

**“Death by an unknown hand:”
Kinship, Identity and Conflict in Medieval Eastern Europe**

Project Overview:

Despite the best efforts of modern historians, medieval history for eastern Europe is still most often written as the history of modern nation-states read back in time. Whether this is in such well known, and excellent, works as Janet Martin’s *Medieval Russia*, or Nora Berend, et al.’s *Central Europe in the Middle Ages*, both works take as their base the history of Russia, Bohemia/Czechia, Poland, and Hungary and then proceed to examine the medieval histories of those places. This same phenomenon is less true for western medieval Europe, though it exists there as well in manifold copies of books on medieval France and England in particular. It is time, especially for eastern Europe that a change is made in the way medieval history is written. This project aims to refashion modern claims about medieval kinship, identity and conflict, and present a new picture of medieval eastern Europe that will allow for a more nuanced discussion of the medieval world.

The first section of this work, comprising the first four chapters, deals with the issues of kinship and identity, with a great deal of focus on the latter. As noted, a problem with modern history writing on medieval eastern Europe (defined for the purposes of this work as the medieval polities of Poland, Hungary and Rus’ - though those identities themselves are also called into question in the first chapter) is the prevalence of the idea of modern states read back into history. Medieval polities were not the modern states of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, and so on. These were polities that were ruled by royal families (clans) and the physical territory that was ruled was the territory controlled by the clan corporately and individual members of it. This kinship-focused way of examining medieval history is the starting point for this reexamination of medieval eastern Europe. However, one cannot stop with these royal families, as those identities too are complex as any clan or family is composed of individuals. It is the identity of these individuals, or more appropriately identities, that make up the real challenge of understanding medieval politics. For those individuals cannot be defined solely by a patrilineal clan structure, but must also be considered in light of their matrilineal, as well as their marital connections. Once that increasingly complex view of individuals and their identities is constructed, their relationships with others can be seen not just as a vertical clan kinship structure, but as horizontal kinship webs into which they are woven with all of their bilateral natal and marital kin. This kinship web is an enormous structure that often stretches the breadth of Christian Europe and while one *may* define their kin connections in this way it is impractical for everyday political use. Instead, individuals structured situational kinship networks out of their larger kinship webs as a way to build kin-centered coalitions to prosecute conflicts. These situational kinship networks were temporary alignments of objectives, centered around shared membership in the kinship web, that dissolved after the achievement of the objective, reforming afterwards once more into the larger kinship web.

The second section of this book, comprising the last three chapters, deals also with kinship but is primarily focused upon the issue of conflict within the Volodimerovichi (the ruling family of Rus’) in particular as a way to dig deeper into specific examples and as a microcosm of the larger medieval eastern European world. The issue of ideas of modern states impinges here as

well when historians talk about war between Russia and Poland, for instance. The fact that there was no Russia or Poland has been covered, but there is also the very real issue that 'war' is incorrect in this instance as well. Like the modern national labels it gives an incorrect impression of what was happening in scale, time frame, etc. These conflicts in medieval eastern Europe were largely internal to a kinship web, and thus could be viewed alongside similar frameworks as private conflict or feud that have been used in medieval western Europe. Though this work does not engage in that terminology, the generic term conflict highlights what is often a very low-grade affair in terms of troops and resources allocated, if not what is gained and lost. Similarly, the body count of such conflicts does not match a modern connotation of war. In these medieval conflicts, the main belligerents, the members of the oppositional situational kinship networks, almost always went home alive after the conflict was over. The death of one's opponent was not the goal. This is not to say that these conflicts were without death, but members of royal families, in their shared kinship webs, rarely died. When such a royal did die it was remarked upon by medieval chroniclers as something odd, highlighting the importance of such a fact. The reason for this lack of death in conflict is that the purpose of these engagements was not to kill or even to defeat your opponent, but to force him (and they were usually male belligerents) to cede a particular political or territorial position. Once the conflict determined the victor, there was no need for the death of your opponent, especially if they were also a member of your kinship web.

Refashioning the way modern historians view medieval eastern Europe in this way will result in a more complicated picture, but also one that is more likely to represent the ways in which medieval individuals themselves approached the world around them. Doing so also demonstrates even more completely the interconnectivity of the medieval world beyond modern perceptions read back into the past, be they nations, regions, or confessional boundaries.

Draft Table of Contents:

Introduction

Chapter 1 - States, Families, Individuals - Terminology for Medieval Eastern Europe

Chapter 2 - Issues of Identity

Chapter 3 - The Kinship Web in Theory and Practice

Chapter 4 - Iaroslav Sviatopolchich's Kinship Web in Action

Chapter 5 - The Nature of Conflict

Chapter 6 - Everyone Goes Home Alive

Chapter 7 - Conflict as Bargaining

Conclusion

Appendix - Maps of Poland Through Time

Appendix - Maps of Rus' Through Time

Appendix - Dramatis Personae

Bibliography

Kinship, Identity, and Conflict in Medieval Eastern Europe

Section 2 - Conflict Not War

Ch. 6 - Everyone Goes Home Alive

The seemingly overgeneralized idea of conflict as a term for military, and other, activities that are going on in medieval eastern Europe (discussed in chapter five) is so important especially when one realizes that very few of the principals involved in these conflicts actually die. This is, of course, not to say that no one dies in these conflicts, as there are casualties among the soldiers fighting, and undoubtedly among members of the population many of whom were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Soldiers' deaths are occasionally reported in the primary sources, usually with such general terms as "the carnage was severe" or "the casualties were numerous,"¹ but more often than not the opposite is the case where a battle is mentioned and no deaths, general, specific, or euphemistic, are mentioned.² The same situation exists for the civilian population. Occasionally they are mentioned as bearing the consequences of the attacks which happen in and to their cities and lands, but not often. When they are mentioned it sounds horrible, as in the events of 1067 when the Iaroslavichi captured Minsk and they "put the men to the sword, [and] sold the women and children into slavery."³ Conflict was common in the medieval eastern European world, as it was throughout the medieval globe, and death was attendant upon such conflicts whether our chronicle sources choose to mention it or not. But in the elite conflicts that are under examination here, death is not as constant a companion for the

¹ PVL, s.a. 1019, 1067. Due to the particular nature of the source analysis conducted in this chapter, the vast majority of the primary source examples will come from the PVL. Similar situations can be seen in other primary sources from medieval eastern Europe, this chapter merely focuses on an in-depth examination of this particular source.

² There are numerous examples of such encounters, for just a few examples see, PVL, s.a. 1018, 1021, 1047, 1064, 1068.

³ PVL, s.a. 1067.

royal participants as one might think.⁴ In the many conflicts in medieval eastern Europe among royal elites it is actually quite rare for any of the main participants to die in the prosecution of the conflict. It is worth noting that this is not the case everywhere in the medieval European world. Ireland, a case which has often drawn parallels to Rus', had a much different experience in which the kings and members of the royal family often died in conflict, or even in assassination.⁵ This was a much different experience than in our examples where the point of the conflict for the members of this medieval eastern European elite was not to kill your foe (as is discussed in chapter seven), but to achieve your particular goal out of the conflict. This is especially true when you are fighting against members of your larger kinship web, even if they may not be part of your current situational kinship network. Thus, by and large, at the end of the day, when the conflict is done everyone (at least among the rich and powerful) goes home alive.

Though the majority of this book focuses on events in eastern Europe more broadly, this chapter takes as its focus almost solely events among the Volodimerovichi of Rus'. Even more specifically, the main focus of this chapter is on a detailed analysis of the conflicts presented in the *Povest' vremennykh let* (hereafter PVL), specifically from the years 1015 to 1110. This detailed analysis of the approximately seventy-nine enumerated conflicts in that time, will

⁴ It is worth mentioning a similar sentiment, quoted in the previous chapter as well, from Oleksiy Tolochko, "It is remarkable how few Rurikids actually died in course of internal clashes, how bloodless the campaigns were, how few big battles waged, and how easily the war subsided, once the possibility of a settlement presented itself." "All the Happy Families..." 168.

⁵ N. B. Aitchison, "Regicide in Early Medieval Ireland" in *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Guy Halsall (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1998), 108-125. The same could also be said for Scandinavia where, in regard to royal conflict, Władysław Duczko said that, "in the end, killing was the sole medium that could secure victory". Władysław Duczko, "Reach Consensus then Make War: The Politics of Alliances in 12th Century Scandinavia" in *Consensus or Violence? Cohesive Forces in Early and High Medieval Societies (9th-14th c.)* ed. Sławomir Moździoch and Przemysław Wiszewski (Wrocław, Institute of History at the University of Wrocław, 2013), 40. Though in contrast (and in the same volume), Przemysław Urbańczyk suggests that in Iceland, "it was not an extermination of opponents that strengthened the political status of a potential leader but, rather, increase in the number of his followers and allies." "Violent peace in medieval Iceland" in *Consensus or Violence? Cohesive Forces in Early and High Medieval Societies (9th-14th c.)* ed. Sławomir Moździoch and Przemysław Wiszewski (Wrocław, Institute of History at the University of Wrocław, 2013), 207.

present a picture of conflict primarily among the Volodimerovichi, but also with some of their neighbors as well. This tight focus allows for a more detailed discussion of the deaths that take place in that particular source, in that particular range of time, and among one particular royal clan. The analysis that comes from these details will present a picture of a lack of death among the elite participants among these conflicts, but will also show that there are people who die. The goal will then be to examine the data to see who is dying, why they are dying, and why are more people not dying as a way of understanding how medieval conflicts functioned through this particular case study.

Such a detailed analysis must begin with a disclaimer. The PVL is often a problematic source, as has been noted many times and in many places. Though it was, most likely, written in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it is extant only from two centuries later, and the textual transmission issues are still being debated.⁶ It also has serious source bias issues as it was written by monks who may have had their own biases relating to women and the inclusion of other groups.⁷ Those monks were also not participant observers and so were reliant on others, usually

⁶ There is extensive discussion of this issue, which I will reference, but for a quick summary: the PVL “was most likely created in 1116 in the Kievan *Vydubychi* monastery of St. Michael by its father superior Sylvester, under the patronage of the Kievan prince Volodimer Monomakh.” And “A compelling set of evidence can be produced in support of the view that continuous annals were kept in Kiev since at least the 1040s if not earlier through the eleventh century, which would account for the abundance of precise dating in the *Primary Chronicle* - including the exact date, weekday, and sometimes even the hour.” Oleksiy P. Tolochko, “Christian Chronology, Universal History, and the Origin of Chronicle Writing in Rus” in *Historical Narratives and Christian Identity on a European Periphery: Early History Writing in Northern, East-Central, and Eastern Europe (c. 1070-1200)* ed. Ildar H. Garipzanov (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011), 205, 207.

For the nuts and bolts of some of the linguistic issues, including problems with the above statement, see the ongoing debate between Donald Ostrowski and A. A. Gippius. The discussion begins in the introduction of Ostrowski’s interlinear collation and paradosis and continues in *Slavic Linguistics. The Povest’ vremennykh let: An Interlinear Collation and Paradosis* Compiled and edited by Donald Ostrowski, with David Birnbaum and Horace G. Lunt (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004); Donald Ostrowski, “The Na’cal’nyj Svod Theory and the Povest’ vremennykh let,” *Russian Linguistics*, vol. 31, 2007, pp. 269–308; A. A. Gippius, “Reconstructing the original of the Povest’ vremennykh let: A contribution to the debate,” *Russian Linguistics*, vol. 38:3 (2014): 341–366.

⁷ Charles Halperin has discussed the problems with monastic memory in regard to the nomads, as well. This is important to note as the two situations point out the problems with our limited source base. Charles J. Halperin, “The Ideology of Silence: Prejudice and Pragmatism on the Medieval Religious Frontier” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26:3 (1984): 442–466. This situation, with regard to monastic bias, is discussed further in

unknown, for their information about events.⁸ Perhaps as a last caution, this source was written at the behest of the Volodimerovichi and places their rule in an often positive light. The classic example of this is the invitation to Riurik to come rule, as the local populations could not manage it by themselves.⁹ There is no mention of the raiding, and little of the trading, that we now understand was going on in the eastern European river systems of the ninth century during the Viking exploration of the area. As a subset to that last problem, it was not just the collective Volodimerovichi clan that supported this chronicle writing, but individual families, particularly, most likely, the Monomashichi.¹⁰ The different families among the Volodimerovichi had their own identities, goals, and visions of what history to record. This has been most ably pointed out by Martin Dimnik who has devoted his career to creating a pro-Sviatoslavichi history in contrast to what he views as the pro-Vsevolodovichi, or pro-Monomashichi record of the PVL and the other Rusian chronicles.¹¹ However, with this disclaimer it can also be acknowledged that these many things are part of the reason that one source in particular was chosen for this examination. These are known biases and problems with this particular source. All of the data collected and examined here has been affected by the above problems, and thus can be examined in largely the same light. The goal is that limiting the source base for this particular type of investigation will

Christian Raffensperger, *Reimagining Europe: Kievan Rus' in the Medieval World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 65-66.

⁸ One exception to the unknown informants is "Ian" who the PVL author/compiler tells us provides much information. PVL, s.a. 1106.

⁹ PVL, s.a. 862.

¹⁰ Tolochko, in his summary of what is accepted about the PVL includes that it was written "under the patronage of the Kievan prince Volodimer Monomakh." Christian Chronology, Universal History, and the Origin of Chronicle Writing in Rus', 205. See also, *The Old Rus' Kievan and Galician-Volhynian Chronicles: The Ostroz'kyj (Xlebnikov) and četvertyns'kyj (Pogodin) codices*. Omeljan Pritsak, Introduction. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), xx.

¹¹ This comes through in much of his work, but his Chernigov duology is the best example of it. Martin Dimnik, *The Dynasty of Chernigov 1054-1146*. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1994); *The Dynasty of Chernigov, 1146-1246* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

actually lead to a clearer presentation of data. Similar comprehensive analyses of other sources are possible using this methodology, but have not been conducted here.

One additional note is required on the dates involved in this examination of the PVL. 1110 is the last year of the chronicle and as such presents a logical end date. 1015 was chosen as a beginning date in relation to the subject group, the Volodimerovichi. By limiting this study to the Volodimerovichi (rather than the Riurikids for example), I have excluded early rulers of Rus' who were not descendants of Volodimer himself. Thus, conflict among the Volodimerovichi really begins with the death of Volodimer himself in 1015. This limitation to Volodimerovichi also excludes Sviatopolk Iaropolchich who takes power immediately upon Volodimer's death, but is not one of his children.¹² Sviatopolk's death and actions are not included in these analyses, though due to his importance they will be mentioned throughout, often as aberrant examples.¹³

Volodimerovichi Deaths

This section presents the overall data on Volodimerovichi deaths recorded in the PVL during the period under examination 1015-1110. This data will be broken down into various categories, discussed here, and analysis of the data in those categories will happen later in the chapter. The various charts presented here will be referenced as well throughout the chapter.

Over the course of 1015-1110, there are forty-one deaths of Volodimerovichi either discussed in the PVL, or which can be assumed occurred during that time frame. There are many different ways to break down that information, but due to the focus here on conflict, the main

¹² PVL, s.a. 1015, for Sviatopolk's assumption of power.

¹³ For an excellent analysis of Sviatopolk Iaropolchich's conflict with Boris and Gleb Volodimerich using the language of conflict and negotiation see, Paul A. Hollingsworth, "Holy men and the transformation of political space in medieval Rus'" in *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown*, ed. James Howard-Johnston and Paul Antony Hayward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 209.

breakdown will be around cause of death. To categorize the causes of death of those forty-one Volodimerovichi, I have created four categories; conjectural, illness, killed, and natural causes. Admittedly, there are other ways that this information could be broken down, so this section will present much of the data which has been compiled to give the reader the ability to replicate this research as needed. The categories themselves are not always precise, as one might imagine, and such difficulties will be discussed where relevant.

Cause of Death	Number
Conjectural	8
Illness	2
Killed	12
Natural Causes	19
Total Volodimerovichi Deaths, 1015-1110	41

Table 1: Volodimerovichi deaths in the period 1015-1110 from the PVL

Conjectural is a category which could have been called simply unknown, if that label was not needed elsewhere. These are deaths that can safely be assumed to have happened during this time frame, though they are not explicitly extant from the PVL or elsewhere. Anastasia Iaroslavna who married Andrew of Hungary sometime in the 1030s, died in this period, but precisely when is an unknown,¹⁴ thus her death is counted as conjectural.

Name	death date	cause of death
Ilja Iaroslavich	1020	conjectural
Pozvzd Volodimerich	unknown	conjectural
Stanislav Volodimerich	unknown	conjectural
Premislava Volodimerovna	unknown	conjectural
Peredslava Volodimerovna	unknown	conjectural
Agafia Iaroslavna	unknown	conjectural

¹⁴ Christian Raffensperger, *Ties of Kinship: Rusian Genealogy and Dynastic Marriage* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 2015 [forthcoming]), pp. See also the entry on these individuals at genealogy.obdurodon.org

Anastasia Iaroslavna	unknown	conjectural
Elisabeth Iaroslavna	unknown	conjectural

Table 2: Conjectural Deaths of Volodimerovichi in the period 1015-1110 from the PVL

Illness is defined here as the very few instances in which illness is listed by the PVL as the cause of death. While illness is, of course, a “natural cause” of death, it is separated out here due to the few specific mentions of this as a cause. There are only two examples in this category, but one could add Sviatopolk Iaropolchich (though not a Volodimerovichi) as “his bones were softened,” though this was probably less of a medical illness than divine wrath.¹⁵

Name	death date	cause of death	PVL text
Mstislav Volodimerich	1036	illness	Мѣстиславъ изыде на ловы и, разболѣ ся и умре
Sviatoslav Iaroslavich	1076	illness	престави ся Святославъ, сынъ Ярославль, мѣсяца декабря 27, отъ рѣзання жьльве

Table 3: Deaths of Volodimerovichi due to Illness in the period 1015-1110 from the PVL

Killed is a relatively straightforward category, though there are some caveats here as well. At root, this is a category of people whom the PVL says explicitly are killed by other people. I have included in this category Rostislav Volodimerich who was not killed, but who drowned while fleeing from the Polovtsy in 1093.¹⁶ This is a debatable categorization, thus I mention it, and my rationale for it, which is that his death was caused by his clan’s attack on the

¹⁵ PVL, s.a. 1019, translation from *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans. and eds. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953).

¹⁶ PVL, s.a. 1093.

Polovtsy, which was caused by their attack on Rus'. It could be recategorized as something else, but does not fit any of the other three categories well. The death of Gleb Sviatoslavich is also worthy of mention here simply because of the terseness with which the PVL records the event - "Gleb, son of Sviatoslav, was killed."¹⁷ Gleb is then given a very nice eulogy, but there is no mention made here or elsewhere (though the Novgorod First Chronicle adds that it was in the territory beyond the Volkhov River) of who killed him.¹⁸ There has, of course, been speculation on this matter pointing to Iziaslav Iaroslavich as the commissioner of Gleb's death, if not his assailant.¹⁹ Such problems are endemic when working with medieval sources in general, and with the limited Russian sourcebase in particular, even more so when just focusing on the PVL.

The category of killed is also broken down further into those Volodimerovichi who are killed in conflicts with other Volodimerovichi, and those killed in conflicts with non-Volodimerovichi. This category will receive the most examination later in the chapter when looking at how, why, and by whom Volodimerovichi are killed.

Name	death date	cause of death	PVL text
Boris Volodimerich	1015	killed	И тако съконьча ся блажении Борисъ,
Gleb Volodimerich	1015	killed	Поваръ же Глѣбовъ, именемъ Търчинъ, вынезь ножь, зарѣза Глѣба, акы агня непорочно
Sviatoslav Volodimerich	1015	killed	Святопѣлкъ же оканьнии зѣлыи уби Святослава, пославъ

¹⁷ PVL, s.a. 1078.

¹⁸ *Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopis' starshego i mladshhego izvodov*, vol. 3, *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2000), [hereafter NPL] s.a. 1079.

¹⁹ Martin Dimnik has suggested that Iziaslav Iaroslavich arranged Gleb's murder. *The Dynasty of Chernigov 1054-1146*, 144-145. While the editor of the *Kievan Caves Paterikon* has suggested it was in battle with Iziaslav, *The Paterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery* Muriel Heppell, transl. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1989), 144n450.

			ко горѣ Угърѣстѣи, бѣжащю ему въ Угры
Rostislav Volodimerich	1066	killed	Умьре же мѣсяца февраля въ 3 днь
Iziaslav Iaroslavich	1078	killed	И тако убиень бысть Изяславъ, сынъ Ярославль
Boris Viacheslavich	1078	killed	Първое убиша Бориса, сына Вячеславля
Gleb Sviatoslavich	1078	killed	убиень бысть Глѣбъ, Святославль сынъ
Roman Sviatoslavich	1079	killed	И възврати ся Романъ въспять, и бывъшю ему, убиша и Половци
Iaropolk Iziaslavich	1086	killed	Лежащю на санкахъ а онъ съ коня саблюю прободе я, мѣсяца ноября въ 22.
Rostislav Vsevolodich	1093	drowned	И тако утопе Ростиславъ, сынъ Въсеволожъ.
Mstislav Sviatopolchich	1099	killed	убиень Мъстиславъ, сынъ Святопѣльчъ въ Володимири,
Iziaslav Volodimerich	1096	killed	И убиша Изяслава, сына Въсеволожа

Table 4: Volodimerovichi killed in the period 1015-1110 from the PVL

The fourth category is natural causes, which comprises the largest single group of deaths of members of the Volodimerovichi clan in this period. There are no specific causes listed for any of these deaths, thus their categorization here as ‘natural’ deaths. If they were other than natural, I believe it would have been noted by the chroniclers as such, as they do for the other twenty-two dead Volodimerovichi in this period. This category includes those Volodimerovichi who “passed away” (*prestavi sia*) or simply “died” (*um’re*) with no other explanation. Similar to the drowning death of Rostislav Volodimerich there is the case in this category of Iaroslav

Iaropolchich. Iaroslav was in the midst of a rebellion against Sviatopolk Iziaslavich at the time of his death.²⁰ In 1102, he escaped from captivity in Kiev, only to be recaptured by Sviatopolk's son, also named Iaroslav, and returned to Kiev in chains. It is only later in the entry for 1102 that Iaroslav Iaropolchich dies. His death, though linked temporally to his rebellion, and perhaps causally due to injuries sustained during escape and recapture that we might imagine, is listed simply as "Iaroslav Iaropolchich passed away" - leading me to categorize this as a death by natural causes, despite the circumstances surrounding his death. This category also has Vsevolod Iaroslavich who "passed away" in 1093, but who had also been sick before his death.²¹ There is no evidence that the sickness, rather than old age, was the proximate cause of death, so I have retained him in this category of natural causes.

Name	death date	cause of death	PVL text
Volodimer Sviatoslavich	1015	natural	Умьре же на Берестовѣмь
Evstafii Mstislavich	1033	natural	Мьстиславичь Еустафии умьре.
Briacheslav Iziaslavich	1044	natural	умьре Брячиславъ, сынъ Изяславль, вьнукъ Володимирь, отьць Вьсеславль
Volodimer Iaroslavich	1052	natural	Престави ся Володимирь, сынъ Ярославль стареишии
Iaroslav "Mudryi" Volodimerich	1054	natural	Престави ся великий кьнязь Русьскый Ярославль
Viacheslav Iaroslavich	1057	natural	Престави ся Вячеславъ, сынъ Ярославль
Igor' Iaroslavich	1060	natural	Престави ся Игорь, сынъ Ярославль.
Sudislav Volodimerich	1063	natural	Судиславъ престави

²⁰ PVL, s.a. 1101, 1102.

²¹ PVL, s.a. 1093.

			ся,
Mstislav Iziaslavich	1069	natural	посади сына своего Мъстислава Полотъскѣ; иже въскорѣ умре ту.
Dobronega/Maria Volodimerovna	1087	natural	death not noted in PVL, in non-Russian source
Anna Iaroslavna	1089	natural	death not noted in PVL, in non-Russian source
Riurik Rostislavich	1092	natural	Въ сеже лѣто умре Рюрикъ, сынъ Ростиславль
Vsevolod Iaroslavich	1093	natural	престави ся великий кнѣзь Всеволодъ, сынъ Ярославль, внукъ Володимирь
Rostislav Mstislavich	1093	natural	престави ся Ростиславъ, сынъ Мъстиславль, внукъ Изяславль
Vseslav Briacheslavich	1101	natural	Престави ся Въсеславъ, Полотъскый кнѣзь
Iaroslav Iaropolchich	1102	natural	Въ сеже лѣто престави ся Ярославъ Яропѣлчичь
Viacheslav Iaropolchich	1104	natural	престави ся Вячеславъ Яропѣлчичь
Katerina Vsevolodovna	1108	natural	престави ся Катерина, Всеволожа дъщери
Evpraksia Vsevolodovna	1109	natural	Престави ся Евъпраксии Всеволожа

Table 5: Volodimerovichi deaths by natural causes in the period 1015-1110 from the PVL

Volodimerovichi do not kill Volodimerovichi

The statement that Volodimerovichi do not kill Volodimerovichi is true, but it is also meant to be thought provoking. It is true that, according to the data here (table 4 in particular), none of the

violent deaths among the Volodimerovichi during this period was committed by another Volodimerovichi.²² This leads to a whole series of questions beginning with the big one, why? But also engendering others such as, is this true, is this purposeful, or even do they kill anyone? The remainder of the chapter will be broken down into three sections which will attempt to answer these, and other, questions about the seeming Volodimerovichi aversion to killing one another in conflict. The answers begin with the assertion that yes indeed the Volodimerovichi do kill people, just not each other. There is also an extended discussion of why that might be the case and finally affirmative conflict avoidance, resolution, or de-escalation strategies practiced by the Volodimerovichi to avoid killing one another in conflict and thus creating larger, deadlier conflicts.

Volodimerovichi do kill People

Lest a picture be created that the Volodimerovichi are largely benign pacifists, let us be clear that they do in fact kill people. The majority of the people that the Volodimerovichi kill, as well as cause to be killed, in the pages of the PVL are from amongst the Polovtsy, though that is not all of them. There are nine instances in the PVL where the PVL has one of the Volodimerovichi killing a non-Volodimerovichi individual, and in five of those instances the Volodimerovichi is the actual agent of the non-Volodimerovichi's death, their killer.²³

Name(s)	death date	Killed By	Manner of Death
Rededia of the Kasogians	1022	Mstislav Volodimerich	single combat

²² While it might indeed be rare for two Volodimerovichi to face each other in combat and actually kill the other, what is meant here is the depiction of such violence in the PVL and the chronicle's lack of direct statements placing blame for Volodimerovichi deaths on other Volodimerovichi.

²³ Again, as noted above, this is as depicted in the PVL where the Volodimerovichi is named as the party who did the killing. This may mean that they ordered it, but they are given (or take) responsibility for the action.

Moislav of the Mazovians	1047	Iaroslav Volodimerich	Killed in battle
The Kievans who freed Vseslav	1069	Mstislav Iziaslavich	non-judicial killing
A group of Khazars who had plotted against Oleg and advised killing his brother	1083	Oleg Sviatoslavich	"slaughtered"
Itlar' and Kytan	1095	Ordered by Volodimer Monomakh	ambush
Tugorkhan	1096	unknown	killed in battle
20 Polovtsian princes were killed; Urusoba, Kchi, Arslanapa, Kitanopa, Kuman, Asup, Kurtek, Chenegrepa, Sur'bar', and many others	1103	Volodimerovichi armies	Killed while fleeing battle
Beldyuz'	1103	Volodimer Monomakh orders Beldyuz' execution	executed
Taz, brother of Boniak	1107	Sviatopolk Iziaslavich, Volodimer Monomakh, Oleg Sviatoslavich, Mstislav Vsevolodich, Sviatoslav, Viacheslav and Iaropolk Volodimerich	Killed while fleeing battle

Table 6: Non-Volodimerovichi killed by Volodimerovichi in the period 1015-1110 from the PVL

To examine this further, I will look at a few specific examples from table 6, arranged by types of killing. In 1147, Iaroslav Volodimerich kills Moislav, the leader of the Mazovians.²⁴ This is part of a joint campaign between Iaroslav and his relative Casimir, the ruler of the Mieszkowice, to subject people to Casimir's rule after the difficult rule of his father, Mieszko II,

²⁴ PVL, s.a. 1047.

and Casimir's own minority.²⁵ Iaroslav's killing of Moislav assists his alliance with his relative Casimir, but it also, probably, makes his own position more stable with one less avaricious neighbor. Moislav is someone to whom Iaroslav is not connected familiarly or otherwise, and thus his death does not seem to affect Iaroslav's position in any way but a positive one. The Volodimerovichi also kill people internal to Rus', as well. In 1083, Oleg Sviatoslavich returned from his time in Byzantium, and promptly "slaughtered the Khazars who had counseled the death of his brother and had plotted against himself."²⁶ His reasons for killing the Khazars are clearly presented by the PVL, as is the personal nature of the killing itself. It was Oleg, according to the PVL who "slaughtered the Khazars," rather than ordering it, or otherwise causing it to be done. This is not necessarily a direct statement that Oleg did this as a matter of historical fact, but that the PVL presents him as having done it. Thus the purpose of the single chronicle used here, as a way to confine the analysis to what this chronicle is saying, and allow for an easier time of comparing the various deaths noted in the PVL. In this same year, 1083, it should be noted, Oleg also allows the Volodimerovichi, David Igorich and Volodar Rostislavich, who had usurped his position to go free. At the same time he is killing the Khazars, he is not killing his kin. This juxtaposition is important to note in the context of our discussion of who is being killed and by whom, and the idea that the Volodimerovichi do not kill one another.

There is another way to analyze these nine examples of killing, and that is by ethnicity and/or religion. I group these two ideas together here because the idea of ethnicity in the premodern world is quite difficult to tangle with (some reasons for which are articulated in the first two chapters of this book), and religion is often conflated with ethnicity by the primary

²⁵ More about this campaign can be found in a variety of places, specifically Raffensperger, *Reimagining Europe*, 73-77.

²⁶ PVL, s.a. 1083, Cross translation.

sources that remain to us. In this set of nine examples, eight of those killed could be defined as either non-Russian or non-Christian. In seven of those instances the two would definitely overlap with one possible exception. What is Russian is, of course, an issue of its own, but if we mean denizens of the kingdom of Rus', that might work as an analytical framework. The one exception to this overlap then would potentially be the Khazars who were killed by Oleg Sviatoslavich in 1083.²⁷ They were killed in the Russian-ruled and controlled city of Tmutorokan', which makes it Russian territory and could thus make its inhabitants Russian. The PVL labels them as Khazars, perhaps to set them apart, perhaps as a comment on religion (the "Jewish Khazars" are one of the groups that visit Volodimer in 986 to discuss conversion),²⁸ but they could be classed as Russian, as they inhabited a Russian city. It might perhaps be a stretch to do the same thing for the Pechenegs or even the Kasogians, though. The latter paid tribute to Mstislav after his defeat of their ruler Rededia in single combat, but they do not become part of Rus' for any length of time after that, as far as the PVL records.²⁹ While the Pechenegs interact heavily with the Volodimerovichi from the moment of their arrival on the steppe south of Rus', they are typically portrayed as 'other' by the PVL.

The majority of these nine cases then involve the killing of non-Volodimerovichi, as well as non-Christians. Again, there are exceptions to this. The Khazars, once again a problematic group, are not necessarily Jewish, just because the "Jewish Khazars" supposedly came to convert Volodimer in 986, or because the elite of the Khazars converted to Judaism at some point, perhaps in the eighth century.³⁰ Further, it is known that there were Christians, Muslims, Jews,

²⁷ PVL, s.a. 1083.

²⁸ PVL, s.a. 986.

²⁹ PVL, s.a. 1022.

³⁰ PVL, s.a. 986. There is a great deal of literature on the Khazars, and especially on their conversion. For two examples see, Kevin Alan Brook, *The Jews of Khazaria*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006); D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964).

and pagans living in Itil, the capital of the Khazars, before it was destroyed by Sviatoslav, father of Volodimer, in 965.³¹ Thus, while they are labeled as Khazars, their religion is an unknown for the purposes of this discussion. Moislav of the Mazovians, killed by Iaroslav Volodimerich in 1047, was most likely a Christian.³² In fact, Paul Knoll and Frank Schaer in their notes to the *Deeds of the Princes of the Poles* suggest that he was a nobleman who had served the Mieszkowice before rising up in rebellion against them.³³ This reduces the number of non-Christians to five of the nine, four of which are Polovtsy. Five of nine is still a substantial portion of the dead and it is true that the the PVL records different behavior in regard to the Polovtsy, in particular, than to interactions amongst the Volodimerovichi. Thus, we need to be aware of religion/ethnicity as a category of discourse when talking about who can and cannot be killed.

The importance of flight as a method for avoiding killing will be discussed below as a conflict resolution strategy; but in the case of the Polovtsy it does not have the same effect. Normally, when one party flees from a conflict, the conflict is finished and that party is allowed to get away. There are only three instances, out of thirty-five total flights from conflict, that the flight is not honored and the conflict continues (see Table 6 for all of them). One of those is Sviatopolk Iaropolchich's killing of Sviatoslav Volodimerich in 1015, one of the first three killings in this period examined in the PVL, all of which are the result of Sviatopolk Iaropolchich's struggle for the Kievan throne.³⁴ The other two instances where flight is not honored both involve the Polovtsy and both come nearly at the end of the period under

³¹ PVL, s.a. 965. The multi-ethnic and multi-confessional character of the Khazars is discussed in the works cited above, but is also approached from the perspective of Turkic sources by Peter B. Golden in *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), 239-242.

³² PVL, s.a. 1047. Moislav's death is also recorded in the *Gesta Principum Polonorum* of Gallus Anonymus where he is referred to as Mieclaw, and is simply "killed" with no agent of his death, nor mention of Iaroslav Volodimerich. *Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*, 82-83.

³³ *Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*, 83n2.

³⁴ PVL, s.a. 1015.

examination. In both 1103 and 1107, a coalition of Volodimerovichi rulers gathered together to fight against the Polovtsy, and in both of those years the Polovtsy turned and fled at some point during the battle.³⁵ Contrary to what happens when Volodimerovichi turn and flee, they are allowed to get away and conflict ends (discussed in some depth later in the chapter), in this instance the Volodimerovichi pursue and kill the Polovtsy, killing twenty Polovtsian rulers (nine named in the text) in 1103 and many Polovtsians (one named ruler in the text) in 1107 (see Table 6). In 1107, the PVL describes the collective Volodimerovichi as the killers of Taz, brother of Boniak and the others who were fleeing.³⁶ The contrary example of these two Polovtsian cases of being killed while fleeing points to the possibility of other differences with how the PVL portrays the Volodimerovichi treating the Polovtsy versus how they treat each other. But it also does make the point, rather effectively, that the Volodimerovichi are willing to kill, and not just commission killing, when the circumstances call for it.

Such an analysis of Volodimerovichi actively killing non-Volodimerovichi is important in the context of the larger study within this chapter. Though the sample size is small, nine total instances, five of which have the Volodimerovichi actively killing the non-Volodimerovichi, it demonstrates that the PVL does use language that the Volodimerovichi kill, and that the absence of such language in regard to conflict between the Volodimerovichi is not a fluke of the text, but a choice of the chronicler, or perhaps even the reality that the chronicler is describing. This, then, serves as an effective check on the presentation of the data here and perhaps reinforces the notion

³⁵ PVL, s.a. 1103, 1107. S. A. Pletneva in her examination of the Polovtsy notes that “The Polovtsy (khans and commoners) were by no means inclined to sacrifice their lives for their allies”. I think this might be accurate in regard to the commonplace nature of flight, but inaccurate if used as a negative comparison with the Volodimerovichi, who may have felt exactly the same way. *Polovtsy* (Moscow: Nauka, 1990), 108.

³⁶ PVL, s.a. 1107.

that though the Volodimerovichi do kill, they simply do not kill other Volodimerovichi.³⁷

Whether or not the difference here is that the majority of those killed here are non-Christian (five of the nine examples) or it is that the Polovtsy are inherently treated differently (four of the nine examples), I can not say definitively.³⁸ One must at the very least consider this information when making a decision about the larger ideas presented here in regard to the system of Volodimerovichi conflict and violence.

Causes and Motivations of Violent Death Among the Volodimerovichi

Though there are forty-one total deaths among the Volodimerovichi during the period under examination, the focus here (and for the remainder of the chapter) will be on the twelve Volodimerovich who were killed. There are two main, interrelated, questions that occur in looking at the data presented in table 4, and which I will attempt to answer in this section. The first is why do more principal participants, members of the Volodimerovichi in this case, not die during conflicts with one another, especially when conflict is as common as is discussed in the secondary literature?³⁹ The second is why do none of these Volodimerovichi die at the hands of other Volodimerovichi, and is there a specific reason for that? These two questions are important to consider, as their potential answers help create a more accurate picture of Rus' than the land of internecine warfare presented in some secondary sources. It also presents a new picture of how

³⁷ It may be important to note that I am stipulating that this is an assignment of responsibility by the chronicler. Whether or not these Volodimerovichi did these deeds themselves or ordered them done, the PVL uses language that says the individual Volodimerovichi *did* them, which is the subject under discussion here.

³⁸ Yulia Mikhailova has done excellent work and concluded that there is no single perspective in the chronicles of anti-nomad sentiment. Further, she points out in her own analysis of language that similar language is used for conflict with the Polovtsy and between Volodimerovichi in southern Rus' chronicles of the twelfth century. Yulia Mikhailova, "‘Christians and Pagans’ in the Chronicles of Pre-Mongolian Rus: Beyond the Dichotomy of ‘Good Us’ and ‘Bad Them’" *Geschichte der Slavia Asiatica: quellenkundliche Probleme* No Issue Number (2013), 68.

³⁹ For a discussion of the frequency of comments about the nature of conflict in this period of Russian history in the secondary literature, see chapter five.

medieval royal families managed conflict amongst themselves, both within a clan and among a larger kinship web, to maintain those connections that they worked so hard to build. Killing members of the clan, and of the kinship web, seems to have been unnecessary to achieve short term goals, as well as counterproductive to the long term goals of increasing a particular clan's power.

Of the twelve Volodimerovichi killed (Table 4), three of them die in the first year of the period, 1015. They are a result of Sviatopolk Iaropolchich's quest for the throne of Rus'. This leaves nine deaths by violence to occur over the remaining ninety-four years of the period. This is slightly less than one violent death per decade of Volodimerovichi rule of Rus', as recorded in the PVL. Not to make light of the situation, but this is a far different picture presented than the popular perception of a Rus' consumed by infighting between the Iaroslavichi post-1054, the rebellion of Vseslav Briacheslavich, or the bad days of Sviatopolk Iziaslavich and the Blinding of Vasil'ko.⁴⁰ Lacking consistent comparative data (a similar analysis of chronicle sources) from amongst the Mieszkowice or Árpáds, it would be impossible to say whether or not this is normal or abnormal, but at the very least it is different than the common perception of Volodimerovichi rule in Rus', which is a place to start. Why then are there few violent deaths among the Volodimerovichi?

There are a host of possible reasons for such a lack of death. In the following pages, I will examine five relatively broad categories to determine if any, or all, are responsible for such a lack of violent death amongst the Volodimerovichi. The broad categories represent various reasons that could be advanced to explain this circumstance and include military, religious,

⁴⁰ Perhaps the most dramatic statement of this comes from the previously quoted Nicholas Riasanovsky in his *History of Russia* textbook where he characterizes the rule of the Iaroslavichi in the second half of the eleventh century as, "a frightening record of virtually constant civil wars." Nicholas V. Riasanovsky. *A History of Russia* 5th Edition (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 39.

political, economic, and familial reasons. These are not always easy to disentangle from one another, but they have been broken out here as an aid to discussion. The goal of this exercise is to analyze various approaches to the conflicts and see how conflict was structured the way it was, and why.

The issue at hand is death in conflict, or lack thereof, and so one must begin with the military issue to better determine why Volodimerovich did not die more often in combat. This is not a case of them simply being bad at combat as Henry of Livonia will later accuse the Rusians of being, a view endorsed by Robert Bartlett in his *Making of Europe*.⁴¹ A more likely explanation is that the conflict that takes place is relatively small scale and not much death, of any kind, is seen - at least as far as the picture provided by the primary sources. An extreme example, referenced earlier in the chapter is that of Rededia of the Kasogians and Mstislav Volodimerich engaging in single combat, rather than allowing their armies to fight one another.⁴² The major problem with this story being that Mstislav Volodimerich only triumphs after promising to build a church, and thus the whole tale serves as a testament to the greatness of the Christian god over non-Christians.⁴³ It fits into the category of such topoi, the most famous of which is perhaps Clovis's determination to convert during his battle against the Alemanni, and resulting victory.⁴⁴ This is, as noted, an extreme example of limited combat, as well as perhaps being part of a topos of Christian triumph over pagans. In general, however, the conflicts that are noted in the PVL are small ones marked with little fanfare or detail. The entry for 1071 provides

⁴¹ Robert Bartlett suggests that "their early attempts were so unsuccessful as to seem slapstick." *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 74-75. The source material regarding the Rusian construction of siege machines comes from Henry of Livonia. Henricus Lettus, *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, transl. James A. Brundage (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), Bk. 10, ch. 12.

⁴² PVL, s.a. 1022.

⁴³ "Mstislav exclaimed, "Oh Virgin Mother of God, help me! If I conquer this man, I will build a church in thy name." PVL, s.a. 1022. Cross translation

⁴⁴ Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, Lewis Thorpe, transl. (New York: Penguin, 1974), Bk. 2, ch. 30.

two such examples, “Vseslav expelled Sviatopolk from Polotsk” followed later by “Iaropolk defeated Vseslav near Golotichesk.”⁴⁵ Both of these entries indicate that a military conflict occurred, but also that it was resolved relatively quickly, and with little bloodshed, if we can read between the lines of the PVL.

One of the things that allows for such a reading of the PVL is that it does, on occasion, have conflicts that involve mass death, and which are singled out as such by specific language. Of the seventy-two conflicts I documented in the PVL, only twelve of them have mass death, and three of those are from the complex 1097 entry which actually deals with several events and several years (see Table 7). To break it down even further, only a few (four) of those twelve explicitly use the word “carnage” (*secha zla*) which I believe is a codeword in the PVL for an exceptionally violent conflict with mass death.⁴⁶ For instance, in 1067, the Iaroslavichi were engaged in conflict with Vsevolod Briacheslavich, and the PVL notes that “the carnage was severe...the casualties were numerous.”⁴⁷ While in 1078 there is an instance of “carnage” noted during the conflict between Oleg Sviatoslavich and Boris Viacheslavich on one side and Iziaslav Iaroslavich and Vsevolod Iaroslavich on the other.⁴⁸ This is also the same conflict in which both Boris Viacheslavich and Iziaslav Iaroslavich lose their lives. Earlier in that same entry for 1078 there is a conflict between Oleg Sviatoslavich and Boris Viacheslavich versus Vsevolod Iaroslavich during which the PVL notes that “many lost their lives,” including two non-Volodimerovichi individuals who are named.⁴⁹ The existence of these major battles involving

⁴⁵ PVL, s.a. 1071.

⁴⁶ The use of such a code word would not be original to Rus'. In the medieval west, “a great effusion of blood” was often used “to describe the effects of immoderate interpersonal violence.” Mark D. Meyerson, Daniel Thiery, and Oren Falk, “Introduction” in *A Great Effusion of Blood? Interpreting Medieval Violence*, ed. Mark D. Meyerson, Daniel Thiery, and Oren Falk (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 3.

⁴⁷ PVL, s.a. 1067. Cross translation

⁴⁸ PVL, s.a. 1067.

⁴⁹ PVL, s.a. 1078.

mass death, and especially those in which the PVL uses the important keyword of “carnage” is a major indicator that the PVL does note when conflict with mass death occurs. The fact that such occurrences are in the minority, by a large percentage, further indicates that the normative conflict in Rus’ was a small one, with a limited number of participants and a limited amount of death. While such a phrasing regarding death in combat may seem odd to the modern mind, it is important to accurately set expectations for the kinds of conflicts in which the Volodimerovichi engaged, the better to understand the military reasons for the lack of death amongst them in their conflicts.

Year	Belligerent 1	Belligerent 2	Mass death
1016	Iaroslav Volodimerich	Sviatopolk Iaropolchich	yes - carnage was severe
1019	Iaroslav Volodimerich	Sviatopolk Iaropolchich	yes - "the carnage was terrible, such as had never before occurred in Rus'."
1024	Mstislav Volodimerich	Iaroslav Volodimerich	yes - lots
1067	Iziaslav, Sviatoslav and Vsevolod Iaroslavich	Minsk	"the brethren captured it [Minsk], put the men to the sword, sold the women and children into slavery"
1067	Iziaslav, Sviatoslav and Vsevolod Iaroslavich	Vseslav Briacheslavich	yes - "the carnage was severe" "the casualties were numerous"
1078	Oleg Sviatoslavich and Boris Viacheslavich	Vsevolod Iaroslavich	yes, many, two by name, "Ivan, son of Zhiroslav, and Tuky, the brother of Chudin"
1078	Iziaslav and Vsevolod Iaroslavich	Oleg Sviatoslavich and Boris Viacheslavich	yes; carnage was awful
1099	Sviatopolk Iziaslavich	Volodar and Vasil'ko Rostislavich	yes; conflict was violent and casualties numerous on both sides
1099	David Igorich and Boniak	Hungarian reinforcements with	yes - including Hungarian bishop

		Iaroslav Sviatopolchich	Kupan and nobles
1099	Sviatopolk Iziaslavich and Sviatosha Davidich	David Igorich	yes; massacre of David's soldiery
1103	Sviatopolk Iziaslavich, Volodimer Monomakh, David Sviatoslavich, David Vseslavich, Mstislav Vsevolodich, Viacheslav Iaropolchich and Iaropolk Volodimerich	Polovtsy	yes
1106	Vseslavichi	Zimegola	yes - 9K followers of the Vseslavichi

Table 7: Conflicts with mass death in the period 1015-1110 from the PVL

Religion offers another potential reason that violence, especially intra-familial violence, is limited in these conflicts. The first crime in the world according to the Bible, was Cain's murder of Abel.⁵⁰ Fratricide was thus frowned upon in the Christian medieval world. Despite what seems like there would be solid religious reasons for a prohibition on fratricide in Rus', there is no mention of fratricide (*bratoubitstvo*), by name in the PVL. The story of Cain and Abel is included though, as part of the history of Christianity as told to Volodimer during his examination of various religions in 986.⁵¹ And Cain is referenced three more times in the text, all of which are applied to Sviatopolk and his planning for the deaths of Boris and Gleb.⁵² Interestingly, Sviatopolk is never referred to as Cain, or a new Cain, but simply employs Cain's tactic, and is called upon to suffer as Cain did. The lack of a specific accusation of fratricide by the PVL for Sviatopolk is curious, though he is referred to as "the accursed" for this murder.

⁵⁰ Genesis 4.

⁵¹ PVL, s.a. 986.

⁵² PVL, s.a. 1015, 1019.

Later in the PVL, it is even explicitly noted that Boris and Gleb were killed by “an unknown hand” and thus not by Sviatopolk, perhaps explaining why the author used the phrase Cain’s device, rather than making a specific accusation of murder.⁵³

As noted earlier in this chapter, three of the twelve Volodimerovichi killed occur in 1015 at the instigation of Sviatopolk, thus it is not surprising that Cain is referenced here. It may be surprising though that there is not more of a push to make Sviatopolk into even more of a Cain figure. And it is definitely surprising that in the remaining one-hundred years of the PVL neither Cain, nor the issue of fratricide again come up, despite nine more Volodimerovichi killed. This lack of mention of religious prohibition on intra-kin murder may be an argument from silence, but it is certainly intriguing that such silence exists on a topic where it could easily be imagined that there might be universal agreement. Oleksiy Tolochko has suggested that the lack of royal death in these conflicts is due to a continuing emphasis on the cult of SS Boris and Gleb, that the continued veneration of them kept alive the story of Sviatopolk Iaropolchich and his “bad end.”⁵⁴ This is an interesting, but problematic argument as the minimal number of deaths exist, the cult of SS Boris and Gleb exists, but there is no clear correlation between the two, especially in the PVL under examination here. In this case, it is not possible to demonstrate a correlation, and so while there is a Christian religious prohibition on fratricide this does not appear as an issue in the PVL’s account of these years, and thus probably does not play a role as the reason, or potentially

⁵³ PVL s.a. 1086.

⁵⁴ Tolochko, “‘All the Happy Families...’,” 168. Paul Hollingsworth offers a, perhaps, more realistic assessment of the cult’s impact on the Volodimerovichi: The princes of Rus’ could not live up to the standards set by the image of Boris and Gleb, but perhaps for that very reason they rallied so forcefully around a cult that presented in such a religiously distilled fashion their own unattainable wishes for ideal political relations.” “Holy men and the transformation of political space in medieval Rus’,” 211. While A. A. Gippius makes the argument that the evolution of the Boris and Gleb story is really a product of the twelfth century conflict between Volodimer Monomakh and Iaroslav Sviatopolchich (see chapter four) and thus bears directly on this intra-clan conflict. A.A. Gippius, “‘Letopisanye’ Paremiinye chteniia o Borise i Glebe: Istoriia teksta i istoricheskii kontekst” *Fakty i Znaki: Issledovaniia po semiotike istori* 2 (2010): 42-71.

even a reason, behind the lack of Volodimerovichi killing Volodimerovichi. This is also the case when one looks at other sources, such as the Kievan Caves Paterik which describes how the abbot Feodosii shunned and condemned Sviatoslav Iaroslavich for his usurpation of his brother Iziaslav; and yet there was no political change to accompany these condemnations from arguably the most influential ecclesiastic in Rus'.⁵⁵ One might also note in this context the occasional prohibition of shedding Christian blood. Though this is not enforced consistently, there are examples such as the events of ca. 1127 when the hegumen of the St. Andrew monastery stopped a brewing conflict between Vsevolod Olgovich (who had just seized Chernigov from his uncle) and Mstislav / Harald Volodimerich of Kiev (defending the rights of Vsevolod's uncle Iaroslav Sviatoslavich) because it would spill too much Christian blood.⁵⁶ Similarly, the "Testament" of Volodimer Monomakh exhorts his children to not kill Christians.⁵⁷ Though these exhortations do not seem to be enough to stop conflict, it is possible that they are part of an underlying rationale for limiting death in conflict.⁵⁸

One of the most compelling reasons for a lack of death can perhaps be explained under the description of political reasons. In Rus', it is only members of the Volodimerovichi clan who hold power.⁵⁹ Their authority, derived from historical precedent and traced to Volodimer, comes from their membership in the family, but it is ratified quite often by their supporters whether they

⁵⁵ *The Paterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery*, trans. Muriel Heppell, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1989), 74-78.

⁵⁶ Hypatian, s.a. 1128.

⁵⁷ Laurentian, s.a. 1096.

⁵⁸ Paul Hollingsworth ends his discussion of ecclesiastical involvement in Volodimerovichi conflict with the story of Metropolitan Nicholas's intervention on behalf of Iaroslav Iaropolchich in 1101, where the metropolitan gains Iaroslav's freedom from Sviatopolk Iziaslavich. However, the very next year, Iaroslav is again in chains in Kiev and subsequently dies mysteriously, testifying both to the good intentions and lack of enforcement of Christian morality on the Volodimerovichi. "Holy men and the transformation of political space in medieval Rus'," 212-213.

⁵⁹ This is discussed in chapter one and in more detail in Christian Raffensperger, "The Forgotten Kingdom of Rus': A Modern Revision to Medieval Titulature" [article under review].

be members of a warband or members of a city.⁶⁰ Accepting both of these previous statements as true, it could be said that each of the Volodimerovichi who rule cities in Rus' have a base of support, whether it is the larger clan, their warband, or the inhabitants of the city they rule (or a city which they have ruled in the past). Moving forward from this proposition then, if one Volodimerovichi were then to kill another Volodimerovichi, he would be alienating that Volodimerovichi's base of support. This may seem simplistic in its reasoning, but defeating an opponent and replacing them as ruler of a city not only keeps them alive but they also have the opportunity to come back once again and make another attempt to rule, if they so desire. Their supporters are not deprived of their favored Volodimerovichi, even if that Volodimerovichi is deprived of his particular place of rule.

One example will, I hope, suffice to demonstrate this point.⁶¹ Over the course of 1064-1065, the city of Tmutorokan' in the south changed hands several times, and in each instance one Volodimerovichi expelled another from the city with zero loss of Volodimerovichi life. It began in 1064 when Rostislav Volodimerich fled to Tmutorokan' and expelled Gleb Sviatoslavich from the city.⁶² Rostislav achieved his goal of taking control of the city without any loss of life for his kinsman. The next year, though, Sviatoslav Iaroslavich marched on Tmutorokan', on his son Gleb's behalf, and even before Sviatoslav arrived, Rostislav Volodimerich withdrew from the city.⁶³ Rostislav withdrew, the PVL says, not because he was afraid, but because he was "reluctant to take up arms against his uncle."⁶⁴ This is an interesting statement; it would seem, on its face, to be made against intra-familial violence, though when placed in its proper context of

⁶⁰ Donald Ostrowski discusses this more in regard to his interpretation of the bases for rule in Rus'. Donald Ostrowski, "Systems of Succession in Rus' and Steppe Societies" *Ruthenica* XI (2012): 29-58.

⁶¹ Though I would also note that this subject, more broadly, is the topic of chapter seven "Conflict as Bargaining."

⁶² PVL, s.a. 1064.

⁶³ PVL, s.a. 1065.

⁶⁴ PVL, s.a. 1065. Cross translation.

Rostislav Volodimerich expelling Gleb Sviatoslavich in 1064, and then again in 1065 after Gleb returns to the throne, that seems logically dissonant. Yet, in the final analysis of these three conflicts there is not only no death (Volodimerovichi or other), but no whisper in the PVL of military engagement. Each time the aggressor takes the city, achieving their goal, with neither death nor violence. The ability to achieve one's goal without violence seems to indicate that from the standpoint of politics, violence and death are not required to obtain a particular end.

Standing firmly alongside political rationales against intra-Volodimerovichi violence are economic rationales against violence. Violence, and conflict of most kinds, are bad for the economy. This is not to say that the Volodimerovichi do not have conflict over economic issues, of course. The disagreements between the family of Iziaslav Volodimerich with the other descendants of Volodimer Sviatoslavich over who rules Novgorod were primarily about controlling one of the most productive economies of medieval Rus'. When Briacheslav Iziaslavich took Novgorod in 1021 and Vseslav Briacheslavich, his son, did it again later in the century, they were acting to expand their area of not just political control, but economic control as well.⁶⁵ But despite this conflict over economic matters, it does not lead to intra-familial killing. And conflict that went so far as to push the Volodimerovichi into killing one another, something that is incredibly rare as demonstrated here, would probably also have an incredibly negative effect on the economy. So, while the Volodimerovich do have conflict over economics, it too provides a rationale for suggesting that peaceful relations within the family are better, for business, than deadly relations.

The final, potential, rationale for a dearth of Volodimerovichi death in conflict is familial relations. This category is especially important within the context of the larger discussions in the

⁶⁵ PVL, s.a. 1021, 1067.

book about the importance of kinship relations in medieval eastern Europe.⁶⁶ Earlier in this chapter it was noted that fratricide is never mentioned in the PVL. While that is true, brothers and the issues between them both good and bad are mentioned, and quite a lot. As established earlier, kinship was the basis for relationships in medieval Europe and thus it should not be surprising that such an important tie as brothers gets included a great deal in discussions of intra-Volodimerovichi relations.⁶⁷ Brothers are called upon in the PVL to support one another, admonished against fighting one another, and just noted in passing as having relations with one another. Brothers and their relationships with one another are another frame that we can then use to help understand the lack of violence between Volodimerovichi.

To begin with the positive interactions between brothers; one of the most well known interactions between Volodimerovichi brothers begins with the death of Iaroslav Volodimerich and the succession of his son Iziaslav.⁶⁸ In what has been called his testament to his sons,⁶⁹ Iaroslav calls upon his sons explicitly as “brothers by one father and mother.”⁷⁰ This means something very particular for someone who had many half-siblings himself, with whom he did not necessarily get along, and who existed in a medieval world where half-siblings were often

⁶⁶ Though outside of medieval eastern Europe, William Miller’s analysis of feud in Iceland, specifically through an examination of the saga literature, demonstrates that there are no instances of fratricide (or patricide or matricide) in the sagas. Such close kin killings seems to have been inconceivable. William Ian Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking: Feud, Law, and Society in Saga Iceland* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 160.

⁶⁷ Though outside the bounds of our Rus’- and PVL-specific conversation, Peter Sawyer, in a discussion of conflict in Scandinavia notes that “the killing of a close kinsman cannot be compounded; it is ‘bootless,’ and the normal result in modern times has been the exile of the offender.” We have no such evidence from Rus’, but it is worth considering as a marker of familial stigma in this situation. Peter Sawyer, “The Bloodfeud in Fact and Fiction” in *Tradition og historieskrivning: Kilderne til Nordens aeldste historie Acta Jutlandica LXIII:2* (Humanistik Serie 61) (1987), 31.

⁶⁸ PVL, s.a. 1054.

⁶⁹ This document has been examined at length by Martin Dimnik in “The ‘Testament’ of Iaroslav ‘the Wise’: a Re-examination” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 29:4 (1987), pp. 369-86.

⁷⁰ PVL, s.a. 1054.

some of the closest rivals for power.⁷¹ Iaroslav seems to have been attempting to very explicitly tell them that they were the closest kin one could be and that they needed to act in that fashion.⁷² Further this seems to be confirmed when he mentions this particular kin relationship again in the same testament calling upon them to remain at peace, “brother heeding brother.”⁷³ Iaroslav, ostensibly on his deathbed, utilized kinship terminology and specifically called upon his sons as brothers to remain at peace and not engage in conflict with one another.⁷⁴ This is a powerful incentive to avoid intra-familial conflict to be sure.

Though Iaroslav exhorted his sons to heed one another, that did not work out well, and Iziaslav Iaroslavich, after being expelled from Rus’ twice (the latter time by his brothers Sviatoslav and Vsevolod), was killed fighting alongside his brother Vsevolod against other members of the Volodimerovichi clan in 1078.⁷⁵ However, despite the repeated violations of Iaroslav’s dying wish, and despite Iziaslav’s death in battle against another Volodimerovich-led army, the PVL takes pains to point out that he was not, in fact, killed by his kin. The PVL says quite clearly that, “He perished not by a brother’s hand, but he laid down his life for his

⁷¹ For Iaroslav’s life himself the easiest example is his persistent conflict, and division of Rus’, with his half-brother Mstislav. In medieval Europe more broadly the most well known example is the division of territory and subsequent conflict between Louis the Pious’s sons. The crux of that conflict was Louis’s second marriage and subsequent redistribution of territory amongst his sons after the birth of Charles the Bald to his second wife.

⁷² Oleskiy Tolochko follows this same line of reasoning in his article discussing feud in Rus’. O. Tolochko, “‘All the Happy Families...’ The Rurikids in the Eleventh Century” in *The Neighbours of Poland in the 11th Century*, ed. P. Urbanczyk (Warsaw: DiG, 2002), 162-163.

I think it is also worth pointing out that Iziaslav, Iaroslav’s heir, was not always in that position. Iziaslav was the second son, but became heir after Volodimer Iaroslavich’s untimely death shortly before his father. Such an upsetting of an understood inheritance relationship most likely had a major consequence on the understanding of the political situation amongst the Iaroslavichi.

⁷³ PVL, s.a. 1054. Cross translation. This phrase, “brother heeding brother,” may also lend credence to the interpretation of Donald Ostrowski in regard to the horizontal political structure of Rus’. Ostrowski, “Systems of Succession.”

⁷⁴ This call to “fraternal harmony” is not a unique observation. Simon Franklin has referred to it as the “paramount dynastic (i.e. political) virtue.” Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus, 750-1200* (New York: Longman, 1996), 249.

⁷⁵ PVL, s.a. 1078.

brother.”⁷⁶ Thus, despite Iziaslav’s death in conflict with another group of Volodimerovichi what mattered to the chronicler was that he had helped his brother, literally his brother (Vsevolod) rather than a generic family member, and especially that he had not died at the hands of a brother.⁷⁷ The importance of this point is emphasized by the death of one of Iziaslav’s sons, Iaropolk, who was killed in 1086 and who, the PVL records, prayed for “death by an unknown hand.”⁷⁸ As with his father Iziaslav, Iaropolk did not die at the hands of his brother (either literally or by a kinsman’s hands). To the chronicler, the lack of brother killing brother was a familial imperative that had to be respected and was thus reinforced in the chronicle narrative.

Not all of that reinforcement was positive, one last mention of brothers must be mentioned in this familial frame, and that is the rhetorical stick that the PVL wields to demonstrate what happens if brother does kill brother. In 1097 after the blinding of Vasil’ko Rostislavich, Volodimer Monomakh calls on the Sviatoslavichi and tells them, “If we do not avenge this deed, a greater crime will rise against us. Brother will begin to kill brother, so that the land of Rus’ will perish, and our foes the Polovcians [Polovtsy] will come and take it.”⁷⁹ This very specific threat recorded in the PVL is not one of hellfire burning for fratricide, or heavenly hosts punishing sin, but a very practical, relatable, threat to the Russian rulers. If Volodimerovichi kill each other, then the kingdom will fall apart and the Polovtsy will take it. This seems a fitting

⁷⁶ PVL, s.a. 1078. The importance of this statement and the analysis here is perhaps best expressed by quoting Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard’s *Emergence of Rus’* on the same event where he says, “Indeed, despite the chronicle-fed impression of continual crisis, Iziaslav was the first and only reigning prince of Kiev to be killed in battle against his kin.” 261. While I agree with the incorrect impression of continual crisis, I do not think the chronicle, or at least the PVL is to blame for that. Nor despite the literal accuracy of the second half of the statement, is it enough to note that he died in battle against his kin, when the PVL takes such pains to point out that he did not die at their hand.

⁷⁷ Tolochko notes, after this time, the creation of a fictive kinship bond among the Volodimerovichi where all are seen as brothers, though the clan has fractured into families by that time. Tolochko, “‘All the Happy Families...’” 166.

⁷⁸ PVL, s.a. 1086.

⁷⁹ PVL, s.a. 1097. Cross translation

threat to incentivize the Volodimerovichi to honor their kin and not kill one another. And thus it seems to be a very good explanation why there is minimal Volodimerovichi death in this period in conflict.

It is clear from the numbers presented here that there is a lack of Volodimerovichi death in violent conflict, especially with other Volodimerovichi. In this section, I have examined five frames for understanding why conflict might have been structured in this way, as to minimize conflict and death. While all may have played some role, and thus we might suggest that ‘All of the Above’ is the correct answer, I would suggest rather that death in conflict was minimized largely due to familial and political reasons. The Volodimerovichi actively did not want to kill one another (themselves) and they could achieve their political aims without doing so. How they were able to engage in conflicts with one another, some of which ended violently, but not kill each other, is the subject of the next section.

Conflict Resolution Strategies

The Volodimerovichi were, of course, not immune to conflict, and even understood that their people and members of their clan would die. After a conflict, recorded under the year 1096, in which one of the Volodimerovichi dies, Mstislav Volodimerich tells Oleg Sviatoslavich that, “It is no wonder [that Iziaslav Volodimerich died], both emperors and men are killed in battle.”⁸⁰ The laconic way in which the PVL records the quotation by Mstislav about his brother’s death seems to indicate the matter of fact attitude of the Volodimerovichi to death. Yet, despite that, they still endeavored not to kill one another. This section deals with two particular ways in which the Volodimerovichi attempted to avoid killing other Volodimerovichi, while still engaging in

⁸⁰ PVL, s.a. 1096.

conflict with one another. Such tactics are an important way to understand how the Volodimerovichi viewed conflict and attempted to limit its scope so as not to endanger (more) life.⁸¹

The first tactic that they used was a system of cut-outs, non-Volodimerovichi who would kill Volodimerovichi, potentially at the behest of other Volodimerovichi. In this way, Volodimerovichi could eliminate their rivals within the family, without themselves killing any other member of their clan.⁸² There is no direct evidence of this process in the PVL, but of the twelve Volodimerovichi deaths in this period in the PVL, three, one-quarter of them could possibly be instances of such a cut-out being used to kill a Volodimerovichi (See Table 8). This number could be doubled with the inclusion of the three deaths in 1015, which could easily be attributed to Sviatopolk Iaropolchich. It is only the exclusion of him as a member of the Volodimerovichi which keeps the number at three, rather than six. They are mentioned here, however, as important indicators of what might be a trend of behavior among the larger clan. It is also important to note one other factor, which is the issue of blame. Blame in these instances is rarely conveyed past the cut-out, or the death of a Volodimerovichi in battle. There is one counter example which points out the oddity of this. In the 1096 conflict noted above, Iziaslav Volodimerich dies in battle while making war against Oleg Sviatoslavich.⁸³ Though there is no specific information, Iziaslav “was killed,” his brother Mstislav Volodimerich refers specifically

⁸¹ This is not limited to the Volodimerovichi in medieval Europe, of course. Gerd Althoff, working from a much more detailed and rich source base writes about the use of conflict resolution measures, before, during and after conflicts. Gerd Althoff, “Satisfaction: Peculiarities of the Amicable Settlement of Conflicts in the Middle Ages” in *Ordering Medieval Society: Perspectives on Intellectual and Practical Modes of Shaping Social Relations* ed. Bernhard Jussen, trans. Pamela Selwyn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 270-271.

⁸² I am certainly not the first to suggest this as an idea. Simon Franklin has suggested the Vsevolod Iaroslavich arranged the deaths of several of his Volodimerovichi opponents, for instance. Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus'*, 262-263.

⁸³ PVL, s.a. 1096.

to Oleg Sviatoslavich as his killer saying, “you have killed my brother.”⁸⁴ The sentence, which goes on to note that death happens to “both emperors and men” does not seem to blame Oleg unduly, but it does clearly state that he was responsible for the death. This is the lone instance, that I know of, in which such blame exists.⁸⁵ And it is utterly unsupported by the PVL’s depiction of Iziaslav Volodimerich’s death. This absence of blame in the PVL, I see as a way for the chronicler, or the Volodimerovichi themselves, to avoid engaging themselves further in intra-clan conflict. This lack of blame (or lack of transferable blame) represents a, perhaps, understated third tactic to the two more active tactics presented here.

Name	death date	cause of death	PVL text
Rostislav Volodimerich	1066	killed	Умьре же мѣсяца февраля въ 3 днь
Roman Sviatoslavich	1079	killed	И възврати ся Романъ въспять, и бывъшю ему, убиша и Половци
Iaropolk Iziaslavich	1086	killed	Лежащю на санкахъ а онъ съ коня саблюю прободе я, мѣсяца ноямбрия въ 22.

Table 8: Volodimerovichi deaths suspected of happening at hands of non-Volodimerovichi cut-outs in the period 1015-1110 from the PVL

Though there are only three total instances of the use of cutouts, I will discuss two of them to demonstrate the idea. The first of those is from 1086 when Iaropolk Iziaslavich is killed

⁸⁴ PVL, s.a. 1096.

⁸⁵ It is possible that there is another instance of this beyond Iziaslav Volodimerich’s death. In the Tale of the Blinding of Vasil’ko, recorded in the PVL under the year 1097, David Igorich incites Sviatopolk with a leading statement about the killer of Sviatopolk’s brother, and then follows it with, “Now he plots against me and against you...”. PVL, s.a. 1097 Cross translation. This “he” is a reference to Volodimer Monomakh and thus could be seen as a direct indictment of one Volodimerovichi in the death of another. However, this same example also includes an instance of cutouts as well when it is not David himself to blame for this agitation, but “Satan now incited certain men to report to David... [and] David gave credence to their false words”. Though David is later seen as an inciter, he is let off the hook by the chronicler at the very beginning.

by a non-Volodimerovichi man named Neradets.⁸⁶ While it may be true that there were a lot of people looking to kill, or at least remove, Iaropolk Iziaslavich at this time it was Neradets who is clearly named as Iaropolk's killer by the PVL, "Neradets killed him with his sword."⁸⁷ Neradets is described as "accursed" and "incited by the devil and evil men" but those men are not explicitly named. After killing Iaropolk Iziaslavich, Neradets fled directly to Riurik Rostislavich in Przemyśl where he, presumably stayed. I use "presumably" because despite Neradets being "thrice accursed" and fleeing directly to one of the Volodimerovichi, there is no follow up recorded in the PVL. The PVL continues the 1086 entry with the arrival of Iaropolk's body in Kiev, his encomium and burial.⁸⁸ Riurik Rostislavich is never censured or punished in any way for this, and in fact Riurik is not mentioned again for years. Later, Vasil'ko Rostislavich, Riurik's brother, is implicated in the killing by another member of the clan, David Igorich, but even in that context the PVL reports it as a false rumor.⁸⁹ The clear murder of one of the members of the Volodimerovichi could be tied, using only the evidence presented in the PVL, to another member of the clan, but the PVL explicitly refuses to do so. This seems as if it is a clear method of avoiding having Volodimerovichi kill Volodimerovichi, even if only in the pages of the chronicle.

The second example is, perhaps slightly less clear cut, but is another example of a Volodimerovichi being killed by a non-Volodimerovichi, with a rival Volodimerovichi in the background. In 1079, Roman Sviatoslavich was killed by his erstwhile allies, the Polovtsy.⁹⁰ While this may be read with a more traditional eye as an example of Polovtsian perfidy, it seems

⁸⁶ PVL, s.a. 1086.

⁸⁷ PVL, s.a. 1086.

⁸⁸ PVL, s.a. 1086.

⁸⁹ PVL, s.a. 1097. After Sviatopolk Iziaslavich agrees to pursue the rumor, the PVL says that David, "thus deceived Sviatopolk."

⁹⁰ PVL, s.a. 1079.

much more likely that another Volodimerovichi was behind the killing. The 1079 entry in the PVL is relatively short, and contains all of the vital information. First, Roman Sviatoslavich was allied with the Polovtsy and they began to attack Vsevolod Iaroslavich's territory. Second, Vsevolod did not advance against them, but instead made peace with the Polovtsy (Roman Sviatoslavich is not mentioned). Finally, third, the Polovtsy returned home in company with Roman Sviatoslavich whom they killed along the way.⁹¹ The implication is that Vsevolod Iaroslavich was behind this, and perhaps that it was even a condition of the treaty between him and the Polovtsy.⁹² The PVL adds one more conspirator to this story a few years later when Oleg Sviatoslavich, brother to the slain Roman, returns from exile in Byzantium and kills some Khazars whom he holds responsible for plotting to kill his brother.⁹³ If the Khazars were responsible it does undermine the idea that this was a Volodimerovichi contract killing. However, there is also the possibility, suggested by Martin Dimnik, that the Khazars were in alliance with Vsevolod.⁹⁴ In that case, such a revenge killing by Oleg Sviatoslavich might simply reinforce the tactic discussed here, in that Oleg could not kill Vsevolod Iaroslavich, another Volodimerovichi, but he could kill his non-Volodimerovichi allies.

The use of non-Volodimerovichi to kill Volodimerovichi seems, from these two examples, like a plausible explanation for the lack of Volodimerovichi killing other Volodimerovichi.⁹⁵ It also offers a way to avoid the expansion of killing via feud, as discussed in

⁹¹ PVL, s.a. 1079.

⁹² For two examples of people who believe Vsevolod was culpable here see, Dimnik, *The Dynasty of Chernigov*, 155-156; Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus'*, 262-263.

⁹³ PVL, s.a. 1083.

⁹⁴ Dimnik, *The Dynasty of Chernigov*, 156.

⁹⁵ Whether or not this rhetorical device of the chronicler reflected the reality of the families involved is, of course, unknown and unknowable.

chapter five. Such a tactic should probably not be called a conflict resolution strategy, but it is, nevertheless, a strategy to avoid escalating the conflict.

The second tactic that the Volodimerovichi use to de-escalate conflict, and thus avoid killing one another is the strategic use of flight.⁹⁶ Of the seventy-eight conflicts in this period in the PVL, thirty-five of them contain one party fleeing from the conflict (see Table 9). In all of the cases where it is Volodimerovichi fleeing from other Volodimerovichi, their flight ends the conflict entirely. There are only three of these flights where the flight is not honored and the conflict continues post-flight.⁹⁷ Two of those involve the Polovtsy and the third is in 1015 and is related to Sviatopolk's seizure of the throne of Kiev. Those instances have been examined above in regard to the killing of non-Volodimerovichi by Volodimerovichi. Thus, from the remaining thirty-two examples, it is clear that flight by the Volodimerovichi serves to de-escalate, or even resolve the conflict, in the favor of the party that does not flee. The party that has not fled has accomplished their political goal, and there is no need to go to the extent of killing their opponent, and family member, to get what they want. A few short instances of this will be examined below to make the point, though all of the examples are available in table 9.

In 1021, Briacheslav Iziaslavich seized Novgorod from Iaroslav Volodimerich.⁹⁸ The entry is relatively short, but contains Briacheslav's seizure of the Novgorodians and his return with them to his home city of Polotsk; Iaroslav's march against him near there; and Briacheslav's defeat by Iaroslav; followed at the very end by "Briacheslav fled to Polotsk."⁹⁹ That is the end of the entry and the end of the conflict. Briacheslav's flight ended the conflict,

⁹⁶ Simon Franklin notes the importance of flight as well. He suggests that Iaroslav violates this principle, or rather the conflict turns in a different direction with Mstislav in 1023/1024. Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus'*, 187.

⁹⁷ Though I have not done so, one could, certainly extend this survey into Russian sources after the PVL, as the topos of "flight" continues there.

⁹⁸ PVL, s.a. 1021.

⁹⁹ PVL, s.a. 1021. "а Брячиславъ бѣжа къ Полотъску."

and no more needed to be said about it, from the point of view of the PVL. Even when there is no military conflict between two parties, flight is the end of the conflict. For instance, in 1077, Boris Viacheslavich took advantage of Vsevolod Iaroslavich's absence from Chernigov and seized the city for himself.¹⁰⁰ However, after only eight days, Boris thought better of the idea and "fled to Tmutorokan".¹⁰¹ There is no punishment for Boris's little indiscretion, as his flight seems to have signalled the end of this particular conflict. Finally, even when the flight is to locations outside of Rus' it seems to have been honored. In 1085, Iaropolk Iziaslavich, a problematic character who has been mentioned here before, engaged in conflict with Volodimer Monomakh and was defeated by him.¹⁰² Upon his defeat by Volodimer, Iaropolk Iziaslavich "fled to the Liakhs [Poles]."¹⁰³ In this particular instance, Iaropolk's flight ended the hostilities involved in the conflict, which is to say that there was no more fighting, but the entry for that year continues with the resolution of the conflict. Volodimer seized Lutsk, one of Iaropolk's cities, which surrendered, as well as Iaropolk's family and took the latter back to Kiev. Despite not being the absolute end of the interaction between the two parties, Iaropolk's flight still signalled the end of actual hostilities between the two sides. The entry for the next year begins with Iaropolk's return and immediate peace with Volodimer.¹⁰⁴

Through the three examples discussed here, and the many more in Table 9, it becomes clear that the PVL was attempting to use the concept of 'flight' as a formulaic way of ending conflict. In the case of intra-Volodimerovichi conflict this served as a way to mitigate further loss of life and to create the preconditions for a settlement. The one who fled, lost. And thus the

¹⁰⁰ PVL, s.a. 1077.

¹⁰¹ PVL, s.a. 1077. "и бѣжа Тьмutorоканю"

¹⁰² PVL, s.a. 1085.

¹⁰³ PVL, s.a. 1085. "бѣжа въ Ляхы"

¹⁰⁴ PVL, s.a. 1086.

one who did not was the victor and needed to do nothing more to complete their victory. Flight, and especially perhaps this formulaic language, can then be seen as a successful

Volodimerovichi conflict resolution strategy.

Year	Belligerent 1	Belligerent 2	PVL Text
1015	Sviatopolk Iaropolchich	Sviatoslav Volodimerich	Святопѣлкѣ же оканьнии зѣлыи уби Святослава, пославъ ко горѣ Угрьстѣи, бѣжащю ему въ Угры
1016	Iaroslav Volodimerich	Sviatopolk Iaropolchich	Святопѣлкѣ же бѣжа въ Ляхы
1018	Boleslaw I Chrobry	Iaroslav Volodimerich	Ярославъ же убѣжа съ четырьми мужи
1018	Sviatopolk Iaropolchich	Boleslaw I Chrobry	Болеславъ же побѣже ис Кыева,
1018	Iaroslav Volodimerich	Sviatopolk Iaropolchich	бѣжа Святопѣлкѣ въ Печенѣгы.
1019	Iaroslav Volodimerich	Sviatopolk Iaropolchich	а Святопѣлкѣ бѣжа
1021	Iaroslav Volodimerich	Briacheslav Iziaslavich	а Брячиславъ бѣжа къ Полотьску.
1024	Mstislav Volodimerich	Iaroslav Volodimerich	Видѣвъ же Ярославъ, яко побѣжаемъ есть, побѣже съ Якуньмъ, князьмъ Варяжьскимъ,
1064	Rostislav Volodimerich	?	Бѣжа Ростиславъ Тмутороканю, сынъ Володимиръ, вѣнукъ Ярославль, и съ нимъ бѣжа Порѣи и Вышата, сынъ Остромиръ, воеводы Новѣгородьского
1067	Iziaslav, Sviatoslav and Vsevolod Iaroslavich	Vseslav Briacheslavich	Вьсеславъ бѣжа
1068	Iziaslav, Sviatoslav and Vsevolod Iaroslavich	Polovtsy	и побѣгоша Русьстии князи
1068	Kievans	Iziaslav Iaroslavich	Изяславъ же бѣжа въ

			Ляхы.
1069	Boleslaw II and Iziaslav Iaroslavich	Vseslav Briacheslavich	Vseslav бѣжа из Бѣлагограда Полотъску
1073	Sviatoslav and Vsevolod Iaroslavich	Iziaslav Iaroslavich	изиде Изяславъ ис Кыева and Изяславъ же иде въ Ляхы
1077	Boris Viacheslavich	Vsevolod Iaroslavich (in absentia)	и бѣжа Тѣмutorоканю
1078	Oleg Sviatoslavich	Vsevolod Iaroslavich	Бежа Ольгъ, сынъ Святославль, Тѣмutorоканю
1078	Iziaslav and Vsevolod Iaroslavich	Chernigovans	людѣмъ въбѣгшемъ въ дѣнѣшнии градъ.
1078	Iziaslav and Vsevolod Iaroslavich	Oleg Sviatoslavich and Boris Viacheslavich	побѣже Ольгъ въ малѣ дружинѣ
1081	David Igorich and Volodar Rostislavich	Ratibor?	Бѣжа Игоревичъ Давыдъ съ Володарьмъ Ростиславичьмъ

1084	Volodar and Vasil'ko Rostislavich	Iaropolk Iziaslavich	Въ сеже время выбѣгоста Ростиславича дѣва отъ Яропѣлка, и пришьдѣша прогнѣна Яропѣлка
1084	Volodimer Monomakh	Volodar and Vasil'ko Rostislavich	и выгнѣна Ростиславича
1085	Vladimir Monomakh	Iaropolk Iziaslavich	Яропѣлкѣ же, оставивъ матеръ свою и дружину свою въ Лучьскѣ, а самъ бѣжа въ Ляхы.
1093	Polovtsy	Sviatopolk Iziaslavich; Volodimer Monomakh, Rostislav Vsevolodich	Святопѣлкѣ же стояше крѣпкѣ, и побѣгоша людие, не тѣрпяще ратьныхъ противления и послеже побѣже Святопѣлкѣ. Volodime r and Rostislav - и побѣже и Володимиръ съ Ростиславьмъ и вои

			его
1096	Sviatopolk Iziaslavich and Volodimer Monomakh	Oleg Sviatoslavich	и выбѣже Ольгъ ис Чърнигова,
1096	Oleg Sviatoslavich	Iziaslav Volodimerich	Iziaslav's followers fled after his death - прочии же вои побѣгоша
1096	Mstislav Volodimerich	Oleg Sviatoslavich	Iaroslav Sviatoslavich fled when he realized Mstislav was getting close - бѣжа тоѣ ноци; Oleg expected Mstislav to flee, but he didn't - Ольгъ же установи ся на Клязьмѣ, мьня, яко, боя ся его Мьстиславъ побѣгнетъ; Oleg when the battle went poorly - и убоавъ ся побѣже Ольгъ; Mstislav says to Oleg to stop fleeing - "Не бѣгаи никаможе"
1098	Vladimir Monomakh, David and Oleg Sviatoslavich	Sviatopolk Iziaslavich	Святопѣлкъ же хотя побѣгнути ис Кіева, и не даша ему Кыяне побѣгнути
1099	Sviatopolk Iziaslavich	David Igorich	и изиде Давыдъ из града, и прииде въ Чървень, а Святопѣлкъ вѣниде въ градъ въ великую; later - а Давыдъ бѣжа въ Ляхы.
1099	Sviatopolk Iziaslavich	Volodar and Vasil'ko Rostislavich	и видѣ Святопѣлкъ, яко люта брань, побѣже, и прибѣже Володимирю.
1099	David Igorich and Boniak	Hungarian reinforcements with Iaroslav Sviatopolchich	Ярославъ же бѣже на Ляхы
1099	Sviatopolk Iziaslavich	David Igorich	Давыдъ побѣже въ

	and Sviatosha Davidich		Половѣцѣ
1099	David Igorich and Boniak	Sviatosha Davidich	И изиде Святоша из града; посадникъ же Василь выбѣже
1102	Iaroslav Iaropolchich	Iaroslav Sviatopolchich	Выбѣже Ярославъ Яропѣлчичъ ис Кыева
1103	Sviatopolk Iziaslavich, Volodimer Monomakh, David Sviatoslavich, David Vseslavich, Mstislav Vsevolodich, Viacheslav Iaropolchich and Iaropolk Volodimerich	Polovtsy	Половѣци же, видѣвъше устрѣмление Русьское на ся, не достигвъше побѣгоша предѣ Русьскими { пѣлки / кнѣзѣи }.
1107	Sviatopolk Iziaslavich, Volodimer Monomakh, Oleg Sviatoslavich, Mstislav Vsevolodich, Sviatoslav, Viacheslav and Iaropolk Volodimerich	Polovtsy	Половѣци же ужасъша ся, отъ страха не възмогаша ни стяга поставити, нѣ побѣгоша, хватаючи конѣи, а друзѣи пѣши побѣгоша.

Table 9: Flights from conflict in the period 1015-1110 from the PVL

Combining the two tactics discussed here of utilizing non-Volodimerovichi actors to kill fellow Volodimerovichi clan members, and flight as a means of ending conflict, we can see that the Volodimerovichi themselves, or the compiler of the PVL at the very least, constructed successful means for limiting conflict within the clan. In this way the clan could conflict with one another for specific purposes, often for precedence as discussed in chapter seven, without engendering larger, more deadly conflicts that would shatter the unity of the Volodimerovichi. It is important to understand these conflict resolution strategies as affirmative ones to help them structure their world and their conflicts in particular. In this way it can be shown that apart from the constant ‘internecine warfare’ depicted in many accounts of medieval Rus’, there were in fact

strategies being utilized to minimize and manage conflict so that it served a particular purpose and did not result in all-out civil war.

Conclusion

The picture presented here, a detailed analysis of the conflicts in the PVL from 1015-1110, demonstrates two particularly interesting and useful ideas. The first is that the Volodimerovichi do not often die in conflict. In this sample set, that seems to be rather rare, which leads to other conclusions such as the limited scope and goals of military conflict in medieval eastern Europe, Rus' in this particular example. Though these conflicts may include many members of a kinship web, representing multiple clans, the actual death toll in the specific military engagements is quite small and is often restricted to the non-royal combatants. Which leads to the second idea coming out of this data which is that Volodimerovichi do not kill Volodimerovichi. While this may happen for a variety of reasons it seems most likely that they do not kill one another because they are family, and because they are able to accomplish their political goals without doing so. This seems evident from the variety of examples given here where conflicts are decided, one party wins and another loses, without loss of Volodimerovichi life. This is then ensured through the two particular tactics of conflict de-escalation and/or resolution. Utilizing non-Volodimerovichi actors to kill fellow Volodimerovichi is a way that they can keep the idea of kin not killing kin intact, while still reaching for a goal attainable only through the death of a family member. It must be kept in mind however, that this too is rare, and that of the Volodimerovichi who die in this period, this represents a very small number. The second, more direct means of conflict de-escalation/resolution through flight is much more efficacious. The only times it does not work to end a conflict is when it is non-Volodimerovichi who are fleeing. As demonstrated here, the PVL is a window into clan conflict and strategy in medieval eastern Europe. The ideas

presented in this chapter reinforce the analyses of conflict in chapters five and seven to present the larger idea that kin in medieval eastern Europe really did engage in conflict, with all that entails, not war.