

Rogneda of Polotsk

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Rogneda of Polotsk (962-1002) is the Slavic name for **Ragnhild**, whose father Ragnvald (Slavic: Rogvolod) *came from overseas* (i.e., from Scandinavia) and established himself at Polatsk in the mid-10th century.

It has been speculated that Ragnvald belonged to the Ynglings royal family of Norway. In or about 980, Vladimir of Novgorod, on learning that she was betrothed to his half-brother Yaropolk I of Kiev, took Polotsk and forced Rogneda to marry him. Having raped Rogneda in the presence of her parents, he ordered them to be killed, along with two of Rogneda's brothers.

Rogneda gave him several children. The four sons were Yaroslav the Wise, Vsevolod, Mstislav of Chernigov, and Izyaslav of Polotsk. She also bore two daughters, one of whom is named by Nestor the Chronicler as Predslava (taken as a concubine of Boleslaus I of Poland, according to Gallus). A later chronicle tells a story, most likely taken from a Norse saga, of Rogneda plotting against Vladimir and asking her elder son, Izyaslav, to kill him. As was the Norse royal custom, she was sent with her elder son to govern the land of her parents, i.e. Polotsk. Izyaslav's line continued to rule Polotsk and the newly-found town of Izyaslavl until the Mongol invasion.

After Vladimir converted to Christianity and took Anna Porphyrogeneta as his wife, he had to divorce all his previous wives, including Rogneda. After that, she entered the convent and took the name **Anastasia**.

Around 1825 Kondraty Ryleev wrote a narrative poem entitled *Rogneda*. This poem became a literary source for her portrayal in the nationalist Russian opera *Rogneda* by Alexander Serov, which premiered in 1865.

See also

- Family life and children of Vladimir I

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Vladimir and Rogneda (1770).

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