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Raffensperger, Christian. **Reimagining Europe: Kievan Rus' in the medieval world.** Harvard, 2012. 329p bibl index afp ISBN 9780674063846, \$55.00

Raffensperger (Wittenberg Univ.) owes much to Benedict Anderson (*Imagined Communities*, CH, Mar'84). First, there is the book title; then, the argument that the religious and national developments of the Kievan period (988-1146) reflected imagined communities unlike those long described by historians who saw the past as a precursor of modern times. Although Rus' (like the rest of Christendom) owed much to Byzantium, in this period it was one of several micro-Christendoms that wanted independence from outside control. The rulers of Rus', remembering their Viking ancestors, wanted military and commercial ties to the kingdoms to their north and west more than with Byzantium. Raffensperger's insights into art and architecture, coinage, marriage contracts, the choice of saints, rulers' names, and the contacts between churches illuminate a dark period in Rus'ian history. Had the Rus'ian church adopted Latin or Greek, had eastern horsemen not overrun the principalities, or had the events of 1054 and 1204 not happened, there would have been no question that Rus' was a part of Europe. Raffensperger make a persuasive case that in these years, before central control from Kiev disintegrated, it was. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above.—*W. L. Urban, Monmouth College (IL)*