Species of Legitimacy: The Rhetoric of Succession around Russian Coins

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In William Shakespeare's play *Cymbeline* (c. 1609), a character bewails the uncertainty of pedigree with the lament that his mother's husband "was I know not where / When I was stamped. Some coiner with his tools / Made me a counterfeit."[1] The twinned fears of counterfeit coinage and illegitimate birth are happily dispelled when, in the last act, a foundling prince is discovered to bear a birthmark, "that natural stamp," which attests his authenticity as surely as the watermark on a modern banknote.[2] The apparently infallible "natural stamp" seems to exorcise the unsettling specter of the counterfeit. Royal parentage, the birthmark assures us, is always verifiable on the body of the prince.

Russian history of the same period, however, shows that birthmarks are also an uncertain business and that the connection between legitimate parentage and legal tender is a social as well as a literary metaphor. After Tsar Fedor I's death, in 1598, a series of False Dmitriis representing themselves as Ivan the Terrible's youngest son, who had been killed in a suspicious knife accident in 1591, laid claim to and even briefly occupied the throne. The phenomenon of royal imposture—*samozvanchestvo*, or "self-appointing"—persisted into the nineteenth century, with some pretenders acquiring large followings and presenting serious challenges to the central government.[3] According to Boris Uspenskii's classic analysis, such impostors derived their authority from somatic marks designating them as the rightful heir. "It was precisely by virtue of these 'royal signs' [*tsarskie znaki*] that the most diverse pretenders—for example, the False Dmitrii, Timofei Ankudinov, Emel'ian Pugachev and others—demonstrated their royal descent and their right to the throne; and it was especially the marks on their bodies that made others believe in them

1. William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, in *The Complete Works* (New York, 1977), 2.5.4–6.

2. Ibid., 5.5.366.

3. K. V. Chistov writes that although royal pretenders have appeared elsewhere, "no country but Russia has known such frequent royal imposture or seen it play such a significant role in the history of the people and the state." K. V. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy XVII–XIX vv.* (Moscow, 1967), 29. See also Maureen Perrie, *Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time of Troubles* (Cambridge, Eng., 1995); Boris Uspenskij, "Tsar and Pretender: *Samozvanchestvo*, or Royal Imposture in Russia as a Cultural-Historical Phenomenon," in Iu. M. Lotman and B. A. Uspenskii, *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*, ed. Ann Shukman (Ann Arbor, 1984), 259–92; Philip Longworth, "The Pretender Phenomenon in Eighteenth-Century Russia," *Past & Present*, no. 66 (February 1975): 61–83; and S. M. Troitskii, "Samozvantsy v Rossii XVII–XVIII vv.," *Voprosy istorii*, no. 3 (1969): 134–46.

Figure 1. Tver′ prince-moneyer coin. A. Oreshnikov, *Russkie monety do 1547 goda*.

and support them."[4] Uspenskii cites examples from a beggar who claimed to be an "eagle, the son of eagles," because of the marks on his skin to a peasant who recognized the true tsar in a provincial bathhouse in 1844 thanks to the pattern of his chest hair.[5]

The phenomenon of "royal marks" suggests a profound symbolic identification of money with succession, because all the marks specified in Russian sources also appeared on Russian coins and actually evolved in tandem with the numismatic record. As widely circulated images of state authority, numismatic marks might be expected to influence popular symbols of dynastic legitimacy, and there is evidence that religious dimensions of samozvanchestvo might be extended to money as an icon-like image of the holy tsar.[6] Most fundamentally, however, these marks point to a semiotics of legitimacy and especially to a slippage between signs that advertise a political and economic reality and signs that create or perform that reality. Popular legends of royal

4. Uspenskii, "Tsar and Pretender," 264.

5. Ibid., 264–65.

6. During the antiburial of False Dmitrii I, the coin traditionally placed in the mouth of a dead man was replaced by a reed pipe; since musical instruments were considered the inverse of icons, as the False Dmitrii was considered an anti-tsar, this suggests that the coin was perceived as a kind of icon. See Uspenskii, "Tsar and Pretender," 291. Another anecdote relating coins with holy images, and, conversely, false coins with sacrilegious images, is the report of a traveller in the 1650s: "when they showed brand-new rubles to their Russian interlocutors, the latter respectfully kissed the Tsar's representation; but a regular taler or a 'levok' [a countermarked billon taler] they threw away in disgust, and never failed to spit on it!" I. G. Spassky, *The Russian Monetary System: A Historico-Numismatic Survey*, trans. Z. I. Gorishina and L. S. Forrer, rev. ed. (Amsterdam, 1967), 120. Although doubtless exaggerated (such coins were in common circulation and given official countermarks), the report suggests that the images on coins might have belonged to the spectrum of venerated images. Icons were themselves often decorated with coins, and in some eighteenth-century Ukrainian icons, images of coins are painted directly onto the wood. See I. G. Spasskii, "Neobychnyi numizmaticheskii pamiatnik," *Numizmatika i sfragistika* 2 (1965): 35–51.

imposture in Russia seem to realize in political life the metaphor identifying legitimate parentage and legitimate coin that we encounter as an artistic trope in *Cymbeline*. The one authentic ruler, who is created by patrilineal inheritance and distinguished from fraudulent rulers by his royal marks, possesses a unique prerogative to license authentic specie, which circulates as a symbol of his authority and is distinguished from counterfeit coin by reference to the same iconography.

The circular relationship obtaining between the ruler and his money is illustrated in a series of fifteenth-century Tver' coins that represent a moneyer at work wearing a crown—or perhaps a prince coining money, since the iconography metaphorically collapses the two categories.[7] These pieces are interesting in not just depicting contemporary minting technology but identifying the ruler who commissions specie with the mintmaster who manufactures it. The image identifies political and economic legitimacy through a recursive structure whereby the coin's value proves the genuineness of the prince in whose name it is coined while the prince's seal guarantees the genuineness of the silver. Where these pieces allude to the prince's guarantee of the material coin through a pictorial representation of the minting process, another Tver' coin and several Moscow coins express the metaphorical equivalence of ruler and mintmaster through a binomial structure, featuring the prince's name on one side and the moneyer's on the other.[8] The binomial structure invokes political as well as economic guarantees of legitimacy, since it is homologous with contemporary coins attributed on one side to the issuing prince and on the other to the grand prince or Mongol khan who supports him.[9] It proclaims the prince's patent of the mintmaster and his guarantee of the coin using the same format by which coins advertise a suzerain's patent of a prince.

This essay outlines this mutually symbolizing relation between coins and legitimacy in the cultural imagination, which was already being cultivated during the Muscovite succession struggles of the 1400s. In this period, competing claims to the title of grand prince advertised on the coins of rival members of the Daniilovich clan became a useful propaganda medium but also revealed a persistent slippage between the function of numismatic symbols to proclaim and to confer political legitimacy. In the royal marks of later pretenders, the metaphorical identification of coinage and succession outlasts the Daniilovich line itself. Indeed, these somatic marks are only one arresting

7. A. V. Oreshnikov, *Russkie monety do 1547 goda* (Moscow, 1896), coin nos. 136–45.

8. Ibid., coin nos. 266, 667, 668. One bilingual coin bears the Muscovite prince's name in Cyrillic on one side and the name of the moneyer in Latin script on the reverse; other Muscovite coins pairing ruler and moneyer are in Cyrillic on both obverse and reverse. Two Pskov coins (nos. 80, 85) also refer to the moneyer by name. On the coupling of the issuing prince and the mintmaster, see A. V. Chernetsov, *Types on Russian Coins of the XIV and XV Centuries: An Iconographic Survey*, trans. H. Bartlett Wells (Oxford, 1983), 97–98.

9. The homology between these two binomial structures is illustrated by the inscription on one Moscow coin, "RARAI," which has been interpreted sometimes as naming a moneyer and sometimes as a garbled version of the name of a Mongol suzerain. Oreshnikov, *Russkie monety*, coin no. 507. Compare Oreshnikov's interpretation to Thomas S. Noonan, "Forging a National Identity: Monetary Politics during the Reign of Vasilii I," in A. M. Kleimola and G. D. Lenhoff, eds., *Culture and Identity in Muscovy, 1359–1584* (Moscow, 1997), 503.

instantiation of an underlying assumption that a quasi-numismatic symbol can generate proof of legitimacy in the political as in the economic sphere. The same assumption is legible in chronicle accounts, the inscription and iconography of coins, and other media.

The most successful pretenders appeared at moments of crisis in hereditary succession. The appearance of a tsar bearing a "royal mark" or "natural stamp" is an idealized image of ordinary principles of royal inheritance; the trope joins a numismatic discourse of legitimacy to a discourse of generational succession.[10] Scenes like Shakespeare's, in which princely legitimacy is represented in a literary work through a numismatic figure, already require us to triangulate coins, inheritance, and metaphor. Claude Lévi-Strauss has argued broadly that language, kinship, and trade are all "forms of exchange which are obviously interrelated" and that "it is therefore legitimate to seek homologies between them."[11] Although he has in mind primarily marriage and gift exchange, Lévi-Strauss's basic point also applies to succession and has been brought to bear on monetary economies in recent work gathered under the rubric of New Economic Criticism. According to Mark Osteen and Martha Woodmansee, such studies ask how "textual economy . . . mirrors economic conditions" and suggest a homology between rhetorical and monetary exchanges, because metaphors by their nature imply relations of transfer and exchange.[12] The link between face value and intrinsic identity implied in the sphere of legitimate succession by royal marks, for example, is also essential to the functioning of the monetary economy, and it plays a prominent role in the rhetorical structures of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* as well as in Russian documents like the letters of Ivan IV.

I focus on verbal tropes, succession practices, and economic functions by turns in order to elucidate the rhetorical matrix that identified the legitimacy of the tsar and the legitimacy of money, to sketch out its evolving applications, and to suggest the avenues, not least the propaganda of circulating coins, through which it entered the popular imagination. First, I read passages from Ivan IV's first letter to Prince Kurbskii to show how, on the eve of the Time of Troubles, the monarch conceived of usurpation as a falsified succession, sug-

10. *Russkaia istoricheskaia biblioteka*, 39 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1872–1927; hereafter *RIB*), 13:393. Some pretenders surrounded themselves with entire substitute families; for example, an eighteenth-century man not only represented himself as Peter III but called his mother the Empress Elizabeth. This man was also considered by his followers to be Jesus Christ and his mother the Virgin Mary, a phenomenon bound up with the myth of the tsar as Christ—a religious dimension to royal imposture that this footnote cannot deal with in depth. See Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, 225–26; and Uspenskii, "Tsar and Pretender," 260–62, for analysis of this point. Pretenders claiming to be the real Aleksei Petrovich, son of Peter I, appeared even during the prince's lifetime, which, according to Uspenskii, "testifies to the fact that viewing Peter as a 'substituted' Tsar could be transferred to his son: in as much as Peter is seen as a false Tsar, his son may be seen as the false heir." Uspenskii, "Tsar and Pretender," 277.

11. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, vol. 1, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York, 1963), 83.

12. Mark Osteen and Martha Woodmansee, "Taking Account of the New Economic Criticism: An Historical Introduction," in Mark Osteen and Martha Woodmansee, eds., *New Economic Criticism: Studies at the Intersection of Literature and Economics* (London, 1999), 36, 22.

gestive of falsified coin. My second section treats early Muscovite coins that articulated family relationships, especially conflicts between primogenitary and collateral principles of inheritance. Finally, I turn to coins relating the prince to the material artifact of money, especially those representing him as an executioner poised to punish counterfeiters, in order to contextualize efforts by other parties to command numismatic symbols. In all of these contexts, the perception of legitimate succession is intertwined with a currency of signs and the circulation of specie.

The Poetics of Legitimacy

Ivan IV's epistolary exchange with the exiled Prince Kurbskii demonstrates how quasi-numismatic tropes ground acts of verbal invention as well as a rhetoric of sovereignty.[13] An acid, able theoretician of autocracy, Ivan, in his first letter of 1564, rebukes the boyars for having aspired to dominate the young tsar, who in himself embodies absolute power. A tension between primogenitary and collateral inheritance colors Ivan's position. Where he as the eldest son had inherited his father's rank and property, among boyar families title passed to the next eldest brother and property was divided among the clan. This principle of generational rotation posed a potential threat to the institution of primogenitary inheritance. Prior to Ivan's birth, his uncle Iurii had expected to inherit the throne; Ivan's regency council, alarmed by signs that Iurii might attempt to depose the infant tsar with the support of boyar allies, arrested him in 1533.[14] As late as 1553, some elements of the court favored the tsar's cousin over his son as the heir apparent.[15]

Ivan accordingly conceives of conspiracy against the tsar as familial violence, in which a man betrays his brother, as contrasted with primogenitary succession, in which the ascendant tsar takes what is already his inalienable property.

> And we praise [God] for his great mercy bestowed on us, in that he has not hitherto allowed our right hand to become stained with the blood of our own race; for we have not seized the throne from anyone, but, by the grace of God and with the blessing of our fathers and forefathers, as we were born to rule, so have we grown up and ascended the throne by the bidding of God, and with the blessing of our parents have we taken what is our own, and we have not seized what belongs to others.[16]

13. This correspondence has itself been accused of being a counterfeit, but I follow the main stream of scholarship in treating the letter discussed here as genuine. See Charles J. Halperin, "Edward Keenan and the Kurbskii-Groznyi Correspondence in Hindsight," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 46, no. 3 (1998): 376–403.

14. Janet Martin, *Medieval Russia, 980–1584* (Cambridge, Eng., 2007), 367. For a full treatment of boyar succession, see Nancy Shields Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics: The Making of the Muscovite Political System, 1345–1547* (Stanford, 1987).

15. Martin, *Medieval Russia*, 374–76.

16. *The Correspondence between Prince A. M. Kurbsky and Tsar Ivan IV of Russia, 1564–1579*, ed. and trans. J. L. I. Fennell (Cambridge, Eng., 1955), 15; *Perepiska Ivana Groznogo s Andreem Kurbskim*, ed. Ia. S. Lur'e and Iu. D. Rykov (Leningrad, 1979), 12–13. I quote from Fennell's English translation, with parallel citations to the later Russian edition edited by Lur'e and Rykov.

When the true sovereign assumes his place, Ivan insists, he "takes what is his own" (свое взяхом) in a closed economy of royal identity that is opposed to systems of open exchange in which it is possible to "take what belongs to others" (а не чюжое восхитихом). His letter conceives the paternal line of royal succession as a continuous and divinely sanctioned entity. Ordained by both royal and heavenly fathers, the tsar is sharply distinguished from the boyars, whom he describes as brothers and cousins who share his blood but not his proper inheritance of autocratic rank. Ivan imagines designs on his power as a fraternal plot to shed blood within the clan (единоплеменная кровь). To place any other individual on the throne—as he accuses Kurbskii of conspiring to do—would be to murder the true heir and to raise up a brother who makes a false claim on his inheritance.[17]

In the epistle's conclusion, the tsar expands on the theme of familial illegitimacy by directly comparing treason and adultery. The two crimes are, he asserts, directly comparable, for "an adulterer in treachery is like an adulterer in the flesh," and raising up an illegitimate ruler is the same thing as fathering an illegitimate child. "So then have you too been a partaker with traitors," continues Ivan, accusing Kurbskii of this joint crime through a biblical reference, "Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother and thy mouth hath slandered thine own mother's son." This fraternal relation includes all Orthodox males: "Your brother and your mother's son—these are all Christians, for we are all baptised in the same font and all were born from above."[18] Ivan's theological metaphor of universal brotherhood does not entitle his subjects and Christian brothers to aspire to his position but rather exacts from them a duty of respect for and fealty to the tsar, who is defined by a special relationship of substitutability with their common father. The metaphorics of the passage are consistent with Ivan IV's assiduously cultivated parallel between Christ the King and the tsar as Christ on Earth, son of a unique father and literally related to a paternal authority from which his metaphorical brothers can profit only by his grace.[19]

Within this system of figures, to aspire to the tsar's authority is to commit treason, adultery, heresy, and fratricide all at once. Usurpation comes also to adumbrate forgery in an intricate passage in which Ivan describes the boyars' illegitimate claims through tropes suggesting falsified money. Here Ivan shifts focus from his inherited rank to another aspect of his "paternal heritage," the inherited gold and silver the boyars have also attempted to steal. He accuses them of a faulty poetics of exchange, according to which appropriation of the tsar's material legacy would imply shared possession of a patrimony that is in fact uniquely proper to the eldest son.

17. The point is rephrased in similar terms in Ivan IV's second letter of 1577. *Perepiska*, 166.

18. *Correspondence*, 179; *Perepiska*, 52.

19. See Uspenskii, "Tsar and Pretender," 260; and Priscilla Hunt, "Ivan IV's Personal Mythology of Kingship," *Slavic Review* 52, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 771–74. Compare the western European use of Christological parallels to ground the primogenitary presumption that "father and son are one according to the fiction of the law." Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, 1957), 391.

> But what of the treasures inherited by me from my father [lit. of my paternal heritage]? With their cunning they seized it all, as though it were pay for the boyar children; but from them they took it all for themselves for their own profit, rewarding them [the boyar children] not according to their service and recompensing them not according to their merits; and so from this treasure did they forge for themselves golden and silver vessels and upon them they inscribed the names of their parents as though they had been the possessions of their parents. Now all people know that during the rule of my mother Prince Ivan Shuiskii had a marten fur coat [lined] with mohair and the skins were shabby [lit. ancient]; now supposing this was a [genuinely] ancient possession of the Shuiskiis, surely it would have been better, rather than to forge those vessels [as they did], to have exchanged the fur coat and with the surplus [money accruing from the sale of the new coat] to have forged the vessels?[20]

The forging, or reforging, of Ivan's inherited gold and silver—*iskovati*, also used of minting coin—is collapsed into a false claim of inheritance. By melting down the tsar's silver and gold and inscribing it with their own parents' names, the boyars pretend to have succeeded to rather than simply absconded with the treasure.

In his dense web of analogical language, remaining always within the spheres of hereditary and economic exchange, Ivan observes that the treasure is not properly theirs and that the metal so marked is not actually money. Indeed, his point is that boyar inheritance is not of a kind with his own, which is conferred by primogenitary birth and includes the power to mint specie. As when he defines treachery as fratricidal violence, Ivan's evocations of falsified inheritance and counterfeit coins function less as literal charges than as tropes that inform his conception of inalienable authority. Within this symbolic structure, a difference in kind between their inheritances is suggested in the boyars' self-serving claim to have taken Ivan's gold not for themselves but on behalf of the "boyar children." Because this service class was understood, in part correctly, as comprising descendants of boyar families who had fallen from rank, it fulfills the rhetorical function of contrasting the uncertain patrimony within boyar clans with Ivan's own divinely ordained position, which remains his even when others seem to have usurped it.[21] Ivan accuses the boyars of disenfranchising the service class as well as himself, since they misappropriate these wages directly from Ivan's treasury.[22] In fact, by reforging the metal and marking it with their parents' names, the boyars do not simply assert ownership but put forward a claim to paternal succession—the unique prerogative of the tsar. By taking Ivan's "paternal heritage" for themselves, the boyars attempt to render the autocrat himself a "boyar child" who does not succeed to his father's privileges.

At issue is not just the appropriation of a thing that can be measured by

20. *Correspondence*, 77; *Perepiska*, 28.

21. I. B. Mikhailova, *Sluzhilye liudi Severo-Vostochnoi Rusi v XIV–pervoi polovine XVI veka: Ocherki sotsial'noi istorii* (St. Petersburg, 2003), 102.

22. On boyar abuses of the service class during Ivan's minority, see Richard Hellie, *Enserfment and Military Change in Muscovy* (Chicago, 1971), 34.

money but the appropriation of an inherited role that includes the authority to license money. The circular relationship between the tsar's inalienable authority and the sanctity of his coin becomes apparent in the congested analogy of Shuiskii's coat, through which Ivan argues that the true tsar cannot ever be deprived of his heritage. The coat is Shuiskii's patrimony, as the gold and silver is Ivan's, but the two inheritances are not directly equivalent. Shuiskii's legacy can never be exchanged for the tsar's as such but only traded in the marketplace: "And if [these furs] really were an heirloom with which the vessels would be forged, then it would be better to exchange the coat for a new one and forge vessels from the profit."[23] Any profit Shuiskii gains by the exchange can be realized as money, melted down, and inscribed however he likes. Of course, the passage snidely implies that the poverty of Shuiskii's patrimony would be revealed the moment it was offered for exchange—that his old, moth-eaten lineage is not really worth much. Yet the main rhetorical thrust of Ivan's illustration is that, although Shuiskii's coat can be compared to Ivan's inheritance, because the garment has long been held by the Shuiskii family, just as Muscovy has been held by the Daniiloviches, and can even be exchanged in the marketplace for kopecks minted in Ivan's name, the two patrimonies are not really equivalent. Ivan's inheritance, symbolized by his coin, remains his even if usurpers claim to have had it from their own fathers, whereas Shuiskii's legacy, like a garment, can be stripped from him and monetized at will.

After the value of his inheritance has been rendered into money stamped with Ivan's or Ivan's father's name, Shuiskii is free to melt it down and mark the silver as his legacy. However, to dissolve the "royal mark" that guarantees genuine money implies no privilege to issue money of his own, even if he subsequently decorates the metal with emblems of his own lineage. At the outset of Ivan's reign, his mother and regent, Elena Glinskaia, presided over the 1535–38 coinage reform that recalled existing *denga* coins and reminted them, in Ivan's name, into kopecks of a different weight; this was accompanied by the mass punishment of counterfeiters who, "inspired by the devil, had begun to clip the old dengas and add evil adulterations to the silver"—vividly illustrated by engravings in the sixteenth-century *Illustrated Chronicle Codex* that portray the execution of false moneyers alongside the beheading of upstart boyars.[24] Ivan's reference to boyar efforts "during the reign of my mother" to melt down and reforge his patrimonial silver thus stand in sharply ironic contrast to the period's actual monetary reforms, in which money marked with the father's name was preserved from criminal adulterations by being reminted in the name of the new tsar.

Ivan's labyrinthine series of comparisons and substitutions performs in poetic language the system of conceptual exchanges between coinage and legitimacy, counterfeiting and usurpation, which recur after his death in the quasi-numismatic claims of royal pretenders. The set of tropes that frames

23. I have slightly literalized Fennell's translation.

24. Mel'nikova, *Russkie monety*, 17; *PSRL* 26.323; and *Litsevoi letopisnyi svod Ivana Groznogo. Rus' (1537–1549 gg. ot V.Kh.)*, vol. 27, bk. 19, 437–38, Runiverse, at www.runivers.ru/upload/iblock/fec/LLS19.pdf (last accessed November 30, 2015).

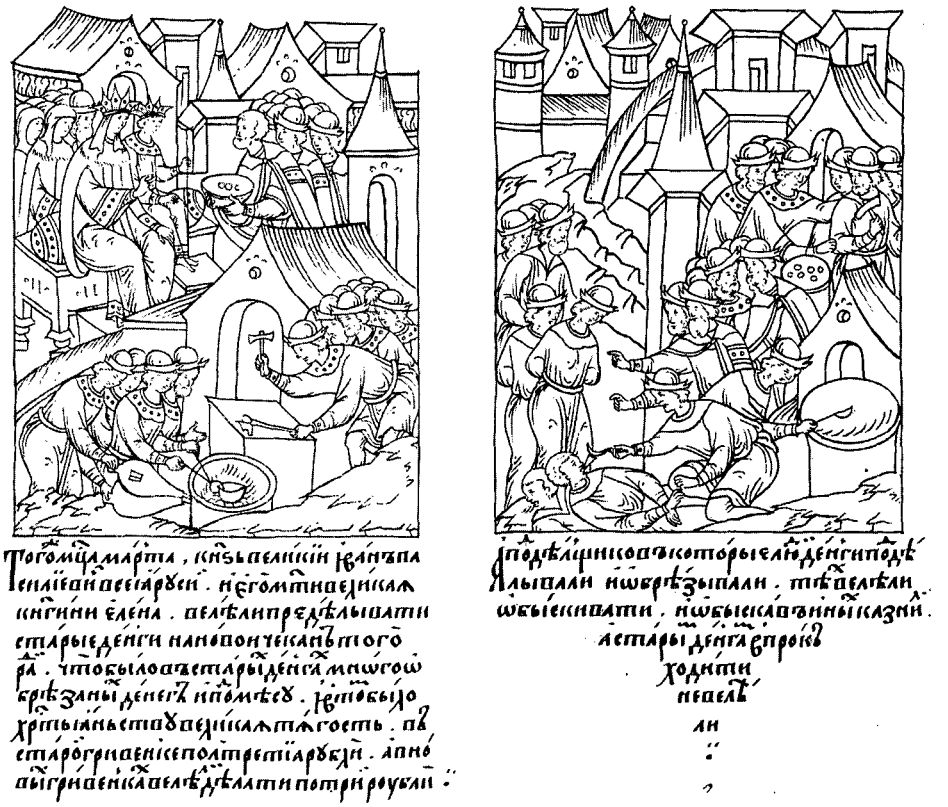

Figure 2a and 2b. Punishment of counterfeiters. "In that same month of March, Grand Prince Ivan Vasil'evich of all Rus' and his mother, Grand Princess Elena, ordered all the old dengas to be remade and minted anew because among the old dengas were many clipped dengas and much adulteration; and in this was much hardship for the peasants. In the old *grivenka* were two and a half rubles weight [of silver], but the new grivenkas were ordered to be made at the weight of three rubles. And the counterfeiters, those people who had counterfeited and clipped dengas, were sought out and, when they were found, some of them were executed; and the old dengas were thenceforth not allowed to circulate." *Litsevoi letopisnyi svod Ivana Groznogo. Rus' (1537–1549 gg. ot V.Kh.).* Courtesy of Runiverse. http://www.runivers.ru/lib/book6958

Ivan's discourse is not original to him, however. Earlier legal documents had already codified primogenitary inheritance as an exclusive prerogative to mint coin. His grandfather, Ivan III, had stipulated in his will that "my son Iurii and his brothers are not to make coins in their lands in Muscovy and Tver', but only my son Vasilii is to make coins."[25] Only one son, who possesses inalienable political authority, is empowered to license money. Any effort on the part of literal or metaphorical brothers to claim that function becomes

25. *Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty velikikh i udel'nykh kniazei XIV–XVI vv.*, ed. L. V. Cherepnin and S. V. Bakhrushin (Moscow, 1950; hereafter *DDG*), 361. Efforts to limit coinage in appanage principalities are discernable as far back as the reign of Vasilii I. See Noonan, "Forging a National Identity," 508.

https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.75.1.1 Published online by Cambridge University Press

susceptible to tropes of counterfeiting as well as usurpation. At the end of the Daniilovich dynasty, pretenders' claims to being Ivan's own son by virtue of unique and inalienable "royal marks" were consistent with this rhetorical matrix, which harkens back to precedents in the earliest Muscovite money.

The Axes of Succession

Coinage, which is commonly understood to facilitate tyranny, and primogenitary succession, which also centralizes power, played crucial and complementary roles in the formation of the Muscovite state.[26] Janet Martin has described how the Muscovite princes were ineligible to assume the position of grand prince according to traditional practices of generational rotation and how their "authority rested on the power of the Khan."[27] The first Muscovite coin, minted by Dmitrii Donskoi on planchets of silver wire around 1370, was economically important as the first step toward a central currency but also politically important as an advertisement of this relationship of patronage.[28] One side was embellished with a cock and the Russian inscription "Seal of the Grand Prince"; the other appealed to the Mongol khan with the Arabic inscription "Sultan Abdullakh."[29] Other principalities rapidly followed suit, and by the 1420s "men traded in coin in all of Rus'."[30] However, the period's extraordinary explosion of coin types was swiftly counteracted by Moscow's expansion and its arrogation of minting rights.

Like other East Slavic households during the coinless period, Muscovite princes "ruled over their family domain jointly," the eldest representing the family but forbidden to dominate his brothers or to claim exclusive privileges beyond the eventual grand princely patent.[31] At the time it began to issue coins, the Daniilovich dynasty, "due to peculiarities of family size and early deaths, also established precedents for a vertical system of succession."[32] Dmitrii Donskoi, who had no living brothers at the time of his death, in 1389, bequeathed his lands to his eldest son, Vasilii, enjoining the younger sons to

26. On coinage and state control, see, e.g., Stephen Deng, *Coinage and State Formation in Early Modern English Literature* (New York, 2011), 52; and the extended argument in P. N. Ure, *The Origin of Tyranny* (New York, 1962). On primogeniture, see, e.g., Martin, *Medieval Russia*, 237–38; George Majeska, "The Moscow Coronation of 1498 Reconsidered," *Jarbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 26, no. 3 (1978): 358; and A. E. Presniakov, *The Formation of the Great Russian State: A Study of Russian History in the Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries*, trans. A. E. Moorhouse (Chicago, 1970), 314–15.

27. Martin, *Medieval Russia*, 221.

28. On coinage's dual role of advertising political aspirations and reflecting political realities of subordination, see Noonan, "Forging a National Identity," 495.

29. Oreshnikov, *Russkie monety*, coin no. 448. Rus' had been entirely surrounded by coin-using economies from the twelfth century, when coins were struck in Crimea and by the Volga Bulgars; East Slavic princes had briefly experimented with coin in the late tenth century, but mintage was discontinued less than 50 years after the first issue. See V. L. Ianin, "Den'gi i denezhnye sistemy," in A. V. Artsikhovskii, ed., *Ocherki Russkoi kul'tury XIII–XV vekov* (Moscow, 1969), 324, 333; and V. L. Ianin, *Denezhno-vesovye sistemy russkogo srednevekov'ia: Domongol'skii period* (Moscow, 1956), 169.

30. *Novgorodskaia pervaia letopis'*, ed. A. N. Nasonov (Moscow, 1950), 414.

31. *DDG*, 9–10.

32. Martin, *Medieval Russia*, 263.

"respect and obey your older brother, Prince Vasilii, in my place, the place of your father."[33] The formula of the elder brother as a metaphorical father is typical of contemporary princely testaments and also of state treaties, which conceive of hierarchical political relationships, like the khan's patent of the grand prince, as familial relations between fathers and sons or between elder and younger brothers.[34]

The ruler's legitimacy in the early years of Muscovy's ascendency was, then, expressed in a system of both binomial coinage that appealed to the khan as guarantor of the grand prince and familial metaphors that superimposed political relations onto kinship hierarchies. The *Nikon Chronicle*, compiled in the 1520s, illustrates the intersection of binomial coinage and metaphorical family relations in its account of a 1399 battle between Lithuanian and Mongol forces. As the author describes it, the Lithuanian prince Vitovt threatens to enslave the khan and destroy his army if he does not accept a proposal of adoption commensurate with vassalage: "God has subjected all lands to me, submit you also to me and be my son." Initially, the young khan agrees to these conditions, "but in addition to this Vitovt wanted the Vitovt mark to be on all the Horde money in the whole Horde." This last demand is evidently a stringent one, for Temir-Kulutui requests three days to think it over. His vassal Prince Yedigei convinces the khan to refuse and himself goes in person to tell Vitovt, "I ought to be father over you and you to be my son, and every year I should have tribute and outlay from all your principality, and in the whole of your principality my Horde mark ought to appear on your coins."[35] In the end, the Mongols won the battle, though we have no numismatic evidence of the fact, and the details of the exchange are likely a later interpolation that indicates the place of coinage in the cultural imagination rather than actual historical events.[36] By pointing to a figurative discourse articulating both the political relationship of patronage and the familial relationship of paternity through the association of names on coins, the passage is most relevant to Moscow's own binomial coinage, which propagandized primogeniture following Vasilii I's death, in 1425.[37]

Although Vasilii I had younger brothers due to inherit the throne under the old collateral system, he chose to bequeath the Muscovite principality to his own son, also named Vasilii, and secured him a precautionary Tatar patent as grand prince in advance.[38] In 1419, Vasilii I's collateral heir, Konstantin Dmitrievich, refused to sign a document acknowledging Vasilii II's claim; he

33. *DDG*, 34.

34. For an extended treatment of this topic, see Craig Kennedy, "Fathers, Sons, and Brothers: Ties of Metaphorical Kinship between the Muscovite Grand Princes and the Tatar Elite," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, no. 19 (January 1995): 292–301.

35. *PSRL*, 11:183.

36. As the scribe might have known, Vitovt's vassal princes, including the Russian rulers of Chernigov and Smolensk, did mint coins with Vitovt's heraldic emblem on the reverse.

37. See Gustave Alef, "The Political Significance of the Inscriptions on Muscovite Coinage," *Speculum* 34, no. 1 (January 1959): 5. Prince Vitovt was Vasilii II's grandfather and the head of his regency council; until his death, in 1431, Vitovt prevented Iurii Dmitrievich from deposing the underage prince. See Martin, *Medieval Russia*, 265–66.

38. *DDG*, 60; *PSRL*, 8:96.

was disenfranchised and granted a parcel of land only upon his capitulation in 1421.[39] Around the same time, a number of Muscovite vassal princes issued double-named coins, featuring local types and the name of the issuing appanage prince on one side but with the inscription "Grand Prince Vasilii" on the other. In an exhaustive article on the *numismata* of Vasilii II's reign, Gustave Alef argues that these coins were struck in the name of the heir by the members of his regency council in order to advertise the ten-year-old heir's claim and "to make known that the prince regents were the guarantors of the succession."[40] Like coins appealing to the authority of the khan to legitimize the Muscovite prince, the binomial format of these coins defends the position of a ruler who acceded to his position by questionable means. Insofar as Vasilii II's legitimacy rested on his relationship to his father, these pieces literalize the paternal metaphors found in treaties with the khan. In addition, they omit the customary patronymic and are attributable to either the elder Grand Prince Vasilii or the son of the same name he had elevated to that position in his own lifetime—inaugurating the Daniilovich clan's custom of anticipatory succession, most notably instantiated in the elaborate co-optation ceremonies of Ivan III.[41]

Vasilii I's brother and collateral heir, Iurii Dmitrievich of Galich, nonetheless pressed a claim over his nephew and occupied Moscow briefly on two occasions, in 1433 and again in 1434, the year of his death. In 1446, Iurii's son Dmitrii Iur'evich seized the grand prince and put out his eyes, although Vasilii II, now identified with the sobriquet "the Blind," reclaimed his position a year later. These events were encoded in a profusion of double-named coins that, like the pieces attributed binomially to Grand Prince Vasilii and the members of his regency council, advertise hierarchies of power. Alongside single-named coins of the first usurper reading "Grand Prince Iurii" and proclaiming an exclusive right to the title, we encounter double-named coins affirming Vasilii II's preeminence through the inscriptions "Grand Prince Vasilii" and "Prince Iurii Dmitrievich."[42] Dmitrii Iur'evich also minted coins titling him grand prince, using obverse types identical to coins attributed to Vasilii II.[43] Most mysteriously, coins attributed to "Grand Prince Dmitrii" on one side and "Grand Prince Vasilii" on the other ascribe the same rank to both cousins, though it is difficult to imagine circumstances that might compel either claimant to commission coins acknowledging his rival as a co-reigning grand prince.[44]

39. *PSRL*, 25:244–45.

40. Alef, "Political Significance of the Inscriptions on Muscovite Coinage," 5.

41. See, e.g., Majeska, "The Moscow Coronation of 1498"; and Martin, *Medieval Russia*, 272–74, for descriptions of anticipatory succession ceremonies in relation to evolving succession principles. Anticipatory succession has been practiced in other situations where succession principles were unclear, notably Capetian France and seventh-century Byzantium. See Andrew Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France: Studies on Familial Order and the State* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 37–42; and David Michael Olster, *The Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century: Rhetoric and Revolution in Byzantium* (Amsterdam, 1993), 180–81.

42. Oreshnikov, *Russkie monety*, coins nos. 707–12.

43. Ibid., coins nos. 717–18.

44. Ibid., coins nos. 719–21. The side attributed to Dmitrii Iur'evich features a rider piercing the head of a dragon with a spear with a circular inscription; the side attributed to Vasilii II has only four lines of text spelling out the grand prince's name and rank.

Both Gustave Alef and I. G. Spasskii have identified moments of political turnabout when one of the rivals might have found it advantageous to license this coin, but, while ingenious and plausible, their respective historical rationalizations contradict each other and neither has been conclusively proven.[45] Iakov Lur'e, on the other hand, pointing to the fact that Dmitrii Iur'evich and Vasilii II were both referred to as grand prince in a single chronicle dating from 1437, has suggested that the position of Muscovite grand prince was not in fact an exclusive one; this line of thought persuasively demonstrates the need for an underlying structural cause, even if its basic thesis sits uneasily with the bloody-mindedness with which the two men strove to eliminate one another.[46] While we lack the information to contextualize this coin attributed to two grand princes at once, its dual inscriptions intimate an underlying indecision between two forms of succession. In 1428, two years before Iurii Dmitrievich began to prosecute his claim to Vasilii's position, two separate treaties referred to both men as grand prince; in May of the same year, a treaty records "Prince" Iurii Dmitrievich's recognition of his nephew "Grand Prince" Vasilii as an "elder brother."[47] Such inconsistencies suggest that primogenitary and collateral claims were at this point undecidable in a sense that transcends fluctuations of political fortune.

To put this another way, the underlying problem is not to rationalize the presence of two names on a single Muscovite coin—from the very beginning, Muscovite coins paired names in order to articulate both political relationships and the literal or metaphorical family relationships superimposed on them. As coins reflecting hierarchical relationships between patrons and vassals disappeared, coins simultaneously attributed to fathers and eldest sons entered circulation.[48] The use of binomial coins to forestall doubts over dynastic legitimacy outlasted the Daniilovich dynasty itself. After the death of Ivan IV's enfeebled son Fedor in 1598, the newly crowned Boris Godunov continued minting coins in the name of his predecessor, though with a noticeably different "portrait" of the horseman, initialed "BO," for "Boris Ospudar," on the obverse.[49] In this case, the numismatic rhetoric of Ivan IV's letter, which identifies legitimate succession with the right to mark a predecessor's money as one's own, is employed after the end of Ivan's dynasty and in the absence of a literal primogenitary relationship. In justifying his doubtful claim through

45. See Alef, "Political Significance of the Inscriptions on Muscovite Coinage," 12; and Spasskii, *Russian Monetary System*, 143.

46. Ia. S. Lur'e, "Dvuimennye monety Vasiliia II i Shemiaki i dvoevlastie v Moskve," in D. S. Likhachev, ed., *Srednevekovaia Rus'* (Moscow, 1976), 87.

47. *DDG*, 63, 462.

48. Late in his reign, Vasilii II himself replaced the numismatic formula "Sovereign of All Rus'" with the pluralized "Sovereigns of All Rus'" to reflect his eldest son Ivan's co-option, attested to by a 1448 treaty in which Vasilii explicitly refers to Ivan as grand prince. Oreshnikov, *Russkie monety*, coins nos. 615, 617, 632, 634; *DDG*, 155. Like his father's 1425 coins ambiguously attributed to "Vasilii" and issued by the members of the regency council, these pieces aimed to forestall any doubt as to the legitimate heir. See Alef, "Political Significance of the Inscriptions on Muscovite Coinage," 11.

49. A. S. Mel'nikova, "Sobytiia 1598 goda i monety Borisa Godunova," *Istoricheskie zapiski Akademii nauk SSSR* 109 (1983): 344–45; Mel'nikova, *Russkie monety*, 65–67. False Dmitrii I resumed types in the old Daniilovich style—consistent with his claim to restore the Daniilovich line; see Mel'nikova, *Russkie monety*, 90.

a binomial structure, Boris followed established numismatic precedents that both documented and propagandized ideologies of succession.

Thus, any binomial Moscow coin can be, if not explained, at least contextualized within an anatomy of possible relationships. These coins generate a grid opposing fraternal to paternal family relations (coins attributed to brothers or cousins versus coins attributed to a father and son) and hierarchical political relations to relations of equivalence (coins advertising patronage, like those attributed to the khan and grand prince or to the grand prince and an appanage prince, versus coins attributed to relatives of equal rank, like pieces issued by the brother-princes of Rostov or coins minted by the grand prince and his co-opted heir).

Paternal hierarchy
(patron-father above vassal-son)

Collateral hierarchy (grand prince-brother above prince-brother)	Collateral identity (brother-prince with brother-prince)

Paternal identity
(grand prince-father with grand prince-son)

In this fashion, early Russian coins present a rhetorical field of metonymic associations and metaphoric kinship exchanges in which evolving claims of princely legitimacy were conventionally and systematically expressed. The trend is, of course, toward the "paternal identity" type. Money consistent with the co-option of an heir occurs only in Moscow and only subsequent to Vasilii I's reign: coins advertising "Grand Prince Vasilii" (without the patronymic), coins of Vasilii II attributed to pluralized "sovereigns" of Russia, pieces referring to both Ivan III and his son Ivan Ivanovich as grand prince, and binomial jetons minted for coronation rituals.[50] The metaphorical identification of father and son on these pieces can be contrasted to the collateral equivalence upheld by the money of Rostov, a city divided between two brothers in 1328: their descendants, whose relationship mirrored that of Vasilii II and Dmitrii Iur'evich, began in the late 1300s to coin binomial money together. This joint mint operated through the early 1400s, when Moscow arrogated the coinage rights of one of the princes.[51] In the context of the succession struggle, such coins,

50. On numismatic documents of Ivan III's co-option of his son, see I. G. Spasski, "Gold Coins and Coin-like Gold in the Muscovite State, and the First Gold Pieces of Ivan III," *Numismatic Chronicle* 17, no. 139 (1979), 165–84. In the event, Ivan the Younger predeceased his father. Although verbal expressions of father-son identity occur only on Muscovite coins, there is a possible pictorial parallel on nameless Riazan' coins that place two human heads inside the family mark, or *tagma*, of the princely house. Chernetsov suggests that these faces "represent the ruling prince and his heir." Chernetsov, *Types on Russian Coins*, 156. His interpretation might be correlated with chronicle passages speaking of "the princes of Pronsk," a princely city of Riazan', in the plural, and with 1371 and 1402 treaties (the same time frame as the aforementioned Riazan' coins) referring to "the two princes of Pronsk (Vladimir and his son Ivan) as 'grand princes.' These documents were edited and copied in Moscow, so that the ascription must have had some special significance not fully defined in our records." Presniakov, *Formation of the Great Russian State*, 205.

51. Spasskii, *Russian Monetary System*, 92.

which are homologous with coins attributed binomially to Grand Prince Vasilii and to Grand Prince Dmitrii, allied the Rostov cousins with a model of princely succession that was—on a rhetorical level, if not that of actual political fealty—incompatible with Vasilii II's claim to the throne of Moscow.

This is as much as to say that primogeniture won out. Only coins expressing paternal hierarchy and collateral identity are documented before Vasilii II's reign, while only coins reflecting primogenitary equivalence and fraternal hierarchy are found after it.[52] The shift was accomplished both by Vasilii II's arrogation of coinage rights upon his return to the throne in the late 1440s and by the actual elimination of brothers, who were executed or tonsured as they reached puberty. "The Grand Prince and his elite missed no opportunity," writes Nancy Shields Kollmann, "to eradicate collateral lines, rather than risk having an appanage prince claim the throne by collateral inheritance, as Prince Yuri of Galich tried to do."[53] The last collateral coin is attributed to Grand Prince Vasilii and Prince Vasilii Iaroslavich of Serpukhov, Vasilii II's brother-in-law and the last representative of the Daniilovich clan's last collateral line.[54] The types appear to portray the coordinated action of the two princes, since the two sides depict a man attacking a serpent with a sword and a horseman driving a spear into the serpent's mouth, respectively. The numismatic correlate to a treaty stripping Serpukhov of sovereignty and laying special stress on its prince's recognition of primogeniture, the coin was minted during the wave of reprisals meted out by the blinded grand prince on his return to the throne, sometime between 1451 and 1456.[55] In that year, Vasilii Iaroslavich, although a steadfast ally throughout the civil war, was arrested on charges of sedition and exiled to Uglich, where he died a captive. Russia's last collateral coin thus coincides with the last collateral branch of the princely line.

Counterfeits and Usurpers

Muscovite coins operated both to articulate the changes in succession that facilitated Muscovy's centralization and as an actual mechanism of that centralization. This function is perhaps most prominent in the coins of aspirant tsars. It was Boris Godunov who completed the centralization of the Russian monetary system with the highly effective coins A. S. Mel'nikova calls a "mirror not just of the economic conditions of the period but of its complex political circumstances."[56] After his ouster, neighboring powers supported various claimants and flooded Russia with degraded kopecks.[57] However, False Dmitrii II struck kopecks in Pskov, with obverse types identical to the coins of other

52. "The abolition of appanage coinage parallels the curtailment of appanage political power," writes Thomas Noonan, in "Forging a National Identity" (496).

53. Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics*, 156.

54. Oreshnikov, *Russkie monety*, coin no. 749.

55. Vasilii Iaroslavich swears in the event of Vasilii II's death "to hold your son, Grand Prince Ivan, in your place." *DDG*, 184.

56. A. S. Mel'nikova, *Russkie monety ot Ivana Groznogo do Petra Pervogo: Istoriia russkoi denezhnoi sistemy c 1533 do 1682* (Moscow, 1989), 63.

57. Ibid., 134–39.

Figure 3. Binomial coin of Prince Vasilii Iaroslavich of Serpukhov and Grand Prince Vasilii II. A. Oreshnikov, *Russkie monety do 1547 goda*.

claimants but minted at a superior weight standard.[58] When compared to the relatively debased coin made by his rivals, the intrinsic value of the False Dmitrii's money was the corollary of the royal sign supposedly stamped into his flesh. The high quality of his silver legitimated him by implying that other claimants were, like their adulterated coin, counterfeit.

Maureen Perrie argues that royal marks like those attributed to the False Dmitriis echo a trope in western adventure romances and fall into "three main categories: secular symbols of state, such as the eagle; religious symbols (the cross); and celestial signs (moons and stars). These appear either individually or in various combinations, perhaps indicating that Russians held a mixture of secular, religious, and folkloric concepts of the monarchy."[59] However, all three kinds of images constituted official as well as popular signs of royalty insofar as they also appeared on circulating coins. Perrie cites Ivan Turgenev's 1877 *Virgin Soil*, in which a character scoffs at peasants for believing in pretenders with "some royal marks or other on the chest, branded by red hot five-kopeck pieces," but it seems to have gone unremarked that such signs, as specified in Russian sources, evolved in close tandem with numismatic types.[60]

This parallel chronology of royal marks and Russian coins, which is to my knowledge complete, comprises the following: 1) "Red birthmarks on the shoulders" shaped like a "tsar's crown" and "double-headed eagle" in 1673, which can be correlated with the double-headed eagle and crown on coins struck after Tsar Aleksei's 1654 currency reform.[61] 2) A 1732 "Aleksei Petrovich"

58. Ibid., 100.

59. Maureen Perrie, "'Royal Marks': Reading the Bodies of Russian Pretenders, 17th–19th Centuries," *Kritika* 11, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 552.

60. Ibid., 558.

61. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, 86–87; Perrie, "'Royal Marks,'" 544–45; and Spasskii, *Russian Monetary System*, 126–31. One witness attested to

near Tambov with a cross on his back and a sword on his thigh, matching the cross on the reverse of the ruble popularly known as the *krestovik*, minted 1722–29.[62] 3) A "Petr Petrovich" of the same year, active primarily among the Don cossacks; the star on his chest and moon on his back recall Peter I's 1724–25 *solnechnik* rubles, which feature a portrait of the tsar wearing a star-shaped medal and, on the reverse, a stylized sunburst at the center of a cross.[63] 4–6) Crosses on the foot; on the chest, forehead, and shoulders; and on the chest, back, and arms of pretenders in 1765, 1772, and 1774, respectively, which could be related either to *krestoviki* still in circulation, to the cross pattern on five- and ten-ruble coins minted 1755–1805, or, most plausibly, to the four crosses embellishing the eagle on rubles after 1730.[64] 7) Emel'ian Pugachev's less specific "royal marks"—probably an eagle like that on contemporary rubles, given that he denied in interrogations showing "heraldic devices and Russian eagles of any kind."[65] 8) Crosses on the back and chest of an 1822 pretender, when coins with a large cross on the obverse, struck between 1797 and 1801, remained in prominent circulation alongside the five- and ten-ruble coins.[66] And 9) an 1826 man with a crown on his chest and a scepter on his shoulder, reminiscent of the crown and scepter sported by the eagle on rubles minted after 1802.[67]

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an additional moon and star; these are Ottoman rather than Russian symbols, and indeed the account comes from a Cossack border region. Other sources mention only the Russian emblems, while one cynic observes simply that the pretender had "something like a scab" on his shoulder. Compare the 1646 case in which a pretender paid a woman in the Crimean khanate, an Ottoman dependency, to brand a star and crescent moon onto his back and then "showed that mark to many people and spoke as if he was the son of the tsar and as if the state of Muscovy belonged to him; and the Russian people, believing his thievery, came to him." The brand reproduces not a symbol of the Russian empire per se but the symbol of the local power. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, 67.

62. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, 126–27; "1 rubl' 1722 goda (s monogrammoi, na grudi net pal'movoi vetvi (na grudi ordenskaia lenta)," *Gdge Nashel*, at gdenashel.ru/katalogrus/1811-1-rubl-1722-goda-s-monogrammoi-na.html (last accessed November 5, 2015); and Spasskii, *Russian Monetary System*, 155.

63. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, 127; "1 rubl' 1724 goda ('Solnechnik.' Portret v latakh, SPB v obreze rukava," *Gde Nashel*, at gdenashel.ru/katalogrus/1821-1-rubl-1724-godasolnechnik-v-latax.html (last accessed November 5, 2015).

64. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, 144; Perrie, 546–47, 549; "10 rublei 1775 goda," *Gde Nashel*, at gdenashel.ru/katalogrus/3577-10-rublei-1775--goda.html (last accessed November 5, 2015); and "Ruble—Ekaterina II," *Numista*, at en.numista.com/catalogue/pieces26972.html (last accessed November 5, 2015).

65. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, 147–48; Perrie, "'Royal Marks,'" 548.

66. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, 185; Perrie, "'Royal Marks,'" 550; and "1 rubl' 1797 goda," *Gde Nashel*, at gdenashel.ru/katalogrus/1973-1-rubl-1797-goda.html (last accessed November 5, 2015).

67. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, 210, 44; Perrie, "'Royal Marks,'" 550–51, 556–57. In the mid-nineteenth century, we further encounter a cross-shaped pattern of hair on the chest of a false Grand Duke Konstantin and folk songs that attribute a similar mark to False Dmitrii I. While the eagle on contemporary rubles continued to bear four crosses, it seems more likely that the cross had at this point become a conventional sign of royalty, as in French legends of foundling kings, and was, as Perrie suggests, influenced by the crosses traced on the body during baptism and royal unction

Thus, for an extended period royal marks appear to have been sensitive to the evolving iconography of circulating coins. The eagle, cross, and star appeared on the bodies of pretenders only after they appeared on numismatic objects, suggesting an identification, in the social imagination, of money as a material object with the body of the tsar. While the sample size is too small to say with confidence, coin design may even have exerted influence on the bodily location of royal marks.[68] In an 1822 letter to Tsar Alexander I, a townsman who had discovered the monarch's father alive and well in a provincial bathhouse conceives of the royal body as a coin-like object stamped on both sides: "He bears upon his body, on his back between the shoulder-blades, a cross the like of which none of your subjects can have except those of supreme power; for this reason it must be supposed that he has a similar sign also on his chest."[69]

Although these examples take place beyond the control of the state and even as a challenge to its authority, they participate in the established metaphorical identification of the ruler and his money. Samozvanchestvo and counterfeiting are the inversion of legitimate succession and licensed mints. In fifteenth-century coinage, the prince's guarantee of his money as a metaphorical mintmaster has a counterpart in Muscovite dengas that represent a prince-executioner standing vigilant against false moneyers with a sword in one hand and an axe in the other; the reverse sometimes features a severed hand, the punishment for counterfeiting according to somewhat later documents.[70] At the height of the succession crisis, pieces with this type were

rites. Perrie, "'Royal Marks,'" 549. Other pretenders' marks are either unspecified or appear in foreign sources. Dutch traveler Isaac Massa attests to contemporary Russian rumors that the body exhibited as False Dmitrii I lacked an unspecified sign on the left side of his chest that had distinguished the ruler. Isaak Massa, *Kratkoe izvestie o Moskovii v nachale XVII v.*, trans. A. A. Morozova (Moscow, 1937), 157, 159. A Polish source ascribes an eagle to the arm of False Dmitrii I, and a Belarusian chronicle cites unspecified marks shown by False Dmitrii II at a border crossing. Other early accounts of royal marks are clustered in 1643–46 and also appear abroad: an unspecified heraldic sign in Poland; a half-moon and star tattoo in Crimea; crosses and stars and the inscription "Semen Shuiskii Vasil'evich, son of Grand Prince and Tsar of Muscovy Vasiliii Ivanovich" in Moldova; an eagle with Russian writing around it in Poland; and Timofei Ankudinov's unspecified mark in Constantinople, which Chistov takes as a *gerb* and which Perrie suggests was astronomical. See Perrie, "'Royal Marks,'" 540–44; and Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, 71. Some of these marks are reminiscent of numismatic phenomena. For example, the eagle appeared on all major Polish coins of the time and a bird also appeared on the Russian *polushka*. The Polish instance of an eagle surrounded by writing is, as Perrie notes, especially reminiscent of a medal, seal, or coin. Perrie, "'Royal Marks,'" 554. However, none of these can be correlated with Russian coinage specifically, which throughout the period featured a horseman on the kopeck and a bird on the polushka.

68. The distribution of small crosses on the bodies of pretenders in 1765, 1772, and 1774—on the head, arms, and foot—seems to echo the distribution of crosses on the gerb depicted on contemporary rubles: a large cross on the main crown, two smaller crosses below and to the sides of it (on each of the two eagle heads), and a prominent cross on the orb held in the eagle's left foot. In periods when a cross occupied the entire obverse or reverse of the ruble, crosses appear correspondingly on the chest or back of the pretender.

69. Quoted in Uspenskii, "Tsar and Pretender," 265.

70. Chernetsov, *Types on Russian Coins*, 64–65.

Figure 4. "Grand Prince" Dmitrii Iur'evich of Galich prince-executioner coin. A. Oreshnikov, *Russkie monety do 1547 goda*.

struck by both Vasilii II and Dmitrii Iur'evich. In fact, the only coins identifying Dmitrii as exclusive grand prince couple this generic minatory image with an obverse portrait, labeled "Grand Prince Dmitrii," of a peaceful ruler wearing a crown and carrying a bird. Vasilii II's coins with this type often incorporate an Arabic element that emphasizes his patent from the khan. Another coin type of Vasilii II bears the inscription "Let madness go and you live on" (Оставите безумье и живи будете), anticipating chronicle references to counterfeiters as madmen (*bezumnii chelovetsi*).[71]

The only satisfying interpretation of these coins to date is as minatory messages addressed to counterfeiters, but "no Russian forgeries of the 14th–15th centuries are in fact known. If the forgers' activities had reached a certain development, counterfeit coins would have survived to this day."[72] However, if the categories of counterfeit coiner and illegitimate ruler are metaphorically identical, then these coins would address the princely pretentions of relatives and rivals as well as counterfeiters of lower birth. After all, as Paul Strohm writes, the usurper-prince is "the *ultimate* counterfeiter, who cannot be prosecuted or even named. . . . At once completely illegitimate and the very guarantor of legitimacy."[73] The thirteen coins that feature warnings against counterfeiters, and therefore accuse other money of being counterfeit, were all minted by grand princes whose position was openly challenged; of these, eleven can be associated with the succession conflict between Vasilii II (ten coins) and Dmitrii Iur'evich (one coin).[74] As the minatory coins of both princes circulated simultaneously, with identical types featuring a prince-executioner, they could be distinguished only by referring to the name of the

71. *PSRL*, 26:323; Spassky, *Russian Monetary System*, 98.

72. Spasskii, *Russian Monetary System*, 98.

73. Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399–1422* (New Haven, 1998), 139. Emphasis in the original.

74. The other instances are a prince-executioner coin of Dmitrii Donskoi and coins with a verbal warning (*rostozha [storozha] na bezumnago cheloveka*) minted by Ivan Mikhailovich of Tver' during a period of rivalry in that principality. Oreshnikov, *Russkie monety*, coins nos. 453, 97–100.

issuing prince on the other side. On Dmitrii Iur'evich's coin, this name was associated with an idealized image of a just ruler. Distinguishing the true from the false prince—or determining the correct principle of succession, which is another way of saying the same thing—becomes collapsed into the act of telling true from counterfeit coin.

The economic context of coins resonates powerfully with other aspects of social life. Muscovite money links the legitimacy of the sovereign and his money both materially, in the licensing and quality of coins, and figuratively, insofar as coins and the images and inscriptions on them symbolize autocratic power. The Shakespearean example of the foundling prince's "natural stamp" shows that legitimate succession, political power, numismatic markings, and verbal figures rhetorically interact in early modern Britain as well. Reading literary figures of coin in connection with Renaissance ideologies of charismatic kingship, Stephen Deng describes diverse situations in which the English monarch and his coin were metaphorically identified. For example, when the king ceremonially touched his subjects to cure them from scrofula, or "king's evil," he also gave them a coin to wear as a talisman, believed to figure continued contact with the sovereign and therefore to ward off recurrence of the disease—at once a sign of the king's authority and a ritual that buttressed that authority against challengers.[75] Deng argues that in England anxieties of illegitimacy were linked to religious conflict and the development of capitalist institutions, but in Russia they appear to have stemmed from shifts in succession practices, as witnessed by the iconography of and inscriptions on Muscovite coins as well as the related discourse in chronicles, legal documents, and letters. The systematic recurrence of this figurative system linking inheritance and coin was entrenched during the simultaneous introduction of coinage and primogeniture in the East Slavic territories, where coins articulated and advertised schemes of dynastic legitimacy at a critical juncture in political evolution. Like the English custom in which the monarch distributed coins as talismans against scrofula, the binomial inscriptions on Muscovite coins and Ivan IV's elaborate rhetoric of coinage and succession can be largely explained as conscious manipulation of symbols on the part of the state, which enlisted economic metaphors and numismatic materials in defense of its own interests.

As the phenomenon of quasi-numismatic royal marks demonstrates, however, the profound identification of ruler and coin acquired a life independent of its purposeful use by the state and came to inform popular expressions of dissatisfaction well beyond the Daniilovich dynasty. Anton Petrov, leader of the 1861 peasant uprising at Bezdna, warned his followers not to believe anyone who claimed to speak in the tsar's name until "a young tsar, seventeen years old, comes to us with a gold medal on his right shoulder and a silver medal on his left shoulder; him you should believe."[76] At this time of political discontent, Petrov's fantasy of a tsar-redeemer constituted a late but transparent association of genuine tsars and properly marked metal. Like

75. Deng, *Coinage and State Formation*, 145.

76. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, 216. See also Perrie, "'Royal Marks,'" 550.

Ivan IV's letter, in which the ruler warns against counterfeit inheritance using transactional tropes of succession, peasant legends about false and true tsars rely on a poetics of exchange—a wax doll is crowned in place of the true tsar, for example, or another infant is switched at birth for the real heir, who is subsequently to be recognized by some special sign. For K. V. Chistov, these pivotal scenes of substitution implicitly question the legitimacy of *any* ruler, despite outward trappings of power.[77] Philip Longworth, too, has argued that samozvanchestvo manifested a deeply rooted mistrust of the social order and even a form of protest.[78] However, royal impostors and their somatic marks did not call into question political castes and economic structures as such but actually referred to mechanisms that facilitated a centralized political and economic system. The deeply rooted rhetorical association of money and succession helped ensure that even resistance to the social order was articulated in the established terms of coinage and inheritance—the very guarantors of centralized power.

77. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, 30–31.
78. Longworth, "The Pretender Phenomenon in Eighteenth-Century Russia," 63.