

The Early Patronage of the Cult of SS. Boris and Gleb

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Abstract

This paper examines the patronage of the cult of SS. Boris and Gleb through the reign of Volodimir Monomakh (r. 1113–1125) by using textual criticism, memory studies, and works on medieval Christian materiality. It revisits the chronology of the main texts on SS. Boris and Gleb (the *Primary Chronicle*, two hagiographical tales and Nestor's *Lesson* concerning the life and murder of the saints); the *Primary Chronicle* contaminated the hagiographical works that were written under Monomakh. This textual analysis offers a new perspective on the patronage of the cult. There were many factors that stimulated the emergence of the cult in the 1070s, including the threat of nomadic raids, inter-princely conflicts, and the aspirations of clerical communities to enhance their spiritual glory, augment their wealth, and address issues of historical memory. The promotion of the cult was therefore a collective effort of the princely and clerical elites. Among the clerical promoters of the cult were the metropolitan's see, monastic communities, and the local clergy in Smolensk and Vyshhorod. The patronage of the cult crossed institutional boundaries as different groups of patrons promoted their interests during the commemoration of the royal martyrs. Royalty sponsored the building and decoration of churches dedicated to the saints. The metropolitan's see initiated the gathering of information on miracles performed by the saints, organised their liturgical commemoration, and used the cult for mediating princely politics. The cult was also affected by a revision of the memory of Iaroslav Volodimirovich (r. 1019–1054) during the reign of his grandson Volodimir Monomakh. As part of this revision, monastic hagiographers created stories about Iaroslav establishing and patronising the cult of the saints. The myth of Iaroslav's patronage validated Monomakh's commemorative activities and appealed to other descendants of Iaroslav as potential sponsors of the cult.

Keywords

SS. Boris and Gleb – cult of saints – patronage – hagiography – the *Primary Chronicle* – Iaroslav Volodimirovich – Volodimir Monomakh – the church

The cult of SS. Boris and Gleb played a major part in the culture and politics of Rus. The origin and early history of the cult remain a matter of controversy. According to some scholars, the veneration of the saints was originally of a popular or dynastic nature, stemming from pre-Christian healing practices or an ancient cult of ancestors. These students accept the evidence of hagiographical works that Iaroslav Volodimirovich (r. 1019–1054) initiated the veneration of the saints and even assume that he commissioned some of these hagiographical accounts. These interpretations of the cult often emphasise its political function as a tool for legitimising Iaroslav's path to power.¹ Other scholars date the official establishment of the cult to a later period, between the translation of the saints' relics in 1072 and another translation that followed in 1115, though they concede that unofficial local veneration may have started under Iaroslav. However, the proponents of late dating fail to explain why the hagiography of SS. Boris and Gleb attributes the initiative of their veneration to Iaroslav. In particular, Andrzej Poppe, who has offered the most comprehensive theory of the canonisation of the saints in 1072, admits that he has no answer to the question about why the hagiographers date the beginning of the cult to Iaroslav's reign.²

- 1 A.A. Shakhmatov, *Istoriia russkogo letopisaniia*, 1, 1 (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2002), 58–59; Liudolf Müller [Ludolf Müller], "O vremeni kanonizatsii sviatykh Borisa i Gleba," in Müller, *Poniat' Rossiia: Istoriko-kul'turnye issledovaniia* (Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2000), 71–84; M. Iu. Paramonova, *Sviatye praviteli Latinskoï Evropy i Drevnei Rusi: Sravnitel'no-istoricheskii analiz vatslavskogo i borisoglebskogo kul'tov* (Moscow: Institut vseobshchei istorii RAN, 2003), 231–253; A.M. Ranchin, *Pamiatniki Borisoglebskogo tsikla: Tekstologïia, poetika, religiozno-kul'turnyi kontekst* (Moscow: Universitet Dmitriia Pozharskogo, 2017), 364–373. Cf. N.I. Mil-iutenko, *Sviatye kniaz'ia-mucheniki Boris i Gleb* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Olega Abyshko, 2006), 54, 55, 171. Iaroslav as commissioner of hagiography: S.A. Bugoslavskii [Buhoslav's'kyi], *Tekstologïia Drevnei Rusi, 2: Drevnerusskie literaturnye proizvedeniia o Borise i Glebe* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskikh kul'tur, 2007), 253; Gail Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes Boris and Gleb: A Socio-Cultural Study of the Cult and the Texts* (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1989), 82.
- 2 Andrzej Poppe [Andrzej Poppe], "O zarozhdenii kul'ta svv. Borisa and Gleba i o posvia-shchennykh im proizvedeniiax," *Russia Mediaevalis*, 8 (1) (1995): 54. On the cult postdating the reign of Iaroslav, see also N.N. Il'in, *Letopisnaia stat'ia 6523 goda i ee istochnik* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1957), 165–166, 179–180; M. Kh. Aleshkovskii, *Povest' vremennykh let: Iz istorii sozdaniia i redaktsionnoi pererabotki* (Moscow: Ves' mir, 2015), 284–285; A.N. Uzhankov,

Following Poppe and other authors who connect the beginning of the worship of the saints with the 1072 translation, this paper seeks to re-examine the early patronage of the cult through the reign of Volodimir Monomakh (1113–1125). Scholars ascribe the establishment of the cult to various actors, including the princes, the church, or popular support. Such interpretations tend to focus on one group of promoters and assume that they imposed their vision of the cult on an audience. But, as Paul Hollingsworth notes, the promoters of the cult were also part of the audience for which representations of the cult were intended. Hollingsworth therefore encourages us to look at a creative interaction between the promoters and recipients of the cult.³ I will examine the relationship between various contributors to the veneration of the saints on the basis of the main texts associated with the cult. My study involves the *Primary Chronicle* (*Povest' vremennykh let*, 1110s), the Office (*Sluzhba*) of Metropolitan Ioann and three interconnected hagiographical works: the anonymous *Tale and Passion and Encomium of the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb* (hereafter, *Anonymous Tale, S'kazanie i strast' i pokhvala sviatuiu mucheniku Borisa i Gleba*); the *Tale of the Miracles of the Holy Passion-Sufferers of Christ Roman and David* (*Tale of the Miracles, S'kazanie chiudes sviatoiu strastot'rp'tsiu Khristovu Romana i Davida*), and the *Lesson Concerning the Life and Murder of the Blessed Passion-Sufferers Boris and Gleb* (*Lesson, Chtenie o zhitii i o pogublenii blazheniuiu strastoterptsa Borisa i Gleba*), which was written by the accomplished hagiographer Nestor of the Caves monastery.⁴

“Sviatye strastoterptsy Boris and Gleb: K istorii kanonizatsii i napisaniia zhitii, [Nachalo],” *Drevniaia Rus': Voprosy medievistiki* (hereafter, *DRVM*), 2 (2) (2000): 28–50; Uzhankov, “Sviatye ..., [Okonchanie],” *DRVM*, 1 (3) (2001): 37–49; Alan Timberlake, “The Origins of Anonymous’s Skazanie and Nestor’s Chtenie o svv. muchenikakh Borise i Glebe,” *Russkii iazyk v nauchnom osveshchenii*, 1 (11) (2006): 163, 172; S.M. Mikheev, “Sviatopolk sede v Kieve po otsi.” *Usobitsa 1015–1019 godov v drevnerusskikh i skandinavskikh istochnikakh* (Moscow: Institut slavianovedeniia RAN, 2009), 13–14, 253, 266; Alan Timberlake, “The Origins of the Boris and Gleb Cycle in the Chronicle,” *Zeitschrift für Slawistik*, 55, 1 (2010): 27, 30, 42.

3 Paul A. Hollingsworth, “Holy Men and the Transformation of Political Space in Medieval Rus’,” in James Howard-Johnston, Paul Antony Hayward, eds., *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 207.

4 For critical editions, see D.I. Abramovich [Abramovych], *Zhitii sviatykh muchenikov Borisa i Gleba i sluzhby im* (Petrograd: Tipografia imp. Akademii nauk, 1916); Serhii Buhoslavs'kyi, *Ukraino-rus'ki pam'iatky XI–XVIII v.v. pro kniaziv Borysa ta Hliba: Rozvidka ta teksty*, in Bugoslavskii, *Tekstologija*, 2: 361–600 (orig. 1928); Giorgetta Revelli, ed., *Monumenti letterari su Boris e Gleb* (Genova: La Quercia, 1993); Paul Hollingsworth, ed., *The Hagiography of Kievan Rus'* (Cambridge, MA: Distributed by Harvard University Press for the Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 1992), 3–32; 97–134. Every edition has its own merits and weaknesses. I will prioritise Abramovich’s and Hollingsworth’s publications which, taken together, provide

All conclusions about the dating, context and cultural functions of these sources should be based on a textual analysis. My study of the cult will also benefit from modern memory studies. Student of medieval memoria have established that there was no formal procedure for canonisation in Rus or Byzantine in the eleventh century. Correspondingly, the veneration of Boris and Gleb as saints did not require fully developed hagiographical narratives, such as lives. Rather, commemoration was primarily liturgical and therefore involved the composition of an office.⁵ In terms of terminology, it is preferable to speak about sanctification as an extended process rather than canonisation which implies a set of formal requirements and rules. Finally, the patrons of the cult regularly interacted with what Caroline Bynum calls “holy matter,” i.e., the relics, coffins, and tombs of the saints. Recent studies of medieval Christian materiality tell us that in medieval memoria holy matter had agency, which transmitted the reaction of the saints to various aspects of their veneration.⁶ A study of patronage should therefore consider the material aspect of the cult. Following these methodological premises, this article will start with a re-examination of the relationship between the key texts on the cult. The paper will then discuss who and how promoted the veneration of the saints, the aims of this patronage, and literary responses to it.

1 The Chronicle and Hagiographical Works

S.A. Bugoslavskii (Buhoslavs'kyi) and more recently Alan Timberlake have convincingly demonstrated that the chronicle text that can be found in the *Primary Chronicle* contaminated the *Anonymous Tale* and the *Tale of the Miracles*. In their turn, these works became sources for Nestor's *Lesson* (Bugoslavskii conceded that Nestor may have also used the *Primary Chronicle*). This theory logically explains how the abstract rhetorical text of the *Lesson* appeared from the previous chronicle and hagiographical works, which contain many con-

a comprehensive set of texts and extensive commentaries. The more specialised editions of Buhoslavs'kyi and Revelli will also be used in appropriate places.

- 5 Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes*, 45–48; 78; Poppe, “O zarozhdenii,” 30; Sean Griffin, *The Liturgical Past in Byzantium and Early Rus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 229–239; Vasileios Marinis, Robert Ousterhout, “‘Grant Us to Share a Place and Lot with Them’: Relics and the Byzantine Church Building, 9th–15th Centuries,” in Cynthia Hahn, Holger A. Klein, eds., *Saints and Sacred Matter: The Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2015), 162.
- 6 Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press, 2011), 25–26.

crete details.⁷ But what version of the chronicle did the hagiographers use? The question is important for the dating of the hagiographical works on Boris and Gleb and therefore for our general understanding of the history of the cult. Scholars usually assert that it was not the *Primary Chronicle* but a hypothetical earlier chronicle that affected the *Anonymous Tale*. A.A. Shakhmatov and Bugoslavskii dated that chronicle to the reign of Iaroslav Volodimirovich.⁸ Their dating heavily relies on textual connections between the *Primary Chronicle*, the hagiography, and later church calendar books, including the *Prolog* (*Synaxarion*, a collection of lives of saints organized by the dates of their feast days) and the *Paremīnik* (*Prophetologion*, a lectionary of Old Testament liturgical readings). It was assumed that these liturgical books contain excerpts from an ancient non-extant chronicle that became a source for the *Primary Chronicle* and the *Anonymous Tale*. However, the readings contained in the *Prolog* and the *Paremīnik* textually depend on the *Primary Chronicle* and are irrelevant to the problem of the chronicle sources of the *Anonymous Tale*.⁹

Timberlake offers a more nuanced approach to the dating of that hypothetical chronicle, asserting that it went through two editorial stages. At first it was a narrative that originated in the circle of Boris Volodimirovich's armed retinue (*druzhina*) during the reign of Iaroslav. Timberlake dates this *druzhina* tale on the basis of a chronicle entry about the burial of Oleg Sviatoslavich in 977: "So they buried Oleg in the town of Vruchi[i], and his tomb is there to this day." The scholar takes this information literally, maintaining that the *terminus ante quem* for this entry must be 1044 when the body of Oleg was translated to the Tithe church. However, the chronicler's accounts of the graves of early Rus rulers are not factual but legendary, as apparent from his description of the grave of Sviatopolk Volodimirovich, the murderer of Boris and Gleb: "His tomb is in the wilderness even to this day, and an evil odor issues forth from it."¹⁰ Chronicle references to the tombs of princes existing "to this day" are a

7 Bugoslavskii, *Tekstologīia*, 2: 7–360; Timberlake, "The Origins of Anonymous's Skazanie," 159, 162, 163, 172, 180. Mikheev assumes that Nestor's *Lesson* or a similar hagiographical text contaminated the *Anonymous Tale*. However, Timberlake's analysis clearly demonstrates that the text of the tale, including its rhetoric on Vyshhorod, influenced the *Lesson* whose rhetorical discussion of Vyshhorod is abstract and vague. Mikheev, *Sviatopolk*, 51, 95, 109, 117.

8 Bugoslavskii, *Tekstologīia*, 2: 243; Shakhmatov, *Istoriia*, 1, 1: 46, 50–56, 63, 281.

9 *Prolog*: Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 215–216; *Paremīnik*: A.A. Gippius, "Letopisnye' Paremiinye chteniia o Borise i Glebe: Istoriia teksta i istoricheskii kontekst," in *Fakty i znaki. Issledovaniia po semiotike istorii*, 2 (Moscow: RGGU, 2010), 42–71.

10 Samuel Hazzard Cross, Olgert P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, eds., *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text* (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953) 91, 133 (hereafter,

literary device for constructing the memory of the princes, so the entry about Oleg Sviatoslavich's tomb could appear any time after his death in 977.

Timberlake attributes the second stage in the history of the chronicle text on Boris and Gleb to the so-called *Beginning Compilation* (*Nachal'nyi svod*), which he dates to the late 1080s or the first half of the 1090s. According to Shakhmatov, the *Beginning Compilation* has not survived but has contaminated the Younger Redaction of the *First Novgorodian Chronicle* (hereafter, N1Y, existing copies from the fifteenth century). Timberlake examines the relationship between the chronicle and the hagiography by tracing the transmission of Psalmic quotations. According to the scholar, the *Beginning Compilation* witnessed an editorial event that transformed the *druzhina* tale about Boris and Gleb into a Christian tale of martyrdom. This reworking involved the adding of quotations from the Psalter to the chronicle text, including Ps. 33:21 and 34:20 which appear in N1Y (or, according to the scholar, the *Beginning Compilation*) and the *Anonymous Tale*, but not in the *Primary Chronicle*. Enriched with Scriptural rhetoric, the *Beginning Compilation's* account of Boris and Gleb contaminated the *Anonymous Tale* which was compiled around 1115 in connection with the translation of Boris' and Gleb's bodies to a new church.¹¹

Quotations from the Psalter are indeed crucial for reconstructing the textual history of our sources.¹² Unlike factual material, which is open to literary manipulations during textual transmission, Psalmic citations tend to remain stable and can be checked against the controlled textual tradition of Scripture. However, Timberlake's argument about the *Beginning Compilation* affecting the *Anonymous Tale* is based on thematic rather than textual analysis (he does not examine the Slavic text of the Psalmic quotations). At the same time, a textual study by Tat'iana (Tet'iana) Vilkul has demonstrated that the direction of borrowing was opposite. The hagiographical work contains better and more logical readings, including those in the above-mentioned Psalmic quotations, whereas their text in N1Y is corrupt. Vilkul's findings demonstrate that the *Anonymous Tale* influenced N1Y and the hypothesis about the *Beginning Compilation* is superfluous.¹³

Cross, *RPC*); Donald Ostrowski, *Povest' vremennykh let*, <https://donostrowski2.bitbucket.io/pvl/index.html> (version with last update from 15 June 2014), lines 75,10–75,12; 145,18–145,20 (hereafter, Ostrowski, *PVL*); Timberlake, "The Origins of the Boris and Gleb Cycle," 43.

11 Timberlake, "The Origins of the Boris and Gleb Cycle," 36, 44–46; Timberlake, "The Origins of Anonymous's Skazanie," 158, 161, 164.

12 Donald Ostrowski, "Identifying Psalmic Quotations in the *Povest' vremennykh let*," in Ostrowski, *Povest' vremennykh let*, 217.

13 Tat'iana Vilkul, "Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopis' i Nachal'nyi svod," *Palaeoslavica*, 11 (2003):

Students of the hagiography of SS. Boris and Gleb usually have little interest in the *Primary Chronicle* per se because, as we have seen, they assume that the hagiographical works appeared before the *Primary Chronicle* and were contaminated by an earlier chronicle.¹⁴ At the same time, the *Primary Chronicle* and the *Anonymous Tale* also share some Psalmic quotations which are missing from N1Y. In particular, the chronicle account of the assassins of Gleb returning to their master Sviatopolk includes citations from Ps. 9:18, 36:14, 36:15, 36:20, 51:3–51:7 (Table 1).¹⁵ These textual connections require us to revisit the place of the *Primary Chronicle* in the textual history of the hagiography of SS. Boris and Gleb.

TABLE 1 Psalmic citations in the *Primary Chronicle* and the *Anonymous Tale*

<i>Bolognese Psalter</i> ¹⁶	<i>Primary Chronicle</i> ¹⁷	<i>Anonymous Tale</i> ¹⁸
	[] – common text in the Laurentian, Hypatian and Khlebnikov copies; < > – text in the Hypatian and Khlebnikov copies, missing from the Laurentian copy { } – text in the Laurentian and Radziviłł copies, missing from the Hypatian and Khlebnikov copies	Uspenskaia redaction [] – Sil'vestr redaction

12–13. Timberlake mentions Vilkul's study but does not engage it in his discussion of the transmission of Psalmic quotations. Timberlake, "The Origins of Anonymous's Skazanie," 158 note 2, 160–161.

14 Cf. Timberlake, "The Origins of Anonymous's Skazanie," 160–161, 188; S.M. Mikheev, "Otrazhenie Nachal'noi letopisi v Novgorodskoi i letopisi mladshogo izvoda," *DRVM*, 1 (31) (2008): 48.

15 For textual analysis, see Bugoslavskii, *Tekstologĭa*, 2: 236–237 no. 22. Cf. N1Y in *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* (hereafter, *PSRL*), 3 (Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul'tury, 2000), 173.

16 V. Jagić, ed., *Psalterium Bononiense: Interpretationem veterem slavicum* (Vienna: Gerold, 1907), 38, 174–176, 255–256 (right column).

17 Ostrowski, *PVL*, lines 136,29–137,2e; 137,5–137,7e. See also Ostrowski, *PVL*, section "Quotations from the Psalms in the PVL," pp. 1, 17–18, 30–32; Cross, *RPC*, 128–129.

18 Bugoslavskii, *Tekstologĭa*, 2: 522–523, other redactions: *ibid.*, 405 (Torzhestvennik), 423 (Synod), 477 (Sil'vestr), 500 (Chudovskaia). Cf. Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 43; Revelli, *Monumenti*, 338; Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 110.

TABLE 1 Psalmic citations in the *Primary Chronicle* and the *Anonymous Tale* (cont.)

<i>Bolognese Psalter</i>	<i>Primary Chronicle</i>	<i>Anonymous Tale</i>
9:18 Възврататъ са грѣшници въ адъ, <i>вѣси жъци [ж] забѣважити Бѣ.</i>	[А шкани же възвратишаса възпати јако же ре ^ч Дѣдѣ: «Возвратишаса грѣшници въ адъ»],	Оканънии же они оубо ицѣ възвративъшесна къ пославъшюоумоу на. јако же рече Дѣдѣ: «Возврататъсн грѣшници въ адъ и <i>вѣси забывающии Бѣ,</i> » и пакы:
36:14 Оржжие изъвлѣшѣ грѣшници, налашѣ лѣжѣ свои <i>сѣстрѣлѣти ништа и оубогаго,</i> заклати правѣж срѣемъ.	и напрагоша луки своа и <i>стрѣлѣти нища и оубога,</i> заклати правѣна ср ^ц мъ, и шружѣ ихъ вниде въ ср ^ц ца ихъ, и луци ихъ скрушатъсѣ, јако грѣшници погибнуть, изыщезюще јако дымъ погибнуть».)	«Ороужие звлекоша грѣшници напрагоша лоукъ свои заклати правѣна ср ^д цѣмъ и ороужие ихъ вниде въ ср ^д ца, и лоуци ихъ скрушатъсѣ, јако грѣшници погибноутъ, [ищезающе јако дымъ ищезнуть]».
36:15 Оржжие ихъ внидетъ въ срѣца ихъ, и лѣци ихъ сѣкроушѣтѣ са.		
36:20 Јако грѣшници погыбнѣтѣ. Врази же гѣи коупно прославити са имъ и възнести, и <i>сѣцажащии</i> јако дымъ иштезѣж.		
51:3 Что са хвалиши въ злѣбѣ сильны, безаконне вѣсь дѣнь	[«Что са хвалиши ѡ злѣбѣ силне и безаконѣ»] {вѣсь дѣнь} [оумисли назыкъ твой] <јако бритѣа изострена, створилъ естѣ лѣстѣ,	«Чѣто сна хвалиши сильнии о злѣбѣ, безаконие вѣсь дѣнь <i>неправдоу</i> оумисли назыкъ твои, възлюбилъ еси злѣбоу паче блѣгостынѣ, неправдоу неже глаголаати правдоу, възлюбилъ еси вѣсна гѣы потопнына и назыкъ гѣы потопнына и назыкъ лѣстѣвѣ. Сего ради раздруситѣ та Богъ до конѣца, вѣстергнетѣ та и <i>преселитѣ та</i> отъ села твоего и коренъ твои отъ зѣмла живущихъ.»
51:4 <i>неправѣдѣ</i> оумисли жѣкъ твой јако <i>бритѣа изострена створилъ еси лѣстѣ.</i>	лѣстѣ, възлюбилъ еси злѣбу паче благостына, неправду неже гѣти правду, възлюбилъ еси вѣса гѣы потопнына назыкъ лѣстивѣ. Сего ради *Бѣ раздруситѣ та* до конѣца и вѣстергнетѣ та ѿ села твоего и коренъ твои ѿ зѣмла живущихъ.»>	
51:5 Възлюбилъ еси злѣбѣ паче благостына, неправѣдѣ неже гѣлати правѣж [...]		
51:6 Възлюбилъ еси вѣса гѣы потопнына жѣзыкѣ лѣстивѣ.		
51:7 Сего ради Бѣ раздруситѣ та до конѣца, вѣстрѣгнетѣ та и <i>прѣселитѣ та</i> ѿ села твоего и коренъ твои отъ зѣмла живущихъ.		

- КНЛЕВНИКОВ: РАЗДРУШИТ ТА БѢ

The Psalmic citations reproduced in Table 1 should be correlated with Bugoslavskii's and Timberlake's conclusions that the text witnessed by the *Primary Chronicle* affected the *Anonymous Tale*. As we have seen, assertions about an earlier chronicle serving as a common source for the *Primary Chronicle* and the *Anonymous Tale* are problematic and unnecessary. It was not an earlier chronicle but the *Primary Chronicle* that contaminated the hagiographical work. In particular, the hagiographer borrowed from the *Primary Chronicle* the citations reproduced in Table 1. The hagiographer also added new quotations from the Psalms (the above-mentioned Ps. 33:21 and 34:20), which later migrated to NY . At the same time, the Novgorodian chronicler left out the textual block with Psalmic citation that can be found in Table 1. Textually, the fragments of the *Anonymous Tale* reproduced in Table 1 are close to the Hypatian copy of the *Primary Chronicle* but occasionally to the Khlebnikov copy (Ps. 51:7) and the Laurentian copy (Ps. 51:3).¹⁹ There are also citations from the Psalter that appear either in the chronicle or in the tale, but not in both works (text in italics in Table 1). The distribution of such "unique" readings demonstrates that generally the *Primary Chronicle* gives more correct quotations from the Psalter than the tale does, confirming the view that the chronicle contaminated the hagiographical work. All this evidence indicates that the compiler of the *Anonymous Tale* utilised an early version of the *Primary Chronicle* which can be dated to ca. 1113–1116.²⁰

When exactly did the hagiographer of the *Anonymous Tale* access the chronicle? To answer this question, we need to consider the tale's account of churches erected at the sites of SS. Boris' and Gleb's deaths (Table 2). This information can be correlated with the chronology of church building at those places. In particular, we know that Monomakh built a stone church in memory of the saints on the banks of the river Al'ta, where Boris perished, in 1117. The site of his brother Gleb's death on the river Smiadina (Smiodyn') near Smolensk received a stone church later, in 1145.²¹

19 Cf. Bogoslavskii's observation that the *Anonymous Tale* borrows from the archetype of the Laurentian, Radzivil' and Academy copies of the *Primary Chronicle*. Bugoslavskii, *Tekstologiya*, 2: 243. Cf. Dmitrii Borovkov, *Ubiistvo Borisa i Gleba: Ot srednevekovykh reprezentatsii k sovremennym interpretatsiiam* (St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2017), 80–81.

20 For the chronology of the compilation of the *Primary Chronicle*, see Sergei Bugoslavskii, "Povest' vremennykh let: Spiski, redaktsii, pervonachal'nyi tekst," in N.K. Gudziĭ, ed., *Starinnaia russkaia povest': Stat'i i issledovaniia* (Moscow, Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1941), 36; Donald Ostrowski, "The Načal'nyj Svod Theory and the Povest' Vremennykh Let," *Russian Linguistics*, 31 (2007): 302–303.

21 On these stone churches, see Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 114 note 295, 229 note 207.

TABLE 2 The *Anonymous Tale* on Churches^a*Uspenskaia redaction:*

И на мѣстѣ идеже мѣнчѣскыимъ вѣнцѣмъ оувазостася създанѣ быста цркви въ имя юю.

Chudovskaia redaction, main text:

И на мѣстѣхъ идеже мѣнчѣскыимъ вѣнцѣмъ оувазостася созданѣ бы^с цркви во имя юю.

Chudovskaia redaction, variant:

создана бысть церкви юю

Synod redaction:

И на мѣстѣхъ идеже му^ничьски^н вѣнцѣ^н оувазостася создана бы^с цркви во имя ваю

Torzhestvennik (Panegyrikon) redaction:

И на мѣстѣхъ иде же цркви юю въ имя **създана**

Sil'vestr redaction, main text:

И на мѣстѣхъ идеже мѣнчкы[мѣ] вѣнцѣмъ оувазостася създанѣ быста цркви во имя юю.

Sil'vestr redaction, variant:

И на мѣстѣ идеже мѣнчкы[мѣ] вѣнцѣмъ оувазостася создана бысть церкви во имя его.

a Bugoslavskii, *Tekstologiya*, 2: 408 (Torzhestvennik); 427 (Synod); 483 notes 387, 389 (Sil'vestr); 503 note 334–335 (Chudovskaia); 526 (Uspenskaia). Cf. Abramovich, *Zhitia*, 49 notes 24, 25; Revelli, *Monumenti*, 392 notes 66, 67, 71; Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 114.

Another important source about churches on the Al'ta is the chronicle account of the Polovtsy burning two structures in the area, a certain Let'skaia church (*bozhnitsa*) and a church of SS. Boris and Gleb, in 1154 (Table 3).

Taken together with other sources, the chronological evidence of the *Anonymous Tale* about the churches is relatively straightforward. Unfortunately, the passage reproduced in Table 2 has been the subject of numerous speculations in those studies that claim that the tale appeared before 1117 when Monomakh built his church on the Al'ta. According to the church historian Makarii

TABLE 3 Chronicle Account of Devastation on the Al'ta in 1154

Hypatian Chronicle:^a

Тогда же много зла створиша Половци школо Переяславла и пожгоша села вса и Летъскую божницю и сѣю мѣнку Бориса и Глѣба* зажгоша.

Variant in the Khlebnikov and Pogodin copies:

* храм

Laurentian Chronicle:^b

Тогда же много зла створиша Половци школо Переяславла, пожгоша бо села вса ии** Летъскую божницю сѣю*** мѣнку зажгоша.

Variants in the Radziwiłł and Academy copies:

** оне "и"

*** "и святую" instead of "сѣю"

a *PSRL*, 2 (Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul'tury, 1998), col. 476 note 61.

b *PSRL*, 1 (Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul'tury, 1997), col. 344 notes 38, 40. M.K. Karger preferred the *Laurentian Chronicle* which reports the destruction of only one building, the Let'skaia church dedicated to the martyrs. But the *Laurentian Chronicle* clearly mishandles prepositions in the account of the 1154 raid and abridges it by leaving out the names of the martyrs. Other copies from the group of the *Laurentian Chronicle* support the reading of the *Hypatian Chronicle* about two buildings. M.K. Karger, "Let'skaia bozhnitsa' Vladimira Monomakha," *Kratkie soobshcheniia o dokladakh i polevykh issledovaniakh Instituta material'noi kul'tury*, 49 (1953), 13–20.

(M.P. Bulgakov), the references to the churches in the tale are irrelevant to its dating because the work refers to a wooden church built on the Al'ta before 1117. Makarii's assertion is based on the *Primary Chronicle's* evidence that prior to his death in 1074 Abbot Feodosii of the Caves monastery appointed certain presbyter Iakov as his successor, but the brethren did not like that candidature because Iakov had not taken orders in the Caves monastery. Rather, he and his brother Pavel came from Letets.²² Makarii's interpretation of this story contains a series of conjectures: Letets means the Al'ta (this is probable but not certain); there was a church there; there was also a monastery by the church where Iakov became a monk (in fact, the chronicle says that he came from Letets but does not say that he took monastic vows there); the church was dedicated to SS. Boris and Gleb; and it was made of wood (as opposed to the stone church erected in 1117). As for the churches destroyed in 1154, Makarii thought that both

22 Cross, *RPC*, 157–158; Ostrowski, *PVL*, lines 186, 29–187, 3.

were dedicated to the royal martyrs, with the Let'skaia church being the old wooden church while the second church was built from stone by Monomakh in 1117. Makarii's speculative scepticism has found support in modern scholarship.²³

In fact, the dedication of the Let'skaia church remains unknown. The chronicles give us its geographical location but say nothing about its consecration. This is a strange decision if one considers that the chronicles diligently report the dedication of the second church to Boris and Gleb. Apparently, the churches had different statuses in cultural memory. The second one was associated with the cult of SS. Boris and Gleb which was sponsored by the princely elite and the metropolitan. But the significance of the first church was local, and its consecration was inconsequential for the chroniclers. To explain their attitude to the Let'skaia church we need to consider the memory of the Al'ta as a geographical place. Memory studies tell us that various groups usually anchor their collective memory in particular places.²⁴ A frontier river, the Al'ta saw numerous armed conflicts between the Rus and the nomads. We can get some idea about how members of the Rus elite remembered the Al'ta from the *Paterik* of the Caves monastery which tells us about a Varangian called Shimon, a wealthy man with a large household comprising of some three thousand people and many priests. Shimon participated in the defence of Rus from the Polovtsy in 1068. It was the Al'ta where both armies met. The Polovtsy prevailed, killing many defenders. Shimon was lying wounded in their midst when he had a vision of an enormous church in the sky and prayed to God for deliverance from bitter death. According to the legend, earlier he had a similar vision of a church with a voice telling him that such a church was to be built in the name of Theotokos. Miraculously healed, Shimon followed the divine instructions by generously funding the Caves monastery and its church of the Theotokos.²⁵ The Shimon legend does not mention any specific church on the Al'ta but it

23 Makarii, bishop, "Eshche ob Iakove mnikhe," *Izvestiia imperatorskoi Akademii nauk po Otdeleniiu russkago iazyka i slovesnosti* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia imp. Akademii nauk, 1853), cols. 146–149; Andrzej Poppe, "Opowieść o męczeństwie i cudach Borysa i Gleba: Okoliczności i czas powstania utworu," *Slavia Orientalis*, 18 (1969), 4: 363–364; Il'in, *Letopisnaia stat'ia*, 24–25; A.V. Nazarenko and others, "Boris i Gleb," in *Pravoslavnaia entsiklopediia*, section "Khramostroitel'stvo," <https://www.pravenc.ru/text/153171.html> (accessed 6 October 2022).

24 Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 24–25; Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 146–147; Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 121.

25 Muriel Heppell, ed., *The Paterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery* (Cambridge, MA: Dis-

does associate the memory of the site with the raids of the nomads, the hardship of warfare, wounding, healing and votive church building. Judging by the legend, well-off combatants with numerous court clergy commemorated fighting on the Al'ta by erecting churches which were dedicated to different holy figures, not only SS. Boris and Gleb. The Let'skaia church could have been commissioned by a wealthy member of the Rus military elite to commemorate his experience on the Al'ta. It is impossible to say when the Let'skaia church was erected and whom it was dedicated to. But, judging by the chronicle description, it was most likely irrelevant to the cult of SS. Boris and Gleb.

Our analysis of the sources confirms Paul Hollingsworth's observation that the first known shrines on the spots of the martyrs' deaths were two stone churches erected respectively on the Al'ta in 1117 and on the Smiadina in 1145.²⁶ The grammatical structure of the *Anonymous Tale's* account of these churches reveals a peculiarity which is significant for reconstructing the textual history of the work. The oldest existing Uspenskaia redaction contains a discrepancy between grammatical numbers: the first half of the passage (in bold in Table 2) appears in the singular while the rest of it (about building the churches) is in the dual. Other main redactions of the tale also use the singular in various places, including those where the Uspenskaia redaction uses the dual.²⁷ According to Bugoslavskii, all these redactions stem from the earliest archetype ("original") of the *Anonymous Tale*, which predated the existing redactions.²⁸ The consistent presence of different words in the singular in different redactions indicates that the singular number is not an accidental occurrence. Rather, the singular comes from the period when there was one church dedicated to the saints at the sites of their deaths, the one erected by Monomakh on the Al'ta in 1117. The existing redactions of the tale witness a later stage

tributed by Harvard University Press for the Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 1989), 1–5.

26 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, xxix, xxxix, 114 note 295.

27 Makarii noted the grammatical discrepancy on the basis of one copy of the *Anonymous Tale*. Makarii, "Eshche ob Iakove," col. 149. Poppe went to great lengths to dismiss the historical and linguistic evidence of the passage on the churches in the tale because he believed that the work was compiled not under Monomakh but in connection with the translation of the relics in 1072. Like Makarii, Poppe did not examine the entire textual tradition of the hagiographical account of the churches but focused on the late *Torzhestvennik* redaction. Poppe, "Opowieść," 364–365.

28 Bugoslavskii, *Tekstologîa*, 2: 149–171. On the redactions of the *Anonymous Tale*, see also N.I. Serebrianskii, "Drevnerusskîia kniazheskîia zhitiia: Obzor redaktsii i teksty," in *Chteniia v imp. Obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh pri Moskovskom universitete*, 3 (254) (1915), section "11. Issledovaniia," 91.

in its textual history when the text was inconsistently edited after the erection of another church on the Smiadina in 1145.

The compilation of the *Anonymous Tale* should be broadly dated to the period from 1117 to 1145, more precisely, before the death of Volodimir Monomakh in 1125. The *Anonymous Tale* discusses the earliest miracles associated with the cult, the discovery of Gleb's body and the revelation of its incorruptibility during the reburial of the body at Vyshhorod. The compiler of the *Tale of the Miracles* starts his list of miracles from the one about a Varangian who was burned by fire coming out of the saints' grave after he accidentally stepped on it. Chronologically, this miracle continues the account of miracles in the *Anonymous Tale*. At the same time, the *Anonymous Tale* contains generic references to miracles that are covered in greater detail in the *Tale of the Miracles* (the healing of blind and lame persons and the visits of the saints to prisons). Chronological continuity and cross-references indicate that there was some coordination between these two literary projects (see below). The *Anonymous Tale* and the *Tale of the Miracles* contaminated Nestor's *Lesson*. Bugoslavskii has already conceded a late date for the *Lesson*, the period between 1108 and 1115–1120. We can now adjust the dating of the *Lesson* to the period from 1117 to 1125, after the creation of the *Anonymous Tale* and the *Tale of the Miracles*.²⁹

The *Primary Chronicle* stimulated hagiographical work, but the hagiographers were not copyists. Different hagiographical texts reveal significant factual discrepancies in the accounts of the same miracles performed by the saints. The hagiographers apparently had a creative license to alter facts that they found in the chronicle and other sources.³⁰ The hagiographical works are also purposefully selective. Nestor's texts are particularly instructive in this respect because he is very explicit about his creative method. In his *Life* of Feodosii of the Caves, Nestor acknowledges he has "recorded a few of the many stories" about the abbot.³¹ Nestor proclaims a similar selective approach to his material in the *Lesson* on Boris and Gleb. He even cuts short Biblical texts, including the Old Testament stories of Creation, Cain and Abel: "Let me not prolong the narration, but I shall tell the tale quickly."³² Nestor also abbreviates his account of miracles that happened after the deaths of SS. Boris and Gleb: "Many miracles

29 Bugoslavskii, *Tekstologïia*, 2: 286 note "c".

30 For factual differences between the *Anonymous Tale* and the *Primary Chronicle*, see Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, xxxv note 81; Borovkov, *Ubiïstvo*, 68–69. For discrepancies between descriptions of the same miracle in different hagiographical works, see, for example, Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 24–25, 127–128 note 35; Abramovich, *Zhitïia*, 20, 60–62.

31 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 95; S.I. Kotkov, ed., *Uspenskii sbornik XII–XIII vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1971), 135.

32 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 4; Abramovich, *Zhitïia*, 2.

did God work ... If we should set to recording these things one by one, great would be the burden of books, but let no one think them untrue.”³³

The compiler of the *Anonymous Tale* also practices creative selectiveness, as evidenced by his statement: “But let me refrain from speaking at length, lest through much writing we slip into forgetfulness.”³⁴ The hagiographers reveal a selective approach to their sources because longwinded texts can easily distract the author and the reader from what really matters. Scholars often overlook this narrative strategy when they try to date the hagiographical works using an argument from silence. The omission of datable events from these works does not mean that they were created before the dates of those events. More often than not, such silence is an instrument of selective memory politics that aims at preventing forgetting.³⁵

2 The Establishment of the Cult and the Metropolitan See

The death of Boris and Gleb in 1015 was followed by some commemorative activities. The early acts of commemoration were uncoordinated and, most likely, caused by different reasons. At some time between 1015 and 1072 the body of Gleb was translated from the Smolensk region to Vyshhorod, where Boris was already buried. The chronicle does not tell us who organised the translation and when exactly it happened.³⁶ Starting from the middle of the eleventh century, the lay and Christian names of the murdered princes (Boris-Roman and Gleb-Davyd) were used in princely families. This naming politics may reflect various political and cultural considerations. The dramatic story of Boris and Gleb could enter the collective memory of the princely elite even without the sanctification of the murdered princes.³⁷

The veneration of Boris and Gleb was formalised during the translation of their bodies to a new church commissioned by Iziaslav Iaroslavich in 1072. Poppe has convincingly demonstrated that the ceremony was a crucial step

33 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 27; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 22.

34 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 98; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 28.

35 For dating on the basis of an argument from silence, see Shakhmatov, *Istoriia*, 1, 2 (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2003), 576–578; Ranchin, *Pamiatniki*, 40–41. For criticism of this approach, see A.G. Kuz'min, *Nachal'nye etapy drevnerusskogo letopisaniia* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1977), 149, 152; Timberlake, “The Origins of Anonymous's Skazanie,” 185–186.

36 Cross, *RPC*, 129; Ostrowski, *PVL*, lines 137,9–137,12.

37 See Aleshkovskii, *Povest'*, 284–285; Poppe, “O zarozhdenii,” 59–64.

in the sanctification of the martyrs.³⁸ The 1072 translation attracted top-level members of the lay and ecclesiastical elite: Iaroslav's three sons (the reigning prince of Kyiv Iziaslav Iaroslavich and his brothers, Sviatoslav Iaroslavich and Vsevolod Iaroslavich) as well as Metropolitan Georgii, the bishops and abbots, including Feodosii of the Caves monastery. The cult was a joint response of members of the above-mentioned elite groups to various factors that threatened external and internal stability. The commemoration of Boris and Gleb intensified in connection with the raids of the Turkic nomadic people of the Polovtsy (Cumans, Kipchaks). Starting from 1055, these attacks were becoming more and more devastating.³⁹ In 1062 the Polovtsy defeated Vsevolod. Another military disaster followed in 1068, when the Polovtsy smashed the combined forces of Iziaslav, Sviatoslav and Vsevolod on the Al'ta. As we saw, this raid remained in the cultural memory of the Rus. The defeat also resulted in the uprising of the Kyivans. The citizens demanded weapon from Iziaslav so that they could protect themselves from the invaders, but the prince refused to cooperate. The Kyivans expelled Iziaslav, who fled to Poland. In the meantime, Sviatoslav, who earlier withdrew to his town of Chernihiv, regrouped his troops and successfully attacked the marauding Polovtsy at Snovsk (northeast of Chernihiv) in November 1068. Iziaslav returned with Polish troops to reclaim the Kyivan throne and punish his adversaries among the Kyivans in 1069. Sviatoslav and Vsevolod negotiated the terms of Iziaslav's return, but eventually expelled him from Kyiv in 1073. The attacks of the Polovtsy and subsequent troubles profoundly destabilised the princely elite. There were serious concerns about assassination in the generation of Iaroslav's sons and their families, as evidenced by a prayer against poisoning in the prayer book of Iziaslav's wife Gertruda.⁴⁰ As Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard conclude, the political crisis of the late 1060s and early 1070s, which divided Iziaslav and his brothers, was highly reminiscent of the succession struggle of 1015–1019, when, as we remember, Boris and Gleb perished.⁴¹ Such similarities actualised the memory of Boris and Gleb among the Rus elite and eventually generated their cult.

Clerical communities used the cult to enhance their spiritual glory, improve their welfare and address issues of historical memory. Among these clerical

38 Cross, *RPC*, 155; Ostrowski, *PVL*, lines 181,18–182,19; Poppe, "O zarozhdenii," 45–56.

39 Il'in, *Letopisnaia stat'ia*, 170.

40 Martin Dimnik, *The Dynasty of Chernigov, 1054–1146* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies, 1994), 42–43, 49; Natalia Anna Makaryk Zajac, "Women between West and East: The Inter-Rite Marriages of the Kyivan Rus' Dynasty, ca. 1000–1204," unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Toronto, Toronto, 2014), 128–129, 132.

41 Dimnik, *Dynasty*, 65–81; Simon Franklin, Jonathan Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus, 750–1200* (London: Longman, 1996), 253.

groups we find the Vyshhorod clergy, who capitalised on the location of Boris' and Gleb's tombs in their town. The cult also helped the Vyshhorod clerics to deal with the awkward memory of the Vyshhorod elite supporting Sviatopolk during his plot against Boris and Gleb back in 1015. The veneration of the martyrs could have also benefitted from the developed system of liturgical commemoration operated by the influential community of the Caves monks. Their leader Feodosii efficiently used such commemoration for supporting his ally Iziaslav.⁴² The position of the metropolitan see in the sanctification of the murdered princes requires a more detailed consideration. According to the chronicle, the 1072 translation revealed the miraculous incorruptibility of the martyrs' bodies. This miracle overcame Metropolitan Georgii's uncertainty concerning the relics. Scholars have offered various explanations for the metropolitan's doubts, ranging from his reluctance to accept Rus saints because the metropolitan was a Greek to assertions that Georgii had to be sceptical ex-officio in his capacity of the head of the church. However, the most promising approach emphasises the literary nature of the account of the metropolitan's hesitation.⁴³

In my view, Georgii's doubts are part of a bigger literary picture of physical engagement with the relics of the saints during the ceremony of translation. The change in Georgii's attitude should be seen in connection with another miracle which involved Gleb's stone coffin. During the translation, the coffin stopped at the church-door, refusing to move through until the people cried "Kyrie eleison." The story about Georgii is thus a story of holy matter revealing its own agency, which transforms the attitude of all worshippers, individual and collective, to the memory of the saints. The incorrupt relics prompt the metropolitan to abandon his doubts. The stone coffin requires members of the crowd to intensify their prayers. From a historical perspective, Georgii's uncertainty about the holiness of the relics is no more real than the coffin's dissatisfaction with the insufficient fervour of the attendants. But in the literary context of

42 On the Vyshhorod elite in 1015, see Cross, *RPC*, 126; Ostrowski, *PVL*, lines 132,21–132,27. On Feodosii manipulating liturgical commemoration in the interest of Iziaslav, see Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 85–86; Kotkov, *Uspenskii sbornik*, 124.

43 Georgii as a Greek: M.D. Priselkov, *Ocherki po tserkovno-politicheskoi istorii Kievskoi Rusi x–xiii vv.* (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2003), 75; Dimnik, *Dynasty*, 79; N.N. Voronin, "‘Anonimnoe’ skazanie o Borise i Glebe, ego vremia, stil’ i avtor," *Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury*, 13 (1957), 21; Il'in, *Letopisnaia stat'ia*, 185; Uzhankov, "Sviatyie ... [Nachalo]," 38. Georgii as the head of the church: Miuller, "O vremeni," 75; Aleshkovskii, *Povesť*, 286; A. Poppe, "O vremeni zarozhdeniia kul'ta Borisa i Gleba," *Russia Mediaevalis*, 1 (1973): 17; Ranchin, *Pamiatniki*, 398; Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes*, 50–51. Literary explanations: Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 27 note 68; Paramonova, *Sviatyie*, 250–251.

Christian materiality, the stories about the metropolitan and the crowd increasing their veneration of the saints testify to the triumph of SS. Boris and Gleb, who agree to accept the translation of their bodies to a new home only if they receive unconditional worship.⁴⁴

In a broader historical context, the fact that Georgii agreed to participate in the translation ceremony even before the relics revealed their incorruptibility indicates that the metropolitan had no concerns about the sanctification of Boris and Gleb. Furthermore, the metropolitan see actively developed the liturgical commemoration of the saints. The 1072 translation concluded with the Divine liturgy. As Poppe has demonstrated, the liturgical commemoration of SS. Boris and Gleb was finalised during the prelacy of Georgii's successor, Metropolitan Ioann (also known as Ioann II, in office ca. 1076–1089). Ioann prepared an Office for the saints which is a compilation of several previously recorded offices. The existence of several offices suggests some diversity in the liturgical commemoration of the saints immediately after the 1072 translation. The commemorative calendar of their feast days also reveals significant variations. According to the chronicle, the participants of the translation in 1072 instituted a feast day to commemorate the ceremony, which different versions of the chronicle date to 2 or 20 May. Chronologically, this is the earliest holiday in honour of SS. Boris and Gleb. But Ioann's Office commemorates the saints on 24 July, which, according to later hagiography, is the date of Boris' murder on the Al'ta. Offices for 2 (or 20) May appear in much later sources, starting only from the fourteenth century, and often include stichera which were originally composed for the festival of 24 July. Some calendars also mention 5 September, the alleged date of Gleb's murder.⁴⁵

Such chronological discrepancies are typical of early commemorative practices. For example, early church texts give us different dates for the commemoration of Feodosii of the Caves monastery after the metropolitan decreed to celebrate his memory across Rus in 1108. The vita of Feodosii, which was compiled by Nestor in Kyiv, and the Kondakar of 1207, which originates from Rostov,

44 On the agency of the body and the tomb, see Romedio Schmitz-Esser, *The Corpse in the Middle Ages. Embalming, Cremating, and the Cultural Construction of the Dead Body* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019), 135; Robert Marcoux, "Body, Liturgy, and Tomb Monuments in the Later Middle Ages," in Philip Booth, Elizabeth Tingle, eds., *A Companion to Death, Burial, and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, c. 1300–1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 252.

45 Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes*, 46; N.S. Seregina, *Pesnopeniia russkim sviatym: Po materialam rukopisnoi pevcheskoi knigi XI–XIV vv. "Stikhirar' mesiachnyi"* (St. Petersburg: Rossiiskii institut istorii iskusstv, 1994), 93; O.V. Loseva, *Russkie mesiatseslovy XI–XIV vekov* (Moscow: Pamiatniki istoricheskoi mysli, 2001), 92–95, 105–106.

commemorate the abbot on the date of his demise, 3 May. But the Novgorodian Sticherarion of 1156–1163 (possibly 1160) records the commemoration of Feodosii after the Day of the Deposition of the Virgin's Girdle on 31 August, i.e., at the end of the liturgical year which starts on 1 September.⁴⁶ We can safely assume a similar chronological variety in the early commemoration of SS. Boris and Gleb. The clergy of Iziaslav's church at Vyshhorod, which received the relics of the saints in 1072, celebrated their memory in May. It is possible that the date of 24 July was invented in the 1070s to boost the morale of Iziaslav, Sviatoslav and Vsevolod by reminding them that the place of their defeat on the Alta in 1068 was the same place where Boris was also defeated physically but triumphed in spirit.⁴⁷ Judging by Ioann's Office, the feast day of 24 July enjoyed the support of the metropolitan see, something which eventually ensured the popularity of this date in the commemorative calendar of the church.

A Greek by origin, Ioann adapted for his Office several Greek hymns. The choice of Greek precursors reflects two key themes in the cult of SS. Boris and Gleb, the defence of the Rus land and miraculous healing. Correspondingly, the Greek sources of Ioann's Office include hymns to military saints like Prokopios, Demetrios, and George.⁴⁸ In the context of Polovtsian raids, the militant component of the cult came to the forefront of liturgical commemoration. Ioann calls Boris (in baptism Roman) and Gleb (Davyd) a "honourable pair," who crushed satanic hosts, and "invincible warriors of Christ." The liturgist historicises this combative Christian rhetoric by praising the saints for curbing the

46 Vita: Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 33. Kondakar: Arne Bugge, ed., *Contactarium Palaeoslavicum Mosquense* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1960), 83v; Richard David Bosley, "A History of the Veneration of SS. Theodosij and Antonij of the Kievan Caves Monastery, from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Century," unpublished PhD dissertation (Yale University, 1980), 106; T.V. Shvets, "Blagoveshchenskii kondakar' – muzykal'nyi pamiatnik Drevnei Rusi," unpublished Art Studies Candidate dissertation (St. Petersburg: Sankt-Peterburgskaia gos. konservatoriia im. N.A. Rimskogo-Korsakova, 2012), 35. Sticherarion: I. Sreznevskii, *Drevnie pamiatniki russkago pis'ma i iazyka X–XIV vekov* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia imp. Akademii nauk, 1863), 179; M.A. Malygina, "Iazykovye osobennosti i sostav Mineinogo stikhiraria: Po drevnerusskim spiskam XII veka," unpublished Philology Candidate dissertation (Moscow: Institut russkogo iazyka im. V.V. Vinogradova, 2012), 39, 41. See also L.P. Zhukovskaia, ed., *Svodnyi katalog slaviano-russkikh rukopismykh knig, khra-niashchikhsia v SSSR, XI–XIII vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1984), no. 54: 95–96; no. 173: 193–194; Loseva, *Russkie mesiatseslovy*, 100–101.

47 Cf. Loseva, *Russkie mesiatseslovy*, 93; Miliutenko, *Sviatye*, 94.

48 Abramovich, *Zhitiiia*, 134–143. Poppe, "O zarozhdenii," 31–45; Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes*, 56–65; Monica White, *Military Saints in Byzantium and Rus, 900–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 144–145; Griffin, *The Liturgical Past*, 199–209.

“arrogance of the pagans” (*poganyikh* “*shatanie*). This expression comes from medieval hymns to the Mother of God.⁴⁹ The topos of the Virgin repenting the Devil-inspired attacks is fairly common for medieval Slavic hymnals. For example, the Parakletiki from the second half of the twelfth century contains a canon of repentance which praises the Virgin for relieving from the “assaults of the unclean” (*izbavi nechistyikh* “*napastii*).⁵⁰

In the Office, the theme of the Virgin protecting the Christians from the pagans culminates in a hymn to the Mother of God (*thetokion*) which prays her for eternal deliverance from the “lawless tongues” (*ot* “*bezzakonnykh*” “*iazyk*”).⁵¹ This passage finds a parallel in the *Primary Chronicle* which uses practically identical words for describing the Rus captured by the Polovtsy: “We have deserved to be delivered into the hands of an alien tongue, the most lawless of all the world” (*v ruky iazyku strannu i bezzakon’neishiu vseia zemli*).⁵² Ioann’s Office and the *Primary Chronicle* also share some other common themes, including, as Sean Griffin has demonstrated, comparisons to St. Stephan and the story of Cain and Abel. The scholar asserts that the chronicle tale was the earlier source while the Office is derivative, but there is no textual evidence for such a conclusion.⁵³ Rather, the Office and the chronicle resort to common sources in their discussion of certain common subjects, including the raids of the Polovtsy. Thanks to his superior status in the church hierarchy,

49 Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 137, 140, 143. Cf. O.A. Krasheninnikova, *Drevneslavianskii Oktoikh sv. Klimenta, arkhiepiskopa Okhridskogo, po drevnerusskim i iuzhnoslavianskim spiskam XIII–XV vekov* (Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul’tury, 2006), 207.

50 Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 143; Parakletiki (*Paraklitik*), RGADA, F. 381, Op. 1, ed. khr. 80, f. 37 <http://rgada.info/kueh/> (accessed 3 September 2022).

51 Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 143. On thetokia in the Office, see M.F. Mur’ianov, “Iz nabliudeniia nad strukturoi sluzhebnykh Minei,” in V.P. Grigor’ev, ed., *Problemy strukturnoi lingvistiki, 1979* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), 273. The expression *iazyk* “*bezzakonen*” can also be found in a hymn to the Mother of God for Compline on Saturday in modern printed hymnals (Octoechos). However, this phrase seems to be a later addition as it does not appear in early Slavic liturgical books. In Byzantium, canons for Compline are attested only from the last quarter of the eleventh century. *Oktoikh* “*sirech*” *Osmoglasnik*, *Glasy 1–4* ([Kyiv]: [Ukrains’ka pravoslavna tserkva], 2001), 507; Irina Lozovaia, “O sisteme peniia sedmichnykh kanonov Oktoikha v rannei liturgicheskoi traditsii,” in Lozovaia, ed., *Vizantiia i Vostochnaia Evropa: Liturgicheskie i muzykal’nye sviazi* (Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2003), 57; I.E. Lozovaia, *Drevnerusskii notirovannyi Paraklit XII veka: Vizantiiskie istochniki i tipologiia drevnerusskikh spiskov* (Moscow: Moskovskaia konservatoriia, 2009), 102–106, 131–152; Maria Iovcheva, “Drevneslavianskii Oktoikh: Rekonstruktsiia ego sostava i struktury,” in Hans Rothe, Dagmar Christians, eds., *Liturgisches Hymnen nach byzantinischem Ritus bei den Slaven in ältester Zeit* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 53, 67–69.

52 Adapted from Cross, *RPC*, 178; Ostrowski, *PVL*, lines 223,21–223,22.

53 Griffin, *The Liturgical Past*, 205.

Metropolitan Ioann was able to set literary parameters that were later emulated by the monastic chronicler.

The focus on the pagans attacking Rus distinguishes Ioann's Office (and the chronicle) from earlier rhetorical works on Rus princes. In particular, Metropolitan Ilarion, who was active during the reign of Iaroslav, discusses warfare in very general terms, often paraphrasing Scripture. Ilarion encourages Iaroslav's father Volodimir Sviatoslavich to pray that God "may protect them [the people of Rus – SB] from all war and captivity" and ask the Lord not to "deliver us into the hands of the enemies, lest Thy city be called a captured city," to "repel armed enemies, strengthen peace." Ilarion's discourse is triumphalist as he pleads God to "grant our rulers to be feared by the nations" and praises Volodimir and his ancestors for their victories and might.⁵⁴ In contrast, the tone of Ioann's Office is alarmist and defensive as it reflects the concerns of the clergy, and the Kyivan elite in general, about the devastating raids of the Polovtsy in the second half of the eleventh century.

Ioann's Office combines the subject of SS. Boris and Gleb restraining the "arrogance of the pagans" with another major aspect of the cult, the curative powers of the saints. His Office employs Greek hymns for such saints as Cyrus and John, who were known for their healing powers.⁵⁵ Ioann's discussion of curative miracles performed by the saints is rather generic, in line with his broad literary strategy of adapting Byzantine liturgical models. However, there are two miracles that have received a more detailed treatment in the Office. One of them concerns the miracle of light emanating from Gleb's face at the site where his body was lying on the Smiadina at Smolensk. Unlike later hagiographical works, the Office says nothing about Iaroslav organising a search for Gleb's body. Rather, Ioann attributes the discovery of the body to local trappers who found it in an oak forest. The Office even reproduces the purported direct speech of these huntsmen: "What is that vision? Come to us, we are seeing a glorious vision." The liturgist also alludes to another miracle, which involved a pagan (*nechistyj*, in later hagiographical works a Varangian) who was burned at the saints' grave (see above).⁵⁶

54 Simon Franklin, ed., *Sermons and Rhetoric of Kievan Rus'* (Cambridge, MA: Distributed by Harvard University Press for the Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 1991), 18, 26, 28–29; A.M. Moldovan, "Slovo o zakone i blagodatj" Ilariona (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1984), 79, 92, 99; N.N. Rozov, "Sinodal'nyi spisok sochinenij Ilariona – russkogo pisatelja XI v.," *Slavia*, 32 (1963): 172, 173.

55 Griffin, *The Liturgical Past*, 206.

56 Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 142. On miracles in the Office, see also Poppe, "O zarozhdenii," 36.

The Office does not specify where both miracles took place, but we can learn about their localities from later hagiography. During the preparation of the Office, the metropolitan's see apparently collected information about miracles from local church authorities at Smolensk and Vyshorod. Communication between the metropolitan and bishops also accompanied the establishment of the commemoration of Feodosii of the Caves in 1108. Ioann's Office reveals the role of local communities in the veneration of SS. Boris and Gleb at the early stage of their sanctification. Miliutenko has already noted that the Smolensk community played a very prominent part in the early history of the cult.⁵⁷ Indeed, the coverage of miracles in the Office suggests that the early liturgical commemoration of the saints heavily relied on Smolensk legends about trappers discovering Gleb's body. In later hagiography, this Smolensk tradition gives way to Vyshhorod legends and stories about Iaroslav Volodimirovich ordering a search for Gleb's body in the Smolensk region. However, when Ioann was working on his Office, the Vyshhorod mythology of the saints was still nascent, and hagiographers were yet to invent stories about Iaroslav's patronage.

Finally, it was the metropolitan see that used the cult of Boris and Gleb as a tool for mediating princely politics. In 1101 Metropolitan Nikolai intervened in a conflict between Iaroslav Iaropolchich and his half-uncle Sviatopolk Iziaslavich of Kyiv. Sviatopolk Iziaslavich arrested Iaroslav Iaropolchich, who allegedly planned to attack him. Thanks to Nikolai's mediation, Iaroslav Iaropolchich was brought to the tomb of SS. Boris and Gleb and unchained there. The conflict continued next year, when Iaroslav Iaropolchich escaped from Kyiv but was recaptured and eventually died in Sviatopolk Iziaslavich's prison.⁵⁸ Nikolai's attempt to evoke the cult of Boris and Gleb for alleviating Iaroslav Iaropolchich's imprisonment was only partially successful. Still, this episode shows that the metropolitan see acted as a major patron of the cult after its establishment in 1072. The commemorative activities of metropolitans ranged from promoting the liturgical commemoration of the saints to utilising their memory as a means of conflict resolution.

57 Miliutenko, *Sviatye*, 40, 42, 149, 152, 154, 267–268.

58 Cross, *RPC*, 199, 200; Ostrowski, *PVL*, lines 275,1–275,6; 275,16–275,21, 276,26–276,27. For various interpretation of Iaroslav Iaropolchich's death, see Dimnik, *Dynasty*, 258; Christian Raffensperger, *Conflict, Bargaining, and Kinship Networks in Medieval Eastern Europe* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018), 74, 86.

3 The Cult of SS. Boris and Gleb and Monastic Communities

The reign of Volodimir Monomakh saw the increasing involvement of monastic communities in the veneration of SS. Boris and Gleb. In the 1100s, the Caves monks prepared the most comprehensive historicised narrative ever produced in pre-Mongol Rus, the *Primary Chronicle*.⁵⁹ The chronicle discusses, among other topics, the succession struggle after the death of Volodimir Sviatoslavich, including the assassinations of Boris and Gleb. The chronicler allocates Iaroslav Volodimirovich a prominent part in avenging their deaths by defeating their murderer, Sviatopolk Volodimirovich, but says nothing about Iaroslav's veneration of Boris and Gleb as saints. Rather, the chronicle account of the struggle between Iaroslav and Sviatopolk ends with an admonition to the princes of Rus that they would incur the same punishment as Sviatopolk did, or even more severe, if they commit a similar crime. Nevertheless, the chronicle discusses those aspects of the cult that were already outlined in Ioann's Office, healing and the protection of Rus: "Ye give healing to pilgrims from other lands [...], making the lame to walk, giving sight to the blind, to the sick health, to captives freedom, to prisoners liberty, to the sorrowful consolation, and to the oppressed relief. Ye are the protectors of the land of Rus."⁶⁰

Elsewhere the chronicle explicitly connects the cult of SS. Boris and Gleb with the raids of the nomads. The chronicle representation of the steppe politics of Rus princes is of course highly biased. The relationship between Rus and the Polovtsy was complex as it included both armed violence and diplomatic marriages.⁶¹ But for Kyivan monks, the Polovtsy were the scourge of God. This is why the monastic chronicler prays the martyrs to "subject the pagans to our princes."⁶² The commemorative calendar of the cult provides a chronological framework for the chronicle discussion of the Polovtsy's attacks. Speaking of their victory over Sviatopolk Iziaslavich on 23 July 1093, the chronicler emphasises that the prince was defeated on the eve of the saints' feast day (24 July), which was "a new festival in Rus." Sviatopolk's failure thwarted what was supposed to be the commemoration of the protectors of Rus from the Polovtsy in Kyiv. Instead, "there was no joy in the city, but only lamentation because of

59 Donald Ostrowski, "The Title of the *Povest' vremennykh let* Redux," *Ruthenica*, 6 (2007): 315–321.

60 Cross, *RPC*, 129; Ostrowski, *PVL*, lines 137,15–137,20.

61 P.P. Tolochko, *Dinasticheskie braki na Rusi, XII–XIII vv.* (St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2013), 155–168; Christian Raffensperger, *Ties of Kinship: Genealogy and Dynastic Marriage in Kyivan Rus'* (Cambridge MA.: Distributed by Harvard University Press for the Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 2016), 77–78, 91–93, 103–104, 108–109.

62 Cross, *RPC*, 130; Ostrowski, *PVL*, lines 139,8–139,9.

our manifold sins and unrighteousness and for the multiplication of our transgressions.” In this account, the commemoration of the saints sets the scene for developing a repentant explanation for the victory of the Polovtsy.⁶³

In a broader cultural context, the chronicle interprets the cult from the perspective of God’s divine plan for Rus. God promised that the princes and people of Rus would live in peace and triumph over their enemies, above all, the Polovtsy. But this divine promise is conditional as it requires the princes to demonstrate piety and humility in domestic affairs as well as courage in defending the land of Rus from external enemies.⁶⁴ The death of Boris and Gleb advanced the divine design because the martyrs hallowed the land of Rus with their blood. Boris and Gleb act as the protectors of Rus, exemplifying the ideal Christian ruler. The chronicler also emphasises the global renown of the saints as their tombs attract pilgrims from other lands. The topic of foreign pilgrims coming to the tombs echoes the veneration of SS. Boris and Gleb outside Rus, as evidenced by the relics of the saints kept at the Sázava Monastery in Bohemia in 1095.⁶⁵ At the same time, the death of Boris and Gleb is by no means central to the chronicle narrative of the inter-princely struggle that followed the death of Volodimir Sviatoslavich. Rather, as Gail Lenhoff notes, the chronicle account is a complex text which deals with various subjects and intertwines narrative and rhetorical blocks.⁶⁶

As demonstrated above, the chronicle was followed by three major hagiographical works on Boris and Gleb. One of them, the *Lesson*, was written by Nestor, who was a monk in the same Caves monastery where the chronicle was created. The compilers of the *Anonymous Tale* and the *Tale of the Miracles* do not tell us about their institutional affiliation, but the texts of their works offer some circumstantial evidence of the place of their origin. The tales discuss two miracles that Metropolitan Ioann also mentions in his Office, the discovery of Gleb’s body near Smolensk (in the *Anonymous Tale*) and the miracle with the Varangian burned at the saints’ grave at Vyshhorod (in the *Tale of the Mira-*

63 Cross, *RPC*, p. 177; Ostrowski, *PVL*, lines 221,23–222,18; Dimnik, *Dynasty*, 184. The context of the chronicle entry suggests that the chronicler calls the holiday of SS. Boris and Gelb new in comparison with the Ascension Day, which is one of the earliest Christian festivals. The chronicle description of the day of SS. Boris and Gleb as new does not testify to the date of their sanctification. Müller, “O vremeni,” 77–78; Ranchin, *Pamiatniki*, 403–407.

64 On providentialism in the *Primary Chronicle*, see Devid K. Prestel’ [David Prestel], “Plody provideniia: Iazycheskaia i sviashchennaia istoriia v Povesti vremennykh let,” *Rossica Antiqua*, 2 (2011): 23–42.

65 Cross, *RPC*, 129; Ostrowski, *PVL*, lines 137,15–137,20; Nazarenko, “Boris i Gleb,” section “Pochitanie B[orisa] i G[leba] za predelami Rusi.”

66 Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes*, 108–109.

cles).⁶⁷ The *Anonymous Tale* omits some details that can be found in the Office, like the direct speech of trappers who found Gleb's corpse. At the same time, the account of the second miracle in the *Tale of the Miracles* is more comprehensive than the brief and somewhat vague reference to the miracle in the Office. The hagiographers apparently utilised not the Office, but its sources, the records of two early miracles. Scholars usually assume that the compilers of the hagiographical texts had access to some records of miracles kept at Vyshhorod churches (so-called Vyshhorod records). But, as we have seen, the records that Ioann and the hagiographers utilised dealt not only with Vyshhorod but also with Smolensk and were probably prepared at the metropolitan see. Sources about other miracles that happened at Vyshhorod may have come from a monastery, as suggested by the miracle of curing a lame and dumb man. The *Tale of the Miracles* reports both the lay name of that person (Zhdan) and his monastic name (Nikola).⁶⁸ Records of miracles at Vyshhorod apparently originate from a monastic collection of lives and miracles, similar to the *Paterik* of the Caves monastery.

The compilers of the *Anonymous Tale* and the *Tale of the Miracle* therefore had connections with various church institutions, including the metropolitan see and a monastery. They also had a strong interest in Vyshhorod. Two clerics were perfectly positioned to form such a broad network. One of them was Lazor', who headed the clergy of Iziaslav's church at Vyshhorod in 1072. Later, in 1088, Lazor' was the hegumen of St. Michael's monastery at Vydubychi. He received the bishopric of Pereiaslav' on the Alta (Southern Pereiaslav') in 1105 and, in his capacity of bishop, participated in the translation of Boris' and Gleb's bodies in 1115. Lazor' was undoubtedly well connected with top level hierarchs. In particular, he had access to Metropolitan Ioann, the compiler of the Office, who consecrated a new cathedral at St. Michael's in 1088.⁶⁹ Another important figure was Sil'vester, who was Lazor's successor first at St. Michael's monastery (from 1115 or earlier) and then at the bishopric see of Pereiaslav' (from 1118). Sil'vester was also a literato. In 1116 he prepared a copy of the *Primary Chronicle* at St. Michael's, though scholars still argue whether he merely copied, edited or even wrote the chronicle.⁷⁰ As we remember, the *Anonymous Tale* and the

67 On the impact of the liturgical texts on the hagiography, see Bugoslavskii, *Tekstologïia*, 2: 248–252.

68 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 124; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 57.

69 Cross, *RPC*, 169; Ostrowski, *PVL*, lines 207,17–207,21; M.V. Pechnikov, "Lazar'," *Pravoslavnaia entsiklopediia*, <https://www.pravenc.ru/text/2462527.html> (accessed 28 October 2022).

70 Aleksei Tolochko, "Perechityvaia pripisku Sil'vestra 1116 g.," *Ruthenica*, 7 (2008): 154–165; O.V. Tvorogov, "Sil'vestr," in E.A. Mel'nikova, V. Ia. Petrukhin, eds., *Drevniaia Rus' v sred-*

Tale of the Miracles were composed between 1117 and 1125. Lazor', who died in 1117, could have masterminded the hagiographical project but, contrary to N.N. Voronin, the cleric hardly wrote both texts.⁷¹ Sil'vestr's contribution was probably more substantial as he could work on the hagiographical texts from 1117 until his death in 1123. Lazor' and Sil'vestr also had enough administrative power to involve other people in the compilation of the hagiographical works on SS. Boris and Gleb. The involvement of several literati from the same clerical circle may explain why the *Anonymous Tale* and the *Tale of the Miracles* share many common features but, as Timberlake has noted, rely on somewhat different sources.⁷² It would be safe to attribute the *Anonymous Tale* and the *Tale of the Miracles* to the circle of Lazor' and Sil'vestr.

Why did the hagiographers from the Lazor'-Sil'vestr circle become interested in the figures of SS. Boris and Gleb? The main reason was undoubtedly the work on the *Primary Chronicle* carried out at the Caves and St Michael's monasteries. The *Primary Chronicle* was something more than an episode in a long series of hypothetical chronicle compilations. The impact of the *Primary Chronicle* crossed institutional boundaries as the chronicle became a source of influential ideas for hagiographers working in different monasteries. With the chronicler setting the literary scene, the hagiographers were able to create a narrative focused on the royal martyrs. The hagiographical works develop the main themes associated with the cult of Boris and Gleb. Like the chronicle, the *Anonymous Tale* calls the princes "ramparts and a fortress of the land of Rus" while the *Tale of the Miracles* paraphrases John of Damascus, describing the saints as "intercessors for the entire nation." The *Anonymous Tale* also picks up the theme of the global veneration of the martyrs.⁷³ Derived from the *Primary Chronicle*, the *Anonymous Tale*, the *Tale of the Miracles* and the *Lesson* are the results of cross-institutional work initiated by the monastic circle of Lazor' and Sil'vestr and continued by Nestor.

nevekovom mire. Entsiklopediia (Moscow: Ladomir, 2014), 738. Cf. Kuz'min, *Nachal'nye etapy*, 162–163.

71 Voronin treated both tales as one literary work. Voronin, "Anonimnoe skazanie,"; cf. Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, xlv note 132.

72 Timberlake, "The Origins of Anonymous's Skazanie," 159.

73 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 114–115, 118; Abramovich, *Zhitiiia*, 49–50, 52.

4 The Myth of Iaroslav's Patronage

The hagiography of SS. Boris and Gleb introduces a major new topic, Iaroslav's patronage of the cult. According to the *Anonymous Tale*, after defeating Sviatopolk, Iaroslav inquired about the location of Boris' and Gleb's bodies, ordering the translation of the latter from the Smolensk region to Vyshhorod. The *Anonymous Tale* concludes the story with a panegyric on Vyshhorod.⁷⁴ The *Tale of the Miracles* gives more details on Gleb's burial at Vyshhorod noting that Iaroslav put his body at Boris' grave which was next to St. Basil's church. After the church was destroyed by a fire, the prince built a small chapel where the relics, which had miraculously survived, were solemnly transferred. Miracles occurred at the shrines of the martyrs in the chapel, with one of these wonders prompting Iaroslav to conceive a new church for the relics. The metropolitan supported this initiative recommending that the prince build a new great church. Inspired by the hierarch, Iaroslav commissioned a church with five cupolas. The metropolitan and Iaroslav also established "a holiday to be celebrated on 24 July, the same day on which the most blessed Boris was killed" and on which "the new church was consecrated and the saints were translated."⁷⁵

The hagiographical accounts of Iaroslav emphasise his direct interaction with the relics. In Kyivan literature, references to the present time and personal experience usually reinforce the narrative. We have already seen that the chronicler "confirms" his accounts of early Rus princes with claims that their graves still exist, but such references perform a literary function. Nestor also intertwines historicised narrative with claims on personal witnessing, as apparent from the concluding statement of his *Lesson*: "Lo, I, sinful Nestor, have written down but a few of the many things concerning the lives and murders and miracles of the holy and blessed passion-sufferers ... Some things I have transcribed from those who knew of these matters, others I myself have witnessed."⁷⁶ But this is not the witnessing of an impersonal reporter. Nestor does not use personal knowledge for providing the reader with more details on the subject of his narrative. For example, in his account of the miracle of a woman with a withered hand, Nestor claims that he met the woman personally. But, unlike another version of the miracle that appears in the *Tale of the Miracles*, Nestor omits many specific details, like the name of the town where the woman lived (Dorohobuzh) and her social status of a servant.⁷⁷

74 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 113–116; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 48–52.

75 Adapted from Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 118–121; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 52–55.

76 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 31–32; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 26.

77 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 125–126; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 58–59.

For Nestor and other monastic literati, eye-witnessing confirms the Scriptural maxim: “A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden” (Matt 5: 14–15, as quoted in the *Anonymous Tale*) because the Lord does not permit a treasure (i.e. the saints’ bodies) to be hidden in the ground, as the *Tale of the Miracle* and Nestor’s *Lesson* tell us.⁷⁸ In the *Lesson*, the story of Iaroslav discovering the bodies of his half-brothers, commissioning churches and translating the relics of the saints is a story of Iaroslav’s direct interaction with the materiality of the cult: “The Christ-lover rejoiced with a spiritual joy, because his holy brothers had been found worthy of grace: no longer would he have to hear from others, but he himself became an eyewitness.”⁷⁹ Iaroslav’s personal engagement with the relics reveals and endorses the sanctity of the holy matter.

The hagiographical perspective on Iaroslav’s patronage explains what from a historical point of view looks like logical contradictions in the hagiographical accounts of the cult. One of such contradictions concerns the main sign of sanctity, the incorruptibility of the saints’ bodies. According to the *Anonymous Tale*, the curators of the translation of Gleb’s body to Vyshhorod were amazed at the incorruptibility of his corpse. The hagiographer insists that the miraculous condition of Gleb’s relics is memorable.⁸⁰ But this statement is optimistic because the *Tale of the Miracles* tells us that the incorruptibility of Boris’ and Gleb’s bodies was revealed on a different occasion, during the translation of the relics to the chapel that Iaroslav erected after the fire destroyed St. Basil’s church by which the bodies were originally buried.⁸¹ The metropolitan, his priests, and Iaroslav participated in the ceremony of translation. But none of them recalled that the incorruptibility of Gleb’s body had already been demonstrated during his reburial. Furthermore, the *Tale of the Miracles* also reproduces the chronicle description on the 1072 translation (with some additions, see below), including the miracle of fragrance emanating from the open coffins of the saints.⁸² Contrary to the chronicle, which logically mentions the incorruptibility of the bodies only once, in connection with the 1072 translation, the hagiographers give us as many as three episodes of revealed incorruptibility, during the translation of Gleb’s body (in the *Anonymous Tale*), the translation of both bodies to the chapel under Iaroslav and the translation of the same bodies to Iziaslav’s church in 1072 (the last two episodes appear in

78 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 18, 113, 118; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 15, 48, 53.

79 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 23; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 19.

80 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 113; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 48. For other internal contradictions in the hagiography of Boris and Gleb, see Ranchin, *Pamiatniki*, 367–368.

81 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 119; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 54.

82 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 123; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 56.

the *Tale of the Miracles*). The reoccurring miracle of incorruptibility suggests that the hagiographers are interested not in the history of sanctification, but in the agency of holy matter which reveals the incorruptibility of their bodies. The hagiographical accounts repeatedly demonstrate incorruptibility like liturgical commemoration re-enacts the drama of Boris' and Gleb's martyrdom every time the liturgy is served.

Like the chronicler, the hagiographers allocate a leading role in commemorative ceremonies to the highest lay and ecclesiastical authorities, the ruling prince and the metropolitan. The *Tale of the Miracles* reports that certain metropolitan Ioann participated in Iaroslav's translations. It is very hard to confirm the existence of that hierarch because there were two more metropolitans called Ioann, the compiler of the Office and another one, who briefly headed the church in ca. 1090. A seal attributed to certain Metropolitan Ioann of Rus have been dated to a very broad period from the early eleventh century to the 1160s. As Poppe concludes, there are no reasons to connect it with Metropolitan Ioann mentioned in the hagiographical works on Boris and Gleb. Nadezhda Nikitenko and Viacheslav Kornienko attribute to that metropolitan a supplicative graffito written on behalf of certain Ioann in St. Sophia in Kyiv because the omega in the inscription is allegedly executed in the shape of an anchor, which is a symbol of the church. This interpretation is too forced to be taken seriously.⁸³

Nestor's *Lesson* also mentions Metropolitan Ioann in connection with Iaroslav's commemorative activities. According to Poppe, Nestor's evidence is independent and reliable because he was a monk from the Caves monastery whose brethren surely knew the names of past metropolitans. In fact, the opposite is true. The compiler of the *Primary Chronicle*, who was also a Caves monk and Nestor's contemporary, demonstrates a shaky knowledge of the history of the metropolitan see under Iaroslav and does not mention a metropolitan called Ioann during Iaroslav's reign. Later sources about Ioann are also highly problematic. Metropolitan Ioann from the hagiographical works on Boris and Gleb remains an elusive figure, because, apart from the hagiography, no other sources from pre-Mongol Rus reliably confirm his existence. All studies of the hierarch and his tenure during Iaroslav's reign heavily rely on the hagiographical material.⁸⁴

83 V.L. Ianin, *Aktovye pečati Drevnei Rusi X-XV vv.*, 1 (Moscow: Nauka, 1970), 51; Poppe, "O zarozhdenii," 32 note 17; Nadezhda Nikitenko, Viacheslav Kornienko, *Drevneishie graffiti Sofii Kievskoi i vremia ee sozdaniia* (Kyiv: Instytut ukrains'koi arkhieohrafi ta dzhereloznavstva imeni M.S. Hrushevs'koho, 2012), 185–186.

84 On Ioann I and sources on him, see Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 20 note 46; A. Poppe,

As we have seen, Nestor's *Lesson* textually depends on the *Tale of the Miracles*, so Nestor obviously borrowed the name of the hierarch from that work. The latter apparently had access to earlier sources on the cult, including Metropolitan Ioann's Office, more precisely, its title "The Work of Ioann, Metropolitan of Rus, [Devoted to] the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb," which already existed by 1015.⁸⁵ At the same time, the early sources on the commemoration of Boris and Gleb are conveniently vague. Ioann's Office has no date of compilation; there is no date of the translation of Gleb's body to Vyshhorod in the Office or the chronicle either. Such murky chronology offered ideal opportunities for inventing (or "discovering") the early history of the cult. Following the Office and the *Primary Chronicle*, the hagiographer of the *Tale of the Miracles* apparently assumed that Metropolitan Ioann not only compiled the Office but also participated in the translation of the relics under Iaroslav, in the same manner as Metropolitan Georgii presided over a similar ceremony in 1072.

The hagiographers also elaborate on the history of the holiday on 24 July by presenting it as a result of Iaroslav's commemorative activities. As we have seen, both Ioann's Office and the *Primary Chronicle* already mention the holiday but do not explain its origin. The *Anonymous Tale* seeks to fill in this gap by reporting the date of Boris' death on 24 July. Surprisingly, the hagiographer uses the Calends of August, though the holiday is mentioned in the earliest Slavic church calendars, including one dating to the period from 1096 to 1117. Such unusual Western reference suggests that the "historification" of Boris' death was still work in progress during the compilation of the *Anonymous Tale* with literati resorting to various sources in attempts to establish the date of his murder. The *Tale of the Miracles* adds more details about the holiday, claiming that it was established by Iaroslav and his metropolitan during the translation of the saints' relics to the great five-cupola church. This idea was probably inspired by the chronicle account of the authorities establishing a feast day in May during the translation of the relics in 1072.⁸⁶

"Mitropolity i kniaz'ia Kievskoi Rusi," in Gerhard Podskalski [Podskalsky], *Khristianstvo i bogoslovskaiia literatura v Kievskoi Rusi, 988–1237 gg.* (St. Petersburg: Vizantinorossika, 1996), 448–449; A.V. Nazarenko, "Kievskii mitropolit Ioann I," *DRVIM*, 3 (2007): 76–77; A.V. Nazarenko, "Ioann I," in *Pravoslavnaia entsiklopediia*, <https://www.pravenc.ru/text/469570.html> (accessed 18 October 2022); A.P. Tolochko, "Zamechaniia o perykh mitropolitakh kievsikh," in A.A. Turilov, ed. *"Vertograd mnogotsetnyi": Sbornik k 80-letiiu Borisa Nikolaevicha Flori* (Moscow: Indrik, 2018), 82–87.

85 For the dating of the title, see Poppe, "O zarozhdenii," 35.

86 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 106 note 263, 121; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 37, 55, 136; Cross, *RPC*, 154, 155, 177; Ostrowski, *PVL*, lines 181,26; 182,15–182,17; 222,3–222,4; Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes*, 46.

The myth of Iaroslav's commemorative activities contributes to the hagiographical narrative on three generations of princes sponsoring (or planning to sponsor) churches dedicated to the saints and adorning their shrines. Among these royal patrons we find Iaroslav, his sons Iziaslav, Sviatoslav and Vsevolod and their sons Sviatopolk Iziaslavich, Davyd Sviatoslavich, Oleg Sviatoslavich and Volodimir Vsevolodivich Monomakh. The hagiographical works intertwine the subject of royal patronage with reports on miraculous healing, which is one of the main components of the cult. In particular, the *Tale of the Miracles* tells us that Sviatoslav applied Gleb's arm to a wound in his (Sviatoslav's) neck during the translation of the relics in 1072. After this engagement with the relics, Gleb's fingernail miraculously remained on Sviatoslav's head. The miracle with the nail evokes the memory of Sviatoslav as a patron of the cult. He sponsored numerous religious foundations in Kyiv, including the Caves monastery, St. Sophia, and a monastery dedicated to St. Simeon. Most importantly for the hagiographers, Sviatoslav began to build the stone church at Vyshhorod to which the relics were translated in 1115.⁸⁷ The hagiographers from the Lazor'-Sil'vestr circle added the miracle of the nail to the chronicle account of the 1072 translation to commemorate Sviatoslav's patronage of the cult.

The author of the *Tale of the Miracles* also praises the sponsorship of the cult by his contemporary prince, Volodimir Monomakh. It was Monomakh who agreed to consecrate the above-mentioned stone church which was started by Sviatoslav Iaroslavich and completed by his son Oleg in ca. 1111. Monomakh also intervened in the interior design of the church by requesting that the bodies of the saints be placed in the centre of the building so that he could erect a silver canopy above the tombs. But other participants, Sviatoslav's sons Davyd and Oleg wanted to place the relics where their father wanted them to rest, in a specially prepared chamber on the right side. Following the clerics' suggestion, the princes resolved the dispute by casting lots. With Davyd and Oleg winning, the tombs were placed in the chamber. Despite the rejection of his original plan, Monomakh eventually adorned the tombs with gold and silver.⁸⁸

The *Anonymous Tale* does not refer to Monomakh directly, but it glorifies the Vyshhorod church which houses the holy coffins of the saints, i.e. the church

87 Dimnik, *Dynasty*, 114–116, 120–122, 125–126; A.A. Gippius, M.M. Drobysheva, “‘Ruga’ v graf-fito no. 9 Sofii Kievskoi,” in E.A. Mel'nikova, ed., *Vostochnaia Evropa v drevnosti i sredn-vekov'e*, 32; *Sravnitel'nye issledovaniia sotsiokul'turnykh praktik* (Moscow: Institut vseobshchei istorii RAN, 2020), 58–65.

88 Martin Dimnik, “Oleg Svyatoslavich and His Patronage of the Cult of SS. Boris and Gleb,” *Mediaeval Studies*, 50 (1988): 363; *PSRL*, 2: col. 281–282.

which Monomakh agreed to consecrate.⁸⁹ The *Tale of the Miracles* is more explicit about Monomakh's contribution to the cult as the work allocates him a leading part in the translation of the relics in 1115. For some reasons, the *Tale of the Miracles* says nothing about Monomakh's plan of decorating the new tombs of the saints. It is hard to say whether the tale was created before Monomakh launched his renovation project or whether the hagiographer had reasons to remain silent about it. Nevertheless, according to Timberlake, the *Tale of the Miracles* glorifies Monomakh as the righteous guardian of Boris' and Gleb's holiness.⁹⁰ Furthermore, the hagiographer presents Monomakh's engagement with the cult as an old tradition. The *Tale of the Miracles* projects Monomakh's patronage back to the time when the bodies of Boris and Gleb were kept in the wooden church built by Iziaslav. According to the hagiographer, in 1102, Monomakh, then still prince of Pereiaslav', visited the wooden church at night to measure the tombs, prepared gilded silver panels and installed them at the tombs, also secretly at night. It is hard to imagine the prince personally involved in such nocturnal activities. The story was probably created following the example of Monomakh's patronage of the saints' shrines in 1115. The account of Monomakh decorating the tombs in 1102 seeks to demonstrate that the prince contributed, albeit indirectly, to the creation of the stone church at Vyshhorod. As we remember, the church was completed by Oleg Sviatoslavich. But, according to the *Tale of the Miracles*, he decided to finish the project only after Monomakh decorated the coffins of the saints in the old wooden church. In fact, Oleg of course followed the will of his father, Sviatoslav, who began to build the church.⁹¹

It was against this background that the theme of Iaroslav's patronage of the cult appeared in the *Anonymous Tale* and was developed in the *Tale of the Miracles* and Nestor's *Lesson*. The hagiographical accounts of Iaroslav's sponsorship of the cult echo the general revision of the memory of Iaroslav during Monomakh's reign. The *Primary Chronicle* contains a fictitious testament of Iaroslav who allegedly told his son and Monomakh's father Vsevolod: "If God grant that you succeed your brothers upon my throne justly and without the exercise of violence, may you lie beside my tomb where I lie when God takes you from this world, for I love you more than your brethren."⁹² In fact, it is

89 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 113–116; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 48–52.

90 Timberlake, "The Origins of Anonymous's Skazanie," 190.

91 Hollingsworth, *Hagiography*, 127, 131–132; Abramovich, *Zhitiia*, 60, 63–64.

92 Cross, *RPC*, 174; Ostrowski, *PVL*, lines 216,16, 217,4. On the instrumentalisation of the memory of Iaroslav in the chronicle, see also Timberlake, "The Origins of the Boris and Gleb Cycle," 40.

very difficult to say that Vsevolod succeeded his brothers “without the exercise of violence.” Together with his brother Sviatoslav, Vsevolod usurped the Kyivan throne by expelling their elder brother Iziaslav from the city in 1073, briefly occupied it again in 1077 before renouncing it to Iziaslav, and finally established his regime in Kyiv after challenging Iziaslav, who perished in battle, in 1078. When Vsevolod died in 1093, his son Monomakh buried him in St. Sophia in Kyiv. Monomakh’s brother Rostislav was also interred in the cathedral in the same year. Monomakh therefore turned St. Sophia, which was commissioned by Iaroslav and became his resting place, into a familial mausoleum. In the *Primary Chronicle*, Iaroslav’s alleged instructions to Vsevolod legitimise the latter’s path to power and Monomakh’s burial scenario. The hagiographical accounts of Iaroslav’s patronage of the cult of SS. Boris and Gleb perform a similar legitimising function by justifying Monomakh’s commemorative activities. The hagiographical descriptions of Iaroslav’s veneration of the saints “confirm” that Monomakh inherited from Iaroslav not only the burial place in St. Sophia but also the patronage of the saints’ tombs at Vyshhorod. The hagiographers sought to secure further donations from Monomakh by presenting him as the continuator of an honourable tradition which was allegedly established by his grandfather Iaroslav. Such encouragement was especially topical in the context of Monomakh’s project of decorating the tombs of the saints after the translation of their bodies in 1115. The hagiographical stories about Iaroslav establishing the veneration of the saints also appealed to other potential sponsors among Iaroslav’s descendants.

Medieval *memoria* was polyphonic and fluid.⁹³ Different promoters of the cult of SS. Boris and Glen had different priorities which were articulated and negotiated during the establishment and veneration of the cult. The cult of the saints addressed such diverse issues as the stability of the princely elite, defence and security, healing and associated income, the agency of holy matter, local and global Christianity. The patronage of the cult crossed institutional boundaries as different groups of the elite promoted their interests during the commemoration of the royal martyrs. The hagiographers who worked during the reign of Monomakh capitalised on the tradition of patronage that went back to the translation of the relics in 1072. Since then, the princes, the metropolitan, the Vyshhorod clergy and monastic communities had actively contributed to the

93 Matthew Innes, “Introduction: Using the Past, Interpreting the Present, Influencing the Future,” in Yitzhak Hen, Matthew Innes, eds., *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 7.

sanctification and veneration of Boris and Gleb. Royalty sponsored the building and decoration of the churches dedicated to the saints. The metropolitan see was particularly active in gathering information about early miracles performed by the saints, organising their liturgical commemoration, and using their cult for mediating princely politics. The monks of the Caves monastery produced an influential historicised account of the saints' deaths. The hagiographers of SS. Boris and Gleb instrumentalised the cultural memory of past princes to demonstrate the ancient origin of the cult and facilitate the veneration of the saints across the territory of Rus.

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