

Byzantium, Medieval Russia and the So-called Family of Kings. From George Ostrogorsky to Franz Dölger's Construct and its Critics*

On the origins of Dölger's construct

It was in 1940, during World War II, that the Byzantinist George Ostrogorsky (1902-1976)¹ first published his famous handbook »Die Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates«, which was, especially in its revised editions, to serve historians as *the* standard reference book for Byzantine history for the next 50 years or more². Although outdated in some respects, it nevertheless remains an outstanding handbook³.

Turning to our topic we read the following lines in the handbook's section I.1 about »The Christianised Imperium Romanum«:

»As heir of the Roman *imperium* Byzantium aspired to be the sole Empire and claimed control of all lands which had originally belonged to the Roman *orbis* and now formed part of the Christian world (*oikoumenē*). Hard reality thrust this claim further and further into the background, but the states which grew up within the Christian oecumenical jurisdiction on former Roman territory side by side with the Byzantine Empire were not regarded as being its equals. A complicated hierarchy of states developed and at its apex was the ruler of Byzantium as Roman Emperor and head of Christendom«⁴.

From the handbook's second edition onwards, in the corresponding footnote, Ostrogorsky refers not only to his own article, »Die byzantinische Staatenhierarchie« (published in Prague in 1936)⁵, but also to the article »Die Familie der

Könige im Mittelalter« published by his German colleague Franz Dölger (1891-1968) in 1940⁶ and thus in the very same year that Ostrogorsky's handbook appeared. There is no reason to doubt that Ostrogorsky would also have liked already to mention Dölger's article together with his own in the first edition, but obviously this was nearly as impossible then as it would be nowadays. As we shall see, it is important to bear in mind the sequence of both articles as well as their correlation in substance.

Turning to the key phrase »family of kings« of the present paper, it should be noted that it refers not only to Dölger's article from 1940 (and indirectly to three other articles by him of thematically similar or related content, a further article by his former student Otto Treitinger, who went missing in World War II, and an influential article by the art historian André Grabar)⁷, but also to an article by Wolfram Brandes, published in 2013, which heavily criticized Dölger's construct⁸. Although I will go into more detail later on the (as it were) middle Byzantine section of Brandes' article, I may already here permit myself briefly to reflect on the article's final part, in which Brandes tries to prove that Dölger was so impressed by Hitler's concept of political rule in Southeastern Europe (and world dominion) that it was this which motivated him to develop his construct. In other words, according to Brandes' assumptions, Hitler's conception of political dominance formed the ideological background of Dölger's article⁹.

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1 See Ferluga, Ostrogorsky. – Hunger, Anzeiger. – Ferjančić, Ostrogorski. – Radić, Ostrogorski. – Maksimović, Ostrogorsky. – Korczak, Ostrogorski. – Karpov, Ostrogorskij.

2 Ostrogorsky, Geschichte. – Ostrogorsky, History.

3 See Cameron, Byzantine 40: »Many shorter histories of Byzantium have been published in recent years, but none has so far achieved the central position held by that of Ostrogorsky, nor do the current spate of handbooks and companions generally offer a comprehensive alternative analysis«.

4 Ostrogorsky, History 26. Cf. Ostrogorsky, Geschichte [1940] 17 (with n. 1); Geschichte (2nd and 3rd Edition) 23 with n. 1.

5 Ostrogorsky, Staatenhierarchie. – Ostrogorsky, Sistem (Serbian translation). – See also below n. 13.

6 Dölger, Familie. – On Dölger (not to be confused with the scholar Franz-Joseph Dölger) see Hose, Dölger. – Brandes, Familie 262-263. 275-279. – Müller, Athos im Nationalsozialismus 345-346. 368 and passim. – Prostko-Prostyński, Dölger. – Hausmann, Geisteswissenschaften 732. 740 f.

7 Dölger, Familie der Fürsten. – Dölger, Bulgarenherrscher (thematically related). – Dölger, Brüderlichkeit. – Treitinger, Staatsgedanke. – Grabar, Family.

8 Brandes, Familie.

9 See *ibidem* 261. 275. 277-279, particularly 278: »1939/1940 entwarf Dölger, so möchte man vermuten, ein Konzept für eine deutsche Suprematie auf dem Balkan – mit Adolf Hitler als »Vater«, befreundete Regime (Horthy in Ungarn, Antonescu in Rumänien usw.) als »Brüder« und dann die übrigen Nationen in untergeordneter Position (nicht zuletzt Griechenland, Serbien oder Albanien). [...] Da Franz Dölger in seinem Aufsatz über die »Familie der Könige« an keiner Stelle *expressis verbis* auf zeitgenössische Vorgänge oder auf die NS-Ideologie eingeht oder auch nur anspielt, macht der Text einen objektiven Eindruck«. On the Athos expedition which took place in 1941, cf. now with a view to Brandes' remarks the exhaustive, excellent article Müller, Athos im Nationalsozialismus, who summarizes Dölger's role (368) thus: »[...] der Expeditionsleiter selber »verfolgte« explizit wissenschaftliche Interessen. Allerdings hat er sich in seinen Publikationen nationalsozialistischen Intentionen aus wissenschaftlichen Gründen teilweise auf fatale Weise angenähert.«

Though at first glance this seems to be a convincing thesis¹⁰, one should proceed with caution and not accept it hastily, without any reservation. For, in my opinion, it is much more likely that Dölger's construct was notably influenced by Ostrogorsky's article from 1936 (see also below): The latter had apparently inspired Dölger's article, a fact, completely overlooked by Brandes, although he does once quote Ostrogorsky's article¹¹.

Hence, one could regard Dölger's article, as it were, as a response to Ostrogorsky's article all the more as it must have been conceived c. 1938 considering its publication in 1940¹².

From this point of view, and bearing in mind the fact that Ostrogorsky never expressed any serious criticism of Dölger's construct before or after 1945¹³, we may realize that things seem to be much more complicated. This is all the more true considering that Ostrogorsky, who was an Orthodox Christian born in Russia (Saint Petersburg), became in 1933, after the Nazis came to power, a victim of their discriminatory and racist legislation: At once the administration removed him from his university post on the basis of the so-called Aryan section (§ 3) of the »Statute for the Restoration of the Civil Service«¹⁴. Thus he was forced to leave Breslau (today's Wrocław), where he had taught as a *Privatdozent* since his habilitation there in 1928, for Prague and Belgrade¹⁵. Against this background, it seems appropriate, and even necessary, to revisit Dölger's construct and his argument for it, in this case with special regard to the inclusion of medieval Russia within it.

Dölger's construct

According to Dölger, the »family of kings« was an ideological construct (»Gedankenkomplex«), which proves that in the Middle Ages »not only the concept of an almost mystical relationship between all ruling sovereigns existed, but that this [the mystical relationship, G. P.] was also understood as a political ›institution‹, to which in certain circumstances [...] legal consequences were attached«¹⁶. Dölger emphasized »that the official designation of the degree of kinship to the Byzantine emperor« was not simply a »metaphor, but a *title* to be taken seriously, and [...] often assumed the role of a weighty *legal* title«¹⁷. Dölger therefore intended to explore »from what conceptual sphere this strange arrangement of a many-membered artificial royal family« had arisen »for Byzantium, which played a leading role in the construct's development and dissemination«¹⁸. Yet in trying to find a solution to this question he realized that »due to the lack of theoretical explanations of the composition of the *family of kings*« one was relied almost entirely on studying »the formulaic use of titles of kinship in letters written by the sovereigns«¹⁹ or a suitable Byzantine source, from which the necessary information about the use of titles of kinship in accordance with the rules of protocol for correspondence with foreign rulers could be ascertained.

10 See Rapp, *Brother-Making* 214: »[...] Brandes has convincingly argued that Dölger's concept of the Familie der Könige was ultimately inspired by his vision for a new, hierarchical world order with Germany at its center.«

11 Brandes, *Familie* 263 n. 14.

12 See Dölger, *Familie* 36 n. 2, where he refers to Ostrogorsky as follows: »Über die hierarchische Gliederung der Fürsten der Welt nach byzantinischer Auffassung hat (doch ohne Rücksicht auf die uns hier beschäftigende Frage der Verwandtschaft) gehandelt: G. Ostrogorsky, [Staatenhierarchie etc., G. P.], besonders S. 49ff«. – At any rate, Ostrogorsky as well, in the articles *Staatenhierarchie* 51 = *Sistem* 250f.; and *Emperor* 11f. (with n. 30 referring to Dölger's »Family« articles) = *Car* 275f., does briefly touch upon the spiritual kinship of foreign rulers with the Byzantine emperor. – Probably an additional source of inspiration for Dölger, written by a renowned medievalist and published 1938/39, was Holtzmann, *Weltherrschaft*.

13 See Ostrogorsky, *Emperor* 1. 6f. 10-12. – Ostrogorsky, *Car* 263. 269f. 373-275.

14 The statute was called »Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums« and was promulgated on 7 April 1933; cf. on its execution e. g. Gerstengarbe, *Entlassungswelle* 17-19. – Hausmann, *Geisteswissenschaften* 37. – Grüttnner/Kinas, *Vertreibung*, esp. at 134 on § 3: »[...] der ›Arierparagraph‹ regelte die Entlassung von Beamten wegen ›nichtarischer‹ Abstammung. Unabhängig von ihrer Religionszugehörigkeit waren sie in den Ruhestand zu versetzen. Gemäß Nr. 2 zu § 3 Abs. 1 der 1. DVO [Durchführungsverordnung, G. P.] vom 11. April 1933 galt schon als ›nichtarisch‹, wer von einem jüdischen Großeltern teil abstammte«. See on the terminology also *ibidem* 129 n. 20, where the authors explain that the term »Nichtarier«, used by the Nazis, was a designation which characterizes an »identity that was externally imposed« (»eine von außen aufgezwungene Identität«).

15 Balzer, *Osteuropa-Forschung* 21: »Ein [...] Vorteil der Historiker in Breslau war der glückliche Umstand, daß die ›Arisierung‹ fast vollständig an ihnen vorbeigegangen war. »Nur« zwei Privatdozenten waren dem »Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums« zum Opfer gefallen«, and *ibidem* n. 97: »Einer derjenigen, die als Nachfolger der beiden geschäfteten Dozenten 1934 nach Breslau kam, war Georg Stadtmüller, der Georg Ostrogorsky folgte«. – Mühle, *Volk* 100f.: »An der Schlesischen Wilhelms-Universität war das Gesetz zur *Wiedereinführung des Berufsbeamtentums* vom 7. April 1933 zügig und konsequent umgesetzt worden. Ohne nennenswerten Widerstand, ja begleitet vom Beifall eines großen Teils der Studierenden und Lehrenden wurden in einer er-

sten Entlassungswelle insgesamt 45 beamtete Professoren und Privatdozenten aus ihren Ämtern gedrängt. Unter den Amtsenthobenen befanden sich mit Richard Koebner und Georg Ostrogorsky zwei unmittelbare Fachkollegen Aubins (my italics; read *Wiederherstellung* instead of *Wiedereinführung*), see also 73. 103-104. 220. – Stadtmüller, *Erinnerungen* 212: »Mein Vorgänger Georg Ostrogorsky hatte als Russe und ›Halbarier‹ nach der national-sozialistischen Machtübernahme aus der Universität ausscheiden müssen«. – See in addition Gerstengarbe, *Entlassungswelle* 22 (no. 27) and 33; and Grüttnner/Kinas, *Vertreibung*, 126. – See also Ferluga, *Ostrogorsky* 633. – Hunger, *Ostrogorsky* 540. – Ferjančić, *Ostrogorski* 648. – Maksimović, *Razvoj* 664. – Radić, *Ostrogorski* 148, and Korczak, *Ostrogorski* 205: All six authors still knew nothing of Ostrogorsky's removal from his post. – On Stadtmüller see also Hausmann, *Geisteswissenschaften* 731-733.

16 Dölger, *Familie* 35, with the quotations: »[...] nicht nur die Auffassung von einer Art mystischer Verwandtschaft aller regierenden Fürsten untereinander bestand, sondern daß dieser damals auch die Bedeutung einer politischen *Institution* zukam, an welche u. U. [...] staatsrechtliche Folgerungen geknüpft wurden«. Shortly thereafter (35f.) Dölger, alluding to Ostrogorsky's aforementioned article, states that one, by focusing on this Byzantine institution, will »recognize a whole system of a fictional arrangement of world domination, in the official hierarchical ranking of all princes of the world by degrees of kinship in relation to the βασιλεὺς τῶν Ῥωμαίων«. »Dort wird in einer offiziellen Abstufung aller Fürsten der Welt nach Verwandtschaftsgraden zum βασιλεὺς τῶν Ῥωμαίων [...] ein ganzes System fiktiver Weltbeherrschungsorganisation sichtbar«.

17 *Ibidem* 36, with the following quotations: »daß die offizielle Benennung des Verwandtschaftsgrades zum byzantinischen Kaiser [...]«; »Metapher, sondern ein ernst zu nehmender *Titel* ist, der [...] nicht selten die Rolle eines anspruchsvollen Rechtstitels angenommen hat«.

18 *Ibidem* 36 (with quotes): »[...] aus welchen Gedankenkreisen diese merkwürdige Einrichtung einer vielgliedrigen künstlichen Königsfamilie [...]«; »[...] für Byzanz, welches in der Durchbildung und Verbreitung der Institution die führende Rolle spielt«.

19 See *Ibidem* 36f. (with quotes) »Da theoretische Ausführungen über den Bestand der Familie der Könige durchaus fehlen«; »auf den protokollarischen Gebrauch der Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen in den Briefen der Fürsten«, while several references to the sources follow there at 43-51.

The main source of Dölger's construct, its content and importance for his construct

Dölger found such a source in the so-called list of forms of address (for correspondence), contained in book II of the famous Book of Ceremonies of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (944-959) as chapter 48²⁰. It belongs to those parts of book II, which were only after the emperor's death, probably in the period from 963-969, added to the Leipzig Codex of the Book of Ceremonies²¹. According to Dölger, this chapter provides information on »the Byzantine conceptions of rank and relationship« between foreign rulers and the emperor, in particular about »artificial kinship titles« awarded to each of them by the emperor²². Interestingly, though in light of my previous remarks not surprisingly, Dölger based his work on exactly the same key source as Ostrogorsky had used in his pioneering article on the hierarchy of states²³.

Dölger states that according to the list »the *oikoumenē* is ruled by the father of the ruling families and the family of the nations, the *Basileus tōn Rhomaiōn*«, that is the Byzantine emperor. Their »nearest *kin*« were independent »Christian rulers in neighbouring regions of the empire such as the rulers of the Armenians, the Alans and the Bulgars«. Designated »spiritual children«, they were »bound to the emperor [...] through a particular duty to obey«. The next in line were the »Christian German and French rulers« who »had a [...] close but less intimate relationship with the emperor« and were acknowledged members of the family as »(spiritual) brothers«. Then there were »several« »friends«, hence »those independent rulers and nations who had received this title by special agreement«. Christian and non-Christian rulers who did not possess the title »friend« and could not prove any degree of kinship with the emperor were subordinate. Their position was defined »by other characteristics of forms of address and protocol«. This was also true for »regional potentates«

who were, from the emperor's perspective, subjects (*douloi*, slaves /servants of the emperor): that group consisted of »the lesser rulers in Armenia, Serbia, southern Italy etc.«. Dölger saw in all this »not the arbitrary measures of the Imperial chancery, but rather the quite systematic, intricate graded structure of a *universal family of kings*«, which pointed to the emperor as the »father« »with a *patria potestas*«²⁴. Thus, Dölger was convinced that he had proved the existence of a »family of kings«. A family »in which individual rulers saw each other as *brothers*, while the [...] emperor maintained the fiction of *fatherhood* for a whole series of neighbouring Christian rulers, dividing the rest into *brothers*, *friends* and *subjects*«²⁵. As indicated above, Dölger substantiated his theory with further source material. However, because of its complexity this construct was often reproduced in a form much or indeed overly abridged, for example in Marie-Theres Fögen's well-known article of 1993, which refers to Dölger's construct as a »heuristic device for dealing with the Christian rulers in the West«²⁶, but unfortunately disregards the rulers in Eastern Europe, Asia Minor and the Caucasus contained in Dölger's construct²⁷.

The reception of Dölger's construct and the case of Medieval Russia

Dölger's construct, in whichever form, was as widely accepted as Ostrogorsky's (including by Ostrogorsky himself, as I demonstrated above) and remains so to this day²⁸. This was also the case in connection with the baptism of the prince of Kiev, Vladimir I Svjatoslavič (980-1015), by Byzantine clerics in 988²⁹.

Admittedly, we lack sources to prove that Emperor Basil II indeed took on the role of godparent, which we would expect according to Dölger's construct. Merely circumstantial

20 See Constantinus [VII], *De cerimoniis I*, 686-692; and (with translation): Constantine [VII], *The Book, II/48*, 686-692. – On the list see Ferluga, Adressenliste. – Nerlich, *Gesandtschaften* 69-73. – Dagron, *Byzance*, with Dagron, Introduction; and the following four articles dealing with special addressees of the list: Martin-Hisard, *Constantinople*. – Zuckerman, *À propos*. – Malamut, *Adresses*. – Martin, *Occident*. – Most recently see Komatina, *King of Francia*; and below n. 72.

21 Featherstone, *Remarks* 477-479.

22 Dölger, *Familie* 37 (with quotes: »die Auffassung der Byzantiner von dem ranglichen Verhältnis«; »künstlichen Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen«), while from this point to 42 there follows the listing of the categories of status and the addressees of the list.

23 See Dölger, *Familie* 37 with n. 4. – Ostrogorsky, *Staatenhierarchie* 49-52. – Ostrogorsky, *Sistem* 247-249. Cf. also Ostrogorsky, *Emperor* 11 f.

24 See Dölger, *Familie* 42 (with the quotes, of which I offer here only the latter: »nicht etwa willkürliche Einfälle der [...] Kaiserkanzlei, sondern den ganz systematischen, verwickelt abgestuften Aufbau einer Weltfamilie der Könige [...]«).

25 *Ibidem* 51, with the quote: »in der sich die einzelnen Fürsten gegenseitig als *Brüder* betrachteten, der [...] Kaiser aber die Fiktion einer *Vaterschaft* gegenüber einer Reihe von benachbarten christlichen Fürsten aufrecht erhält und die übrigen in *Brüder*, *Freunde* und *Untertanen* gliedert [...]« – Then (52) Dölger states with regard to the (51) aforementioned »*ideal* roots of this institution« (»die *ideellen* Wurzeln dieser Institution«) that the family of kings was based »auf der [...] metaphorischen Übertragung eines Verwandtschaftsverhältnisses auf ein intimes Treueverhältnis«; yet was to be traced to »ganz

bestimmte Wurzeln institutioneller Art«. In this context he (52 f.) also refers to some formal observations about the position, function and use of terms of kinship in letters of rulers and presumes, the titles »*frater*, *filius* bzw. *pater*« in the references would express »ein ganz bestimmtes, auf Abkommen bzw. Verleihung beruhendes staatsrechtliches Verhältnis« (53).

26 Fögen, *Denken* 50, with the quote: »Hilfskonstruktion im Umgang mit den christlichen Herrschern des Westens«.

27 On these rulers see the corresponding contributions above in n. 20 mentioned after Dagron, Introduction.

28 See Prinzing, *Byzanz* 45 n. 12 for bibliographical references from the years 1956 to 2011, but add Wessel, *Kaiserbild* 734 f. 744. – Kazhdan, *Notion* 15 with his statement: »The »family hierarchy« survived the decline of the federate system. It was in full swing in the tenth century, as is reflected in Constantine Porphyrogenitus's Book of Ceremonies and in the titles of the Bulgarian ruler. The father-son terminology can be traced even in late Byzantine diplomatic correspondence«; Macrides, *Godfather* 151. – Mureşan, Introduction 13. 16. – Guran, *Fontières* 83. 92 f. – Jakobsson, *Legend* 358 (based on Grabar, *Family*). – Jakobsson, *Emperors* 660. Regarding the family terminology see Rapp, *Brother-Making* 214: »In his letters to foreign rulers, the emperor addressed them according to a carefully calibrated hierarchy of proximity«; and particularly *Gastgeber*, *Formular* 216 f. and below n. 64.

29 See Nazarenko, *Vladimir (Vasilij)* 697. 699 f. – Shepard, *Spreading* 232 f. – Steindorff, *Christianisierung* 3. 10. – Poppe, *Christianization* 326. 331. 333; also here nn. 42. 78-79; for further references see Prinzing, *Byzanz*, 46 n. 13. On Vladimir see Podskalsky, *Vladimir I.*; and PmbZ II, 6, # 28433 (Vladimir I. von Kiev).

evidence is offered by a speech in honour of Vladimir written by the native Russian Ilarion, metropolitan of Kiev from 1051 to 1054. It attests that Vladimir was baptised with the name of Vasilij³⁰, thus the same name which Emperor Basil [pronounced Vasilios] II (976-1025) bore, too³¹. That this was surely no mere coincidence, and indirectly but clearly designates the emperor as Vladimir's spiritual father, that is his godfather (also indirectly including the patronage of the church father St Basil the Great)³², is a more or less compelling consequence of the historical context. For the emperor had appealed to Vladimir for military help shortly before the baptism, when he was beset by rebellious generals. This offered Vladimir the chance to combine his offer to help with the demand that the emperor give him his sister Anna in marriage. The emperor finally agreed on the condition that Vladimir be baptised. This is, in short, the evidence from which Vladimir's acceptance in the »family of kings« is generally deduced³³.

Whether, however, *this* association tallies with current research on Dölger's construct is the central question and theme of this paper. My attempt to answer this question cannot examine the whole construct. This is far beyond the scope of a lecture. Therefore, I shall restrict myself to the Russian context. After making a critical evaluation of the state of scholarship, I shall attempt to reach at least a partial answer and would be delighted if the result were to stimulate further discussion.

Criticism of Dölger's theory

As far as I know, Dimitri Obolensky in his magisterial work on the »Byzantine Commonwealth« (1971) was the first to criticize Dölger's construct³⁴. And it took another ten years before further critical voices were heard with regard to the validity of the construct: an article by Simon Franklin from 1983³⁵, three

articles by Evangelos Chrysos (1989. 1992)³⁶, the dissertation by Giasmina Mōyseidou (a student of Chrysos) from 1995³⁷, an article by Johannes Preiser-Kapeller from 2013³⁸, two works by Peter Schreiner³⁹, and finally the aforementioned article by Wolfram Brandes from 2013⁴⁰. Each approach and the corresponding main arguments will be discerningly discussed here.

In Obolensky's opinion the main weakness of Dölger's construct lies in the one-sided emphasis on Byzantine superiority and in his disregard of the cultural bonds which strongly influenced relations between Byzantium and its Eastern European neighbours, despite changing political constellations⁴¹. According to Obolensky, »any attempt to define these relations in precise legal terms will probably oversimplify and distort their true nature«. In an endeavour to find an explanatory model for the problem of »how the political independence of the medieval peoples of Eastern Europe could be reconciled with their recognition of the emperor's supremacy«, Obolensky suggests that we should view »their links with the empire not from the standpoint of modern interstate relations, nor in terms of a conflict between »nationalism« and »imperialism«, but in the context of the Byzantine Commonwealth«⁴². And here, in the same breath, he defines it as »that supranational community of Christian states of which Constantinople was the centre and Eastern Europe the peripheral domain«⁴³. From his point of view the affiliation of a country to this community of states was based, in a loose fashion, on two preconditions: namely »its ruler's acceptance of Byzantine Christianity, and implicitly thereby of the emperor's sovereignty«⁴⁴.

Franklin, however, was very sceptical of the notion that the acceptance of Orthodox Christianity by Kievan Rus' implied the recognition of the emperor's supremacy (and therefore by extension his position at the apex of the »family of rulers«) in any way. In his opinion socio-cultural differentiation is necessary and, as far as the population of medieval Russia

30 Ilarion, Slovo (Moldovan) 186a VII 5-13. Въ ѿдъ крѣстивса, въ ѿдъ вѣдѣса; и изиде ѿ коупѣли вѣловразжаса. имаа принѣмъ вѣчьно [...] Василии. им же написаса въ кѣнигы животныа. cf. Ilarion, Slovo (Müller) 104 [= Slovo §39, line 16-20], cf. the Müller's comment 163 regarding § 39,19. – Müller, Taufe 103. – Podskalsky, Christentum 17. 111. 235f. 319. – Shepard, Coming 185-187. 199. 210-221. – Shepard, Christianities 149; and Rostkowski, Christian Names 187-189. – On Ilarion see Podskalsky, Christentum 84-86 (and index). 285 (in A. Poppe's list of Kiev's metropolitans); and Turilov, Ilarion.

31 On Basil II see PmbZ II,1, # 20838 (Basil II.).

32 On him see Kannengiesser, Basilius von Caesarea, and Murav'ev/Turilov, Vasilij Velikij.

33 See Poppe, Christianization 326. 331. 333; and Prinzing, Byzanz 46 n. 13; 48 n. 17 for further references. – Panagopoulou, Γάμοι 172-178. – Feldman, Research. – Interestingly, Maksimovič, Russia 241, in his statement »Toward the end of the tenth century [...] Kievan Rus' adopted Christianity and became a member of the European Christian community«, replaced the »family of kings« by the latter.

34 Obolensky, Commonwealth 3. 272f. 277. Cf. my review BZ 71, 1978, 101-104, and Stephenson, Statement 201f.

35 Franklin, Empire 508-512.

36 Chrysos, Concepts 13-23. – Chrysos, Diplomacy 37. – Chrysos, Legacy.

37 Mōyseidou, Byzantium, with a summary in English 407-421.

38 Preiser-Kapeller, Eine Familie 258f.

39 Schreiner, Byzanz 82. – Schreiner, Familie, with »Addenda et corrigenda« in: Schreiner, Kultur 257.

40 Brandes, Familie 262-275.

41 Obolensky, Commonwealth 3.

42 Ibidem 277; see also 201: »There is no doubt [...], that Russia after 989 was accorded a high status within the East European community. Though high, his status was of course a subordinate one; and it will be suggested [...], that, although Vladimir and his medieval successors were wholly independent of Byzantine control in political matters, they all, with one temporary exception, recognised that the emperor, as the head of the Orthodox Christian community, possessed by divine right a meta-political jurisdiction over Russia«; or 223, where Obolensky states: »And yet the relations between the princes of Russia and the emperors of Byzantium were not, and could not be, relations between equals. On the ideal, »meta-political« plane the Russian princes, the *archontes Rhosias*, as they styled themselves in Greek on their seals, continued to acknowledge the emperor's supreme position in Christendom, which was at least tacitly recognized by Vladimir after his baptism«; or finally 268f.; and Obolensky, Culture 13-16.

43 Obolensky, Commonwealth 277. – For critical comments on this concept see (besides Franklin, Empire) Arnason, Byzantium 502f., for whom the analogy to the British Commonwealth is partly misleading; Raffensberger, Europe 10f. 41; and Kaldellis, Hellenism 109f. (overly critical). But cf. Shepard, Circles 17-28 and 53-55. – Shepard, Commonwealth 6-11. 33-36. 50-52, and below n. 52 for literature in which Obolensky's model or concept was convincingly modified or constructively discussed.

44 Obolensky, Relations 6 and, modifying, 8.

is concerned, the question is how far the reception of Byzantine texts has been filtered in varying ways by the recipients, so that they understood the texts very differently according to their education and profession. Franklin substantiates his theory with several texts⁴⁵.

Since among them is also the famous admonitory letter written by the Patriarch Antonios IV⁴⁶ in September 1393 to the Grand Prince Vasilij I Dmitrievič (1389-1425) of Moscow⁴⁷, I would like to examine this important source more closely. Vasilij I had indirectly provoked the patriarch to take this step because he, Vasilij, had forbidden Metropolitan Kiprian/Cyprian of »Kiev and the whole of Russia« (1375-1406) from commemorating the emperor in the liturgy⁴⁸. The central passage of the letter with the reference to this instruction reads (according to John W. Barker's translation, with some modifications) as follows: »For you hinder, so they say, the Metropolitan from commemorating the sacred name of the Basileus [emperor, G. P.] in the diptychs, a matter which would be at any time impossible; and that you say that: »We have a Church, but we neither have a Basileus nor do we reckon one.« Now these things are not good. The holy Basileus holds a great position in the Church, for the Basileus is not thus also as are the other rulers and sovereigns of localities, since from the beginning the Basileus confirmed and established their piety in all the inhabited world. [...] Therefore, it is not a good thing, my son, that you should say that »We have a Church, but not a Basileus.« It is not possible among the Christians to have a Church and not to have a Basileus. For the Basileus and the Church have great unity and commonality, and it is not possible for them to be divided from each other«⁴⁹.

Regarding the controversy on the Russian attitude to the emperor, we must point out (following John Meyendorff, Obolensky and Guran), that Kiprian was probably the first metropolitan to introduce the commemoration of the emperor instead of the grand prince into the liturgy. If this was

the reason for Vasilij's protest, then it is remarkable that he, after receiving Antonios's letter, should have accepted the emperor's commemoration, although it is not clear where and how long this new custom was practiced⁵⁰.

Does this evidence not contradict Franklin's theory, at least to a certain degree? He himself does not consider that the grand prince's authorisation of the liturgical reference to the emperor is any reason to revise his scepticism. But perhaps he is not quite so sure of this, for with his »neither« (the one nor the other) he gives a sibylline answer to the question whether the people of Kiev recognised the »Byzantine emperor's meta-political authority« (this too is Obolensky's formulation) or rejected it⁵¹. If, however, we extend the time period to 1453 then, in my opinion, the ecclesiastical and monastic links between Russia and Byzantium indeed support a (modified) version of Obolensky's position⁵².

Let us now turn to Evangelos Chrysos: in a first article he points out that in official correspondence in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, the salutatory use of kinship terms had the same function as brother and friend have today in political and diplomatic circles. Although there were »diplomatic formulae which were strictly adhered to, there was never [...] a *political institution* like the »family of rulers and states« or a »hierarchical world order«⁵³. In addition, he points out several weaknesses in Dölger's theory with regard to foreign policy treaties⁵⁴.

In his second article, which investigates relations between Byzantium and Russia on the basis of secondary literature, Chrysos justifiably points out that Byzantium not only never claimed territories beyond the Crimea, but also that Russia had never been a vassal of Byzantium, which in political terms generally operated defensively »towards its distant northern neighbours«. Hence the question arose for him as to what effect the »so-called political and metapolitical doctrine of the *byzantinische Staatenhierarchie*« had »on this policy« and whether the latter should be defined »as »defensive

45 Franklin, *Empire* 512-514. 518-537.

46 He held the office of patriarch in 1389-1389 and 1391-1397, see Talbot, Antony. – Žavoronkov, Antonij.

47 On him see Kučkin, Vasilij.

48 See Franklin, *Empire* 508. 536. On Kiprian see: Franklin, Kiprian. – Obolensky. – Cyprian of Kiev. – Salamon, Cyprian. – Florja, Kiprian. – Preiser-Kapeller, Episkopat 504-506, and Shepard, *Shaping* 304. 306-308.

49 Miklosich/Müller, *Acta II*, 188-192 No. 447, at 190f.: [...] ἔμποδιζεις γὰρ, ὡς λέγουσι, τὸν μητροπολίτην ἵνα μνημονεύῃ τοῦ θεοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ βασιλέως ἐν τοῖς διπτύχοις, πρᾶγμα γενέσθαι ποτὲ ἀδύνατον, καὶ ὅτι λέγεις ὅτι ἐκκλησίαν ἔχομεν ἡμεῖς, βασιλεῖα δὲ οὐτε ἔχομεν, οὐτε λογιζόμεθα, καὶ οὐδὲν ἐνὶ ταῦτα καλά. ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ ἅγιος πολὺν τόπον ἔχει εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐνὶ καθὼς οἱ ἄλλοι ἄρχοντες καὶ αὐθένται τόπων, οὕτω καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς, διότι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς οἱ βασιλεῖς ἐστήριξαν καὶ ἐβεβαίωσαν τὴν εὐσέβειαν εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην, [...]. / [...] οὐδὲν οὖν ἐνὶ καλὸν, υἱέ μου, ἵνα λέγῃς, ὅτι ἐκκλησίαν ἔχομεν, οὐχὶ βασιλεῖα, οὐκ ἐνὶ δυνατὸν εἰς τοὺς χριστιανούς, ἐκκλησίαν ἔχειν καὶ βασιλεῖα οὐκ ἔχειν. ἡ γὰρ βασιλεία καὶ ἡ ἐκκλησία πολλὴν ἔνωσιν καὶ κοινωvίαν ἔχει, καὶ οὐκ ἐνὶ δυνατὸν, ἀπ' ἀλλήλων διαιρεθῆναι. – For the letter's more or less partial translation in English see Barker, *Social thought*, 194-196. – Barker, Manuel II, 106-109 (with quotation at 107f.). – Meyendorff, *Byzantium* 254f. 264. – Geanakoplos, *Byzantium* 143f. No. 105. – For a slightly abridged German translation see Hauptmann/Stricker, *Kirche*, 196-199 No. 51. – The date of this letter was erroneously given as 1389 by Prinzing, *Byzantium*, 50. – On the letter's content and its background see Darrrouzès, *Regestes VI* No. 2931.

– Ostrogorsky, *Emperor* 8f. – Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte*³ 457f. – Beck, *Jahrtausend* 97f. – Meyendorff, *Byzantium* 103. 254-257. 264. – Obolensky, *Cyprian* 195-197. – Dagron, *Emperor* 311f. – Möyseidou, *Byzantium* 139-143. – Hinterberger, *Relations* 128f. 134. – Pitsakis, *Fin de temps* 216f. – Hilsdale, *Art* 268-270. 291. 328f. – Mureşan, *Introduction* 14 and 19. – Guran, *Frontières* (most comprehensive). – Vetochnikov, *Fonctions* 344. – Vetochnikov, *Pouvoir* 154f. – Maksimovič, *Russia* 253; further references in Prinzing, *Byzantium* 50 n. 31.

50 See Meyendorff, *Byzantium* 254-257 (in addition he advanced the hypothesis that the liturgical commemoration of the emperor was perhaps practiced by predecessors of Kiprian, while he attributed our ignorance in this matter to the loss of relevant source material or on the latter's still insufficient state of research). – Obolensky, *Cyprian* 196f. – Shepard, *Commonwealth* 40. – and Guran, *Frontières* 82-94 (but he disputes Meyendorff's hypothesis).

51 Franklin, *Empire* 534. The question alludes to the quotation from Obolensky above in n. 42.

52 See Tinnefeld, *Kirchenpolitik* 382f. – Meyendorff, *Byzantium* 103. 107. 111. 116-118. – Hösch, *Byzanz* 519-527. – Thomson, *Communications*. – Shepard, *Commonwealth* 28-33. 41-46. 50-52. – Mureşan, *Introduction* 13-16. – Vetochnikov, *Pouvoir* 154f. – Tachias, *Punkt* 285-292. – Stephenson, *Statement* 204f. – Shepard, *Old Russia* 378-383. – Shepard, *Superpower* 108-110 (important modification of Obolensky's model).

53 Chrysos, *Concepts* 16.

54 *Ibidem* 17-21.

imperialism« at all»⁵⁵. His reply, as he puts it, is »very simple: In the Middle Ages, the Orthodox Christians of Eastern and Southeastern Europe certainly had a strong sense of solidarity and ›togetherness«, which was focused on Constantinople and personified by the Emperor«. Emphasizing that only »in this sense, we are indeed entitled to speak of a ›Byzantine Commonwealth«⁵⁶ he affirmed his aforementioned negative statement concerning Dölger's and Ostrogorsky's constructs. According to Chrysos, designations such as »brother«, »son«, or »nephew« of the Emperor in the forms of address in official letters from the imperial chancery to foreign rulers are attributable to the needs of court ceremonial and were used in line with the traditions of diplomatic language. Even though, »of course, the Byzantine court supplemented this practice with the Christian concepts of spiritual kinship«, this custom and the related expressions »did not have any substantial effect on the legal and political relations between the empire and its neighbours«. A hierarchy of titles is not to be found and there is also no evidence that »brothers« or »sons« of the emperor addressed each other in this manner and by analogy considered the emperor's »brothers« to be their »uncles«. In sum, the investigation of Byzantine-Russian relations should not be influenced by the postulation of a seemingly »valid universalistic ideology«⁵⁷.

From the various results of Chrysos's third article I should like to offer the following: »[...] there is no evidence to support the widespread assumption that a ›hierarchy« or a ›family« of nations or princes existed, who were all linked together by ties of kinship with the Byzantine emperor as the head of the imaginary structure«, which is followed by the statement, that »notions of ›hierarchy« and ›family« are completely missing in the sources«⁵⁸.

Although Chrysos argues largely convincingly in his articles, there nevertheless remain some doubts with regard to his rejection of Ostrogorsky's and Dölger's constructs and Obolensky's concept of a »Byzantine Commonwealth«. For not only the existence of the aforementioned list of forms of address in the Book of Ceremonies in my opinion proves his categorical denial of the lack of »notions of ›hierarchy« and ›family« in the sources wrong, at least in part; but also the fact that his criticism of Obolensky's concept is, as we have learnt from historical research in the last two decades, to a certain degree superficial, if not one-sided, because it does

not sufficiently take in account the effect of various kinds of »Soft Power«⁵⁹.

Möyseidou, then, in her dissertation, extensively substantiates, confirms and augments the issues criticized by Chrysos and includes the list of forms of address contained in the Book of Ceremonies. Yet relevant new points of view are, in my opinion, not apparent, not even in chapter 2, which initially discusses the independence of the Russian »archon« and then goes on to address the question whether through his Christianisation or his admission to the »family« of Byzantine emperors the Russian ruler became a vassal of the emperor⁶⁰. As expected, the reply is negative, but this was also already well known, since Ostrogorsky's article from 1936 (revised in 1956) had made this clear. Hence neither he nor Obolensky, decades later, took the Russian princes or grand princes for a vassal of the Byzantine emperor⁶¹. As for Preiser-Kapeller, he investigates the use of kinship titles in the forms of address and salutation formulas in letters and documents to foreign Christian (and Muslim) rulers found in the Register of the Patriarchate of Constantinople (14th century)⁶². He also compares their use by the Patriarchal Chancery with the corresponding formulas from the *Ekthesis nea* of 1386, a compendium of standard forms of address for ecclesiastical, but also secular authorities within and without »the Byzantine sphere of influence [...], indeed in part with a detailed indication of the addressee (by name)«⁶³.

As far as method is concerned, Preiser-Kapeller rightly emphasizes that from the material of the *Ekthesis nea* we cannot extrapolate »an established system« as Dölger had once done (with the list of the forms of address in the Book of Ceremonies) in order to deduce a »fully conceptualized foreign political ›doctrine« in the sense of »the [...] phantom of Dölger's ›family of kings««. For the *Ekthesis Nea* does not, according to Preiser-Kapeller, convey more than »certain conventions« or »guidelines«. Instead the »composition of a salutation« in a letter and »its importance« for the »relationship« between the correspondents has to be redefined each time⁶⁴. By means of the material listed in the appendix of his article, he, therefore, concludes that the »family of kings« in Dölger's categorical sense cannot be proved here. Nevertheless, Preiser-Kapeller cannot but confirm that the application of »spiritually fictive kinship relations«, by means of corresponding designations in forms of address, is »ubiquitous«⁶⁵.

55 Chrysos, *Old Russia* 243 (with quotes; my italics). On »defensive imperialism« see Obolensky, *Principles* 52. – Chrysos, *Imperium* 624. – Shepard, *Super Power* 109 (with this interpretation: »a term that has some bearing about universalism's role in perpetuating empires, its capacity to make up for loss of militarist momentum with other sorts of ties that bind«).

56 Chrysos, *Old Russia* 243 (with the quotes).

57 *Ibidem* 244 (with quotes).

58 Chrysos, *Diplomacy* 37 (with quotes).

59 See for instance Shepard, *Superpower* 108-122 (with further references); cf. Cameron, *Byzantine* 38-40.

60 Möyseidou, *Byzantium* 51-71 (Introduction: an instructive and critical report about the state of research with regard to her topic, from Dölger's and Ostrogorsky's constructs until Obolensky's concept of a *Byzantine Commonwealth*, based on the literature until 1993), ch. 2, 171.

61 Ostrogorsky, *Staatenhierarchie* 41. 58-61. – Ostrogorsky, *Sistem* 238f. 258-262.

62 Preiser-Kapeller, *Familie*. – On the patriarchal register see Prinzing, *Byzanz* 52 n. 40; add most recently: Gastgeber, *Patriarchate*.

63 Preiser-Kapeller, *Familie* 258: »geistliche, aber auch weltliche Autoritäten innerhalb und außerhalb des byzantinischen Machtbereichs [...], z. T. sogar mit der konkreten (namentlichen) Angabe des Destinatars«. – Darrouzès, *Ekthesis*; on this formulary book see the highly important study Gastgeber, *Formular*; and below n. 67.

64 Preiser-Kapeller, *Familie* 258 (: »ein feststehendes Regelsystem«; »durchkzipierte außenpolitische ›Doktrin«; »bestimmte Gepflogenheiten«; »Leitlinien«; »des [...] Phantoms der Dölger'schen ›Familie der Könige«).

65 See Preiser-Kapeller, *Familie* 259 (»geistlich-fiktiver Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen«; »allgegenwärtig«) and the summarizing paragraph (»Zur Auswertung«) 260-272, and the appendix with forms of address concerning foreign rulers 273-289 (»Verzeichnis der in den Urkunden des Patriarchatsregisters erwähnten nichtbyzantinischen Machthaber (mit Vergleichsbeispielen)« with regionally ar-

This is also true, as he shows, for all patriarchal and the (less well documented) imperial correspondence with the Russian (grand-) princes: the latter are generally designated as the (spiritual) sons and only twice as nephews of the patriarch or emperor. Thus, the choice of other epithets demonstrates for the records nuances in the degree of esteem⁶⁶. (Meanwhile Christian Gastgeber significantly modified Preiser-Kapeller's observations through his lucid analysis of the sophisticated manner in which the *Ekthesis Nea*, as well as the patriarchal [and imperial] chanceries, made use of a »relational system of the family metaphor«. While he emphasizes the importance of Dölger's study on the »family of kings«, he succeeds in defining this complex of family metaphor more precisely: For according to him, »the examples [i. e. of the use of family metaphors, G.P.] from the secular and clerical sphere show that they do not imply the idea of a universal family or even a universal social model of unity, but a relational vocabulary expressing a social relationship or respect is used«⁶⁷).

Yet it is not only this finding that emphasizes the persistence of the kinship concept. Equally important is that Patriarch Antonios IV wrote in another letter from 1393 – sent to Novgorod, its authorities and inhabitants – that he had dispatched letters in order to instruct them about their dangerous situation, by »admonishing and teaching, as *spiritual father* and lord of all Christians in the *oikoumenē*, appointed by God« (my emphasis, GP), hence of their respective Christian rulers, too⁶⁸. This quotation demonstrates in an exemplary manner what is, from our perspective, the unrealistic and exaggerated image the hierarchy entertained of itself at that time. However, we must understand: The patriarchs derived their image of themselves – despite the predicament of the territorially reduced empire – from the nominal extent of their diocese, from their office and, until 1453, undiminished close connection with their ruler, the Byzantine emperor, whom

they (again according to Patriarch Antonios IV) unabashedly consider to be their »Basileus and Autokratōr of the Romans, and that is of all Christians«⁶⁹!

Schreiner points out the frequent lack of accordance between »ideal and reality« in Dölger's construct and indicated his agreement with Chrysos's criticism »demonstrated by the example of the Russians«⁷⁰. In his article on the imperial family he only mentions the »family of kings« very briefly, as explanation for the absence of all imperial journeys abroad before 1365: The main reason is to be found in the »ideology of superiority of the Byzantine Empire, expressed in the construct of the ›family of rulers«. He rightly adds that »the conceptual field of the ›family of kings« must be reconsidered«⁷¹.

Brandes can claim the credit for having been the first historian to critically take a systematic look at Dölger's construct, though he concentrates on the refutation of Dölger's interpretation of early and (early) middle Byzantine texts and the validity of his argumentation varies as far as the details are concerned. If we disregard his insufficient, only partially applicable comment on the list of the forms of address, he still fails to extend the verification of his criticism with source material from the 9th century to the Late Byzantine period. However, Brandes' legal-historical objections are in the main strikingly accurate: Indeed, the »Family of Kings« never possessed the quality of a »legal title« and never constituted a legally binding institution⁷².

Yet at this point we must take a closer look at Brandes' article on baptism (published together with the »Family« article), which unfortunately only touches lightly on Vladimir's baptism and completely ignores the question of the emperor's godparenthood⁷³. Brandes turns to the importance of the baptism of Vladimir or of the conversion of medieval Russia in the following passage: »What was perhaps more important [than the success of Byzantium's mission in Bulgaria, men-

ranged rubrics, thus »1.1 Orthodoxe Machthaber im Sprengel von Konstantinopel«, and there at 1.1.8 those in Russia, arranged according to rank: Grand Princes; other Russian Princes; Novgorod; then »2. Orthodoxe Machthaber außerhalb des Sprengels [...]; 2. Nicht-orthodoxe christliche Machthaber; 3. Heidnische Machthaber – Der Großfürst von Litauen; 4. Muslimische Machthaber«.

66 Preiser-Kapeller, *Familie* 260-265. 276-281; see in addition Kuzenkov, *Vizantija* 228.

67 Gastgeber, *Formular* 216 f.: (quotes: 216 »relationales System der Familienmetapher«; 217 »Jedoch zeigen die Beispiele, die sowohl den weltlichen als auch den klerikalen Bereich umfassen, dass damit *nicht* die Idee einer universalen Familie impliziert ist oder gar ein universales soziales Einheitsmodell, sondern ein relationales Vokabular zum Ausdruck der Sozialbeziehung bzw. des Respekts zur Anwendung kommt, [...]«).

68 *Acta et diplomata*, II, No. 446, 181-187, at 182: [...] παραίων και διδάσκων, ως πατήρ και δεσπότης πνευματικός παρά θεοῦ καταστάς τῶν ἀπανταχοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης χριστιανῶν [...]; see Darrouzès, *Regestes* VI, No. 2929; this letter was addressed to the bishop, the city officials, and the clergy and citizens of Novgorod. – In his letter, quoted above n. 43, Antonios IV even designates Vasilij I as a γνήσιον υἱόν [...] και φίλον, that is as »genuine son and friend«, see Miklosich/Müller, *Acta* II, no. 447, 189 and Barker, *Manuel II* 106. In other words: The patriarch is going to construct his virtual ›family of rulers« in the context of his flock.

69 For the quote from Antonios IV's letter from 1493 see Miklosich/Müller, *Acta* II, No. 447, 190: εἰ γὰρ και, συγχωρήσει θεοῦ, τὰ ἔθνη περικύκλωσαν τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ βασιλέως και τὸν τόπον, ἀλλὰ μέχρι τὴν σήμερον τὴν αὐτὴν χειροτονίαν ἔχει ὁ βασιλεὺς παρά τῆς ἐκκλησίας και τὴν αὐτὴν τάξιν και τὰς αὐτὰς εὐχὰς και τῷ

μεγάλῳ χριεῖται μύρω και χειρο<το>νεῖται βασιλεὺς και αυτοκράτωρ τῶν Ῥωμαίων, πάντων δηλαδὴ τῶν χριστιανῶν [...], translated by Barker, *Manuel II*, 107: »For even if, with the acquiescence of God, the Gentiles have encircled the realm and land of the Basileus, yet, up to this day, the Basileus has had the same election by the Church and the same prayers, and with the same great myrrh is he anointed and is he elected Basileus and Autokratōr of the Romans, that is of all Christians«. – See on the universal claims of the Byzantine patriarchate, Beck, *Geschichte* 238 f. – Meyendorff, *Byzantium* 112-118. – Malamut, *Empire* 173. – Shepard, *Commonwealth* 50. – Guran, *Frontières* 91-94.

70 See Schreiner, *Byzanz* 162. His following uncritical support for the doctrine of the so-called »limited oikoumene« (T. Loughis) is not up for debate here.

71 Schreiner, *Familie* 747, referring to Chrysos, *Concepts*. – Schreiner, in the »Addenda and Corrigenda« to the reprint of his »Family« article, adds (referring to 747 n. 50) the following remark: »Research has been only much too eager, though often without sufficient reflection, to tackle the ›Family of Kings«, ›invented« by Franz Dölger in 1940, so that a revision was long ago needed. For this a new starting point has been created by J. Preiser-Kapeller, Eine »Familie der Könige«? « (»Die von Franz Dölger 1940 ›erfundene« Familie der ›Könige« ist von der Forschung nur zu gern und oft wenig reflektiert aufgegriffen worden, so dass eine Revision längst nötig war. Dafür ist jetzt ein neuer Ausgangspunkt geschaffen von J. Preiser-Kapeller [...]«).

72 Brandes, *Familie* 263 f. His comment on the list of forms of address ignores (*inter alia*) the contributions contained in Dagron, *Byzance* (see above n. 21). See on the list most recently the balanced description and comment by Lilie, *Außenpolitik* 315-317.

73 Brandes, *Taufe* 14. On the creating of spiritual kinship and godparenthood in general see most recently Rapp, *Brother-Making* 9-12 and (index).

tioned in the context before, G. P.] was the ›baptism of Russia‹ in 988. A cultural and also political precedence was thereby constituted in both states and, through the ›baptism‹, an incipient kinship of minds was created⁷⁴. Here Brandes refers to Gerhard Podskalsky's renowned handbook on »Christianity in Kievan Rus'« for the second sentence (including the quotation), where however we read: »The Byzantine precedence in the family of states was defined through the emperor's spiritual kinship with the newly converted princes/kings and their successors, which was based on godparenthood. Admittedly, this was at first a one-sided Byzantine view of the relationship, and there is no confirmation of it in Russian sources«⁷⁵.

Since Brandes explicitly talks of »a political and cultural precedence in both states«, he obviously thought here of the aforementioned Bulgaria, although the context of his quotation only refers to Russia. While this is a minor slip, the following points are more relevant: 1) Brandes quotes Podskalsky inaccurately (also without the additional sentence), 2) he ignores the whole question of the emperor's godparenthood and 3) his own reference to the (allegedly) constituted political precedence (sc. of the Byzantines) brings him unexpectedly, though unintentionally, so close to Dölger's position that he ends up in a position that is contrary to the referenced results even of his own research.

Attempt at a summary, with the inclusion of a visual source

Indeed, with a view to the reaction to and reception of Dölger's strict construct, at this point we should realize that it seems to be a »phantom« in various ways (though not completely so), because Dölger himself not only called some of the elements fictitious, but also largely ignored the perspective (and response) of the »family's« foreign members. But the omnipresence of kinship designations in address and salutatory formulas in the foreign correspondence of the emperor (here hardly referred to at all) and in the patriarchate's correspondence proves the consistent prevalence of

the Byzantine patriarchal way of thinking when structuring their relations with foreign powers and with the periphery of their empire. The emperor and (increasingly) the patriarch indisputably saw themselves as the head of an ideally familial structure differentiated by rank. Its flexibility allowed them to react flexibly to changes in (ecclesiastical-)political circumstances. According to these findings, Dölger's construction is not completely but largely inadequate for an understanding of the (ecclesiastical-)political web of relationships between Byzantium and its closer and more distant neighbours.

So let us return to the question raised above: Can we still uphold the frequently made link between Vladimir's baptism and his acceptance into the »family of kings« in the face of current research? As we have seen, this link is (and could be) based on Vladimir's recorded baptismal name of Vasilij and Emperor Basil's conjectured, though historically most probable, spiritual godparenthood for his newly baptised brother-in-law⁷⁶. Despite Vladimir's well-known Byzantinism⁷⁷ we should, however, be very careful, because we have no clear proof from either the Byzantines or the Russians of Vladimir's status as the emperor's spiritual son, nor any personal testimony that he bore the name Vasilij⁷⁸. Regarding the political significance of Vladimir's baptism, it therefore seems preferable to follow Obolensky's concept and to speak of Vladimir's acceptance, at least to some degree, into a sort of »Byzantine Commonwealth«. Accordingly, medieval Russia became a member of the group of independent (Orthodox) territories in which the Byzantine emperor, enhanced by the spiritual legitimation by the Church, traditionally enjoyed the highest respect, while in pragmatic terms he had no direct political power over the corresponding rulers, thus also the (grand) princes of medieval Russia until 1453. For, from his point of view, the latter enjoyed a rank equal to the Emperor⁷⁹.

This complicated relationship, by the way, found its perfect visual expression in the iconographic design of the famous »Major Sakkos« of Photios, the metropolitan of »Kiev and All Rus'« (1408-1431)⁸⁰ who arrived in 1410 at Moscow accompanied by an embassy sent by the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos (1391-1425)⁸¹ to Grand Prince Vasilij I Dmitrievič in order to devise the marriage between Manuel's

74 Ibidem 83 with n. 111, with the quotation »Vielleicht noch wichtiger war die ›Taufe Russlands‹ im Jahr 988. Dadurch wurde ein kultureller und auch politischer Vorrang in beiden Staaten konstituiert und durch die ›Taufe‹ eine beginnende geistige [sic, G. P.] ›Verwandtschaft‹ geschaffen«.

75 Podskalsky, *Christentum* 41: »Der byzantinische Vorrang in der Staatenfamilie war durch die in der Taufpatenschaft begründete geistliche Verwandtschaft des Kaisers mit den neubekehrten Fürsten/Königen und deren Nachfolgern festgelegt; freilich war dies zunächst nur die einseitig byzantinische Sicht der Beziehungen, deren Rezeption in den russischen Geschichtsquellen nirgends bestätigt wird«; for the quotation in the Russian edition see Podskal'ski, *Christianstvo* 69.

76 According to Schmalzbauer, *Herrscheronomastik* 217 the goodparenthood of Baseileios II for Vladimir could be excluded as forbidden by canon-law, because Basil II was the brother of Vladimir's bride Anna. The argument is unconvincing, because the Byzantine emperor could infringe/break the norm for reasons of state, see for example Macrides, *Marriages* 275.

77 Kämpfer, *Bildwelt* 126-135 (also on Vladimir's self-testimonies). On the various meanings of the term »Byzantinism« see: Angelov, *Byzantinism*. – Bodin, *Whose Byzantinism*.

78 Also later he was worshiped only as St Vladimir, not Vasilij, see Poppe, *Sainthood* 48f. Admittedly, in the so-called »Ustav Vladimira« (Vladimir's Statute), a church statute allegedly issued by Vladimir, the Kievan Prince is nearly regularly calling himself »knjaz velikij Vasilei« [or Vasilij]. But all existing versions of this text originated in the post-Mongolian era, see Podskalsky, *Christentum*, 191. – Podskalsky, *Christianstvo* 312. Thus this statute cannot – pace Rostkowski, *Names* 188 n. 20. – serve as evidence for Vladimir's real use of his Christian name Vasilij after the baptism itself.

79 See above n. 42, cf. also Kämpfer, *Herrscherbild* 115.

80 On him see PLP No. 30322 and Preiser-Kapeller, *Episkopat* 506; Photios had his seat at Moscow. On the term *sakkos* see Kazhdan, *Sakkos*. – Hilsdale, *Art* 300f. (also particularly on Photios' *Sakkos*).

81 On him see most recently Prinzing, *Manuel II*.



Fig. 1 Front of the Major Sakkos. Kremlin Museums, inv. No. TK-4. – (After Medieval Embroidery 45).



Fig. 2 Detail of the Major Sakkos' Front: Co-Emperor John (VIII) and his bride Anna Vasil'evna. The inscription reads: ΙΩ(αννης) ΕΝ Χ(ΡΙΣΤ)Ω ΤΩ Θ(ε)Ω ΠΙΨΟΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ Ο ΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟΓΟΣ – ΑΝ(να) Η ΕΥΣΕΒΕΨΑΤΗ ΑΥΓ(στα) Η ΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΝΗ (John in Christ the God faithful Emperor the Palaiologos. – Anna the Most Pious Empress the Palaiologine). – (After Medieval Embroidery 48).



Fig. 3 Detail of the Major Sakkos' Front: Grand Prince Vasilij I Dmitrievič and his wife Grand Princess Sof'ja (Vitolovna). The inscription reads: КНАЗЬ ВЕЛІКЪТЪ БАСИЛІЕГЪ ДІМІТРИГЪВІЧЪ КНАГЪТЪ (НА) ВЕЛІКА ССФІА. – (After Medieval Embroidery 49).

son (Co-)Emperor John (VIII) Palaiologos (b. 1392, ruled 1425-1431)⁸² and the daughter of Vasilij I and his wife Sof'ja Vitovtovna, Anna Palaiologine (b.1403 or 1400?, d. 1417)⁸³. The marriage alliance, concluded with the aim of strengthening the weak position of the Byzantines as they became ever more beleaguered by the Ottomans, was, after the couple's engagement (1411), sealed through the wedding, which took place at Constantinople, most probably in 1414⁸⁴.

Turning to the Sakkos of Photios (see **figs 1-3**), it was a gift, sent (probably) from the »Byzantine authorities to the Muscovite Church«⁸⁵ and presumably produced for his inauguration service in Moscow or, more importantly, for

the liturgical celebration of the imperial wedding. The vestment's highly complex and sophisticated iconography was most probably designed by Photios himself⁸⁶, and represents a masterpiece of late Byzantine church embroidery. This precious piece of art was (among others) acquired by the Kremlin Museum (i.e. in the *Oružejnaja Palata*) in 1920 from the Patriarchal Vestry⁸⁷.

But why or to what extent is the aforementioned »complicated relationship« expressed in the front design of the Sakkos? It is its front, which shows in the central part of its lowest register, above the hem and on the same level, the following four figures: On the left (as seen by the observer) co-emperor

82 See PLP 21481. He became uncrowned co-emperor 1406/1407, and was crowned as such in January 1421, see Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken II*, 410f., and Ferjančić, *Savladarstvo 370-372*, both also with reference to the Sakkos.

83 On her see PLP 21349.

84 Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken II*, 406f. (who erroneously corrects the date of the wedding to »etwa 1411«). – Dukas, *Ἱστορία*, 222/223 (with n. 78, fixing 1411 for the engagement, and 1414 for the wedding); 1414 is likewise given as the date for the wedding by Obolensky, *Notes* 141-142. – Kämpfer, *Herrscherbild* 150. – PLP 21349 (on Anna). – Kučkin, *Vasilij* 109. – Barkov, *Sakkos* 505. – Hilsdale, *Art* 297. – Kolditz, *Johannes VIII* 636.

85 Obolensky, *Notes* 141. – Kämpfer, *Herrscherbild* 150. – Hilsdale, *Art* 293. According to Barkov, *Vestments* 457 it is not clear, »whether they [the Sakkoi and other Byzantine pieces] were presented by the Byzantine emperors to metropol-

itans of Moscow for their particular services, or whether they were brought to Moscow from Constantinople or made in Moscow by visiting craftsmen. There is not even unanimity about the time when they were made«. On the reconstruction of the Major Sakkos (including the so called Minor Sakkos and other ones) see Kachanova, *Reconstruction*, also taking into account the replacement and additions of depictions, parts of liturgical texts and of inscriptions in Greek and Old Russian, all apparently carried out in Russia: see her summary at 465.

86 Barkov, *Sakkos* 512. On the complex iconography of the Major Sakkos' front see *ibidem* 488-496. 502-505. – Bogdanović, *Canopy* 249-266 and Hilsdale, *Art* 301-316. 325-332 (both still ignoring the results of the studies by Barkov and Kachanova). – Photios is also depicted on the front of the Sakkos.

87 Barkov, *Vestments* 452. – Barkov, *Sakkos* 488.

John (VIII) Palaiologos and his Russian bride Anna Vasil'evna, both depicted with a halo as sign of their official (imperial) sanctity⁸⁸ and each of them standing upon a *soupedion* (Latin: *suppedaneum*); on the right the bride's parents, Vasilij I and his wife, both without a halo and not standing upon a *soupedion*. All four figures, depicted in the same size and labelled by their official titles⁸⁹, are vested in their official garments and wear a crown, while the rulers hold additional insignia⁹⁰. With regard to the ranking of both rulers (and their spouses) it is important, indeed decisive to realize that, on the one hand, only a spiritually based supremacy of the Byzantine couple is clearly marked by the halo and the standing on a *soupedion*⁹¹, while, on the other hand, the political equal ranking of *both* couples, particularly of the rulers, is a further »hypothetical designate« of the compositional context, as the late Frank Kämpfer put it in his detailed interpretation of the Sakkos⁹². This equal ranking is, in my opinion, indeed clearly expressed through the couples' position on the same level. The importance of

this compositional element has been if not overlooked, then at the very least underestimated by Obolensky, Hilsdale and Barkov⁹³, though it ultimately confirms Obolensky's concept (cf. above, text between notes 41-44) and even facilitates the understanding of Vasilij's acceptance of the expressly depicted spiritual supremacy of the Byzantine Imperial couple.

To conclude with an ecclesiastical outlook: Since Vladimir's baptism also initiated the broad Christianisation of the Kievan Rus' and led to the establishment of ecclesiastical structures in the metropolitanate of Kiev, medieval Russia became an integral part of the ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople⁹⁴. And it remained more or less within the patriarchal sphere of influence until Grand Prince Vasilij II attained the desired autocephaly in 1448⁹⁵, but not (or only very conditionally) under the influence of the Byzantine emperor. The conclusion of this development was the foundation of the Russian patriarchate in Moscow in 1589, which was also accepted by the ecumenical patriarchate⁹⁶.

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88 See most recently Kolditz, Johannes VIII 636 referring here also to the Major Sakkos, and 638; on the emperor's sanctity in general see for instance Pitsakis, Sainteté.

89 The titles of the Byzantine couple in Greek, and those of the Russian couple in Old Russian: Kämpfer, Herrscherbild 150. – Barkov, Sakkos 494. – Hilsdale, Art 294 f.

90 Mayasova, Embroidery 44-50 (with excellent photos). – Barkov, Sakkos 488-496 offer detailed descriptions of the front of the Sakkos; cf. also Hilsdale, Art 293-311.

91 Obolensky, Notes 145. – Hilsdale, Art 293-295.

92 Kämpfer, Herrscherbild 150, 155-156 where he states: »The princely Russian couple stands undoubtedly for other than family reasons besides the Byzantine co-imperial couple. A programmatic reference to the overall iconographic program is added to the compositional context with the designate of the equal ranking in the »Family of Kings«. (»Unzweifelhaft steht das russische Fürstenpaar aus anderen als familiären Gründen neben dem Paar der byzantinischen Mitkaiser. Zum kompositorischen Zusammenhang mit dem hypothetischen Designat der Ranggleichheit in der »Familie der Könige« tritt ein programma-

tischer Bezug zum ikonographischen Gesamtprogramm des Sakkos« 155). Unfortunately, Mayasova, Barkov, Bogdanović and Hilsdale overlooked Kämpfer's important book.

93 Obolensky, Notes 145-146. – Barkov, Sakkos 502, 511. – Hilsdale, Art 293, 298 (with n. 85), with her final remark 327: »The sakkos places the contemporary royal effigies in the forefront of the composition, celebrating family unity and the intertwined histories of Palaiologan and Muscovite dynasties, but beyond this it ultimately emphasizes the source of family unity as Orthodoxy that binds them all and that is centered in imperial Constantinople. The Byzantine vision of – or really desire for union in the service of the Queen of Cities«.

94 Preiser-Kapeller, Episkopat 489-497 offers an overview on its history. – On the titles of the metropolitans, who kept their title »Metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia«, even after 1328, when Moscow became their seat, see Vetochnikov, Titre 274. 282-284. 295. 298-302.

95 On the establishment of the autocephaly of the Russian Church see Abelenčeva, Mitropolit.

96 Preiser-Kapeller, Patriarchat 76. – Mureşan, Introduction 15.

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Summary / Zusammenfassung

Byzantium, the Rus and the So-called Family of Kings. From George Ostrogorsky to Franz Dölger's Construct and its Critics

This essay engages with the discussion surrounding the historical applicability of the construct of the »Family of Kings in the Middle Ages«, which has had much influence in Byzantine Studies and Medieval Studies. It was articulated by the Munich Byzantinist Franz Dölger (1891-1968) in an article which appeared in 1940 (and reprinted in 1953 and 1964). After increasing amounts of criticism on the concept were voiced from the 1970s onwards, the Frankfurt Byzantinist Wolfram Brandes subjected it to a fundamental critique at the Historikertag of 2012 in Mainz: first in a historical-source critical respect with the thesis, that it lacks almost any basis whatsoever in the source material, and thus is obsolete; second, with regard to the history of scholarship with the observation, that it was supposedly based on Dölger's sympathy for Hitler's plans of world domination. Upon closer inspection, however, it proves that Brandes' criticism applies primarily to the early medieval sphere. Indeed, with regard to the contemporary historical context, Brandes completely overlooked the fact that Dölger's essay was a reaction to the article »The Byzantine Hierarchy of States« (»Die byzantinische Staatenhierarchie«), which appeared in 1936, of the Byzantinist Georg Ostrogorsky, who had finished his doctorate in Göttingen and his habilitation in Breslau in 1928. After the rise to power of the National Socialists, he lost position due to their repressive and racist legislation, which forced him to emigrate to Belgrade via Prague. It is thus worth taking into consideration that Ostrogorsky never felt compelled to voice any notable critique of Dölger's construct. Furthermore, it is a matter of the question whether in connection with the »baptism« of Kievan Rus' under Prince Vladimir (988) one can still speak of his entry into the »Family of Kings«. The answer lies, as is demonstrated, in a modification of the model of the Byzantine Commonwealth developed by Obolensky.

(Transl. Z. Chitwood, Mainz)

Byzanz, die Rus' und die sogenannte Familie der Könige. Von George Ostrogorsky zu Franz Dölgers Konstrukt und seinen Kritiken

Der Beitrag befasst sich mit der Diskussion um die historische Tragfähigkeit des Konstrukts der »Familie der Könige im Mittelalter«, das in der Byzantinistik und Mediävistik eine starke Wirkung entfaltet. Konzipiert wurde es von dem Münchner Byzantinisten Franz Dölger (1891-1968) in einem 1940 erschienenen Artikel (nachgedruckt 1953 und 1964). Nachdem man seit den 1970er Jahren zunehmend Kritik an dem Konstrukt geübt hatte, unterzog es der Frankfurter Byzantinist Wolfram Brandes auf dem Mainzer Historikertag 2012 einer fundamentalen Kritik: Erstens in historisch-quellenkritischer Hinsicht mit der These, das Konstrukt entbehre fast jeglicher Quellenbasis, sei somit obsolete; zweitens in wissenschaftsgeschichtlicher Hinsicht durch den Hinweis, es verdanke sich Dölgers Sympathie für Hitlers Weltherrschaftspläne. Näher betrachtet, zeigt sich aber, dass Brandes' Kritik hauptsächlich im Hinblick auf frühmittelalterliche Aspekte zutrifft. Doch im Hinblick auf den zeitgeschichtlichen Aspekt übersah Brandes völlig, dass Dölgers Beitrag eine Reaktion auf den 1936 erschienenen Artikel »Die byzantinische Staatenhierarchie« des in Göttingen promovierten und 1928 in Breslau habilitierten Byzantinisten Georg Ostrogorsky darstellt, der 1933, gleich nach Machtübernahme der Nationalsozialisten, durch deren repressive und rassistische Gesetzgebung seine Stellung verlor, was ihn in die Emigration über Prag nach Belgrad zwang. Es sollte also zu denken geben, dass sich Ostrogorsky nie veranlasst sah, an Dölgers Konstrukt nennenswerte Kritik zu üben. Des Weiteren geht es um die Frage, ob man im Zusammenhang mit der »Taufe« Altrusslands unter Fürst Vladimir (988) noch von seiner Aufnahme in die »Familie der Könige« sprechen könne. Die Antwort liegt, wie sich zeigt, in einer Modifikation des von Obolensky entwickelten Konzepts des Byzantine Commonwealth.