

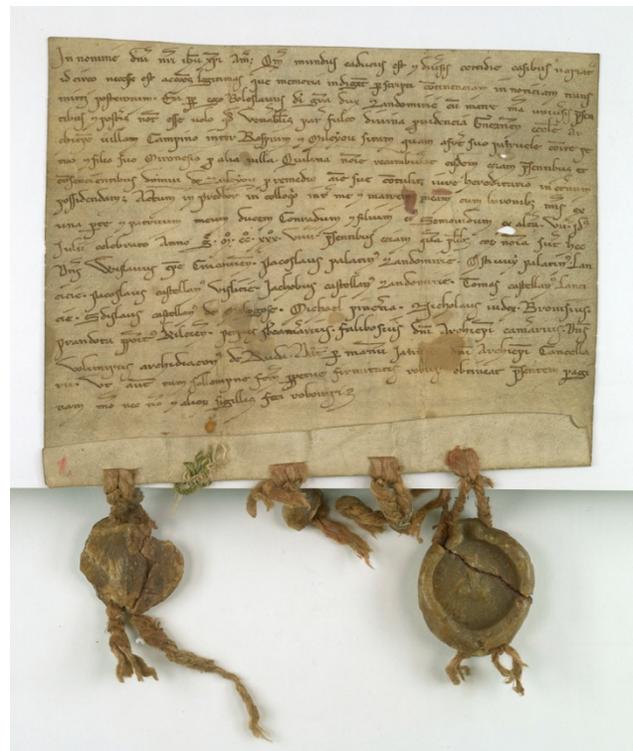
The Religious Patronage of Duchess Agafia Sviatoslavna of Mazovia (d. after 1247): Confessional Identity and the Expansion of Latin Christendom on the Border Between Rus' and Poland in the Thirteenth Century

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While theological and liturgical differences between eastern and western forms of Christianity were emerging in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, the Orthodox Riurikid dynasty which ruled early Rus' (comprising present-day Belarus', Russia, and Ukraine) nonetheless concluded the majority of its marriage alliances with Latin Christian rulers. Though raised in an Orthodox Christian environment, Rus' princesses became queens consort and wives of high-ranking nobles ruling over Latin Christian subjects. The experiences of these brides can therefore serve as a litmus test for the state of Orthodox-Catholic relations during a critical period of their development.

The talk will present initial findings of the research project, "Gendering the Schism: Women's Experiences of Religious Differences in the Orthodox-Latin Christian Marriages of Early Rus', ca. 1000–1250," which seeks to investigate this issue. Within the framework of this project, the talk will focus on analyzing the case-study of one such Rus' princess: Agafia Sviatoslavna (d. after 1247), who became the wife of Duke Konrad I of Mazovia (d. 1247) around 1207–1210. In particular, it will examine Agafia Sviatoslavna's relatively well-documented patronage of ecclesiastical institutions, which coincided with a more confrontational dynamic that had begun to emerge in the mid thirteenth century between Byzantine Orthodoxy and Latin Christianity.

Far more than other Rus' princesses who became consorts of Latin Christian rulers during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, Agafia Sviatoslavna seemed to have embraced the religious culture of her husband. She supported the militant expansion of Latin Christendom into Eastern Europe through donations to various crusading orders and also facilitated negotiations for church union



Agafia Charter of 1239

with the Orthodox hierarchy in Rus' undertaken in 1245 by the Franciscan Friar Giovanni di Piano Carpini on behalf of Pope Innocent IV. In addition, two rich surviving visual sources testify to Agafia's patronage: a golden chalice with matching paten given to Płock Cathedral depicting her as a donor together with her husband and children, and an embroidered chasuble (known erroneously as the "Chasuble of Saint Hedwig / Jadwiga") showing her as donor with her son Siemowit. These material objects commissioned by Agafia and her family serve as additional valuable evidence of her religious identity by demonstrating her active support of Latin Christian ecclesiastical institutions.

At the same time, Agafia's assimilation into the religious culture of her husband was counterbalanced by the very close ties established during her reign between the court of Płock in Mazovia and allied Rus' princes. Agafia not only hosted visits from Orthodox Rus' princes, her cousins, but also married several of her children to Rus' rulers during her widowhood. In addition to maintaining such ongoing contact with her Orthodox homeland throughout her life, her activities also ensured that ties between Polish and Rus' courts were continued in the next generation.

The illustrative example of Agafia Sviatoslavna's patronage will contribute to a wider inquiry into the roles of Rus' princesses as rulers, Christian patrons, and facilitators of cultural exchange between Orthodoxy and Latin Christianity during a transitional time of ecclesiastical relations, marked by the entry of crusading orders into Eastern Europe and by the beginning of efforts by Mendicant Orders to convert the Rus'.

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