

POLITICS AND HIERARCHY IN THE EARLY RUS' CHURCH: ANTONII, A 13TH-CENTURY ARCHBISHOP OF NOVGOROD

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The Orthodox Church of Russia is a hierarchical institution. Administration is essentially in the hands of the bishops, who delegate powers to monasteries and parish clergy. The chief hierarch of early Rus' was the metropolitan, who resided in Kiev (later in Vladimir, and still later in Moscow), and answered to the patriarch of Constantinople and his Holy Synod. Unlike the members of the Orthodox parish clergy, who are married men, bishops are recruited from the unmarried, monastic clergy. Despite the important role the bishops played in church life in early Rus', we have little biographical data on any of them from the period before the Mongol conquest of Rus' in 1237–1240.¹ The details we have are either quite basic—often just dates of service listed in chronicles—or items of dubious value garnered from hagiography: items that are recorded not so much as historical facts but rather as pious incidents meant to generate faith and reverence for the subject.

In the case of Antonii, a 13th-century archbishop of Novgorod (d. 1232), however, we have numerous details, largely because

¹ On the administrative structure of the church in Kievan Rus', see Shchapor, *State and Church*.

of the important role he played in the political life of the city-state of Novgorod, which was well recorded in the local chronicles, but also because some of his own personal writings have survived. Chronicling his life may give us some useful insight into the kinds of men who were raised to the high office of bishop in Rus', particularly in the city of Novgorod.

In the 13th century, the northwestern Rus' city of Novgorod was clearly one of the most important cities in the Rus' state, and likely its wealthiest. Its ecclesiastical head, the archbishop, might actually have been the most powerful figure in the city. Princes and mayors (*posadniki*) came and went, but (at least in theory) the archbishop remained, a formidable focus of local patriotism. The Novgorodian prelate was unique in that he alone carried the title of archbishop in the Rus' church, and also because he was chosen by the local populace (or at least by its leaders) and dispatched to the metropolitan of Kiev, the head of the church in Rus', solely for confirmation and consecration. He was not simply appointed by the metropolitan or by the metropolitan in conjunction with the local prince. But, of course, there was no hereditary local prince in Novgorod, and most of the other offices in the city-state that deemed itself "Lord Novgorod the Great" were also elective.

Dobrynia ladreikovich, better known as Archbishop Antonii (who presided over the Novgorodian Church from 1211 to 1219, and again from 1225 to 1228), is best known to the scholarly community because of his *Kniga Palomnik*, or *Pilgrim Book*, his fascinating description of Constantinople in the year 1200, coincidentally, a bare four years before this largest city in Christendom was conquered by the Latin crusaders. His work is an important historical source, albeit less for historians of Rus' than for historians of the Byzantine Empire. It is one of the finest and most detailed descriptions of medieval Constantinople in any language, particularly important for its record of the city's monumental topography just before it was sacked and looted by the knights of the Fourth Crusade. It is also a veritable mine of details about popular religion and local traditions, for here Antonii describes such things as the beauty of a patriarchal liturgy celebrated in the Great Church of St. Sophia, the glory of the choirs, specifics of the ritual (and the miraculous appearance of a rose "white as cheese" growing out of the forehead of a saint in a wall painting), as well as the stories connected with various saints and images he venerated in the city.

He recounts the story of a father forcing the angel who has come for his son's soul to wait until the end of the service where the boy was an acolyte, and the tale of an artist who claimed that he had depicted Christ as if he were alive; God struck him down for his presumption.² Producing such a work presupposes a talented and sophisticated author whose biography bears study.

Antonii's basic biography can be charted from his *Pilgrim Book* and the local chronicles of Novgorod.³ The *Pilgrim Book* yields what we might call "hard data" about the author only as related to his visit to the Byzantine capital and what he saw there and recorded. It does, however, yield a specific date, Sunday, 21 May 1200 A.D, the date on which he notes seeing a miracle in the Great Church of St. Sophia: a candelabrum in the shape of a cross that hung above the main altar miraculously rose during matins to the accompaniment of cries of, "Kyrie eleison!" ("Lord have mercy!"). It then descended again, with the lamps still burning.⁴ Unfortunately, no other sources confirm this wonder or its date, but the data here specifies a specific date when he was in Constantinople. Antonii's *Pilgrim Book* is so full of material on the Byzantine capital that it is hard to imagine that the facts were collected during a short trip. The author mentions almost one hundred monasteries, churches, and shrines in and around Constantinople, and an even larger number of relics and miraculous icons that he venerated. It is the fullest travel account of the Byzantine capital from the Middle Ages.⁵ The work, in fact reads like the travel memoir of someone who had lived in the city quite a while and knew its patterns such as what happened on different holidays. Interestingly enough, the chronicle entry registering the choice of Antonii as archbishop of Novgorod in 1210 notes, by way of introducing the previously unmentioned monk (apparently recently tonsured after having traveled to Constantinople as a layman), that he had "just returned" from "Tsargrad" (that is, Constantinople).⁶ Thus, Antonii might have spent significant time there (since he was already

² *Kniga Palomnik*. On the text see O. A. Belobrova, "O 'Knige Palomnik'" 225–235; Seemann, *Wallfahrtsliteratur*, 213–221; and Lenhoff, "Kniga Palomnik."

³ See *Kniga Palomnik*, "Introduction."

⁴ *Kniga Palomnik*, 13–15.

⁵ Majeska, "Russian Pilgrims," 93; and Majeska, "Anthony of Novgorod."

⁶ "Togdazhe biashe prishel," *Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopis'*, 250.

visiting in May of 1200), and possibly made some important contacts.⁷ In any case, with his call to the archiepiscopal throne of his home city began one of the most checkered careers of a Novgorodian hierarch of the Middle Ages.⁸

The circumstances of Antonii's choice as archbishop were clearly irregular. He was appointed (but did not take office) in 1210⁹ by the new Prince of Novgorod, Mstislav Mstislavich "the Bold" (Udaloï) (from the Smolensk line of princes), to replace Archbishop Mitrofan, who had been irregularly appointed by the Grand Prince Vsevolod "Big Nest" (Bol'shoe Gnezdō) of Suzdal'. Mitrofan's appointment had been part of a package deal with the appointment of Grand Prince Vsevolod's son, Sviatoslav, as prince of Novgorod in 1199.¹⁰ When the young prince was ousted, so was his

⁷ It has been suggested that if Antonii remained in Constantinople until shortly before his election as archbishop in 1210, he could also be the author of two pieces of Novgorodian material treating the Latins' sack of Constantinople that read like eyewitness accounts. Aleshkovskii, *Povest' vremennykh let*, 79, suggests that Antonii either himself wrote the long chronicle entry on the taking of Constantinople, "The Tale of the Taking of Tsargrad by the Crusaders," or at least insisted on its insertion into the *First Novgorod Chronicle*, the editing of which he oversaw. It is included sub anno 6712 (1204); see *Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopis'*, 46–49, 240–246. Loparev (*Kniga Palomnik*, "Introduction") suggests that Antonii wrote a second version of the *Pilgrim Book* to include anti-Latin references. This supposed "second edition," however, could just as easily be the result of simple scribal emendations to "update" the work after 1204; see the textual variants included in the Loparev edition of *Kniga Palomnik*.

⁸ The basic data are available in *Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopis'*, 51–72; cf. *ibid.* 281–282, 473–474. Cf. Khoroshev, *Tserkov' v sotsial'no-politicheskoi sisteme*, 40–48; Ianiin, *Novgorodskie posadniki*, 127–142; and Senyk, *Church in Ukraine*, 127–128, 139–140. On the tangled chronology of this part of the *Novgorod First Chronicle* (different year calculations, etc.) see Ianiin, "K khronologii," 89–95; and Berezhkov, *Khronologija*, 247. See Khoroshev, *Tserkov' v sotsial'no-politicheskoi sisteme*, 40–47, on the politics of the Novgorod archbishopric in this period, and Beliaev, *Istoriia Velikogo Novgoroda*, 262–309, on the political history.

⁹ He actually took office only in 1211.

¹⁰ Tolochko, "Kiev iNovgorod," 174–176. The case for Mitrofan's appointment as the work of the prince of Suzdal' is spelled out in Beliaev, *Istoriia Velikogo Novgoroda*, 262. It is difficult to see how Fennell, *Crisis*, 55, can describe Mitrofan as Prince Mstislav's "firm supporter." He seems to misinterpret the *Novgorod First Chronicle* entry for 1210 on relations between the prince and the bishop, albeit Mitrofan actually fled to Toropets, the previous throne of Mstislav, when he was ousted—perhaps to appeal to the prince to reconsider. But Fennell also puts far too much weight on an

ecclesiastical counterpart, Mitrofan, to be replaced by an anti-Suzdal' cleric who would mirror the period's dominant orientation, namely, Antonii. The deposed archbishop, Mitrofan, bided his time, first in the town of Toropets, and then with his patron in the Suzdal' lands, until 1219, when he returned to Novgorod. While Antonii was away, Mitrofan managed to take over the cathedral with the backing of the pro-Suzdal' faction of the populace. His supporters were in control and they told Antonii, "Go wherever you want!" (*Poidi gde ti liubo*). He returned to Novgorod (evidently "where he wanted") and stayed at the Spas Nereditsa Monastery, conveniently close to the princely residence (*gorodishche*), held, apparently, by the backers of Mstislav's son Vsevolod, the current prince. (Prince Mstislav the Bold himself had gone off to take the principality of Galich in the south.) The situation was clearly uncanonical: Lord Novgorod the Great was faced with two archbishops for the one Cathedral of St. Sophia, with both, as it were, now in residence in the city. Probably because they were secure in the knowledge that their candidate had seniority on the Novgorodian episcopal throne, the pro-Suzdal' party pressed to send both would-be incumbents to the court of the metropolitanate in Kiev for resolution of their dispute. Their assumption proved correct, and their candidate, Mitrofan, was returned to office in the city. Rather than being punished for usurping an already occupied throne and being sent for penance to a monastery, however, the metropolitan appointed Antonii to rule the newly established (or reestablished) bishopric of Peremysl'.¹¹

incident when Mitrofan prevented the desecration of the body of an anti-Suzdal' former *posadnik*, Dmitrii Miroshkinich (ibid., 61, n67, n68). It must be remembered that Mitrofan was appointed out of Suzdal' when his predecessor on the archbishop's throne died while on an embassy there; Suzdalian envoys actually accompanied Mitrofan to Kiev for his installation! Moreover, in 1222, it was Mitrofan who led the Novgorodian delegation to Suzdal' to ask for a prince of the Suzdal' line to replace Vsevolod Mstislavich. He then served as regent for the underage Suzdalian prince Vsevolod Iur'evich (*Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopis'*, 60).

¹¹ *Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopis'*, 51–72; Isaiv, *Istoriia Permis'koho iepiskopstva*, 8–9; I am grateful to Prof. Ihor Sevčenko for this second citation. On the bizarre history of this area in the 13th century, when it went back and forth among Rus', Poland, and Hungary, see *Galician-Volynian Chronicle*, 24–33, 132–134; Sharanevych, *Istoriia Halytsko-Volodymyrskoy Rusy*, 75–80; Fennell, *Crisis*, 34–44; and Winter, *Russland und das Papsttum*, 82–87. Peremysl' traditionally went to a younger son of the Galician prince: see Hrushevskij, *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusy*, 2:462. There is considerable

The lack of punishment for usurpation of the already occupied Novgorod episcopal throne should not be surprising; the metropolitan had originally authorized the appointment and consecrated Antonii for that post. The metropolitan's decision to appoint the newly unemployed Antonii to Peremysl', however, suggests something very special. This principality had just been wrested from Hungarian occupation, during which time the churches there had been handed over to the Latins by the Hungarian king. Peremysl' was also in the sphere, if not the gift, of Antonii's patron, Prince Mstislav Mstislavich, now on the throne of Galich.¹²

At the death of Archbishop Mitrofan in 1222, the people of Novgorod, still under the influence of the Suzdal' party, chose the monk Arsenii of the same Khutyn Monastery that had produced Antonii as their new *vладыка* (Lord Bishop). Since Arsenii apparently had been warned that the metropolitan would not consecrate him, he never went to Kiev. Meanwhile, the Suzdal' party in Novgorod that had supported him lost power under a series of child princes dispatched from Suzdal'. As the Suzdal' army marched on Novgorod to reassert Suzdalian claims there, the Novgorodian burghers worked out a compromise with Suzdal'. They agreed to pay off the Suzdal' grand prince and accept as their service prince Mikhail Vsevolodovich of Chernigov, Grand Prince Iurii of Suzdal''s brother-in-law.

In 1225, after the Hungarians retook Peremysl', and during Prince Mikhail's very short first reign in Novgorod, Antonii returned to his original see and resumed his archiepiscopal throne, perhaps as part of the negotiated compromise.¹³ When Prince Mikhail left for Chernigov, however, the more clearly pro-Suzdal' faction again became active, particularly once the office of Novgorodian prince had gone to Iaroslav Vsevolodovich of Pereiaslav', Iurii of Suzdal''s brother. As the new prince gained control in Novgorod,

dispute over the early years of the Peremysl' eparchy: see Senyk, *Church in Ukraine*, 139–142.

¹² PSRL 25 (1949), 110; Pashuto, *Ocherki*, 149; and Aleshkovskii, *Povest' vremennykh let*, 79. On the political events in this area in the first half of the 13th century, see Pashuto, *Ocherki*, 191–220; and Pashuto, *Vneshniaia politika*, 241–251.

¹³ On Mikhail of Chernigov's rule in Novgorod, see Dimnik, *Mikhail, Prince of Chernigov*, 15–51. Dimnik would seem to be incorrect, however, in seeing Antonii as an active supporter of the Suzdal' line of princes (*ibid.*, 31n52). The material he cites in support of his position can just as easily be read as depicting a pastoral figure trying to minister to various factions in his flock. See also above, note 8.

Antonii felt less and less welcome and finally returned to his Khutyn Monastery (1228), to be replaced in the Archbishop's Palace by the same Arsenii he had ousted from office previously. Once Prince Iaroslav went off and left Novgorod in the charge of his two young sons, however, the populace turned on the still unconsecrated *Vladyka* Arsenii, blaming him for the rains continuing into December, a weather pattern that had made it impossible to harvest the grain. He was also accused of gaining his office by bribing the prince. In a general anti-Suzdal' *mélée* he was beaten almost to death by a crowd before he escaped to the cathedral, where he claimed sanctuary. Probably at the request of Antonii, who had resumed his archiepiscopal office, Arsenii was allowed to retire again to the Khutyn Monastery.¹⁴ Now bereft of speech, Antonii functioned through two spokesmen appointed by the city until, still in 1228, he accepted the counsel of the newly reinstalled Prince Mikhail Vsevolodovich of Chernigov (Iurii's brother-in-law, and the earlier "compromise candidate") and voluntarily retired, also to the Khutyn Monastery.

After Antonii's retirement, a different ritual was followed for appointing a successor: what appears to have been a committee put the names of three candidates into a chalice from which an old monk was asked to draw one. With the agreement of all factions (it seems), the monk Spiridon was named archbishop of Novgorod and dispatched to Kiev to be consecrated to bishop's orders.¹⁵ Antonii died at the Khutyn Monastery in 1232 and was buried in the narthex (*prítvor*) of St. Sophia in the presence of his successor, Archbishop Spiridon, apparently in the good graces of the local church leadership.¹⁶ So ended a strange and unseemly episode in the evolving relations between Novgorod and the grand princely seat of Suzdal' (soon to be moved to Moscow).¹⁷

¹⁴ On possible interpretations of this strange incident, see Froianov, "O sobytiakh 1227–1230," 97–113.

¹⁵ Khoroshev, *Tserkov' v sotsial'no-politicheskoi sisteme*, 43–47; Beliaev, *Istoriia Velikogo Novgoroda*, 308–309. On the tradition of Novgorod choosing its own archbishop, see Tomilin, *Velikonovgorodskaiia kafedra*, 7–12; and cf. also Iarin, "K khronologii," 95.

¹⁶ *Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopis'*, 72; and Iarin, "K khronologii," 89–94. On the burial place of Archbishop Antonii, the Martirii porch (*papert'*) on the church's south side, near the Chapel of the Nativity of the Mother of God, see Iarin, *Nekropol'*, 81–87.

¹⁷ On the general political situation in Novgorod, see Beliaev, *Istoriia Velikogo Novgoroda*, 262–309; and Dimnik, *Mikhail, Prince of Chernigov*, 15–51.

Explaining the strange career of Dobrynia ladreikovich is not easy. Apparently, he was from an important Novgorod family, doubtless merchant-boyar stock. D. I. Prozorovskii argues rather convincingly, albeit on the basis of circumstantial evidence, that Dobrynia was from the family of Proksha Malynich, a clan that produced a number of officials of Novgorod, including Antonii's father, the *voevoda* (governor-general) ladrei Prokshinich,¹⁸ who was killed by the lugrians in 1218. This might well be true. What is beyond dispute is that Antonii had a good education, for he writes literately and with style. His syntax is excellent; his ability to wield words and archaicisms comfortably and effectively is impressive. He never misses a chance to use the dual, and uses it correctly, even in oblique cases. Gail Lenhoff has argued, quite correctly, that his *Pilgrim Book* is an elegant and sophisticated adaptation of the *khozhenie* genre popularized by Igumen Daniil in the previous century.¹⁹ As a literary work, Antonii's *Pilgrim Book* demonstrates an enviable control of rhetorical devices, levels of diction, and use of salient detail and emotion. And it was probably a Novgorodian secular education that allowed Antonii to pen this work; the language in his *Pilgrim Book* is relatively free of Church Slavonicisms, strengthening the argument that he was not yet in holy orders when he made his trip.

Antonii's trip to Constantinople must have taken considerable money, probably his own, for there is no real evidence that he went to Byzantium as part of an official delegation from either church or state, although that possibility is not *prima facie* excluded.²⁰ That he was an important citizen of Novgorod is suggested

¹⁸ ladrei (sometimes called Iakov, perhaps his baptismal name) Prokshinich. The original patriarch of the family, Proksha, was shorn by St. Varlaam of Khutyn, and died a monk of that monastery. Proksha's second son, Viacheslav, also eventually took vows at the Savior Khutyn Monastery, and became the monk Varlaam, often confused with the founder of the monastery who carried the same monastic name. This later Varlaam was Dobrynia's uncle; when he died, he was buried in the Khutyn Monastery with great ceremony by Archbishop Spiridon, Dobrynia/Antonii's successor on the archiepiscopal throne of Novgorod. See the full argument in Prozorovskii, "O rodoslovii sv. Antonia," 1–15. See also Khoroshev, *Tserkov' v sotsial'no-politicheskoi sisteme*, 166–167; and Aleshkovskii, *Povest' vremennykh let*, 79.

¹⁹ Lenhoff, "Kniga Palomnik," 39–61.

²⁰ He might well have come to Constantinople as a private citizen representing the anti-Suzdal' party in Novgorod.

by the “souvenirs” he brought back with him from Constantinople: a piece of the wood of the “true cross”; a “tomb of the Lord” (a ribbon measuring the size of the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem, or, in this case, more likely, of a Constantinopolitan facsimile); a piece of the martyr robe of St. Theodore; relics of St. Blaise; and a piece of the stone from under the head of St. John the Evangelist in the tomb—hardly mementos of a common pilgrim.²¹ Moreover, the Khutyn Monastery, founded by the Novgorod boyar Aleksei Mikhailovich (later St. Varlaam of Khutyn), where Dobrynia took his vows, was the wealthiest monastery in the Novgorod lands and attracted the boyar elite of the city.²² From what other sources indicate, Dobrynia ladreikovich would have fit in well.

Explaining Dobrynia's almost unprecedented overnight rise from merchant-boyar layman to the second highest position in the Rus' church hierarchy is difficult. Certainly being an educated man (and perhaps even a very spiritual man) would have been important, but he also had excellent political credentials. His family was part of the anti-Suzdal' party that won out in 1210 with the appointment of Mstislav the Bold as service prince of Novgorod to replace the Suzdalian holder of that throne. Dobrynia, now Archbishop Antonii, was, in fact, the anti-Suzdal' ecclesiastical counterpart of the new prince. Moreover, it is possible that, having just recently spent time in Constantinople as a wealthy traveler, he might have personally forged ties with members of the Holy Synod whose members would thus have known him personally and perhaps have decided to use him in an anti-Suzdal' ecclesiastical campaign.

The top church hierarchy in Constantinople, like the metropolitan in Kiev, must have been exasperated by Suzdalian behavior. From the time of Prince Andrei Bogoliubskii's reign in Suzdal' (1157–74), the local princes had been initiating moves to gain ecclesiastical independence from the Kiev metropolitanate, and, more recently (1185), the Suzdalian Prince Vsevolod “Big-Nest” had even rejected the Kiev metropolitan's appointee to the Rostov bishopric in favor of his own candidate.²³ That action must have

²¹ *Kniga Palomnik*, 11, 22, 33; *Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopis'*, 52. On these relics see Tsarevskaia, “O tsar'gradskikh relikviiakh.”

²² Khoroshev, *Politicheskaia istoriia kanonizatsii*, 70–71; and Khoroshev, *Tserkov' v sotsial'no-politicheskoi sisteme*, 166, 203–211.

²³ Kartashev, *Ocherki*, 1: 188, 222.

angered both the metropolitan in Kiev and the patriarch. In Novgorod, Mitrofan had been appointed archbishop under pressure from the Suzdalian prince; Antonii, according to this scenario, would have replaced the pro-Suzdal' bishop as a loyal son of the Kiev metropolitan and the Patriarchal Synod in Constantinople, and the ecclesiastical authorities would not have demurred about raising an only recently professed monk to the rank of archbishop overnight.

One of the periods of Antonii's life about which it would be interesting to know more is his activity as bishop in Peremysl', where he was obviously appointed to retrieve the area for the Kiev Metropolitanate and the Orthodox Church. Were there reasons that he was the appropriate person for the job besides his being an unemployed bishop and a favorite of the powerful regional prince? Were his ties with the Patriarchal Synod in Constantinople key? Did his educational level or experience with western Christian merchants in Novgorod put him in particularly good stead? No sources seem to address these questions.

Antonii must have commanded considerable respect among the clergy and people of Novgorod, for long after his death he was closely connected in popular lore with St. Varlaam (d. 1192/1193), the beloved founder of the Khutyn Monastery. Varlaam was said to have given over to Antonii the direction of that community at his death,²⁴ a circumstance that would have been chronologically impossible. In fact, there was likely a popular confusion here with the later St. Varlaam, also an abbot of Khutyn (d. 1243), and a contemporary of Antonii (possibly his uncle), whose career uncannily parallels Antonii's.²⁵ Varlaam (Viacheslav Prokshinich in the world) was part of the embassy that negotiated a compromise with Grand Prince Iurii of Suzdal' when the latter was leading his army toward Novgorod in 1224.²⁶ As a result of these negotiations, Mikhail Vsevolodovich of Chernigov took the Novgorodian princely throne and Antonii was returned to the episcopal throne of the city in 1225. Elected *tysiatskii* (militia general of the city) three years later, Viacheslav abruptly resigned and retired to the

²⁴ See, for example, the "Sofia II Chronicle," *PSRL* 6 (1853), 135 (s.a. 1407).

²⁵ Dmitriev, *Zhitiinye povesti*, 14–19, 33–73; cf. Ianin, *Novgorodskie akty*, 207–210. On the texts possibly responsible for this confusion, see Anisimov, "Ikona Varlaama," 138–167.

²⁶ *Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopis'*, 64.

Khutyn Monastery, where Antonii retired the same year—and possibly for the same political reason: the temporary demise of the anti-Suzdal' clique.

Popular and elite lore both remembered Antonii—correctly, it would seem—as a representative of the anti-Suzdalian party. His informal canonization in the 15th century, in the midst of the Novgorodian struggle against Muscovite absorption, for example, apparently resulted from a dream of the sexton (*ponomarkh*) at the Cathedral to St. Sophia in which a group of Novgorod archbishops buried in the cathedral nartheces appeared. All the bishops in this vision besides Antonii (and, therefore, probably including him as well) were known defenders of Novgorod's traditional independence against the imperialist menace of Suzdal'. They represented the sanctity of the Novgorodian church's struggle against the encroachments of the new Suzdalian threat, Moscow. Interestingly, Antonii's real-life competitors for the archiepiscopal see (most notably, Mitrofan, who was buried in the same area, but also the unconsecrated Arsenii), pro-Suzdal' all, were not part of the sexton's patriotically inspired vision.²⁷

It is obvious that Dobrynia Iadreibovich was intimately involved in the politics of 13th-century Rus', as was, of course, any archbishop of Novgorod. Although he was clearly of the group that supported the independence of the Novgorodian republic, and probably from an important family from the "trading side" of Novgorod, the area that usually led the anti-Suzdal', pro-independence faction in the city,²⁸ he does not appear to have been a fanatic. His tenure, after all, coincided with princes and mayors (*posadniki*) of both persuasions with whom he seemed to work. Indeed, some scholars even treat Antonii as a backer of Suzdalian centralization policies in Novgorod because of some of his actions that might better be seen as examples of evenhandedness on the part of the spiritual leader of that fractious state.²⁹

²⁷ *PSRL* 3 (1870), 239, 271; Khoroshev, *Politicheskaiia istorii kanonizatsii*, 137–145; and Khoroshev, *Tserkov' v sotsial'no-politicheskoi sisteme*, 40–50, 92–96.

²⁸ Aleshkovskii, *Povest' vremennykh let*, 79, suggests that Antonii's family was connected with the Miroshkinichi clan of the Nerevskii ward on the trading side, against whom the Suzdalian faction had rioted in 1207.

²⁹ See above, p. 32

But one must also see the career of Antonii within the larger context of the politics of the Russian Church. His original (essentially uncanonical) appointment to Novgorod was sealed by his consecration to episcopal orders by Metropolitan Matthew, just lately arrived in Kiev from Byzantium and clearly beholden to the Ol'govich line of princes from Smolensk who ruled in Kiev through Vsevolod "the Red" (Chermnyi). The Ol'govichi were vying for leadership of the Rus' federation with the Suzdal' princes presided over by Vsevolod Big-Nest. Mitrofan, who was ousted from the archiepiscopal throne of Novgorod by another Ol'govich prince, Mstislav the Bold, had been consecrated by Matthew's predecessor on the metropolitan throne, Nicephorus II, who had become a supporter of Suzdal'.³⁰ When Mitrofan returned to Novgorod with the backing of the Suzdal'-line prince resident in his city, Matthew had to accept his reinstatement as a matter of common sense. What to do with the deposed Antonii was certainly a problem, however. He had been, after all, not only the second-ranking hierarch in the Russian church by dint of presiding over Novgorod, but he was also a client of the Ol'govich princes dominant in Kiev. However, creating a see for Antonii within the Galich principality now ruled by Antonii's former patron, Prince Mstislav the Bold (formerly of Novgorod), might not have been simply making a place for the throneless Bishop Antonii. The metropolitan's decision to appoint the newly unemployed Antonii to Peremysl' suggests something more.

The erection (or resurrection) of the Peremysl' Orthodox diocese, and Antonii's appointment to it, should be seen as part of a larger Byzantine-Church response to aggressive behavior on the part of the Latin Church in the early 13th century. That behavior included not only the closure of eastern churches in Hungarian territory, but also the establishment of a Latin patriarchate in crusader-run Constantinople, and increasingly threatening actions against Eastern Christian Rus' principalities like Novgorod and Pskov on the part of the German knightly crusader orders settled on the Baltic coast. Retrieving Peremysl' spiritually would have been another part of that campaign to shore up Eastern Christianity under siege. Antonii would be an appropriate choice for the position of bishop of Peremysl' not only because he was an educated man, but also because he had experience in Constantinople, where, as an important Rus' visitor, he might well have had dealings with the senior

³⁰ Cf. Poppe, "Mitropolity kievskie," 200–202.

hierarchy of the Byzantine capital. After all, he brought home a number of important relics that he could not have obtained without considerable support in high places in the Constantinople ecclesiastical establishment.

Had Antonii, perhaps, obtained his throne in Novgorod in part, at least, as someone with the explicit trust of the patriarch and Holy Synod because of having met with synod members during his visit to the Byzantine capital? Was there, for some reason, an anti-Suzdal' policy at the Byzantine patriarchal court now driven into exile in Nicaea by the Latin occupation of Constantinople? Antonii, then, could be seen as promoted to the episcopate specifically in order to play the role of a well-connected "trouble-shooter" for the Patriarchate of Constantinople both in Novgorod and in Peremysl'.

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POLITICS AND HIERARCHY OF THE EARLY RUS' CHURCH

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GEORGE P. MAJESKA

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