

**Title:** Narrating the Center: Kiev and Moscow in 16th-century Historiography  
**Author:** Polina Rikoun, University of Denver

My presentation examines the ways that theories of place can be shaped by theories of time. I explore the connection between place and time on the example of the Kievan *Synopsis* of 1674–1680, a history of Eastern Slavs written in the Kievan Cave Monastery and attributed to its archimandrite Innokenty Gizel (Rothe). As the first historical narrative to articulate the myth of Russian-Ukrainian unity in an explicit and cohesive way, *Synopsis* became one of the foundations of Russian imperial historiography in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Plokhy 263–66; Kohut 72). It continues to influence East Slavic historical consciousness and self-perceptions to this day.

This foundational text strives to define and defend Kiev's position as the spiritual center of Orthodox Christianity (Zhylenko 14), while also negotiating Kiev's relationship to the political power wielded by Moscow. Both Kiev's and Moscow's status as center depend on the role they play in a temporal framework, the narrative of creation, fall, and redemption that constitutes Christian universal history. While most European peoples strove to integrate their history into this overarching narrative in the Middle Ages (Breisach 107–25), the Christian narrative remained foundational for East Slavic history into the early modern period.

In my presentation I examine the ways that in *Synopsis*, Kiev vies with Moscow for the central role in Christian history, i.e. in the divine plan for redeeming humankind. *Synopsis* manages to achieve a precarious balance between glorifying the Muscovite tsar on the one hand and defending Kiev's own claims to power on the other. To this end, geographical distinctions and distances are downplayed and even erased, and the relationship between the two centers is articulated in terms of their place in Christian time.

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