



THE INCORPORATION OF ORAL HISTORICAL TRADITION IN THE EARLY HISTORICAL TEXTS: SNORRI'S *YNGLINGASAGA* AND NESTOR'S *PRIMARY CHRONICLE*

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The role of oral tradition, an important source of early history writing, was especially great for the formation of historiography in the northern and eastern periphery of the Christian world. The memories Scandinavians and Eastern Slavs had of their origins, their relations with kindred nations and their wars with enemies were the only existent source of information for the reconstruction of their remote past. These recollections were transmitted orally for centuries and were first put into writing only in the eleventh (in Ancient Russia) and twelfth centuries (in Iceland). By that time the peoples of both regions had adopted Christianity, and early historiographers, men of learning, absorbed together with Christian theology and culture the Christian perception of historical process and the concept of world history as the history of the Christian nations. The Bible and the works of the Church Fathers suggested a kind of linear history progressing from the Creation to the triumph of Christianity and then its collapse before the Judgement. This concept of history was in dramatic contrast to the attitude to the past then prevalent in the pagan world, where oral historical tradition had its roots. At the same time the Bible, Church Fathers, and early Christian historians provided patterns for history-writing that again contradicted the methods of presentation of oral history.

Thus the main task for the authors of the first national ('barbarian') histories (Goffart 1988) in Northern and Eastern Europe, who strove to incorporate their own peoples into the family of Christian nations and to present their past as an integral part of world history, was to adapt the oral – and pagan – historical tradition of their nations to the standards of Christian history writing (Weber 1987). Therefore oral tradition had to be reviewed and selected, and the appropriate parts of it had to be reinterpreted, rearranged, and modified in such a way as to conform to the annalists' aims.

The usage and modification of oral tradition by authors of 'barbarian histories' as well as the mechanisms of its incorporation in the narrations varied greatly. Old Norse and Old Russian history writers had some common grounds for their treatment of national historical traditions.



On the one hand, the European North and East of the preliterate period were tightly connected economically, politically, and culturally due to a great number of Viking bands moving hither and thither, and settling for some time or forever in Old Russian towns (Franklin & Shepard 1998; Mühle 1991). The Old Russian historical tradition of the ninth and tenth centuries emerged and took shape among the professional warriors who were members of princely retinues. Until the mid-tenth century most of them were Scandinavians, and only in the tenth century did Slavic warriors began to penetrate this circle. Sharing the same activities and interests Scandinavian and Slavic comrades-in-arms possessed common historical memories and common historical traditions. On the other hand, a certain simultaneity and similarity of the main social and political developments in the Northern and Eastern European worlds could result in the emergence of similar traditions and their interpretations. An immediate example of the appearance of a historical tradition in this mixed milieu and its further separate development within the Old Norse and Old Russian cultural space is the tale about the death of Kievan prince Oleg (*Helgi*) (Melnikova 2000). Old Russian and Old Norse historical writings thus had a partially (although limited) common background.

The depth of historical memory, i.e. the interval between the earliest memorised events and the time of their recording in writing, constituted several centuries in both regions. During all this period the remembrances about the past underwent continual changes. They were supplemented by new perceptions and impressions, and some of them lost their actuality and were forced into oblivion. Oral history was unstable and mobile, and its topicality was the most important factor to constitute and to maintain the tradition. The ceaseless revision of oral history went hand in hand with its equally ceaseless reinterpretation and modification though the fluid nature of oral history was seldom – if ever – realised by its bearers (Vansina 1985; Caunce 1994).

The earliest extant historical work in Russia is the *Primary*, or *Nestor's Chronicle*. It is considered to have been compiled by a monk of the Kiev Cave monastery, named Nestor, at the beginning of the twelfth century. It is based on earlier historical compilations from the 1070s and 1090s that did not survive but were reconstructed. To describe events before the end of the tenth century, Nestor and his predecessors made use of local oral tradition and Byzantine chronographs, although it is uncertain at what time and in what compilation one or another item of oral tradition was introduced into the chronicle. Snorri's *Heimskringla* was



written about a century later. It was also based on previous historical works (*Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sögum*, *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*) and on oral tradition including skaldic verses.

Though the *Primary Chronicle* and *Heimskringla* have obvious differences of genre, they have some common features. The *Primary Chronicle* can be justly regarded as an early ‘barbarian’ history in the vernacular. Snorri also aimed to reconstruct the history of the Norwegian kings, and he also wrote in the vernacular. Both authors were men of learning, well educated and widely read Christians. Both Nestor and Snorri made wide use of local oral tradition. This source was especially important for their constructions of the early history of their nations before the end of the tenth century. Therefore the comparison of the usage of oral tradition by Nestor in the initial part of his chronicle and by Snorri in *Ynglingasaga* seems promising for studies of the transformation of oral into written history.

1. ATTITUDE TO ORAL TRADITION

The first question to arise is if Nestor or Snorri were aware of a specific nature of oral tradition as compared with written sources.

It seems that neither Nestor nor Snorri felt any difference between a written word and a word of mouth, and they didn’t draw any visible distinction between oral and written traditions. Snorri was one of the earliest European historians who pondered over the problem of the reliability of his sources and formulated his attitude to them in the introduction to *Heimskringla*. He names as his sources ‘old stories’ (*forn frásaga*) about hofdings, pedigrees and genealogical rolls (*kynkvísl* and *langfeðgatal*), as well as old poems and songs (*forn kvæði* and *söguljóð*) told by wise men. He speaks especially of two genealogical songs, *Ynglingatal* by skald Thjodolf of Hvini and *Háleygjatal* by Eyvind Skald-Spoiler. Skaldic poems about konungs (*konunga kvæði*) form another group. Later he adds Ari Thorgilsson’s historical works to his main sources. In each case Snorri provides a brief characteristic, paying special attention to the content and the trustworthiness of each piece.

From the modern point of view Snorri’s sources fall into two categories, two former complexes belong to the oral tradition, whereas Ari’s texts are items of written culture. Snorri’s discussion of their reliability, however, shows that his demarcation lines were different. The reliability of the two genealogical songs is not debated at all. Most probably Snorri took their accuracy for granted and his further usage of Thjodolf’s verses seems to



support this supposition. As to the skaldic verses and Ari's writings Snorri feels it necessary to provide arguments. The former can be relied upon for two reasons. First, it was impossible to tell lies about a *konung* in his presence. Second, the poems of skalds were so complicated that their texts could not be distorted. Both reasons are valid within the context of oral culture to which skaldic poetry belongs. One argument is situational, whereas the other refers to the possibilities for memorization. Even more interesting are the proofs of the authenticity of Ari's information. Snorri stresses the process of transmission of information which reached Ari through words of mouth. Ari's data is trustworthy because Ari's informers, all well known Icelanders, were 'old and wise people' ('...*Ari væri sannfróðr at fornum tíðendum bæði hér ok útan landz, at hann hafði numit at gomlum mönnum ok vitrum, en var siálfr námgiarn ok minnigr. En kvæðin þykkia mér sízt ór stað færð, ef þau eru rétt kvæðin ok skynsamliga upp tekin*'. – '...Ari was well informed about events that had happened in the olden times both here [in Iceland] and in foreign parts, because he had learned from old and well-informed men, and himself was both eager to learn and endowed with an excellent memory'. Ys. Prologus). Here again Snorri appeals to the notions of oral culture. He seems to perceive Ari's written history in terms of orality. Though Snorri's arguments differ in all the three cases they show the priority of perceptions of oral culture in Snorri's mentality.

Contrary to Snorri Nestor does not theorize about his sources though he mentions some of them in passing. To denote his source he supplements his retelling about an event with one of two formulas: 'as it is written in Greek chronicles' (seldom: 'Georgius says...') or 'as they say (as they tell)'. The former usually refers to the Byzantine *Chronicle* of Georgius the Monk, the latter to oral tradition. There can be no doubts that Nestor is aware of the difference between the two kinds of sources and tells them apart. However it is not clear what are the grounds for their distinguishing, as Nestor could mean other oppositions: native vs. foreign, Slavic vs. Byzantine, pagan vs. Christian. The latter opposition seems most probable as the Christian aspect was of paramount importance for Nestor and in many cases he cites 'Greek chronicles' (as well as the Bible) to contrast pagans and Christians or criticize pagan customs and habits. Still, even if Nestor gave preference to Byzantine sources (that would have been only natural for him) he never expressed this openly, and he hardly had an opportunity to do so, as the information borrowed from oral tradition and that derived from Byzantine chronicles never coincided. Nor did Nestor verbalize his attitude towards the oral tradition. However, if he never doubts the veracity of Byzantine information, the existence of alternative presentations



of events in oral tradition makes him compare the variants and estimate their authenticity. Thus, being acquainted with at least two legends about Kij, the founder of Kiev, he supports the one that claims Kij to be a prince by origin and calls 'ignorants' those who think that Kij was a ferryman (PC: 139). His choice was determined by his general understanding of the supremacy of Kiev in "the Russian land" ever since its foundation. As Kiev was the residence of the great Russian princes it seemed only natural to him that Kij had to have been a prince too.

It thus seems probable that for both Snorri and Nestor there existed no opposition between oral and written sources. Snorri saw the written history of Ari as a continuation of the oral historical tradition, and estimated its authenticity in terms of oral history. For Nestor the opposition of crucial importance was that between pagan and Christian, which coincided with the opposition of oral and written histories, but the latter seems to have meant nothing to him.

2. HISTORICAL SEQUENCE

The presentation of events in the *Primary Chronicle* and in *Ynglingasaga* forms a historical sequence based on genealogical principles. Snorri produces an unbroken and homogeneous line of rulers of Uppsala and later Vestfold, who pass their power from father to son in all but a few cases. The genealogical pattern of Snorri's narration was predetermined by his source, the list of Thjodolf. Nevertheless, the structural importance of this pattern for Snorri reveals itself in its consistency in the saga and the fact that it was supported by a chain of uniform episodes each telling about the life of a *konung*. Snorri suggests no chronological reference points, and the flow of time seems unstructured. What matters is the relative succession of events and not their duration, and thus the order of events follows a natural sequence: the story proceeds from father to son, to grandson, and to great-grandson, etc.

Nestor also structures his history as a line of Kievan princes, but he (or one of his predecessors) had to create the genealogical sequence himself out of a variety of tales or lays about several independent war leaders and rulers of different centres, some of whom were not relatives. The construction of a single successive line of Kievan princes descending from Rurik was of great importance to Nestor. He wrote at a time when Ancient Russia was decaying because of the feuds among princes and their inability to withstand the attacks of the nomads. He, therefore, viewed his work as an appeal to the princes, 'the grandchildren of a single grandfather', to unite in order to save their fatherland (Likhachev 1970). It was



therefore an urgent necessity for Nestor to show the unity of all Russian princes having roots in their descent from one progenitor, and the genealogical presentation of history was the best way to fulfil this task.

The compiler of the chronicle written in the 1090s is believed to have introduced a chronological scale to date the events described in the chronicle. The chronological pattern was borrowed from Byzantium and based on the Byzantine era, starting with the Creation. The first date stated in the chronicle was 852 as the date of the enthronement of Byzantine emperor Michael III (the calculations of the annalist were erroneous, as Michael was enthroned in 842).

This date divided the historical sequence of the *Primary Chronicle* into two fundamentally different parts. The first told of the early history of the Eastern Slavic tribes and Kij and it lacked chronological division. The narration consisted of loosely connected entries deriving from various sources and presenting different traditions – historical (local oral and Byzantine written), Biblical and didactic. This part of the chronicle can be described as prehistory, i.e. the narration of the non-structured, unordered past. Since 852 each entry has a date, although most of the dates before the end of the tenth century are purely the guess-work of the annalist. The dates ensure the continuity of historical sequence, and the genealogical succession of Kievan rulers is incorporated into this chronological pattern.

The existence of two different historical sequences in the *Primary Chronicle* is the result of the annalist's dealing with two different oral traditions, tribal and warrior ones (Melnikova 1996:93–112). The tribal tradition of the Eastern Slavic peoples of Poliane and Drevliane consisted of stories about their origins, their progenitors, and their conflicts with other tribes. The tribal history covered the time from the sixth to the mid-tenth century and was incommensurable with Byzantine chronology. Tribal tradition provided annalists with the information about the earliest Eastern Slavic history. The warrior, or retinue tradition emerged in the milieu of professional warriors constituting the retinues of Kievan princes since the second half of the ninth century. It consisted of legends about Viking leaders in Eastern Europe, some of whom were lucky enough to become rulers in the towns of Ladoga, Polotsk, Kiev, etc. – Rurik was but one of such leaders. These legends modified and reinterpreted by the second half of the eleventh century, became the main source from which the annalists selected materials to construct the Slavic history from the second half of the ninth to the end of the tenth century. As the connections with Byzantium were already established at the



beginning of the ninth century, and some of the Byzantine sources mentioned the same events that were recounted orally, it was possible to arrange these stories chronologically and supply dates, however arbitrary.

Thus both Snorri and Nestor construct historical sequences based on the genealogical principle, although their motives were different. The two historians part also in the structuralization of time. The first undated part of the *Primary Chronicle* is close to Snorri's narrative and follows the reckoning of time characteristic of oral tradition, whereas the second, dated, part uses the methods inherent to written history.

3. THE BEGINNINGS OF NATIONAL HISTORY

According to Snorri and Nestor, the history of both Scandinavian peoples and Eastern Slavs begins with a migration and the discovery of a new fatherland. The ancestors of the Eastern Slavs, Nestor recounts, lived 'at the Danube' and 'scattered throughout the country' to Serbia, Moravia, and Poland, and later to Eastern Europe, first to the Middle Dnieper region and from there to the north. The annalist suggests that the migration of Slavic tribes which 'had lived for many years' in their Danubian fatherland was caused by the Avars who 'made war upon the Slavs and harassed' one of their tribes (PC: 137–138, 140).

In Snorri's narrative the original native land of the Scandinavian peoples was *Svíþjóð hinn mikla* somewhere in Asia, on the northern shores of the Black Sea near the River Tanais (the Don) and the land of *Tyrkir* (Ys. 1–2). Following Latin geographical literature, Snorri contaminates *Svíþjóð hinn mikla* with the *Scythia magna* of Old Greek and Roman geography (Melnikova 1986: 97–99, 217; Klingenberg 1994). The *Gelehrte Urgeschichte* (Heusler 1908; Klingenberg 1993) was not Snorri's own creation, its existence is already attested in Ari's *Langfeðgatal*. It seems to be Snorri, however, who made the migration story a prehistory of the Scandinavian peoples.

The pre-fatherland in both cases is a mythologized space. Nestor avoids describing it, but the important role played by the Danube in Russian heroic songs (bylinas) suggests its strong mythological connotations (Petrukhin 2000: 38–50). More than that, the Danube of the initial part of the *Primary Chronicle* is a locality that had a special attraction for the Kievan princes who tried (in vain) to return to it and to settle there. The mythological background of Snorri's tale is much more obvious, as the migration story is contaminated with Old Norse



mythological lore. *Svíþjóð hinn mikla* is the residence of Odin, the location of the most sacred heathen temple, the land of prosperity. The euhemeristic interpretation of Odin doesn't hide his sacral background. Like Kij and Svjatoslav, some of the later Uppsala *konungs* long for the homeland of their ancestors and try to reach it (Sveigðir).

Both legends appear to have no historical background. There are no archaeological traces of extensive immigration into Scandinavia since the late Neolithic. Modern archaeology does not connect the origins of the Slavic people with the Danube region. On the contrary, there are indications that the Slavic settlement of the Balkans had its origins in the Middle Dnieper region while the origins of the Slavs are still connected with the Vistula region. Nestor's and Snorri's migration stories cannot therefore be regarded as reflections of historical events, they are rather reinterpretations of an archaic (archetypal) motif.

The realization of this motif by Nestor and by Snorri differs greatly. The Old Russian myth was depersonalized and historicized. Nestor omitted all possible allusions to its mythological background. No chieftain leading the Slavs to their new fatherland is named and the migrants appear to be a shapeless, unstructured mass. This presentation of Slavs corresponds closely to the later comments of the annalist that all Slavic tribes but the Poliane, while pagan, had no order and 'existed in bestial fashion' (PC:141). One can discern here obvious Christian implications. At the same time, Nestor feels it necessary to verify the migration story. His mention of the Avars and their oppression of the Slavs provides the historical context for the story, and the citation of a proverb 'they perished like Avars' (PC: 141) verifies the migration story as a fact of common knowledge.

The Old Norse variant, on the contrary, has deep mythological roots. Though Snorri tries to hide them through the euhemerization of Odin, who acquired the functions of a cultural hero, his story is full of links with Old Norse pagan lore. Odin is represented as a magician and a sorcerer, he can change appearance, and he is the supreme priest. Thus, Snorri's migration story is a complex contamination of Old Norse ancient mythology and medieval learning.

4. RULER'S BIOGRAPHY AS THE MAIN NARRATIVE UNIT

As has already been mentioned, both narrations consist of a series of structurally uniform stories about the life of a *konung* or prince. Thus a "biography" of a ruler is the main narrative unit in both the *Primary Chronicle* and the *Ynglingasaga*. Snorri's narration is a chain of



biographies of the *konungs* of Uppsala and later of Vestfold. The narrative structure of the *Primary Chronicle* is more complicated, it includes didactic comments and discourses of the annalist, retellings of biblical episodes, entries concerning events in Byzantium, and the like. But the core of the narration from the invitation of Rurik to the death of Vladimir is a consistent line of biographies of Kievan princes.

The description of rulers' lives follows a pattern that is practically identical in both works. Each biography includes a more or less fixed set of data about a ruler. It comprises information about his rise to power, his deeds, his death, his burial and/or his burial place (see table 1 which systematises information about the Russian princes according to the *Primary Chronicle*; I could not include a similar table presenting the biographies in *Ynglingasaga* as it is too large whereas the stories about the *Ynglings* are better known to the readers). The same information is provided by Snorri. At the same time he adds references to the sacral qualities or priestly functions of some *konungs*. Sometimes he remarks that the *konung* was peaceful and preferred to stay at home, or on the contrary was famous for his bellicosity. In a few cases Snorri names the wife of the *konung* (when his marriage was the cause of his death). These additions are casual, however, apart from perhaps the information about the sacral abilities of *konungs*, and do not follow any pattern.

In the *Primary Chronicle* as well as in *Ynglingasaga*, the part concerning rulers' deeds is rather short, although it becomes more and more elaborate in later sagas of the *Heimskringla* and the entries for the eleventh century in the *Primary Chronicle*. As for the earliest rulers, the most important and obligatory information about them consists of their coming to power and their death.

Though they differ in some points, Snorri's and Nestor's descriptions have much in common. The direct descent of a ruler from the legendary progenitor of the dynasty (Rurik or Odin) was a necessary element of the "biography". This information proved the legitimacy of a ruler. When relations between two successive rulers were uncertain or they were not kin, as Old Russian Oleg and Rurik, annalists made desperate attempts to establish their kinship. In an early version of the *Primary Chronicle* Oleg was told to be a commander-in-chief of Rurik, in another version he became Rurik's relative, though without any specification.

Another confirmation of legitimacy was an obligatory statement of the fact that this or that person became the ruler after his father. These statements are formulaic. Nestor uses the



phrases ‘X. began to rule after Y.’ or ‘that is the beginning of X.’s rule’. Snorri makes use of the formulas ‘X. *tók ríki eptir fǫður sinn*’ and ‘X. *næst tók konungdóm*’.

Another absolutely unavoidable element of a biography is a description of a ruler’s death and the indication of how and where he was buried. The importance of tales about *konungs*’ deaths in *Ynglingasaga* has been specially emphasised (Lönnroth 1986). This interest was not, however, peculiar only to Snorri, but also to his predecessor Thjodolf. Snorri writes that Thjodolf’s song told about thirty ancestors of *jarl* Rögnvald and described the death and burial place of each of them. This means that this information had a special significance for Thjodolf. It was, however, also of great importance for Snorri, as all the strophes by Thjodolf cited in *Ynglingasaga* deal with that topic.

Nestor attributed the same importance to the deaths and burials of princes. The context of mentions of burial places in the *Primary Chronicle* suggests that they helped to create historical context for traditional tales about princes. In most cases the mound of a prince is said to exist in the days of the annalist and thus verifies the truth of what is told. These remarks seem to be one of the means to adjust oral tradition to the needs of historical narration.

In presenting a ruler coming to power and his death, Nestor and Snorri have very much in common. Where they differ is the description of a ruler’s deeds. Both historians coincide in depicting a ruler as a war leader but these are different kinds of war leadership. Practically all Uppsala *konungs* wage war with their neighbours, impose and collect tributes and amass loot. Exceptions are very rare and therefore specially marked. But these are affairs of limited scale, with a small band of warriors, mostly the men of the *konung*’s retinue. The wars of Russian princes have quite a different scope. All the princes are said to attack Constantinople with a fleet of several hundred ships, to collect, if lucky, an enormously large amount of tribute from the Byzantine emperor and to conclude a treaty to secure the right of the people of Rus to trade in the markets of Constantinople. The aim of an *Yngling konung* was booty. The aim of a Russian prince, as it is presented by the annalist, was to establish relations, economic or cultural, with the mightiest state in the region.

Even more important are differences in the types of other deeds. Ten of Snorri’s *konungs* function as pagan priests. They make offerings to gods, some of them can provide peace and productive years. Russian princes utterly lack these functions. Nothing in the text can be found



to suggest their connections with pagan cults or rituals even though all the princes before Vladimir were pagans. On the contrary, they are all engaged in activities concerned with the consolidation of the state. They are told to found towns, to levy first tributes and then taxes, and to issue laws. They regulate relations between subjugated tribes and continue to conquer new tribes thus expanding the territory of their state. Even the attacks on Constantinople are represented as a state action.

Thus the deeds of *Yngling konungs* depicted by Snorri stress primarily their military activities aimed at gaining booty. A relatively large number of *konungs* possess magic powers or make sacrifices like priests. All of this points to the fact that Snorri preserved much of the mythological background of the tradition on which he based his writings. Nestor describes Russian princes as large-scale war commanders who are in possession of great armies and fleets. They are also statesmen whose deeds are directed at the consolidation of the state.

CONCLUSIONS

Even a brief survey of narrations about early rulers reveals certain similarities and many differences in the usage of oral tradition in *Ynglingasaga* and the *Primary Chronicle*. In both cases the main and only source for constructing the historical past was oral tradition. In the North, however, oral history was homogeneous and tightly connected with mythological lore. In Eastern Europe it fell into two parts of different origin, one belonging to the tribal past and typologically close to the Old Norse historical tradition, whereas another emerged at the time of the formation of the Old Russian state in the milieu of the professional warrior elite.

Historical traditions in both regions had some common features, e.g. the motif of migration and settlement opening a national history, the genealogical principle of constructing history, the biography of a ruler as the main structural unit of narratives. All of these were adopted by Nestor and Snorri and formed the inner pattern of their narratives.

Nevertheless, the historians varied both in their implementation of this pattern and in the interpretation of specific pieces of oral tradition incorporated in their texts. Nestor is very consistent in eliminating all pagan and mythological connotations. He never even mentions explicitly (except for the case of Svjatoslav) that the princes he speaks of are heathens. At the same time Nestor reinterprets traditional motifs and introduces materials to prove and verify them. His main tendency is the historicization of oral tradition from the point of view of the



integrity and the power of the “Russian land”. Snorri preserves the mythological background of the tales he uses and makes no attempts to hide the heathen origin of his personages. Moreover, there appear to be no traces of his more or less serious modification of oral tradition as represented by the poem of Thjodolf. Deviations from Thjodolf’s information are due mostly to misunderstanding of the verses and not their conscious remaking.

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Table 1. Main motifs constituting biographies of Russian princes

Prince	Kij	Rurik	Askold and Dir	Oleg	Igor	Olga	Svjatoslav
Motif							
1. Rise to power	Ruled among his kin	Invited according to a treaty with local nobility	Obtained power in Kiev	Seized power in Kiev	Stated	Regency	Stated
2. Submission of neighboring tribes		Sent his men to different towns	Poliane, Polotchane (?)	Drevliane, Severiane, Radimichi	Drevliane, Ulichy	Drevljane	Vjatichi, Chazars, Jasi, Kasogi
3. Foundation of town (towns)	Kiev, Kievets on the Danube	Ladoga or Novgorod		Unnamed towns		Established forts along the rivers Msta and Luga and in other places	Perejaslavets on the Danube
4. Establishment of order (law)		Established order		Established taxes	Established taxes	Issued laws and established taxes	
5. Voyage to Byzantium	Voyage to Byzantium		Attack on Constantinople; adoption of Christianity (?)	Attack on Constantinople; conclusion of a treaty (911)	Attack on Constantinople; conclusion of a treaty (944)	Voyage to Constantinople to accept Christianity	War against Byzantium in the Danube region; conclusion of a treaty (971)
6. Death	Stated	Stated	Killed by Oleg	Died in accordance with a prediction because of a bite of a snake that	Killed by the Drevliane	Died in her old age	Killed by the Pechenegs and a cup for wine was made out of his skull

				crawled out of the skull of Oleg's horse			of his skull
7. Burial			Buried in Kiev in different places. Their burials (mounds) are on the Hill of Ugorskoje (Askold's) and near the Old Kievan Hill (Dir's)	Buried in a mound on the hill of Shchekovitsa; Inhabitants of Kiev mourned Oleg with great grief	Buried in a mound near Iskorosten'; Funeral feast was followed by a sacrifice of prisoners	Buried according to Christian rite; Inhabitants of Kiev mourned Olga with great grief	
8. Knowledge about the location of burials at the time of the annalist			Askold's burial is on the Hill of Ugorskoje where Olma's estate now lies and there is a church of St. Nicholas over the burial; the burial of Dir is behind the St. Irina Nunnery.	The burial is well known under the name of Oleg's grave	The burial is known	The burial place is not named; Until the days of the annalist her sledge was preserved in Pskov	
9. Additional motifs	- Existence of two brothers and a sister;	- Existence of two brothers; - Sent his men to				- Vengeance on the Drevljane, - Reception of By-	

	- Hunting	different towns, - Had a son named Igor - Assination of power to Oleg as Igor is too young				zantine emissaries, - attempt to baptize Svjatoslav, - the first siege of Kiev by the Pechenegs	
10. Variants	+	+		+			

