

PRAYING FOR THE DEAD IN MUSCOVY: KINSHIP AWARENESS AND ORTHODOX BELIEF IN THE COMMEMORATIONS OF MUSCOVITE ROYALTY

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St. Athanasius the Great, the fourth-century father of the Christian Church who defended and elaborated many of Christianity's fundamental teachings, had a lot to say about death and the dead. For him and for early Christians, the dead remained very much a part of the church itself, still awaiting Christ's return, still hoping for their salvation.¹ They may no longer have been among the living, but the dead were not truly gone for early Christians. They lived on, souls separated from bodies, yet a part of the community of believers and continuing to work out their salvation with the aid of their brethren in Christ.

This aid came principally in the form of commemorative prayers for their salvation offered by living relatives and friends. The liturgical and calendrical structures of the early Christian Church, and in later centuries in the Orthodox East, were arranged with prayer for the dead as an integral part of the life of the pious Christian. Children prayed for their departed parents and ancestors, parents prayed for children who had died in childhood, siblings prayed for each other, and husbands for their wives and

¹ See "Poslanie Iosifa Volotskogo kniagine Goleninovi," 350.

in-laws—the entirety of Christian culture embraced the commemoration of the dead. Indeed, commemoration was so central to early Christians that St. Athanasius the Great warned that those who did not remember to pray for their reposed relatives risked condemnation at the Last Judgment, when neglected kin would appear at the dread judgment seat of Christ as witnesses for the prosecution.

In the Orthodox East, commemoration came to be linked with monasticism, as monks, whose vocation it was to pray (for themselves and for the sins of the world), began to offer themselves as supplicants for those laity, who, being in the world, had other more secular ways of spending their days. In medieval and early modern Russia, monasteries quickly became centers for commemorative prayers for the dead, and every level of society, from princes to peasants, came to monasteries to offer donations that would guarantee that prayers for the donors' kin would be offered by the monks. Donations varied in sum, as did the range of commemorations they paid for. Donors could pay a small sum (perhaps a few kopecks up to perhaps a few rubles) for commemorative prayers for a short time (the 40-day prayers after the person's death, or daily prayers for perhaps a year). Larger sums could procure commemorations for longer periods (daily, or annually on the date the person died, or on the feast day of the person's patron saint), or forever, or, as monastic sources put it, "for as long as this holy house stands."

The means for performing commemorations at Muscovite monasteries or large churches was the *synodikon*, a liturgical book that contained the names of reposed Orthodox Christians that were to be recited at monasteries and churches for the salvation of the souls of those listed.² The structure and arrangement of *synodikons* in the 16th and 17th centuries could vary enormously, but many began with what was a standard opening commemoration

² The word "synodikon" was used for two functionally very different sources. The first was the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, a literary text read once a year on the Sunday of Orthodoxy (the first Sunday of Great Lent), which commemorated the restoration of icons in Orthodox worship, and which listed all those anathematized by the church. The second form of the *synodikon*, the one employed in this study, is the liturgical book that recorded commemorations and that was used at various times and in various services to remember in prayer the names of those recorded in it. On this distinction, see Petukhov, *Ocherki iz literaturnoi istorii sinodiki*; and Steindorff, *Memoria in Altrußland*.

of patriarchs, metropolitans, tsars, tsaritsas, grand princes, grand princesses, appanage princes (collateral members of the ruling dynasty) and their wives. After this obligatory commemoration of the rulers of Muscovy's church and state, most synodikons continued with the names of Orthodox Christians for whom donors, almost always close relatives, had commissioned prayers. In the late 16th and 17th centuries, the custom emerged of ordering names into family entries, or articles (*stat'ia*), each comprising the family of prince so-and-so, followed by names, and then the family of some other prince so-and-so and more names.³ The synodikon was not only the liturgical listing of names to be read at church services by monks—its main and original purpose—but it also was a source that can be used today to reveal notions of family and kinship awareness that were held by late medieval Muscovites, whether they were peasants or princes or tsars.

This article poses and explores a number of fundamental questions about kinship awareness and Orthodox beliefs as they are revealed in monastic synodikons from the 16th and 17th centuries. The focus will be on royal commemorations: the lists of royalty that appear at the beginning of synodikons and in the prayer lists of the Romanov boyar clan that rose in 1613 to occupy the throne after a 15-year interregnum. The royal commemorations in three synodikons will be examined in detail: the 1556/67 commemoration list of Ivan IV the Terrible;⁴ the early 17th-century synodikon of the Znamenskii Monastery;⁵ and the 1677 synodikon compiled by Tsar Fedor Alekseevich for a private family chapel in the royal apartments of the Kremlin.⁶ These three important synodikons will also be placed within the context of a set of royal and Romanov family commemorations that appear in more than a dozen other synodikons of the 16th and 17th centuries.⁷ Who was

³ On the structure of synodikons and their use, see Konev, "Synodikologija"; Shablova, *Sinodik*, 3–62; Spock, "Commemoration and Social Identity"; and Romanov, *Russkii sinodik*, 16–30. More generally, see Spock, "Good Order of the Monastery"; and Miller, *Saint Sergius of Radonezh*, 105–68.

⁴ See Kashtanov, "Tsarskii sinodik"; and Belokurov, "Sinodik Moskovskikh tsarei XVI veka."

⁵ RGADA, Fond 188, opis' 1, No. 46, folia 4v–6, and No. 47, ff. 16–17v.

⁶ GIM, Museum Collection, No. 3652.

⁷ Other Romanov synodikon family "articles" used in this study appear in the following sources: RGADA, Fond 1192, op. 2, No. 561, ff. 10, 10v, and 16v

listed in these royal prayer lists and who was not? What do these lists tell us about kinship awareness among the ruling families of Muscovy? What was the commemorative activity of Muscovite rulers before 1613 and how was it different from that of boyar clans? In synodikons composed after 1613, how were Romanov commemorations treated? How was the transformation of a former boyar clan into a ruling dynasty reflected in their commemorative activity? Orthodox belief held that the dead were very much a concern of the living, and so this study will explore how Orthodox beliefs about death reveal notions of family and kinship awareness among the living, especially among the royal elite.

The Study of Death and Commemoration in Muscovy

The general *Problematik* for this study—what kin did one include in a prayer list and why—is one that has been studied before, but never in relation to the ruling families of Muscovy. The field has its origins, naturally enough, in the publication of the sources central to the study of commemoration at the end of the 19th century. The sources published at this time included principally monastic records such as the synodikons (*sinodiki*); donation books (*vkladnye knigi*), which registered donations to monasteries and large churches; and books of feasts (*kormovye knigi*), which listed donations for commemorative meals on the anniversaries of a relative's death, name day, or, on rare occasions, birthday.⁸ Interest in com-

(Iosifo-Volokolamsk, 16th century); GIM, Diocesan Collection., No. 411, ff. 19, 139–140, and No. 414, ff. 159–159v (16th century); GIM, Simonov Collection, No. 2, ff. 27–28v, 45, 59v (Simonov, 17th century); RGADA, Fond 396, op. 2 (7), No. 3714, ff. 112–113 (Church of St. Evdokiia, 1633); GIM, Bars. Collection, No. 974, ff. 108v–110v (Andronikov, 17th century); GIM, Diocesan Collection., No. 706, folium 85 (17th century); RGADA, Fond 381, op. 1, No. 273, ff. 31–32 (Kaluga, Church of Holy Trinity, 17th century); GIM, Voskresenskoe Collection, No. 66, ff. 78–78v (Synodikon of Grand Princess Tatiana Mikhailovna, 17th century); GIM, Voskresenskoe Collection, No. 67, f. 8 (17th century); RGB, Fond 304, No. 818, ff. 46–46v (Troitse-Sergieva Monastery, 17th century); RGB, Fond 256, No. 387, ff. 2–3v (excerpts from various synodikons, 19th-century copy); GIM, Diocesan Collection, No. 667, ff. 131–139v (Voznesenskoe, 17th century); GIM, Museum Collection, no. 1343, ff. 5, 16v (17th century). Published Romanov “articles” include: Lund and Okhotina, “Rospis’ glavam Sinodika valaamskogo monastyria XVI v.”

⁸ On donation books and books of feasts, see Shablova, *Kormovoe pomoinovenie*; Kirichenko and Nikolaeva, *Kormovaia kniga*; Steindorff, *Speisungsbuch*; Kuchkin, “Tsennyi istochnik”; Kazakova, “K izucheniiu vkladnykh knig”; and Klitina, Manushina, and Nikolaeva, “Vkladnye knigi.”

memoration sources peaked in the decades before the Russian Revolution, when they were noticed by historians and genealogists working on the boyar elite, and as additional sources began to be published and analyzed, including various monastic documents (*akty*), account books (*raskhodnye knigi*), donation charters (*dannye*), wills (*dukhovnye*), and various land registers that provided rich, though often scattered, material for the study of the members of the early modern Russian royal court. Many of the donors listed in synodikons and other documents are, naturally enough, from the boyar elite, and the fact that the family histories of boyar clans were so well preserved in other genres of historical documentation made for a couple of decades of fertile investigations of the role of class and kinship in the workings of the Muscovite political system.

Soviet historiography paid less attention to these sources and to the problem of death and commemoration in general. Economic class and conflict became the dominant model for historical scholarship in the 1920s and 1930s, and death and commemoration as a discrete topic died a quick and hushed death. What work in this field and with these sources that was done focused narrowly on the biographies of political figures, and was cast as “source studies” (*istochnikovedenie*) as a way to obtain begrudging approval for this work from Soviet academic authorities.⁹ One scholar, S. B. Veselovskii, continued to see political relations in terms of kinship (not class) and made vast use of synodikons and donation books in his research on the boyars in the 16th century, little of which was published during his lifetime.¹⁰ A generation later, A. A. Zimin found these sources useful for filling in the biographies of prominent figures and families at court, and he, too, found himself frequently in “hot water,” unable to publish some of his best work.¹¹ As Soviet historiography became progressively walled off from new methodological and theoretical developments in history proceeding in the West, new categories of investigation—the body, gender, death—remained out of grasp and out of favor.

⁹ On the politics and dangers of certain historical topics during Soviet times, see Kobrin, *Komu ty opasen, istorik?*, 131–218.

¹⁰ Veselovskii, *Issledovaniia*; and his personal collection in ANN, Fond 620 (especially, e.g., No. 173).

¹¹ Zimin, *Oprichnina Ivana Groznogo*. See also Kobrin, *Komu ty opasen, istorik?*, 184–193.

In the 1980s, however, things began to change in the Soviet Union as a growing number of enthusiasts rediscovered the synodikon and the topics of death and commemoration through a growing interest in genealogy. Amateur genealogists and history buffs appeared in the reading rooms of Soviet archives, searching for their family histories and discovering synodikons to be among the best sources available for their purposes. Eventually, the Moscow Historical-Genealogical society would be re-founded (it had been disbanded after the 1917 Revolution), and at least one new journal that appeared in 1993 made it its business to trumpet the synodikon as a kind of lost, and now rediscovered, historical oracle that contained all the genealogical answers.¹² Serious historians took note too. The husband-and-wife team of Vladimir and Irina Dergachev produced a handful of important articles on death and commemoration that broke new ground and reintroduced the field and the sources to a new generation of professional historians.¹³ Ludwig Steindorff in Germany built on the Dergachevs' contributions with his own work on the Iosifo-Volokolamsk Monastery in the 16th and 17th centuries—perhaps the birthplace, according to Steindorff, of many of the conventions used at monasteries in the commemoration of the dead.¹⁴

Today, the study of death and commemoration is alive and well and is pursued by scholars both inside and outside Russia, and the range of topics being investigated is widening. Historians of Russian Orthodoxy, for example, have taken notice of the rich sources available for their researches of Muscovite liturgical practice and Orthodox eschatological beliefs. The view—held in Soviet times generally but also by some historians even in pre-Revolutionary times—that prayer for the dead was rooted more in the residue of pagan religious practice in the East Slavic space than in Christian doctrine and dogma, has now been openly questioned. Recent studies have shown the long and deep roots of prayer *for* the dead in Christianity—and prayer *to* the dead on the behalf of the living. The rituals of prayer for the dead, Orthodox teaching on the role and place of saints (who are not prayed for, but rather to), and the general attitude in Orthodoxy that the

¹² *Istoricheskaia genealogiia/Historical Genealogy* appeared for the first time in 1993. The first issue of the revamped journal of the Moscow Historical-Genealogical Society, called *Letopis'*, also appeared in 1993.

¹³ Dergachev, "Rodoslovie Dionissia Ikonnika"; and Dergacheva, "K literaturnoi istorii drevnerusskogo sinodika."

¹⁴ Steindorff, *Memoria in Altrußland*.

dead and the living together constitute the Church (not just the living)—all these have intertwined to make a strong case that one need go no farther back than the teachings of the Eastern Church, and not to pagan cults, to find the roots of the customs and practices surrounding prayer for the dead.¹⁵

Economic historians, too, have ventured into the world of commemoration. Recent works on the economy of late medieval and early modern Russia (the 14th through 17th centuries) have found monastic records to be a treasure trove for materials on Muscovy's material culture and economic life. The income to monasteries from commemorative donations and bequests in wills has been shown to be a substantial part of the financial resources of these holy houses. Richard Hellie has looked at commemorative donations and shown the large amounts given by individuals and families for commemoration and the trends in those donations over the 17th century,¹⁶ and there have been specialized studies of single monasteries that have provided clues about the way in which commemoration insinuated itself into the monastic economy.¹⁷ Part of this increased focus on monastic accounts has included new studies of the administration at monasteries. Steindorff's study of the Iosifo-Volokolamsk Monastery showed that not only new procedures for receiving, recording, and performing commemorations were invented there, but that these new procedures may have been later adopted in other monastic communities in Muscovy and perhaps even by the royal chancelleries in Moscow.¹⁸

Political history, too, has profited from these new avenues of research. The shift in historiographical focus away from class relationships and conflict and toward kinship alliances, marriage ties, and consensus politics has made these sources very important to the study of court politics. S. B. Veselovskii understood this perhaps first of all. His use of monastic sources like donation books and synodikons helped him fill in the genealogies and the biographies of many key figures in the court in the 16th century. These sources also led him to the conclusion that politics was very much

¹⁵ See Sazonov, "Molitva mertvykh za zhivyykh"; and Komarovich, "Kul't roda i zemli."

¹⁶ Hellie, *Economy*, 498–512.

¹⁷ Spock, "Solovki Monastery"; Borisov, *Khoziaistvo Solovetskogo monastyria*; Savich, *Solovetskaia votchina*; and Kliuchevskii, "Khoziaistvennaia deiatel'nost'."

¹⁸ Steindorff, "Commemoration and Administrative Techniques."

shaped by the kinship and marriage ties that bound allies together. While his approach was not much in favor in Soviet times, where the class-based perspective obviously was paramount, there were nonetheless those who picked up where he left off. A generation after Veselovskii, Edward Keenan emphasized kinship and consensus at the court even to the point of suggesting a new paradigm for Muscovite political history by substituting more anthropological models for the formation of political groupings over models based on the state or on class. Today, many of Keenan's early skeptics have reconsidered his views on kinship and politics and come to terms with them, even if they do not always wholly accept all his ideas about the limited nature of monarchical power in Muscovy.¹⁹

While Keenan, unlike Veselovskii, made very little use of commemoration sources in his own work, both nonetheless understood Muscovite politics to be largely about kinship and marriage inside the court elite. The boyar elite were grouped into factions whose internal links often were cemented by marriage ties. These ties made allies into kinsmen, and kin were the very people for whom prayers were offered. It is thus no surprise that we find family articles in synodikons containing in-laws from other clans, and no surprise that we find entries in donation books with large sums given for political allies who also turned out to be affines.²⁰ Commemoration lists reflect not only religious values and the general belief in the efficaciousness of prayer for the dead, but also a family's political alliances. Commemorative prayers may not have been the origin of an alliance between one Muscovite boyar clan and another—these bonds were created with marriage, with patronage and clientage, and with intersecting political careers and political aspirations—but it would be rare, indeed, for us not to see these bonds reflected in the prayer lists composed by members of highly placed clans. We thus have in these prayer lists excellent sources for the study of kinship awareness—who was considered kin and who was not—by examining and identifying (to the extent possible) the names listed in a family article.

¹⁹ Keenan, "Muscovite Political Folkways"; Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*; and Martin, *Bride for the Tsar*. See also Bogatyrev, *Sovereign and His Counsellors*; and Pavlov, *Gosudarev dvor i politicheskaiia bor'ba*.

²⁰ Martin, "Gifts for the Dead"; Martin, *Bride for the Tsar*, 162–164, 183–184, 195–196; and Spock, "Solovki Monastery, 68–97, 215–226."

The study of commemoration and kinship awareness presents two approaches. The first takes as its subject one or more monasteries for which many of the documentary sources survive and seeks to reconstruct the commemorative activity of donors, and the role of pious donations and bequests in the life of the selected monastery or monasteries. The approach allows the researcher to examine very closely the relationship between many clans and a single or small group of monasteries.²¹ In the second approach, it is not a single monastery but a single clan, or perhaps even a single person, whose commemorative activity over many monasteries is investigated. This approach brings the researcher closer to the donors and their relatives, allowing one to peer into the clan's finances, determine the extent and frequency of commemorative gifts and bequests, elucidate the family's genealogy, and provide a rare glimpse into Muscovite kinship awareness. This second approach has its challenges, however. To reconstruct a clan's commemorative activity requires access to monastic records that are often scattered among regional and central repositories and working monasteries. It is a Herculean task, one made all the more vexing by the fact that many of the most important sources for this work are no longer extant. Therefore, this approach has, with few exceptions, been limited to a handful of elite clans and prominent individuals whose commemorative activity is well preserved. Vladimir Degachev studied the well-known iconographer, Dionisii (fl. second half of the 15th century). S. V. Sazonov looked at the commemorations of Patriarch Nikon (1605–1681). The Mstislavskii princely clan has been studied in some detail.²² The royal dynasties of Russia (Daniilovich, Godunov, Shuiskii, and Romanov) offer similarly promising avenues for this approach.²³

Commemorating the Royal Dead

Between October 1556 and January 1557, Tsar Ivan IV (the Terrible) commissioned a commemoration list (*pamiat'*) of Muscovite grand princes and appanage princes that was meant to be dispatched to Constantinople for inclusion in the personal synodikon

²¹ Steindorff's work on Iosifo-Volokolamsk Monastery or Spock's on Solovki represent excellent recent examples of this approach.

²² Dergachev, "Rodoslovie Dionisiia Ikonnika"; Sazonov, "Pominaniia roda patriarkha Nikona," 81–82; and Martin, "Gifts for the Dead." See also Steindorff, "Princess Mariia Golenina."

²³ Martin, "Gifts and Commemoration."

of Ecume-nical Patriarch Ioasaf. The source is well known and has been published and analyzed, but it has yet to be studied in comparative perspective—alongside the lists of royalty found at the beginning of many Muscovite synodikons of the 16th and 17th centuries.²⁴ In his commemoration list, Ivan IV lists members of his lineage: “the commemoration of the dynasty (*rod*) of the pious tsar and grand prince, Ivan Vasil’evich of all Rus’, of pious tsars and grand princes of Russia, and of appanage princes.”²⁵ The text is divided into sections. The first section lists ten princely saints of Kievan Rus’, all from the Riurikovich dynasty as Ivan himself was.²⁶ This list is separated out from other names that follow, inasmuch as one does not in Orthodox practice pray for the soul of departed saints since their salvation is already assured. One prays only for those whose salvation remains at God’s mercy—that is, the rest of us. And so, the text identifies these ten names not for commemoration (*pominati na panikhidakh*, that is, those prayed for in the *panikhida* service for the dead) but as dynastic saints to whom supplicatory services (*molebeny*) can be offered and for whom canons and verses (*stikhiry*) have been composed.

The other sections of Ivan’s commemoration list are arranged by rank and position in the dynasty. Immediately following the royal saints are grand princes of Kiev and Moscow, starting with Iaroslav the Wise (r. 1019–1054) and proceeding down the genealogy of the dynasty to Grand Prince Vasilii III (r. 1505–1533), Vasilii’s brothers, his nephew, and finally the Tsarevich Dmitrii, Ivan IV’s first son, who died in 1553. After the grand princes follow the appanage princes (*kniazi udelnye*), then grand princesses, the princes of Smolensk, of Tver’, of Polotsk, Chernigov, and Riazan’. The commemoration list ends with a short and selective list of appanage princesses—the wives of prominent collateral members of the Riurikovich dynasty. Ivan’s commemoration list amounts to a genealogy by rank, with his relatives arranged by their relationship to the ruling branch of the dynasty and to him.

Ivan’s commemoration list poses a number of questions important for our study of royal commemorations in synodikons. S. M.

²⁴ The most recent publication of the text is Kashtanov, “Tsarskii sinodik,” containing an ample bibliography of studies dedicated to it.

²⁵ Kashtanov, “Tsarskii sinodik,” 51–53.

²⁶ The ten names, listed in the order they appear in Ivan’s commemoration list, are: St. Vladimir; Ss. Boris and Gleb; St. Mikhail of Chernigov; St. Aleksandr Nevskii; St. Feodor of Smolensk and Yaroslavl’ and his sons, Ss. Davyd and Konstantin; St. Mikhail of Tver’; and St. Vsevolod of Pskov.

Kashtanov has plausibly argued that Ivan's list may have derived from the "Sovereign's Genealogy" ("*Gosudarev rodoslovet*")—an official genealogy of the dynasty composed by Ivan IV in 1555.²⁷ A comparison of the composition of Ivan's commemoration list and surviving copies of the "Sovereign's Genealogy" shows numerous similarities. Though there is some variation in the extant copies, the "Sovereign's Genealogy" begins, like Ivan's list, with grand princes, tracing the dynasty all the way back to Riurik (not St. Vladimir). Next come the appanage princes, then the tsars of Astrakhan', the Crimea and Kazan', then the princes of Smolensk, Riazan', Tver', Lithuania, Chernigov, Suzdal', Rostov, and Yaroslavl'. Only after these branches of the Riurikovich Dynasty have been fully elaborated do we find the genealogies of boyar and non-titled servitor clans, arranged hierarchically by rank and position at court. Ivan's commemoration list omits some groups of princes that are included in the "Sovereign's Genealogy," which is probably best explained by the fact that they were not Orthodox (tsars of Astrakhan', the Crimea, Kazan'—who were Muslim), since commemorations were restricted only to Orthodox Christians.²⁸ It makes perfect sense, then, that Ivan's list is shorter and more selective than that found in the "Sovereign's Genealogy"; the rules and practice of Orthodox commemoration required the deletions. Indeed, even the founder of the dynasty—Riurik (who most certainly was not the historical progenitor of the dynasty, despite centuries of tradition to that effect)—is omitted.²⁹ He had been a pagan.

Kashtanov, then, is probably right, though we can perhaps go a bit further than he did. Not only did the "Sovereign's Genealogy" serve as a source for Ivan's commemoration list (in fact, the two sources were probably produced by the same scribes working in the same chancellery), but it most likely served as the source text for the standard commemoration section of royalty found at the beginning of most monastic synodikons, and perhaps even for some chronicle entries and other literary sources.³⁰ We know from a broad comparison of synodikons that a common source text

²⁷ Kashtanov, "Tsarskii sinodik," 47.

²⁸ See Bychkova, *Rodoslovnnye knigi*, 32–64.

²⁹ Pritsak, *Origin of Rus'*, 3–33; Pritsak, "Invitation to the Varangians"; and Pritsak, "*Pověst vremennyx lét* and the Question of Truth."

³⁰ On the relationship between synodikons and other literary genres, see Dergacheva, "K literaturnoi istorii drevnerusskogo sinodika."

must have been used and copied when new synodikons were being produced in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. We know this because some synodikons include an error that had evidently slipped into one version of the genealogy of Muscovite princes sometime after the protograph was compiled, which then got copied by sloppy scribes into some texts we have extant today.³¹ It is certain, then, that a master list of the dynasty circulated for the purpose of commemoration. That master list depicts, in a sense, the range and limits of royal kinship awareness.

Interestingly, the differentiation we find in Ivan's commemoration list between royal ancestors who are saints (and therefore prayed *to*) and those who were not saints (and therefore prayed *for*) is not repeated in monastic synodikons of the 16th and 17th centuries. At the very top of the list of royalty in many synodikons is St. Vladimir, Equal to the Apostles and Enlightener of Rus'. Seven generations below him appears St. Alexandr Nevskii. Ivan's list rightly segregates these two royal saints (and the eight others typically not included in synodikon lists) because, as is obvious, saints are not to be commemorated as if their salvation still hung in the balance and could be affected by the prayers of their descendants. In synodikon after synodikon, these two saintly princes are inappropriately placed in prayer lists. It appears, then, that the list of royalty in synodikons represent as much a genealogy—an articulation of dynasticism and kinship awareness—as a proper commemoration of the dead. In this way, Ivan IV, in composing his commemoration list of his dynasty (*rod*), is telegraphing for us his understanding of who was in and who was not in his family.

Ivan knew, as we do today, that all the names on his commemoration list were agnatic kinsmen. This is why the other names and other princes listed on the "Sovereign's Genealogy"—the probable source text for Ivan's listing—were excluded: the tsars of

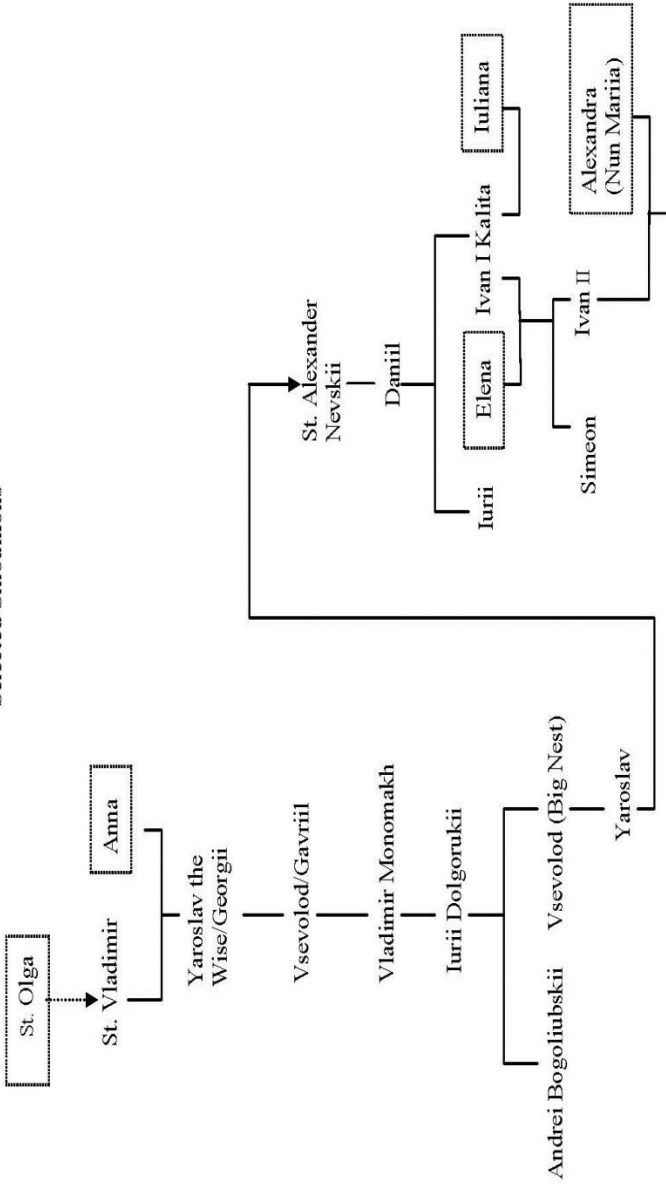
³¹ Most synodikons trace royal genealogies from St. Vladimir—the first Christian grand prince—down a patrilineal line of descent to Vasiliï III, the last Muscovite ruler to hold the title grand prince before the official adoption of the title "tsar". Some versions (see, e.g., RGADA, Fond 381, No. 274; Fond 396, No. 3714, and RGB, Fond 304, No. 818) insert an extra "Vasiliï" and "Ivan" in the list (an easy scribal error to make, perhaps, given the frequent repetition of the names in the Muscovite ruling house). Other errors, idiosyncratic to single copies perhaps, appear as well (see, e.g., the omitted Vladimir Monomakh and the misplaced Dmitriï Donskoi in RGADA, Fond 381, No. 273). For complete and correct examples of the genealogy, see GIM, Museum Collection. 3652; or GIM, Simonov, No. 2.

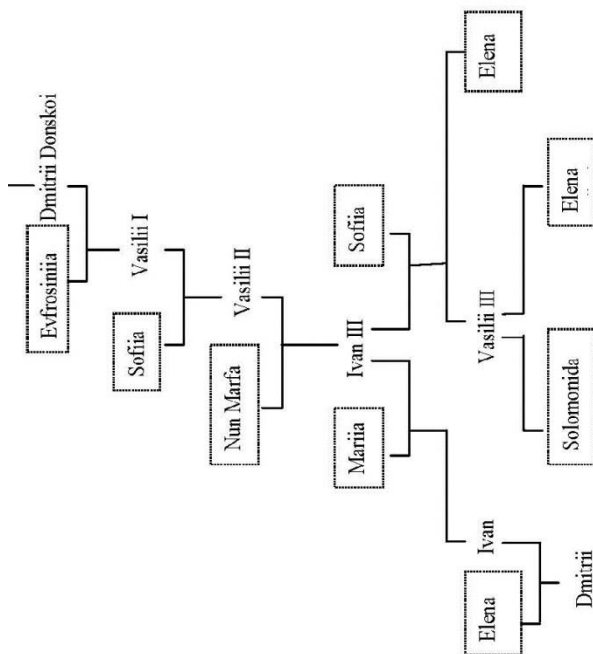
Astrakhan' and Kazan' and the Crimea were not only *not* Orthodox, they were not really kin. There is also a very real difference of focus between Ivan's list and later monastic synodikons. While Ivan's list includes branches of the Riurikovich Dynasty that ruled in other principalities (Riazan', Tver', Chernigov, and so on), synodikons frequently provided only a lineal list of fathers and sons in a straight line from Muscovite rulers back to St. Vladimir (Table 1). Collateral members of the ruling house are ignored in synodikons until we reach the rulers of Moscow, when we meet for the first time a few collateral members of the ruling house. Prayers are limited to direct ancestors, not cousins once or twice (or more) removed.

The Muscovite focus in the synodikons is perhaps seen best of all in the list of grand princesses. In Ivan's list, we have a genealogically much broader (and longer) list of royal women commemorated than in many synodikons. Starting with St. Ol'ga (d. 962), Ivan's list contains the spouses of many grand princes in Kievan, appanage, and Muscovite times, including the wives of many princes from collateral branches of the dynasty. In synodikons, however, the list of royal women began with St. Ol'ga, "who in holy baptism is known as Elena," followed by Anna, the Byzantine wife of St. Vladimir. From here, many synodikons jump over eight generations of grand princes and their wives to Ivan I of Moscow (r. 1328–1341) and his two wives, then to the wives of each ruler thereafter, down to Vasili III (Table 1). It is curious to note that Ivan's list presents sainted royal women together with the non-sainted women; there is no separate section for female saints as there is for their male counterparts. In their presentation of saintly princesses, at least, Ivan's list and subsequent synodikons are very much alike.

Ivan was praying for his dynasty, which is to say his family, and he was doing it in a fashion that was appropriately Orthodox. The royal commemorations in synodikons, however, are more formulaic and seem to have had an expanded purpose: not just to commemorate the family of the ruler (in the way that any donor to a monastery or church might request that his family be commemorated), but simultaneously to pray for, and to proclaim, the lineage of the *current* (stillliving) ruler. This may be why saints and non-saints were commingled in the synodikons, but not (at least in the case of the males) in Ivan's commemoration list. These saintly ancestors may have imparted charisma and legitimacy to the

Table 1. Grand Princes and Grand Princesses in Royal Commemorations
Selected Sinodikons





dynasty and to the current ruler. They could not be omitted if at least part of the point of commemorative prayers was as political as it was salvific. Royal commemorations in synodikonos fulfilled at least two purposes: to secure prayers for the royal dead, and to elevate and legitimate the current ruler. This double purpose became particularly useful under the conditions of a new dynasty—the Romanovs—as it attempted to establish the legitimacy of their ruling house after they came to the throne in 1613.

Romanov Commemorations

In 1631, Tsar Mikhail Fedorovich Romanov gave his family's Moscow compound of land, residence buildings, and a church located just across Red Square from the Kremlin over to be the Monastery of Our Lady of the Sign (Znamenskii Monastery).³² For his gift, Tsar Mikhail and the monks commissioned a synodikon, which survives today in two contemporary copies.³³ The synodikon begins typically—with a generalized prayer for all patriarchs, tsars and tsaritsas, their children, metropolitans, grand princes and princesses and their children, archbishops, archimandrites and abbots (*igumeny*), all the orders of the clergy and monastics, and for all Orthodox Christians everywhere. The opening commemorations appear in content to be very similar to the lists in other synodikonos in this period, all belonging to a textual history that, as we have suggested, likely began with Ivan's commemoration list in 1556–57.

Close inspection of the Znamenskii synodikon and comparison of it with the other texts discussed above reveals two important findings that obtain, as it turns out, not just for this synodikon but also for many others of the 17th century. First, added to the bottom of the introductory listings of tsars, tsaritsas and their children, in seamless fashion, are the names of rulers that followed after the extinction of the Old Dynasty in 1598 on Tsar Fedor I Ivanovich's death. And so, the "Pious Tsar and Grand Prince Boris, who in monastic ranks is Bogolep" (Tsar Boris Godunov [r. 1598–1605]) is inscribed immediately after Fedor I Ivanovich, the last of the Old Dynasty. Then comes the "Pious Tsar and Grand Prince Vasiliï"—Vasiliï Shuiskii (r. 1605–1608)—and then the "Pious

³² On Znamenskii Monastery, see Burakov, *Pod sen'iu monastyrei Moskovskikh*, 260–265; and *Monastyri*, 425.

³³ RGADA, Fond 188, op. 1, Nos. 46 and 47.

Tsar and Grand Prince Mikhail [Romanov],” followed by his children and, inscribed later, subsequent rulers of the Romanov Dynasty.³⁴ (The two False Dmitriis are omitted, naturally.) Dynastic change is treated similarly in the list of tsaritsas. Right after Fedor Ivanovich’s wife, “Tsaritsa and Grand Princess Irina, who in monastic ranks is Aleksandra,” comes the wife of Vasilii Shuiskii and then Mikhail Romanov’s first wife. The change in dynasties from Riurikovich to Godunov to Shuiskii to Romanov goes without special notification in the text, without separate headings, totally unmarked.³⁵ In these lists, a clear image or fiction of dynastic continuity was created.

The second important feature of the synodikon (and many others) is that the royal dynasty, the Romanov Dynasty, appears twice in the text. The first appearance is, as we have seen, in the opening royal commemorations. The second is in a family article that follows directly after the royal commemorations, and is labeled, “the Clan (*Rod*) of the Sovereign Tsar and Grand Prince Aleksei Mikhailovich of All Russia.” It contains a long list of names: 88 in the original text and ten added later in different hands.³⁶ It begins with Patriarch Filaret, already listed above among the patriarchs and his former wife, the Nun Marfa Ivanovna. It next has Tsar Mikhail, his second wife Evdokiia (both of whom are already listed in the royal list above), and five of their children: Ivan and Vasilii, who had already been mentioned amongst the list of tsars, and three daughters, Pelagiia, Marfa, and Sofiia, two of whom had been mentioned already among the tsaritsas.³⁷ Tsarevich Dmitrii Alekseevich and Sofiia Alekseevna (regent, 1682–1689)—two of the children of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich—follow, then a list of Romanov ancestors and kinsmen stretching back generations to the founders of the clan, including collateral branches of the family and in-laws from other clans.³⁸

Like Ivan IV’s synodikon 75 years earlier, the Znamenskii synodikon offers a view of kinship awareness; but whereas Ivan IV’s list offers a purely agnatic, dynastic perception of who was kin, the fact that the Znamenskii synodikon contains two Romanov

³⁴ RGADA, Fond 188, op. 1, Nos. 46, ff. 1v–2.

³⁵ RGADA, Fond 188, op. 1, Nos. 46, ff. 2v–3.

³⁶ RGADA, Fond 188, op. 1, Nos. 46, ff. 4v–6.

³⁷ Tsarevna Marfa Mikhailovna is missing in the list of tsaritsas.

³⁸ Tsarevna Sofiia was added to the list later, in a different hand: RGADA, Fond 188, op. 1, Nos. 46, ff. 4v–5.

lists permits us to use the text to see how the Romanovs thought of themselves both as a dynasty and as a *clan*. Nowhere in the Romanov family article does Ivan III or Ivan IV the Terrible appear, nor even Ivan IV's first wife, Anastasiia Romanovna Iur'eva, who was a member of the Romanov clan. Nowhere are Ivan IV's children (even from Anastasiia) mentioned. Nowhere here are Tsar Vasilii Shuiskii or Tsar Boris Godunov listed. They are present, naturally, in the list of royalty at the beginning of the Znamenskii synodikon, but they are not in the family article for the Romanovs (compare Tables 1 and 2). The list of the "Family (*Rod*) of Tsar and Grand Prince Aleksei Mikhailovich" appears to be a family article like that any other family might compose—peasant, priest, or prince—but it is not the kind of list that tsars of the Old Dynasty seem to have composed. That kind of list, which has the form of a structured, ranked genealogy of the ruling house of Kievan, Appanage and Muscovite Rus' is, as we have seen, what Ivan IV the Terrible composed in 1556/1557. In the Znamenskii synodikon, the Romanovs simultaneously appear as royalty and boyar aristocracy.

The Romanovs have a record of commemorative activity that comes down to us today fairly well preserved. Even before rising to the throne in 1613, Romanov ancestors (who went by more than one surname over the generations: Koshkin, Zakharin, Iur'ev) made donations to large churches and monasteries. The Romanovs' ancestors, however they were called, were prominent in the Muscovite court from the 14th century on. The first historical ancestor of the family (setting aside the fictive genealogies—all composed later—that take the lineage back generations further) was Andrei Ivanovich Kobyla, who was already a boyar when he appeared in sources for the first time in 1346/47.³⁹ From him issued a long and large progeny, with his descendants divided up into separate lines—separate clans, really—all differentiated one from the other: Iakovlev, Iur'ev, Liatskoi, Sheremetev, Bezzubtsev, Kolychev, and others.⁴⁰ The clan we call the Romanovs descended from Andrei Kobyla's fifth son, Fedor Koshka, and from Fedor's grandson, Zakharii, and then from Zakharii's son, Iurii. The first Romanov tsar was nine generations removed from the first historical ances-

³⁹ See Zimin, *Formirovanie*, 175–190; Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 100–104, 211–216.

⁴⁰ The best source for the Romanov genealogy remains Selifontov, *Sbornik materialov*.

tor of the family, a scion—rather than the lone line of descent—of one of the most prolific lineages in the Muscovite elite.

The earliest Romanov donation recorded in the donation book of Troitse-Sergiev Monastery comes from 1539, and seven others followed to 1571.⁴¹ Donations from members of this clan can be found in numerous other donation books and other sources as well for the period before 1613.⁴² The Romanovs continued to compose and amend family articles in monastic synodikons into the 17th century; the kin that were commemorated before their election to the throne remain on their prayer lists composed and submitted to monasteries after 1613. In fact, the Romanovs cast their net even more broadly after 1613, including increasing numbers of names in their family articles.

Romanov family articles in synodikons in the 16th and the 17th centuries share many features, although no two are precisely the same. Some, like a 16th-century text from Iosifo-Volokolamsk monastery, begins with Andrei Kobyla and then charts the line of descent generation by generation down to Nikita Romanovich, brother of Tsaritsa Anastasiia and grandfather of the first Romanov tsar. Some names are unidentifiable, but the list appears largely to be agnatic in structure—charting male ancestors and mostly male siblings.⁴³ The 16th-century synodikon for the Dormition (Uspenskii) Cathedral in the Moscow Kremlin contains several entries commissioned by several different Romanov kinsmen. The emphasis is largely the same; the lineage is traced back to Kobyla or to Zakharii, then widens out around the donor to include his immediate kinsmen, both male and female.⁴⁴

A close analysis of the contents of the Znamenskii synodikon and the order of the entry of names into the list provides vital clues about the kinship awareness of the early Romanov dynasty. The list of names is divided loosely into segments. The first mentions Patriarch Filaret and his former wife, the Nun Marfa, followed by the names of their children, grandchildren, Patriarch Filaret's father (Nikita Iur'ev—the monk Nifont), and siblings. The next segment starts with Zakharii, three generations above Nikita/Nifont, and proceeds with the names of his sons and grandsons. A third segment jumps still further up the genealogy to the progenitor of

⁴¹ Klitina, Manushina, and Nikolaeva, *Vkladnaia kniga*, 98–99 (ff. 352–352v).

⁴² See, for example, Leonid, "Makhrishchskii monastyr'."

⁴³ Lund and Okhotina, "Rospis'," 33.

⁴⁴ For example: GIM, Uspenskii, No. 64, ff. 49, 66v, 166v, 171, 201, 286.

the dynasty, Andrei Kobyla, and to his son and grandson. In between and interspersed within these segments—in no apparent systematic order—are other male members of the lineage as well as wives and daughters. The final segment includes a list of husbands, many of them princes, of some of the daughters of Nikita/Nifont and Patriarch Filaret (Table 2).

Important here, of course, are the names in the last segment. “The monk Sergei,” for example, can be identified as Prince Ivan/Sofronii Sittskii, who had been married to Evfimiia Nikitichna, Patriarch Filaret’s sister. Both were exiled during the Godunov years, forcibly tonsured, and died in confinement. Here we also find Prince Boris Cherkasskii, who had married another of Filaret’s sisters, Marfa, and similarly had been exiled by Godunov. We see Prince Fedor D. Shestunov, who had married Fetiniia Daniilovna, Filaret’s first cousin; and Prince Ivan M. Katyrev-Rostovskii, who married Tat’iana Fedorovna, the patriarch’s daughter and sister of the first Romanov tsar. Many of these names—and others whose exact identity cannot be determined with certainty but who, because of their princely titles, are clearly not blood relatives—appear in other Romanov articles in other synodikons from the 17th century.⁴⁵

To be sure, it is the case that, generally, family articles composed in the 17th century contain more names than those composed in the 16th. It could then be argued that the Romanovs, in compiling the Znamenskii family article and others like it, were merely conforming to conventions of the time. Perhaps the longer list of names in these entries reflects a widening circle of people for whom one offered prayers. Studies of boyar clans in the 16th and 17th centuries do suggest that not just immediate ancestors in the male line, but many of those who shared the same ancestors—collaterals and affines—were increasingly included in synodikon entries for elite clans.⁴⁶ This may have been exactly what the Romanovs were doing in their Znamenskii family article.

It is nonetheless a rare occasion when male in-laws—husbands of one’s daughters and sisters and aunts—were included in the wife’s family’s article. It was the norm throughout the period we are examining to record women in their husband’s family articles, not their birth family’s. This was why, evidently, Tsaritsa

⁴⁵ Studenkin, “Romanovy,” i–vii; Meshcherinov, “Zametka o dome Romanovykh”; and Meshcherinov, “Novye zametki.”

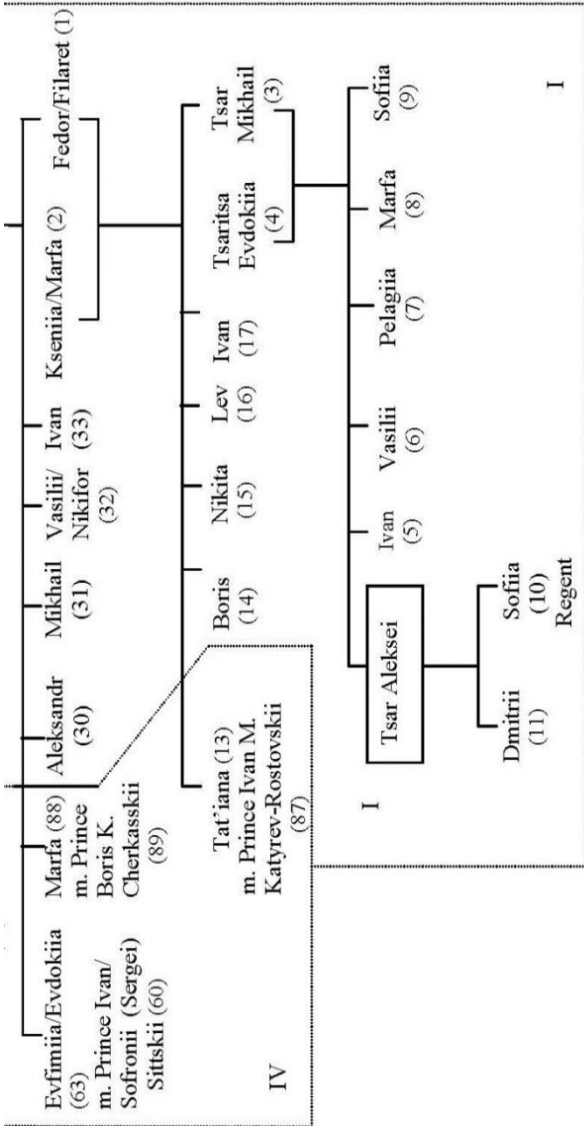
⁴⁶ See, e.g., Martin, “Gifts for the Dead”; and Steindorff, “Kto blizhnie moi?”

Anastasiia was not in the Romanov family article in the Znamenskii synodikon, but only in the royal list at the beginning of the text. She belonged to the ruling dynasty—Ivan IV's family—after her marriage to him, not to her birth family. Muscovy had a patrilineal kinship system. A wife took her husband's surname; and if he had a title, she of course took the title too, even if the wife had come from the non-titled aristocracy. To find Prince Boris Cherkasskii (and Princess Marfa), or Prince Fedor Shestunov (and Princess Fetiniia) listed in the Romanov family article in the Znamenskii (and other) synodikons violates a fairly well-established convention.

Romanov commemorations must be understood in light of their changing status before and after 1613 and in light of Orthodox belief. Romanov rulers were clearly doing many things simultaneously in their commemorations. They were adding their names to lists of previous rulers, establishing thereby their own legitimacy through prayer for the royal dead. They were also praying for the same group of ancestors they had commemorated *before* 1613. They had to. Romanov ancestors were not the same ancestors as those of the Old Dynasty. They simply could not abandon their own forebears to pray for St. Vladimir (which they should not have been doing anyhow) or Andrei Bogoliubskii or Dmitrii Donskoi, as if these rulers were Romanov ancestors. They were not, and everyone knew it. This may be why the Romanovs continued to compose and commission family articles even after 1613. It may also be why we find family articles for the other new dynasties of Muscovy—Godunov and Shuiskii—both of whom continued to have separate entries outside of the royal listings.⁴⁷ Orthodox eschatological belief, then, provides a lens for interpreting these data. The obligation to pray for one's ancestors still obtained for these new royal dynasties. The new rulers could be commemorated after death in the old way (as part of the traditional listings of royalty), but they would also have to keep their family articles current in order to pray for kin that did not fit into the prescribed categories of the traditional royal commemorations (tsars, tsaritsas, grand princes, grand princesses, appanage princes, appanage princesses).

But we may be able to say even more. The inclusion of Romanov affines (Cherkasskii, Shestunov, Sittskii, and so on) may be linked to the circumstances that led to their election to the throne

⁴⁷ See, for example, GIM, Uspenskii, No. 64, f. 131 and No. 66, ff. 31v–32.



NOTE: Numbers in parentheses indicates order of entry (or double entry) in the sinodikon. Segments in the "article" are indicated by boxes drawn around names. Table omits names whose identity cannot be positively established.

in 1613. The 1547 marriage of Ivan IV to Anastasiia Romanovna Iur'eva was followed by many marriages between the Iur'ev-Romanov clan and other prominent clans at court. In the decades and generations after becoming royal in-laws, the Iur'ev-Romanov clan had become not only one of the most high-ranking families at court, but also one of the most well-connected.⁴⁸ Robert Crummey has demonstrated that the composition of the court elite remained remarkably stable between 1598 (the extinction of the Old Dynasty) and 1613 (the election of Mikhail Romanov).⁴⁹ The Romanovs represented continuity in the leadership in the Kremlin, despite the change in dynasty. This discovery has led to some reconsideration of the reasons for Mikhail Romanov's election over other candidates in 1613, and the findings from this study of Romanov commemorations likewise may suggest a different view. Many of the boyars sitting in the Assembly of the Land (*zemskii sobor*) were Romanov relatives (in-laws, or in-laws of in-laws) and this fact may have had at least as much to do with the election of Tsar Mikhail as other factors that have often been cited, such as Mikhail's youth, the role of the Cossacks, Anastasiia's marriage to Ivan IV and her presumed popularity with the "people."⁵⁰ Many of these relatives had suffered exile along with the Romanovs during the dark times of Godunov's reign. The Romanov family article in the Znamenskii synodikon, like that in many others compiled after 1613, may then be a kind of acknowledgement of shared misery (disgrace and exile during Godunov's reign) and shared victory (the election of 1613).

Tsar Fedor Alekseevich's Synodikon

Romanov perceptions of themselves as a dynasty, however, solidified as decades passed and as sons succeeded fathers on the throne. On December 20, 1677, the third Romanov ruler, Tsar Fedor Alekseevich (r. 1676–1682), installed a new synodikon in the Church of the Icon of Christ "Not Made by Hands" located in the tsar's private apartments (*verkh*) in the Kremlin. The synodikon

⁴⁸ Savelov, "Boiare Romanovy," 233–243.

⁴⁹ Crummey, *Aristocrats and Servitors*; and Crummey, "Crown and Boiars."

⁵⁰ Various views of the reasons for Tsar Mikhail's election can be found in: Platonov, *Ocherki po istorii Smuty*, 423–433; Stanislavskii, *Grazhdan-skaia voina v Rossii*; and Dunning, *Russia's First Civil War*.

was assembled, as the text itself proclaims, “for the eternal commemoration of pious sovereigns, tsars and tsaritsas and their children, of devout grand princes and princesses and their children, of holy patriarchs, metropolitans and of all the family of his tsarist majesty, and of [the members of] his council [*sinklit*].”⁵¹

Tsar Fedor’s is not a synodikon like most others. To be sure, it includes the usual introductory commemorations of hierarchs and royalty, beginning with commemorations of patriarchs, then metropolitans, then tsars (from Ivan IV to Aleksei Mikhailovich, including their male children), tsaritsas (from the wives of Ivan IV to the first wife of Tsar Aleksei, including also their female children), grand princes (from St. Vladimir to Vasili III), and grand princesses (from St. Ol’ga to Elena Glinskaia, Vasili III’s second wife). After this typical introduction, however, Tsar Fedor’s synodikon adopts an unusual chronological structure with an entry for each day of the year and the name of the saint commemorated by the church on that day. But there is more. Inserted in the entries for some of these days of the year are commemorations of the name days, birthdays, weddings, coronations, and death anniversaries of members of the Romanov dynasty and selected members of the Old Dynasty: Ivan the Terrible, some of his children, and four of his seven wives; Ivan’s father (Vasili III); his grandfather (Ivan III); and other relatives (see Table 3). In all, commemorations of various kinds are included in the chronological portion of the text for 39 individuals.⁵² It is this group, evidently, that Fedor meant when, at the outset of the text, he claimed to be creating this synodikon for the eternal commemoration “of all the family of his tsarist majesty” (“*radi vechnyia pamiati... vsego ego tsarskago velichestva roda*”).

There are, then, two lists of royalty in Tsar Fedor’s synodikon. The first contains a standard list of past rulers of Kievan Rus’, Appanage Rus’, and Muscovy up until 1677 (the date of the synodikon). The other contains a shorter list—dispersed among the calendrical entries—of only those individuals the tsar thought of as his “family” and whose name days and deaths would, presumably, be marked privately by the tsar, his family, and intimates. Most of the names in the chronological listing are duplicated in royal commemorations at the beginning of the text (Ivan III, Vasili III, Ivan IV, Tsar Vasili

⁵¹ GIM, Museum Collection, no. 3652, f. 5v.

⁵² For these 39 individuals, there are 73 different kinds of commemorations: 33 name days, 34 death anniversaries, two coronations, three marriages, and one birthday.

Shuiskii, and so on), but these are far from duplicate lists. Fedor's chronological listing includes two individuals that are not in the royal commemorations—Boyar Nikita Ivanovich, Tsar Mikhail Romanov's first cousin, and Princess Tatiana Nikitich, his sister—and omits all the grand princes and grand princesses of Kievan Rus' (compare Tables 1 and 3).

The opening commemorations of royalty are much like those found in other synodikons of the 17th century, like the Znamenskii synodikon, but the composition of the calendrical commemorations suggests a strengthening of Romanov notions of dynasticism. As Table 3 shows, Tsar Fedor's links to the Old Dynasty are easily traced through these commemorations, and the omission of Romanov ancestors or collaterals in preference to members of the Old Dynasty is in stark contrast to what we find in Romanov family articles. To be sure, Romanov ancestors still were being commemorated through family articles at countless monasteries and large churches throughout Russia. But it appears that, as the New Dynasty became more and more secure on the throne, it persuaded itself that the name days, birthdays, and death anniversaries of Ivan III, Vasilii III and Ivan IV were dates they could legitimately mark, even if only—indeed, particularly—as private, family affairs. The belief in the efficaciousness of prayer for the dead came to be, by the third quarter of the 17th century, a means of creating and reinforcing the fiction of dynastic continuity and legitimacy. Commemoration, Orthodox belief, and perhaps a deliberately flexible notion of who was kin, came together as a means for solidifying the new dynasty on the throne.

Royal Kith and Royal Kin

Of all the clans included in synodikons of the 16th and 17th centuries, the royal family was treated differently. Its commemorations were covered by the introductory entries in the synodikon, not family articles (*stat'ii*). The lists of royalty at the beginning of the synodikons were, in effect, the ruler's family article. The ruling dynasty was singled out from among all the other elite clans and placed at the top of the synodikon, not unlike the way we have seen the princely saints singled out from among their kinsmen for separate commemoration on Ivan's list (*pamiat'*). Boyar and other elite families in the 16th century typically made donations for one, two, or maybe three relatives at a time, and these relatives were placed in a general listing of first names, often without any identification of what family the individual came from, and certainly

without aggregation of individuals into family articles. By the second half of the 16th century, the structure of the synodikon changed to include family articles, so that an individual courtier could make a donation to a monastery and submit with it a list of names, sometimes quite a long list, to be entered in the cloister's synodikon in a family article. All this change and development in and amongst the commemorations of the elite had no real effect, however, on the way the dynasty was recorded and commemorated.

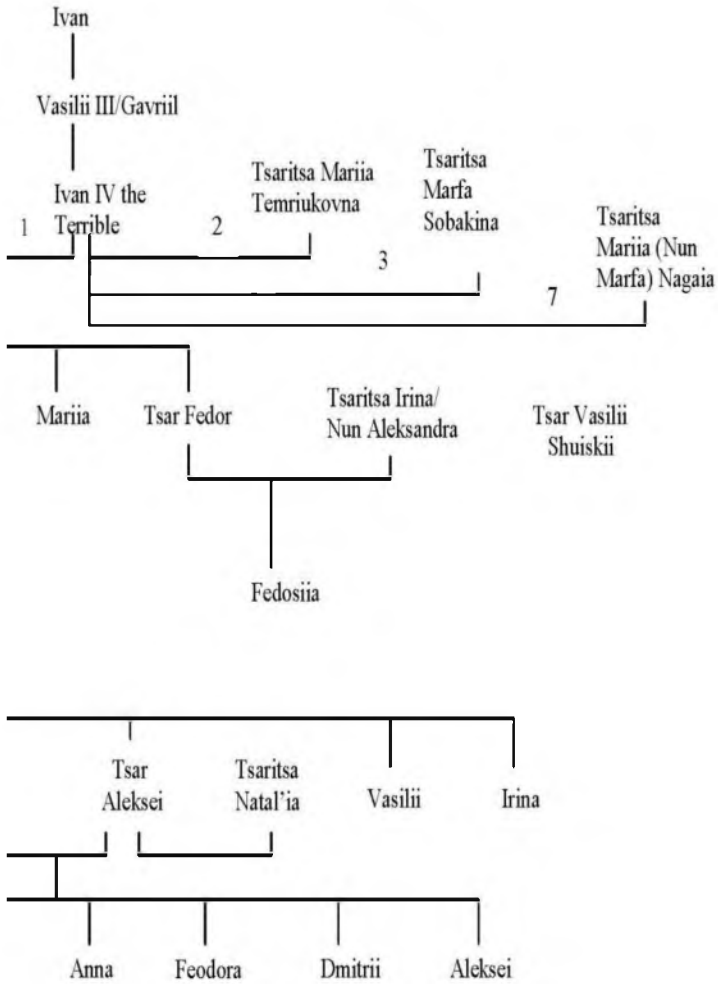
There were, however, a few instances where *collateral* members of the dynasty compiled their own family articles. In a 17th-century copy of the synodikon for Troitse-Sergiev Monastery, we find, for instance, an entry for the "Clan of Prince Vladimir Andreevich [Staritskii]" that begins with Tsar Ivan IV, Ivan's son Fedor Ivanovich, his wife Tsaritsa Anastasiia, his eldest son Ivan Ivanovich, Fedor Ivanovich's daughter Tsarevna Feodosiia, and then other members of Prince Vladimir's more immediate family: his father, Prince Andrei; mother, Princess Evfrosiniia; his brothers and sisters, followed by a long list of names (no fewer than 50) of princes, princesses, monastics, and young children—a fascinating list that defies a full deciphering of all the entries.⁵³ It is a rare instance, and one possible explanation for it may be that collaterals in general—but perhaps the Staritskii line in particular—came to be viewed as detached and separated from the main trunk of the dynasty. Large donations were made by Prince Vladimir and his mother, Princess Evfrosiniia, "for their ancestors" ("po svoikh roditelek").⁵⁴ The case may be analogous to the way the lone collateral line of the Romanov Dynasty was treated after 1613—the line of Boyar Ivan Nikitich Romanov. He continued to make donations and to compile family articles even after 1613,⁵⁵ and he, unlike the descendants of the first Romanov ruler, never received the title "grand prince." This branch of the Romanov clan was treated as non-royal, and perhaps the Staritskiis were too.

⁵³ RGB, Fond 304, No. 818, ff. 11–13v.

⁵⁴ Klitina, Manushina, and Nikolaeva, *Vkladnaia kniga*, 28 (f. 51v).

⁵⁵ See the 17th-century family article for the boyar Ivan Nikitich Romanov in RGADA, Fond 381, op. 1, No. 273, ff. 31–32v. See also donations by Ivan Nikitich to Troitse-Sergiev: Klitina, Manushina, and Nikolaeva, *Vkladnaia kniga*, 99 (f. 352v).

Fedor Alekseevich's Calendrical Commemorations



It is also the case that Muscovite rulers frequently commissioned prayers for individuals outside their family. Steindorff's study of Ivan IV's donations to the Iosifo-Volokolamsk Monastery shows numerous and sometimes quite large donations made for some of his servitors,⁵⁶ and Ivan's "Synodikon of the Disgraced" (*Sinodik opal'nykh*)—which purports to list those executed by Ivan and those for whom, consequently, Ivan himself had commissioned prayers—is famous and well-studied.⁵⁷ Later, in the 17th century, it became common for tsars to commission commemorative lists of those who had fallen in battle.⁵⁸ Muscovite rulers obviously prayed for persons outside the dynasty, but when they prayed for kin, they did so, it appears, within the rubrics of the formal royal commemoration listings.

If it was not the case that Muscovite rulers in the 16th century wrote family articles, rulers and their kin were nonetheless sometimes mentioned in the family articles of boyars and members of high-ranking clans. Royal in-laws, for example, often included members of the dynasty in their family articles in synodikons. Most of our examples come from the 17th century (when family articles were the norm), but the pattern and purpose of these commemorations is clear. In the synodikon of St. Catherine's on Mount Sinai, Prince Vladimir T. Dolgorukov included in his prayer list, firstly, his daughter, Tsaritsa Mariia, the first bride of Tsar Mikhail Romanov, then the tsar's mother, a distant kinswomen, and only then Prince Vladimir's own immediate family.⁵⁹ Relatives of Tsar Boris Godunov and Tsar Vasilii Shuiskii included those tsars' names in their own family articles, usually at the very top of the list.⁶⁰ The Mstislavskii princes prayed for their kinsman, Grand Prince Simeon Bekbulatovich, who stepped in temporarily as grand prince of Rus' at Tsar Ivan IV's request in 1575–76.⁶¹ Prince Ivan Khovanskii prayed for his distant kinswomen Princess Evfrosiniia and her

⁵⁶ Steindorff, "Vklady tsaria Ivana Groznogo," 90–100.

⁵⁷ On this peculiar synodikon, see, for example, Buganov, "K izucheniiu sinodika opal'nykh"; Veselovskii, *Issledovaniia po istorii oprichniny*, 323–478; Skrynnikov, "Vvedenie oprichniny," 3–86; Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo terora*, 529–545.

⁵⁸ See, for example, RGB, Fond 304, No. 818, ff. 243–244.

⁵⁹ *Orthodox Pomjanyk*, 20 (f. 10v).

⁶⁰ See, for example, RGADA, Fond 188, op. 1, No. 46. f. 6; and RGB, Fond 304, No. 818, ff. 10v, 29.

⁶¹ RGADA, Fond 141, No. 62, f. 116. See also Martin, "Gifts for the Dead."

husband, Prince Andrei Staritskii (Ivan IV's uncle) and their child, Prince Vladimir, and grandchild, Prince Vasili. ⁶² In each of these (and other) cases, the donor and the royal person commemorated were related, though sometimes quite distantly even by contemporary reckoning. In each case, marriage linked the donor or donor's clan with the ruling dynasty. These commemorations, then, can be seen as supporting the view that politics in Muscovy was about kinship and marriage. They reflect not only the Orthodox impulse to pray for the dead, especially relatives, but also the attitudes of donors about who was kin and who was not—a determination that may have had as much to do with political alliances as it did with genealogical proximity.

Conclusion: Kinship Awareness and Orthodox Belief

That Orthodox Christians in Muscovy prayed for the dead and believed that their prayers could soften the heart of an angry God is more than just a well-established behavior. The practice ran through the society and to a large degree characterized the culture. Less well understood have been the mechanics of commemoration and the range of persons for whom one prayed. When St. Athanasius the Great proclaimed that praying for ancestors was a Christian duty and that failure to do so endangered one's soul at the Final Judgment, Muscovites, like most Orthodox it seems, paid attention. Muscovites relied on their children to remember and to pray for the departed; indeed, it was one of the reasons for having children. Monks could and did offer these prayers, but they had to be solicited to do so, and no prayers were better than those offered by kinsmen and kinswomen. But the question remains, who were the relatives one prayed for?

Approaching an answer to this question for the centuries treated here poses, as we have seen, enormous methodological problems. Studies are emerging that are beginning to elaborate upon the kinship world of Muscovites but we have to center our focus necessarily on those individuals, families, and groups that are best documented. The work of identifying names in prayer lists is tedious and time consuming. Synodikons are resistant to interpretation, and deciphering the family articles in them requires synthesizing a range of often unrelated sources—genealogies, monastic records, liturgical manuals, and the scattered scraps

⁶² RGADA, Fond 188, op. 1, No. 46, f. 10.

of information culled from wills, land records, legal documents, and various court registers. For the lower rungs of the social ladder in Muscovy, these sources simply do not exist and so the investigations must begin with the elite.

Limited though its perspective is, the study of royal commemorations nonetheless throws light on the general custom and practice of prayer for the dead in Muscovy. It was an obligation taken seriously by Muscovites, their royalty included. They spent relatively large sums on commemorations. They were sure to include not only adults or males, but also women and infant children in their prayer lists. Muscovites appear to have thought of their prayer lists in a self-conscious way. They appear to have understood that whom they prayed for conveyed—even if only to God and to some isolated monks—an image of the donor and the donor's family. Most of all, of course, it was a self-image. Prayer lists reflected values—the religious values of Orthodox Christians to pray for the dead—and reflected relationships between the people praying and those, though reposed, being prayed for. In the world of the living, these relationships could have real meaning, as when a member of one family included the member of another in his or her own commemorations. This meaning in the living world was probably true on every social level, whether one was a peasant or a prince; but placed in a political context these prayers could have reflected and reified ties of blood and marriage that were the central elements of politics in Muscovy.

The field of study in death and commemoration is still undercultivated and understudied, but it is not underappreciated. To be sure, few topics in the history of Russia in general, or within the field of Russian church history in particular, are growing faster than it is. The new research in liturgics, in theology, in economic history as it pertains to commemoration at monasteries, and in studies of commemoration and kinship awareness—all of this work is recasting our understanding and enlarging our appreciation for this culture that took very seriously its eschatological beliefs. Having scholars take seriously Muscovy's own religious beliefs about death has been, perhaps, the most important outcome of this research to date.

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RUSSELL E. MARTIN

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