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EARLY CHRISTIANITY ON THE WAY FROM THE VARANGIANS TO THE GREEKS

Edited by
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У разі передруку матеріалів узгодження з видавцями обов'язкове

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List of Abbreviations

Adam, *Gesta*   Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, ed. by Bernhard Schmeidler, MGH SRG, 2. Hanover: Hahn, 1917.

Från Bysans till Norden *Från Bysans till Norden: Östlige kyrkoinfluenser under vikingatid och tidig medeltid,* ed. by Henrik Janson. Skellefteå: Artos, 2005.

MGH   Monumenta Germaniae Historica

SRG   Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum

SRG ns   Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, nova series

PSRL   *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei*, 44 vols, 2nd edn. St Petersburg, Leningrad, and Moscow: Akademiia Nauk SSSR and Iazyki slavianskoi kul´tury, 1908—.

Rom und Byzanz im Norden *Rom und Byzanz im Norden: Mission und Glaubenswechsel im Ostseeraum während des 8.—14- Jahrhundert*, ed. by Michael Müller-Wille, 2 vols (Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1998)

Introduction:
Early Christianity on the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks

by Ildar Garipzanov and Oleksiy Tolochko

There has been a long-standing gap between Slavists studying the process of Christianization in Rus´ with a focus on Byzantine Orthodoxy and medievalists studying the same process in Scandinavia with a focus on Latin Christendom. Such a historiographic dichotomy is partly the understandable result of the institutional and linguistic divisions between medievalists and Slavists, but it is also due to the realities of modern European geopolitics, whereby Scandinavia and Eastern Europe belong to two distinct parts of Europe differing in terms of their political organization, social complexion and culture. This contemporary division has been projected upon the remote historical past all the way back to the advent of Christianity in these northern and eastern regions of medieval Europe. Yet such a 'teleological' approach to early Christianity contradicts material evidence, which points to common social, political and cultural processes that were developing in late Viking Age Scandinavia and Rus´. In this north-eastern edge of medieval Europe, the contacts and links between the two regions in the tenth and eleventh centuries were as numerous and influential as the better-explored relationships between Scandinavia and its western neighbours on the one hand, and the well-established links between Rus´ and Byzantium on the other.[1] The question, then, is whether we should expect that the dissemination of early Christianity in Scandinavia and Rus´ in that period was profoundly different from more general patterns of interactions between the two regions.

When Western medievalists and Scandinavian scholars in particular discuss the Christianization of Scandinavia, their accounts focus upon the process by which a 'package' of Christian faith and culture was brought from Latin Europe to Scandinavia, with particular emphasis on the roles of the Anglo-Saxon and German missions. In Eastern European studies, meanwhile, the Christianization of early Rus´ is discussed as a process influenced chiefly by Byzantium, and researchers working within the latter academic tradition follow in one or another

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1 See especially Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus, 750–1200* (London and New York: Longman, 1996), pp. 3–180; and *Drevneishie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy, 2009 god* (Moscow: Indrik, 2010).

way the paradigm constructed after the hagiographic discourse of medieval Rusʹ, whereby Christianization is perceived as a phenomenon resulting from a series of individual conversions of Rusʹ rulers with the country following in their footsteps. Regardless of their differences, both master narratives — ultimately guided by medieval histories, chronicles and the lives of saints — continue to discourage scholars from exploring contacts and borrowings across the north-eastern fringe of European Christendom and do not take into account the growing body of archaeological evidence indicating intensive socio-economic and cultural exchanges between Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. This contradiction has become even more apparent in recent years, when archaeologists have shown that the transmission of artefacts associated with early Christianity seems to follow this wider pattern of exchange.[2] At the same time, archaeological evidence indicating early Christian cross-boundary contacts still lacks a coherent interpretative model.

The discrepancy between the master narratives portraying two separate and essentially different stories of the Christianization process and archaeological evidence showing close contacts between Scandinavia and Rusʹ in the tenth and eleventh centuries illustrates the gap that exists between archaeologists and text-based scholars in research on Christianization in medieval northern Europe. This is the result of a more general academic split between archaeologists and historians; as one opponent of such a division puts it: ʻModern scholarship fragments the past on the basis of types of evidence — archaeologists study objects, historians study words.ʼ[3] Text-based scholarship focuses on the earliest Christian narratives, which demonstrate the gradual forging of a Christian identity in written discourse produced by the intellectual elite. On the other hand, archaeological investigations concentrate on material evidence that shows the spread of Christian beliefs at a ʻgrass-rootʼ level. Such a separation fosters the continuing existence of two separate, and in some respects incompatible, images of early Christianity in the two regions.

This collection of essays, written by specialists in textual history and archaeology who come from different academic traditions, seeks to address this disparity between textual and material evidence with regard to early Christianity in tenth- and eleventh-century Scandinavia and Rusʹ, departing from traditional historiographic approaches that are based on narrative evidence in an attempt to move towards an alternative interpretative model.[4] The new model relies

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2 See especially *Rom und Byzanz im Norden: Mission und Glaubenswechsel im Ostseeraum während des 8.-14- Jahrhundert*, ed. by Michael Müller-Wille, 2 vols (Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1998); and *Rome, Constantinople and Newly Converted Europe: Archaeological and Historical Evidence, Cracow, Poland, 21–25 September 2010: Book of Abstracts and Addresses*, ed. by Maciej Salamon and others (Cracow and Rzeszów: Mitel, 2010).

3 John Moreland, *Archaeology and Text* (London: Duckworth, 2001), p. 9.

4 This collection presents selected papers from the conference held in Bergen in October 2010, supported financially by the YFF project ʻThe "Forging" of Christian Identity in the Northern Periphery (*c*. 820–*c*. 1200)ʼ, which is funded by the Norwegian Research Council.

more on material evidence and non-narrative written sources, shifting the focus from missionary activities, the conversions of rulers and the establishment of ecclesiastical structures towards the activities of individuals as agents of cross-boundary Christian contacts and influences. It takes into account the existence of a major network of trade and communication extending from Byzantium via Eastern Europe to Scandinavia, better known as the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks. People from different walks of life — priests, monks, lay people and kin groups — travelled along this major European artery, carrying goods and/or transmitting ideas and practices. Christian practices and beliefs were part of this network of cultural exchange. Thus, this trade route was an important factor for bringing early Christianity in Scandinavia and Rus´ closer to each other in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Various people who were converted to Christianity in Byzantium or North-Western Europe (and starting from the late-tenth century in Rus´ or Scandinavia) travelled along the trading routes, leaving their imprints on the form of early Christianity that was developing on the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks.[5] The focus of this new interpretative model on individuals as agents of early Christianization and on the north-eastern European circuit of communication as a vehicle of religious transmission makes it conceptually different from recent works on early Christianity in Northern, East-Central and Eastern Europe written within the framework of regional studies and missionary churches connected to either Rome or Constantinople.[6]

The cross-boundary religious exchange that began in the early tenth century was not hindered by the official conversions of Scandinavia and early Rus´ in the second half of the tenth and early eleventh centuries. In the post-conversion period, ecclesiastical hierarchs were installed in major cities such as Kiev, Lund and Roskilde, but while they were able to influence their immediate urban surroundings their grip on the vast surrounding countryside was rather loose. The two regions were characterized by their lack of developed ecclesiastical structures and the inability of metropolitans and bishops appointed in the eleventh century to impose uniformity in ritual practices within the territories subordinated to them. The role of proprietary churches located at private estates and controlled by powerful lay people or families seems to have been significant. The earliest monasteries appeared in the second half of the eleventh century in close proximity to princely and royal courts. The system of parish churches did not exist, and travelling clerics of obscure origins may have been of importance for spreading Christian beliefs and practices in the countryside even in the eleventh century.

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5   Jonathan Shepard expertly deals with this topic in concluding remarks to this volume.
6   *Rom und Byzanz im Norden*; *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300–1300*, ed. by Martin Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003); *Från Bysans till Norden: Östlige kyrkoinfluenser under vikingatid och tidig medeltid*, ed. by Henrik Janson (Skellefteå: Artos, 2005); and *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy*, ed. by Nora Berend (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

As a result of the specific historical circumstances that existed in the tenth and eleventh centuries, early Christianity in the two regions seems to have been a less coherent phenomenon than in the core regions of Christian Europe. It allowed for more variability and was less strict in its prescriptions regarding what it meant to be Christian. The transmission of Christian ideas by the Varangians travelling between Scandinavia and Byzantium was an essential catalyst for this phenomenon, and the confessional division between the Western and Eastern Churches less useful for its understanding even in the wake of the Great Schism of 1054.

Chronologically, this volume focuses on the tenth and eleventh centuries, while twelfth and thirteenth-century texts are not treated as truthful accounts of the arrival of Christianity to Scandinavia and Rus´— this being the traditional approach adopted by scholars — but as narrative reconfigurations of reality developed in response to the growing systematization of Christian beliefs, practices and organization in both regions from the twelfth century onwards. Of course, it can be debated why and how later medieval authors reconfigured the memory of their early Christian past and possible religious contacts across North-Eastern Europe. No matter how one chooses to tackle these questions, textual criticism is essential if such artefacts of narrative remembrance are to be brought into any discussion of early Christianity in those regions.[7]

One should also be aware that the current 'readings' of such narrative sources have also been framed by long-standing historiographic traditions particular to Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. The first essay in this volume surveys the Norwegian historiography of early Christianity in Norway, which is in need of more substantial research on cross-boundary religious exchanges between the two regions. Ildar Garipzanov reflects upon the emphasis on Western, most importantly English, influences typical of the Norwegian historiography of the twentieth century and upon its apparent lack of interest in Scandinavian religious contacts with Eastern Christianity. This historiographic approach is in line with the more general trend of seeing Norway as an immanent part of Western Europe from the early Christian period onwards. As Garipzanov emphasizes, such an approach is not specific to Norwegian historians and can be traced in the works of other Scandinavian scholars, who traditionally have discarded any discernible influence of Eastern Christianity on early Christian Scandinavia. As is argued in this essay, such a disregard for Eastern religious influences has been due in part to the uncritical reading of later Scandinavian written sources, which rarely mention religious contacts with Eastern Christianity. Such narratives written with

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7   These issues have been discussed in detail in the following works: *Saints and Their Lives on the Periphery: Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200)*, ed. by Haki Th. Antonsson and Ildar H. Garipzanov, Cursor Mundi, no. 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010); and *Historical Narratives and Christian Identity on a European Periphery: Early History Writing in Northern, East-Central, and Eastern Europe (c. 1070–1200)*, ed. by Ildar H. Garipzanov, Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, no. 26 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

a few exceptions from the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries onwards were the result of a creative process of remembrance and forgetting, which makes them less reliable sources for the early Christian period in Scandinavia, as can be exemplified by later written references to Armenian bishops in Iceland and to the unfinished pilgrimage of King Erik Ejegod. Hence, Garipzanov suggests that scholars of Eastern religious influences in Scandinavia should turn to other, non-narrative types of evidence — most importantly, early Christian legal sources, the evidence related to the dissemination of the cult of saints and, last but not least, archaeological data.

The next two articles in this volume are concerned with the concept of 'Varangian Christianity', as recently advanced by John Lind. This approach is an attempt to go beyond the established canons of both Scandinavists and Slavists, focusing rather on individuals' adoption of faith and rite rather than on the advent of institutionalized church structures. This 'grass-roots' form of Christianity, nested within the group of Scandinavian merchants and warriors active on the periphery of the Christian world, was subjected to various influences, Byzantine as well as Western, with neither dominating the resulting religious behaviour.[8] Henrik Janson's essay provides a detailed overview of such diverse ecclesiastical influences on Scandinavians and Varangians from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, but the focal point of his narrative is the geographic concepts of 'Scythia' and 'Scythians' as applied in that period to Scandinavia and Eastern Europe and their inhabitants. Janson argues that these designations were not simply antiquated terms used by early medieval Latin and Byzantine authors, but may have designated a cultural sphere, including religious culture, stretching from Scandinavia to Rus´ and still existing in the first half of the eleventh century. Thus, Janson agrees with Lind that the religious culture of this 'Scythia' was characterised by the absence of institutionalised church organisation and by a broad array of Christian influences from adjacent regions, yet unlike Lind, he does not call this phenomenon 'Varangian Christianity' but rather 'Scythian Christianity'.

The concept of 'Varangian Christianity' is further reflected upon in Oleksiy Tolochko's article on tenth-century Rus´. He argues that the generally accepted image of an established Christian community of Kiev, with a significant section of the polity's ruling elite already converted, is far too optimistic. It is based on fictitious accounts by the early twelfth-century author of the *Primary Chronicle*. The only authentic documents from tenth-century Kievan society, the Ruso-Byzantine treaties of 911 and 944, provide a much more sombre picture. It appears that the only place where a sizable Christian Rus´ community existed was

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8   John Lind, 'The Christianization of North and Eastern Europe c. 950–1050 — A Plea for a Comparative Study', *Ennen & nyt*, 2004, no. 4, 1–18 <http://www.ennenjanyt.net/4-04/lind.html> [accessed 8 August 2011].

Byzantium, with the major incentive to adopt the new faith being service in the imperial army. Thus, the principal source of 'Varangian Christianity' in Rus´ was Byzantium, and Tolochko argues that with regard to Christianity, the Varangians, their northern origin notwithstanding, were viewed as part of the 'Greek' world of Byzantium. The evidence from the contemporaneous documents seems to be in accord with reflections on 'Christianity before the Conversion' in later sources, namely the *Primary Chronicle* of the twelfth century and the *Life of the Varangian Martyrs* composed at some point in the eleventh century. The latter, both in its explicit message and also in its choice of hagiographic models, typified the generally accepted belief that in pre-conversion Rus´ only the Varangians who 'came from the Greeks' had been introduced to Christianity, while the population at large still remained heathen.

This image of 'Varangian Christianity' linked to Byzantium seems to correspond to the evidence of cross-shaped pendants found in tenth-century Rus´, which is the main topic of Fedir Androshchuk's essay. Hitherto, most archaeologists have agreed that such pendants deposited in graves in Scandinavia and Rus´ were probably the most obvious and uncontroversial markers of the Christian identity of individuals. Androshchuk challenges this view and emphasizes that cross-shaped pendants have been found almost exclusively in high-status female graves, along with other objects of social prestige. Therefore, he argues, such pendants were primarily social markers of wealth and status, even though their religious meaning might have been known to their owners. Looking for the possible origin of this practice, Androshchuk draws attention to the Byzantine custom, well documented by *De ceremoniis*, of an emperor dispersing small crosses of silver during the major religious feasts in Constantinople. The objects were thus tokens of rank and status and may have influenced the attitude of Varangians serving in or visiting Byzantium, which in turn must have affected the general attitude to similar objects in tenth-century Rus´ where their usage gradually became limited to high-ranking women. It would therefore appear that a segment of the Rus´ society most influenced by Christianity, the Varangians who served in the imperial army, did not consider small crosses to be an important marker of their faith and chose to display their religious affiliation visually by other means.

An additional set of questions present themselves concerning the inner religious lives of these new converts. How Christian were those Vikings who accepted formal baptism? What parts of the Christian doctrine did they understand and adopt? To what extent was their Christianity, both as a system of belief and as a practice, framed by their traditional beliefs? These are the questions that Elena Melnikova tries to answer in her article. As she points out, the circumstances in which Scandinavians usually adopted Christianity during the ninth and the tenth centuries—short visits to the courts of Christian rulers or negotiations in the wake of Viking attacks —would not contribute to a thorough instruction in Christian teaching. The version of Christianity that the Vikings were able to grasp

and assimilate was a simplified set of notions, the most important of which was the idea of a single Christian god, often identified as Christ, perceived as being a triumphant and potent ruler of heaven and earth, nature and humans. Other Christian figures, even the Virgin Mary, played minor roles and seem to have been absorbed into the religious culture much later. Searching for the causes of such obvious selectivity, Melnikova suggests that abstract Christian ideas were filtered through traditional Scandinavian models, with only those parts of the Christian doctrine that could be correlated with heathen concepts having a chance of being digested by the warrior culture of the Vikings. No doubt, Christian teaching was deliberately simplified for the new converts by preaching missionaries. However, the early stages of the Scandinavians' adoption of the new faith, Melnikova concludes, should be understood not as a Christian interpretation of heathenism but rather as a heathen interpretation of Christianity.

In his article, Fjodor Uspensky discusses the contacts between early Christian Scandinavia and Rus´ in the late tenth and eleventh centuries via dynastic name-giving patterns. It is well known that a considerable number of Varangian names were used in early Rus´ and some of them became traditional Rus´ names. Conversion had no immediate affect on traditional naming patterns, and such onomastic exchange between ruling families in Scandinavia and Rus´ continued into the eleventh century. In this early period, Christian names remained void of additional social and political meanings typical of traditional names, which resulted in the need for dual (one traditional and the other baptismal) princely names. Thus, at first, the gradual adoption of Christian names did not have a destructive impact on the pre-Christian naming traditions, and name-giving remained one of the most conservative cultural spheres.

While all other essays in this volume focus on the period of the tenth and eleventh centuries, Tatjana Jackson's contribution deals with later Old Norse narrative sources. She argues that religious differences between Scandinavia and Rus´ were of little importance for the Icelandic saga writers and for the authors of Scandinavian itineraries and geographical works; for them, the Christian world remained an indivisible whole. Sagas style the Greek emperor as a Christian wise man and the undisputable ruler of Christendom. They tell how those Icelanders and Norwegians who had visited Byzantium preached Christianity in Eastern Europe, founded monasteries there and converted Rus´ to Christianity. Twelfth-century accounts of pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem include admiring descriptions of Christian places in Constantinople. In contrast to early Rus´ sources, sagas have also preserved information on Ruso-Scandinavian dynastic marriages from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Jackson states that the reasons for such attitudes among Old Norse narrators were the personal relationships of Scandinavian kings with Byzantine emperors and matrimonial links with Rus´ princes, the prestige associated with service in the Varangian Guard and trade activity along the way from the Varangians to the Greeks.

Seen from this perspective, the statement in the *Primary Chronicle* (*s.a.* 983) regarding the first Christian martyr in Rus´ at the time of the Conversion may be seen as being not so far removed from reality: 'бѣ же Варѧгъ то пришелъ изъ Грекъ . и держаше вѣру хⷭ҇еꙗньску' (This Varangian had came from the Greeks and adhered to the Christian faith).[9] Nevertheless, at the same time, the following essays provide this dictum with additional nuances and set it within wider religious, cultural and narrative contexts, thus bringing together the opposing sides of the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks, both in terms of the Christian influences in the historical period in question and in terms of bridging the gap between the separate traditions developed within the fields of medieval Scandinavian scholarship and Slavic studies.

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9   *Lavrentevskaia letopis´*, ed. by A. F. Karskii, PSRL, 1 (Leningrad: Izdatel´stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1926–28), col. 82.

Early Christian Scandinavia and the Problem of Eastern Influences

by Ildar Garipzanov

Modern Scandinavian historiography and the problem of Eastern religious influences

The impulses that drove the Christianization of Norway came for the most part from England; consequently, the early Norwegian church was structured along the lines of its Anglo-Saxon model. This paradigm became entrenched in Norwegian historiography in the early twentieth century, influenced in particular by the works of Rudolf Keyser[1] and Absalon Taranger.[2] Such an Anglocentric vision of the early Christianization process became even more welcome in Norway after World War II, linked to wider trends whereby Norwegian society sought to disentangle itself from its cultural and historical ties with Germany and stress instead its long-standing connections with the Anglo-Saxon world across the centuries. From this perspective, it is not surprising that this Anglocentric interpretation of the Christianization of Norway continued to dominate Norwegian historical writings until the 1990s, receiving further support from historians such as Fridtjov Birkeli.[3] Only recently has this post-war trend given way to a more nuanced approach to early Christian Norway, which admits that 'the connection with England has been studied more thoroughly than that with Germany, and future research may find more evidence of German influence'.[4] Indeed, Sæbjørg Walaker Nordeide has recently questioned Birkeli's view that the early Norwegian stone crosses were inspired by Anglo-Saxon prototypes, arguing that German influences on the appearance of this phenomenon in Norway are as likely as Insular ones.[5] Furthermore, in his recent doctoral dissertation, Torgeir Landro has presented strong evidence that casts doubt upon Taranger's long-established thesis that many of the legal norms in the early

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1 *Den norske Kirkes Historie under Katholicismen*, I (Christiania: Tønsberg, 1856).

2 *Den angelsaksiske kirkes indflydelse paa den norske* (Kristiania: Grøndahl, 1890).

3 Fridtjov Birkeli, *Norske steinkors i tidlig middelalder: Et bidrag til belysning av overgangen fra norrøn religion til kristendom* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1973); id., *Hva vet vi om kristningen av Norge?* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1982); and id., *Tolv vintrer hadde kristendommen vært i Norge* (Oslo: Verbum, 1995).

4 Sverre Bagge and Sæbjørg Walaker Nordeide, 'The Kingdom of Norway', in *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy*, ed. by Nora Berend (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 121–66 (p. 138).

5 'Cross Monuments in North-Western Europe', *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters*, 37 (2009), 163–78.

Christian Norwegian laws were influenced by Anglo-Saxon church legislation. In short, Landro argues, existing parallels between the two corpora of church law by no means testify to English influences, since they belong to the common stock of Western European ecclesiastical regulations. Indeed, specific features of the east Norwegian Christian laws link them not only to Continental ecclesiastical traditions but also to Eastern (Armenian in particular) Christianity.[6] This conclusion is quite remarkable considering that early contacts with Eastern Christianity have rarely been on the radar for Norwegian scholars,[7] for, as has been noted by Marit Myking, 'eventual influence from the east has never been studied closely, except for the discussion of the "*ermske*" bishops, and then mostly in the history of art.'[8]

This is not a phenomenon specific to Norwegian historiography. Scandinavian medievalists in general have been reluctant to acknowledge Eastern influences on early Christian Scandinavia. Nowadays, most Scandinavian scholars agree that from the very beginning Scandinavia was Christianized from the West, primarily from Germany and the British Isles.[9] Byzantine influences have been acknowledged occasionally in regard to early Swedish Christianity,[10] but it has been emphasized that there is no evidence of any Byzantine or Rus´ mission to early Christian Sweden, so that we can speak only of relationships and contacts with the Christian East but not of Eastern influences.[11] Alternatively, when such influences have been acknowledged by scholars, they have been interpreted as being transmitted via — and therefore already acculturated by — Western Christendom.[12] Such academic disengagement with Eastern traces in

6   *Kristenrett og kyrkjerett: Borgartingskristenretten i eit komparativt perspektiv* (Bergen: Universitetet i Bergen, 2010).

7   Most importantly, Jan Ragnar Hagland, 'The Christianization of Norway and Possible Influences from the Eastern Churches', *Paleobulgarica*, 20,3 (1996), 3–18; and id., 'Armenske biskopar i Norden på 1000-talet?', in *Från Bysans till Norden*, pp. 153–63.

8   'Eventuell påverking frå aust har aldri blitt nærare undersøkt, bortsett frå i diskusjonen om dei "ermske" biskopane, og då mest innanfor kunsthistoria.' Marit Myking, *Vart Noreg kristna frå England?* Skriftserie, 1 (Oslo: Senter for studier i vikingtid og nordisk middelalder, 2001), p. 190. In this analysis, Myking provides a more detailed overview of how this 'English' paradigm was established in Norway in the nineteenth century and was updated in the twentieth century.

9   For an overview and references, see Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Kristninga i Norden 750–1200* (Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 2003), pp. 28–31; Olav Tveito, *Ad fines orbis terrae: En studie i primær trosformidling i nordisk kristningskontekst* (Oslo: Unipub, 2004), pp. 29–121; Bagge and Walaker Nordeide, 'The Kingdom of Norway', pp. 121–66; Michael Gelting, 'The Kingdom of Denmark', in *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy*, ed. by Nora Berend, pp. 73–120; and Nils Blomquist, Stefan Brink, and Thomas Lindquist, 'The Kingdom of Sweden', in *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy*, ed. by Nora Berend, pp. 167–213.

10 Bertil Nilsson, 'The Christianization in Sweden: Concluding Remarks', in *Kristnande in Sverige: Gamla källor och nya perspektiv*, ed. by Bertil Nilsson (Uppsala: Lunne Böker, 1996), pp. 431–41 (pp. 432–33).

11 Bertil Nilsson, 'Förekom det bysantinska influenser i tidig svensk kyrkohistoria?', in *Från Bysans till Norden*, pp. 17–35 (p. 31). One should remember that, unlike the case of papal Rome, it was not common for the Byzantine church to send missionaries to the furthest parts of Europe.

12 See especially Signe Horn Fuglesang, 'A Critical Survey of Theories on Byzantine Influence in Scandinavia', in *Rom und Byzanz im Norden*, I, pp. 35–58; and Per Beskow, 'Byzantine Influence in the Baltic Region?', in *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe AD 300–1300*, ed. by Martin Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), pp. 559–63.

early Scandinavian Christianity has been, of course, partly due to the dearth of knowledge of Eastern European religious history and languages among Scandinavian medievalists. Yet this lack of interest also owes much to the wider academic perception of early Christian Scandinavia as an immanent part of Western Europe. Needless to say, such a perception has been based on the general view of medieval Europe as being sharply divided into western and eastern halves based on religious (as well as more generally cultural) grounds, starting in the early Middle Ages and with the final disruption coming after the Great Schism of 1054. The post-World-War-II division of Europe and the modern borders of the European Union, often labelled as the 'proper Europe', encouraged such an interpretation of early Scandinavian Christianity: proper European culture with Christianity at its core must have come from the West. For example, in his highly speculative book on the 'Europeanization' of the Baltic region between 1075 and 1225, the Swedish historian Nils Blomquist has stated that in this period:

> it was somehow decided that people living in and around the Baltic were to become *Europeans in the Western* sense [my emphasis — *I.G.*], while more eastern parts of the Viking world began disappearing behind a cultural border.[13]

Meanwhile, recent studies on the interactions between Latin and Greek Christianity around the time of the Great Schism clearly indicate that in this period the religious differences between Western and Eastern Christians in the Mediterranean were less noticeable to contemporaries than it is stated in modern literature. Tia Kolbaba has made this point quite clear in her recent works dealing with the 'teleology of "the schism"'. As she demonstrates, the friendly contacts between the representatives of the two churches in the tenth and eleventh centuries were as numerous as the cases of altercations, and the somewhat accidental conflict between certain hierarchs of Rome and Constantinople in 1054 was not shared by all their fellow hierarchs. It took the events of the long twelfth century and the growing religious as well as cultural divide during the first crusades — culminating at the sack of Constantinople in 1204 — before theological and ritual differences between the Catholics and Orthodox Christians turned from a matter that concerned only a few learned individuals into mutual hostility on a broader social scale. Amongst other things, this growing hostility can be testified by a drastic increase in the production of the lists of the errors of the Latins in thirteenth-century Eastern Christendom.[14]

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13 *The Discovery of the Baltic: The Reception of a Catholic World-System in the European North (1075–1225)*, Northern World, 15 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 11.

14 Tia M. Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000); ead., 'Latin and Greek Christians', in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, III: *Early Medieval Christianities c. 600–c. 1100*, ed. by Thomas F. X. Noble and Julia M. H. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 215–29; and ead., *Inventing Latin Heretics: Byzantines and Filioque in the Ninth Century* (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 2008).

Nevertheless, the situation in Northern Europe was in no way different to that in the Mediterranean world. The relationship between Catholic and Orthodox Christians in the early Christian North remained quite amicable in the eleventh century and deteriorated only gradually in the twelfth with the establishment of more rigid ecclesiastical structures both in Scandinavia and northern Rus´. This was then compounded by the start of the Latin crusades on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea at the turn of the thirteenth century.[15] In other words, there were no real objections to friendly contacts and interactions between Christians across the east-west axis of Northern Europe after their official conversion up to the time when ill feeling began to grow in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. From a more practical perspective, the famous Way from the Varangians to the Greeks (*Put' iz variag v greki*) — which connected Scandinavia, Rus´ and Byzantium precisely in this post-conversion period — would have increased the frequency of such contacts.[16] Due to intensive social communication in the late Viking Age, the presence of Scandinavians in eleventh-century Rus´ was an everyday reality, with matrimonial ties tightly linking the princely clan of the early Rus´ with the nascent royal houses of Scandinavia.[17] Consequently at that time, lay people, Christian priests, monks and pilgrims were able to travel along that north-eastern axis of European communication and be accommodated by their new religious environments. As has been shown by Jonathan Shepard, Eastern clerics embarking on this route in the tenth and eleventh centuries were able to travel as far as the British Isles, and such 'Greek' clerics were mentioned in local written texts.[18] Thus, Scandinavia was within their reach in those centuries, and the main question we should ask ourselves is therefore what sources we should look at in order to trace their activities in the northern lands.

Scandinavian written narratives and religious contacts with Eastern Europe

Unfortunately, surviving narrative sources from medieval Scandinavia are of little help in this regard, since they rarely mention contacts with Eastern clerics. Yet this evidence must be treated with circumspection. Unlike in the British Isles, only a very limited number of narrative sources were written in Scandinavia in

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15 For more details, see John Lind, 'The Martyria of Odense and a Twelfth-Century Russian Prayer: The Question of Bohemian Influence on Russian Religious Literature', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 68, 1 (1990), 1–21 (pp. 20–21); and id., 'The Christianization of North and Eastern Europe c. 950–1050 — A Plea for a Comparative Study', *Ennen & nyt*, 2004, no. 4, 1–18 <http://www.ennenjanyt.net/4-04/lind.html> [accessed 8 August 2011].

16 For more details on this route, see Jonathan Shepard's essay in this volume.

17 See Fjodor Uspenskij, *Skandinavy, variagi, Rus´: Istoriko-filologicheskie ocherki* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul´tury, 2002), especially at pp. 21–63.

18 Jonathan Shepard, 'From the Bosporus to the British Isles: The Way from the Greeks to the Varangians', in *Drevneishie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy, 2009 god* (Moscow: Indrik, 2010), pp. 15–42 (pp. 26–29).

the early twelfth century, while most texts in Latin and Old Norse were composed from the last decades of that century onwards.[19] As a result, what have survived are the late-twelfth- and thirteenth-century perceptions of early Christianization, which tended to obliterate facts seemingly at odds with concurrent religious contexts.

The well-known case of the Armenian bishops in late eleventh-century Iceland is a good illustration of this active process of remembrance and forgetting.[20] The first Icelandic text written in the vernacular, the early twelfth-century *Íslendingabók*, describes various clergymen arriving in Iceland in the eleventh century and names three Armenian bishops among them — Peter, Abraham and Stephen — who must have arrived at the time of the country's first official bishop, Ísleifr (1056–80).[21] This neutral remark did not survive the consolidation of the two Icelandic bishoprics (Skálholt founded in 1056 and Hólar founded in 1106), for three generations later (*c.* 1200), the Icelandic *gesta episcoporum* known as *Hungrvaka* disapprovingly mentioned anonymous foreign bishops present in Iceland along with Bishop Ísleifr, who found support among local evil men because of their apparently more lenient commands.[22] Finally, *Kristni saga*, composed around the mid-thirteenth century, describes Ísleifr as having the whole-hearted support of all the Icelanders. The presence of subversive foreign bishops with an Eastern pedigree was not compatible with this thirteenth-century view of the past and thus was written out of Icelandic post-conversion history.[23] Therefore, the memory of the Armenian missionary bishops in early Christian Iceland gradually faded into obscurity by the time when the confessional divide between the Western and Eastern Churches became a well-known fact in the European North.

The case of the Armenian bishops in Iceland is rather unique in that we have in our possession an early text enabling us to see a real historical event behind

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19 For more details and references, see *Historical Narratives and Christian Identity on a European Periphery: Early History Writing in Northern, East-Central, and Eastern Europe (c. 1070–1200)*, ed. by Ildar H. Garipzanov, Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, 26 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

20 For more details and references on this case, see Magnus Már Lárusson, 'On the so-called "Armenian" bishops', *Studia Islandica*, 18 (1960), 23–38; Ia. R. Dashkevich, 'Les arméniens en Islande (XIe siècle)', *Revue des études arméniennes*, 22 (1986–87), 321–26; id., 'Armiane v Islandii (XI v.)', *Skandinavskii sbornik*, 23 (1990), 87–97; Hagland, 'The Christianization of Norway', pp. 3–18; id., 'Armenske biskopar i Norden', pp. 153–63; Fjodor Uspenskij, 'Marginalii k voprosu ob armianakh v Islandii (XI vek)', *Scando-Slavica*, 46 (2000), 61–75; Myking, *Vart Noreg kristna*, pp. 126–28; Margaret Cormack, 'Irish and Armenian Ecclesiastics in Medieval Iceland', in *West over Sea: Studies in Scandinavian Sea-borne Expansion and Settlement before 1300*, ed. by Beverley Ballin Smith and others (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), pp. 227–34; and Ildar H. Garipzanov, 'Wandering Clerics and Mixed Rituals in the Early Christian North (c. 1000–c. 1150)', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 63 (2012, forthcoming).

21 *Íslendingabók. Kristni saga*, trans. by Sian Grønlie (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2006), p. 10, n. 78.

22 *Hungrvaka*, in *Biskopa sögur II*, ed. by Ásdís Egilsdóttir, Íslenzk Fornrit, 16 (Reykjavik: Hið Íslenzka fornritafélag, 2002), pp. 8–9; and *Origines Islandicae*, ed. by Gudbrand Vigfusson and F. Yorke Powell (Oxford: 1905), I, pp. 425–57 (p. 429).

23 *Kristni saga*, in *Biskupa sögur I, síðari hluti – sögutextar*, ed. by Sigurgeir Steingrímsson and others, Íslenzk fornrit, 15, 2 (Reykjavik: Hið Íslenzka fornritafélag, 2003), pp. 38–40.

the transforming historical narratives of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. We are less fortunate in other instances when no such text has survived, as in the case of the unfinished pilgrimage of the Danish king Erik Ejegod and his wife Bothild to Jerusalem in 1103. This pilgrimage was described by the skald Markús Skeggjason in his poem *Eiríksdrápa*, composed soon after the death of the royal couple on this trip.[24] Thirty-two stanzas have survived to the present day: one of them mentions Erik's pilgrimage to Jerusalem in general terms (no. 26), another describes solemn liturgical processions with which the Danish king and his companions were greeted in the cities of another country on the way to Constantinople. Precious reliquaries and portable crosses were carried in these processions, and they were accompanied by the sound of ringing bells (no. 27).[25] The country is not identified, and the land route taken to Constantinople remained unspecified. Yet there is a stanza (no. 3) that mentions his visit to Rus´, the rich gifts the king received there from local rulers, and his popularity in 'all the eastern regions'.[26] Considering the existence of the well-known route that ran from the Varangians to the Greeks in the eleventh century, some scholars have interpreted this stanza as referring to such eastbound travel to Constantinople.[27] By contrast, in the 2009 critical edition of this poem, Jayne Caroll attributes this event to the time of Erik's exile after around 1086 since another stanza describes his return from Rus´ to Denmark, which she dates to some time before 1095.[28] In her interpretation of these stanzas, Caroll follows *Knýtlinga saga*, which incorporated most known stanzas from that poem in its narrative, and according to which Erik and Bothild's way to Constantinople lay via Germany.[29] The saga's version is in agreement with a pilgrimage land route from Western Europe along the Danube to Constantinople and further to the south, which is known to have been established in the second quarter of the early eleventh century.[30]

Yet *Knýtlinga saga* was written in Iceland in the mid-thirteenth century, one-and-a-half centuries after Erik's pilgrimage had taken place, and the poetic *Eiríksdrápa* might have been the only reliable piece of evidence that the saga author had in his hands. Meanwhile, in the saga's narrative, the stanza describing

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24 It is dated between 1103 and 1107. For more details and references, see *Eiríksdrápa*, ed. by Jayne Carroll, in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2: From c. 1035 to c. 1300*, ed. by Kari Ellen Gade (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), pp. 432–59 (pp. 432–33). The stanza numbers in this poem are given according to this latest edition.

25 Ibid., pp. 455–57.

26 Ibid., pp. 435–36.

27 Abno Fellman, *Voyage en orient du roi Erik Ejegod et sa mort a Paphos* (Helsinki: Osakeyhtio Weilen, 1938); and Sigfús Blöndal and Benedikt S. Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 135.

28 *Eiríksdrápa*, ed. by Carroll, pp. 436–37.

29 Ibid., pp. 453–54.

30 Françoise Micheau, 'Les itinéraires maritimes et continentaux des pèlerinages vers Jérusalem', in *Occident et orient au Xe siècle: actes du IXe congrès de la société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public (Dijon, 2–4 juin 1978)*, Publications de l'Université de Dijon, 17 (Paris: Société les Belles Lettres, 1979), pp. 79–104 (pp. 90–91).

Erik's trip to Germany (no. 24) is followed first by the stanza mentioning the foundation of the archbishopric of Lund (no. 25) and only thereafter by the stanza reporting his decision to embark on a pilgrimage. From this perspective, the stanza narrating Erik's trip to Germany might have been unrelated to the description of his pilgrimage, and the saga's narrative accompanying that stanza might simply have been a thirteenth-century Icelandic interpretation of the event, based on existing knowledge of pilgrimage routes to Jerusalem. An earlier Icelandic pilgrimage account, composed by Abbot Nicholas in the mid-twelfth century, likewise describes that cleric first travelling to Germany. Yet Nicholas' itinerary after Germany is strikingly different to Erik's: Nicholas takes the land route to Italy and then travels by ship via the Eastern Mediterranean. On his way, he passes Cyprus, the resting place of King Erik, but never visits Constantinople.[31] By contrast, the author of *Knýtlinga saga* knew of Erik's stay in the Byzantine imperial capital, and hence needed to bring his royal hero directly to Byzantium from Germany. This interpretation may explain the absence in the saga of any detailed information regarding Erik's trip from Germany to Constantinople.

Meanwhile, a generation earlier in Denmark, there was an alternative interpretation linking Erik's pilgrimage route to Rus´. According to Saxo Grammaticus, Erik first reached Rus´ on a boat and then travelled through it by land before arriving in Byzantium, thus following the route well-known to such an eleventh-century Scandinavian ruler as Harald Hardråde.[32] Saxo Grammaticus is of course known to have invented many events and distorted others in his construction of a glorious Danish past comparable to that of the Romans, but his passage on Erik's travel via Rus´ is very short and plain. It adds nothing to Erik's glorification and cannot be explained as a mere rhetorical invention. Saxo is believed to have used *Eiríksdrápa* too, and thus his reference to the Rus´ route to Constantinople may have derived from this early poem.[33]

Pilgrimages from Rus´ to Jerusalem began soon after the Holy City had been captured by the Crusaders. Between 1104 and 1108, a Rus´ hegumen named Danila undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and left a detailed written account

31 For more details and references on this account, see Francis Peabody Magoun Jr., 'The Rome of Two Northern Pilgrims: Archbishop Sigeric of Canterbury and Abbot Nikolas of Munkathvera', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 33, 4 (1940), 267–89 (pp. 277–88); and Joyce Hill, 'From Rome to Jerusalem: An Icelandic Itinerary of the Mid-Twelfth Century', *The Harvard Theological Review* 76, 2 (1983), 175–203.

32 'Interea Ericus petitam navigio Rusciam terrestri permensus itinere, magna Orientis parte transcursa Bizantium veniebat'. Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, 12. 7. 1. 1, ed. by Karsten Friis-Jensen and Peter Zeeberg, 2 vols (Copenhagen: Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab & Gad, 2005), II, p. 78.

33 Bjarni Guðnason, 'The Icelandic Sources of Saxo Grammaticus', in *Saxo Grammaticus: A Medieval Author between Norse and Latin Culture*, ed. by Karsten Friis-Jensen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 1981), pp. 79–94 (pp. 89–90).

of his travels.[34] These facts demonstrate that the pilgrimage route from Rus´ to the Holy Land was already established by the time of Erik's voyage, and he could have chosen this eastern route instead of the western one via Germany. Furthermore, an Anglo-Saxon princess Gytha, who stayed at the Danish court before her marriage to the Rus´ Prince Volodimer Monomakh, apparently went on pilgrimage in 1098 and passed away in Jerusalem.[35] Her son Mstislav Volodimerovich was married to the Swedish princess Christina and was known in Scandinavia by the Norse name 'Harald'. This Rus´ ruler with his close contacts with the Scandinavian royal houses was prince of Novgorod, the key northern town lying on the route to Byzantium. Consequently, if the Danish royal couple had visited there, they would have had received a warm welcome, similar to the one described in *Eiríksdrápa* (stanza no. 27). On the other hand, the 1103 entry in the *Primary Chronicle* describes a military conflict that took place between Rus´ princes and the nomadic Cumans around the southern Dnieper, that is, in the region that was crucial for any travel from southern Rus´ to Byzantium. The two involved parties broke the 1101 peace agreement and were engaged in military clashes south of the Dnieper Rapids in the spring of 1103.[36] Such hostilities would probably have prevented anyone from travelling via the Dnieper at that time, although Erik's company might have passed the volatile region before the outbreak of military activities in the spring of 1103.

All in all, both thirteenth-century narrative versions of Erik's pilgrimage have their advantages and weaknesses, and the dearth of earlier sources makes it impossible to establish conclusively which route Erik would have taken from Denmark to Byzantium. This case thus highlights the essential problem of using Scandinavian narrative texts composed in the late-twelfth and thirteenth centuries as sources for Scandinavian post-conversion history, and for contacts between early Christian Scandinavia and Rus´ in particular. These narratives, as Leslie Abrams puts it, 'are retrospective and inherently unreliable, sometimes flagrantly so'.[37]

This statement can hardly apply to the earliest narrative sources composed in Denmark in the early twelfth century: Ælnoth's *Gesta* of the kings Svein and St Knud (*c*. 1110–11) and the *Chronicle of Roskilde* (*c*. 1138).[38] Yet they suffer from another shortcoming: they were composed by clerics attached to established

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34 Aleksandr V. Nazarenko, 'Rus´, Zapad i Sviataia zemlia v epokhu krestovykh pokhodov (XII vek)', in *Drevniaia Rus´ na mezhdunarodnykh putiakh* (Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul´tury, 2001), pp. 617–48 (pp. 640–41); and *Khozhdenie Igumena Daniila*, in *Biblioteka literatury Drevnei Rusi*, ɪᴠ: *XII vek*, ed. by D. S. Likhachev and others (St Petersburg: Nauka, 2004), pp. 27–117.

35 Nazarenko, 'Rus´, Zapad i Sviataia zemlia', p. 632.

36 *Povest´ vremennykh let*, in *Biblioteka literatury Drevnei Rusi*, ɪ: *XI–XII veka*, ed. by D. S. Likhachev and others (St Petersburg: Nauka, 2004), pp. 286–91.

37 'Eleventh-century Missions and the Early Stages of Ecclesiastical Organisation in Scandinavia', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 17 (1994), 21–40 (p. 23).

38 For more details and references, see Michael Gelting, 'Two Early Twelfth-Century Views of Denmark's Christian Past: Ailnoth and the Anonymous of Roskilde', in *Historical Narratives and Christian Identity*, ed. by Garipzanov, pp. 33–55.

Danish ecclesiastical centres and therefore express their institutional agendas. Ælnoth was an English cleric from Canterbury who had moved to Denmark some time before he wrote his *Gesta* at the request of St Knud's Priory in Odense, which was established with the help of monks from Evesham Abbey in England. They guarded the relics of St Knud and needed a hagiographic text in order to develop the cult of the first Danish royal saint. The *Chronicle of Roskilde* was written a generation later by a canon of the cathedral chapter of Roskilde. Both authors wrote their narratives within an established Latin Christian tradition, and any contacts established by early Christian Denmark and its kings with the Eastern Church would have been of no importance to them.

By the way of conclusion: the traces of eastern influences on early Christian Scandinavia in non-narrative sources

Thus, considering the nature of the surviving early Christian narratives in Scandinavia, one should hardly expect to find in these narratives much evidence of the religious contacts along the Varangian–Greek route, nor any traces of the influences that might have come from such contacts. Therefore if we wish to advance our understanding of this topic, we must rely on other types of evidence, three types of which seem to be especially promising for such research.

1. The earliest canonical texts

The first type of sources that can shed more light on such contacts are the earliest canonical texts that survive from Scandinavia and early Rus´. As mentioned above, Torgeir Landro has recently identified some traces of Eastern baptismal rites in an early Norwegian Christian law, the Borgarting law.[39] Chapter Two of this law deals with emergency baptism, when a newborn child was in danger of dying before any priest could reach them.[40] In this case, the godfather was allowed to baptise the child. Yet unlike Western baptismal rites in which the marking of the body parts with chrism or spittle occurs before the immersion — except for the top of the head[41] — the formula for an emergency baptism in the Borgarting law lists this procedure as being performed with spittle after the immersion, which is a feature of Eastern baptismal rites.[42] Furthermore, the parts of the body listed

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39 *Kristenrett og kyrkjerett*, pp. 34–35 and 46–68.
40 *De eldste østlandske kristenrettene*, ed. by Eyvind Fjeld Halvorsen and Magnus Rindal (Oslo: Riksarkivet, 2008), p. 122.
41 See Susan A. Keefe, *Water and the Word: Baptism and the Education of the Clergy in the Carolingian Empire*, 2 vols (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), I, pp. 80–115.
42 For examples, see Juliette Day, *The Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem: Fourth- and Fifth-century Evidence from Palestine, Syria and Egypt* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 110–11; and E. C. Whitaker, *Documents of Baptismal Liturgy*, ed. by Maxwell E. Johnson, 3d edn (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2003), pp. 32 and 123.

for marking in the Eastern Norwegian law are present in the description of the post-immersion anointment in the Armenian baptismal rite. Thus, the Borgarting law, which generally follows the Latin canonical tradition, demonstrates traces of Eastern influence in the baptismal sequence recorded for emergency baptism.[43] This ritual was performed in the absence of Latin priests, by lay people or unauthorised wandering clerics, some of whom arrived in Scandinavia along the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks.

The traces of such wandering people can be found in other Christian rituals recorded along this route. For example, a baptismal rite recorded in the *Inquiries of Kirik*, a Novgorodian canonical text composed around the mid-twelfth century, follows in general the Eastern tradition but demonstrates some features that may be interpreted as ultimately deriving from Ireland.[44] Such influences in the regions lying in the northern part of the route connecting Scandinavia with Byzantium are the best testimony to religious contacts and influences facilitated by a more general pattern of communication along that route. From this perspective, more thorough comparative studies of early canonical texts from Scandinavia and Rus´ might provide us with more evidence demonstrating the nature of the religious exchanges between the two regions in the early Christian period.

2. Evidence related to the cult of saints

The cult of saints is another type of evidence that can provide us with more evidence regarding early Christian impulses transmitted to Scandinavia along the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks: more precisely, the patterns of dissemination of certain cults of saints. On the one hand, it is difficult to trace specific textual borrowings between hagiographic corpora composed in Latin and Old Church Slavonic religious cultures, although Aleksandr Nazarenko has argued that the Latin miracle of St Panteleon from Cologne influenced an Old Church Slavonic miracle of St Nicholas in Novgorod.[45] On the other hand, the popularity of certain universal saints in the two regions bear witness to mutual influences, as demonstrated by the patterns of early church dedications. Such influences were due to the close links between the cult of saints and royal power in that period, leading to the promotion of certain universal saints by the Scandinavian and early Rus´ ruling families. The dissemination of the cults of

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43 As Landro, *Kristenrett og kyrkjerett*, p. 63, puts it, 'Spørsmålet om austlege trek i Borgartingskristen rettens nauddåpsritual må endeleg drøftast i lys av kontaktane mellom Norden og austlege område frå vikingtida og frametter, og gjer at eventuelle austkyrkjelege innslag i norske kristenrettar ikkje skulle vekkja for stor overrasking.'

44 For more details, see Garipzanov, 'Wandering Clerics'.

45 Aleksandr V. Nazarenko, 'Chudo sv. Pantelimona o "russkom korole Haral´de": monastyr´ sv. Pante- leimona v Kel´ne i semeistvo Mstislava Velikogo (konets XI – nachalo XII veka)', in *Drevniaia Rus´ na mezhdunarodnykh putiakh*, pp. 585–616.

St Nicholas and St Clement in Scandinavia and Rus´ in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries exemplifies this trend neatly.

The cult of St Clement was established in Kiev immediately after conversion (988), when the relics of the saint were brought from Cherson (the northern Byzantine outpost in the Black Sea) to Kiev and deposited in the princely Tithe Church at its foundation in 996. Thus, from its inception, the cult of St Clement was promoted by the Rus´ prince Volodimer and the clergy of the Tithe Church, which led to the swift dissemination of the cult in eleventh-century Rus´. At the turn of the eleventh century, St Clement also became a popular saint in Scandinavia, promoted by Norwegian and Danish kings such as Olaf Tryggvason, St Olaf and Cnut the Great. The first two kings must have been involved in the foundation of the two earliest Norwegian churches dedicated to the saint; the church in Oslo was founded between 996 and 1028 and the one in Trondheim between 997 and 1016. It can hardly be coincidental that the two churches dedicated to St Clement were built in Norway soon after the erection of the Kievan Tithe Church and sanctified with the relics of St Clement, and that these foundations were established with some royal involvement. Varangians of high status including both Olafs visited Kiev in those years and must have been impressed and inspired by the riches of St Clement's cult as promoted by Prince Volodimer. The Eastern influence on the dissemination of the cult of St Clement in Scandinavia was then augmented by western impulses, with the concurrent popularity of the cult in England leading to the founding of St Clement's in Denmark by Cnut the Great.[46]

St Nicholas was another saint whose cult became established in Rus´,[47] Normandy and Anglo-Saxon England as early as the eleventh century,[48] and the

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46 For more details, see Erik Cinthio, 'The Churches of St. Clemens in Scandinavia', in *Res mediaevales: Ragnar Blomquist kal. Mai. MCMLXVIII oblata*, ed. by Anders W. Mårtensson, Archaeologica Lundensia, 3 (Karlshamn: Kulturhistoriska Museet, 1968), pp. 103–16; Ie. V. Ukhanova, 'Kul´t sv. Klimenta, papy rimskogo, v istorii vizantiiskoi i drevnerusskoi tserkvi IX–1-poloviny XI v.', *Annali dell'Istituto universitario orientale di Napoli: Slavistica*, 5 (1997), 505–70; Dietrich Hofmann, *Die Legende von Sankt Clemens in den skandinavischen Ländern im Mittealder*, Beiträge zur Skandinavistik, 13 (Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 1997); Barbara Crawford, 'The Churches Dedicated to St. Clement in Norway: A Discussion of Their Origin and Function', *Collegium medievale*, 17 (2004), 100–29; ead., 'The Cult of Clement in Denmark', *Historie*, 2006, 235–82; Ildar Garipzanov, 'Novgorod and the Veneration of Saints in Eleventh-Century Rus´: A Comparative View', in *Saints and Their Lives on the Periphery: Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200)*, ed. by Haki Antonsson and Ildar H. Garipzanov (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 115–45 (pp. 130–36); and id., 'The Journey of St Clement's Cult from the Black Sea to the Baltic Region', in *From Goths to Varangians: Communication and Cultural Exchange Between the Baltic and the Black Sea*, ed. by Line Maj-Britt Højberg Bjerg and others (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011, forthcoming).

47 For a short overview of the veneration of St Nicholas in eleventh-century Rus´, see Gerardo Cioffari, *La leggenda di Kiev: Slovo o perenesenii moshchei Sviatitelia Nikolaia* (Bari: Centro Studi e Ricerche 'S. Nikola', 1980), pp. 35–41.

48 For different views on the dissemination of the cult of St Nicholas in northwestern Europe, see Karl Meisen, *Nicholauskult und Nicholausbrauch im Abendlande: Eine kultgeographisch-volkskundliche Untersuchung*, 2nd edn, ed. by Matthias Zender and Franz-Jozef Heyen (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1981 [1931]), pp. 89–104; E. M. Treharne, *The Old English Life of St Nicholas with the Old English Life of*

popularity of the cult across Northern Europe visibly increased after the transla-
tion of the saint's relics from Asia Minor to Bari in southern Italy in 1087.[49] The
feast dedicated to this event began to be celebrated not only in the Latin West but
also in early Rus´,[50] where Novgorod became the main centre of this cult from the
twelfth century onwards. In 1113, a stone church dedicated to St Nicholas was
founded there by Prince Mstislav of Novgorod. A little earlier in around 1100, King
Erik Ejegod established the Slangerup nunnery on Sjælland dedicated to the same
saint,[51] which was followed by a dozen of similar dedications in twelfth-century
Denmark.[52] In the early twelfth century, churches dedicated to St Nicholas were
erected in or near royal headquarters in Trondheim and Oslo.[53] The promotion of
St Nicholas' cult by the rulers of Denmark, Norway and northern Rus´ must have
been a coordinated process considering the tight matrimonial ties linking them in
the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. As already mentioned, the Anglo-
Saxon princess Gytha, the mother of Mstislav, spent some time at the Danish
court before she married Volodimer Monomakh. Mstislav himself married the
Swedish princess Christina. Their daughter Malmfrid was betrothed to King
Sigurd Jorsalfar of Norway (1103–30), and after the death of her first husband she
married the Danish king Erik II Emune. Confessional differences hardly created
any obstacles to the promotion of St Nicholas by the royal and princely families of
northeastern Europe connected via marriage alliances. In Sweden, a stone church
of St Nicholas — following the layout of Byzantine provincial churches and later
known as a Russian church — was founded in Sigtuna in the twelfth century,[54]

St Giles, Leeds Texts and Monographs, New series, 15 (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1997), pp. 35–42;
Charles W. Jones, *The Saint Nicholas Liturgy and its Literary Relationships (Ninth to Twelfth Centuries)*
(Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 10–13 and 64–89; id., *Saint
Nicholas of Myra, Bari, and Manhattan: Biography of a Legend* (Chicago and London: University of
Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 140–44 and 147–49; and Véronique Gazeau, *Normannia monastica*, 2 vols
(Caen: Publications de CRAHM, 2008), I, pp. 188–89 and 197.

49 On this event, see Marjorie Chibnall, 'The Translation of the Relics of Saint Nicholas and Norman
Historical Tradition', in *Le relazioni religiose e chiesastico-giurisdizionali: Atti del IIº Congresso
internazionale sulle relazioni fra le due Sponde adriatiche* (Rome: Centro di studi sulla storia e la
civiltà adriatica, 1979), pp. 33–41.

50 Nazarenko, *Drevniaia Rus´ na mezhdunarodnykh putiakh*, pp. 358, 557, and 596; and Cioffari,
La leggenda di Kiev, pp. 43–71.

51 Erik Cinthio, 'Heiligenpatrone und Kirchenbauten während des frühen Mittelalters', in *Kirche und
Gesellschaft im Ostseeraum und im Norden vor der Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Sven Ekdahl,
Acta Visbyensia, 3 (Visby: Museum Gotlands Fornsal, 1969), pp. 161–69 (p. 168); Tore Nyberg,
Monasticism in North-Western Europe, 800–1200 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 66 and 206; and
Haki Antonsson, 'Saints and Relics in Early Christian Scandinavia', *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 15
(2005), 51–80 (p. 64).

52 Per Beskow, 'Kyrkededikationer i Lund', in Per Beskow and Reinhart Staats, *Nordens kristnande i
europeiskt perspektiv* (Skara: Viktoria, 1994), pp. 37–62 (p. 54).

53 *The Saga of the Sons of Magnús*, in Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, trans. by Hollander, pp. 688–714
(p. 699); Haakon Christie, 'Old Oslo', *Medieval Archaeology*, 10 (1966), 45–58 (pp. 48–50); and
Larentz Dietrichson, *Sammenlignede Fortegnelse over Norges Kirkebygninger i Middelalderen og
Nutiden* (Kristiania: Malling, 1888), p. 6.

54 See Jonas Ros, *Staden, kyrkorna och den kyrkliga organisationen*, Occasional Papers in Archaeology,
30 (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2001), pp. 172–76; and Anders Wikström, 'Den svårfångande

probably in the first half. It was erected with some royal involvement side by side with Latin churches, and it may have had close affiliations with Novgorodian merchants from early on.[55] Thus, the case of the cult of St Nicholas in the early Christian North indicates that close dynastic contacts between the ruling families in this region led to the promotion of certain saints across confessional borders.

3. Archaeological evidence

The final, ever-growing body of evidence that can contribute to our understanding of the contacts and influences between early Christian Scandinavia and Rus´ is archaeological data. This source of information is not unproblematic, for archaeological evidence is always prone to different interpretations, as demonstrated by a recent discussion of the finds of 'liturgical' spoons and Eastern eggs in Sweden.[56] Still, there are material objects that point to Scandinavian contacts with the early Christian East: for example, cross-pendants of the so-called 'Scandinavian type', which are dated to the tenth to twelfth centuries and found in both Scandinavia and early Rus´ (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). Early Rus´ and Byzantium have both been suggested as their possible places of origin,[57] and it is known that the crosses of this type were produced in Kiev from early on.[58] However, the question is how we should interpret such a pattern of dissemination.[59] What is beyond doubt is that, irrespective of the origin of these crosses, they were carried to Scandinavia via the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks, and their popularity along that route — perhaps related to their original provenance in Byzantium — testifies to some kind of religious unity felt by the people who wore them on their travels and carried them to the afterlife. Those people who wore or saw such cross pendants in Scandinavia — or at least in Sweden — were most likely able to recognize them and identify their connection to the Eastern route. Yet would this comprehension carry wider religious meanings and implications for the crosses'

kronologin: Om gravstratigrafi och problem med dateringen av Sigtunas tidigmedeltida kyrkor', *Hikuin*, 33 (2006), 223–38 (p. 226).

55 Sten Tesch, 'Kungen, Kristus och Sigtuna — platsen där guld och människor möttes', in *Kult, Guld och Makt*, ed. by Ingemar Nordgren (Göteborg: Kompendiet, 2007), pp. 233–57 (pp. 253–54); and Ros, *Staden, kyrkorna*, p. 175.

56 Fuglesang, 'A Critical Survey of Theories', pp. 35–58.

57 For early Rus´, see Jörn Staecker, *Rex regum et dominus dominorum: Die wikingerzeitlichen Kreuz- und Kruzifizanhänger als Ausdruck der Mission in Altdänemark und Schweden* (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell International, 1999), pp. 110–15. For Byzantium, see Vladimir Petrukhin and Tatjana Pushkina, 'Old Russia: The Earliest Stages of Christianization', in *Rom und Byzanz im Norden*, II, pp. 247–58 (p. 255); and Vladimir Ia. Petrukhin and Tamara A. Pushkina, 'Novye dannye o protsesse khristianizatsii Drevnerusskogo gosudarstva', in *Archeologia Abrahamica*, ed. by Leonid Beliaev (Moscow: Indrik, 2009), pp. 157–68 (pp. 159–61).

58 N. V. Eniosova and T. G. Saracheva, 'Drevnerusskie iuvelirnye instrumenty iz tsvetnykh metallov (resul´taty khimiko-tekhnologicheskogo issledovania', *Kratkie soobshchenia Instituta arkheologii*, 220 (2006), 86–101 (p. 89).

59 For a new interpretation of finds in early Rus´, see Androshchuk's essay in this volume.
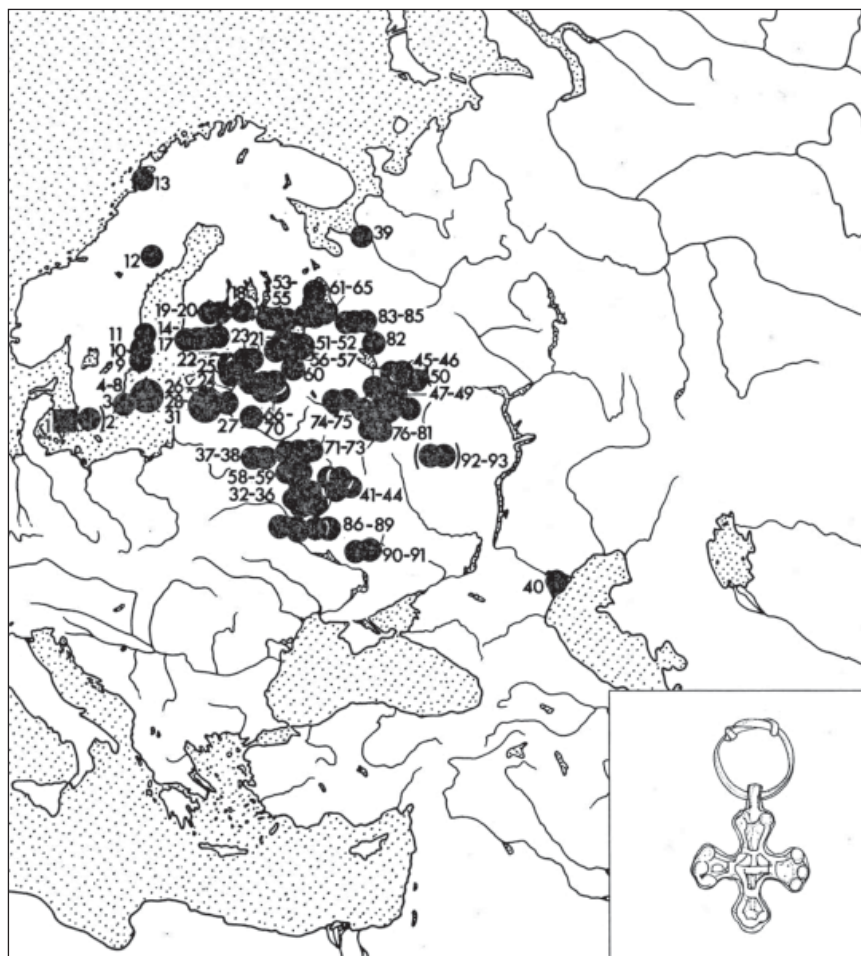
Fig. 1. **The finds of cross-pendants of the 'Scandinavian type'**
(after Jörn Staecker, 1999, type 1.4.3).
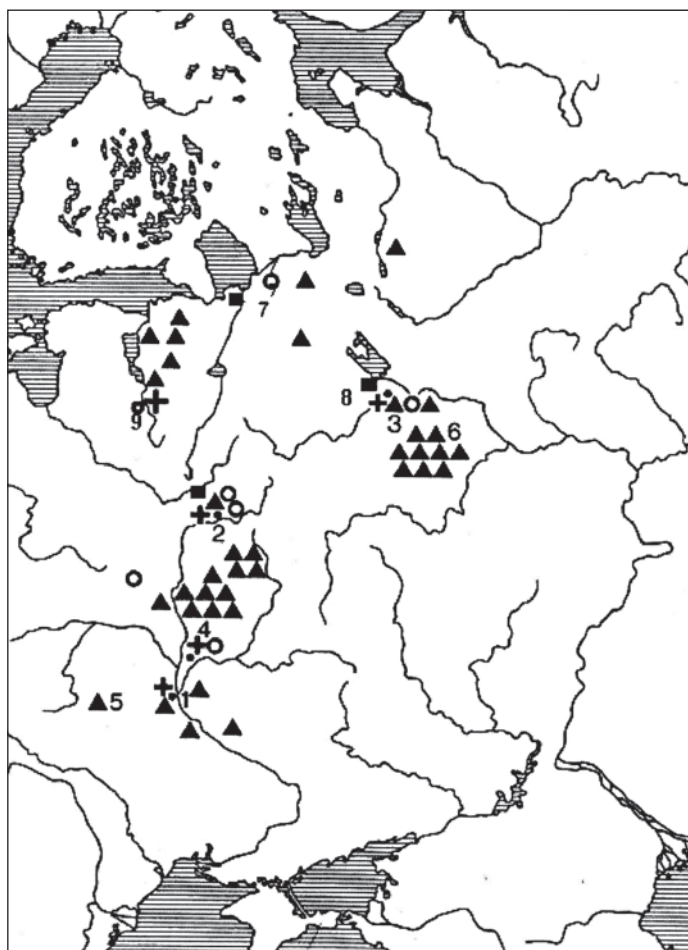
+ — cruciform pendants of sheet silver
▲ — cross-pendants of the Scandinavian type
○ — candles
■ — encolpia

1 — Kiev; 2 — Gnesdovo; 3 — Timerevo; 4 — Shestovitsa; 5 — Pod-
gortsy; 6 — Vladimir mounds; 7 — Old Ladoga; 8 — Uglich; 9 — Pskov

Fig. 2. **The early finds of cross-pendants in Rus´**
(after V. Ia. Petrukhin and T. A. Pushkina, 2009).

owners and viewers? As this example shows, the constantly increasing volume of archaeological data posits new questions with regard to eastern impulses in early Christian Scandinavia, but it also promises us new and more comprehensive answers. Thus, bringing this new data into the wider discussion, along with early canonical texts and the evidence related to the early cult of saints, will be beneficial for both archaeologists and historians, thus enabling us to advance the debate on the nature and extent of Eastern Christian influences on early Scandinavia.

Scythian Christianity

by Henrik Janson

In connection with the treaty of 944 drawn up between the Byzantine Empire and the Rus´ at the command of Prince Igor, the *Povest' vremennykh let*, known variously in English as the *Primary Chronicle* or *The Tale of Bygone Years* (from here on = *PVL*) mentions two categories of Rus´, 'the Christians' and 'the pagans'. This indicates that by this time there was a Christian group among the leading Rus´. However, it is important to note that the word 'pagan' does not appear in the treaty itself but only in the chronicler's commentaries and embellishments from the early twelfth century. The treaty itself speaks of 'Christians' and 'non-Christians', but the division that it makes most often is in fact between 'the baptised' and 'the un-baptised'.[1]

By this time, one of the more distinguished individuals in Rus´ who could be described as a 'pagan', 'non-Christian', or an 'un-baptised person' must have been Olga, Prince Igor's wife and later the grandmother of Volodimer the Great who was to become famous for having brought Christianity to Rus´ in 988/89. However, Olga was baptised before this time, in fact sometime during the years when she was the *de facto* regent in Rus´ from her husband's death in around 945 to the early 960s.

The details of Olga's baptism have been discussed extensively, and I do not intend to go into these details here.[2] However, it should be mentioned that one of the main points of the story about her baptism in the *PVL* is that Olga, by accepting baptism, outwitted the Byzantine Emperor because she understood what he did not, that since he was the sponsor at her baptism he could not, according to Christian law, marry her afterwards as he wished, due to the spiritual kinship they entered through the baptismal ceremony. This says, of course, very little about what actually happened, but it illustrates a point I want to make in this paper: Olga, as part of the Varangian world, was not, before her baptism, unacquainted with the more complex levels of Christian doctrine.

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1   *Lavrentevskaia letopis´*, ed. by A. F. Karskii, PSRL, 1 (Leningrad: Izdatel´stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1926–28), cols. 46–54; *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, ed. by Samuel Hazard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz Wetzor (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953), pp. 73–77.
2   For a recent discussion see Francis Butler, 'Olga's Conversion and the Construction of Chronicle Narrative', *The Russian Review*, 67 (2008), 230–42, with further references.

In 1992 Andrzej Poppe wrote regarding Olga: 'To be sure, as the treaty of 944 indicates, there was already a Christian community in Kiev during the reign of her husband Igor, and Christianity had already penetrated the upper strata of Rus´ society.'[3] The Christian community that Poppe here refers to is what John Lind has described as 'Varangian Christianity',[4] which was evidently the Greek Orthodox community among the Rus´. Olga does not seem to have belonged to this community in 944, as she was not baptised at that point, but then the question is as follows: to what religious context did she actually belong?[5]

Frankish Christianity among the Varangians

Not too far away in space and time from Olga and the treaty of 944, Archbishop Unni of Bremen visited Birka, where he died in 936. This was a somewhat spectacular ending to a grand missionary tour in the North following the victory of the East Frankish king Henry I in 934 over the Danish king Gnupa. Only a few years earlier, Henry had pushed back the Hungarians. The importance of

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3 Andrzej Poppe, 'Once Again Concerning the Baptism of Olga, Archontissa of Rus´', in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers,* 46 (1992), 271–77 (p. 271).

4 John H. Lind, 'Reflections on Church Historians, Archaeologists and Early Christianity in Finland', in *Arkeologian lumoa synkkyyteen: Artikkeleita Christian Carpelanin juhlapäiväksi,* ed. by Mervi Suhonen (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto, 2006), pp. 68–74; id., 'The Importance of Varangian Traditions for East–West Collaboration and Confrontation in the 12th–13th centuries', in *Expansion – Integration? Danish-Baltic Contacts 1147–1410 AD,* ed. by Birgitte Fløe Jensen and Dorthe Wille Jørgensen (Vordingborg: Danmarks Borgcenter, 2009), pp. 27–37. The concept of 'Varangians' in itself was however closely connected — and at least sometimes synonymous with — that of 'Latin Christians'. For more information, see Stanisław Rožniecki, *Varægiske minder i den russiske heltedigtning* (Copenhagen: Pios Boghandel, 1914), pp. 197–99; and John Lind, 'Varangians in Europe's Eastern and Northern Periphery: The Christianization of North- and Eastern Europe c. 950–1050 — A Plea for a Comparative Study'. *Ennen & nyt,* 2004, no. 4, 1–18 (p. 12) <http://www.ennenjanyt.net/4-04/lind.html> [accessed 8 August 2011], where attention is drawn to an event that took place in the late 1060s or early 1070s when a prominent Varangian in Kiev by the name Shimon, a nephew of a certain Hakon (Iakun), decided together with his household of no less than 3000 souls, including his priests, to stop being a 'Varangian' and instead become a 'Christian' by exchanging his Latin rites for Orthodox rituals. Gerhard Podskalsky, *Christentum und theologische Literatur in der Kiever Rus´ (988–1237)* (München: Beck, 1982), p. 20, mentions an example where the Latin Christians were treated as equals of pagans. It is quite comic when Patriarch Photius I in his clash with the Papacy in the 860s called Latin a barbaric and Scythian tongue; see Francis Dvornik, *The Photian Schism: History and Legend* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), p. 105 with note 2.

5 As modern concepts of the 'Old Norse' and 'Old Slavonic' religions say much more about the period of romantic nationalism in European history during which they were formulated rather than about the religious conditions of the Viking Age itself, I think that it is meaningless to consider whether Olga might have worshipped *Perun* or *Thórr,* the former mentioned in the treaty of 944. See A. P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom: An Introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 145–45; Edgar Hösch, 'Das altrussische Heidentum', in *Millennium Russiae Christianae: Tausend Jahre Christliches Russland 988–1988,* ed. by Gerhard Birkfellner, Schriften des Komitees der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zur Förderung der slawischen Studien, 16 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1993), pp. 95–107; Henrik Janson, 'The Organism Within: On the Construction of a non-Christian Germanic Nature', in *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes and Interactions,* ed. by Anders Andrén and others, Vägar till Midgård, 8 (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2006), pp. 393–98.

Henry's victory over King Gnupa has been played down sometimes, but from a contemporary perspective it was a major event that made Henry I famous in Europe as the first ruler to have subjugated the Danes and made them tributaries.[6] King Henry also forced Gnupa to be baptised, and soon after a new aggressive diplomatic 'missionary' campaign was directed to the North under the command of a Saxon nobleman, Archbishop Unni of Bremen. According to Adam of Bremen, writing in the 1070s, Unni's first measure was 'to ordinate priests for every single church in the kingdom of the Danes'.[7]

In view of the picture that can be drawn from sources of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, of a great clash between a monolithic form of paganism and an even more monolithic form of Christianity, it might seem a little surprising that a well-informed cleric, the head of the cathedral school in one of the major Saxon metropolitan sees, expressed himself in these words about the conditions in the North in the early tenth century, which indicates that churches already existed in Denmark by that point. The impression otherwise given in overviews of this period is that Christianity had suffered a devastating setback in Scandinavia after the death of Archbishop Ansgar in 865. However, this picture, which is still dominant today, is mainly the result of the vehement propaganda disseminated by the Archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen. Bremen had been severely weakened after Ansgar's death due to the powerful Archbishop of Cologne's resistance to the unification of the Archbishopric of Hamburg with the Bishopric of Bremen. It was only in Archbishop Unni's days and with the backing of Henry I that Bremen regained its position, but even with the support of Henry I, Hamburg-Bremen still lacked the proper papal privileges needed to claim any ecclesiastical rights in the North.[8]

These circumstances have certainly contributed to the very dark picture painted by Adam of Bremen — refined still further by his followers — of the position of Christianity in Scandinavia during those years when Bremen lacked influence. Nevertheless, as has been alluded to above, even Adam of Bremen looked upon this region during these years as a distinct area with its own churches, and while its relapse to paganism is elaborated further by additional twelfth- and thirteenth-century sources, the Christian elements of Adam's account have, as we shall see, strong support in sources more contemporary to the events.

The fact that Adam was very tendentious in his attempts to portray the years between Ansgar and Unni in the worst possible light is evident in his account of

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6   Liutprand, *Antapodosis*, 3. 21, in *Liutprandi Cremonensis opera omnia*, ed. by P. Chiesa (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), pp. 1–150 (p. 76): 'Hic [i.e. Heinricus rex] etiam Sclavorum gentem innumeram subiugavit sibique tributariam fecit; primus etiam hic Danos subiugavit sibique servire coegit; ac per hoc nomen suum multis nationibus celebre fecit'; and also 3. 48, p. 93: '[…] cuius [i.e. Heinricus rex] ex hoc apud Italos nomen maxime tunc clarebat, quod Danos, nulli ante subiectos, solus ipse debellaret ac tributarios faceret.'

7   Adam, *Gesta*, 1. 59, p. 58: 'Ordinatis itaque in regno Danorum per singulas ecclesias sacerdotibus […]'.

8   Henrik Janson, 'Konfliktlinjer i tidig nordeuropeisk kyrkoorganisation', in *Kristendommen i Danmark før 1050*, ed. by Niels Lund (Roskilde: Roskilde Museums Forlag, 2004), pp. 215–34.

how Unni entered the Baltic Sea and arrived in Birka. Since the death of Ansgar, he declared, no teacher had gone there for seventy years, except for Rimbert, so devastating had been the persecutions of the Christians. According to Adam, the *Sueones* and the *Gothi* had first been converted by Ansgar but then they had re-lapsed and the Christian religion was 'totally forgotten' (*penitus obliti*) until they were called back by Archbishop Unni in the 930s. 'This is sufficient to know', he stated, 'because if I say more it will be claimed that I lie'.[9]

Comparing Adam's words with those of his sources reveals that he was mov-ing beyond the limits of accuracy in his account. He contradicts, for instance, *Vita Ansgarii*, the life of Ansgar, which Archbishop Rimbert, Ansgar's immediate successor as Archbishop of Bremen, had written in the early 870s. According to Rimbert the ecclesiastical conditions among the *Sueones* during the first years of his own pontificate were still prosperous, and the priests sent out from the Empire were received readily by the king and the people.[10] A few decades later we are told in *Vita Rimberti* that Rimbert himself also visited frequently these regions beyond the Sea, that is, in *Sveonia*, and he had always appointed priests to the churches there. These churches were founded (*constitutae*) among the pagans themselves, far from their episcopal seat in Bremen. Yet even more problematic was the fact that they were separated from their metropolitan see by the sea. However, the conclusion of Rimbert's anonymous biographer — writing probably within a decade or so after Rimbert's death in 888 — was that through the priests in these churches the pagans could hear the word of God and Christian captives could have consolation.[11]

These are contemporary statements about the religious life among the *Sue-ones* covering approximately the period after Ansgar's death in 865 to the end of the ninth century. They show that even during this period there were Frankish churches present in the Varangian world of the North, and in spite of the dark rhetorical colours used by Adam of Bremen to depict this period he is not all together contradicting this information. In fact, according to Adam it was only

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9   Adam, *Gestae*, I. 61, p. 59.

10   Rimbert, *Vita Ansgarii*, 33. ed. by Georg Waitz, in *Vita Ansgarii auctore Rimberto*, MGH, SRG, 55 (Hannover: Hahn, 1884), pp. 64–65.

11   *Vita Rimberti*, 16, pp. 80–100 (pp. 94–95): 'Preterea legationis suae offitium, quod ad praedicandum gentibus verbum Dei primitus a decessore suo susceptum est et postmodum sibi successionis iure quasi herededitarium provenit, impigre executus est; ipse quidem per se, quociens occupationes aliae sineret, eisdem legationi insistens, semper autem constitutos habens presbiteros, per quos et verbum Dei gentiles audirent, et solatium captivi christiani haberent, ad ecclesias inter ipsos paganos constitutas longe ab ecclesia sedis suae, quodque gravissimum erat, marinis discriminibus adeundas. Quae discrimina ipse frequentius et habundantius sustinens, saepe, tamquam de se testatur apostolus, naufragium pertulit, saepe in proximo erat [...]'; and again in ibid., 20, pp. 96–97: 'Fertur etiam antiquorum more sanctorum quedam fecisse miracula, frequenter videlicet, dum iret ad Sueoniam, tempestatem maris orationibus suis sedasse, caeci cuiusdam oculos illuminasse per confirmationem, quam episcopali more cum chrismate sacro in eodem. Set et filium quendam regis dicitur a demonio liberasse; cui etiam affirmationi hoc astipulari videtur, quod multatis astantibus episcopis clamor ab ore vexati saepius sonabat Rimbertum solum inter eos digne comissum egisse offitium, ipsumque sibi esse cruciatui, auctor vocis testabatur.'

in the years immediately preceding the victory of Henry I over the Danes in 934 that King Gnupa (called *Hardecnut Worm* by Adam) tried to destroy Christianity in Dania entirely, by driving 'priests' from his borders — specifically Frankish or even only East Frankish priests, or perhaps even only priests under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Bremen — killing and torturing quite a few of them.[12] If so, these actions might very well have been provoked by the war itself, and these were obviously the churches to which Unni, according to Adam, delegated priests again after the East-Frankish victory.

In light of this, an oft-discussed passage concerning the conversion of King Harold Gormsson and the Danes in the mid-960s becomes more explainable. Harold's conversion was probably one of the comprehensibly arranged conversions in Scandinavian history. It was arranged by Otto the Great, and the evidence from Harold's famous rune stone in Jelling suggests that it was the king's intention for his conversion to be remembered by posterity as the decisive step when the Danes were made Christians, for he states on it that he was the one who had made the Danes Christians, *kristna*.[13]

King Harold's statement can be seen in agreement with Adam of Bremen's dark picture of the period after Ansgar. As a result of this, a comment from the contemporary observer Widukind of Corvey has always been treated as a confusing anomaly. Writing about the conversion of King Harold, Widukind explicitly contradicts the Jelling stone and says that this event was not what had made the Danes Christians, for 'the Danes had been Christians since ancient times, but nevertheless they were serving idols with a heathen rite.'[14] Exactly what these idols were and what this heathen *ritus* might have been is not very clear, but it is quite clear that to this Benedictine monk from the mid-tenth century the Danes had actually been *christiani* for much longer than the Jelling stone implies. In the heading of the chapter in question, Widukind, or an almost contemporary copyist, wrote: 'About the Danes, how they were made fully Christian' (*De Danis, quomodo Christiani perfecte facti sunt*).[15]

A generation later, Widukind's statement received support from Bishop Thietmar of Merseburg who explained that the *Christianitas* of the Danes was, as he says, 'renovated' through the conversion of King Harold. According to Thietmar King Harald and the Danes were accused of having 'deviated from the *cultura* of their forefathers' (*antecessorum cultura suorum deviantem*) and by this deviation

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12 Adam, *Gestae*, 1. 55, pp. 55–56.

13 Henrik Janson, 'Pagani and Cristiani: Cultural Identity and Exclusion Around the Baltic in the Early Middle Ages', in *The Reception of Medieval Europe in the Baltic Sea Region: Papers of the XIIth Visby Symposium, held at Gotland University*, ed. by Jörn Staecker (Visby: Gotland University Press, 2009), pp. 171–91.

14 Widukind of Corvey, *Rerum gestarum Saxonicarum libri tres*, ed. by Georg Waitz and K.A. Kehr, MGH, SRG, 60 (Hannover: Hahn, 1904), p. 65: 'Dani antiquitus erant Christiani, sed nichilominus idolis ritu gentili servientes'.

15 Widukind, *Rerum*, 3. Inc. cap., pp. 101–4.

from the proper cult they had opened up for 'gods and demons' (*dii et demones*).[16] It therefore seems fairly obvious that neither Widukind in the 960s nor Thietmar in the early eleventh century considered the Danes, as a collective people, to be non-Christians before the baptism of Harold, only bad Christians. Nevertheless, King Harold claimed to have made his people Christian when he formed an alliance with Otto the Great and the East Frankish Church and was baptised as a result.

According to Widukind, the results of Harold's conversion were threefold: first-ly, the king promised to worship Christ alone, which was part of the baptismal act. Secondly, he ordered his people to reject idols, which was also part of the baptismal act; the rejection of idols was a purely personal matter only when the baptised indi-vidual was not king. Thirdly, from then on the king showed priests and ministers of God appropriate levels of respect. This last matter was not a part of the baptismal act, but it shows that even if King Harold had not treated them with the sufficient respect before, Frankish priests had indeed been present in his kingdom.

Furthermore, in the case of Sweden specifically, it can be noted that even if Adam in a certain moment states that the Christian religion after Ansgar had been 'totally forgotten' when Unni arrived in Birka, he later seems to confirm the picture painted in *Vita Rimberti* when speaking about the three bishops — also known from the synodal acts from Ingelheim in 948 and whom Adam claims Un-ni's successor Adaldag appointed to the bishoprics of Hedeby, Ribe and Aarhus on Jutland — when he declares that these three bishops were also delegated to 'those Churches that are beyond the Sea, on Funen, Zealand, and Scania, as well as in *Sueonia*'.[17] Just as *Dania*, so is *Sueonia* also referred to as a region with churches in the first half of the tenth century, even by Adam of Bremen. In this way he lends support to the picture given in *Vita Rimberti* in the late ninth century concerning churches among the pagans in *Sueonia*, and for long it has been accepted among leading Swedish archaeologists that the picture presented by the more contempo-rary written sources about the Christian presence in Sweden in the late ninth and early tenth centuries is supported by archaeological material.[18]

Looking beyond the sources of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to more contemporary material actually seems to show that the Frankish Church was

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16 Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, 2. 14, ed. by Robert Holtzmann, MGH, SRG n.s., 9 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1935), pp. 53–54.

17 Adam, *Gestae*, 2. 4, pp. 64–65: 'Quibus etiam commendavit illas ecclesias, quae trans mare sunt, in Fune, Seland et Scone ac in Sueonia.'

18 See for example Sune Lindqvist, 'Slesvig och Birka', *Fornvännen*, 21 (1926), 245–65 (p. 257). Recently the location of what might be one of these Frankish churches was identified. On the site where one of Sweden's most important monasteries stood from the middle of the twelfth century, the royal burial-church Varnhem in Västergötland, the remains of a much older stone-church were found, dated to the early years of the eleventh century. What was more surprising though was that even older Christian graves were found around this church, going back as far as the ninth century; see Maria Vretemark, 'Tidiga kristna spår i Varnhem – hur tolkar vi det?'. *Historieforum: Tidskrift för historisk debatt*, 2 (2009), 2–16. This is the first time a Christian burial place of such a respectable age and following West European customs has been identified with certainty in Sweden.

present in the North in the late ninth and early tenth centuries, but it was probably only a marginal phenomenon during this time, especially among the *Sueones*. Yet even if the Frankish Church was only a marginal phenomenon during these years, it can be safely assumed that some leading 'Varangian' families had joined the Frankish Church in the ninth century. In fact, this branch of Varangian society was probably even more influential in the first half of the ninth century. A little known fact is that there was indeed a Frankish Archbishop appointed for the *Sueones* in the early 830s, named Gautbert Simon.[19] From a letter written by Abbot Hrabanus Maurus of Fulda we also know that during these years there was a Frankish metropolitan church under construction somewhere among the *Sueones*, but this grandiose project ended abruptly when the Frankish priests were either killed or thrown out in around 840.[20]

After his escape from *Sueonia* (Arch)bishop Gautbert Simon was granted the position of Bishop of Osnabrück. He was respected as head of the Church of *Sueonia* until his death in 859/60, but there were never any claims from his successors in Osnabrück to this position. Instead it was Archbishop Ansgar and his see that provided continuity, for example with a second visit by Ansgar (in his role as Papal Legate) to *Sueonia* around 850, when good relations seem to have been restored. In the early 840s, the attacking Northmen had also forced Ansgar to flee and give up his metropolitan seat in Hamburg. He then took over the Bishopric of Bremen, and in spite of stern objections from the Archbishop of Cologne to whose church province the bishopric Bremen belonged, he continued to claim his position as Archbishop and work intensely to unite the Bishopric of Bremen and the Archbishopric of Hamburg into one juridical body. He actually managed to get papal privileges in this matter in May 864, and since he also worked to induce metropolitan power in Scandinavia, including in Gautbert's *Sueonia*, he tried to squeeze such a papal privilege out of Rome. However, he failed in this attempt and in February 865 he died, still as Papal Legate in the North. His successors, however, beginning with Archbishop Rimbert (865–88), struggled for centuries to maintain their position as Papal Legate — which had been Ansgar's personal title — and to win the position of Metropolitan of the North. They did not succeed to get papal privileges for these claims until Archbishop Adalbert (1043–72) in the middle of the eleventh century.[21]

Consequently, after the failure of the great plans of the 830s there was a minor role for the Frankish Church in the North in the weaker period from the middle of

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19 A. D. Jørgensen, *Den nordiske kirkes grundlæggelse og første udvikling* (Copenhagen: Selskabet for Danmarks kirkehistorie, 1874–78), p. 113; Lauritz Weibull, *Nordisk historia: forskningar och undersökningar*, I: *Forntid och vikingatid* (Lund: Natur och kultur, 1948), pp. 167–73 and 184; Janson, 'Konfliktlinjer', pp. 218–19.

20 Albert Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1912), II, p. 700, note 2; Janson, 'Konfliktlinjer', pp. 218–19.

21 See Janson, 'Konfliktlinjer', pp. 219–26.

the ninth to the beginning of the tenth centuries. This weaker period ended with
the regained strength of the East Frankish realm under the Ottonians and the vic-
tory of Henry I over King Gnupa in 934.

Byzantine Christianity among the Varangians

The weaker period of Frankish influences coincided with the increasing
political turmoil of the Frankish Empire and also with the progress of 'Varangian
Christianity' among the Rus´. Jonathan Sheppard has recently brought attention
to the intensified contacts between Byzantium and Northern Europe from around
900,[22] and this is probably an important factor behind the strengthened position of
'Varangian Christianity' in the treaty of 944, if we take 'Varangian Christianity' to
be the orthodox branch of the religion within Varangian society.

Yet even before 900 there seems to have been at least a section of Orthodox
Christians among the Rus´. At the very time around 840 when hostilities were
breaking out in *Sueonia* against (Arch)bishop Gautbert and the young Frankish
church structure, it was reported in contemporary and well-informed Frankish
annals that envoys who called their people *Rhos* had arrived at the Byzantine im-
perial court, sent by their king, called *chacanus,*[23] for the sake of friendship. They
were brought from Constantinople in the early summer of 839, with an imperial
Byzantine delegation to the court of the Frankish Emperor Louis the Pious. In an
enclosed letter from the Byzantine Emperor Theophilos, the Frankish ruler was
asked to help this *Rhos* embassy through his realm on their way home, since the
route by which they had arrived in Constantinople went through barbarian and
very ferocious peoples (*gentes*), a route that Theophilos did not want them to take
again. Louis the Pious made careful investigations about the reasons for their visit
and found out that they actually belonged to the people of the *Sueones*. This fact
seems to have been enough for the Frankish Emperor to suspect that they had
come as spies to the Byzantine Empire as well as to his own, not for the sake of
friendship. He therefore decided to detain them until it could be established con-
clusively if they were to be trusted or not. In a response letter to Constantinople he
reported his decision, stating that if they were found to be trustworthy and a suita-
ble occasion presented itself, he would help them home to their *patria*. Otherwise
he would return them to Constantinople so that Theophilos could deal with them
as he saw fit.[24] Nothing more is heard in the matter, but, as already mentioned, the
Frankish priests were now violently thrown out of the kingdom of the *Sueones* to-

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22 Jonathan Shepard, 'From the Bosporus to the British Isles: The Way from the Greeks to the Varangians',
    in *Drevneishie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy: 2009 god* (Moscow: Indrik, 2010), pp. 15–42.
23 Cf. Ildar Garipzanov, 'The Annals of St. Bertin (839) and Chacanus of the Rhos', *Ruthenica*, 5 (2006), 7–11.
24 *Annales Bertiniani, s.a.* 939, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH, SRG (Hannover: Hahn, 1883), pp. 19–20;
    Jonathan Shepard, 'The Rhos Guests of Louis the Pious: Whence and Wherefore?', *Early Medieval
    Europe*, 4 (1995), 41–60.

gether with their newly appointed metropolitan Gautbert Simon. Thus, the climate for Frankish connections in *Sueonia* was decidedly chilly at this time.

Repeated political difficulties caused by the Huns, Avars, Bulgarians, Magyars, and Petchenegs must have hindered more stable diplomatic relations between Constantinople and more distant parts of the continent from time to time during the Early Middle Ages. Whatever the reasons might have been in this case, the Rus´ delegation seems not to have continued beyond 838/39, and the Rus´ did not make any lasting impression on this occasion. Nevertheless, the next time that the Rus´ paid a visit to the Imperial City, they certainly would.

In 860, vast numbers of vessels — in later Rus´ sources said to have been under the command of the princes Askold and Dir — poured into the Black Sea, harried all the way to the eastern Mediterranean and even attacked the Imperial City before the Emperor Michael III returned from a campaign against the Caliphate to defend his people. It was a shock, and the Patriarch Photius expressed the shame that the attack inflicted on the Empire, especially since 'that nation was obscure, insignificant, and not even known'.[25]

The Rhos' delegation of 839 and Patriarch Photius' reference to the attack of 860 demonstrate that in the mid-ninth century there had not been any relations between the Byzantine Church and the regions of the far North, at least in recent times. Since the early 830s Gautbert Simon held the position of archbishop among the *Sueones*. Consequently, by 839 these lands were under influence of the Frankish Church. There was no room for a Byzantine Church in this region, which was at the time and until Emperor Theophilos' death in 842 unwaveringly iconoclastic. Yet (Arch)bishop Gautbert's death in 859/60 left the *Sueones* without an ecclesiastical head, and in spite of the fact that Archbishop Ansgar received an important letter bestowing papal privileges from the Roman curia of Pope Nicholas I in May 864, he was not established as Gautbert's successor, only confirmed as papal legate in these parts of the North. His death in February 865 made the power structure of the Latin Church in the North even more obscure than it was already. At this time Ansgar's successor Rimbert felt the need to write *Vita Ansgarii* as a statement of Bremen's key role in the North, citing the crucial papal documents.

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25 *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople*, 4. 1, trans. by Cyril Mango (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 96. Cf. ibid., 3. 2, p. 88: '[…] the unbelievable course of the barbarians did not give rumour time to announce it [i.e. the attack], so that some means of safety could be devised, but the sight accompanied the report, and that despite the distance, and the fact that the invaders were sundered off from us by so many lands and kingdoms, by navigable rivers and harbourless seas […]', and 4. 2, p. 98: 'An obscure nation, a nation of no account, a nation ranked among the slaves, unknown, but which has won a name from the expedition against us, insignificant, but now become famous, humble and destitute, but now risen to a splendid height and immense wealth, a nation dwelling somewhere far from our country, barbarous, nomadic, armed with arrogance, unwatched, unchallenged, leaderless, has suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, like a wave of the sea, poured over our frontiers, and as a wild boar has devoured the inhabitants of the land like grass, or straw or a crop (O, the God sent punishment that befell us!) sparing nothing from man to beast […].'

From his own *Vita* we learn that he also acted in the North as if he had 'inherited' Ansgar's privileges.

From a canonical point of view, however, the privileges in question — metropolitan of the *Sueones* (Gautbert) and papal legate (Gautbert and Ansgar) — would return to Rome under these circumstances. Yet the situation in Rome in the middle of the 960s was anything but clear. During this time, as a result of being in turmoil, the papal curia was paving the way for the great divide between the Eastern and the Western Churches through a fierce clash with Constantinople — the so-called 'Photian schism' — which included among other things the *Filioque* Controversy and the intense supremacy quarrel concerning the Bulgarians.[26]

It cannot be a mere coincidence that it is precisely in these years that we hear about envoys sent from the Rus´ to Constantinople to declare their readiness to be baptised.[27] It is not possible to establish exactly what happened, but the attack of 860 had obviously sparked intense diplomatic activity. The consequences of this event can be seen in an encyclical letter from Patriarch Photius to all the Oriental patriarchs, written in the early summer of 867. Photius speaks with great anger about terrible dogmatic novelties that the Latin Church had recently introduced, such as adding *filioque* to the creed. Threatening to exclude the entire West from communion with all 'Christians', he was especially infuriated by the fact that less than two years after the baptism of the Bulgarians by the Byzantine Church, honourless men appeared 'out of the darkness, i.e. the West', and were, like wild boars in God's newly planted vineyard, laying it waste 'with hoof and tusk, that is with their disgraceful lives and corrupted dogmas'. He condemned these 'so called Bishops' and precursors of apostasy as servants of the enemy, i.e. the Devil, and enemies of God. He called upon his fellow patriarchs to help wipe all this evil from the West out of the Church. When this corrupt and 'Godless' preaching had been rooted out, there was, according to Photius, hope that the Bulgarians would return to the Faith they had initially accepted, while there was also hope for those formerly most evil of men, the Rus´, who had only a few years ago dared to attack Constantinople. They had already replaced their 'pagan and godless worship' (*Ελληνικής και αθέου δόξης*)[28] with 'the pure and uncorrupted religion of the Christians', i.e. the Greeks (*τών Χριστιανών καθαράν και ακίβδηλον θρησκείαν*). Instead of continuing to thieve, they had placed themselves among

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26   See Dvornik, *The Photian Schism*.

27   Ludolf Müller, *Die Taufe Russlands: die Frühgeschichte des russischen Christentums bis zum Jahre 988* (Munich: Erich Wewel, 1987), pp. 57–60.

28   Cf. Rom. 3. 9–23, and the concept κενόδοξοι in Phil. 2. 3. Could Photius' formulation be a reference to the glory and fame that the Rus´ had won through the attack? Photius had spoken vividly about this unworthy glory in his Homilies, see the quote above. Most commentators of this passage have read δόξης as 'religion' which has no firm basis; the translation 'worship' is possible though, and seems to fit with the context, but in my opinion it risks making the reader miss the point of the passage, which is the reference to Rom. 3. 23: glory and worship without the consent of God/Constantinople, brought nothing but vain glory and *vana superstitio*. '*Ελληνικής*' had already lost all 'ethnic' significance in late Roman times and had assumed the more general meaning of 'pagan' or 'non-Christian'.

the friends and adherents of the Empire, and they had become so eager in their faith that they had received a bishop and shepherd, and enthusiastically embraced all of the Christian customs from Constantinople.[29]

This reference to the 'conversion of the Rus´' in the middle of the 860s in a contemporary source has not always received due attention.[30] There are several reasons for this, such as the prevalent myth transmitted in later sources of the 'Christianisation of Rus´' under Volodimer the Great, and the fact that the treaty of 911, cited in the *PVL*, still speaks of the distinction between the Christians and Rus´ (which actually seems to be a synonymous expression for 'Greek and Rus´'). A third reason, however, is another good source, the *Vita* of Emperor Basil I, which was instigated by Basil's own grandson Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus in the 950s. Emperor Basil had come to power in September 867 by killing his predecessor Michael III. He immediately deposed Photius as patriarch and reinstalled Patriarch Ignatius whom Photius and Michael III had deposed in 858, which had been an unlawful act according to both Ignatius and the papacy.[31]

In *Vita Basilii* it is clearly stated in direct opposition to the encyclical letter of Photius that it was after Photius' deposition under Basil's emperorship that a peace agreement was made with the Rus´. Furthermore, in connection with this agreement we are told as well that Basil had also persuaded the Rus´ to take baptism, and to accept an archbishop who had been ordained by Patriarch Ignatius.[32]

There is evidence to suggest that good relations were indeed established during these years between the Greeks and Rus´, because a substantial number of Rus´ did military service in the Empire before the treaty of 911.[33] This supports the information in our two sources about a peace treaty, but if the Rus´ were actually Christianised by Patriarch Photius and had received a bishop from him, then why did they have to be Christianised by Basil and receive an archbishop from Ignatius? Recently, an explanation was suggested by Constantine Zuckerman. According to Zuckerman, this was a two-step conversion. Photius had succeeded in creating a good relationship with the Rus´, and had made them accept Christianity, but he also made a serious mistake of the same kind that he had done in relation to the Bulgars a few years earlier: disappointing the new converts by sending only a bishop rather than an archbishop. In the case of Bulgaria this had

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29 *Photii Patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia*, Ep. 2, ed. by B. Laourdas and L.G. Westerinck, I (Leipzig: Teubner, 1983), pp. 40–53; on the conversion of the Rus´ see p. 50, ll. 293–305.

30 Müller, *Die Taufe Russlands*, p. 60: 'Dieser Text bezeugt zweifelsfrei, dass zur Zeit der Abfassung dieses Briefes eine regelrechte, von Byzanz eingesetzte und der byzantinischen Kirche unterstehende Kirchenorganisation in Russland begründet worden war.'

31 Dvornik, *The Photian Schism*, passim.

32 Theophanes Continuatus. *Chronographia*, 5. 97, ed. by I. Bekker (Bonn, 1838), pp. 342–44.

33 Alexander A. Vasiliev, *The Russian Attack on Constantinople in 860* (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1946), pp. 231–32; and Sigfús Blöndal and Benedikt S. Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium: an Aspect of Byzantine Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 27.

the disastrous effect that Khan Boris turned to Rome instead. In the case of Rus´, we do not know of such events, but after a few years — around 870 according to Zuckerman — they got their archbishop from Basil and Ignatius.[34]

Nevertheless, there might be another side to this problem as well.[35] One question that became acute immediately after the deposition of Photius was whether or not his legal acts could still be held as valid. If Ignatius' deposition in 858 had been illegal, had Photius in fact been the patriarch? One thing in this respect was clear enough: the Papacy did not accept Photius, and the Frankish assertion in 839 that the *Rhos* was a part of the *gens Sueonum* was an indication that any ecclesiastical intrusions into this sphere of influence — to which the Papacy had confirmed Ansgar as Papal Legate as late as May 864 — might well lead to a clash with the Latin Church. Under these conditions, to have had the Church in Rus´ established by Photius was not a good starting point for the Byzantines. Obviously, it was not a solid legal foundation to build on, for at any time it could be challenged as being schismatic, since the papacy did not accept Photius as patriarch. This circumstance might very well have called for a revision of the church structure among the Rus´ around 870, and a simple way to solve the problem was to re-establish the Rus´ Church with an archbishop at its head. This was also a strategy of attack that took advantage of the weak and unclear position of the Latin Church and the Episcopal powers among the *Sueones* after the deaths of Gautbert and Ansgar in around 860 and 865 respectively.

Putting the pieces together, we can conclude that there must have been two metropolitan Churches under construction among the *Sueones* and the *Rhos* in the ninth century, one Latin-Frankish under Gautbert in the 830s and one Byzantine among the Rus´ from the 870s. We do not, however, know where they were placed. In the first case, Birka or its surrounding area seems to be a likely hypothesis, while in the second case the most natural place would certainly have been Kiev,[36] which by this time had started to become the key focal point of the Rus´ world. The first of these churches (Latin-Frankish) seems to have been abandoned in around 840, but in the case of the Byzantine Church the situation is much more unclear. The perspective displayed in *Vita Basilii*, representing the circle around Constantine Porphyrogenitus in the 950s, does not seem to reflect any break at all.[37] The fact is, as is well known to experts in Rus´ history but probably less well

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34 Constantine Zuckerman, 'Deux étapes de la formation de l'ancien état russe', in *Les centres proto-urbains russes entre Scandinavie, Byzance et Orient: Actes du Colloque International tenu au Collège de France en octobre 1997*, ed by M. Kazanski and others, Réalités byzantines, 7 (Paris: Lethielleux, 2000), pp. 95–120.

35 Müller, *Die Taufe Russlands*, p. 65.

36 Ibid., pp. 60–62; Josef Bujnoch, 'Geschichte und Vorgeschichte der Missionerung Russlands', in *Millennium Russiae Christianae: Tausend Jahre christliches Russland 988–1988*, ed. by Gerhard Birkfellner, Schriften des Komitees der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zur Förderung der slawischen Studien, 16 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1993) pp. 25–41 (pp. 32–33); cf. Podskalsky, *Christentum und theologische Literatur*, p. 27, on the reasons against Tmutarakan.

37 We are told in *Vita Basilii* (Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, 5. 97, pp. 342–44) that after a miracle had been performed by the Byzantine Archbishop in front of the Rus´, the Rus´ abandoned all

known in wider circles, that from the Byzantine perspective there was no decisive 'Christianisation' of the Rus´ with Volodimer's baptism around 989.[38] This event, so famous in later Rus´ and even Scandinavian historical writings from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries onwards, went totally unnoticed in Byzantine sources.[39] From their perspective, an Archbishopric had been established among the Rus´ around 867/70 and existed there continuously,[40] and some scholars have considered it reasonable to assume that, in reality, there actually was such continuity.[41]

Thus, behind the simplified picture presented in twelfth- and thirteenth-century sources, both Frankish Christianity and Orthodox — 'Varangian' — Christianity were important factors in the early stages of Christianity in Scandinavia and Rus´. Nevertheless, neither of these two were of any importance before the 830s and neither succeeded in establishing a dominant position before the end of the tenth century. In light of this, I will now turn to a possible third factor.

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doubts and began to be baptized. The formulations imply that they had continued with that ever since. Constantine's grandfather, Emperor Basil I, Patriarch Ignatius, and the unnamed Archbishop had, from this perspective, converted the Rus´ once and for all.

38 A few decades into the eleventh century, the Arabic-Christian historian Yahya of Antioch mentions the baptism of Volodimer and those in his realm (Peter Kawerau, *Arabische Quellen zur Christianisierung Russlands* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasswitz, 1967), p. 14–19), but this does not contradict the official position of the Byzantine authorities since it concerns only the baptism, not the foundation of a new church. Greek clerics might have had a hard time among the Rus´ during the previous years since, as Yahya of Antioch implies, Volodimer had parted with the Bulgarians in hostilities against the Byzantines. For more information on the role of baptism among the Rus´ (and Varangians), see later in this article. The whole operation must be seen in the light of the rebellion of Bardas Phokas, when Emperor Basil II badly needed the Varangian/Rus´ troops, but could not lay the fate of the Empire in the hands of the unbaptised, which in the propaganda would have had the same semantic meaning as 'pagans', see Andrzej Poppe, 'The Political Background to the Baptism of Rus´: Byzantine-Russian Relations between 986–89', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 30 (1976), 195–244 (p. 201); and Podskalsky, *Christentum und theologische Literatur*, pp. 17–24.

39 Andrzej Poppe's judgement in this connection seems to address the core of the problem: 'The idea of "source" has been rather freely interpreted by many historians: later materials (from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries) have been evaluated on the same level as the primary sources' ('The Political Background', p. 201, note 15).

40 Poppe, 'The Political Background', p. 201, Podskalsky, *Christentum und theologische Literatur*, p. 14, note 61; and Müller, *Die Taufe Russlands*, pp. 65–66.

41 See for instance Samuel H. Cross's review of G. Laehr, *Die Anfänge des russischen Reiches (Politische Geschichte im 9. und 10. Jahrhundert)* (Berlin: E. Ebering, 1930) in *Speculum*, 7 (1932), 138–40 (p. 140): 'it is not so certain that Christian activities ceased entirely in Kiev after its capture by Oleg, especially on account of the proofs of the existence of a considerable group of Christians in Kiev supplied by the Treaty of 944'. The Russian tradition is of course on this point governed by the idea of a conversion of Rus´ under Volodimer, and the beginning of the Metropolitan see of the Rus´ is lost in the distant past, but here too the Patriarch Photius is identified as providing a starting point for the conversion. The information in the chronicles is however very confused from a chronological point of view, placing Photius in the time of Volodimer, see Müller, *Die Taufe Russlands*, p. 61; Oleg M. Rapov, *Russkaia cerkov v IX — pervoi treti XII veka: priniatie christianstva* (Moscow: Vyssshaia shkola, 1988), pp. 281–82; Fedor B. Poliakov, 'Die Auffassung der byzantinischen Mission in der lokalen hagiographischen Überlieferung über den Heiligen Leontij von Rostov', in *Tausend Jahre Christentum in Russland*, ed. by Karl Christian Felmy and others (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), pp. 445–59 (pp. 450–53); Edgar Hösch, 'Griechische Bischöfe in Altrußland', in *Zwischen Christianisierung und Europäisierung: Beiträge zur Geschichte Osteuropas in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit: Festschrift für Peter Nitsche zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Eckhard Hübner, Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des östlichen Europa, 51 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998), pp. 201–20 (pp. 210–14).

Medieval Scythia

From the latter part of the ninth century there seems to be a clear tension between Rome and Constantinople over the concepts of *Sueones* and *Rhos*; Patriarch Photius acted almost like a first Anti-Normanist by disregarding the claims of the Latin Church among the Rus´. Yet there is also a third concept in play: when in 936 Archbishop Unni of Bremen died in Birka in what today is central Sweden, an almost contemporary monk in the Saxon monastery Corvey noted this, but instead of Birka or *Sueonia* he referred to the place of his death as being *in Scithiam*.[42] The question, then, is what did this tenth-century Frankish monk have in mind?

Scythia is a geographical concept of impressive durability. As a name for the part of Europe north of the Black Sea from the Danube to the Don, it was already well-established when Herodotos wrote about it in the fifth century B.C., and it was probably already very old by then.[43] One thousand years later, it had the same meaning when Jordanes wrote about the Goths in the middle of the sixth century.[44] By this time, it is certain that the term 'Scythians' had started to be attributed to any group beyond the Danube coming into contact with the Greek-Roman world.[45] For instance, the Goths are said by Procopius to have been called Scythians previously, because all groups who lived in that area were called Scythians.[46]

To Jordanes, *Scythia* was a political entity over which *Ermanarik* had ruled (*imperavit*) and over which Attila had been *regnator*. He treated *Germania* and *Scythia* as two equal entities separated by a border in Weichsel, stating that Ermanaric 'ruled over all nations in *Scythia* and *Germania*'.[47] Several centuries later Germania's eastern border still went in Weichsel.[48] Even when Otto III

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42 *Die Corveyer Annalen*, *s.a.* 936, ed. by Joseph Prinz (Münster in Westfalen: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1982), p. 113 and table 7.

43 Cf. Esther Jacobson, *The Art of the Scythians: Interpenetration of Cultures at the Edge of the Hellenic World*, Handbuch der Orientalistik, 8,2 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 29–51; Boris N. Grakow, *Die Skythen* (Berlin: Deutscher Vlg. der Wissenschaften, 1978); Ellis H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks: A Survey of Ancient History and Archaeology on the North Coast of the Euxine from the Danube to the Caucasus* (New York: Biblo & Tannen, 1971[1913]).

44 Jordanes, *Getica*, 30–32, 45, and 123–25, in *Jordanis Romana et Getica*, ed. by Theodor Momsen, MGH, Auctores antiquissimi, 5,1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1882), pp. 61–62, 65, and 89–90, the latter of which demonstrates the eastern borders of *Scythia* through the story of how the Huns entered this land that until then was unknown to them, over the Sea of Azov. For more on this subject see Henrik Janson, 'Nordens kristnande och Skytiens undergång', in *Från Bysans till Norden*, pp. 165–217 (p. 185). The concept could also be used more loosely to designate most of the North-Central Eurasia, but in a stricter sense the region spanned from the Danube (and Weichsel) to the Don (and the Urals).

45 In my opinion it had always been the case, see Janson, 'Nordens kristnande', pp. 178–86; and Henrik Janson, 'The Christianisation of Scandinavia and the End of Scythia', in *Drevneishie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy: 2009 god* (Moscow: Indrik, 2010), pp. 197–210 (pp. 207–8).

46 Procopius of Caesaria, *Werke* 2: *Gotenkriege*, 4. 5–6, ed. by O. Veh (München: Heimeran, 1966), pp. 736–55 (p. 738).

47 Jordanes, *Getica*, 120, p. 89: '[…] omnibus Scythiae et Germaniae nationibus […] imperavit'.

48 Janson, 'Nordens kristnande', p. 186.

in 997 called for Gerbert d'Aurillac — Archbishop of Reims and later Pope Sylvester II — to join his court, Gerbert, often regarded as the most learned of men in the tenth century, enthusiastically penned the famous words 'Ours, ours is the Roman Empire', naming the realms in question, i.e. Europe outside the Greek Byzantine Empire and the Muslim Spain: *Italia*, *Gallia*, *Germania* and *Scythia*.[49]

Accordingly, both *Scythia* and *Germania* seem to have been territories with an extremely stable position in the European geography well into the Early Middle Ages. However, Scandinavia's position in this respect was not as stable. In 98 A.D. Tacitus had included major parts of Scandinavia and the Baltics in his *Germania*, but in the Early Middle Ages the perspective seems to have shifted somewhat. The sources now distinguished between *Scythia minor* and *Scythia (maior)*. *Scythia minor* designated the former Roman province on the western Black Sea shore south of the Danube, now known as Dobrogea. Its ecclesiastical centre was in the Metropolitan town *Tomis*, founded during the Gothic era. *Scythia (maior)* was Scythia proper; the position of *Tomis* on the very edge of the huge *Scythia (maior)* but beyond it, is remniscent of the position of Mainz in lesser *Germania* on the Roman side of the Rhine, later the base for Boniface, who became 'the apostle of the Germans' in Germania proper, *Germania magna*. To some extent, it also has resonances with Hamburg (and Bremen) on the edge of the Frankish Empire, and perhaps also Dory (*Doros*) on Crimea in the eparchy of *Gothia* in the eighth century.[50] However, due to the continuous invasions and violence in the Danube area during the Early Middle Ages, *Tomis* was often isolated and eventually ended up under the rule of the Bulgarian princes.

In late Roman times and in the first centuries of the Middle Ages, there is sometimes a certain degree of uncertainty as to whether the name *Scythia* in the sources refers to *Scythia minor* or *Scythia (maior)*. In the seventh century, however, due to large social and political changes that were taking place in the area beginning in the late sixth century,[51] the name *Scythia minor* largely fell out of use. Around 700 we instead find the anonymous geographer of Ravenna identifying the island of *Scandza* — mentioned by Jordanes as the place from which the Goths originated — as 'Old Scythia' (*Scythia antiqua*).[52]

Under the year 907 the *PVL* mentions the Varangians first among the peoples that the Greeks counted as being part of *Scythia maior*.[53] Furthermore, it can be noted that immediately after the attack on Constantinople in 860 Patriarch Photius

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49 *Lettres de Gerbert (983–997)*, ed. by Julien Havet, Collection de textes pour servir à l'étude et à l'enseignement de l'histoire, 6 (Paris, 1889), p. 237.

50 Alexander A. Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea*, Monographs of the Medieval Academy of America, 11 (Cambridge, MA, 1936), pp. 97–104.

51 Alexandru Madgearu, 'The End of Town-life in Scythia Minor', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 20,2 (2001), 207–17.

52 *Ravennatis anonymi cosmographia et Guidonis geographia*, 1. 12, ed. by J. Schnetz, Itineraria Romana, 2 (Leipsig: Teubner, 1940), p. 11.

53 PSRL, 1, cols. 30–31; *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, pp. 64–65.

had referred to the aggressors as Scythians.[54] It was only when he got back to the subject in his encyclical letter of 867, and boasted that they were now allies of the Empire and had received a bishop, that he called them 'Rhos'.

Another example that indicates Scandinavia's close link to the geographical concept of *Scythia* comes from the mid-eleventh century. According to the Byzantine chronicler John Scylitzes, Prince Volodimer of Novgorod unleashed his fury against the Byzantines in 1043, and Scylitzes declared that the reason was that an 'illustrious *Scyth*' had been killed in a conflict that arose amongst traders in the Empire. The focus of his account lies with the still-young Prince Volodimer, and there is no mention of his father Grand Prince Iaroslav the Wise of Kiev, even though there can be no doubt that the whole operation was directed and sanctioned by Iaroslav.[55] Nevertheless, Scylitzes places the responsibility for the episode solely with Prince Volodimer stating that he had exploded in anger and decided to attack Constantinople. Scylitzes describes how the prince immediately gathered all his troops, and called in also 'a considerable number of the people inhabiting the islands to the north of the ocean', which obviously refers to Scandinavia. Scylitzes furthermore informs us that the 'Scythian' merchants dwelling in the capital were dispersed into the themes and placed under armed guard. Speaking of Volodimer's fleet, he states that the 'Scythians' dwelled in their ships at a location on the southern shore of the Black Sea.[56]

There was a reason why Scylitzes did not use the concept of Rus´ explicitly in this account. There was a special relationship between the illustrious *Scyth* that had been killed, the *Scythian* merchants in Byzantium, Volodimer of Novgorod, and finally the peoples from the islands north of the ocean. A conflict with them was to some extent a conflict with the Rus´, but they did not actually fit Scylitzes's political concept in the middle of the eleventh century; rather, in his eyes they were *Scythians*. It all seems to be part of a desire to free Grand Prince Iaroslav and the Rus´ from all responsibility for the attack, and instead lay the blame on Volodimer and the 'Scythians'. In all probability this also would have been the version that Iaroslav himself preferred.[57]

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54 *The Homilies of Photius*, 3. 3, p. 89.

55 For the political background and the intense, far-reaching network of alliances that was built up in Europe around the attack of 1043 — which actually became something of a turning point for the political development of the North — see Henrik Janson, *Templum nobilissimum: Adam av Bremen, Uppsalatemplet and konfliktlinjerna i Europa kring år 1075,* Avhandlingar från Historiska institutionen i Göteborg, 21 (Göteborg, 1998), pp. 133–52; cf. Jonathan Shepard, 'Why did the Russians Attack Byzantium in 1043?', *Byzantinisch Neugreichische Jahrbücher*, 22 (1977–84), 147–212.

56 Johannes Scylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, ed by I. Thurn, Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae 5 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973), pp. 430–31. Cf. Janson, 'Nordens kristnande', p. 200, with notes 134 and 135.

57 Whether or not it was because of his role as scapegoat, Volodimer actually never recovered from the catastrophic experience of 1043, and neither were the relations between northern Rus´ and Scandinavia ever to be the same again, see Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*, pp. 155–62 with note 533.

In the mid 1070s, approximately at the same time as Scylitzes gave this report, Adam of Bremen, writing from a more western perspective, stated that beyond the Danish islands, 'another world' (*alter mundus*) was opening up that was almost unknown in his part of the world.[58] The traveller here entered into what he called the *Scythian Sea*,[59] and here began the Scythian world. From here, the Scythian Bay 'stretched over long distances through Scythian regions all the way to Greece' (*longo tractu per Scithicas regiones tendatur usque in Greciam*).[60]

This scattered evidence seems to suggest that up to the middle of the eleventh century the concept of *Scythia* and the *Scythians* could be used as something more than merely a learned reference to an antiquated ethnonym. It could contain still some cultural — and, in some cases, perhaps even political — significance, and the sphere it designated could include Scandinavia. In this respect the evidence from the written sources is supported by the archaeological material, which indicates strong eastern connections for Scandinavia until the end of the tenth century.[61] Consequently, when in the middle of the tenth century a monk from Corvey referred to Birka in Lake Mälaren as a place located *in Scithiam*, there is reason to believe that to him *Scythia* was something more than a mere learned allusion to classical literature. There are good reasons to think that as far as this monk was concerned, *Scythia* referred to a vast cultural sphere beyond the horizon of the Frankish and the Byzantine Empires, in which at least the eastern parts of Scandinavia could be included.

Scythian Christianity

As was addressed in earlier paragraphs, in connection with the baptism of Harold Bluetooth Widukind of Corvey said that the Danes hade been *christiani* since ancient times. Writing on the same subject some decades later, Thietmar of Merseburg indicated not only that they had been Christians before but also that they had deviated from the proper religion of their forefathers. Seen from this perspective, the religion of the Danes was a mutation of the proper form of Christianity held by their predecessors. This was the perspective on the Danish religion before Harald's conversion around the end of the first millennium, and how this is to be understood is still open for discussion.

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58 Adam, *Gestae*, 4. 21, p. 250.
59 Adam, *Gestae*, 2. 18; 2. 21–22; 4. 10, with Schol. 116, pp. 73–81 and 237–38. In Schol. 123 we find an interesting distinction between *Scythia* and *Sueonia* proper, for Emund, King of the *Sueones*, sent his son King (!) Anund to Scythia (*in Scithiam*) to expand the Empire (*ad dilatandum imperium*).
60 Adam, *Gestae*, 4. 10, p. 237.
61 T. J. Arne, *La Suède et l'Orient: études archéologiques sur les relations de la Suède et de l'Orient pendant l'âge des vikings*, Archives d'études orientales, 8 (Uppsala, 1914); Sture Bolin, 'Muhammed, Karl den store och Rurik', *Scandia*, 12 (1939), 181–222; Ingmar Jansson, 'Situationen i Norden och Östeuropa för 1000 år sedan – en arkeologs synpunkter på frågan om östkristna inflytanden under missionstiden', in *Från Bysans till Norden*, pp. 37–95.

In *Vita Ansgarii* we are told that what triggered the intense 'missionary' activities from the Frankish side around 830 was an embassy from the *Sueones* to the Frankish Emperor, probably in 829. Among other things, this embassy had informed the Emperor that there where 'many among their people' (*multos in gente sua*) who wished to receive 'the cult of the Christian religion' (*christianae religionis cultum*), and even the king was inclined to allow God's priests to reside there if they were found worthy.[62] These are the words of the *Sueones* as filtered through the language of a high ranking cleric of the Frankish Church. The *Sueones* have most certainly not spoken of 'God's priests', but of Frankish priests, and most probably they did not speak of 'the cult of the Christian religion' but rather of services according to Frankish observance. What is clear though from this passage is that there were 'many' (*multi*) *Sueones* that were well-acquainted with and well-disposed to Christianity even before Ansgar's arrival around 830. In fact, this should come as no surprise since the archaeological material has long indicated that there were Christian components in Scandinavian society for centuries before the official conversion.[63]

Around 840, Walafrid Strabo, the abbot of Reichenau, tried to explain why there were Greek words, such as the rather fundamental word *kyrica*, 'church', in his own language, before turning to the matter of the Goths. According to the abbot, the Goths had been converted to Christianity early on, 'if not the right way', when they lived in the provinces of the Greek, and they had 'our i.e. the Teutonic language'. Through the work of this people, according to Walafrid, holy books were translated into their language, and these monuments could still be found (that is, in the ninth century) among some peoples. Next came the most sensational information: trustworthy monastic brothers had informed him that 'among some of the Scythian peoples' (*apud quasdam Scytharum gentes*), especially the Tomitans, the Divine Service was still today (*hactenus*) celebrated in this language'.[64]

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62 Rimbert, *Vite Ansgarii*, 9, pp. 34–35. I have hesitated in translating the word *religio* as 'religion' here because the modern connotations of that word are more far-reaching than they were in the Middle Ages when *religio* rather meant something like 'observance', 'reverence' or 'piety'.

63 Wilhelm Holmqvist, 'Was There a Christian Mission to Sweden before Ansgar?', *Early Medieval Studies*, 8 (1975), 33–55. See also Brita Malmer, 'Kristna symboler på danska mynt ca 825–1050', in *Kristendommen i Danmark før 1050*, ed. by Niels Lund (Roskilde: Roskilde Museums Forlag, 2004), pp. 75–85 (pp. 75–78), who identifies old Christian symbols on Danish coins from the 820s, which obviously had nothing to do with Ansgar, see Niels Lund, 'Mission i Danmark før Harald Blåtands dåp', in *Kristendommen i Danmark før 1050*, ed. by Niels Lund (Roskilde: Roskilde Museums Forlag, 2004), pp. 20–27 (p. 25). Malmer's interpretation has however been challenged by Ildar H. Garipzanov, 'Frontier Identities: Carolingian Frontier and Gens Danorum', in *Franks, Northmen, and Slavs: Identities and State Formation in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by Ildar H. Garipzanov and others (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 113–42 (p. 136–39).

64 Walafrid Strabo, *Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum*, ed. by Alfred Boretius and Viktor Krause, MGH, Legum Sectio, 2,2 (Hannover: Hahn, 1897), p. 473–516 (col. 927): 'Si autem quaeritur qua occasione ad nos vestigia haec Graecitatis advenerint, dicendum et Barbaros in Romana republica militasse, et multos praedicatorum Graece et Latinae locutionis peritos, inter has bestias cum erroribus pugnaturos venisse: et eis pro causis, multa nostros

The question then is, which peoples in *Scythia* were celebrating the mass in Gothic in the early ninth century? There is no obvious answer to this question. Possibly such masses could have been celebrated in Tomis — if the 'Tomitans' were actually still in the city after the Bulgarian invasions — but Walafrid speaks about a plurality of peoples, and in that case there seems only to be two Germanic-speaking possibilities left:[65] the Goths in the Crimea region and the Scandinavian world. Yet Walafrid would have had hardly any knowledge about the Crimea.[66] It furthermore seems unlikely that with the phrase *quasdam Scytharum gentes* he would have been referring to the Goths themselves.[67] What was this Christianity of *Scythia* celebrated in a Germanic language?

The first (known) bishop of Tomis and *Scythia* (*minor*) was Theophilus, 'bishop of the Goths', who signed the statement of the Council of Nicaea against the Arians in 325.[68] When the Arian Goths under the next (known) bishop of the Goths, Wulfila travelled to more secure Roman areas during a period of insurrection from the Huns in the 370s, an Orthodox branch of the Goths still remained around and beyond the Danube.[69] In Constantinople by this time, the Goths were viewed as the filthiest of barbarians and it caused some resentment in the Imperial City when in around 400 Patriarch John Chrysostom provided a group of these Orthodox Goths with a church outside the City and allowed them to worship and preach in their own Gothic language. He even took part in some of these ceremonies himself and engaged, through interpreters, in intimate discussions with the Goths.[70]

Consequently, at the beginning of the fifth century the liturgical Gothic tongue had been sanctioned by the highest authority, and this seems to have contributed

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quae prius non noverant utilia didicisse, praecipueque a Gothis, qui et Getae, cum eo tempore, quo ad fidem Christi, licet non recto itinere, perducti sunt, in Graecorum provinciis commorantes nostrum, id est Theotiscum sermonem habuerint. Et (ut historiae testantur) postmodum studiosi illius gentis, divinos libros in suae locutionis proprietatem transtulerint, quorum adhuc monumenta apud nonnullos habentur. Et fidelium fratrum relatione didicimus, apud quasdam Scytharum gentes maxime Tomitanos eadem locutione, divina hactenus celebrari officia.'

65 It has to be noted though that the groups using this liturgy must not necessarily have been primarily Germanic speaking.

66 The possibility cannot of course be totally ruled out, but until the 860s the knowledge in the West about the Greek world was astonishingly meagre. Even the envoys sent by Nicholas I to Constantinople in 861 to negotiate with Patriarch Photius I did not know Greek, see *Anastasii bibliothecarii epistolae sive praefationes*, ed. by E. Perels and G. Laehr, MGH, Epistolae, 7 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1928), pp. 395–442 (p. 405).

67 Walafrid's teacher was the learned Abbot Hrabanus Maurus of Fulda who in the 830s was engaged in (Arch)bishop Gautbert's work on establishing a new Church in *Sueonia*, sending books, bells, priestly garments and so on to Gautbert in *Sueonia*, see Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, p. 700, note 2. As tutor of the young Charles the Bald, Walafrid would probably have been present at court when the delegation from the *Sueones* turned up in Worms in 829 and when Ansgar arrived with a rune-letter from the *rex Sueonom* a couple of years later. Archbishop Ebbo of Reims, one of the very few, maybe the only of higher rank in the Frankish church who had entered the Scandinavian world before the 830s might also have been a source of information.

68 Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea*, pp. 11–18.

69 Ibid., pp. 20–21.

70 Ibid., pp. 32–33.

to a strong Orthodox Gothic Church in the following generations. Well over a century later around the year 520, deeply learned and orthodox Gothic[71] monks appeared in Constantinople and in Rome to instigate a long-lasting and extremely complicated discussion in the Imperial Church regarding the most subtle aspects of the Trinity. They were well suited for this task since in *Scythia minor* on the fringe of the Empire where they came from, they were constantly clashing with various heresies.[72] In these years, the Church of *Scythia minor* seems to have operated as a consolidating and expanding missionary structure heading north and east, still with the bishop of *Tomis* as its metropolitan.[73] At the end of the sixth century, however, due to invading 'barbarians' (often referred to as Avars and Slavs) this structure was beginning to disintegrate. Only the coastal towns prevailed, and *Tomis* in particular, even if they were relatively isolated from its previous hinterland.[74]

During these first Christian centuries, the word 'Scythian' became almost synonymous with 'Gothic'. The Goths who were attacked by the Huns were called 'Scythians' by the contemporary writers Eunapius in around 400 and Zosimus in around 500, while the Goths whom John Chrysostom welcomed in Constantinople were called 'Scythians' by the contemporary writer Theodoret of Cyrus.[75] Even the Gothic monks who initiated the Trinitarian controversy around 520 were called 'Scythians'. Indeed, the whole debate has been referred to as 'the Scythian controversy'.[76] Perhaps the reluctance on the part of these writers to use the name 'Goths' for these Orthodox Christian Goths was the result of the intimate connection between this name and the Gothic Arians within the Empire.[77]

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71 Viktor Schurr, *Die Trinitätslehre des Boethius im Lichte der 'skythischen Kontroversen'*, Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur und Dogmengeschichte, 17,1 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1935), p. 143.

72 Cf. for example Schurr, *Die Trinitätslehre*, p. 148: 'Sicher ist dass den Skythen [i.e. the Scythian monks and theologists] eine häretische Sinnedeutung ferne lag: Sie waren schärfste Gegner der Eutychianer, Severianer und Henotiker.'

73 Emelian Popescu, 'Die kirchliche Organisation der Provinz Scythia Minor vom vierten bis ins sechste Jahrhundert', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 38 (1988), pp. 75–94 (p. 93): 'Die Missionstätigkeit der Donaubistümer der Scythia [minor] und vor allem die des Bistum von Tomis wird von zahlreichen christlichen Denkmäler bestätigt'. Linda Ellis, 'Elusive Places: a Chorological Approach to Identity and Territory in Scythia Minor (2nd – 7th centuries)', in *Romans, Barbarians and the Transformation of the Roman World: Cultural Interaction and the Creation of Identity in Late Antiquity: Biennial Conference on Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 241–52 (pp. 247–52).

74 Madgearu, 'The End of Town-life', p. 214: 'Ruralization began in the last two decades of the 6th century and continued through the first two decades of the next. One of its final results was to wipe out the differences between the territory of the South-Danubian provinces and the barbarian North-Danubian area.' Cf. Ellis, 'Elusive Places' (p. 251).

75 Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea*, pp. 24, 26, and 32.

76 Schurr, *Die Trinitätslehre*; Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, ii, 1: *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590–604)* (London: Mowbray, 1987), pp. 317–43.

77 J. H. W. G. Liebschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops: Army, Church and State in the Age of Arcadius and Chrysostom* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), p. 153; Ralph W. Mathisen, 'Barbarian Bishops and the Churches "in barbaricis gentibus" during Late Antiquity', *Speculum*, 72 (1997), 664–97 (pp. 679 and 693, with note 193); and Janson, 'Nordens kristnande', p. 189.

Under these circumstances, when in the sixth-century church of Tomis was at its peak, the term *Scythia* had almost become a nation-building feature among the inhabitants of *Scythia minor*, and they began to be referred to as 'Scythians'.[78] The invasions of around 600 brought a sudden end to this development, and the terms 'Scythia' and 'Scythians' rapidly returned to their broader geographical meaning, so that in the middle of the ninth century Patriarch Photius, as we have seen, was not afraid of any confusion when using the term 'Scythians' as designation for a new kind of 'barbarians' from the north, the Rhos. Subsequently, in 936 Archbishop Unni was said to have died in Birka *in Scithiam*.

What happened to the Orthodox Gothic Church in the turmoil of the invasions of the seventh and eighth centuries is not known. A solitary voice is the anonymous geographer of Ravenna who in around 700 gave voice to the associations that had developed around the Scythian name and identity during the previous period. He stated that several geographers called Scandinavia *Scythia Antiqua*[79] which indicates some kind of imagined Gothic connection between *Scythia minor* and Scandinavia, probably along similar lines to those expressed by Jordanes' *Getica* at the time when the society of the very learned 'Scythian monks' was at its peak in the mid-sixth century. Only in the ninth century through Walafrid Strabo do we hear again about religious communities in *Scythia* that used books and liturgy written in 'Gothic'.

Concluding Remarks

How far into Scythia had the Tomitan or 'Scythian' Church actually reached? Today there is no clear answer to that question. Nevertheless, what Walafrid says about books and liturgy written in the 'Gothic' language and used among some of the peoples of *Scythia* implies that these Scythian, i.e. 'Gothic', churches were still a factor in the religious life of *Scythia* towards the middle of the ninth century. However, if we look at *Scythia* in the classical sense as the region north of the Black Sea between the Danube and the Don in the first millennium AD, there were probably also many other factors. In fact, there is fairly good evidence to suggest that the Apostle Andrew, or others very close to him in time, had brought Christianity to *Scythia* only a few decades after the death of Jesus.[80] Additionally, just a century or so later, Tertullian explained that throughout the ancient world, people had come to believe in Jesus, and mentioning the Spainiards, the nations of the Gauls, the Britons — inaccessible to the Romans but subjugated to Christ — the Sarmatians, Dacians, Germanians and Scythians, 'and of many remote nations, provinces, and islands, many unknown to us, which we can scarcely enumerate.

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78   Ellis, 'Elusive Places', pp. 250–51.
79   *Ravennatis anonymi cosmographia*, 1. 12, p. 11.
80   Francis Dvornik, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of Apostle Andrew* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 199 and 208–9.

In all these places the name of Christ already arrived, to whom the city gates are open, and to whom none are closed'.[81] This enthusiastic account may however be exaggerated somewhat, for a contemporary of Tertullian, Origen, writes that there still were 'very many' among the Britons, the Germanic people by the ocean, Dacians, Sarmatians, and Scythians who had not been reached by the Word.[82] In the fourth century, Christian churches were well established on the northern shores of the Black Sea,[83] and by the seventh century it was probably hard to find any political body far beyond the Black Sea region that had never been subject to any Christian influences whatsoever.[84] The Huns, the Avars and the Magyars had all been exposed to Christianity before their entry into *Scythia* and the Danube area;[85] and indeed, by this time the Nestorians had even established a Christian Church in China.[86] What then about Christianity in Scythia?

It was pointed out many years ago by the Cambridge historian Nikolay Andreyev that the 'Christianisation' of Rus´ under Volodimer was not made 'into an uncultured soil, into a wild desert, but into a powerful community […] which in some sectors had long maintained contacts with other civilizations'.[87] The same goes of course for the Scandinavian North, and there is little doubt that one of these 'sectors' was Christianity. In *Scythia* proper — that is, the region north of the Black Sea between the Danube and the Don, and which sometimes included Scandinavia — there was probably a broad array of Christian influences during the first millennium AD, and probably a multitude of diverse internal developments, but there was no dominant institutionalised Church organisation during this period.

What traces might there be of such Christian influences? Let me end this discussion by pointing to two hypothetical possibilities. First, the *prima signatio* — or, as it is called in Swedish, *primsigning* — is a well-known component of the picture of the traditional violent Viking, who, still fundamentally an Old Norse pagan, suddenly discovers that it is easier to make good business with the Christians if you become *primsigned*. There are, however, reasons to think that it was more than just a practical matter, for in the early Church baptism was not seen as absolutely

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81 Tertullianus, *Adversus iudaeos*, 7. 4–5, ed. by H. Tränkle (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1964), p. 14.
82 Origines, *Commentary to Mathew*, cited after *A Dictionary of Christian Biography and Literature to the End of the Sixth century A.D.: With an Account of the Principal Sects and Heresies*, ed. by Henry Wace, and William C. Piercy (London: Hendrickson, 1911), p. 785. Cf. Mircea Pacurariu, *Geschichte der Rumänischen Orthodoxen Kirche*, Oikonoimia: Quellen und Studien zur orthodoxen Theologie, 33 (Erlangen: Lehrstuhl für Geschichte und Theologie des christlichen Ostens, 1994), p. 22.
83 Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea*, pp. 4–21.
84 Gyula Moravcsik, 'Byzantine Christianity and the Magyars in the Period of Their Migration', *American Slavic and East European Review*, 5, 3–4 (1946), 29–45.
85 Moravcsik, 'Byzantine Christianity', pp. 35–39.
86 Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, I: *Beginnings to 1500* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), pp. 287–323.
87 Nikolay Andreyev, 'Pagan and Christian Elements in Old Russia', *Slavic Review*, 21,1 (1962), 16–23 (p. 18).

necessary for salvation. Many postponed their baptism for years or decades because of the cleansing effects of the sacrament, and those who died unbaptised could still achieve salvation on the basis of their desire to be baptised.[88] What was necessary though was the catechumenate, known as *cristning* in Old English, a term that is evidence in itself of how important this ceremony actually was.[89]

Infant baptism had become the norm in the Roman-Frankish and the Byzantine world already by the fifth century. It is all the more astonishing to find the catechumenate as an institution in the middle of the ninth century in Scandinavia practised just as it was in the fourth century. In Archbishop Rimbert's *Vita Angarii* from around 870 we read of a peculiarity of the Christian Danes in Slesvig around 850. Rimbert explains that they were willing to receive the sign of the cross in order to become catechumens. This gave them the right to enter the church and join in divine services, but they postponed the reception of baptism. They thought it better to be baptised at the end of their life, so that, after having been cleansed from sins and redeemed, they might enter the gates of eternal life pure and spotless without any delay.[90] How the Danes had come to embrace this old Christian idea — famous through the example of Constantine the Great — is not easily explained if their first contact with Christianity was with Ansgar and his successors.

This fact might very well explain, however, why King Gnupa, who — according to Widukind — ought to have been numbered among the Danes who had been Christians since ancient times, had to be baptised after his defeat against Henry I in 934. It might also very well explain how the Swedish King Olaf Eriksson 'Skötkonung' could be a Christian in the 990s as evidenced by his striking of Christian coins,[91] even though a very good contemporary source proves that he actually was not baptised until 1008.[92] It might in fact also explain how Olga could have been so aware of Christian law, if we were to believe the story about her baptism in *PVL*. She was at least baptised at a well chosen point in life, and seems to have made that decision herself. It might also throw new light on the distinction between the 'baptised' and 'unbaptised' in the treaty between Rus´ and Constantinople of 944, with which I began this article.

What Rimbert spoke about in *Vita Angarii* might consequently have been something more than a temporary abnormality in the Christian world of the Northmen. In fact, it seems to have been the norm for the upper strata of society

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88 Lawrence D. Folkemer, 'A Study of the Catechumenate', *Church History*, 15 (1946), 286–307 (p. 290, note 29): 'There was an intense fear of post-baptismal sin among many of the ancients'.

89 Joseph H. Lynch, *Christianizing Kinship: Ritual Sponsorship in Anglo–Saxon England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 61–62.

90 Rimbert, *Vita Ansgarii*, 24, pp. 51–53.

91 Brita Malmer, *Den svenska mynthistorien: Vikingatiden ca 995–1030* (Stockholm: Kungliga Myntkabinettet, 2010).

92 Janson, 'Konfliktlinjer', pp. 216–17. Even Adam of Bremen seems to have been aware of this practice, since when speaking of the conversion of Harold Bluetooth, who as we have seen was baptised in the 960s, he says that Harold was converted already by Archbishop Unni in the 930s, even though he postponed the baptism, see Adam, *Gestae*, 1. 59, pp. 57–58.

through most of the tenth century, and in fact it was still preserved in the slightly lower social strata in some parts of Scandinavia until the second half of the eleventh century. By this time, phrases resembling the language of *Vita Ansgarii* were appearing on Upplandic rune stones about people who had died 'in white robes', i.e. in baptismal dress.[93]

On the basis of *Vita Ansgarii* it could be suggested that the important role of the catechumenate in the 'Scythian world' might have been more than a temporary fraud on the part of the Old Norse — or Old Slavonic for that matter — 'pagans'. It was possibly a fundamental part of Scythian culture in the Viking Age, and in eleventh-century Uppland it was perhaps a cultural trace (amongst others) of the old mixture that had comprised Christianity in Scythia.

As we have seen, it already posed a problem to Walafrid Strabo in around 840 as to how the Greek word *κυριακόν* could have ended up in his own language as the word for the house of the Lord, *kyrica* 'church'. Indeed, this is the word for 'church' in all Germanic languages, except the language of Wulfila's Arian Goths. For them as for all other Mediterranean Churches including the Nestorian Church of Persia, in the Arabic, and in the 'Celtic' Churches as far as Ireland, the word for God's house was derived from the Greek word *εκκλησία*: which becomes the Latin *ecclesia* and the Arian Gothic *aikklesjo* or *basilica*. This is strange enough, but even more remarkable is that in Greek, usage the word *κυριακόν* peaked around the year 300, especially under Constantine the Great (306–37), but then disappeared during the fourth century.[94] It is furthermore quite clear that the word must have been taken up directly from the Greek into a Germanic language, obviously in a region bordering, or which interacted closely with the Greek Church.[95] Consequently there is overwhelming scholarly agreement from Walafrid Strabo onwards over the fact that the word *kyrica* was adopted before the end, or even middle of the fourth century among the Danubian Goths or the 'Scythians' as they were usually called in the fifth and sixth centuries.[96]

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93 Michael Lerche Nielsen,'Runesten og Religionsskifte', in *Kristendommen i Danmark før 1050*, ed. by Niels Lund (Roskilde: Roskilde Museums Forlag, 2004), pp. 95–102 (p. 100).

94 Hadrian Allcroft, *Circle and the Cross: A Study in Continuity*, II: *The Cross* (London: Macmillan, 1930), p. 383; Knut Schäferdiek, 'kirihha-*cyrica- *κυριακόν*: Zum geschichtlichen Hintergrund einer Etymologie', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 106 (1984), 46–50 (p. 47); D. H. Green, 'From Germania to Europe: The Evidence of Language and History', *The Modern Language Review*, 92 (1997), xxix–xxxvii (p. xxxv); and Janson, 'Nordens kristnande', p. 198.

95 Elias Wessén, 'Om den äldsta kristna terminologien i germanska fornspråken', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 40 (1928), 75–108; Green, 'From Germania to Europe', p. xxxv: 'That there is in fact a connection between the Greek word and Germanic word [...] there can be no doubt'.

96 Over the years there have been different isolated efforts to try to challenge this broad agreement. One of the more elaborate of these was an attempt to connect Church with the '*circus*' as set forth by Allcroft, *Circle and the Cross*, pp. 382–422. However, this attempt to fit the word 'Church' into general ideas about sacred places and gatherings in circles is pure fancy and now hopelessly obsolete. A similar approach is represented by the various sophistic endeavours to disconnect the Slavonic word *crĭky* from the Germanic *kyrica*, for instance by deriving the former instead from Latin *basilica*; see Gunnar Gunnarsson, *Das slavische Wort für Kirche*, Uppsala universitets årsskrift, 7 (Uppsala: Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1937). The attempt to move the point of contact between Greek and Germanic to Western

As *κυριακόν* disappeared from the Empire in the fourth century and *aikklesjo* was chosen among the Arian Goths,[97] *kyrica* spread quickly on the other side of the Danube through all other Germanic languages all the way to the British Isles. Early on it was also taken up from Gothic into Old Slavonic — *црькъı* (crĭky) — along with other Gothic loanwords.[98] For Finnish, however, *kirkko* most probably entered the language from Swedish through a historically recognisable process. Furthermore, in Swedish *kyrka* is only one of the words in key church terminology that derives from the Gothic, with others being *döpa* (Goth. *daupjan* 'to baptise') and (probably) *påsk* (Goth. *paska* 'Eastern').[99]

Consequently, the word *kyrica* in itself might possibly bear witness to the importance of the Gothic or 'Scythian' Church beyond the Danube. In any case, from late Antiquity onwards *kyrica* became the dominant term for the 'house of the Lord' not only in *Germania* but also in *Scythia*. It is still a challenge to explain why, when in the third century the need arose for a *terminus technicus* with which to denote the separate houses of Christian worship, the world north of the Roman Empire came to choose a word that was different to that employed by the rest of the Christian world. It was established in the languages of the British Isles and Scandinavia over the Germanic- and Slavonic-speaking settlements of the Continent and perhaps far beyond,[100] during a period that is sufficiently early to challenge the established views of the 'Christianization process'.

Europe (see Schäferdiek, 'kirihha-*cyrica- *κυριακόν*', pp. 46–50; and Green, 'From Germania to Europe', pp. xxxvi–xxxvii) lacks empirical support to suggest that the Greek word was actually used by the Church of the Latin West in the fourth century. It also lacks a convincing explanation as to why this Greek word would have been taken up into Germanic from the Latin Church of the West and to why it then spread through the Germanic speaking world at such an early date.

97 See Knut Schäferdiek, 'Der Germanische Arianismus: Erwägungen zum geschichlichen Verständnis', in *Miscellanea historiae ecclesiastica*, 3, ed. by D. Baker, Bibliotheque de la revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, 50 (Lovain, 1970), pp. 71–83.

98 Antoaneta Granberg, 'Gotiska och tidiga germanska lånord i fornkyrkoslaviska', in *Gotisk workshop: et uformelt formidlingstræf*, 2, ed by Mette Bruus and others (Odense: Syddansk Universitet, 2010), pp. 11–24.

99 Wessén, 'Om den äldsta kristna terminologien'.

100 See for example *Dictionary of the Turkic Languages. English: Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tatar, Turkish, Turkmen, Uighur, Uzbek*, ed. by K. Öztopçu and others (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

'Varangian Christianity' in Tenth-century Rus´

by Oleksiy Tolochko

Not long ago, John Lind stressed the importance of the 'eastern' dimension for understanding Christianization processes in what he rightly called 'the periphery of Christendom'.[1] Stretching from Anglo-Saxon Britain to the Byzantine Empire, this periphery was a sphere where Scandinavians were extremely active during the formative decades of the ninth and tenth centuries, the period during which the first political entities emerged and first Christian influences arrived in this area. Seen from this perspective, the region possesses a certain unity, being bound by the commercial and military pursuits of the Scandinavians. Of these, the commercial aspects are generally regarded in scholarly literature as the most important for Eastern Europe. Recent investigations into the state-formation process in Eastern Europe assign a crucial role to long-distance trade by the Scandinavians who first formed wandering mercantile and military communities, then a network of proto-urban centres to support their trade, which later served as a bedrock for the emerging Kievan state. The Scandinavians apparently were the only international group active in Eastern Europe whose enterprises enabled them to transcend the local experiences of other communities in Eastern Europe. In the course of their long-distance trade Scandinavians moved goods, people and cash between the edges of this space, and it is only natural to consider them as carriers of the key innovations (social, military or political) in the region at this time. From a historical perspective, Christianity was perhaps the most important of these innovations, and Scandinavians (known as the *Varangians* in Byzantium and Rus´) appear to have been 'natural' carriers and disseminators of the new faith. Being exposed to Christianity in the furthest corners of this space and also being either indifferent to or unaware of dogmatic and institutional differences between the Latin and Greek churches — or perhaps simply opportunistic — Scandinavians created a phenomenon that John Lind has termed 'Varangian Christianity'.

The concept of 'Varangian Christianity' appears to be a valuable tool for understanding early traces of Christianity in Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, the question is: was Christianity simply another commodity of Scandinavian trade,

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1 John Lind, 'The Christianization of North and Eastern Europe c. 950–1050 — A Plea for a Comparative Study', *Ennen & nyt*, 2004, no. 4, 1–18 <http://www.ennenjanyt.net/4-04/lind.html> [accessed 8 August 2011].

just like the goods and cash transported into Eastern Europe from both the Latin West and the Greek East?

This paper tests this hypothesis for the period of the tenth century. It does so on two levels: that of perception (by analyzing the message and sources of the *Life of the Varangian Martyrs*) and that of actual practice (by revisiting the Byzantine-Rus´ treaty of 944). It argues that with regard to Christianity, the *Varangians*, their northern origins notwithstanding, were viewed as part of the Byzantine world.

How Varangian is the *Life of Varangian Martyrs*?

It is a well-established view that on the eve of the conversion (the 980s), the Christian community in Kiev consisted mainly of those Scandinavians who either travelled to Byzantium on a regular basis for commercial purposes or else served in the Imperial Army as mercenaries.[2] This, essentially, is a scholarly rendition of the concept advanced by our principal source for 'pre-Conversion' events, the *Primary Chronicle*, composed in the early twelfth century. The chronicle develops an image of the gradual penetration of Christianity into the still-pagan realm of the Rus´ princes, where each new step in the dissemination of this new teaching followed a known instance of contact with Byzantium. According to the *Primary Chronicle*, the Rus´ of Kiev were first introduced to the Christianity in the wake of the campaign against Constantinople (noted in the entry for 907) and the conclusion of the Rus´-Byzantine treaty of 911. The text of the treaty is followed by the story, seemingly composed by the chronicler himself, of the pagan Rus´ envoys being compelled to undertake a tour on the major Christian sites of Constantinople, as well as instruction in Christian faith, and even appreciating some of the most important Christian relics there, among them the Passions of Christ.[3] The next opportunity

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2   For a general survey of Christianization among the Slavs, see Jonathan Shepard, 'Slav Christianities, 800–1100', in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, III: *Early Medieval Christianities, 600–1100*, ed. by Thomas F. X. Noble and Julia M. H. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 130–57.

3   'The Emperor Leo honored the Rus´ envoys with gifts of gold, palls, and robes and placed his vassals at their disposition to show them the beauties of the churches, the golden palace, and the riches contained therein. They thus showed the Rus´ much gold and many palls and jewels, together with the relics of our Lord's Passion: the crown, the nails, and the purple robe, as well as the bones of the Saints. They also instructed the Rus´ in their faith, and expounded them of the true belief.' 'The Russian Primary Chronicle', trans. by Samuel H. Cross, *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philosophy and Literature*, 12 (1930), p. 154. The story is rightly believed to be apocryphal. On the relics described, their locations and fate, which provides us with the *terminus post quem* (1106) for the composition of the story, see John Wortley and Constantine Zuckerman, 'The Relics of Our Lord's Passion in the Russian Primary Chronicle', *Vizantiiskii vremennik*, 63 (2004), 67–75. It is puzzling however that John Skylitzes reports a very similar incident that was said to have happened just six years before with the Arab Tarsoite envoys. In spring of 905, 'there came from Tarsus and Melitene to the capital the notorious Abelbakes and the father of Samonas, sent to arrange the exchange of prisoners. The emperor received them in great style, especially decorating the Magnaura (palace) for the occasion. He also lavishly adorned the Great Church and took them there, where he showed them all the objects worthy of veneration and also the vessels, vestments and the like, which were used in divine worship. It was unworthy of a Christian state to expose to the eyes of persons of another race and of different religion those things which are even hidden from Christian men whose lives are less than orderly', John Skylitzes,

for a chronicler to discuss the progress of Christianity in Kiev came after the following campaign in Byzantium (941) and the second Ruso-Byzantine treaty of 944. To the text of the treaty the chronicler adds the story of its endorsement in Kiev by both pagan and Christian Rusʹ. It is from this passage that we learn of 'numerous Christian Varangians in Kiev' and their cathedral church of St Elijah.[4] The growing acceptance of Christianity and a sizable Christian community in Kiev prepared the ground for the next key step: in 955 (according to the chronicle chronology) Princess Olga travelled to Constantinople to accept baptism there.[5] The climax of all these preparatory stages was Prince Volodimer's decision to convert to Christianity in 988. Yet once again, direct contact with Byzantium and its sacred sites proved crucial: before taking a final decision, Volodimer sent his envoys to Constantinople where they enjoyed Christian liturgy in the Hagia Sophia, and the stories of their extraordinary experience forced Volodimer to take the matter very seriously indeed.[6]

The chronicler's belief that, before the Conversion, the Christian population of Kiev consisted entirely of Varangians and that the source of their faith was Byzantium, is typified by insertion into the *Primary Chronicle* under the year 983 of the so-called *Life of the Varangian Martyrs*.[7] It tells the story of martyrdom of two Varangians, a father and son, at the hands of the still-pagan Kievites. In the mid-twelfth century, another version of this *Vita* was included in the Rusʹ *Synaxarion* (*Prolog*) under July 12th.[8] Naturally, the existence of two versions with slightly different details of the story gave rise to a debate on whether the *Vita* had existed as a separate piece outside the chronicle or was specifically written for the chronicle's narrative. The discussion generated a sizable body of literature,[9] which explored all three combinations of the two texts' possible relationships: the chronicle version is original, the *Prolog* version is original, both are derived from a third text, now lost, which should be considered to be the original. At least one of these possibilities seems to have been abandoned in resent scholarship:

A Synopsis of Byzantine History 811–1057, transl. by J. Wortley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 183. Skylitzes, most certainly, had lifted the account from Symeon Logothete; see *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Caniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus*, ed. by Immanuel Bekker (Bonn: Weber, 1838), pp. 711 and 868.

4   'The Russian Primary Chronicle', trans. by Cross, p. 164.

5   Ibid., p. 168–69.

6   Ibid., p. 198–99.

7   See Nikolai Nikolskii, *Materialy dlia povremennogo spiska russkikh pisatelei i ikh sochinenii (X–XI vv.)* (St Petersburg, 1906, pp. 4–6; Boris Kloss, 'Zhitie Fedora Variaga i ego syna', in *Pismennye pamiatniki istorii Drevnei Rusi. Letopisi, povesti, khozhdeniia, poucheniia, zhitiia, poslaniia*, ed. by Iaroslav Shchapov (St Petersburg: Blits, 2003), pp. 213–14.

8   Olga Loseva, *Zhitiia russkikh siatykh v sostave drevnerusskikh prologov 12 – pervoi treti 15 vekov* (Moscow: Rukopisnye pamiatniki Drevni Rusi, 2009), pp. 225–27; text published on pp. 424–25.

9   See recently Aleksandr Vvedenskii, 'Zhitie variagov-muchenikov (funktsionirovanie legendy v letopisi i v Prologe', *Drevniaia Rusʹ: Voprosy medievistiki*, 33 (2008), 63–72. See also Pavel Lukin, 'Skazanie o variagakh-muchnikakh v nachalnom letopisanii i Prologe: tekstologicheskii aspekt', *Drevniaia Rusʹ: Voprosy medievistiki*, 38 (2009), 73–96, which adds very little to the discussion.

the *Prolog* version is now considered to be derivative of the chronicle text.[10] It is much harder to establish whether the *Life* is contemporaneous with the *Primary Chronicle* (i.e. written by the same author and specifically as a part of the chronicle narration) or whether, in some form or another, it predates the chronicle text as we know it from copies of the *Primary Chronicle*. Here the ideas developed in the early twentieth century by Aleksei Shakhmatov are still the most influential. The scholar suggested that the story had been among the accounts of the earliest postulated chronicle text, the hypothetical 'Most Ancient Compilation' of 1039.[11]

The quest for the *Life*'s date was driven, to a large degree, by attempts to uncover its 'historical component'. The purposes of this paper do not require us to take a position in this debate: after all, whatever the origin of the *Life*, it postdates the actual event considerably and, as a hagiographic text, has a very limited value for historical reconstruction. Its early date, however, would be an important hint that the idea of pre-Conversion 'Varangian' Christianity was current long before the *Primary Chronicle* took is final shape. There are indications that its author knew the story of Varangian martyrs before he decided to insert it into the entry for 983. One of these is his reference to the 'Christian Varangians' dwelling in Kiev in the entry for 945. Another is the homily appended to the story, which stressed that the Apostles never visited Rus´ 'in body' but their teachings nevertheless reached the country and were spread here (apparently by the likes of the Varangian martyrs). This is the notion (also present in the *Sermon on Law and Grace* by Ilarion) that precedes the idea of St Andrew's mission to Kiev and Novgorod, which the *Primary Chronicle* proudly boasts of in its very opening pages.

The *Vita*'s explicit message is clear enough: the Varangians suffered because they were Christians, and they were Christians because, in the chronicler's words, they 'came from the Greeks'.[12] I would suggest, however, that this message is further supported by the choice of the sources upon which the *Vita* is based.

A general outline of this story is as follows:

Upon conquering the city of Kiev, the as yet unconverted prince Volodimer encouraged all sorts of pagan practices among his subjects including such extreme forms of idolatry as human sacrifices. It so happened that the lot cast by the Kievites in order to choose their next victim pointed to the son of a certain Varangian, who was to be slain for the idols. The Varangian happened to be a secret Christian, and before being murdered, he instigated a debate with the pagans. He told them that their idols were not the real gods: they were made of wood that would soon rot away; they could neither eat nor drink; they could not speak, and all because they were made of wood by human hands and with human tools. Unlike the 'God

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10   Kloss, 'Zhitie Fedora Variaga i ego syna', p. 214; Vvedensky, 'Zhitie variagov-muchenikov', pp. 63–72; Loseva, *Zhitiia russkikh siatykh v sostave drevnerusskikh prologov*, p. 226.
11   Aleksei Shakhmatov, *Razyskaniia o drevneishikh russkikh letopisnykh svodakh* (St Petersburg, 1908), pp. 145–46.
12   'The Russian Primary Chronicle', trans. by Cross, p. 182.

whom the Greeks worship,' the true Creator of all things, the pagan idols were themselves human creations.[13]

The sources for the Christian Varangian's preaching to the pagans have already attracted attention. In the 1920s, Viljo Johanes Mansikka noted that the speech alludes to Deuteronomy ('And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of men's hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell', 4. 28) and hence is one of the chronicle's numerous 'invisible Biblicisms'.[14] The theme of idolatry is, of course, conspicuous in the Old Testament, and similar passages on the man-made origin of idols can be found in Psalms (115 and 135), in the Prophets (Jeremiah, 10. 3–5; Daniel, 5. 23). One or more of these texts might have suggested the wording of the Varangian's sermon. Yet in addition to these there exists a hagiographic source that provided the author of our *Vita* with the narrative model for his story.

The so-called *Vita of the First Cherson Martyrs* is a Slavonic text known in two versions: the shorter one found in the Rus´ *Synaxarion* (*Prolog*) and an extended version that came down in two slightly different translations: one represented by the famous *Suprasl* manuscript of the eleventh century, another in the so-called *Menaion* of Metropolitan Makarios of the sixteenth century.[15] In spite of a significant chronological distance between the two, both translations are now considered to have been made rather early and are attributed to the Bulgarian Preslav School of the tenth century.[16]

It is in this *Vita of the First Cherson Martyrs* that we find episodes upon which the story of Varangian's preaching before the pagan mob was apparently modelled. Actually, there are two episodes in this *Vita* that are of interest for us. Basil, the first bishop appointed for Cherson to convert the population of the city who was subsequently martyred, commenced his mission by preaching (with wording reminiscent of the Varangian's speech) to the pagans on the man-made nature of their idols: 'He started to teach the people of the city, telling them: those are not gods whom you respect and worship, but idols that cannot render you any help; there is God in Heavens by whose word everything was created'.[17] For this,

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13 'The Russian Primary Chronicle', trans. by Cross, p. 182; *Ipatevskaia letopis´*, ed. by A. A. Shakhmatov, PSRL, 2 (St Petersburg: Tipografiia M. A. Aleksandrova, 1908), col. 70: 'не суᵗ то бѕи но древо . днъ єсть а оутро изъгнило єсть . не ꙗдать бо ни пьють . ни мᵒлвать . но суть дѣлани руками въ древѣ . сокирою и ножемъ . а Бъ̄ єдинъ єсть . ємуже служать Грѣци . и кланаютса . иже створилъ н҃бо и землю и чл҃ка и зъвѣзды и сл҃нце и луну . и далъ єсть жити на земли . а си бѕи что сдѣлаша . сами дѣлани суть.'

14 Viljo J. Mansikka, *Religiia vostochnykh slavian* (Moscow: RAN, 2005), p. 81 (Russian translation of a work first published in 1922); Igor Danilevsky, *Povest vremennykh let: Germenevticheskie osnovy izucheniia letopisnykh tekstov* (Moscow, 2004), p. 104.

15 Published in Petr Lavrov, *Zhitiia khersonskikh sviatykh v greko-slavianskoi pismennosti*, Pamiatniki khristianskogo Khersonessa, 2 (Moscow, 1911), pp. 158–68.

16 M. I. Chernyshova, 'Zamechaniia o iazyke slavianskoi versii 'Zitiia khersonskikh sviatykh'', in *Ocherki istorii khristianskogo Khersonessa*, Khersoness khristianskii, 1 (St Petersburg: Nauka, 2009), 118–38.

17 Lavrov, *Zhitiia khersonskikh sviatykh*, p. 165: 'нача оучити гра́дскыꙗ лю́жа гл҃а, ꙗко не сⷮ воѕи ꙗ̃ мните имѣти и чести, но и кꙋ́мири не могꙋ́ще ва̃ъ помощи, е̂ во б҃ъ на нб҃с҃ѣ, иже слов҃ его сотвори всꙗческаꙗ и мⷬостию его ѿ небытиꙗ в бытие приведы всꙗ.'

the bishop was killed by an angry mob of pagans. Of more immediate importance for us is, however, the second episode. Here we have a family setting with father and a son as the main protagonists (as in the chronicle), the difference being that it is the son who makes the speech on the man-made nature of the idols: 'Your gods cannot do this [resurrect the dead] because they are idols of stone and without a soul, by which the devil tempts people to destroy them'.[18]

If the *Vita of the First Cherson Martyrs* did serve as a template for the *Life of Varangian Martyrs*, that would mean that the textual composition of the latter is entirely 'Eastern', as it were, and so its implicit message is also 'Greek' rather than 'Northern'.

I would not argue, of course, that the author of the Varangians' *Life* had enjoyed the liberty of choosing between 'Western' or 'Eastern' sources and deliberately opted for the latter. Most probably, he had not. Moreover, the very concept of being able to choose between placing Varangians in either a 'Western' or 'Eastern' context almost certainly would seem alien to his mindset. It is precisely this absence of choice that is revealing; the Varangians, as Christians, are firmly placed within the world of Byzantine Christianity.

I would argue, however, that the choice of the model was not entirely incidental. After all, the author of our *Life* picked an obscure *Vita* of the first Cherson martyrs, and there must have been a reason for this.

One must bear in mind that the *Life of the Varangian Martyrs* is intimately linked to the Tithe Church, which was the first — and, for the first half-century after the Conversion, the largest — Christian edifice in Kiev. It was erected by Prince Volodimer as a triumphant monument to his achievement of converting the realm to Christianity, and for some time it served as the embodiment of the Church in Rus´, being practically synonymous with it. It housed the most important relics, those of Pope Clement, brought by the Prince from the city of Cherson upon his baptism. The *Life of Varangian Martyrs* is, in fact, the foundation myth for the Tithe Church. The martyrdom had occurred on the very spot where the Tithe Church was later erected and the exceptional holiness of the site placed the Tithe Church in the league of its own. In fact, for later readers, it was not the martyrs themselves but the link that their story had to the church that was the most important aspect of their *Life*.

The clergy of the Tithe Chuch, as we know, were imported in their entirety by Prince Volodimer from Cherson, the place where he had been baptised. In the chronicle they are referred to as 'the Cherson priests' (*popy korsun'skie*),[19] which clearly indicates their status as the cathedral's chapter. In the early days of Christianity in Kiev, they must have been a very important group indeed. It was

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18 Lavrov, *Zhitiia khersonskikh sviatykh*, p. 165: 'понеже бози нши сего сотворити не могѫть, камение безд҃шьно и капища сѫще, ꙗже диаво на прелесть и на погыбѣ ч҃лкѿ сотвори. но […] вѣрѹита в҃ б҃а […].'
19 'The Russian Primary Chronicle', trans. by Cross, p. 204; PSRL, 2, col. 101.

this group that served as the 'memory community' for the Tithe Church, shaping and translating its image, and it is tempting to think that the story of Varangian martyrs came from this milieu. The city of Cherson was the source of Kievan Christianity, and the first Cherson martyrs as models for the first Kiev martyrs would seem to be well-chosen.[20]

It appears that the *Life of Varangian Martyrs* proved paradigmatic for the concept, prominent in the *Primary Chronicle*, of 'Varangian Christianity,' that is, the idea that in pre-Conversion Rus´ only the Varangians were Christians. However, the same concept also exerted influence outside the chronicle. The *Synaxarion* (*Prolog*) version of St Volodimer's vita (from the mid-twelfth century) somewhat inexplicably introduces him as being 'from the Varangian kin' (*ot plemeni variazhska*).[21] Volodimer's Scandinavian origins (which are correct, as it happens) are never stressed or even noted in the chronicle, and certainly they were not his defining characteristics. These origins are not even explicitly clear from the chronicle, for already his father had a Slavonic name. Among other princes' possible attributes, by which he could have been introduced in a hagiographic text, his Scandinavian heritage was of minor importance, yet it is there, and intrinsically linked to his baptism. It would seem that the reason for this was the idea that the first Christian, be it Princess Olga, the Varangian martyrs or the prince who converted the Rus´, could only belong to the Varangians.

The Baptised Rus´ of 944 and the Christian Community of Kiev

The *Life of Varangian Martyrs* and texts that it influenced represent a retrospective image of Varangian Christianity, and the way it was looked at from a distance of a century or more. As with any concept found in medieval text, it should be carefully weighed against other reliable kinds of evidence before being admitted into a scholarly discourse.

For the whole of the tenth century, there are only three documents whose authenticity is not in doubt, all preserved within the *Primary Chronicle*. These are texts of the Ruso-Byzantine treaties of 911, 944, and 972. It is their evidence that should hold precedence over any account found in narrative sources. Historically, this was not the case, however: the canon of writing of Kievan history, established

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20   A word of caution is necessary at this point. Whatever the ancient origin of the story, the way it now reads in the *Primary Chronicle* makes the *Life of Varangian Martyrs* too intimately linked to other fragments of the chronicle. The Varangian father's description of pagan idols is echoed by the words of German missionaries to Volodimer: 'We worship God, who has made heaven and earth […] and every creature, while your gods are only wood' ('The Russian Primary Chronicle', trans. by Cross, p. 184) and the famous description of the wooden idol of Perun erected by Volodimer while still pagan (itself modelled on Daniel 2. 32–33). All these might indicate that the *Life* was taking shape simultaneously with other passages of the chronicle and that all belong to the same authorship.

21   For the text see Loseva, *Zhitiia russkikh siatykh*, p. 426.

at the turn of the nineteenth century, preferred to follow the fictitious storylines of the *Primary Chronicle*.

It is thought to be a well-established fact that by the mid-tenth century, there was a sizable Christian community in Kiev. This idea, which can be found in any survey or a special study of this topic (too numerous to be cited here), is based on the direct chronicle evidence to that effect and on chronicle reports that in 945 there stood in Kiev the church of St Elijah, which was considered to be the city's cathedral. The existence of a cathedral church is explained in the chronicle by the great number of Christian Varangians in Kiev at the time. However, as was pointed quite some time ago,[22] the account of the St Elijah church in Kiev is erroneous, being found in the fictitious account of the treaty's ratification supposedly held in Kiev. This invented story was based entirely on the idea of what protocol should look like, which was supplied by the text of the treaty itself. The actual St Elijah church mentioned there was the one in Constantinople where some of the signatories to the treaty from the Rus´ side took their oath immediately after having drafted the text.[23] The twelfth-century chronicler, having found the reference to the church in the treaty of 944, transplanted it, by mistake or design, onto the Kievan soil, most likely in order to create a procedure equivalent to the one that took place in Constantinople. If the entire story of the treaty's ratification in Kiev (including the Christians and their cathedral) is taken as pure invention, the image of a large and rapidly expanding Christian community in Kiev loses its sole source base.

That leaves us with the texts of the two treaties (911 and 944) as our only reliable evidence. Their parallel reading, however, might suggest that in the thirty years between the treaties there did indeed occur radical changes in the composition of Kievan society.

In general, the treaty of 911 makes a clear distinction between the 'Christians' (as synonymous with the 'Greeks') and the 'Rus´'. It never once mentions or even hints at the possibility that 'Christians' might belong to groups other than the Byzantines. The contraposition of the two terms (for example, in the phrases like, 'Whatsoever Rus´ kills a Christian, or whatsoever Christian kills a Rus´ […]' or 'If any Rus´ commit a theft against a Christian or vice versa […]'[24]) leaves no

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22 It would seem that the first one to have made this observation was the great eighteenth-century chronicle scholar August Ludwig Schlözer in his *Nestor: Russkie letopisi na drevle-slavianskom iazyke*, 3 (St Petersburg, 1819), pp. 183–84.

23 Jana Malingoudi, *Die russisch-byzantinischen Verträge des 10. Jhds. aus diplomatishcher Sicht* (Thessaloniki: Vanias, 1994), pp. 46–47; ead., 'Russko-vizantiiskie sviazi v 10 veke s tochki zreniia diplomatiki', *Vizantiiskii vremennik*, 56 [81] (1995), Indrik 90, note 95); M. A. Vasiliev, 'Stepen´ dostovernosti izvestiia Povesti vremennykh let o protsedure ratifikatsii russko-vizantiiskogo dogovora 944 g. v Kieve', in *Drevneishiie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy, 1998 god* (Moscow, 2000), pp. 64–71; Jonathan Shepard, 'Rus´', in *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy: Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus´ c. 900–1200*, ed. by Nora Berend (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 377.

24 'The Russian Primary Chronicle', trans. by Cross, p. 152.

doubt that in 911 Byzantines considered all Rus´ heathen and would not recognize any Christians among them. The treaty of 944 follows suit. Here too we find the contrast between the 'Christians' and the 'Rus´' in several provisions for incidents that might occur between the two groups (for example, if Christian captives are sold to Rus´, or if a Christian kills a Rus´, and vice versa).[25] These instances are not numerous, however. Mostly, the treaty resorts to the ethnic names, 'the Rus´' and 'the Greeks'. The shift in terminology in favour of ethnic rather then religious affiliations might be accidental, yet there seems to be a reason for it. Typically, the treaty of 944 treats the Rus´ as still largely pagan, which is obvious from the general provision that in the case of a disputed court testimonies, 'our Christians [i.e. Byzantines] shall take an oath according to their faith, and non-Christians [i.e. the Rus´] according to their law'.[26] However, by 944, Byzantines knew that not all of the Rus´ were heathen anymore and that one might come across Christians among them.

Indeed, in the sanction clause at the beginning of the treaty and also in the oath formula at the end of the text, we discover two groups among the Rus´ signatories defined by their relationship to Christianity. The treaty calls them 'those who adopted baptism' and 'unbaptised Rus´' respectively.[27]

The presence of these two groups in such critical parts of the document seems to support the idea that, between 911 and 944, the Christians emerged as a not only numerous but also politically important group in the Rus´ community of Kiev. The signatories of the treaty were of two ranks: 'envoys' each representing a member of a royal clan and more numerous 'merchants', also apparently sent by the prince. As a group, they all must have belonged the uppermost stratum of society, those very close to Igor, prince of Kiev. It is within these two factions that scholars normally look for the 'baptised Rus´'. The presence of Christians among the envoys would point to the existence of a Christian community at home, in Kiev. Among the fifty-odd names of the envoys and merchants listed in the treaty, not a single one is Christian.[28] It would be too risky, however, to infer the faith of individual Rus´ according to their names: both Christians and heathens could and did use their traditional names, and the custom extended well into the times when the realm was firmly within the Christian sphere. Some of those listed may or may not have been Christian, but there is no way of judging this based on their names.

I would argue, however, that the 'baptised' Rus´ refers to a third faction, which did not come from Kiev but was resident in Byzantium.

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25 'The Russian Primary Chronicle', trans. by Cross, p. 162.
26 Samuel Cross, it seems, preferred in this case the reading of the Hypatian copy, which rendered his translation erroneous (ibid., p. 161).
27 Ibid., pp. 160 and 163.
28 The names are mostly of Scandinavian origin; see Elena Melnikova, 'The List of Old Norse Personal Names in the Russian-Byzantine Treaties of the Tenth Century', *Studia anthroponimica Scandinavica: Tidskrift för nordisk personnamnforskning*, 22 (2004), 5–27.

It is noteworthy that the division of the Rus´ into 'baptised' and 'unbaptised' factions only became visible because of the different manner in which they took their oaths. While the 'unbaptised' Rus´ swore on their weapons and armour, the 'baptised' Rus´, naturally, did it in the church and on the cross ('have sworn in the Cathedral, by the church of St Elijah, upon the Holy Cross set before us'[29]). Allusions to the 'baptised' Rus´ thus stand in contrast to the otherwise adamant treatment of the people of Rus´ as heathen in the treaty of 944.

More puzzling still is the fact that the two factions, 'baptised' and 'unbaptised' Rus´, serve as proxies for different communities. While the 'unbaptised' Rus´, as might be expected, took their oath on behalf 'of prince Igor, and all the boyars, and all the people, and all the Rus´ land',[30] the baptised Rus´ seem to represent no one but themselves. In taking the oath, they simply state that they accept and will honour the conditions of the treaty ('to abide by all that is written herein, and not to violate any of its stipulations'[31]).

A close reading of the respective formulas of the oaths reveals a notable difference.[32] While the treaty's provision (i.e. the Byzantine side) simply requires the 'unbaptised' Rus´ to swear in the manner that they are used to ('The unbaptised Russes shall lay down their shields, their naked swords, their armlets, and their other weapons, and shall swear […]'[33]), the formula of oath taken by the 'baptised' Rus´ is written in the first person plural: 'We, those who had accepted baptism, swear […]'[34]). This looks very much like a notation of a statement or a declaration appended to the drafted text of the treaty.[35]

Moreover, the text of the treaty provides no unambiguous evidence that the 'unbaptised' Rus´ did take an oath in Constantinople. The prescribed ritual, with its stress on weapons (namely shields and swords) directly contradicted the stipulation of the very same treaty that strictly prohibited the Rus´ from entering the city with their weapons.[36] The procedure, furthermore, required the oath to be taken with naked swords, which would seem quite out of place in the Imperial Palace.

The descriptions of the two oaths are set apart also grammatically. While the 'baptised Rus´' was said to have sworn in the past tense (клахомсѧ, imperfect), the 'unbaptised Rus´' was expected to swear at some point in future (да полагають… и да клѣнутьсѧ; technically optative, but in this case denoting future tense). Does that mean that at the Palace only the Christian Rus´ took their oath

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29 'The Russian Primary Chronicle', trans. by Cross, p. 163.
30 Ibid., p. 163.
31 Ibid.; PSRL, 2, col. 41: 'хранити жє всє єжє єсть написано на нєи . и нє прєступати ѿ того ничто жє.'
32 On formulas of oaths, see Malingoudi, 'Russko-vizantiiskie sviazi v 10 veke', pp. 79–80.
33 'The Russian Primary Chronicle', trans. by Cross, p. 163.
34 PSRL, 2, col. 41: мы жє єлико насъ крᵉтилиса єсмы . клахомса цр͠квью . ст͠го Ильи въ зборнѣи цр͠кви.
35 It is probably not accidental that in his translation Cross marked this passage out by setting it out as a separate paragraph and providing it with a heading.
36 '[The Rus´] shall enter the city through one gate in groups of fifty without weapons', Cross, 'The Russian Primary Chronicle', p. 161.

and the heathens did not?[37] And were the latter group expected to do so after having returned to Kiev, together with Prince Igor, as stipulated by the treaty?[38]

Thus the treaty of 944 would seem to indicate that at the moment of negotiations there were two different groups of Rus´ present in Constantinople: those empowered by Prince Igor ('unbaptised') and another group, the 'baptised.' The impression is that the members of this group simply happened to be in Constantinople when the envoys arrived, which meant that their loyalty should be reaffirmed but they were not part of the embassy.

The question then is who this group of 'baptised' Rus´ might be. It has been noted that the principal incentive for a Rus´ to be baptised was a desire to enter the service of the Emperor, and that Varangians were encouraged by imperial authorities to become Christian.[39] Among the Rus´ troops in Constantinople there was one detachment, which Constantine Porphyrogenitus in *Book of Ceremonies* referred to as the 'baptised Rhos'. On May 31, 946, just two years after the treaty of 944 had been concluded, a regiment of 'baptised Rhos' 'with banners, holding shields and wearing their swords' were standing as guards of honour outside of Chalke (in the Grand Palace) during the reception of the Tarsoite envoys.[40] It is these 'baptised Rhos' that have been identified recently as the group of 'baptised Rus´' who signed the treaty of 944.[41] 'Baptised Rhos' are listed among other detachments of 'sailors' standing guard at the Palace that day, quite probably belonging to the same regiment of Rhos that took part in the Lombard campaign of 935.[42] It remains only to speculate whether they made up a separate squadron or were selected for the occasion from among a larger (and mixed) detachment of Rus´ mercenaries serving in the navy. Since only Christian barbarians were eligible for employment in the Palace guard, the second possibility seems more likely.

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37 As Malingoudis notes, normally the envoys would have taken their oaths in one of Constantinople's churches and would include their formulas of oaths into the treaty (Malingoudi, 'Russko-vizantiiskie sviazi v 10 veke', pp. 79–80). However, the only available sources of evidence, other than our treaties, are those agreements signed in the twelfth century between Byzantium and the Italian republics of Genoa, Venice and Pisa. Here, both parties were Christian, but it is unclear what the practice was when heathen envoys were involved in negotiations.

38 The final clause of the treaty reads: 'Your representatives shall go with the envoys of our empire and conduct them before Igor, Great Prince of Rus, and to his subjects. Upon receipt of this document, they shall then bind themselves by oath to observe the truth as agreed upon between us and inscribed upon this parchment.' 'The Russian Primary Chronicle', trans. by Cross, p. 163. PSRL, 2, col. 41: 'а ѿходаче со слоꙗ цртва нашеᵍ. да попроводать к вєликому кнѧзю Игорєви Руᵉкому и к людємъ єго . и ти приимающє харотью на роту идуть . хранитᴴ истину . ꙗко жє мы свѣщахоᴹ . и написахомъ на харотью сию.'

39 Shepard, 'Rus´', p. 377.

40 *De Ceremoniis,* I, ed. by J. J. Reiske (Bonn, 1829), p. 579, ll. 21–22; Sigfús Blöndal and Benedikt S. Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium: an Aspect of Byzantine Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 21; and Shepard, 'Rus´', p. 377.

41 Aleksandr Filipchuk, 'Sotsialnyie gruppy rusov v Konstantinopole v 10 v.: kontakty, torgovlia i formirovanie politicheskoi elity', in *Vostochnaia Evropa v drevnosti i srednevekov´e*, *XIII* (Moscow, 2011), pp. 293–95. See also Oleksandr Filipchuk, 'Rusy sered 'viisk narodiv´ u Vizantii 9 – 11 st.: naimatsi ta soiuznyky' (Unpublished dissertation, Chernivtsi University, 2010), pp. 123–30.

42 Ibid., p. 125.

The identification of the 'baptised Rus´' of the treaty (944) with the 'baptised Rhos' of *The Book of Ceremonies* (946) robs the idea of an organized Christian community in Kiev of its second and last source of evidence. It would appear that it was only in Constantinople that a sizable group of Christian Rus´ existed at this time. It is quite conceivable that after having retired from the imperial army, some of the Christian mercenaries would come back to Kiev and settle there permanently. Since service in Byzantium, no doubt, was associated with a certain degree of prestige and would also result in considerable wealth, Christians Varangians, upon their return, must have joined the privileged classes of Kievan society. These individual Christians are probably responsible for the archeologically detectable traces of a Christian presence in Kiev and at other sites during the tenth century.[43] However, the idea of a strong link between Christianity and high social status, sometimes postulated in archaeological literature, should not be overstated. After all, Christian artifacts (such as cross-shaped pendants) are mostly associated with female graves,[44] and the only documented instance of the conversion of a member of the Rus´ elite is that of Princess Olga (and probably some of her female companions in Constantinople). Judging by the relatively detailed description of her son Sviatoslav's campaigns against Byzantium, there were no Christians among the Rus´ military elite in the next generation.[45]

Source traditions and scholarly reconstructions are not always happily reconciled. In our case, however, it would seem that the *Chronicle*'s idea was essentially sound: in pre-Conversion times, Christians were the Varangians who went to Byzantium and were baptized there. It was indeed the concept of 'Varangian Christianity' that has been developed in this volume, transmitted by individuals rather than social and political structures as part of a general pattern of cultural and economic interaction between Byzantium and Eastern Europe, and it was spread along the major communication networks established in the tenth century between the Baltic and Mediterranean worlds. The Varangian Christianity of the tenth century existed in the absence of established ecclesiastical structures and clear confessional distinctions. Yet its heterogeneity and cultural neutrality must not be exaggerated: for the Kievan state and its ruling elite, the principal influences came from Byzantium, and those few Varangian Christians that are known from the written sources were firmly associated with the 'Greek' world of Byzantium.

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43 For a historical interpretation of these finds, see Shepard, 'Rus´', pp. 377–78.
44 See Fedir Androshchuk's article in this volume.
45 The chronicle, too, seems to have sensed this 'female' nature of Christianity unbecoming to a warrior. Encouraged to convert by his mother, Sviatoslav reportedly answered that his followers would ridicule him for such an act ('The Russian Primary Chronicle', trans. by Cross, p. 110).

Symbols of Faith or Symbols of Status?
Christian Objects in Tenth-Century Rus´

by Fedir Androshchuk

To study the Christianization of Rus´ based on archaeological evidence is not something new, and such a topic has already generated a considerable amount of research.[1] This paper will deliberate some of the archaeological arguments presented in earlier works, and aims to explore the social and functional contexts in which Christian objects or symbols associated with Christianity circulated in Rus´ during the Viking Age and in the tenth century in particular. Generally, two classes of archeological evidence have been associated with the dissemination of Christianity in Eastern Europe: inhumation graves with west–east orientation and specific objects with clear Christian symbolism (most often, cross-shaped pendants) found in burials. These two types of evidence are considered the obvious markers of the deceased person's adherence to the Christian faith, while their absence, conversely, is taken as an indication that the buried person belonged to those still practicing heathen cults.

The earliest inhumation grave in early Rus´ is Grave 11 in the Plakun cemetery in Staraia Ladoga. A man between 60–70 years old was buried in a wooden cist oriented west–east (northwest–southeast). Close to his feet lay parts of a wooden trough and a birch box. A number of corroded iron and bronze objects lay to the right of the body. Pieces of felt and fur were also recorded in the grave.[2] The timber of the chamber was dendrochronologically dated to 880–900, and there are construction traits that share parallels with sites in Denmark, such as Hede-

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1   A selection of recent publications includes Aleksandr P. Mocia, *Naselenie Srednego Podneprovia IX–XIII vv.* (Kiev, 1987), pp. 48–80; Nikolai A. Makarov, 'K otsenke christianizacii drevnerusskoi derevni v XI–XIII vv.', *Kratkie soobshchenia Instituta archeologii,* 205 (1991), 11–21; Aleksandr S. Choroshev, 'Christianizaciia Rusi po archeologicheskim dannym', *Priroda,* 7 (1988), 68–76; Aleksandr Musin, 'Mech i krest: novoe religioznoe soznanie Drevnej Rusi po dannym archeologii', in *Rannesrednevekovovye drevnosti Severnoi Rusi i ee sosedei* (St Petersburg: RAN, 1999), pp. 134–50; Aleksandr Musin, 'Two Churches or Two Traditions: Common Traits and Peculiarities in Northern and Russian Christianity Before and After 1054 AD through the Archaeological Evidence: A View from the East', in *Rom und Byzanz im Norden*, II, pp. 276–95; Nikolai Makarov, 'Far Northern Parts of Ancient Russia on their Way to Christianity', in *Rom und Byzanz im Norden*, II, pp. 259–73; Vladimir Y. Petrukhin and Tamara A. Pushkina, 'Old Russia: the Earliest Stages of Christianization', in *Rom und Byzanz im Norden*, II, pp. 247–58; and Gali F. Korzuchina and Anna A. Peskova, *Drevnerusskie enkolpiony: Kresty-relikvarii XI–XIII vv.* (St Petersburg: Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, 2003).

2   Vladimir A. Nazarenko, 'Mogilnik v urochishche Plakun', in *Srednevekovaia Ladoga*, ed. by V. V. Sedov (Leningrad: Nauka, 1985), pp. 165 and 168.

by.[3] Most of the chamber graves in Hedeby are dated to the tenth century and are associated with the trader and warrior strata of the town's society.[4] So far this is the only inhumation grave in Rus´ that can be firmly dated to the end of the ninth century, but it is not certain that it should be interpreted as a Christian grave.

One object usually associated with a Christian milieu in Rus´ is a fragmentary Tating ware jug found in a female grave in the Plakun cemetery of Staraia Ladoga together with the remains of a cremated boat.[5] Such jugs are well represented on the Continent, in Scandinavia and in eastern England and their dissemination is usually associated with missionary work in the area. Fragments of at least one other jug were discovered in the layer dated to the ninth and first half of the tenth centuries in the hill fort known as Zemlianoe gorodishche in Staraia Ladoga (Fig. 3).[6] It has been suggested that the Tating ware jugs were used for mixing wine and water, for the washing of hands during Mass, or some other liturgical function.[7] Critics of this interpretation point out that the jugs come mainly from female graves and rarely occur in the vicinity of churches or monasteries. The grave in the Plakun cemetery also contained fragments of two vessels of locally produced hand-made pottery, about a hundred boat rivets, nails and mounts, a fragmentary gaming piece, a bronze chain with a ring with twisted ends, thirteen beads of glass and four of silver, melted pieces of silver and bronze, a whetstone and a bear tooth.[8] Such a clear heathen context for the Christian objects is explained away by some scholars by the suggestion that the burial rite reflects the belief system of those performing the burial, rather than the deceased's own at-

3   Kirill A. Michailov, 'Skandinavskii mogilnik v urochishche Plakun (zametki o khronologii i topografii)', in *Ladoga i eio sosedi v epokhu srednevekovia,* ed. by A. N. Kirpichnikov (St Petersburg: RAN, 2002), pp. 63–68; Kirill A. Michailov, 'Kurgannye mogilniki Staroi Ladogi', in *Staraia Ladoga – drevniaia stolitsa Rusi: Katalog vystavki*, ed. by G. V. Golubeva (St Petersburg: Izd. Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha, 2003), p. 155.

4   Ekkehard Aner, 'Das Kammergräberfeld von Haithabu', *Offa,* 10 (1952), 61–115 (p. 99); Heiko Steuer, 'Soziale Gliederung der Bevölkerung von Haithabu nach archäologischen Quellen', in *Archäologische und naturwissenschaftliche Untersuchungen an ländlichen und frühstädtischen Siedlungen im deutschen Küstengebiet vom 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis zum 11. Jahrhundert n. Chr*, II: *Handelsplätze des frühen und hohen Mittelalters*, ed. by H. Jankuhn and others (Weinheim: Acta Humaniora, 1984), pp. 339–66 (pp. 353, 357, and 362); Michael Müller-Wille, 'Wikingerzeitliche Kammergräber', in *Mammen: Grav, kunst og samfund i vikingetid*, ed. by M. Iversen, Jysk Arkaeologisk Selskabs Skrifter, no. 28 (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1991), pp. 181–87 (p. 182).

5   Gali F. Korzuchina, 'Kurgan v urochishche Plakun bliz Ladogi', *Kratkie soobshcheniia Instituta archeologii,* 125 (1971), 59–64; Nazarenko, 'Mogilnik v urochishche Plakun', fig. 7.5; Musin, 'Two Churches or Two Traditions', fig. 1; and Alexei V. Plochov, 'O sviazi nizhnego Povolchovia s zapadnoi Evropoi po keramicheskim materialam', *Severnaia Rus´ i narody Baltiki* (St Petersburg: Bulanin, 2007), fig. 1.5.

6   Plochov, 'O sviazi nizhnego Povolchovia', p. 25.

7   For a discussion on Tating ware jugs, see Jörn Staecker, 'Legends and Mysteries: Reflections on the Evidence for the Early Mission in Scandinavia', in *Visions of the Past: Trends and Traditions in Swedish Medieval Archaeology,* ed. by H. Andersson and others (Stockholm: Central Board of National Antiquities, 1997), pp. 419–54 (pp. 431–33); Anne-Sofie Gräslund, *Ideologi och mentalitet: Om religionsskiftet i Skandinavien från en arkeologisk horizont* (Uppsala, 2001), p. 75; Plochov, 'O sviazi nizhnego Povolchovia ', pp. 36–38.

8   Nazarenko, 'Mogilnik v urochishche Plakun', p. 168, fig. 5.1, 5.5, 5.9, 6.5, 6.8, 6.14–16, and 7.6.
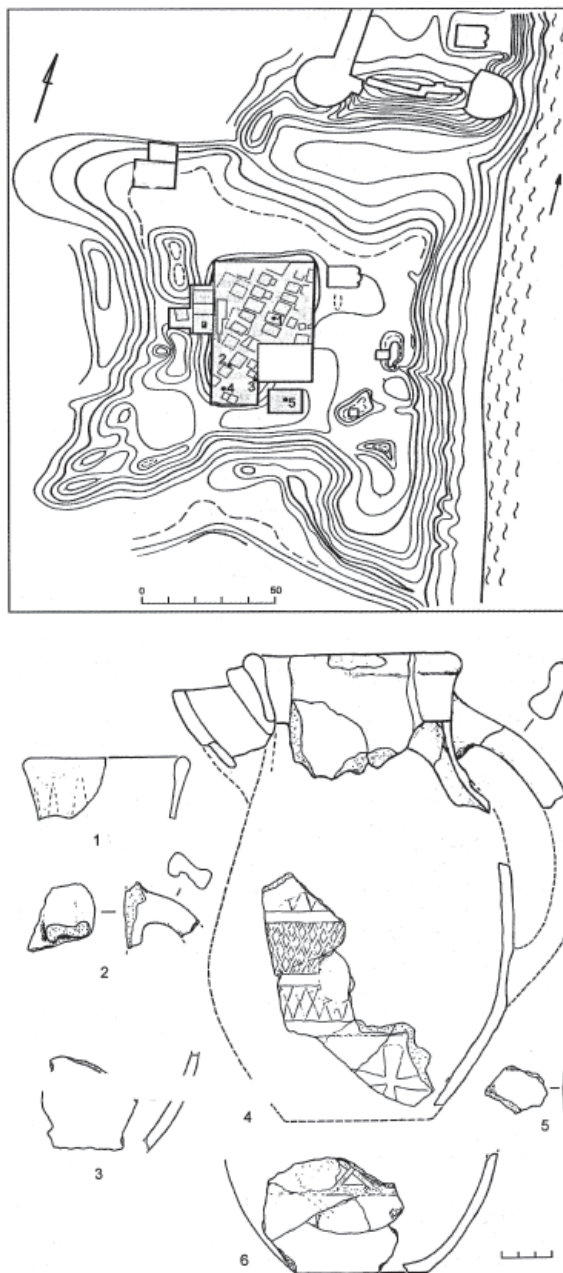
Fig. 3. **Tating ware jugs from Ladoga: above – distribution of sherds in the Ladoga hillfort** (after Plochov, 2007);
below – a jug from a female grave in the Plakun cemetery.

titude.[9] However, it seems that in the two graves described we still lack positive evidence that the buried individuals were in fact Christian. For a more objective interpretation we need to establish the social setting that facilitated such burials.

The Plakun cemetery is only one of several situated in the vicinity of Staraia Ladoga (see Fig. 4). In total, there are eighteen recorded mounds erected here in rows aligned to the river. The mounds measure between 4–20 m in diameter and between 0.30–1 m in height. Two mounds did not contain any graves, one was the chamber-grave, four were cremations in boats, and three were normal cremation graves. The finds include handmade pottery, beads, iron mounts belonging to wooden boxes, buckles, arrowheads, knives, gaming pieces of stone and bone, iron crampons for horses' hooves and also melted pieces of bronze and silver. In one grave a fragmentary sword was found.[10]

Scandinavian scholars have noted that boat graves in Sweden are associated with the local elite, whose residences were located in border areas. By contrast, in Norway they were a common occurrence and not reserved for the highest echelons of society.[11] The power of such members of the Swedish elite probably came from their control over raw materials such as iron, furs and elk antlers.[12]

It would seem that the situation at Ladoga fits this interpretation well enough. A settlement, or rather a group of farmsteads, was established here as a colony in an area harvested for certain resources. Judging from the finds from the hill fort and the surrounding cemeteries, the local society at the end of the ninth and into the tenth centuries was still mixed and included various social elements. Those buried in the Plakun cemetery were involved in trade and military activities and perhaps belonged to the upper layers of local society. It is important to stress that even in the tenth century some individuals of high social rank were buried in this area. From this period there is a chamber grave (placed on the top of a large mound) containing remains of a warrior and two horses (Fig. 5).[13] Kirill Michailov has tried to justify the outlying location of the cemetery at Plakun by suggesting that there may have been a lack of available ground within the settlement.[14] However, if we look at the topography of the settlement, it is quite clear that the area immediately by the riverside was dangerously exposed and unprotected; consequently it seems that the choice of site for the Plakun cemetery was not accidental. It is obvious that this section of the river was of strategic importance, and it is

9   Musin, 'Two Churches or Two Traditions', p. 277.
10   Nazarenko, 'Mogilnik v urochishche Plakun', pp. 163–65.
11   Anna Stalsberg, 'Interpretaciia skandinavskich pogrebenii s lad´ei, proischodiashchikh s territorii Drevnej Rusi', *Trudy VI Mezhdunarodnogo Kongressa slavianskoj archeologii,* IV: *Obshchestvo, ekonomika, kultura i iskusstvo slavian* (Moscow, 1998), pp. 362–71 (p. 370).
12   Björn Ambrosiani, 'Background to the Boat-graves of the Mälaren Valley', in *Vendel Period Studies* (Stockholm: Statens Historiska Museum, 1980), pp. 17–22 (p. 22).
13   Evgenii N. Nosov, 'Sopkovidnaia nasyp bliz urochishcha Plakun v Staroi Ladoge', *Srednevekovaia Ladoga,* ed by V. V. Sedov (Leningrad: Nauka, 1985), pp. 147–55.
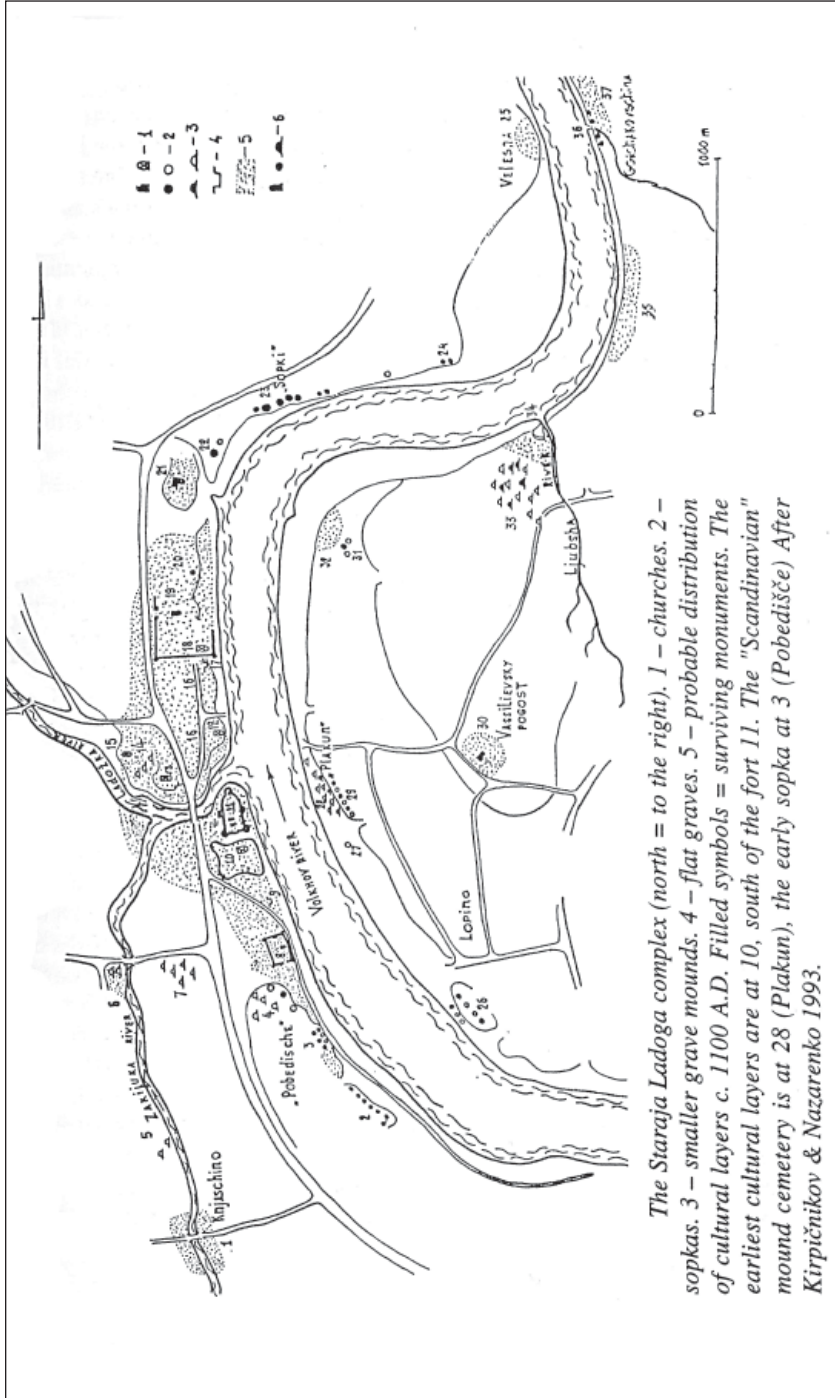14   Michailov, 'Skandinavskii mogilnik', p. 66.

The Staraja Ladoga complex (north = to the right). 1 – churches. 2 – sopkas. 3 – smaller grave mounds. 4 – flat graves. 5 – probable distribution of cultural layers c. 1100 A.D. Filled symbols = surviving monuments. The earliest cultural layers are at 10, south of the fort 11. The "Scandinavian" mound cemetery is at 28 (Plakun), the early sopka at 3 (Pobedišče) After Kirpičnikov & Nazarenko 1993.

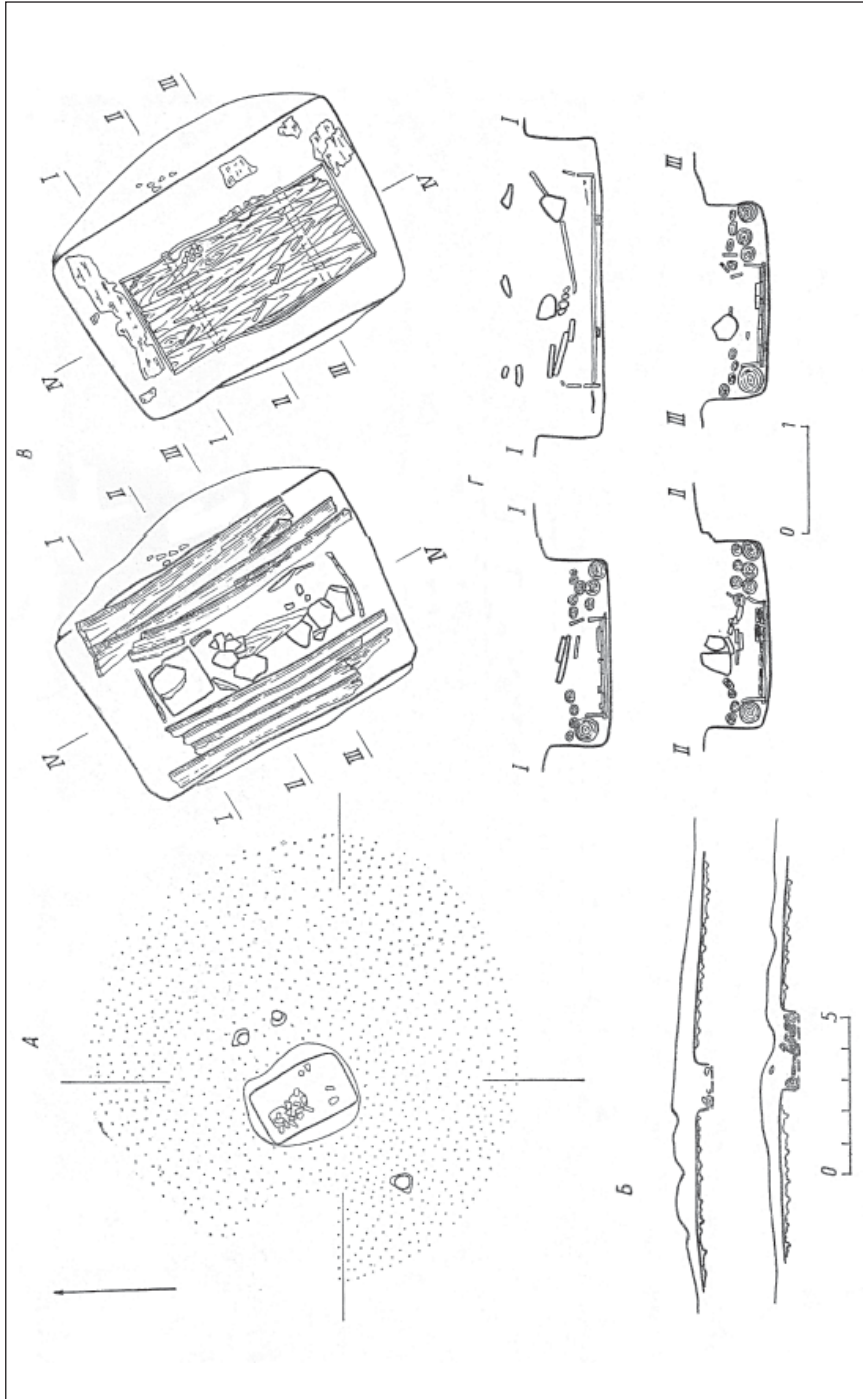Fig. 4. **The Viking Age site of Staraia Ladoga** (after Jansson, 1997).

Fig. 5. **A chamber grave with two horses placed under the top of a large barrow in the vicinity of Plakun** (after Nosov, 1985).

quite likely that for some of those buried here, defending it was their occupation. The objects found there belonged to the inhabitants of one or several farmsteads established by the defenders. In the light of these observations, the presence of a chamber grave and a Tating Ware jug in the Plakun cemetery should be considered as a social as well as religious marker indicating its owner's prominent position in local society.

It is generally accepted that another type of find, cross-shaped pendants, are a clear marker of Christianity among the population of Viking Age Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. Their distribution is commonly used to map the spreading of Christianity in Rus´ territory. In terms of the archeological contexts for these finds, they come from three main sources: settlements, graves and hoards.

Excavations of the early urban centers of Rus´ produced surprisingly few finds. The earliest one is a bronze reliquary cross (*encolpion*) discovered in Ladoga in the cultural layer dated to the early tenth century. The same site also produced nutshells, cauri shells, wax, fragmentary oriental pottery and a boxwood comb.[15] These items suggest that the people who lived on the site were engaged in long-distance contacts with Byzantium and hence enjoyed a prominent, high-status position in the community. However it is impossible to establish whether they considered the encolpion as a symbol of Christian faith or just as an isolated curio.

A silver encolpion from Uglich is dated to the second half of the tenth century (Fig. 6, left). It was found in a pit together with oriental coins and their imitations, glass beads, arrowheads (one of them lancet-shaped), a bronze mount decorated in the Borre style, other mounts of silver, spindle-whorls of Ovruch schist and pottery.[16]

Tenth-century copper-alloy reliquary crosses have been found in the Gnezdovo settlement.[17] Of a similar date is a bronze encolpion excavated from the 'Wet Meadow' area of the Gnezdovo settlement (Fig. 6, right). It was found together with Byzantine coins of Justin I (518–27), Basil I (867–86), Leo VI (886–912) and Romanus I (919–44), one intact amphora and fragments of amphorae and glass vessels.[18] This is the second find of encolpia in Gnezdovo,[19] which along

15 Anna A. Peskova, 'O drevneishei na Rusi christianskoi relikvii', in *Ladoga i Gleb Lebedev: Vosmye chteniia pamiati Anny Machinskoi* (St Petersburg: RAN, 2004), pp. 157–183 (p. 160, fig. 7.2–3); Aleksandr Musin, *Khristianizatsiia Novgorodskoi zemli v IX–XIV vv.: Pogrebalnyi obriad i khristianskie drevnosti* (St Petersburg, 2002), p. 98.

16 Sergei V. Tomsinskii, 'Serebrianyi krestik-enkolpion (iz raskopok 2001 g. v Ugliche)', in *Ladoga i eio sosedi v epochu srednevekovia,* ed. by Evgenii N. Nosov (St Petersburg: RAN, 2002), pp. 263–67, fig. 1; Korzuchina and Peskova, *Drevnerusskie enkolpiony*, p. 56, no. 20.

17 Natalia I. Astashova, 'Enkolpion iz Gnezdova', *Sovetskaia archeologiia*, 3 (1974), 249–51; *The Road from the Varangians to the Greeks and from the Greeks…: Katalog vystavki*, ed. by V. L. Egorov (Moskva: State Historical Museum, 1996), pp. 57–58, no. 344; and Korzuchina and Peskova, *Drevnerusskie enkolpiony*, p. 54, no. 7, pl. 1.

18 Veronika V. Murasheva, Natalia P. Dovganjuk, and Alexandr A. Fetisov, 'Vizantiiskie importy s territorii poimennoi chasti Gnezdovskogo poseleniia', in *Kraeugolnyi kamen: Archeologiia, istoriia, iskusstvo, kultura Rossii i sopredelnych stran* (St Petersburg and Moscow: Lomonosov, 2009), ɪɪ, pp. 530–54.

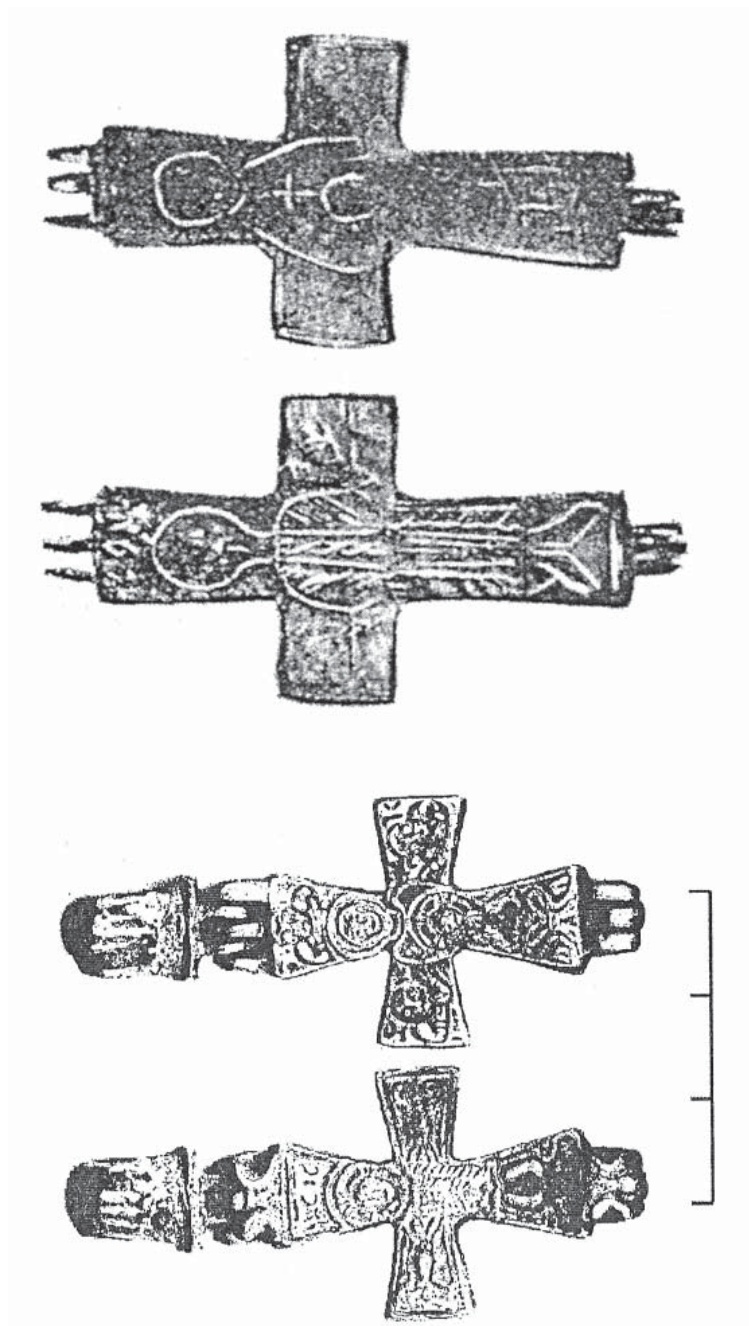19 Korzuchina and Peskova, *Drevnerusskie enkolpiony*, p. 54, no. 7.

Fig. 6. **Early types of cross-shaped pendants in early Rusʹ: left – from Uglich; right – from Gnezdovo** (after Korzuchina and Peskova, 2003).

with finds of candles and wax in other Gnezdovo graves provided some scholars with grounds for concluding that Christianity was known to the Gnezdovo population at that time.[20]

Cross-shaped pendants have been found in single graves from the tenth and eleventh centuries in Gnezdovo, Kiev, Shestovitsa, Timerevo and Podgorcy and some rural cemeteries of northern Russia.[21] The archaeological contexts of these finds have been discussed by Aleksandr Musin,[22] who noted that in many cases they were registered in graves containing weapons, weights and/or scales along with Scandinavian, oriental and European coins. Musin came to the conclusion that Christianity was most prevalent within those sections of Rus´ society that dealt with war, trade and administration.[23] Table 1 outlines the gender distribution of these finds.

As is evident from Table 1, cross-shaped pendants were found in twenty-two graves dated to the tenth and early eleventh centuries. Judging from the associated finds, twelve graves could be interpreted as female, four more as probably female, five were double graves and only one was a possible male grave.[24] Thus it can be concluded that these pendants are common in female graves. A similar situation has been observed in Scandinavia,[25] involving representatives of the same social strata of society.[26] How can this be explained? According to Aleksandr Musin, the first Christians were women, because they were 'more sensitive to such a culture

20 Murasheva, Dovganiuk, and Fetisov, 'Vizantiiskie importy', p. 545.
21 Petrukhin and Pushkina, 'Old Russia: the Earliest Stages of Christianization', pp. 249–50, fig. 1; Musin, 'Two Churches or Two Traditions', p. 279, fig. 3; and Ingmar Jansson, 'Situationen i Norden och Östeuropa för 1000 år sedan – en arkeologs synpunkter på frågan om östkristna inflyttanden under missionstiden', in *Från Bysans till Norden*, pp. 37–95 (p. 73, fig. 15–16).
22 Musin, 'Mech i krest', pp. 135–40.
23 Ibid., p. 141.
24 Mikhail Karger, *Drevnii Kiev*, I (Moscow and Leningrad, 1958), pp. 142, 175, 190–91, and 208–12; Hlib Ivakin, 'Excavations at St. Michael Golden Domes Monastery in Kiev', in *Kiev – Cherson – Constantinople*, ed. by A. Aibabin and H. Ivakin (Kiev, Simferopol, and Paris: Ukrainian National Committee for Byzantine Studies, 2007), pp. 177–220 (pp. 180 and 186–89); David I. Blifeld, *Davnioruski pamiatki Shestovytsi* (Kiev: Naukova Dumka, 1977), pp. 160–63; Radoslaw Liwoch, 'Zabytki z wykopalisk T. Ziemięckiego w latopisowym Pleśnisku', in *Olzhyni chytania* ed(s). by B. Voznytskyy, I. Mytsko, N. Gabrel (Plisnesk, 2005), pp. 5–15; Elena V. Kamenetskaia, 'Zaolshanskaia kurgannaia gruppa Gnezdova', in *Smolensk i Gnezdovo*, ed. by D. A. Avdusin (Moscow: Moskovskii Universitet, 1991), pp. 125–173 (pp. 164, 167, and 168); Daniil A. Avdusin and Tamara A. Pushkina, 'Tri pogrebalnye kamery iz Gnezdova', in *Istoriia i kultura drevnerusskogo goroda* (Moscow: Moskovskii Universitet, 1989), pp. 193–203; Nadezhda I. Platonova, 'Kamernye pogrebeniia XI – nachala XII vv. v Novgorodskoi zemle (analiz pogrebal´nogo obriada)', in *Trudy VI Mezhdunarodnogo Kongressa slavianskoj arkheologii*, IV: *Obshchestvo, ekonomika, kultura i iskusstvo slavian* (Moscow, 1998), pp. 378–79; Elena A. Iakovleva, 'New Burial Finds in Central Pskov from the Time of Princess Olga', in *Historiska Nyheter: Specialnummer om Olga och Ingegerd* (Stockholm: Statens Historiska Museum, 2004), pp. 18–20; and Tatiana E. Ershova, 'Serebrianaia podveska s izobrazheniem tamgi Riurikovichei iz kamernogo pogrebeniia v Pskove', *Kraeugolnyi kamen*, I, pp. 300–6.
25 Staecker, 'Legends and Mysteries', p. 437.
26 Musin, 'Two Churches or Two Traditions', p. 279; and Jansson, 'Situationen i Norden och Östeuropa', pp. 71–73.

as Christianity'.[27] Chronological analysis of cross-shaped pendants shows that the earliest of them were found in graves dated to the mid-tenth century,[28] which means they coincided with the time of Prince Olga's baptism in Constantinople. Records of the retinue accompanying Olga at the reception in the *Pentakouboukleion* of the Great Palace in Constantinople on October 18 (*c*. 957) state that she had with her sixteen female relatives as well as eighteen handmaidens.[29] A comparison of the payments[30] given to the Rus´ during the receptions on September 9 and October 19 demonstrates the ranking within Olga's retinue (Table 2).

Table 1. **Gender distribution of cross-shaped pendants in burials**

Site (gr=grave)	Female grave	Male grave	Double grave
Kiev, gr. 14	+		
Kiev, gr. 110 (child)	+		
Kiev, gr. 117= gr.125			+*
Kiev, gr. 124	+		
Kiev, gr. 1988–89 (child)	?		
Kiev, gr. 13,1997	+		
Kiev, gr. 49, 1999	+		
Лbestovica, gr. 78	+		
Podgorcy			+
Gnezdovo, Zaol. gr. 5	+		
Gnezdovo, Zaol. gr. 27	+		
Gnezdovo, Zaol. gr. 38	?		
Gnezdovo, Centr. gr. 198	+		
Gnezdovo, Centr. gr. 301	+		
Gnezdovo, Centr. gr. 97, 1899			+
Gnezdovo, Dn. gr. 4			+
Timerevo, gr. 417		?	
Timerevo, gr. 459	+		
Pskov, gr. 1, 2003	+		
Pskov, gr. 6, 2008	+		
Udraj, gr. 2			+
Ves', gr. 4	+		

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27 Musin, *Khristianizatsiia Novgorodskoi zemli,* p. 124.
28 Jansson, 'Situationen i Norden och Östeuropa', p. 74, note 83.
29 *De Ceremoniis,* I, ed. by J. J. Reiske (Bonn, 1829), p. 598, ll. 9–10; Jeffrey M. Featherstone, 'ΔI' ENΔEIΞIN: Display in Court Ceremonial (De Ceremoniis II, 15)', in *The Material and the Ideal: Essays in Medieval Art and Archaeology in Honour of Jean-Michel Spier*, ed. by A. Cutler and A. Papaconstantinou, The Medieval Mediterranean People: Economies and Culture, 400–1500, no. 70 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), pp. 75–112.
30 Dmitrii V. Ainalov, 'O darach russkim kniaziam i poslam v Vizantii', *Izvestiia Otdeleniia russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoj Akademii Nauk*, 1908, no. 2, 290–307.

Table 2. **Comparison of the composition of Olga's retinue attending
the banquets on September 9 in the Chrysotriklinos and October 18
in the Pentakouboukleion**

Banquet on September 9	No.	Sum	Banquet on October 18	No.	Sum
Princess	1		Princess	1	200 miliaresia
Olga's nephew	1	30 miliaresia	Olga's nephew	1	20 miliaresia
Male relatives	8	20 miliaresia each = 160	Female relatives	16	12 miliaresia each = 192
Apokrisiarioi	20	12 miliaresia each = 240	Olga's handmaidens	18	6 miliaresia each = 108
Merchants	43	12 miliaresia each = 516	Apokrisiarioi	22	12 miliaresia each = 264
Gregorios the priest	1	8 miliaresia	Merchants	44	6 miliaresia each = 264
Olga's interpreter	1	15 miliaresia	Gregorios the priest	1	8 miliaresia
Interpreters	2	12 miliaresia each = 24	Interpreters	2	12 miliaresia each = 24
Sviatoslav's retainers	?	5 miliaresia each			
Retainers of the apokrisiarioi	6	3 miliaresia each = 18			
Total	**83**	**1011 miliaresia**	**Total**	**107**	**1080 miliaresia**

Differences in the sums paid to Olga's retinues indicate that her relatives received most payment on both occasions. At the reception in the *Pentakouboukleion*, Olga's female relatives received less than her male relatives had the previous month, while the ambassadors (*apokrisiarioi*) and interpreters received the same amount both times. It is important to note that the status of Olga's handmaidens was equal to that of the merchants. While the differences might reflect the attitudes of the Byzantine administration towards the various groupings of the Rus´, and not necessarily coincide with the Rus´ point of view, it appears that all the women in Olga's retinue held high social positions.[31]

The prevalent theory is that Olga was baptized during her visit to Constantinople. If we keep in mind the female burials with cross-shaped pendants listed above, and also the presence of female relatives among Olga's retinue, we can conclude that perhaps some of them were baptized along with Olga.[32]

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31 Jonathan Shepard, 'The Coming of Christianity to Rus: Authorized and Unauthorized Versions', in *Conversion to Christianity from Late Antiquity to the Modern Age: Considering the Process in Europe, Asia, and the Americas*, ed. by C. B. Kendall and others (Minneapolis: CEMH, 2009), pp. 194–95.

32 Vladimir Petrukhin expresses it more explicitly: 'It is possible that female graves with cross-shaped pendants in Kiev belonged to Olga's courtier ladies, who were, as Olga, of Scandinavian origin' ('Put´ iz Variag v Greki: stanovlenie drevnerusskogo gosudarstva i ego mezhdunarodnye sviazi', in *Trudy VI Mezhdunarodnogo Kongressa slavianskoj archeologii*, IV: *Obshchestvo, ekonomika, kultura i iskusstvo slavian* (Moscow, 1998), pp. 127–134 (p. 133). Cf. also Jonathan Shepard's remark: 'There is also an intriguing parallel between the high proportion of female Rus´ graves containing crosses and the ceremonial attention that seems to have been paid to the high-status women who accompanied Olga at her own court receptions' (Shepard, 'The Coming of Christianity to Rus´, p. 197).

It would seem reasonable to assume that during the course of the tenth century, Christian conversions in Rus´ came to be associated with holding of high positions in society. We have already noted that cross-shaped pendants are mainly found in female graves and in hoards, and it is interesting that such pendants were registered in association with other valuable objects normally kept in purses (for instance coins, finger-rings, etc).[33] In one of the graves excavated in Kiev, a cross-shaped pendant was found in a purse made of leather and silk bearing a cross-shaped decorative mount (Fig. 7).[34] Finds of pendants in association with beads also confirm their interpretation as symbols of wealth (Fig. 8). According to Ibn Fadlan, the wealth of the tenth-century Rus´ elite was displayed by both the qualitative and quantitative composition of the necklaces of their women.[35] This interpretation of Christian symbols primarily as markers of high social status is further supported by their being associated with jewelry in hoards found both in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (Fig. 9).[36] From the Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies* we learn that small crosses of silver were used in bestowing largess to participants of the Vigil of the Feast of St Elijah, the Vigil of Palm Sunday and the Festival of Palm Sunday.[37] Thus they were considered to be suitable for distribution as gifts, normally done in the form of coins. It is also important to note that on these occasions crosses were graded according to the personal rank and dignity of the recipient. For instance, *magistri* and *praepositi, anthypatois* (proconsuls) and *patricii* received a large silver cross while the titular heads of the offices, the eunuch, *protospatharii* and all others received small silver crosses. Such offerings, already in the source culture of Byzantium, had dual meaning: they were undoubtedly Christian symbols, and yet were clearly intended primarily as a material reward marking a rank. From the same *Book of Ceremonies* we know that the Rus´ were serving in the Imperial Army from at least the early tenth century. It is tempting to think that the Rus´ mercenaries, while in service to Byzantine emperors, had acquired some of the archeologically discovered crosses or at least the very idea of a cross as a symbol of rank.

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33 Ivakin, 'Excavations at St. Michael Golden Domes Monastery', p. 189; and possibly Karger, *Drevnii Kiev*, p. 210, grave no. 125.

34 Ivakin, 'Excavations at St. Michael Golden Domes Monastery', p. 189, pl. 6.

35 Andrei P. Kovalevskii, *Kniga Akhmeda Ibn Fadlana o ego puteshestvii na Volgu v 921–922 gg.* (Kharkov: Kharkovskii Universitet, 1956), p. 141.

36 Jörn Staecker, *Rex regnum et dominorum: Die wikingerzeitlichen Kreuz- und Kruzifixhänger als Ausdruck der Mission in Altdänemark und Schweden* (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell, 1999), pp. 436–514, nos. 42, 57, 59, 75, 80, and 113; Gali F. Korzuchina, *Russkie klady IX–XIII vv.* (Moscow and Leningrad: Nauka, 1954), p. 99, no. 52; Tamara A. Pushkina, 'Novyi Gnezdovskii klad', in *Drevneishie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy, 1994 god* (Moscow, 1996), pp. 171–186 (p. 181, fig. 4.1).

37 *De Ceremoniis,* I, ed. by Reiske, pp. 114, 161–62, 172–74; Marvin C. Ross and Glanville Downey, 'An Emperor's Gift, and Notes on Byzantine Silver Jewellery of the Middle Period', *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 19/20, (1956/57), 22–33; Michael F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300–1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 196.
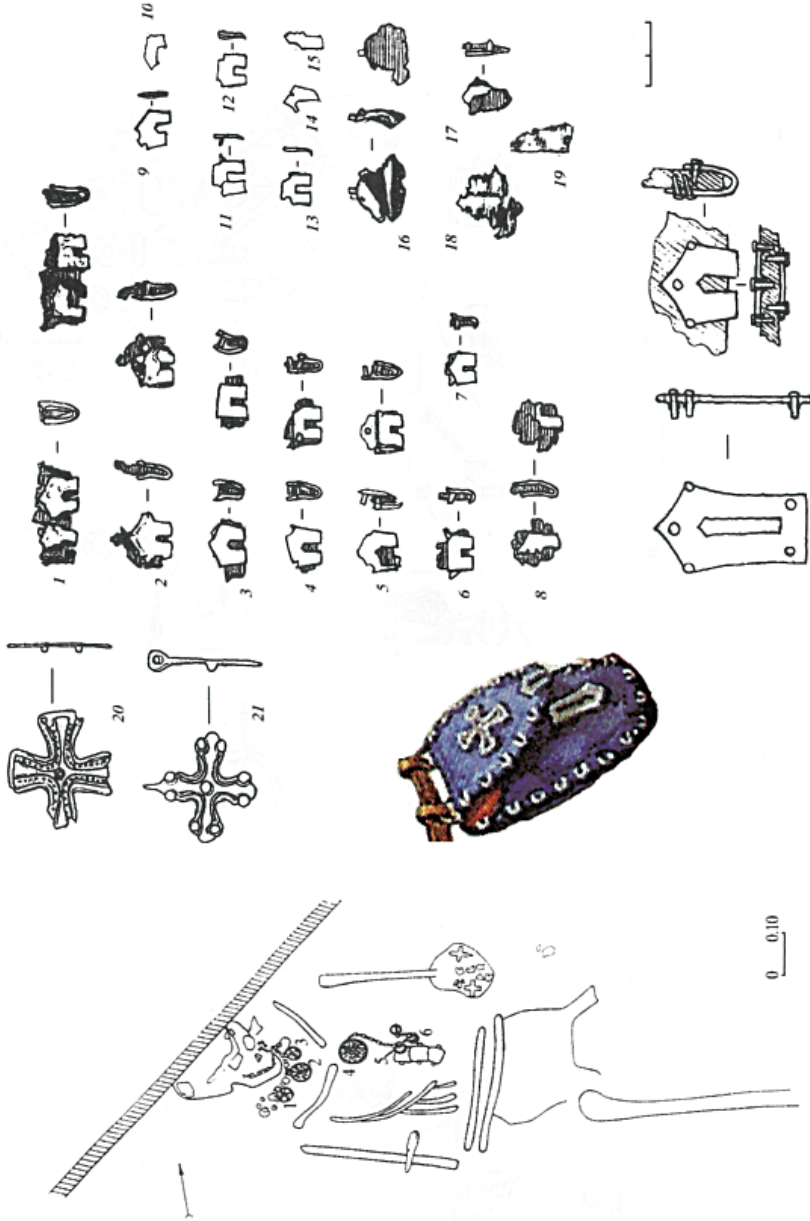
Fig. 7. **Remains of a purse made of leather and silk with a cross-shaped decorative mount discovered in Grave 49 in Kiev** (elaborated after Ivakin, 2007).

Fig. 8. **Finds of cross-shaped pendants in association with beads**
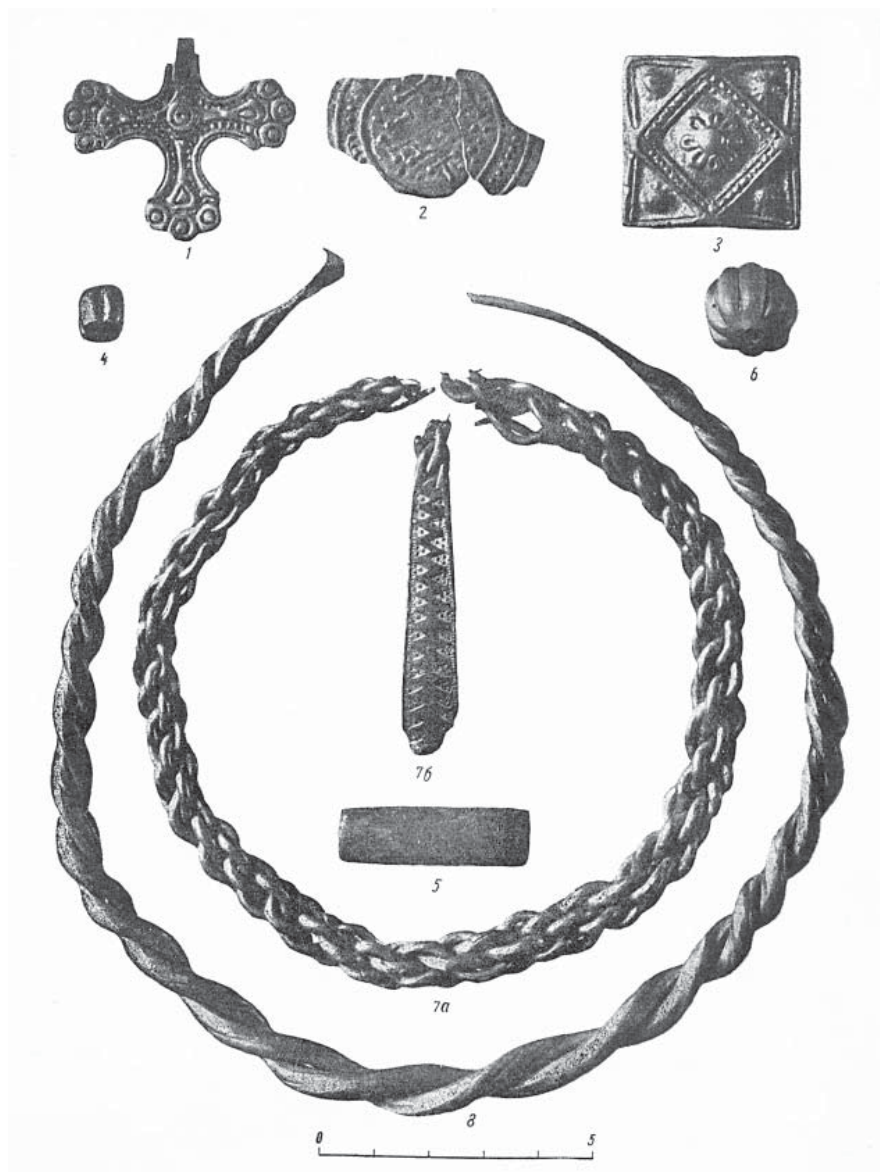(elaborated after Egorov, 1996 and Blifeld, 1977).

Fig. 9. **A cross-shaped pendant in association with ornaments found in a hoard in Kryzhovo, former Pskov region, Russia** (after Korzuchina 1954, no. 52).

In relation to the social status of the individuals buried in graves with cross-shaped pendants, one must examine one type of pendant that became a common cultural feature in both Scandinavia and Rus´ in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries.[38] Let us now take a look at the social context of the pendants dated to the end of the tenth and early eleventh centuries. One is the pendant found in a female grave in the grounds of St Michael's monastery in Kiev.[39] Another sample of identical dating came with a gilt earring from a similar grave at the same site.[40] A cross-shaped pendant was discovered together with a bronze button in a child's grave in the territory of the former St Theodor's monastery in Kiev.[41] Two more identical pendants along with a sword, an axe, a silver finger-ring and a silver arm-ring were excavated from a double grave in Podgorcy (Fig. 10).[42] Finally, it is necessary to note an important find of a bronze mould for producing such pendants, which was excavated from the site of an eleventh-century farmstead in the vicinity of the Golden Gates in Kiev (Fig. 11). The high social status of the owners of the farmstead is confirmed by traces of fortifications in the form of a ditch and a rampart and also by finds of amphora, glass vessels and a princely lead seal.[43] The decoration on the pendants made in this mould are comparable with a pendant found in one of the Gnezdovo hoards dated to the second part of the tenth century,[44] but items associated with the mould do not allow a date before the eleventh century.[45]

Thus, early finds of cross-shaped pendants are associated mainly with high-status female graves. This context allows us to conclude that these pendants, even if their Christian meaning was acknowledged, served primarily as social rather than religious markers.

I would like to sum up with a question: were cross-shaped pendants really meant to manifest exclusively, or even primarily, Christian identity? And, vice versa, does the absence of items such as these mean that a grave necessarily belong to a heathen? If this were indeed the case, we would have to exclude from among the potential Christians virtually all of the male Viking population of Rus´, since their inhumation graves normally do not contain such finds. However, we learn from the written sources that a number of Rhos served in the Byzantine army, specifically its navy.[46] The navy was employed by the Byzantine emperors

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38 Type 1.4.3 according to Staecker, *Rex regnum et dominorum,* p. 110–15. See also Jansson, 'Situationen i Norden och Östeuropa', pp. 69–70.

39 Ivakin, 'Excavations at St. Michael Golden Domes Monastery', p. 189, pl. 6.

40 Ibid., p. 180, fig. 2.20.

41 Evhen E. Borovskyi and Olexandr P. Kaliuk, 'Doslidzhennia kyivskogo dytyntsia', in *Starodavnii Kyiv. Archeologichni doslidzhennia 1984–1989* (Kyiv, 1993), p. 9, fig. 5.

42 Liwoch, 'Zabytki z wykopalisk T. Ziemięckiego', pp. 7–11, fig. 4–11.

43 Ivan I. Movchan, Analolii O. Kozlovskii, and Mikhailo M. Ievlev, 'Lokalni oboronni sporudy verchnogo Kyeva', in *Naukovi zapyski z ukrainskoi istorii,* 16 (2005), p. 106, fig. 2.2.

44 Pushkina, 'Novyi Gnezdovskii klad', p. 179, fig. 4.1.

45 Movchan, Kozlovskii, and Ievlev, 'Lokalni oboronni sporudy', p. 106.

46 John Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World 565–1204* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 125.
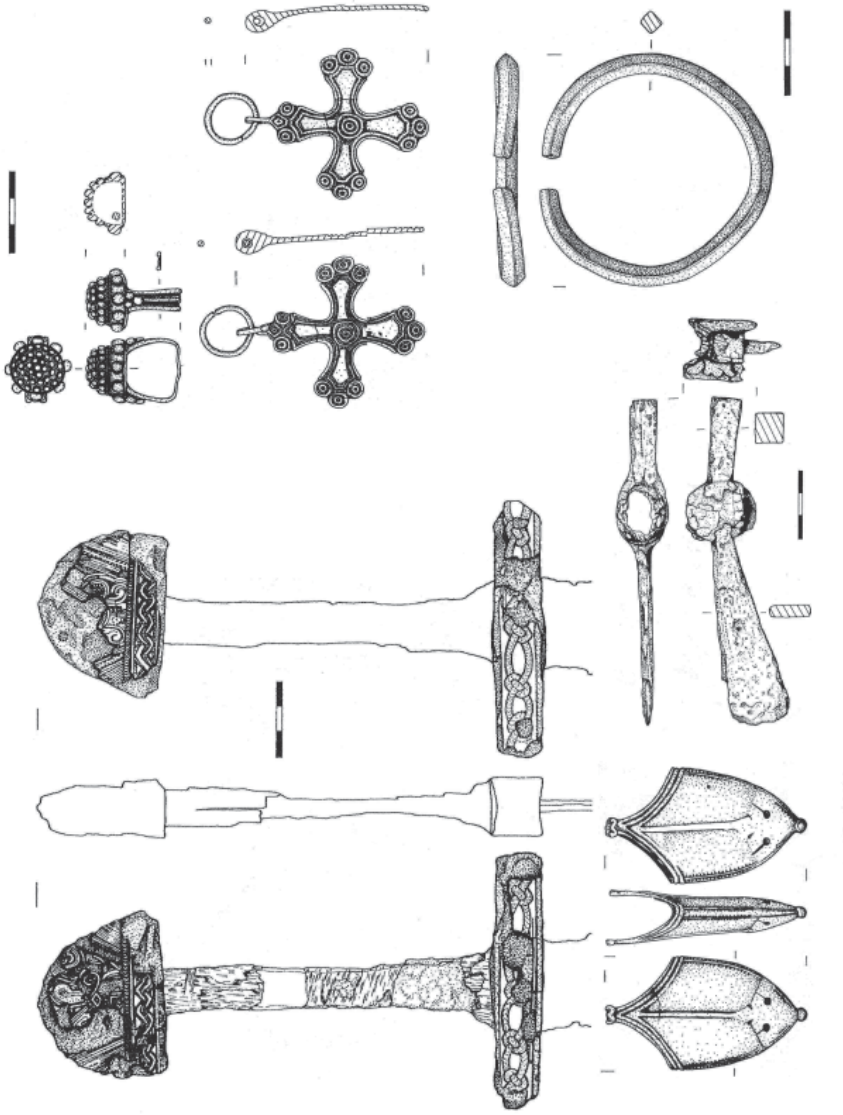
Fig.10. **Cross-shaped pendants discovered in a double grave in Podgorcy** (elaborated after Liwoch, 2005).
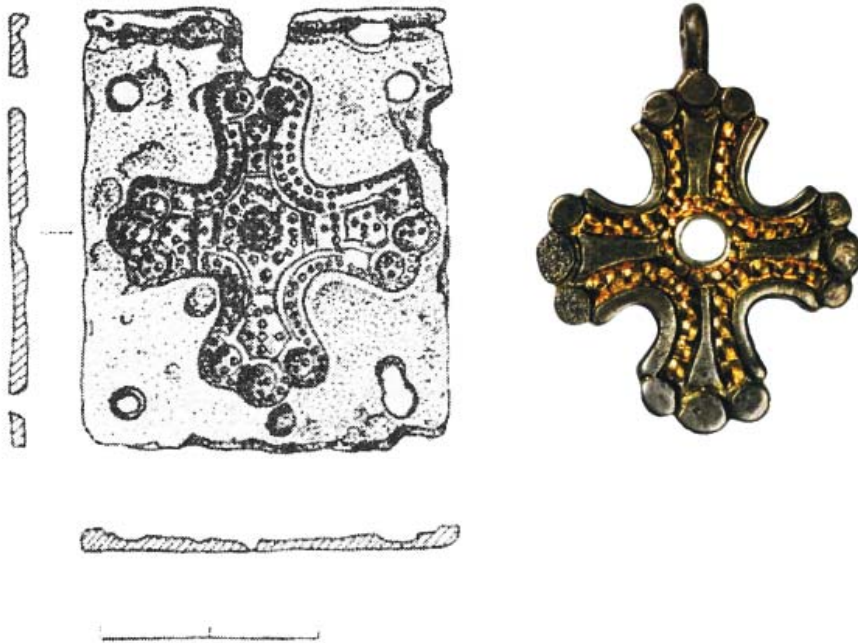
Fig. 11. **Bronze mould for producing cross-shaped pendants found in Kiev**
(after Movchan and others, 2005),
and a pendant from a hoard found in Gnezdovo
(after Pushkina, 1994).

Basil I and Leo VI for the building of various churches in Constantinople, which most certainly would have introduced those Rus´ serving there to the Christian faith.[47] We also know that there were Christian Rhos among the guards of the Great Palace in Constantinople.[48] In the tenth century, military service in the Byzantine army rather encouraged one to become a Christian; it was common to hold liturgical services for the troops as well as praying for victory. Participation in the construction and restoration of churches was one possible occupation for these 'defenders of Christ', but dying for Byzantine emperors was also considered a religious feat as much as a military one.[49] Consequently, the association of the faith with the fight against the enemy[50] automatically made good Christians of the soldiers. Under these circumstances there was probably no need for soldiers to demonstrate their Christian identity by bearing small cross-pendants. In fact, the visual Christian symbols for males might have been the decorative elements of their clothes. For instance, small decorative crosses made of gold or silver wires have been found on the garments of males buried in the weapon-rich chamber graves at Birka.[51] It is believed that these crosslets belonged to headgear, but their shape suggests that they represented an early variant of the so-called *phylactery* which, according to the Orthodox burial rite, must be placed upon the head of deceased laity.[52]

Visual symbols of Christianity such as cross-shaped pendants are associated mainly with female graves and also with hoards, where they served as symbols of high status and wealth. Male burials seldom contain them. However, other evidence points to the likelihood that Christianity penetrated Rus´ society through the agency of those warriors who served as mercenaries in Byzantium. It would appear that for some reason or other this most influenced segment of society did not consider the wearing or even the possession of small crosses to be an im-

47 *Prodolzhatel Feofana: Zhyzneopisaniia vizantiiskikh carei*, 5.68 and 6.18, ed. by J. N. Liubarskii (St Petersburg: Nauka, 1992), pp. 129 and 151.

48 We are told that baptized Rhos 'with banners, holding shields and wearing their swords' were standing on guard outside the balustrade of the Chalke during the reception of the Tarsoite Legates in the Palace on 31 May 946, see *De Ceremoniis,* I, ed. by Reiske, p. 579, ll. 21–22; Featherstone, 'ΔΙ' ΕΝΔΕΙΞΙΝ: Display in Court Ceremonial', p. 93.

49 John Skylitzes records that Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (963–69) 'endeavoured to establish a law that soldiers who died in war were to be accorded martyrs' honours, thus making the salvation of the soul uniquely and exclusively dependent on being in action on military service. He pressed the patriarch and the bishops to agree to this doctrine but some of them vigorously withstood him and frustrated his intent.' John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057*, transl. by J. Wortley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 263. Concerning the concept of 'Christian warriors', see Peter Schreiner, 'Soldiers', in *The Byzantines*, ed. by G. Cavallo (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 88–89; and Vladimir V. Kuchma, *Voennaia organizaciia Vizantiiskoi imperii* (St Petersburg: Aleteia, 2001), pp. 78–80.

50 Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, p. 21.

51 See Agnes Geijer, *Birka III: Die textilfunde aus den Gräbern* (Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, 1938), nos. 524, 542, 644, 710, and 736; fig. 27–28.6–7; Inga Hägg, 'Med textiller som källmaterial', *Saga och sed*, 2006, 116–19.

52 Dmitri Sokolov, *Uchenie o bogosluzhenii Pravoslavnoi tserkvi* (Minsk, 2002), p. 166.

portant mark of their faith. The warrior elite either chose not to express their Christianity visually or else they did so in ways as yet undetected by archeology. Therefore our traditional interpretation of those individuals buried in chamber graves with weapons — as befitted high-status warriors — as being necessarily heathens is probably not correct. Among the tenth-century chamber graves known from Birka, Gnezdovo, Kiev, Chernigov and Shestovitsa whose appearance is generally believed to denote pagan belief, there is undoubtedly a sizable number of Christian burials. However, the attempt to establish criteria for separating the two groups despite their seemingly uniform burial rituals is a task that must be attempted by future studies.

How Christian Were Viking Christians?

by Elena Melnikova

Once the most religious Emperor took pity on their [the Northmen's – *E.M.*] envoys, and asked them if they would be willing to receive the Christian religion; and, when they answered that always and everywhere and in everything they were ready to obey him, he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Him […] The nobles of the royal palace adopted these Northmen, almost as if they had been children: each received a white robe from the Emperor's wardrobe, and from his sponsors a full set of Frankish garments, with arms, costly robes and other adornments. This was done repeatedly, and more and more came each year, not for the sake of Christ but for earthly advantages. They made haste to come, not as envoys any longer but as loyal vassals, on Easter Eve to put themselves at the disposal of the emperor; and it happened that on a certain occasion they came to the number of fifty. The Emperor asked them if they wished to be baptized. When they had confessed their sins, he ordered them to be sprinkled with holy water. As there were not enough linen garments to go around on that occasion, Lewis [Louis the Pious – *E.M.*] ordered some old shirts to be cut up and tacked together to make tunics or to be run up as overalls. One of these was forthwith clapped upon the shoulders of one of the elder men; and when he had looked all over it for a minute, he conceived fierce anger in his mind, and said to the emperor: 'Look here, I've been through this ablution business about twenty times already, and I've always been rigged out before with a splendid white suit; but this old sack makes me feel more like a pig farmer than a soldier. If it weren't for the fact that you've pinched my clothes, and not given me any new ones, with the result that I should feel a right fool if I walked out of here naked, you could keep your Christ and your suit of reach-me-down'.[1]

This tale about a Viking with extensive experience in being baptized is most probably a creation of Notker the Stammerer,[2] who composed a collection of anecdotes about the deeds of Charlemagne for his great-grandson Charles the

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1   Notker Balbulus, *Gesta Caroli Magni.* II. 19, ed. by Hans F. Haefele, MGH*, SRG* n.s., 12 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1957), pp. 89–90. English translation is from *Two Lives of Charlemagne*, trans. by Lewis Thorpe (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969), pp. 168–69.
2   Ian Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth Century Scandinavia', in *The Christianization of Scandinavia: Report of a Symposium held at Kungälv, Sweden, 4–9 August 1985* (Alingsås: Viktoria Bokförlag, 1987), pp. 36–67 (p. 50).

Fat on the occasion of his visit to the monastery of St Gall in 883. Notker does not conceal his belief in the traitorous nature of the Vikings and their baptismal practices being 'not for the sake of Christ but for earthly advantages', and the purpose of the tale is to prove this. However, whether this is pure fiction or a report of a real event only slightly exaggerated by the author, the tale is representative of that time in several respects. Firstly, Notker states that the tradition of baptizing Vikings emerged soon after the Viking raids to Western Europe started. Secondly, he views the baptism of Vikings as something of a mass phenomenon. Thirdly, he stresses the pragmatic purposes of the Vikings in undergoing baptism.[3] Fourthly, he considers the Frankish emperors responsible for introducing the Vikings to Christianity. Finally, Notker accuses the Vikings of ignorance in terms of the meaning of the sacraments, but at the same time he notes their knowledge of Christian rituals. Writing in the last quarter of the ninth century, it is possible that Notker's portrayal of Louis the Pious's reign was coloured by events from later decades; nevertheless his account still provides us with an indication of how familiar the Vikings were with Christianity.

Every single feature in the account's description presents a problem in itself, and some of them have been the focus of previous studies, especially in the last two decades. One of the most intriguing yet complicated aspects of this issue is the mental adaptation of Christianity by these northern heathens: what did the Vikings know of Christianity, how did they appreciate Christian teaching *per se* and in comparison with their native beliefs, in what way was Christianity enrooted in the minds of pagan Scandinavians?[4] Some of these questions have been touched upon in previous scholarship, but mostly in connection with other topics and for the period after the 'official' Christianization,[5] so that the Vikings' early Christian phase has not been considered as a specific phenomenon.

A discussion of how Christianity was perceived by the Scandinavians in the ninth and tenth centuries is hindered by the scarcity of contemporary written sources that reflect their mentality directly. Frankish and Anglo-Saxon annals

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3   Likewise suspicious of the ar-Rūs (i.e. Scandinavian) merchants was the Arabic writer Ibn Khurradadhbih (*c*. 820 – *c*. 890) who remarked that the ar-Rūs merchants coming to Bagdad alleged to be Christians in order not to pay taxes: Ibn Khurradadhbih, *Kitab al-Masalik wa'l Mamalik,* ed. and French tr. by Michael J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1889). Russian translation is from Ibn Khurradadhbih, *Kniga putej i stran*, trans. by N. Velikhanova (Baku, 1986), p. 124.

4   Cf. the formulation of a similar problem by Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Pagan and Christian in the Age of Conversion', in *Proceedings of the Tenth Viking Congress – Larkollen, Norway* 1985, ed. by James E. Knirk, Universitetets Oldsaksamlings skrifter, ny rekke, 9 (Oslo: Universitetets Oldsaksamling, 1987), p. 90: 'What did Christianity and the church service mean to the people who did not understand Latin?'

5   For a more general approach to the problem, see Möller Håkan, 'Mentalitet och kristnande: Reflexioner kring ett tvärvetenskapligt studium – exemplet Jämtland', in *Jämtlands kristnande*, ed. by Stefan Brink (Uppsala: Linne Böcker, 1996), pp. 189–99; Anders Hultgård, 'Religios förändring, kontinuitet och ackulturation/synkretism i vikingatidens och medeltidens skandinaviska religion', in *Kontinuitet i kult och tro från vikingatid till medeltid*, ed. by Bertil Nilsson (Uppsala: Linne Böcker, 1992), pp. 49–103; Henrik Williams 'Runstenstexternas teologi', in: *Kristnandet i Sverige: Gamla källor och nya perspektiv*, ed. by Bertil Nilsson (Uppsala: Linne Böcker, 1996), pp. 291–312.

report a number of cases of Vikings and their leaders being baptized, often in some detail, but they never address the question of what the state of mind of the baptized individuals might have been. Icelandic sagas provide many hints about the Vikings' attitudes towards Christianity, but the sagas were composed at a time when Christianity had long been established in the culture, and many notions of the transitional period had become obscure or incomprehensible and so were misinterpreted. Some references can be found in skaldic verses of the tenth century as well as in runic inscriptions of the eleventh century. Although sparse and sometimes obscure, these references when taken together throw light on the mental processes that accompanied the Scandinavian's familiarization with Christianity. The purpose of this article therefore is to demonstrate the peculiarity of the Norse perception of Christianity in the pre-conversion period by studying only one aspect, the image of Christ as it is presented in early sources.

Ways of familiarization with Christianity

The time of 'official' Christianization — i.e., that which was brought about by rulers who decreed Christianity to be the only religion of their countries (such as Harald Bluetooth in the 960s or Volodimer the Great in 988) — was preceded, as is now widely acknowledged, by a long 'pre-conversion period'.[6] Contrary to the 'conversion moment', which depended heavily on royal power and predominantly involved the social elite, during the 'pre-conversion period' the seeds of the new faith were spread among individuals of different social standing; hundreds or perhaps even thousands of Vikings came across various manifestations of Christianity while raiding and trading in the West and East from the late eighth century onwards. They saw magnificent churches and cathedrals, observed Christian rites, came into possession of splendid church artefacts, captured monks and clergymen, dealt with traders from Christian countries and were in contact with local governors of various positions, as high up as Frankish emperors and Anglo-Saxon kings. A Rus´ annalist from the beginning of the twelfth century introduces a fictitious episode that nevertheless characterizes the spontaneous nature of the Vikings' encounters with Christianity. He tells that having concluded a treaty with Kievan prince Oleg after his victorious attack on Constantinople in 911,

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6   Definitions for the 'conversion moment' and 'conversion period' as two stages in the process of Christianization of the North were proposed by Peter Foote, 'Historical Studies: Conversion Moment and Conversion Period', in *Viking Revaluations: Viking Society Centenary Symposium 14–15 May 1992*, ed. by Anthony Faulkes and Richard Perkins (London: Viking Society for Northern research, 1993), pp. 137–44. This periodization should be supplemented by a 'pre-conversion period' preceding the 'conversion moment' and lasting for about two centuries from the late eighth century onwards. Three phases of Christianization process in Norway have also been identified by Fridtjov Birkeli: infiltration, mission activity and ecclesiastical organization. Fridtjov Birkeli, *Norske steinkors i tidlig middelalder: Et bidrag til belysning av overgangen fra norrøn religion til kristendom.* Skrifter utg. av Det Norske Videnskaps Akademi i Oslo, II. Hist.-filos. kl. n.s. 10 (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1973), p. 14.

the [Byzantine – *E.M.*] Emperor Leo honored the Russian envoys with gifts of gold, palls, and robes, and placed his vassals at their disposition to show them the beauties of the churches, the golden palace, and the riches contained therein. They thus showed the Russes much gold and many palls and jewels, together with the relics of our Lord's Passion: the crown, the nails, and the purple robe, as well as the bones of the Saints. They also instructed the Russes in their faith, and expounded to them the true belief. Thus the Emperor dismissed them to their native land with great honor.[7]

The tale must have been invented by the annalist, but during the talks preceding the conclusion of the treaty, Oleg's emissaries had to visit Constantinople, probably several times. The churches and palaces of the largest city of Europe could not have failed to attract their attention, and the first grains of knowledge about Christianity must have been absorbed by them. Similar chances presented themselves for the Vikings everywhere in Western Europe, and as their activities became more widespread and diverse, such opportunities became more frequent.

The earliest information about baptizing the Norsemen goes back to as early as the times of Charlemagne, whose expansion northward brought him into contact and conflict with the rulers of Southern Denmark (Hedeby) in the last decades of the eighth century.[8] Frankish annals and other sources attest to vivid connections between the emperor and the rulers of Hedeby after Charlemagne's expansion into the lands south of the Elbe. These contacts included not only military confrontations but also the exchange of emissaries (in 782, 804 and 809 to name but a few), carrying out negotiations and concluding treaties.[9] Charlemagne seems to have taken advantage of the struggles between the various claimants to the throne in Southern Denmark, employing different political tools to achieve his goals. One of these tools was spreading Christianity beyond the Elbe. He dispatched, or tried to dispatch, several missions to the Danes, the first being an unsuccessful campaign in 777 followed by a similarly unsuccessful mission in 809. The results of Charlemagne's missionary activities seem to be quite modest but it is in this context that the first baptisms of Danes are reported.

7   *Povest' vremennykh let*, ed. by Dmitrii S. Likhachev and Mikhail B. Sverdlov (St Petersburg, 1996), p. 20. English translation from *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, ed. by Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd Sherbowitz-Wetzer (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1953), pp. 68–69.

8   Robert Levine, 'Baptizing Pirates: *Argumenta* and *Fabula* in Norman *historia*', *Mediaevistik*, 1991, no. 4, 157–78; Herbert Jankuhn, 'Karl der Grosse und der Norden', in *Karl der Große: Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, 4 vols (Düsseldorf, 1967), I, pp. 699–707; Elena Melnikova, 'Ukroshchenie neukrotimykh: dogovory s normannami kak sposob ikh integratsii v inokulturnykh obshchestvakh', *Drevniaia Rus´: Voprosy medievistiki*, 32 (2008), 12–26.

9   On the diplomatic connections between Charlemagne and the rulers of Hedeby, see Elena Melnikova, 'Ukroshchenie neukrotimykh', pp. 13–17. On early missions to Denmark see Reinhart Staats, 'Missionsgeschichte Nordeuropas: Eine geistesgeschichtliche Einführung', in *Rom und Byzanz im Norden*, I, pp. 9–33.

Under the year 807, the anonymous *Poeta Saxo* relates that 'a leader (*dux*) of the Northmen, called Halfdan (*Alfdeni*), submitted to the great Emperor, accompanied by a host of others, and strove to keep lasting faith'.[10] Though the *Vita* was written between 888 and 891, its information is mostly based on *Annales regni Francorum* and is thought reliable.[11] Simon Coupland identifies this Halfdan with the one who headed an embassy to Charlemagne from *rex* Sigfried in 782.[12] If this was the case, Halfdan would have had to become acquainted with Christian culture long before his baptism. Even if this was not the case, the Halfdan of the *Poeta Saxo* would have had to have some previous connections with the Franks to be sure that his coming with 'a host' of Danes would be welcomed. The *Poeta Saxo*'s wording also suggests that Halfdan commended himself to Charlemagne (*subdidit*) and that he was baptized, probably together with his followers.

The same pattern characterizes the baptism of another group of the Danes two decades later. This episode is much better illuminated in the sources and it is frequently cited in the context of the 'Christianization' of the Danes. In 826, the Danish *rex* Harald Klak came to Louis the Pious and was baptized together with his family and retinue of about 400 warriors.[13] That was an act of political necessity because Harald needed help in his struggle for overlordship in Southern Denmark and had been receiving military assistance from Louis the Pious since 815. After the baptism, Harald swore homage to Louis and received the territory of Rüstringen in Friesland as a fiefdom. He returned to Denmark while his son and a group of followers stayed with Louis. Two years later Harald suffered a final defeat in Denmark and moved south, settling in his new land.

Frankish, Anglo-Saxon, Byzantine and early Rus´ sources provide quite a number of other episodes regarding the baptism of Vikings throughout the ninth and tenth centuries. As a rule, they tell about the baptisms of Norsemen under two sets of circumstances: either in cases of the commendation of a leader of a Viking band, sometimes after he suffered defeat (such as Weland in 860–62[14]), or as part of the conclusion of a treaty with a Viking chief such as Guthrum who

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10 Poeta Saxo, *Vita Caroli magni*, 4. 226–28, *s.a.* 807, in *Monumenta Carolina*, ed. by Philipp Jaffé, Bibliotheca rerum germanicarum, 4 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1867), p. 600.

11 On sources of the Saxon Poet, see J. Bohn, *Der Poeta Saxo in der historiographischen Tradition des 8.–10. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt: University of Frankfurt, 1965); Simon Coupland, 'From Poachers to Gamekeepers: Scandinavian Warlords and Carolingian Kings', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7,1 (1998), 85–114 (p. 87, note 8).

12 Coupland, 'From Poachers to Gamekeepers', pp. 87–88.

13 This episode is attested in Frankish annals, Ermold the Black's poem *In honorem Hludovici imperatoris*, Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*, and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta*. See Coupland, 'From Poachers to Gamekeepers', pp. 89–93.

14 Weland came to Charles the Bald with his sons, wife and retinue, commended himself to Charles and was baptized: *Annales Bertiniani, s.a.* 862, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH, SRG, 5 (Hannover: Hahn, 1883), p. 58. Similarly, in 873 the Vikings asked for permission to pass the winter on an island in the Loire; Charles the Bald allowed those who agreed to be baptized to stay, while the unbaptized were ordered to leave: *Annales Bertiniani, s.a.* 873, p. 124. For the analysis of cases connected with commendation of Viking leaders in Francia, see Coupland*,* 'From Poachers to Gamekeepers'.

was locked up by Alfred the Great in Edington in 878 or Olaf (Tryggvason?) who won the battle of Maldon and succeeded in imposing conditions on Æthelred the Unready in 991 but could not manage without an agreement with the king.[15] A more specific case is reported in Byzantine sources concerning a Viking band that attacked Constantinople in 860.[16] Several years after the siege of the Byzantine capital, Patriarch Photius informed East-Christian bishops that the most savage and bloodthirsty people of Rhos, who in previous times had dared to raise their hands against the Empire, had exchanged their pagan and godless faith for the pure religion of the Christians.[17] The baptism of the Rhos became widely known in the Byzantine world and about a hundred years later *Vita Basilii* — ascribed to Constantine Porphyrogenetus and included in the *Chronographia* of Theophanes Continuator — relates that the emperor persuaded the Rhos people to accept a bishop who convinced them to accept baptism with the help of a miracle concerning an incombustible book of Gospels.[18] It was not only the chief(s) but also at least some of the warriors who were converted at this time, and as on other occasions, the leading role in baptizing the Rhos — who are generally considered to be a warrior band from Kiev under the leadership of Askold (< *Höskuldr*) and Dir (< *Dýr* or *Dýri*) — belongs to the Byzantine authorities.

Seldom do the sources state explicitly that the baptisms of individual Scandinavians were carried out according to their free will, and if this information is conveyed it is only in passing, such as the mention of a Dane Sigifrid who was a Christian and served as an intermediary between the Frankish king and the Vikings,[19] or an unnamed Christian Norseman whose advice helped the Frisians to repulse the assault of Rodulf in 873.[20] With certain caution one might take into account the information provided by Rimbert that during the first mission of Ansgar to Birka in around 829–31 there were some citizens who 'desired earnestly to receive the grace of baptism'.[21] According to the early Rus´ annalist, by 944 'many of the Varangians were Christians'.[22] A case similar to Notker's anecdote is

15 Elena Melnikova, 'Zalozhniki i kliatvy: protsedura zakliucheniia dogovorov s normannami', in *Imenoslov*, ed. by Fjodor Uspenskij (forthcoming).

16 For the compilation of Byzantine and early Rus´ sources together with their analysis, see Pavel V. Kuzenkov, 'Pokhod 860 g. na Konstantinopl' i pervoe kreshchenie Rusi v srednevekovykh pis'mennykh istochnikakh', in *Drevneishie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy*, *2000 god* (Moscow: Indrik, 2003), pp. 3–172. On the event itself, see Alexandr Vasiliev, *The Russian Attack on Constantinople in 860* (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1946).

17 Kuzenkov, 'Pokhod 860 g. na Konstantinopl', pp. 76–78.

18 Ibid., pp. 125–29.

19 *Annales Vedastini*, s.a. 883, 884, ed. by Bernhard vom Simson, MGH, SRG, 12 (Hannover: Hahn, 1909), p. 54.

20 *Annales Fuldensis*, s.a. 873, ed. by Fridericus Kurze, MGH, SRG, 7 (Hannover: Hahn, 1909), p. 80.

21 Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii*, 11, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH, SRG, 55 (Hannover: Hahn, 1884), p. 32. English translation is from *Anskar, The Apostle of the North, 801–865*, trans. by Charles H. Robinson (London: SPCK, 1921), p. 49.

22 *Povest' vremennykh let*, ed. by Likhachev and Sverdlov, p. 26; *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. by Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzer, p. 77.

reported in *Annales Bertiniani* under the year 876. A number of Northmen were baptized by Margrave Hugo but after having received baptismal gifts they returned to heathen rituals (*pagano more*).[23]

Three main features thus seem to be typical of descriptions in the chronicles of how Christianity was brought to the Vikings and most probably these features were also key in the process itself. First, as Notker stresses twice, the initiative for the conversion lay with Christian rulers or church authorities, especially in the ninth century. Second, the baptism of a leader of a Viking band was in most cases a precondition for his submission to, or for the establishment of peaceful and long-lasting relations with, a Christian ruler. Third, the baptism of a leader was not usually an individual act: his family (if present) and his followers, at least his closest retinue, were baptized at the same time, making the whole procedure a public occasion. Even if it were only a small number of individual Vikings who had been baptized, their total number was already large enough in the ninth century that certain notions of Christianity could be transmitted to Scandinavia.

The circumstances in which the Vikings of the ninth and tenth centuries usually adopted Christianity — their rather short visits to royal courts or negotiations in the course of their attacks — did not provide opportunities for prolonged instructions in Christian teaching.[24] In rare cases when we know or can calculate the time of their stay in a Christian milieu before their baptism, it usually turns to be not more than a month or two. For example, the accounts of the baptism of Harald Klak in 826 give the impression that the ceremony took place very soon after his arrival. However, he visited Louis the Pious for the first time in 814 and then stayed for at least two years (probably more) in Saxony waiting for military help and opportunity to invade Denmark.[25] Elsewhere, Guthrum was told to come with his thirty followers to Athelney to be baptized; his white garments were taken off on the eighth day and he spent twelve days more at Wedmore with Alfred celebrating the occasion.[26] It is obvious that the time span between Guthrum's arrival and the ceremony of baptism could have amounted to no more than several days. Princess Olga is supposed to have been baptized in Constantinople most probably in 957 where she spent at least a month and a half: as related in *De ceremoniis* by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, she was received by the Emperor two times on Sep-

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23   *Annales Bertiniani*, *s.a.* 876, p. 131.

24   On the whole, catechumenate was not a widespread practice in Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries, according to Alexandra Sanmark, *Power and Conversion: A Comparative Study of Christianization in Scandinavia* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2002), pp. 91–93. Rather, it was more common in the process of converting Norsemen.

25   Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii*, 7, p. 26; *Annales regni Francorum*, *s.a.* 814, 815, in *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters*, v, ed. by Rudolf Buchner (Berlin, 1956), pp. 141–42.

26   *Asser's Life of King Alfred together with the Annals of Saint Neots erroneously ascribed to Asser*, ed. by W. H. Stevenson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1904) pp. 46–47; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, ed. by D. Dumville and Simon Keynes, III: *MS A*, ed. by Janet M. Bately (Cambridge: D. C. Brewer, 1986), pp. 50–51.

tember 9th and October 18th,[27] but she most probably arrived to Constantinople at an earlier date. If the would-be converts were instructed during this short time, their information about the new faith would have been necessarily very limited, concerning only the most vital issues.

Christ — the God of the Christian Vikings

Both the missionaries and church authorities were fully aware of the ignorance of their new flock in Christian matters and their inability to appreciate Christian teaching in its complexity as well as its particulars. The case of Harald Klak is a good example of the attitudes of the preachers to the new converts. The Danish king is said to have been 'ignorant and untaught in the faith, and unaware how God's servants ought to behave. Moreover, his companions who had been but recently converted and had been trained in a very different faith, paid little attention' to Christian norms and rites. One of the tasks entrusted to Ansgar, who followed Harald to Denmark, was 'to devote the utmost care to his profession of faith and by their godly exhortations to confirm in the faith both Harald and his companions who had been baptized together with him, for fear lest at the instigation of the devil they should return to their former errors, and at the same time by their preaching to urge others to accept the Christian religion'.[28]

We do not know precisely what the missionaries taught the new converts but there are indications that they had to adapt Christian dogma in various ways in order to accommodate it to the mindsets of those who had been heathen until recently. The practice of accommodating traditional pagan beliefs was sanctioned as early as 595 by Pope Gregory the Great, who instructed missionaries to the Anglo-Saxons not only to ban heathen traditions but to substitute them with Christian ones and imbue them with Christian meaning. Those who had to instruct the Scandinavian pagans in the Christian faith tried, it seems, to implant only a few of most essential notions in the minds of the neophytes and even these few ideas were radically simplified to be intelligible for former heathens, as is attested by Rimbert. He puts a kind of *Credo* into the mouth of his 'perfect convert', Herigar, who asks 'My Lord Jesus Christ' to cure him 'in order that these unhappy men may know that Thou art the only God and that there is none beside Thee'.[29] The main 'theological' message of Herigar's speech is twofold: there is only one God to be worshipped and this God is Christ. Herigar's *Credo* reflects the author's own opinion on what a 'perfect convert' should know and believe, and Rimbert

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27 See Aleksandr V. Nazarenko, *Drevniaia Rus´ na mezhdunarodnych putiakh* (Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul´tury, 2001), pp. 219–310.

28 Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii*, 7, p. 29. English translation is from *Anskar, The Apostle of the North*, ed. by Robinson, pp. 42-43.

29 Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii*, 19, p. 41. On Rimbert's presentation of the conversion of Sweden by St Ansgar, see Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', pp. 38–42.

consciously identifies God the Father with Jesus Christ. In the first quarter of the tenth century the English king Edward the Elder obligated the Danes of the Danelaw to 'love one God', and this demand was repeated a century later, in 1005, by Bishop Wulfstan for probably a newly arrived Norsemen.[30] Gro Steinsland has noted possible parallels between the Christian Trinity and the multitude of angels, saints, and so on with the numerous figures of the heathen pantheon previously worshipped by the neophyte Scandinavians, while Per Beskow has suggested that the notion of Trinity — i.e. the existence of three holy hypostasis of God — could have been interpreted as a form of polytheism by the heathens.[31]

The idea of the unicity of the Christian God and his identification with Christ remained common long into the 'conversion period'. Amongst the numerous invocations on 'Christian' runic stones of the eleventh century, there are never any mentions of Christ as God's son, and the interchangeability of the invocations 'God' and 'Christ' as well as a common prayer to 'God and God's Mother' indicate that for those who ordered runic monuments, God meant Christ.[32] On one occasion this identification is made explicit: the inscription on Vg 186 reads 'God help his soul and God's mother, holy Christ in the kingdom of heaven'.[33] The skalds of the eleventh and even twelfth centuries also identify Christ as the 'sole' (*einn*) God: 'Christ, sole Prince of Mortals' (Markús Skeggjason, second half of the eleventh century), 'the sole King of the Sun' (Eilífr Kúlnasveinn, end of the twelfth / beginning of the thirteenth century).[34]

The earliest and unique mention of Christ as the son of God dates to the beginning of the eleventh century. In his *Lausavísur* composed in about 1001, Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld (d. 1007) distinguishes between the Son and the Father.

30 Felix Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsaxen*, 3 vols (Halle a. Saale: Niemeyer, 1903–16), I, p. 128. See Judith Jesch, 'Scandinavians and "Cultural Paganism" in late Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. by P. Cavill (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), pp. 55–68 (p. 64).

31 Gro Steinsland, 'The Change of Religion in the Nordic Countries – a Confrontation between Two Living Religions', *Collegium medievale*, 3,2 (1990), 123–36 (p. 126); and Per Beskow, 'Runor och liturgy', in *Nordens kristnande i europeiskt perspektiv: Tre uppsatser*, ed. by Per Beskow and Reinhardt Staats, 1994), pp. 16–36 (p. 22).

32 Sawyer Birgit, *The Viking-Age Rune-Stones: Custom and Commemoration in Early Medieval Scandinavia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 140. The usage of the word *guð* with the verb *hjalpa* in conjunctive pl. (*hialpin*) in several eleventh-century runic inscriptions is explained by Henrik Williams in the light of an obscure phrase in the prologue to the fourteenth-century *Kyrkobalk* of the Södermanland laws where the Christians are called to believe only in Christ 'because he is threefold in name, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit' as a reflection of the notion that Christ had the threefold nature spread since the time of conversion (Henrik Williams, 'Runstenstexternas teologi', pp. 305–6). This explanation based on a late, 'absurd from theological point of view formulation' (Beskow, 'Runor och liturgi', p. 22) has practically no correspondences in earlier texts (the only mention of God the Father is found in *Lausavísur* of Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld; see below), which makes Henrik Williams' interpretation not wholly convincing.

33 For the texts of runic inscriptions see the Database of Runic Inscriptions http://www.nordiska.uu.se/forskn/samnord.htm under the number given in brackets in the text.

34 Finnur Jónsson, *Den norsk-islandska Skjaldedigtning*, BI (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1912), pp. 420 and 565 (further Skj.).

He appeals to both Christ and God for favour, not wishing to incur the displeasure of the Son whose authority was given to him by 'the Father of the World' (*Krist vilk allrar ástar, / Erum leið sonar reiði, / vald es á frægt und folder / feðr, einn ok goð kveðja*).[35] As this is the only mention of this division for a long period of time, God the Father seems to be practically unknown before the conversion, and Hallfreðr displays a familiarity with Christian teaching that is unusual for his contemporaries. One can agree fully with Per Beskow that Northern Christianity of the 'pre-conversion period' and even much later was characterized by 'Christo-monism'.[36]

The image of Christ for those Norsemen who accepted him as a God seems to be far from the one current in the Christian world of that time. In skaldic poetry before 1050 as well as in pictorial art, he appears first and foremost as a strong and mighty ruler.[37] The earliest depictions of him, such as that on the Jelling stone, portray him as triumphant and glorious. The notion of the suffering Christ was not conceived by the Vikings and 'would have been regarded as almost absurd' by them,[38] although they could not have failed to see crucifixes with the suffering Christ in Western Europe and Byzantium. Furthermore, New Testament values such as charity and humility were as alien to the Viking Christ as they were alien to the Viking mentality.

Christ appeared first and foremost as a powerful *konung* whose authority spanned the whole world, both earthly and heavenly. This perception permeates his designations in skaldic verses. Most of the kennings collected by Snorri in *Skáldskaparmál* under the heading *Kristskenningar* are based on the notion of rulership and contain such terms as *konungr* and *dróttinn*. Snorri identifies kennings such as 'king of heavens' (*heims dróttinn*), 'king of all things' (*alls dróttinn*), 'king of sun' (*solar dróttinn*), 'king of the hall of the earth', i.e. 'of the heaven' (*folder hallar dróttinn*), and so on. He cites verses that stress the might of Christ as a ruler: 'The King of Monks is greatest / Of might, for God all governs' (*Máttr er munka dróttins / mestr, aflar goð flestu*, Skapti Thóroddsson, eleventh century), 'Christ, sole Prince of Mortals, / Hath power o'er all that liveth' (*einn stillir má öllu / aldar Kristr of valda*, Markús Skeggjason, second half of the eleventh century).[39] A Swedish runic inscription (U 942) names Christ as 'the ruler of men' (*gumna valdr*) thus underlining his concern for the fates of men.[40]

Several skalds specify the earthly realm of Christ and single out Rome, Byzantium and Rus´ as the loci of his special care. Eilífr Goðrúnarson (tenth

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35 Skj. BI, p. 159.
36 Beskow, 'Runor och liturgi', p. 22. This characteristic of early Christianity in Scandinavia is shared by Williams, 'Runstenstexternas teologi', pp. 305–7.
37 Edith Marold, 'Das Gottesbild der Christlichen Skaldik', in *The Sixth International Saga Conference 28.7 – 2.8.1985: Workshop Papers I–II* (Copenhagen, 1985), pp. 748–49.
38 Gräslund, 'Pagan and Christian', p. 87.
39 Skj. BI, pp. 291 and 420.
40 Williams, 'Runstenstexternas teologi', p. 304.

century) calls Christ 'Rome's Mighty Ruler' (*rammr konungr Róms*),[41] whereas Arnórr jarlaskáld (eleventh century) spreads Christ's grace eastward: 'the Lordly Warder of Greeks and Gardar' (*snjallan Grikkja vörðr ok Garða*).[42] Stressing the particular connection of Christ with Rome and Byzantium (and Garðar = Rus´), these skalds who lived at the 'conversion moment' or immediately after it seem to have perceived these regions as the two main centres from which Christianity was disseminated.[43]

Christ is endowed with functions and qualities appropriate to a *konung* of the Viking Age. He is first and foremost a defender (*vörðr*) of lands and peoples, not only in spiritual sense but in physical way as well. This notion gave rise to a topos comparison of a warrior ruler with him as a guardian. Thus, Knut the Great 'defends the country' like 'the keeper of Greeks defends the realm of heaven' (*Knútr verr grund sem gætir / Gríklands himinríki*).[44]

As a *konung*, Christ possesses good luck (*gipta*) which he can transmit to a person, a *konung* or a Viking. Þórbjörn dísarskáld (late tenth century) mentions a Viking who 'received great luck of the White Christ' (*fekk Hvítakrists hæsta giptu*) after having been baptized.[45] Another skald of the same time, Þórleifr járlsskáld, attributes the victories of the Danish king Svein Forkbeard (d. 1014) in England to the good luck bestowed on him by God, 'prince of the sky's radiance' (*Opt með ærna giptu öðlings himnis röðla, / Jóta gramr enn ítri / Englandi rauð branda*).[46]

If the representation of Christ as a mighty warrior overlord derived from the traditional Scandinavian culture and is attested in sources preceding the 'conversion moment', his endowment with other functions is witnessed by later texts. The spread of these notions in the eleventh century, however, may indicate their emergence some time earlier, i.e. in the 'pre-conversion period'.

In eleventh-century poetry, Christ is designated as the creator of the world several times. Skapti Þóroddsson and Markús Skeggjason proclaimed that 'Christ's power wrought this earth all, and raised the Hall of Rome' (*Kristr skóp ríkr ok reisti Rúms höll veröld alla*) and that 'the King of the Wind-House fashioned Earth, sky, and faithful peoples' (*Gramr skóp grund ok himna glyggranns sem her dyggvan*).[47] The creation function is attributed to Christ by Snorri too, who makes Olaf Haraldsson explain to Arnljot Gellini that among other essentials of

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41 Skj. BI, p. 144.
42 Arnórr jarlaskáld, *Erfidrápa* for Harald Harðráði, 19, in Skj. BI, p. 326. On Christian elements in Arnórr's poetry, see Diana Edwards, 'Christian and Pagan References in Eleventh-Century Norse Poetry: The Case of Arnórr jarlaskáld', *Saga-Book*, 21 (1982–85), pp. 34–53 (pp. 42–43).
43 On the significance of Eastern Christianity in the 'pre-conversion period', see *Från Byzans till Norden*.
44 Þórarinn loftunga, *Höfuðlausn*, in Skj., BI, p. 298. On poetry dedicated to Knútr the Great see Judith Jesch, 'Knutr in Poetry and History', in *International Scandinavian and Medieval Studies in Memory of Gerd Wolfgang Weber*, ed. by M. Dallapiazza and others (Trieste: Edizioni Parnaso, 2000), pp. 243–56.
45 Þórbjörn dísarskáld, a heroic poem (?), in Skj., BI, p. 135, l. 2.
46 Þórleifr járlsskáld, *Drápa* on Sveinn Forkbeard, in Skj., BI, p. 133.
47 Skapti Þóroddsson, in Skj, BI, p. 291; Markús Skeggjason, *Kristsdrápa* (?), in Skj., BI, p. 420.

the Christian faith he is 'to believe that Jesus Christ created heaven and earth and all human beings'.[48] This concept contradicted the Christian dogma in which the creation of the world and human beings belonged to God the Father. On the one hand, the transference of the creation function to Christ — within the framework of Christian teaching — was necessitated by the fact that the figure of God the Father was not widely known. On the other hand, in Scandinavian mythology the same action was ascribed to the supreme god of the heathen pantheon, Odin. As the sole god of the Christianized Vikings, Christ could acquire the function of the creator of the world, thus combining similar Christian and heathen concepts.

Another characteristic of the Viking-Age Christ also reflected only in the eleventh century was the belief in Christ's command over souls in the future life. This idea gained wide acceptance in the eleventh-century texts on rune-stones. In more than 300 inscriptions there appears a prayer 'God (= Christ) / God and God's mother help his / her soul'.[49] In several cases the formula is expanded: 'God (or: God and God's mother) help his (or: her) soul better than he deserved'.[50] As a guardian of the world and mankind, Christ is obviously supposed to take care of Christians not only in their earthly life but in their afterlife as well, choosing whether or not to admit souls into paradise: 'May God and God's mother help his spirit and soul, grant him light and paradise' (U 160, early eleventh century), 'May Christ let Tumme's spirit come into light and paradise and into the world best for Christians' (U 719, late eleventh century).[51] If the notion of Christ being in charge of paradise emerged in the 'pre-conversion period', it might have been paralleled with Odin as the owner of Valhalla, which was 'the world best' for the warriors fallen in battles.

Exclusively Christian characteristics of Christ that could not be correlated with heathen equivalents are hardly represented in sources even of the eleventh century. Runic invocations never address Christ as the Saviour, nor do they reveal any knowledge of the concept of redemption. Both notions were basic tenets of Christianity in which Christ was first and foremost the Redeemer of the sins of mankind as well as of individuals. It is only in one inscription that the idea of sins finds expression: 'May God help his spirit and soul and forgive him his guilt and sins' (U 323, early eleventh century) but it implies forgiveness and not redemption. The versatile complex of notions connected with the idea of salvation therefore seems to be reduced to only one aspect: Christ's ability to ensure that the souls of the deceased are admitted to paradise.

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48 *Óláfs saga ins helga*, ch. 215, in Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla II*, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Íslenzk fornrit, 27 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1979), pp. 369–70. Cf. 'It is a great pity that such a warrior does not believe in Christ, his creator', ibid., ch. 200, p. 349.

49 Williams, 'Runstenstexternas teologi', pp. 292–96. See also Eric Segelberg, 'God Help his Soul', in *Ex orbe religionum*, ed. by Jan Bergman and others (Leiden: Brill, 1972), pp. 161–76.

50 Åke Hyenstrand, '"…bättre än han förtjänade": En parentes om runstenar', *Tor*, 15 (1972–73), 180–90.

51 The author of the latter text seems to be not quite sure about 'the world best for Christians' as he separates it from paradise.

Christ and heathen gods

Accepted as the god of the Christians, Christ could occupy different places in the religious mind of Scandinavian neophytes. He could radically replace heathen gods and become a single divine force, just as Rimbert describes in the case of Herigar, Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld declares in the verses chronicling his own conversion and saga-writers detail in their descriptions of the Icelanders Hjalti Skegjason and Gizzur the White Teitsson who were active in the Christianization of Iceland. However, such a final rejection of traditional gods sometimes took place not without regret,[52] which was more typical for the converts of the later part of the pre-conversion period or for those who spent long periods in Christian countries like Hakon the Good who was brought up by the English king Æthelstan,[53] or early Rus´ Varangian martyrs who lived permanently in Kiev, were baptized in Constantinople and were sacrificed to the pagan gods in 983.[54]

In earlier stages of the Christianization process, Christ is thought to have been appreciated as another god who could be included in the traditional pantheon. This seems to have been the case with one of the first settlers in the northern quarter of Iceland (*c*. 890), Helgi the Lean, whose 'faith was very much mixed: he believed in Christ but invoked Thor when it came to voyages and difficult times'. He must have become acquainted with Christianity before coming to Iceland because he 'believed in Christ and called his home after him' — *Kristness*. At least one of his sons might be also of 'mixed faith' if not a Christian. He obviously doubted the belief in Thor, for when Thor's 'oracle guided him [Helgi] north of the island […] Hrolf asked Helgi whether he was planning to sail to the Arctic Ocean if Thor told him to go there'.[55] In Hrolf's opinion, unlike to Helgi's, following Thor's advice was not obligatory, on the contrary, it might be absurd or even harmful. A similar situation is attested in the letter of Pope Nicholas I to the Danish king Horic II a quarter of a century earlier in 864; the Pope thanked Horic for gifts sent to St Peter

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52 Hallfred, the skald of Olaf Tryggvason, acknowledged in his verses that his rejection of heathen gods after the conversion evoked by his patron was a difficult choice. See Steinsland, 'The Change of Religion in the Nordic Countries', pp. 131–32; Russel Poole, 'The 'Conversion Verse' of Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld', *Maal og Minne*, 2002, no. 1, pp. 15–37. Cf. Paul Schach, 'The Theme of the Reluctant Christian in the Icelandic Sagas', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 81,2 (1982), 186–203.

53 Under the pressure of his heathen subjects he had to perform pagan rituals and was buried according to the pagan ritual in a mound. See Sverre Bagge, 'A Hero between Paganism and Christianity: Håkon the Good in Memory and History', in *Poetic und Gedächtnis: Festschrift für Heiko Uecker zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Karin Hoff and others (Berlin and Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 185–207. Some of the settlers in Iceland from England and Ireland who were Christians, such as Auð the Wise, were buried in a similar way.

54 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. by Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzer, pp. 182–83. For more on the Varangian martyrs, see Elena Melnikova, 'Varangians and the Advance of Christianity to Rus in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', in *Från Byzans till Norden*, pp. 119–24.

55 *Landnámabók*, in *Íslendingabók. Landnámabók*, ed. by Jakob Benediktsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 1 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1968-86), pp. 250-53. English translation is from *The Book of Settlements: Landnámabók*, trans. by Hermann Pálsson and P. Edwards (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1972), p. 97.

and at the same time reproached him for worshipping idols.[56] In the mid-tenth century Hakon the Good secured the conversions of 'the men who were dearest to him; and many, out of friendship to him, allowed themselves to be baptized, and some laid aside sacrifices'.[57] Those who 'laid aside sacrifices' and whose number is designated as *sumir* 'some', i.e. not very many, seem to accept the two main provisions of Christianization, the belief in one God — Christ — and the rejection of pagan gods, while others, though baptized, continued to worship traditional gods together with Christ.

The reckoning of Christ among pagan gods or at least the belief in both is supposed to find reflection in combination of symbols belonging to Christ — a cross — and to Thor — a hammer. The Thor's hammer from Lungås (Västergötland) decorated with crosses has been interpreted by Anne-Sofie Gräslund as an example of this mixed religious beliefs.[58] The mixture of pagan and Christian symbols characterize graffiti on an Islamic coin struck in 910–30.[59] On one side of the coin a large Thor's hammer is carved in the centre with a slightly smaller cross to the right. Below the cross there is an inscription in much smaller runes: **kuþ** *Goð*. On the other side, a cross and the word **kuþ** are inscribed near the edge of the coin. Two of the runes, **ku**, are placed between the branches of the cross whereas the rune **þ** is located beneath them. It is not only the combination of a Thor's hammer and a cross on the coin that attracts attention; the most interesting feature of this graffiti is the location of the word *Goð*. In various forms (**kuþ** and **guð** in younger and older futhark) it occurs on many Islamic coins found in Eastern Europe, on Gotland and in Eastern Sweden, but the question always remained as to whether the word appealed to the Christian or pagan god (the latter being most probably Thor, whose name was carved on several coins, in two cases together with the word *goð*[60] and whose symbol, the hammer, appeared on about 150 coins).[61] On the coin in question **kuþ** is obviously connected with the cross, thus meaning Christ. The same combination of a cross and the word **kuþ** appears on both sides of one Islamic coin from a Ukrainian hoard with the latest coin struck in 954/5.[62] A very specific case concerns a trapezoidal pendant found in a burial in the Rozhdestvenskij necropolis (the Perm' region, Russia) with a Rurikid symbol on one side and a Thor's hammer with its handle in the shape of

56 Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', p. 49 and note 80. Adam of Bremen thought that Horic II was a Christian: *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, 1. 25 [27] and 1. 29 [31], ed. by Schmeidler, pp. 31 and 35.

57 *Hakonar saga góða*, ch. 13, in Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla I*, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Íslenzk fornrit, 26 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1979), pp. 168–69.

58 Gräslund, 'Pagan and Christian', p. 82.

59 Inger Hammarberg and Gerd Rispling, 'Graffiter på vikingatida mynt', *Hikuin*, 11 (1985), pp. 74–75. For the description of the coin, see Igor Dubov, Igor Dobrovolskii, and Iurii Kuzmenko, *Graffiti na vostochnykh monetakh* (Leningrad, 1991), p. 185, no. 422.

60 Hammarberg and Rispling, 'Graffiter', p. 71, nos. 16 and 32.

61 Elena Melnikova, *The Eastern World of the Vikings* (Gothenburg, 1996), p. 86; ead., *Skandinavskie runicheskie nadpisi: Novye nakhodki i interpretatsii* (Moscow, 2001), pp. 107–8.

62 Melnikova, *Skandinavskie runicheskie nadpisi*, p. 151, no. 18.1.

the handle of a sword.[63] About twenty trapezoidal pendants with Rurikid symbols are known in the territory of Rus´ and they have been interpreted as a form of credentials for the emissaries of Rus´ great princes.[64] The Rurikid symbol on the pendant from Rozhdestvenskij necropolis is identified as belonging to Volodimer the Great who was baptized and decreed Christianity the official religion of Rus´ in 988. The burial is dated to the turn of the tenth / early eleventh centuries, so the pendant must have been produced, or at least employed after, the Conversion. The representation of a Thor's hammer on it points to the actuality of heathen symbols (and consequently beliefs) among the already Christianized elite of early Rus´.

The practice of combining baptism and heathen beliefs with or without the inclusion of Christ in the pantheon was a widespread phenomenon for practical purposes. In the 890s the Arabic writer Ibn Khurradadhbih mentioned that the merchants of ar-Rūs claimed to be Christians in order not to pay taxes. He doubted their Christianity but perhaps without justification, for Scandinavian merchants in Bagdad could be baptized and consider themselves Christians without being prevented from worshipping pagan gods. A highly tolerant attitude to such situations is attested in *Egils saga*:

> England was thoroughly Christian in faith, and had long been so, when these things happened. King Athelstan was a good Christian; he was called Athelstan the Faithful. The king asked Thorolf and his brother to consent to take the first signing with the cross, for this was then a common custom both with merchants and those who took soldiers' pay in Christian armies, since those who were 'prime-signed' (as 'twas termed) could hold all intercourse with Christians and heathens alike, while retaining the faith which was most to their mind. Thorolf and Egil did this at the king's request, and both let themselves be prime-signed.[65]

In Icelandic sagas written after the twelfth century, the rite of *primo signatio* is mentioned more than once in contexts similar to the episode quoted above, while Rimbert tells of a great number of citizens of Hedeby who were 'willingly signed with the cross in order to become catechumens'.[66] The Frankish and Anglo-Saxon annals and chronicles, however, refer to Viking 'baptisms' that, if they are described in detail, are presented as baptismal and not prime-signing procedures.[67] In spite

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63 Natalia B. Krylasova, 'Podveska so znakom Riurikovichei iz Rozdestvenskogo mogilnika', *Rossiiskaia arkheologiia*, 1995, no. 2, 192–97.

64 Arkadii A. Molchanov 'Podveski so znakami Riurikovichei i proiskhozdenie drevnerusskoi bully', *Vspomogatelnye istoricheskie distsipliny*, 7 (1976), 69–91.

65 *Egils saga,* trans. by W. C. Green (London: Elliot Sock, 1893), p. 88.

66 Rimbert, *Vita Ansgarii*, 24, pp. 52–53.

67 For general discussion of the problem of prime-signing which I can not discuss here, see Sandholm Åke, *Primsigningsriter under nordisk Medeltid* (Åbo, 1965), esp. pp. 23–47; and Else Mundal, 'Prima signatio', in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 1357–58.

of Rimbert's explanation of their preference of prime-signing to baptism, which implies that they made a deliberate choice, it is difficult to say to what extent the difference between the two rites was realised. In any case, both the prime-signing and the baptism did not exclude 'belief in Christ and praying to Thor' at the same time.

Conclusion

The newly baptized Vikings' knowledge of Christian teaching seems to have been very limited in the eighth to tenth centuries. It was deliberately simplified by preachers and missionaries for the converts to be able to grasp at least some notions that were the core of the Christian faith. The first and the most vital was the notion of a single Christian god — Christ — which had to replace a variety of pagan gods in the minds of the new converts. However, the way in which the baptized Vikings of the pre-conversion period interpreted Christ differed radically from the way in which he was viewed in the established Christian world. Christ was a triumphant and mighty ruler of heavens, earth and mankind, the warder of Christians and the guardian of Rome and Byzantium, the two sources of Christian faith. He was also thought as the master of Paradise. His appreciation seems to have been influenced to a large extent by heathen traditional beliefs. Like Odin, he was regarded as the creator of the world and human beings, considered responsible for bestowing victory and good luck on the warrior lords whom he was said to resemble in terms of their relationship with their retinue.[68]

Other Christian personages and concepts seem to be absorbed much later as they are mentioned only in sources from the late tenth and eleventh centuries, even then in simplified terms.

The veneration of the Virgin Mary is not directly attested in sources before the Conversion. According to Snorri Sturluson, Hakon the Good proclaimed the following rules for converts when he attempted to introduce Christianity into Norway: 'they should believe in one God, Christ the son of Mary, and refrain from all sacrifices and heathen gods; and should keep holy the seventh day, and abstain from all work on it, and keep a fast on the seventh day'.[69] These rules reflect the traditional concept of Christ as the only God of the Christians and include the demand to repudiate sacrifices and worship of heathen gods. The information about the observance of holy days and weekly fasts may well have been Snorri's own addition, but equally it might have stemmed from the tradition about Hakon who was brought up in Christian England and could learn the Christian customs,

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68 See the description of Thor as a 'heaven's ruler' (*himnisjóli*) by Eilífr Goðrúnarson (late tenth century) in his *Þórsdrápa* (Skj. BI, p. 141, l. 9). Edith Marold briefly discusses three instances in skaldic poetry where similar praise is used in reference to Thor, and considers the possible influence of Christian liturgy: Edith Marold, 'Die Skaldendichtung als Quelle der Religionsgeschichte', in *Germanische Religionsgeschichte: Quellen und Quellenprobleme,* ed. by Heinrich Beck and others (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992), pp. 689–90.

69 *Hákonar saga góða*, ch. 15, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, pp. 169–70.

especially as these two specific prohibitions were part of Christian law.[70] The same may be true of the mention of Mary, but her veneration was widespread both in Western Europe and Byzantium long before it flourished in Europe in the eleventh century[71] and became known to the baptized Vikings. Nevertheless, the use of her image seems to be limited to only one of her multiple functions, namely her role as the Mother of Christ. Her name appears in invocations on thirty-four 'Christian' runic stones, always in the formula 'God and God's Mother help his/her soul'.[72] There are no invocations solely to Mary and quite a number of stones with this formula are erected by or for women.[73] The veneration of the Virgin probably did not have much appeal to the Vikings with their warrior culture and mentality and it found wider response among women, who, broadly speaking, have always been considered to be more willing recipients of Christianity.[74] Whether by women or men, Mary was venerated not as an independent saint but only as the mother of the Christian God, even in the eleventh century.

It seems that more abstract ideas began to permeate the minds of the Vikings mostly when they could be correlated with heathen concepts. Christian eschatological ideas were very vague and based on the belief of the existence of afterlife of the soul as reflected in the prayer of Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld for the soul of Olaf Tryggvason: 'may the spotless Christ have the wise king's soul, above the world'.[75] The existence of the concept of paradise is witnessed by several eleventh century runic stones.[76] This paradise, however, seems to be imagined as a brightly lit place (cf. the combination of notions of light and paradise in the above-cited runic inscriptions) and governed by Christ. Even at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the *Norwegian Homily Book* described paradise in the most primitive way by contrasting it with the hell, for while hell was a gruesome location, paradise was a good place to be.[77] This definition echoes the inscription on an eleventh-century rune stone where paradise is defined as the 'world best for Christians'. To reach paradise it seems to have been enough to be simply a Christian, though later clerics insisted on the observance of moral prohibitions. None of these ideas were an utter novelty for the Vikings; Scandinavian heathenism developed a highly elaborate concept of the afterlife with a multitude of other worlds. For these converts, therefore, the dif-

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70 Bagge, 'A Hero between Paganism and Christianity', pp. 185–207.

71 On the spread of the cult of the Virgin Mary in Medieval Europe, see *Marie: Le culte de la Vierge dans la sociéte médièvale*, ed. by D. Iogna-Prat and others (Paris: Beauchesne, 1996).

72 The number of rune stones with a prayer to God's mother is taken from Gräslund, 'Pagan and Christian', p. 92.

73 Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kristnandet ur ett kvinnoperspektiv', in *Kristnandet i Sverige*, ed. by Bertil Nilsson, pp. 313–34.

74 Birgit Sawyer, 'Women and the Conversion of Scandinavia', in *Frauen in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter*, ed. by Werner Affeldt (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1990), pp. 263–81.

75 Skj. BI, p. 157; Edwards, 'Christian and Pagan References', p. 39.

76 See above.

77 *Gamal norsk homiliebok: Cod. AM 619 4o*, ed. by G. Indrebø (Oslo: Dybwad, 1931). See Edwards, 'Christian and Pagan References', p. 182.

ference between this previous system of belief and Christianity was simply a case of reinterpreting these concepts. The concept of a physical life after death in another world was substituted with the idea of the afterlife of a soul, although it is unclear in what way the idea of the soul was understood. Various other worlds such as Valhalla, Hel, as well as less well-defined places such as the green meadow or the abode of Freya, found close counterparts in the Christian concepts of paradise and hell.[78] Sophisticated notions of Christian theology were thus reduced to their most general kernels, which turned out to be similar to heathen beliefs. Those Christian concepts that had counterparts in Scandinavian traditional culture and mythology, however approximate, seem to have been adopted rather easily, whereas the notions that were absolutely alien to Scandinavians — such as that of the Trinity or salvation — were commonly ignored.

It is usually stressed that Scandinavian heathenism underwent *interpretatio Christiana* before being absorbed by Christianity.[79] This is true when we speak of the religious situation in the eleventh century and beyond,[80] but this interpretation seems to be an incorrect one when we turn to the earlier period,[81] when the Vikings were only just starting to become familiar with Christianity. The representation of Christ as a *konung* and his endowment with the qualities and functions of a warrior overlord was one way in which traditional and Christian concepts were able to interact, which at the early stages led to the reinterpretation of new notions and images in terms of Norse culture and in accordance with existing models of Scandinavian mythology. This was the time of the 'appropriation of Christianity',[82] and of *interpretatio norræna*[83] of Christian theology.

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78 A scholarly emphasis on how Christian theology influenced heathen concepts of the afterlife and other worlds as they are presented in thirteenth-century sources seems justified, but the original similarities should be taken into account as well.

79 As one of the latest expressions of these views, see Williams, 'Runstentexternas teologi'.

80 Surely already at the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh centuries there were individuals familiar with Christian theology like Hallfredr vandræðaskáld and Sighvat Thordarson, the skalds of the Norwegian missionary kings Olaf Tryggvason and Olaf Haraldsson (see Bjarne Fidjestøl, 'The Contribution of Scaldic Studies', in *Viking Revaluations*, ed. by Anthony Faulkes and Richard Perkins (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1993), pp. 110–120), just as there were genuine Christians having fully rejected heathendom like Rimbert's Herigar. However, such cases seem to be the exceptions rather than the rule.

81 New archaeological finds seem to suggest that a more profound penetration of Christian ideas can be dated to the middle of the tenth century. A number of examples point to the existence of Christian communes, such as the isolation of specially enclosed parts in the necropolis of Birka (Gräslund, 'Pagan and Christian', p. 91), discoveries of Christian graveyards in Veøy in Romsdal (Norway) from *c*. 950 and in Sebbersund and a royal port or proto-town by Limfjord with a small church *c*. 1000 (Stefan Brink, 'New Perspectives on the Christianization of Scandinavia and the Organization of the Early Church', in *Scandinavia and Europe 800–1350: Contact, Conflict and Co-Existence*, ed. by Jonathan Adams and Katherine Holman (Turnhout; Brepols, 2004), pp. 163–75 (p. 166)).

82 The term was introduced by Gräslund, 'Pagan and Christian', p. 81; see also Steinsland, 'The Change of Religion in the Nordic Countries', p. 127.

83 Cf. '*interpretatio Scandinavica*' in Sanmark, *Power and Conversion*, p. 96.

The Advent of Christianity and Dynastic Name-giving in Scandinavia and Rus´

by Fjodor Uspenskij

In Rus´ and Scandinavia, both countries that embraced Christianity relatively late, the assimilation of Christian names (that is, names with Christian origins) proceeded in different ways during the periods immediately following the two conversions. Naturally, a great number of new names were introduced into the cultures of the two countries along with Christianity. The Church apparently made every effort to propagate these names by assigning them to all newly baptized Christians. However, in Rus´, Scandinavia and other countries converted in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the gradual adoption of Christian names did not have at first a negative or destructive impact on pagan naming traditions. The traditional pagan corpus of names continued to be extremely viable, and name-giving remained one of the most stable, conservative spheres of culture.

The original pre-Christian names established connections between the name-holders and their families, pasts, presents and futures. Christian names, though wholly supported by the Church, remained for a rather long time no more than words with no additional meanings or connections. This situation could lead to a system of dual names, wherein each person bore both a traditional name that ran in the family and was unrelated to Christianity, and a Christian baptismal name.

The choice of a name for any individual is of great significance in any cultural tradition. Yet when a name must be chosen for a prince who will be the future ruler of a country, then this naming becomes central to the existence of the dynasty, and, sometimes, to the existence of the country itself. The name (or names) of a royal heir determines his place in the dynasty and the status that he may hope to achieve according to the expectations of his parents. Thus through their chosen names, such princes actualized the history of the family, planned future alliances and sometimes took the first steps towards future wars. The history of princely naming is, in some sense, the most concise and concentrated history of the dynasty.[1]

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1 For details, see Fjodor Uspenskij, 'Dynastic Names in Medieval Scandinavia and Russia (Rus´): Family Traditions and International Connections', *Studia anthroponymica Scandinavica: Tidsskrift för nordisk personnamnsforskning*, 21 (2003), 15–50; id., *Name und Macht: Die Wahl des Namens als dynastisches Kampfinstrument im mittelalterlichen Skandinavien* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004); Anna Litvina and Fjodor Uspenskij, *Vybor imeni u russkikh kniazei v 10 – 16 vv.: Dinasticheskaia istoria*

It should be noted that in the ruling dynasties of both Rus´ and Scandinavia, the approach to the naming of potential heirs was extremely conservative. Male infants who were to become the rulers of their native land were given traditional names running in the family. For those who were newly converted or for Slavs and Scandinavians who were on the threshold of Christianization, such family-bound names were apparently equally significant. In Scandinavia, the original names inherited from the pagan era were not lost even after conversion, and remained in the general stock of names.

The choice of name for the legitimate male offspring of an aristocratic family was made according to certain rules: usually the name of a deceased ancestor through the male line was chosen. Through this name, the heir and hence the future of the dynasty was connected with the history of the family. By inheriting names strictly through the male line, the dynasties preserved and reinforced family integrity and continuity. Through dynastic marriages, the heir could be tied to numerous ruling families of Europe, but at the same time his name underlined his cultural, political, and ethnic identity — his belonging to a particular dynasty.

Thus, the corpus of male names for each dynasty was limited, with names repeated from generation to generation, and specific names the property of certain families. Any changes in this sphere were signs of fundamental changes in the life of a medieval dynasty. It should be noted that innovations could appear in the dynastic name corpus in two quite different ways. So far I have considered the naming of the main heir of the family, the future ruler. Here, changes were rare, though quite rapid when they did occur — the whole image of the dynasty could be significantly changed over one or two generations. On the other hand, the names of legitimate heirs were not the only ones included in the name stock of each ruling family. The naming of minor members of the dynasty — daughters, illegitimate sons and the offspring of the female line — was less immune to external influence. Their names may be assumed to have had somewhat 'diplomatic', mediatory functions.[2] Providing and reinforcing newly acquired relationships and responding to the claims of the church, the names of minor members of the family gradually expanded the corpus of dynastic names. It was thus enriched with new names that created a potential source of names for the main heirs.

In the late tenth and the eleventh centuries, the borders of the tribal world were broken and the already branching system of names acquired new dimensions. As has been mentioned, it became necessary to combine the requirements of family tradition — the universal Christian stock of names — with the need for political expediency, since political relations had become no less important than family re-

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skvoz prizmu antroponimiki (Moscow: Indrik, 2006); and Fjodor Uspenskij, 'A Brief Survey of the Anthroponymic Situation in the Rurikid Dynasty (from 10th to 16th centuries)', *Studia anthroponymica Scandinavica: Tidsskrift för nordisk personnamnsforskning*, 26 (2008), 5–24.

2   Cf. Uspenskij, 'Dynastic Names', pp. 28–34; and id., *Name und Macht*, pp. 14 and 24–26.

lations. Additional mechanisms of naming were accepted and the existing archaic approach was no longer predominant.

In Rus´, Denmark, Sweden and Norway and in the countries that took longer to embrace Christianity, the naming principles of the ruling dynasties were very similar, Rus´ being closer in this respect to Denmark than to Norway. In both Rus´ and Denmark, the multi-name system became more frequent — so that it was possible for a person to have several names in some cases, not only a Christian name and a secular name. The double-name system common to this era can be found not only among the Rus´ and Danes (some cases are reported for the Swedes as well — *Önundr-Jakob*, for instance), but also among the Hungarians (for example: *Vaik-Stephan* or *Geza-Magnus*), Bulgarians (*Boris-Michael*), Croats (*Zvinimir-Demetrius*), Czechs (*Swyatobor-Frederick*) and the Obodrites.[3] Among all the countries mentioned, a constant and extensive exchange of names and, to some extent, of name-giving principles occurred. These common principles may be accounted for by certain typological similarities between the Scandinavian and Rus´ cultural traditions and by the common history of the ruling families, manifested in real historical situations.

In the following paragraphs I shall describe a number of these situations and show how names were exchanged, how 'a feedback connection' by means of names was formed in dynastic marriages and how the stock of names was gradually enlarged and underwent sudden changes.

The Anglo-Saxon manuscript known as the *Liber Vitae of the New Minster, Winchester*, mentions among the kindred of the Danish and English king Knútr Sveinsson (the Great), his sister's name in a Latinized form: *Santslaue soror CNVTI regis nostri*.[4] Undoubtedly, this designates a Slavonic name, which, for example, takes the form *Świętosława* in Polish.[5]

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3   On the problem of the double-name system, see Johannes Steenstrup, 'Dobbelte Navne: Erik Lam–David', *Dansk Historisk Tidsskrift*, 4, 6 ser. (1892–94), 729–41; Heinz Zatschek, 'Namensänderung und Doppelnamen in Böhmen und Mähren im hohen Mittelalter', *Zeitschrift für sudetendeutsche Geschichte*, 3 (1939), 1–11; Jacek Hertel, 'Problem dwuimienności u Piastów we wcześniejszym średniowieczu (do potomstwa Bolesława Krzywoustego włącznie)', *Onomastica*, 24 (1979), 125–42; Gertrud Thoma, *Namensänderungen in Herrscherfamilien des mittelalterlichen Europa* (Kallmünz: Lassleben, 1985), pp. 36–44.

4   *The* Liber Vitae *of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester*, ed. by Simon Keynes (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1996), p. 95, fol. 26v; Liber Vitae: *Register and Martyrology of New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester*, ed. by W. de Gray Birch (London: Hampshire Record Society, 1892).

5   Cf. *Słownik staropolskich nazw osobowych*, ed. by Witold Taszycki, 6 vols (Wrocław, Warsaw, Cracow, and Gdansk: Wydawn. Polskiej Akad. Nauk, 1966–83), v, pp. 404–5; *Joannis Długossii seu Longini canonici Cracoviensis Historiae Polonicae*, ed. by J. Ż. Pauli and A. Przezdziecki, 5 vols (Cracow, 1873–78), ɪ, p. 398 (*s.a.* 1089); Franz Miklosich, *Die Bildung der slavischen Personen- und Ortsnamen* (Heidelberg, 1927), pp. 95 and 173; Michael Hare, 'Cnut and Lotharingia: Two Notes', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 29 (2000), 261–78 (p. 265); Rafał T. Prinke, 'Świętosława, Sygryda, Gunhilda: Tożsamość córki Mieszka I i jej skandynawskie związki', *Roczniki Historyczne*, 70 (2004), 81–110 (p. 101); Jakub Morawiec, '*Liðsmannaflokkr*: The Question of its Potential Function and the Audience of the Poem', in *Between Paganism and Christianity in the North*, ed. by L. P. Słupecki and J. Morawiec (Rzeszów: University of Rzeszów, 2009), pp. 109–11;

Few owners of this name are known among the Slavs of the tenth and eleventh centuries. Many suppositions have been made concerning its origin and the stages of its usage by the Slavs, but they have concerned the male rather than the female variant of the name. Most of them relate to the name of the famous prince of Rusʹ Swiatoslav, who lived several decades before the Danish Swiatoslava.[6]

The coincidence of the names of these two characters points to the similarity of their origins, although their dynastic destinies are different. Apparently, the same name served quite different functions: it was given to a girl born in the family of the Danish king and to a boy whose family had lived and ruled in Rusʹ. Nevertheless, the reasons for the naming of the son of Igor and Olga may be revealed by an examination of the background to the naming of the 'Danish' Swiatoslava.

We know a great deal about the numerous blood ties of the Danish dynasty with Slavic rulers in the tenth to eleventh centuries. As mentioned above, Swiatoslava is known to have been a sister of Knútr (the Great), and it is known also that Knútr's father, Sveinn-Otto Haraldsson (Forkbeard), had a Slavic wife. Different sources contain somewhat conflicting data about her; nevertheless she undoubtedly belonged to the Polish royal family. It is reasonable to assume that the same Slavic princess was the mother of Knútr the Great and his sister with the Slavonic name *Swiatoslava*. It therefore seems that Knútr's sister was named to underline the connection with her mother's family; in other words, this was a family name carried by the female line.

It is a remarkable fact that the same Slavic family connections also influenced the naming of Knútr, though not in such a direct way as with the naming of his sister. When he was born, he was named *Knútr*, an original Scandinavian name, which later became one of the favourite names of the Danish dynasty. Bearing this name he was the ruler of Denmark, England and Norway. However, this was his secular name, and the Danish kings, like the Rusʹ princes, were known to take an additional name at baptism. Thus the baptismal name of Knútr the Great, according to Adam of Bremen and an entry in the calendar in the Leofric Missal, was *Lambert*.[7]

Fjodor Uspenskij, 'What's in a Name? Dynastic Power and Anthroponymics in Medieval Scandinavia and Rusʹ (the case of *Swyatoslav* and *Swyatoslava*)', in *'Vers l'Orient et vers l'Occident': Mémoire, Identité*, ed. by Pierre Bauduin and Alexander Musin (Caen, in print).

6   The origin of the first Slavonic name of the prince Swiatoslav remains unknown for two reasons. First, since the tenth and eleventh centuries in Rusʹ only the prince Swiatoslav, son of Igor, himself is known to bear this name, and his various offspring are named after him. According to Anatoly Chlenov, 'K voprosu ob imeni Sviatoslava', in *Lichnyie imena v proshlom, nastoiashchem i budushchem: Problemy antroponimiki* (Moscow, 1970), p. 327, the name *Swiatoslav* presents some artificial construction combining the translations of the names *Rurik* (= *Hrörek* < *Hrōþirīkaz* 'mighty of fame', 'famous') and *Oleg* (= *Helgi* 'holy'). This interpretation of the name *Swiatoslav* seems to me rather witty but not quite correct. In the Scandinavian tradition the given name could be derived from the name of an ancestor, however, there are no recorded cases of such combined translations of two traditional names into a foreign vernacular language, for the Scandinavians or their neighbours. The presence of the female variant of this name is valuable evidence in favour of its natural occurrence in the corpus of names of the Slavic ruling families. Furthermore, it is not clear at what point this name entered the Rurikids' family. The fact that the prince of Rusʹ received it from his mother's family like his Danish namesake cannot be excluded.

7   See Adam, *Gestae*, schol. 37 [38], p. 112; Jan Gerchow, *Die Gedenküberlieferung der Angelsachsen, mit einem Katalog der libri vitae und Necrologien*, Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung, 20 (Berlin:

Why Knútr received this very name and the circumstances surrounding his baptism are not known in detail. It is likely that Knútr was christened Lambert because this was the name of the Polish king Meshko II Lambert, son of Boleslav the Brave, who was a close relative on his mother's side.[8] It seems that by the time of Knútr's baptism, these Polish dynastic connections had become important for the Danes, thus explaining the choice of the baptismal name *Lambert*, a very popular one in the Piast dynasty.

Thus, Knútr the Great and his sister Swiatoslava were at least 'half Slavs',[9] even though Knútr was the king of Denmark in the Viking Age period and rarely interfered in the affairs of the Slavic world. Swiatoslava's connection through the female line with a noble Slavic family was directly reflected in her name, though this was due to the fact that in the Danish ruling dynasty her position was insignificant. Her name does not recur later in the Danish dynasty, and only one *Swiatoslava* is recorded in early twelfth century Denmark.[10] On the other hand, the Slavic family connections of her brother (one of the key figures of the Middle Ages in Denmark) played a minor role in both his dynastic naming and his dynastic life. In a sense, names thus determined the destiny of the ruling family's offspring more than their biological links with a particular ethnos.

The fact that Igor's son, the representative of the third Varangian generation, was given a Slavonic name *Swiatoslav* showed that a new episode in the history of the family had begun. The prospects of the family were once and for all connected to the new motherland, though the Scandinavian contacts were not completely lost and from time to time could be renewed through dynastic marriages. The princely anthroponymicon became more and more Slavonic, although, a number of Varangian names (*Igor < Ingvarr*, *Oleg < Helgi*, *Gleb < Guðleifr*, *Iakun < Hákonr*, *Rogvolod < Ragnvaldr*) firmly entered the Rus´ corpus of names. With every new generation, the Varangian names were increasingly recognized as being traditional rather than foreign. Beginning with the era of Swiatoslav's son, Volodimer the Great, a new and more complicated mechanism of princely name-giving began to develop.

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de Gruyter 1988), pp. 253–57; id., 'Prayers for King Cnut: The Liturgical Commemoration of a Conqueror', in *England in the Eleventh Century: Proceedings of the 1990 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by C. Hicks, Harlaxton Medieval Studies, 2 (Stamford: Paul Watkins Publishing, 1992), p. 235.

8   See Oswald Balzer, *Genealogia Piastów* (Cracow: Nakładem Akademii Umiejętności, 1895), pp. 50, 65, note to tables I.12 and II.6, cf. pp. 52–54; Jacek Hertel, *Imiennictwo dynastii piastowskiej we wcześniejszym średniowieczy* (Warsaw, 1980), pp. 103–4; and Hare, 'Cnut and Lotharingia', pp. 261–68.

9   The possibility cannot be excluded that Knútr and Swiatoslava may have had Slavic relatives besides those on their mother's side, although this has not been proven. The wife of their paternal grandfather, Haraldr Gormsson (Bluetooth), was a Slav called *Tofa*. She was a daughter of Mstivoy, apparently the princely ruler of the Slavic tribe Obodrites. It is not entirely clear whether Tofa was their grandmother, i.e., whether she had been the mother of Svein Haraldsson (Forkbeard).

10   See *Danmarks Gamle Personnavne*, I: *Fornavne*, ed. by G. Knudsen and M. Kristensen (Copenhagen: Gad, 1936–41), col. 1314.

In pre-Mongolian Rus´, secular princely names such as *Swiatoslav, Volodimer, Vsevolod, Mstislav, Iaropolk* and *Igor* were apparently used most frequently. The majority of names used by the growing princely family were repeated, inherited from previous generations. In this case, the repetition of names and name continuity, typical of a family-based culture, also expressed the idea of inherited power in the form of ancestral rights to princedom and to land.

The heir of the dynasty had to bear the name of some ancestor, the family tradition being rather indifferent to the ethnic or linguistic origin of the chosen name. For example, by the middle of the eleventh century the name *Igor* (from Scandinavian *Ingvarr*) and the Slavonic *Swiatoslav* were equally suitable for heirs of the princely families, because by that time there had been Rurikids who had held both of these names.

To be sure, we do not always know why specific princes were named as they were, but the study of the whole corpus of names allows us to reconstruct or at least guess at these reasons. The corpus of princely family names constituted a rather complicated but harmonious and well-organized system. A central principle of this system was names given in honor of some deceased ancestor, and if the name was chosen for a boy, the names of the ancestors by the male line were obviously preferred.

In general, the process of name-giving was closely connected with strategies of power. The choice of a 'prototype'-ancestor, after whom the newborn was named, depended on the place in the princely hierarchy that the relatives were planning for the child. The name for the child was chosen, as a rule, by the father or grandfather, in other words by the oldest living ancestor in the male line. As already noted, this was usually the name of some dead ancestor; certainly there was a strict prohibition against the name of a living father or grandfather. Thus, a strong chain of continuity was created in which all the members of the family, living and deceased, had their own roles.

In certain cases, children might receive names from their mother's family. However, for male offspring, most typically, these would be additional family names. For example, Prince Mstislav the Great featured in the Icelandic sagas (and in one German source written in Latin) under the name *Haraldr* (or in Latin transcription — *Aroldus*). The reason is that not only was he the son of Volodimer Monomakh and the great-grandson of Iaroslav the Wise, but he also belonged to a no less noble Anglo-Saxon family through his mother's line. The famous king Harald Goðwinsson — who perished in the battle at Hastings in 1066 and was the last English ruler defeated by the Northmen — was the grandfather of Prince Mstislav, for Harald's daughter Gyða while living in exile journeyed to Rus´ in order to marry Volodimer Monomakh.[11]

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11   There are other Rus´ princes known in Scandinavia by their extra Scandinavian names. One of the sons of Iaroslav the Wise was known in the Icelandic sources by his Scandinavian name Holti the Brave (*inn frœkni*). Different researchers have identified him with different persons: with Il´ia, Swiatoslav, Iziaslav, Vsevolod (for detail see: Fedor Braun, 'Das historische Russland im nordischen Schrifttum

We also know that Mstislav was married to a Swedish princess, and for her the name *Haraldr*, Scandinavian in origin, would have been familiar and usual. However, this name with its Western cultural orientation is not applied to the eldest son of Volodimer Monomakh in any Rus´ sources. In Rus´ this son of Volodimer Monomakh was known as *Mstislav* or, in some special situations, as *Fjodor / Theodore*, which was his baptismal name. In other words, the name of the prince's son was taken from his father's family, while names from his mother's family were typically

des X.–XIV. Jahrhunderts', in *Festschrift Eugen Mogk zum 70. Geburtstag* (Halle: Max Niemayer, 1924), p. 155; Elena Rydzevskaia, 'Iaroslav Mudryi v drevne-severnoi literature', *Kratkie soobshchenia Instituta istorii materialnoi kul´tury*, 7 (1940), p. 67; Jonathan Shepard, 'Yngvarr's Expedition to the East and a Russian Inscribed Stone Cross', *Saga-Book*, 21 (1984–85), 222–92 (p. 284, note 10); Tatjana Jackson, 'Islandskie korolevskie sagi kak istochnik po istorii Drevnei Rusi i ee sosedei (11–12 vv.)', in *Drevneishie gosudarstva na territorii SSSR* (Moscow: Nauka, 1991), pp. 159–63; ead., *Islandskie korolevskie sagi o Vostochnoi Evrope (pervaia tret 11 v.)* (Moscow: Ladomir, 1994), p. 157. The most valid option, it seems, is to identify Holti with Vsevolod Iaroslavich which is confirmed by the data of Óláfr Tryggvasson's Saga by the monk Odd (version S) (*Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar af Odd Snorrason munk*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen: Gade, 1932), p. 21). Here Holti, the son of Iaroslav the Wise and the father of Volodimer, is called Haraldr's father. Thus, the name *Holti* is included in genealogical chain: Iaroslav — Vsevolod (Holti) — Volodimer — Mstislav (Haraldr). However, the fact that Vsevolod (= Vissivald) and Holti were both mentioned as the sons of Iaroslav the Wise in *Heimskringla* contradicts the identification of Holti with Vsevolod: 'Then Ingigerðr got married to Iaroslav. Their sons were Valdamarr, Vissivaldr, Holti the Brave', Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, 3 vols, Samfund til Udgivelse at gammel nordisk Litteratur, 23 (Copenhagen, 1893–1900/1), II, p. 182. It is not clear why the same man could be called simultaneously (and without any comments) by two different names: the original Scandinavian Holti and Vissivald, well known to the Scandinavians.

It cannot be excluded that another offspring of Iaroslav and Ingigerd was known in Sweden by his Scandinavian name. In one of the scholias to Adam, *Gestae*, schol. 84 [85], p. 197, it was told that the Swedes asked a certain Anunder (Önundr) to come to the throne: 'Quo mox depulso accersitus est Anunder a Ruzzia, et ilio nihilomninus amoto Sueones elegerunt quondam Haquinum. Iste accepit matrem Olaph iuvenis in matrimonio' ('Soon he [Hallstein Steinkelsson – *F.U.*] was banished and Anunder from Rus´ was invited (to take his place), however, having removed him, the Swedes chose a certain Hakvin. He married the mother of Óláfr the youth'). In other scholia to Adam, this Anunder was said to be a Christian whom the Swedes drove away because he refused to make sacrifices to the gods (ibid., p. 259, schol. 140 [136]). Nothing more is known of Anunder, although some suppositions have been advanced concerning his identity. Most historians tend to identify Anunder with the Swedish king Ingi the Old: Bernhard Schmeidler, *Hamburg-Bremen und Nordost-Europa vom 9. bis 11. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1918), p. 313; Gertrud Thoma, *Namensänderungen in Herrscherfamilien des mittelalterlichen Europa* (Kallmünz: Lassleben, 1985), p. 215. This seems unlikely, since Adam of Bremen is known to have finished his *Gesta* in about 1070 and King Ingi was not mentioned there. However, Ingi the Old is a historical character who reigned during the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries (it was his daughter Kristín who became the wife of Mstislav-Haraldr the Great). Why should this king (who had a dynastic name) take another dynastic Swedish name, that of Anunder? Considering the unlikelihood of this, one can assume that these are different persons and Anunder ruled earlier than Ingi. It is likely that Anunder was actually invited from Rus´, and thus it is possible that he was from the Iaroslavichi's family. In this case, he was like all Iaroslavichi from the marriage with Ingigerðr, and a grandson of the Swedish king Óláfr Skötkonung through the female line. In the power vacuum that existed at that time in Sweden, the rights of the grandchildren through the female line acquired additional significance. His name, *Anunder*, is in line with this hypothesis, for it was the name of Princess Ingigerðr's own brother Önundr-Jakob Óláfsson. The question of which of the Iaroslavichi might have carried the name *Anunder* as one of his names requires further investigation. Scholarly literature has also suggested that the holder of the Scandinavian name *Sveinn* or *Svenki* was the prince Mstislav of T'mutarakan' (Shepard, 'Yngvarr's expedition to the East', p. 251).

secondary at best. This was the case not only for the offspring of royal unions with Westerners, but also for those of unions with those from the nomadic East.

As we can see, the nature of the name itself was, in some sense, indifferent to family tradition. No matter whether a name was Slavonic or Scandinavian, pagan or Christian, it must have related to the pre-existing family 'prototype', connecting its bearer with his or her relatives in some sense. It is for this reason that new, non-family names entered the dynastic tradition with great difficulty, penetrating the Rus´ royal dynasty more gradually.

Facing the vast expansion of Christian names, the princely tradition immediately worked out a 'response strategy' in the form of a dual naming system. Each prince — beginning with Volodimer-Basil the Great who converted Rus´ — had a Christian name as well, but over time the Christian names began to supplant the traditional dynastic names. At this point, in my opinion, family tradition did not disappear but rather began to change. Many principles of naming were preserved, but the names, the units of the name corpus, were gradually replaced by other ones. As early as in the second half of the eleventh century there were princes that were mentioned in the chronicle exclusively by their Christian names. By the beginning of the twelfth century, the number of such members of the prince family had increased, and by the middle of the thirteenth century their numbers were quite great. By the fifteenth century, old secular names had completely fallen out of use by the ruling family. However, the questions are: what was the situation at the beginning of this process, and which Christian names were the first to be used without secular names in that period?

The earliest of all these names are *Basil*, *Roman* and *David*, the Christian names of the saint brothers Boris-Roman and Gleb-David and of their father Volodimer-Basil. It is important to note that all these princes were famous as saints at that time. Thus, the Christian names of the younger relatives had already been the names of ancestors who were particularly revered by the Church and subsequently canonized. Conventionally, the Christian name was introduced into dynastic history in the following way: at first, some prince venerated by the Church bore the name as a second, baptismal one; later, his grandson was given this name as his only one, because for him this name then became both a family and a Christian name.

This was a practice that extended not only to the names of the canonized princes. Rather soon, other Christian names of ancestors began to appear as the single names of princes. Three such names can be found in the family of Volodimer Monomakh, belonging to his younger sons, who were apparently the offspring of his second marriage. Why, then, do we know well the secular names of Monomakh's elder sons but know only the Christian names of his younger sons? What made Volodimer-Basil Monomakh name his children *George*, *Roman* and *Andrew*?

In order to begin to formulate an answer to this question, we must make a short digression. In all things concerning naming practices, Volodimer Monomakh always

singled out the figure of his grandfather Iaroslav the Wise. In his Testament, he emphasized particularly that his own name had been given to him by Iaroslav:

> Азъ худыи дедомъ своимъ Ярославомъ […] наречнемь въ крещении Ва-силии Русьскымь именемь Володимиръ отцомъ възлюбленъмь и матерью своею Мьномахы.

> I, wretched man that I am, named Vasili at my baptism by my pious and glori-ous grandsire Yaroslav, but commonly known by my Russian name Vladimir, and surname Monomakh by my beloved father and mother.[12]

However, as it may seem, none of his children were named after this great-grandfather. Indeed, there was no one named *Iaroslav* in Monomakh's family. It may seem that Volodimer Monomakh did not even give any of his children the name of his father *Vsevolod*, though the some of the youngest of these were born undoubtedly after Vsevolod's death.

However, the names of the father and grandfather of Volodimer Monomakh were in fact present in his family. We must remember that the Christian name of Iaroslav the Wise was *George*, and Vsevolod, the son of Iaroslav, received the name *Andrew* at his baptism. Most likely, Volodimer Monomakh's second marriage meant a new starting-point in his naming strategy. The opposition between children born to a ruler by different marriages is a trivial thing in medieval history. Having adult sons by his first marriage and no intention of depriving them of their family rights, Volodimer apparently wanted to give the same rights to his children by his second marriage. The secular names of his elder children unambiguously marked their high positions in the system of family relations. Monomakh could ensure such a high position in the family for his younger offspring only by taking a different approach to the choice of names. The names had to be taken from the set of the family names with easily recognizable prototypes.

Volodimer Monomakh gave his eldest son by his second marriage the name *George*, the Christian name of his grandfather Iaroslav-George the Wise. Hence, the name *George* appeared to be a family name and a Christian name at the same time, and the dynastic fate of George the Long-Armed (the founder of a new branch of the family, who ultimately inherited the throne of Kiev) made this name a prestigious family name for his descendants.

Another son of Volodimer Monomakh was given the Christian name of Monomakh's father, Vsevolod-Andrew. It is noteworthy that this son of Monomakh was born later than one of his grandsons. The grandson was called *Vsevolod*, while the son was given the baptismal name of the ancestor *Andrew*.

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12 *Lavrentevskaia letopis´*, ed. by A. F. Karskii, PSRL, 1 (Leningrad: Izdatel´stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1926–28), col. 240; English translation is from 'The Russian Primary Chronicle', transl. by Samuel H. Cross, *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, 12 (1930), pp. 301–2.

Monomakh's third son by his second marriage was also known only under the Christian name *Roman*. This naming is related to the baptismal names of the martyr princes Boris-Roman and Gleb-David. The names of these saintly brothers had been repeatedly reproduced by that time in the Rurikid family.

So, George the Long-Armed was given the Christian name of his own great-grandfather, and George's brother Roman was given the Christian name of the great-grandfather's brother. The grandfather's baptismal name was given to another of Monomakh's sons by the second marriage, who was named *Andrew*. We should recall that we know this grandfather and great-grandfather predominantly by their secular names. However, their baptismal names were also well known to their contemporaries and descendants. Hence, after some time they could be recognized as family names. Thus, although originally Christian and family names had been opposed to each other, subsequently by the twelfth century the Christian name began to take on both the function of baptismal name and of family name.

As has already been mentioned, in the dynasty of Rurikids up to some time there was a strict prohibition against giving a newborn the secular name of a living ancestor. The eldest son of a prince was often named after his great-grandfather because his grandfather was still alive at the time when his eldest grandson was born. It was for this reason that the grandfather's name was often given to one of the younger grandsons, although, from the point of view of family continuity, it would be ideal if the eldest grandson could receive the name.

In the twelfth century it can be observed how some of the accepted 'rules' for the choice of secular names simply do not work in the choice of a Christian name.[13] In particular, a son could be called by the name of his living father. Generally speaking, in many European dynasties the tendency for a father and son to share the same name became the norm over the course of time – this was very attractive in terms of assuring continuity of power. This was so even though this principle, as has already been noted, was at odds with traditional family practices. In the Rurikid dynasty, the naming of a son after his living father appears to have been possible only when the original secular names of the princes (i.e. the non-Christian names that are not listed in liturgical calendars) were replaced by Christian ones. However, can we say that with the total adoption of Christian names by the princes, the family principles of name-giving were completely forgotten? In light of this discussion, we can conclude that despite appearances, this was not the case; these same principles were simply manifested in different forms and came about as a result of other notions and mechanisms.

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13 For details, see Litvina and Uspenskij, *Vybor imeni u russkikh kniazei*, pp. 163–74; and Uspenskij, 'A Brief Survey of the Anthroponymic Situation', pp. 12–18.
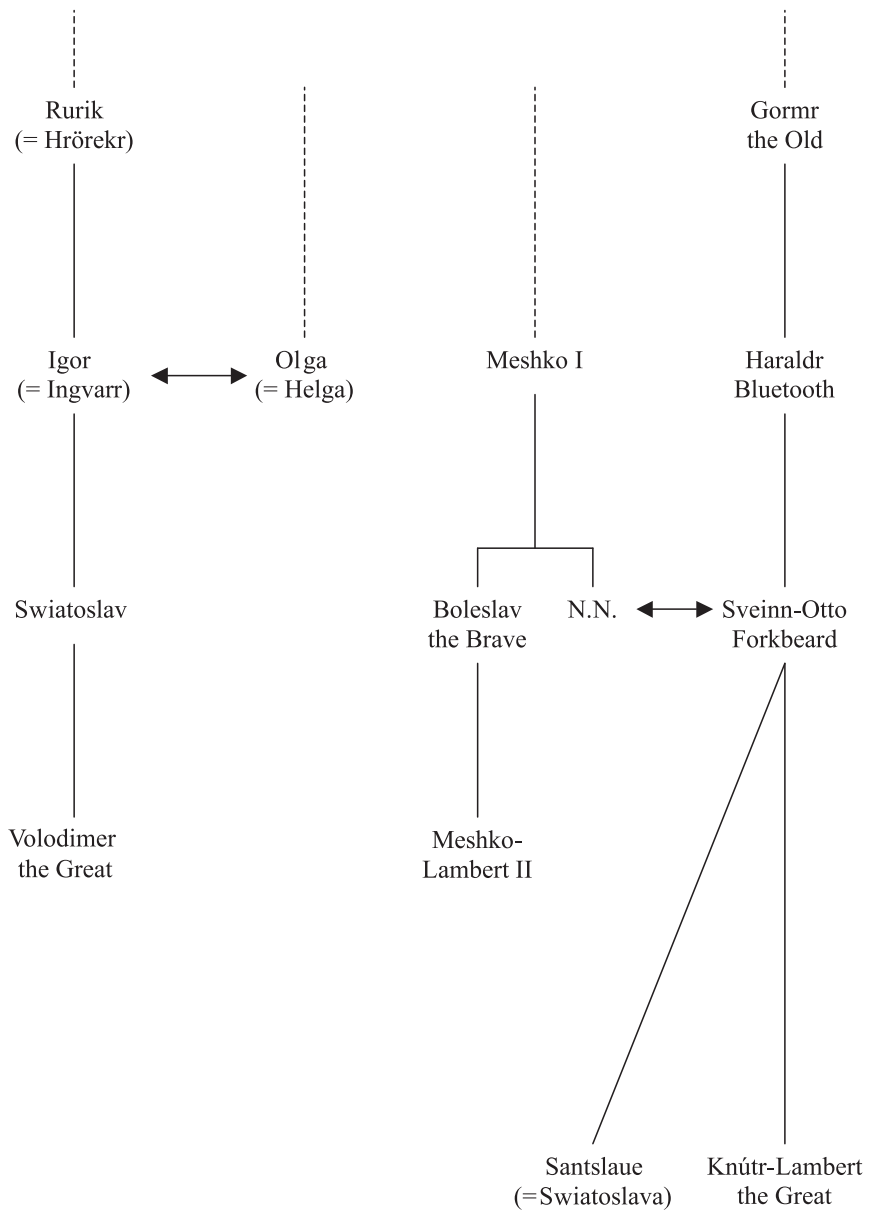
Rurik
(= Hrörekr)

Gormr
the Old

Igor
(= Ingvarr) ⟷ Olga
(= Helga)

Meshko I

Haraldr
Bluetooth

Swiatoslav

Boleslav
the Brave   N.N. ⟷ Sveinn-Otto
Forkbeard

Volodimer
the Great

Meshko-
Lambert II

Santslaue
(=Swiatoslava)

Knútr-Lambert
the Great

Fig. 12. **Matrimonial links between the Rus´, Polish and Danish ruling families.**

Rurik (= Hrörekr)

Olga (= Helga) ◄────────► Igor (= Ingvarr)

Swiatoslav

Rogvolod (= Ragnvaldr)

Volodimer-Basil
the Great ◄────────► Rogneda
(= Ragnheiðr)

St Boris-Roman

St Gleb
(= Guðleifr)-David

Óláfr Skötkonungr

Iaroslav-George ◄────────► Ingigerðr-Irina

Harald Goðwinsson   Vsevolod-Andrew

Gyða ◄────────► Volodimer-Basil
Monomakh

Ingi
Steinkelsson

George the
Longarmed

Mstislav the Great-
Haraldr-Theodore ◄────────► Kristin
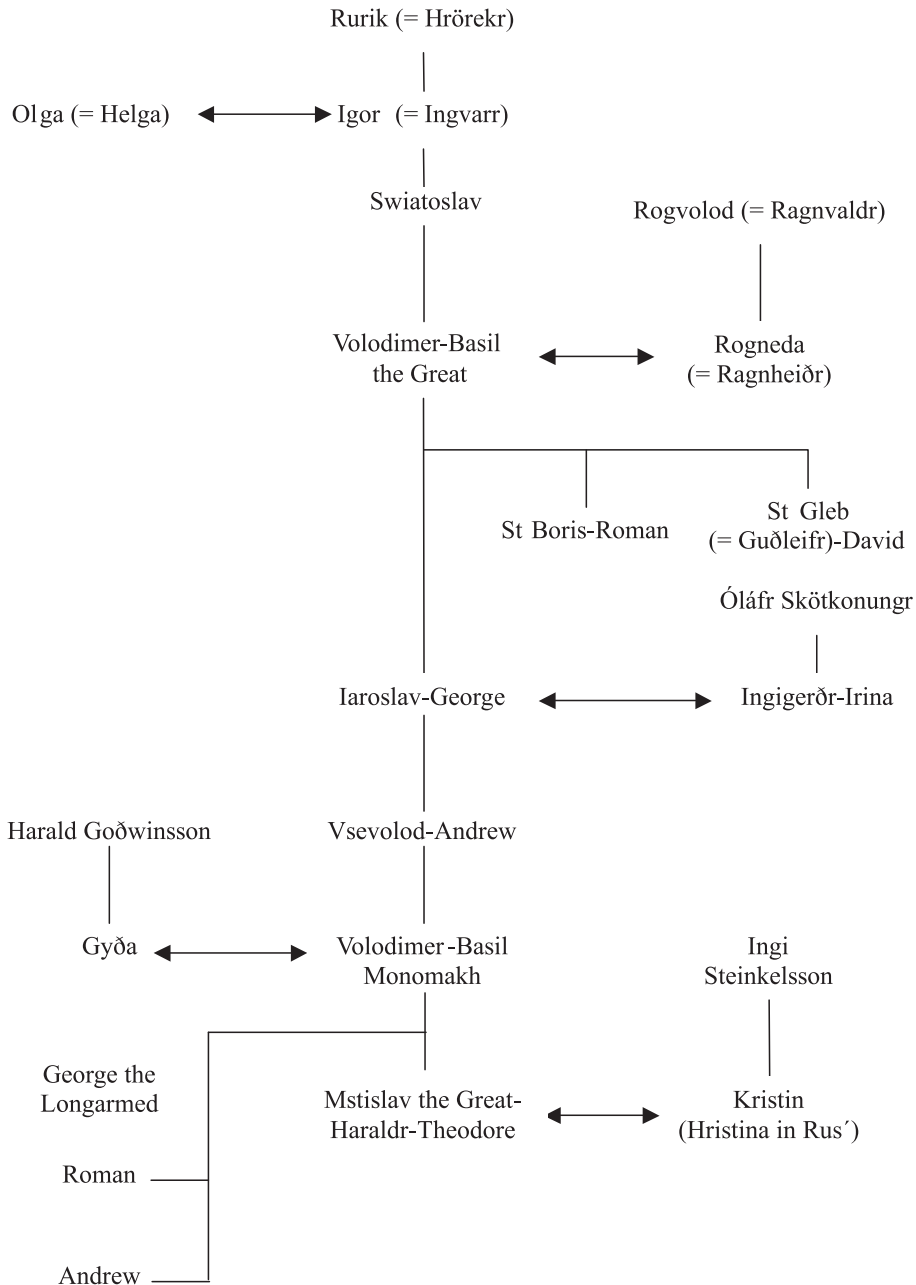(Hristina in Rus´)

Roman

Andrew

Fig. 13. **Matrimonial links between the Rurikids and the Swedish
and Anglo-Saxon royal families.**

Rus´ and Scandinavia: the Orthodox–Latin Division in Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and in Reality

by Tatjana N. Jackson

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that the religious differences between Scandinavia and Rus´ were of little importance for the Icelandic saga writers of the twelfth to the early thirteenth centuries, just as they were of little importance for the ruling dynasties in both Rus´ and Scandinavian countries from the eleventh to the mid-twelfth centuries. A number of sagas style the Greek emperor as 'the throne king' and 'the head of Christendom', and they depict him as having the authority to appoint an individual as 'overseer and ruler of all the Kings in Russland and the whole realm of Garda'.[1] The sagas also describe how those Icelanders and Norwegians who had visited Greece preached Christianity in Eastern Europe, founded monasteries there and converted Rus´ to Christianity in the late tenth century. In contrast to early Rus´ sources, the sagas preserve information on Rus´-Scandinavian dynastic marriages of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Consequently, in the following discussion I will also consider the reliability of this data and the attitude to such marriages in early Rus´ in light of the relationship between the Latin and Orthodox churches.

All of what we know of Old Norse-Icelandic literature was written (or at least written down) after the Great Schism of 1054,[2] but this event and its consequences leave practically no traces in the Icelandic sagas. In his paper entitled 'The Schism That Never Was', Sverrir Jakobsson attests to only one 'unambiguous mention of "the great schism" in medieval Icelandic sources', preserved in the saga of bishop Arni — *Árna saga biskups* — and in a number of annal entries from the year 1274.[3] This is the story of the 'assembly in Lyon' where 'the Greeks had reverted to true Christianity, from the contentious position that they

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1   'sva sem foríngi e(ðr) valldz maðr skipaðr yfir alla konungá Ruz landi ok i öllu Garða Riki', *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, Editiones Arnamagnæanæ, ser. A, 1, ed. by Ólafur Halldórsson (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1958), p. 300. The English translation is from *The Saga of King Olaf Tryggwason Who Reigned over Norway A. D. 995 to A. D. 1000*, trans. by J. Sephton (London: David Nutt, 1895), p.187.

2   See, for example, *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Critical Guide*, ed. by Carol J. Clover and John Lindow, Islandica, 45 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985).

3   Sverrir Jakobsson, 'The Schism That Never Was: Old Norse Views on Byzantium and Russia', *Byzantinoslavica: Revue internationale des Études Byzantines*, 66, 1–2 (2008), 173–88 (p. 175).

had temporarily adopted, on the wise counsel of Pope Gregory'.[4] Consequently, Sverrir Jakobsson concludes, the Icelanders scarcely had much knowledge of the disagreement. Similarly — and with reference to Henrik Janson's dissertation[5] — he asserts that Adam of Bremen also 'appears not to know of a great schism'.[6] However, I doubt that this was the case with Icelandic saga authors; I would say rather that the disagreement was beyond the sphere of their interests, for sagas seldom go into details regarding religious matters. For instance, the sagas use the adjective *heiðinn* 'heathen' to describe the peoples living along the *Austrvegr*,[7] the Muslims of the Volga Bulgaria region[8] and those from the southern part of the Iberian peninsular.[9]

The case of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* by Odd Snorrason

Lars Lönnroth put forward a suggestion[10] shared by other scholars,[11] that the celebration of Olaf Tryggvason (995–1000) by the monks Odd († 1200) and Gunnlaug († 1218 or 1219) was mainly the result of an Icelandic national interest in promoting the king who was responsible for the conversion of Iceland as being equal to King Olaf Haraldsson (1014–28) who was considered to have brought Christianity to Norway. The *fróðir menn* ('learned men') in Iceland were aware of the fact that Iceland had been converted during the time of Olaf Tryggvason (in the year 1000), which why in the late twelfth century 'a Latin biography was written in which Óláfr was pictured as a holy warrior and *rex iustus*, empowered by Divine Grace to destroy paganism in the northern countries and establish the Kingdom of God'.[12] Thus, in his *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, Odd Snorrason creates an image of a king who may rightly be called the apostle of the Northmen ('er at retto ma kallazt postoli Norðmanna').[13]

4   Sverrir Jakobsson, 'The Schism That Never Was', p. 175.

5   Henrik Janson, *Templum nobilissimum: Adam av Bremen, Uppsalatemplet och konfliktlinjerna i Europa kring år 1075* (Göteborg: Historiska institutionen i Göteborg, 1998), pp. 152–62.

6   Sverrir Jakobsson, 'The Schism That Never Was', p. 176.

7   Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, 3, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Íslenzk fornrit, 28 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1951), p. 403; and *Sverris saga etter Cod. AM 327 4º*, ed. by Gustav Indrebø (Kristiania: Den Norske Historiske Kildeskriftkommission, 1920), p. 120.

8   Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, 2, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Íslenzk fornrit, 27 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1945), p. 339.

9   Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, 3, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, p. 242.

10 Lars Lönnroth, 'Studier i Olaf Tryggvasons saga', *Samlaren*, 84 (1963), 54–94 (p. 93).

11 Cf. Theodore M. Andersson, 'King's Sagas (*Konungasögur*)', in *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, ed. by Carol J. Clover and John Lindow, pp. 197–238 (p. 226).

12 Lars Lönnroth, *European Sources of Icelandic Saga-Writing: An Essay Based on Previous Studies* (Stockholm, 1965), p. 17.

13 *Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar av Oddr Snorrason munk*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen: Gad, 1932), p. 261 (chapter 78, redaction *U*).

As far as Olaf Tryggvason's missionary activity is concerned, not only Odd[14] but also a number of other twelfth-century sources — *Noregs konunga tal*,[15] *Ágrip af nóregskonunga sögum*,[16] *Rekstefja* by Hallar-Steinn and the anonymous *Óláfs drápa Tryggvasonar*[17]— depict Olaf as the king who converted several countries to Christianity, namely Norway, Iceland, Greenland and the Shetland, Orkney and Faeroe Islands.[18] The historical accuracy of this statement has been called into question by scholars, although its apparent factual shortcomings might be mitigated by Odd's own remark: 'Sua ær at virþa sem Olafr konungr hinn fyrri æfnaði oc setti grunduollinn cristninnar með sinu starfi. En hinn siþarri Olafr reisti ueggi' ('We may consider that the first King Olaf prepared and established the foundation of Christianity with his labor, but the latter Olaf raised the walls').[19]

Olaf is also over-generously credited by Odd with the conversion of Rus´. Although this story contradicts the information provided by many reliable historical sources and does not stand up to scrutiny, there is no doubt that Odd included descriptions of Olaf's involvement in the baptism of the Rus´ prince and the conversion of the early Rus´ people in order to glorify his hero.[20]

According to Odd (as well as some other saga authors), Olaf Tryggvason was also an active participant in the conversion of Denmark. In historical fact, Harald Gormsson and the Danes were baptized under the influence of the German

14   In chapter 52 of redaction *A* we read: 'En þat er sagt at Olafr konungr T. s. cristnaði fim lond' ('we are told that King Olaf Tryggvason converted five countries'), however further six, but not five, countries are named: 'En þessi eru heiti landa þeira er hann cristnaði Noregr. Hialtland. Orkneyar. Færeyiar. Island. Grönland' ('These are the names of the lands he converted: Norway, Shetland, Orkney, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Greenland'), ibid., pp. 154–55. The English translation is from *The Saga of Olaf Tryggvason by Oddr Snorrason*, trans. by Theodore M. Andersson, Islandica, 52 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 101–2.

15   Five countries are mentioned (but not named) in the twelfth-century *Noregs konunga tal* that goes back to Sæmundr inn fróði's lost work: *Den Norsk-Islandske Skjaldedigtning*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, B: 'Rettet text', I: *800–1200* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1973), p. 578.

16   In *Ágrip af nóregskonunga sögum*, *c*. 1190, with which the translator of Odd's Latin text into Old Icelandic is supposed to have been familiar, it is said of Olaf that 'kristnaði hann fimm lönd: Nóreg ok Ísland ok Hjaltland, Orkneyjar ok it fimmta Færeyjar' ('he Christianised five countries: Norway, Iceland, Shetland, Orkney and the fifth, the Faeroes'), *Ágrip af nóregskonunga sögum*, ed. by Bjarni Einarsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 29 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1985), pp. 3–54 (p. 22). The English translation is from *Ágrip af Nóregskonungasögum: A Twelfth-Century Synoptic History of the Kings of Norway*, ed. and trans. by M. J. Driscoll (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1995), p. 31.

17   In *Rekstefja* by Hallar-Steinn (*Den Norsk-Islandske Skjaldedigtning*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, B, I, pp. 527–28) and in the anonymous *Óláfs drápa Tryggvasonar* (attributed by Finnur Jónsson to Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld Óttarsson, ibid., p. 570). Cf. Kate Heslop's edition <http://www.skaldic.arts.usyd.edu.au/db.php?if=default&table=poems&id=36> [accessed 21 February 2011], wherein the following countries are enumerated: Iceland, Greenland, Norway, the Orkneys and the Shetland Islands.

18   See Tatjana N. Jackson, 'Norvezhskii konung Olaf Tryggvason – 'Apostol Russkikh'? (istochniko-vedcheskie zametki)', *Slavianovedenie*, 2000, no. 4, 46–48.

19   *Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar av Oddr Snorrason munkr*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson p. 156; *The Saga of Olaf Tryggvason by Oddr Snorrason*, trans. by Andersson, p. 102.

20   See Tatjana N. Jackson, 'The Role of Óláfr Tryggvason in the Conversion of Russia', in *Three Studies on Vikings and Christianization*, ed. by Magnus Rindal, KULT's skriftserie, 28 (Oslo: University of Oslo, 1994), pp. 1–17.

Emperor Otto I (936–73), according to German, English and Danish chroniclers including Widukind, Saxo Grammaticus and Adam of Bremen. Furthermore, it is likely that Gunnlaug Leifsson and/or Odd Snorrason were familiar with a synopsis of Adam's description of the event. In spite of this, the saga authors permit a certain degree of anachronism, since in the sagas Otto has Olaf Tryggvason to thank for his victory over the Danes. Since Olaf lived from *c*. 965 to *c*. 1000, it is obvious that the Old Norse-Icelandic sources have replaced Otto I with Otto II (973–83) or even Otto III (983–1002). The main requirement for the Emperor is that he must be a contemporary of Olaf Tryggvason, so that this Otto can defeat the Danes following Olaf's advice and with God's help.[21]

Yet how does Odd describe Olaf's own path to God? According to Odd (chapter 13), when Olaf was in Rus´ he heard a voice speaking to him in a vision. The voice told him to go to Greece: 'and there the name of the Lord your God will be made known to you. And if you obey His commandments, you will have eternal life and bliss. When you have the true belief, you will turn many others away from the error and toward salvation, for God has assigned you to convert many peoples to him'.[22] So Olaf went to Greece, and he met there 'excellent and devout teachers', and they 'taught him the name of the Lord Jesus Christ', and instructed him in the true faith. There in Greece Olaf received his *prima signatio*.[23] After that, he returned to Rus´ and directed the Rus´ prince and all his people towards Almighty God, before departing to visit a prophet 'on a certain island called Scilly, not far from Ireland'.[24] At that time and in that place he was sanctified with holy baptism, 'and in answer to his prayers he was enabled by God to become the enlightener of many minds'.[25]

We can look at this text in three different ways. Firstly, we might conclude that, although the saga was written in around 1180–1200 (i.e. nearly a century and a half after 1054),[26] it does not differentiate between the Greek and the Irish preachers, demonstrating that, in the eyes of Odd and his audience, the 'Northern' and the 'Eastern' religions had the same roots in Greece. Even when describing Olaf's possible life after the battle of Svold, Odd locates him in a 'munclifi i Girclandi eða Syrlandi' ('a monastery in Greece or Syria').[27] Secondly, we might note that, according to Odd, Greece is only the place of Olaf's *prima signatio*, for he was

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21 For more information, see Tatjana N. Jackson, 'The Fantastic in the Kings' Sagas', in *The Fantastic in Old Norse / Icelandic Literature: Sagas and the British Isles: Preprint Papers of The Thirteenth International Saga Conference*, ed. by John McKinnell and others (Durham: Durham University, 2006), I, pp. 426–34.

22 *The Saga of Olaf Tryggvason by Oddr Snorrason*, trans. by Andersson, p. 54.

23 Ibidem.

24 Ibid., p. 55.

25 Ibid., p. 56.

26 Theodore M. Andersson, 'Introduction', in *The Saga of Olaf Tryggvason by Oddr Snorrason*, trans. by Andersson, pp. 1–27 (p. 4).

27 *Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar av Oddr Snorrason munkr*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, p. 242; *The Saga of Olaf Tryggvason by Oddr Snorrason*, trans. by Andersson, p. 136.

fully baptised in Ireland, thus placing this Catholic country above Greece from the point of view of religious concernment. Thirdly, it is possible that Odd and his audience were well aware of the fact that Olaf Tryggvason had lived before the Great Schism, which is precisely why Odd divided Olaf's baptism between Greece and Ireland and made him the enlightener of both the northern peoples and Rus´. However, only the first hypothesis seems likely, as, judging from the other sagas that we now turn to, the separation of the Eastern and Western churches was of no concern to the Icelandic saga authors, who traditionally lived in an indivisible Christian world.

Sagas about the far-travellers

One additional saga is ascribed to Odd Snorrason, and this is the saga of Yngvar the Far-Traveller (*Yngvars saga víðförla*). Marina Mundt has highlighted the fact that there are five characters in the sagas nicknamed 'far-travellers', and all of them travelled through Rus´.[28] They are: Yngvar the hero of *Yngvars saga víðförla*,[29] Eirik of *Eiríks saga víðförla*,[30] Thorvald of *Þorvalds þáttr víðförla*[31] and two less important figures, Brand in *Kristni saga*[32] and Arrow-Odd in *Ørvarr-Odds saga*.[33] Three long narratives about the far-travellers (two sagas and a *þáttr*) were written down even later than Odd's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*. Odd wrote *Yngvars saga víðförla* in Latin in the last decades of the twelfth century, while in the thirteenth century this original was translated into Icelandic and heavily reworked on the basis of oral traditions that had developed in Sweden after the unsuccessful end of Yngvar's campaign.[34] *Þorvalds þáttr víðförla* is thought to have been written by another monk in the Thingeyrar monastery, Gunnlaug Leifsson, in around 1200. The *þáttr* is preserved in three redactions of the text written before 1250; its fourth redaction is found in *Kristni saga* from the thirteenth century.[35]

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28 Marina Mundt, 'Oriental Pictures in the Old Norse Legendary Sagas', in *Proceedings of the 33ʳᵈ International Congress of Asian and North African Studies, Toronto, August 19–25, 1990* (Queenston, Ontario: Edwin Mellen, 1992), pp. 208–14 (p. 213).

29 *Yngvars saga víðförla jämte ett bihang om Ingvarsinskrifterna*, ed. by Emil Olson (Copenhagen: Møller, 1912).

30 *Eiríks saga víðförla,* ed. by Helle Jensen, Editiones Arnamagnæanæ, ser. B, 29 (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1983). Only two manuscripts (B and C) out of four mention Eirik's travels through Rus´, but they are considered by the publisher to have been the older ones (ibid., pp. 7–9).

31 *Þorvalds þáttr víðförla*, in *Biskupa sögur I*, ed. by Sigurgeir Steingrímsson and others, Íslenzk fornrit, 15 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 2003), pp. 49–100.

32 *Kristni saga*, in *Biskupa sögur I*, pp. 1–48.

33 *Ørvarr-Odds saga*, ed. by R. C. Boer (Leiden: Brill, 1888).

34 Galina Glazyrina, 'The Viking Age and the Crusades Era in *Yngvars saga víðförla*', in *Sagas and Societies: International Conference at Borgarnes, Iceland, September 5–9, 2002*, <http://tobias-lib.uni-tuebingen.de/volltexte/2004/1068/pdf/14_gal~1.pdf> [accessed 23 February 2011]; and ead., 'Put´ na vostok – put´ k khristianskomu spaseniiu: Siuzhety islandskikh sag o skandinavakh-puteshestvennikakh', in *Drevneishie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy, 2009 god* (Moscow: Indrik, 2010), pp. 384–404 (pp. 391–95).

35 Glazyrina, 'Put´ na vostok', pp. 395–402.

Additionally, *Eiríks saga víðförla* was written probably around 1300.[36] All these texts have been preserved in still later manuscripts.

The presence of such figures in the sagas invites a number of questions. What kind of travellers are they? Where and why are they travelling? *Yngvars saga* is based on a historical campaign dating to the early eleventh century that is also reflected in around thirty runic inscriptions on memorial stones erected in Sweden, mostly in Södermanland and Uppland.[37] *Þorvalds þáttr* is also based on real historical facts concerning the activities of the first missionaries to Iceland in the 980s, one of them (Thorvald) ending his days in a monastery that he founded in Greece or Rus´.[38] *Eiríks saga* is different, more a literary fabrication than a reflection of reality, for its hero, the son of King Thrand of Thrandheim, travels in search of the heathen 'Ódáins akr' ('pasture of immortality').[39] Galina Glazyrina has argued convincingly that these three texts are united by the fact that their heroes (the Swede, the Icelander and the Norwegian) are anxious to save their souls, an undertaking that they accomplish through their trips to the Eastern part of the world. Since this matter is discussed in several sagas from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it is possible that the idea of achieving salvation by travelling to the 'East' via Rus´ occupied a certain place in the collective consciousness of medieval Icelandic society during this period.[40]

Another question to consider is: where specifically within the Eastern part of the world did these characters travel to? Ingvar went to *Garðaríki* (Rus´) and further into the *Austrhálfa* (the Eastern part of the world), as did his son Svein after him. From a geographical perspective it is not possible to identify their route with any certainty; the saga states that they traveled from *Garðaríki* down the Great River, and although several scholars have suggested possible candidates for this river, none of these have proved conclusive.[41] Thorvald went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Byzantium, and from there to Rus´, where he ended his life in a

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36 Glazyrina, 'Put´ na vostok', pp. 402–4.

37 Elena A. Melnikova, 'Pohod Ingvara v shvedskikh runicheskikh nadpisiakh', in *Saga ob Ingvare Puteshestvennike: Tekst, perevod, kommentarii*, ed. by Galina V. Glazyrina (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 2002), pp. 168–90.

38 The missionary activities of the *þáttr*'s main character Thorvald Kodransson and the Saxon bishop Fridrek are also described in Ari Thorgilsson's *Íslendingabók* and in *Landnámabók*, *Grönlendinga saga* and *Grettis saga*. The dates when Thorvald lived are difficult to ascertain, but it seems that he started preaching Christianity in Iceland in around 981 and left the country in 985. See *Priadi istorii: Islandskie sagi o Drevnei Rusi i Skandinavii*, trans. by I. B. Gubanov and others (Moscow: Vodoleĭ Publishers, 2008), pp. 167–92 and 221–22.

39 See Galina V. Glazyrina, 'V poiskakh raia: prostranstvo v *Sage ob Ĕireke Puteshestvennike*', in *Vostochnaia Evropa v drevnosti i srednevekovie, XVIII Chteniia pamiati ... V. T. Pashuto* (Moscow: Institut vseobshcheĭ istorii RAN, 2008), pp. 26–32.

40 Glazyrina, 'Put´ na vostok', p. 404.

41 For more information see Tatjana N. Jackson, 'Tri reki tekut s vostoka cherez Gardariki, i samaia bolshaia ta, chto nakhoditsia posredine', in *'Russkaia reka': Rechnye puti Vostochnoi Evropy v antichnoi srednevekovoi geografii*, ed. by Tatjana N. Jackson and others (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskikh kultur, 2007), pp. 316–25.

monastery. Eirik journeysed to Constantinople, and from there continues his voyage further East.

Furthermore, were these far-travellers baptized before, during or after their eastern voyages? In the case of Ingvar this issue is clouded by another uncertainty: the origin of Ingvar and Svein's Christian piety. There is not a word in the saga to indicate how and where they were baptized, and the only hint might be in the description of Yngvar's departure on an expedition from Rus´, where 'a bishop consecrated the steel and flint for him'.[42] This may perhaps suggest that Yngvar was in fact baptized in Rus´. In the case of the other far-travellers, Thorvald had been baptized before his pilgrimage by the Saxon bishop Fridrek, and together they tried to bring the true faith to the Icelanders. Eirik adopted Christianity in Constantinople, after putting his questions to the Emperor and receiving all the answers necessary to satisfy him.

Miklagarðskeisari

The latter two texts (*Þorvalds þáttr* and *Eiríks saga*) introduce the *Miklagarðskeisari*, the Emperor of Constantinople. In the context of the current discussion, his role is of particular interest. If Olaf Tryggvason, according to Odd, went to Greece to meet 'excellent and devout teachers' and 'an excellent bishop' who could 'administer holy baptism, which he had long desired',[43] then it is significant that in *Eiríks saga* the instructor in the true faith is the Emperor himself. As Sverrir Jakobsson puts it, 'he is a fully-fledged Christian *doctor* or *didaskalos*, who instructs the young Nordic prince in the fundamentals of Christianity. […] A Nordic man is thus made to seek his education about the Christian world view in Byzantium'.[44] On the one hand, it seems that the educated clerics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries — which the saga authors undoubtedly were — recognized the significance of Eastern Christianity. Yet on the other hand, the Emperor is portrayed by *Eiríks saga* as a person of authority in the distant Eastern part of the world: travellers receive from him a kind of charter or travel document, written in many languages and sealed by the Emperor himself, while in *Þorvalds þáttr* and *Kristni saga* the Emperor has the authority to appoint Thorvald as 'overseer and ruler of all the Kings in Russland and the whole realm of Garda'.[45]

In the introduction to his edition of *Kristni saga* and *Þorvalds þáttr*, Bernhard Kahle describes the latter story as a fable,[46] while elsewhere Hilda Ellis Davidson suggests that Emperor Basil II (976–1025) could have sent Thorvald to Rus´ as

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42 The English translation is from *Vikings in Russia: Yngvar's Saga and Eymund's Saga*, trans. by Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989), pp. 44–68 (p. 51).

43 *The Saga of Olaf Tryggvason by Oddr Snorrason*, trans. by Andersson, p. 54.

44 Sverrir Jakobsson, 'The Schism That Never Was', p. 178.

45 See note 1 above.

46 *Kristni saga*, ed. by B. Kahle, Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek, 11 (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1905), p. xviii.

a missionary.[47] Siân Grønlie supports the theory put forward by Sigfús Blöndal and Benedikt Benedikz that 'if there is any historical reality behind all this, then Thorvald was perhaps among the clerics who arrived in Rus´ after the marriage of Princess Anna, sister of Basil II and Constantine VIII, to Volodimer of Kiev in 989'.[48] No matter how much reality is reflected in the story of Thorvald, what is important for us is that it was written down in around 1200 at the earliest and has been preserved in a number of manuscripts dating to the fourteenth century, which means that, returning to Sverrir Jakobsson, 'at the end of the 14th century Icelanders still looked upon the Byzantine Emperor as the "leader of all Christendom" who was in a position to grant Nordic men worldly and spiritual eminence'.[49]

Sverrir Jakobsson cites an instance from another sub-genre of saga literature, the saga of Charlemagne (*Karlamagnús saga*), a collection of Old Norse prose translations of texts about Charlemagne, most of them Old French *chansons de geste* dating to the thirteenth century. This chivalric romance describes Charlemagne's crusade to the Holy Land where he fights by the Byzantine Emperor's side. When he asks the Emperor for permission to travel home, the Emperor instead offers to give him Constantinople and bestow upon him the privilege of becoming a royal vassal. Charlemagne's answer is what attracts our attention, for he responds: 'God forbid me to do that because you are Emperor and lord of all Christendom'.[50] Again, therefore, the saga emphasizes the superiority of the Greek Emperor, not only in terms of his political authority but also his position as a religious leader.

'Personal associations with Byzantine emperors'

Using material from the *riddarasögur*, Geraldine Barnes has demonstrated that, after the Schism, Icelanders continued to recognize the Byzantine emperor as the undisputed ruler of Christendom. In her opinion, 'key factors were the apparent irrelevance of the Schism, the cultivation by Norwegian kings of personal associations with Byzantine emperors, and the prestige associated with service in the Varangian Guard'.[51] To illustrate these 'personal associations' we should men-

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47 Hilda Ellis Davidson, *The Viking Road to Byzantium* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1976), pp. 254–55.

48 *Íslendingabók, Kristnisaga: The Book of the Icelanders, the Story of the Conversion*, trans. by Siân Grønlie (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1996), p. 69, note 90; cf. Sigfús Blöndal and Benedikt S. Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium: An Aspect of Byzantine Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 197–99.

49 Sverrir Jakobsson, 'The Schism That Never Was', p. 182.

50 Ibid., pp. 178–79. See *Karlamagnús saga. Branches I, III, VII et IX*, ed. by Agnete Loth (Copenhagen: Einar Munksgaard, 1980), p. 95; the translation is that of Sverrir Jakobsson.

51 Geraldine Barnes, 'Byzantium in the *riddarasögur*', in *Á austrvega: Saga and East Scandinavia: Preprint Papers of The 14th International Saga Conference, Uppsala, 9th–15th August 2009*, ed. by Agneta Ney and others (Gävle: Gävle University Press, 2009), I, pp. 92–98. A somewhat similar idea has been formulated by John Lind, who states: 'the split between Rome and Constantinople, which culminated in 1054 and was aggravated during the crusades, did not yet lead to a similar split between the churches of Scandinavia and Rus´ [...] This friendly attitude towards the west may well

tion the descriptions in the Old Norse sources of two prominent pilgrims who visited, in addition to Rome and Jerusalem, Constantinople. According to *Knýtlinga saga*, the Danish king Eirik Sveinsson the Good (1095–1103) visited by foot the holy cities of Rome, Venice and Bari in the early part of his reign, and at the end of his days decided to go to Jerusalem, although he only got as far as Cyprus before he 'contracted a sickness which led to his death'.[52] But his road this time went through Constantinople, and there he was given 'a great welcome' by 'Alexios, King of the Greeks' who offered him 'a choice of gifts', and finally presented him with 'half a ton of gold', 'clothes that he himself had worn, of great value, as well as fourteen warships, and many other princely gifts'.[53] The veracity of this encounter is made evident for us by the saga's inclusion of the skaldic poem *Eiríksdrapa*, composed by Markus Skeggjason in 1104.[54] *Knýtlinga saga* notes that 'this same King Alexios of the Greeks later gave Sigurd the Crusader, King of Norway, a similar choice', and he chose the Padreim Games.[55] Three large compendia of the Kings' sagas (*Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*) written down a century after Sigurd's death give a detailed description of his trip to the Holy Land (which can be dated to 1110), and also mention his visit, on the way back, to Constantinople. There he was met as an honourable guest by the emperor, to whom he gave all his ships, and the gilded dragon heads from the ship that he had steered were set on St Peter's Church in Constantinople. Once again, the information provided by the saga is based on the poems written by the contemporaries of the events described: the skalds Thórarinn *stuttfeldr*, Einarr Skúlason and Halldórr *skvaldri*.[56] Scholars have stressed the intergovernmental nature of these two trips, suggesting that rather than being private enterprises undertaken by individuals, the trips were conducted on a state level with the backing of the highest

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reflect the unbroken traffic of Scandinavian Varangians along the Rus rivers to Constantinople, which we have seen continued long after the Viking Age and did not finish before 1204, at the earliest', John Lind, 'The Importance of Varangian Traditions for East-West Collaboration and Confrontation in the 12th–13th centuries', in *Expansion – Integration? Danish-Baltic contacts 1147–1410 A. D.*, ed. by Birgitte Fløe Jensen and Dorthe Wille Jørgensen (Vordingborg: Narayana Press, 2009), pp. 27–37 (p. 34). I would add to this 'Varangian traffic to Constantinople' also trade traffic, polyethnic trade and handicraft settlements on these river routes, where there were all necessary conditions for a sojourn of numerous ethnic and confessional groups of people. Correspondingly, these contacts were part of a day-to-day life of tradesmen, warriors and other travellers, and the details were of no interest for the sagamen.

52 *Knýtlinga saga*, ed. by Bjarni Guðnason, Íslenzk fornrit, 35 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1982), pp. 93–321 (pp. 235–39); The English translation is from *Knytlinga Saga: The History of the Kings of Denmark*, trans. by Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards (Odense: Odense University Press, 1986), p. 122.

53 *Knytlinga Saga*, trans. by Hermann Pálsson and Edwards, pp. 121–22.

54 Ibid., p. 122.

55 Ibid., p. 121.

56 *Morkinskinna*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen: J. Jørgensen & Co, 1932), pp. 331–37; *Fagrskinna. Nóregs konunga tal*, ed. by Bjarni Einarsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 29 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1985), pp. 57–373 (pp. 319–20); and Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, 3, pp. 249–54.

authorities.[57] Consequently, if these far-travellers were acting as representatives of their country rather than autonomous adventurers, it seems likely that in the early twelfth century religious differences did not hinder wider political contacts.

Matrimonial ties

A good illustration of these strong political contacts is the matrimonial ties of the Rus´ princely family with the ruling houses of Scandinavia from the eleventh to the mid-twelfth century. Seven such alliances are described in the sagas, taking place between the years 1019 and 1154. We learn from the Norse-Icelandic sources of two Swedish kings' daughters who came to Rus´ and became Rus´ princesses, as well as of five Scandinavian queens of Rus´ origin. The marriages were of: (1) Iaroslav the Wise (*Jarizleifr* in the sagas) to Ingigerd, the daughter of Olaf *sænski* Eiriksson, king of the Swedes (1019), (2) their daughter Elisabeth (*Ellisif*) to the future Norwegian king Harald *inn harðráði* Sigurdarson (*c.* 1044), (3) Volodimer Monomakh's son Mstislav (called by the sagas *Haraldr*) to Kristin, the daughter of Ingi Steinkelsson, king of the Swedes (*c.* 1095), (4) Mstislav-Harald's daughter Malmfrid first to the Norwegian king Sigurd *Jórsalafri* Magnusson (*c.* 1111), and afterwards to (5) the Danish king Eirik *eimuni* Eiriksson (1133), (6) another of Mstislav-Harald's daughters, Ingibjorg (Engilborg), to Eirik's brother Knut *lavarðr* Eiriksson (*c.* 1117) and (7) their son Valdemar the Great to Sophia, the daughter of Volodar Glebovich, prince of Minsk (1154).[58]

Besides the Old Norse-Icelandic sources of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries (such as *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium* by Theodoricus Monachus, *Ágrip af nóregskonunga sögum*, *The Legendary saga of Olaf Haraldsson*, *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, *Óláfs saga Haraldssona* and *Heimskringla* by Snorri Sturluson, *Knýtlinga saga*, *Ágrip af sögu danakonunga* and the Icelandic annals), some of these marriages are mentioned in other sources from further afield. Marriages 1 and 2 — according to my list — appear in *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* by Adam of Bremen, marriages 3 and 6 (the former recorded with an error) are mentioned in Abbot William's *Genealogia regum Danorum*, marriage 4 is featured in the *Historia ecclesiastica* by Ordericus Vitalis, while marriage 6 is in the anonymous *Genealogia Regum Danorum*. This

57 See, for instance, Elena A. Melnikova, 'Baltiiskaia politika Iaroslava Mudrogo', in *Iaroslav Mudryi i ego ėpokha* (Moscow: Indrik, 2008), pp. 78–133.

58 See Vladimir T. Pashuto, *Vneshniaia politika Drevneĭ Rusi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1968); Tatjana N. Jackson, 'Islandskie korolevskie sagi o russko-skandinavskikh matrimonialnykh sviaziakh', *Skandinavskii sbornik*, 27 (1982), 107–15; Natalia I. Shchaveleva, 'Polki – zheny russkikh kniazeĭ (XI – seredina XIII v.), in *Drevneishie gosudarstva na territorii SSSR, 1987 god* (Moscow: Nauka, 1987), pp. 50–58; Aleksandr V. Nazarenko, *Drevniaia Rus´ na mezhdunarodnykh putiakh: Mezhdistsiplinarnye ocherki kulturnykh, torgovykh, politicheskikh sviazei IX–XII vekov* (Moscow: Iazyki russkoĭ kul´tury, 2001); and Tatjana N. Jackson, 'Riurikovichi i Skandinaviia', in *Drevneishie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy, 2006 god* (Moscow: Indrik, 2008), pp. 203–27.

same marriage appears in *Gesta Danorum* by Saxo Grammaticus, while both Saxo and the Danish annals include information on marriage 7. However, none of these marriages is even mentioned in early Rus´ sources. Only the *First Novgorod Chronicle*, when it records the death of Mstislav's wife in 1122, mentions her name as 'Мьстиславляя Хрьстина' ('Mstislav's Kristin')[59] (unlike the *Lavrentevskaia* and *Ipatevskaia Chronicles* where she is referred to only as 'Mstislav's princess').[60] This fact is significant, for while early Rus´ princes clearly formed matrimonial alliances with the royal representatives from Catholic countries — not only the Scandinavian kingdoms, but also Poland, Germany, Czechia and France — the Orthodox church never approved of such marriages.[61] The Kievan Metropolitan John II in the 1080s even insisted that it was 'unworthy and improper' for an Orthodox prince to give his daughter to a Latin Christian in marriage.[62] However 'the record of dynastic marriages' — as Franklin and Shepard have noted — 'shows that piety took second place to policy'.[63] Nevertheless, when it came to the official recording of events in the chronicles, there were rarely traces of such marriages, for the chronicles, like many types of literature, were in fact in the hands of the clergy; no doubt the Rus´ chroniclers often knew more than they were willing to share with their readers.

As Alexandr Nazarenko demonstrates,[64] the specific character of this prohibition is easy to explain in light of a condition written into a marriage treaty from 1495, when Elena, daughter of Ivan III — the grand prince of Moscow and the ruler of all Rus´ — was given in marriage to Alexander, the grand prince of Lithuania. The condition was that Elena should neither be proselytized nor forced to become a Catholic, but rather provided with everything necessary to practice her Orthodox faith comprehensively. According to Sigismund von Herberstein, the Lithuanians took it upon themselves to build Elena Ivanovna an Orthodox church within the fortress of Vilno, and allowed the bride to be accompanied by a number of women who shared the same beliefs. This was the practice in the late fifteenth century, but in the eleventh and twelfth centuries no special churches were built for the newly arrived brides, and the Rus´ wives of the Latin husbands (like the

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59 *Novgorodskaia pervaia letopis´ starshego i mladshego izvodov*, ed. by A. N. Nasonov, PSRL, 3 (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel´stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1950), pp. 21 and 205.

60 *Lavrentevskaia letopis´*, ed. by A. F. Karskii, PSRL, 1 (Leningrad: Izdatel´stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1926–28), col. 292; *Ipatevskaia letopis´*, ed. by A. A. Shakhmatov, PSRL, 2 (St Petersburg: Tipografiia M. A. Aleksandrova, 1908), col. 286.

61 See Aleksandr V. Nazarenko, 'Zapadnoevropeiskie istochniki', in *Drevniaia Rus´ v svete zarubezhnukh istochnikov*, ed. by Elena A. Melnikova (Moscow: Logos, 1999), pp. 259–407 (pp. 260–61).

62 *Tserkovnoe pravilo mitropolita Ioanna k Iakovu Chernoriztsu*, in Makarii (Bulgakov), *Istoriia Russkoi Tserkvi* (Moscow: Izdatel´stvo Spaso-Preobrazhenskogo Valaamskogo monastyria, 1995), II, pp. 571–76 (ch. 13, p. 572): 'Иже дщерь благоверного князя даяти замуж в ину страну, идеже служат опресноки [...] недостойно зело и неподобно правоверным'.

63 Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus: 750–1200* (London and New York: Longman, 1996), p. 296.

64 Aleksandr V. Nazarenko, '"Zelo nepodobno pravovernym": Mezhkonfessionalnye braki na Rusi v XI–XII vv.', *Vestnik istorii, literatury i iskusstva*, 1 (2005), 269–79.

Latin wives of the Rus´ princes) had to become part of the local church life, even if they brought with them their own confessors. This meant that — willing or not — they had to communicate ('*сообщатися*') with representatives of a different belief (with those who '*опресноком служат*' — 'use the unleavened bread in Eucharist'), thus violating another prohibition formulated by the Metropolitan John II in his *Church Rule*.[65] Consequently, it is evident why the Metropolitan had nothing against the Catholic wives of the Rus´ princes — after all, they were compelled to join the Orthodox Church when they came to Rus´. However, as stated above, the head of the early Rus´ Orthodox Church failed to influence the foreign policy in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. The grand princes of Kiev continued to give preference to foreign policy advantages over the strict observance of church canons. It is perhaps significant to note that five of the seven aforementioned marriages were contracted after these prohibitions had been formulated by the Metropolitan.

To explain how this could have happened despite the church hierarchs' strict attitude to these matters, Alexandr Nazarenko has noted that the Rus´ princes had their own court clergy who, though under the jurisdiction of the local bishop, preferred to yield to the prince's will in controversial cases. The example he cites is the description of marriage of Prince Sviatoslav Olgovich (1136) in the *First Novgorod Chronicle*. The prince 'was wedded by his own priests' because the Novgorodian bishop Nifont refused to wed him and even forbade priests or monks to go to the wedding saying: 'It behoves him not to take her [we do not know who or why – *T. J.*] to wife'.[66]

Thus, it seems that the Rus´ court existed in an atmosphere of religious indifference, which should not be confused with active religious tolerance. Theological matters receded into the background when political interests were at stake, and in the first two centuries after the Great Schism of 1054 the episcopacy, in spite of all its efforts, failed to suppress or even limit the matrimonial ties between Rus´ princes and West-European ruling dynasties. As Nazarenko points out, the situation changed only in the first half of the thirteenth century, when the crusade movement began to turn its gaze to the Rus´ lands.[67] Still, around 1250, conflicts at the northernmost borders of his lands forced Prince Alexander Nevsky to negotiate with the Norwegian king Hakon Hakonarson; as part of the peace settlement a marriage was negotiated between the Orthodox Rus´ prince and the Catholic Norwegian princess. Written immediately after the events described (in

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65 'И си же опресноком служат […] сообщатися с ними или служити не подобает. Ясти же с ними, нужею суще, Христовы любве ради не отинудь възбранно', *Tserkovnoe pravilo mitropolita Ioanna k Iakovu Chernoriztsu*, ch. 4, p. 571.

66 *Novgorodskaia pervaia letopis´*, p. 24; the English translation is from *The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016–1471*, trans. by Robert Michell and Nevill Forbes, Camden Third Series, 25 (London: Offices of the Society, 1914), pp. 14–15.

67 Aleksandr V. Nazarenko, '"Zelo nepodobno pravovernym"', p. 279.

1264–65), *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* expressed no doubts as to the possibility of such a marriage. The reasons why it never occurred fall beyond our present sphere of interests.[68]

Conclusion

This paper has focused on one of the numerous aspects of the world view of medieval Icelanders. Strange as it may appear to modern minds, it seems that in the eyes of Old Norse-Icelandic learned men — those who wrote and copied sagas from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries — the world remained an indivisible whole, despite having been split by the Great Schism of 1054. Thus, Odd Snorrason does not differentiate between Greek and Irish preachers in his *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, demonstrating that for him and his audience the 'Northern' and 'Eastern' religions had the same roots, and those roots were in Greece. In twelfth- and thirteenth-century sagas about far-travellers anxious to save their souls, the heroes achieve this through their travels to the Eastern part of the world, suggesting that the idea of achieving salvation through travelling to the 'East' occupied a certain place in the collective consciousness of the medieval Icelanders. Many sagas picture the Byzantine emperor as 'a fully-fledged Christian *doctor* or *didaskalos*' and the undisputed ruler of Christendom. Important factors for the preservation of such a world view included: the personal relationships between Scandinavian kings (such as the Danish king Eirik Sveinsson the Good and the Norwegian king Sigurd Magnusson the Crusader) and Byzantine emperors, the prestige associated with service in the Varangian Guard, 'Varangian traffic' to Constantinople — trade activity along the river routes of the East-European Plain through polyethnic settlements (where different religious and ethnic groups would naturally come into contact with each other) — and matrimonially forged political alliances between the Scandinavian countries and the early Rus´, the benefits of which outweighed all confessional differences and prohibitions set down by the Church in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In the case of the last of these factors, while early Rus´ sources have preserved no traces of these marriages, the Icelandic sagas paint a vivid picture of them. Thus, to my mind, it seems that the sagas could reflect a way of life that was above religious contradictions and theological discord.

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68 Cf. Tatjana N. Jackson, 'Aleksandr Nevskii i Hakon Staryi: obmen posolstvami', in *Kniaz Aleksandr Nevskii i ego ėpokha: Issledovaniia i materialy* (St Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 1995), pp. 134–39; and ead., 'On the Date of the First Russian-Norwegian Border Treaty', *Acta Borealia*, 2004, no. 2, 87–97.

Concluding Remarks

by Jonathan Shepard

A not uncommon tendency in the development of maritime trading-links across very long distances is for entrepreneurs initially to go the whole distance themselves, with specialisation in particular stretches of the route — 'segmentation' — becoming the main pattern of trading only later. This is, for example, what happened with the trade in luxuries across the Indian Ocean. Around the beginning of the tenth century A.D. there were still many journeys from the Persian Gulf made directly to China in the same ship, yet by the end of the eleventh century 'direct trade in one ship had ended' and goods underwent a series of exchanges at successive entrepots.[1] Similar tendencies are discernible in the development of overland traffic linking Western Europe with central and eastern Asia in the earlier middle ages. The pioneers, in the form of the Radhanite merchants, seem to have covered immense distances in the ninth century. Ibn Khurradadhbih describes their various routes, which involve not only sea voyages to India and China but also an overland route from western Europe through the lands of the Slavs and the Khazars to the Caspian Sea and on to Balkh, Transoxania and, eventually, the Far East.[2] Some modern scholars have been sceptical, doubting whether individuals could have undertaken journeys lasting for many months. But Ibn Khurradadhbih was very well-informed, being the Director of Posts and Intelligence for the Abbasid caliph and, as M. McCormick has noted, he could well have been describing commercial links in their early stages of formation, when limited numbers of individuals travelled 'from one end of the circuit to the other', with 'fewer middlemen and therefore higher profits'.[3]

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1   Michael Pearson, 'Islamic Trade, Shipping, Port-states and Merchant Communities in the Indian Ocean, Seventh to Sixteenth Centuries', in *New Cambridge History of Islam*, III: *The Eastern Islamic World Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. by David O. Morgan and Anthony Reid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 317–65 (pp. 321–22). See also K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 36–39 and 48–49.

2   Ibn Khurradadhbih, *Kitab al-Masalik wa'l Mamalik,* ed. and French tr. by Michael J. de Goeje (Brill: Leiden, 1889), pp. 114–16.

3   Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, AD 300–900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 690. On the 'archipelago' of emporia connecting the extremities of Eurasia before the arrival of the Portuguese and the forging of new long-distance routes across the Indian Ocean, see Janet Lippman Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System AD 1250–1350* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

The phenomenon of trade-routes that were at first travelled their whole length, with segmentation into various stages occurring only later, bears on the study of the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks in various respects. Firstly, the remarks of Ibn Khurradadhbih indicate that traders were venturing quite regularly across the lands between Christian Europe and the Middle East well before the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks began to leave its mark on more or less contemporary sources. In other words, the celebrated Way, running from the Baltic region along northern Rus´ riverways to the Dnieper and down, eventually, to Constantinople, was a secondary development, subsequent to the appearance of an axis running roughly from north-west Europe south-eastwards to the Khazar and Muslim lands.[4] This is clear from Ibn Khurradadhbih's insertion into his account of the Radhanites of the outlines of various itineraries of Rus´ traders: some of them travelled via the Don and also the Lower Volga to Khazaria, and then sailed across the Caspian Sea. Sometimes they would disembark on its southeast shore and 'carry their goods on camels […] to Baghdad'. There, he states, they would claim to be Christians, in order to pay only the poll-tax, manipulating to their advantage the position of *dhimmis*, 'people of the contract', in the Muslim polity.[5] Ibn Khurradadhbih is most likely to have learnt of this practice through his duties as a top Abbasid official, responsible for posts and communications;[6] so his evidence carries considerable weight. His testimony seems consistent with the fore-mentioned pattern of entrepreneurs traversing the full length of trade-routes in the earlier stages of their development, with multiple exchanges and segmentation becoming the norm only later: by the mid-tenth century Rus´ mercenaries were residing at the Khazar capital, Itil, and Rus´ traders may have been frequenting the city, too. But no literary source describes the Rus´ as going all the way to Baghdad or even as crossing the Caspian Sea for trading purposes at that time. Al-Masudi, our informant about the Rus´ at Itil, mentions the (Volga) Bulgars as their trading partners.[7]

Equally importantly, Ibn Khurradadhbih attests Rus´ acquaintance with Muslim taxation practices alongside the fact that they presented themselves to fiscal officials as Christians. Their subterfuge did not fool him, but the Rus´ would hardly have attempted it were there not good chances of Muslim officials believing them: presumably, it appeared plausible that Rus´ traders had picked up rudiments of Christianity somewhere on their travels, perhaps in Cherson or in towns

4   This is to simplify a complex and ever-changing series of trading-nexuses across Eastern Europe. But in my view there is still merit in the arguments presented by Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus, 750–1200* (Longman: London, 1996), pp. 14–27, 30, and 42–43.
5   Ibn Khurradadhbih, *Kitab al-Masalik wa'l Mamalik*, ed. and French tr. de Goeje, pp. 115–16.
6   On Ibn Khurradadhbih, see *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edn, III (Leiden: Brill, 1971), p. 839 (Mohammad Hadj-Sadok).
7   Masudi, *Les prairies d'or*, tr. by Charles Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, rev. by Charles Pellat, I (Paris: Société Asiatique, 1962), pp. 162–64.

under Khazar rule, perhaps in the remote north.[8] Thus by the time Ibn Khurradadh-hbih revised his 'Book of Ways and Realms', seemingly in the late ninth century, a fair number of Rus´ were familiar enough with Muslim ideology and also with outward Christian observances to turn their acquaintance to practical advantage. They had presumably been dealing with the Muslim authorities for some while, and at that time were ready to pursue the most lucrative markets, sometimes going all the way to Baghdad in person. And for them, religious affinities were negotiable, sometimes a means to a materially profitable end.

   A second key manner in which Ibn Khurradadhbih's remarks bear on our theme is that they invite comparison of the routes he describes with the development of the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks. One may surmise *a priori* from his remarks and from the other instances noted above that traders initially plied this route, too, more or less in its entirety, with segmentation into shorter stretches of the journey to Byzantium developing only subsequently. The route was distinctive, in so far as it offered almost continuous water-links and yet necessitated careful organisation, especially for negotiating the portages between the northern Rus´ river-systems and the Dnieper, and for navigating or portaging past the Dnieper Rapids. Nonetheless, there are hints of a similar progression from fairly long-haul (and small-scale) commercial enterprises to segmentation, with emporia developing along the way, and local supply-chains branching out in many directions. If, as is most likely, the earliest treaty of the Rus´ with the Byzantines was negotiated on behalf of a Rus´ leadership still ensconced in the north, at Riurikovo Gorodishche, this bespeaks long-range operations, as does the apparent naming of the towns of Polotsk, Rostov and Liubech in the accord of 907.[9] So,

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8   That Cherson was the place where, according to Ibn Khurradadbih, some of the Rus´ would bring furs and (presumably Frankish) swords and pay a tithe to 'the emperor of the *Rūm* (i.e. Byzantines)', seems overwhelmingly likely in view of the abundance of finds of seals of *kommerkiarioi* of Cherson, datable from the mid-ninth century to the later tenth century: Ibn Khurradadhbih, *Kitab al-Masalik wa'l Mamalik*, ed. and French tr. by de Goeje, p. 115; Mykola Alekseyenko, 'La douane du thème de Cherson au IXe et au Xe siècle: les sceaux des commerciaires', in *Kiev – Cherson – Constantinople*, ed. by Alexander Aibabin and Hlib Ivakin (Kiev, Simferopol, and Paris: Ukrainain National Committee for Byzantine Studies, 2007), pp. 121–64 (pp. 129–32). On the vitality of Christian life at Cherson, see below, note 42, and for evidence of Christian church organisation in or near the Khazar dominions, see *Notitiae episcopatuum ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed. by J. Darrouzès (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1981), pp. 241–42; Constantine Zuckerman, 'Byzantium's Pontic Policy in the *Notitiae episcopatuum*', in *La Crimée entre Byzance et le khaganat khazar*, ed. by Constantine Zuckerman (Paris: Association des amis du centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2004), pp. 201–30 (pp. 214–18); Maciej Salamon, 'Einige Bemerkungen zur *Notitia episcopatuum* des Codex Parisinus 1555A', in *Byzantium, New Peoples, New Powers: the Byzantino-Slav Contact Zone, from the Ninth to the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Milana Kaimakamova and others (Cracow: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze 'Historia Iagellonica', 2007), pp. 89–102 (pp. 96–97 and 102). That some Rus´ had already gained a passing acquaintance with Christianity in the Baltic world seems all the more probable in the light of our conference proceedings, especially the contribution from Ingmar Jansson, 'Eastern Christianity in Sweden? Viewpoints from an Archaeologist'.

9   Only fragments of the text of the 907 Ruso-Byzantine accord have been incorporated – in reworked form – in the *Povest´ vremennykh let*. But the mention of Polotsk and the other towns as due to receive 'payments' (*uklady*) could register what were in fact routine arrangements, subsidies to traders hailing from those towns: *Povest´ vremennykh let*, ed. by Varvara P. Adrianova-Peretts and Dmitrii

too, does the depiction in Emperor Constantine VII's *De administrando imperio* of wooden craft for transporting goods to Constantinople being marshalled from as far north as Gnezdovo-Smolensk and, even, Novgorod.[10] In time, stopping-places and emporia developed and multiplied along the way as, for example, on Veliko Potemkin island in the Dnieper estuary[11] and at the fortified harbour of Voyn.[12] And Gnezdovo-Smolensk, already becoming an important service-station for travellers between the northern rivers and the Dnieper at the time Constantine was writing, developed into a massive emporium and manufacturing centre.[13] By the eleventh and twelfth centuries, elaborate distribution networks branched out from Smolensk and other conurbations based on the major riverways. Groups of traders would transport commodities originating in the Byzantine south, notably wine and oil, to smaller towns and on to rural settlements, where the finds of shards of amphorae offer partial hints of the trafficking: much of the produce may have travelled in cheaper containers, in the form of leather skins or bags.[14] Novgorod's role as an emporium is well-known, while the contents of the birch-bark letters unearthed there provide evidence of the day-to-day engagement of many of its inhabitants in various commercial nexuses, the majority being local or regional.[15] There are indications not only from Novgorod but also from other cities of semi de luxe ornaments and other imports from the Byzantine world being marketed and circulating at social levels well below the ruling elite, and some of these items made their way to rural settlements even in northern Rus´.[16] Furthermore, regional

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S. Likhachev, rev. ed. by Mikhail B. Sverdlov (St Petersburg: Nauka, 1996), p. 17. See, on what little we know about the circumstances in which the agreements were made, Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, pp. 103–8.

10   Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, ch. 9, ed. and tr. by Gyula Moravcsik and Romilly J. H. Jenkins (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967), pp. 56–57.

11   A. L. Sokul´sky, 'K lokalizatsii letopisnogo Olesh´ia', *Sovetskaia arkheologiia*, 1980, no. 1, 65–73.

12   I. I. Morgunov, 'O pogranichnom stroitel´stve Vladimira Sviatoslavicha na Periaslavskom Levobe-rezh´e', *Rossiiskaia Arkheologiia*, 1999, no. 3, 69–78 (p. 73).

13   See, e.g. Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, pp. 127–28, 140–1, and 334–35; *Put´ iz Variag v Greki i iz Grek: katalog vystavki*, ed. by N. I. Astashova (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyĭ istoricheskiĭ muzeĭ, 1996), pp. 22–26; Wladimir Duczko, *Viking Rus: Studies on the Presence of Scandinavians in Eastern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 160–70 and 187–88. Gnezdovo-Smolensk's importance as a centre for manufacturing amulets was emphasised in Alexander Musin's unpublished paper, 'The Scandinavians in Eastern Europe between Paganism and Christianity'.

14   Thomas S. Noonan and Roman K. Kovalev, 'Prayer, Illumination and Good Times: the Export of Byzantine Wine and Olive Oil to the North of Russia in Pre-Mongol Times', *Byzantium and the North: Acta Byzantina Fennica*, 8 (1995–96), 73–96 (pp. 89–91); repr. in *The Expansion of Orthodox Europe*, ed. by Jonathan Shepard (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 161–84 (pp. 177–79).

15   See contributions to *Novgorod: Das mittelalterliche Zentrum und sein Umland im Norden Rußlands*, ed. by Michael Müller-Wille and others, Studien zur Siedlungsgeschichte und Archäologie der Ostseegebiete, 1 (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 2001); and *Novgorod: the Archaeology of a Russian Medieval City and Its Hinterland*, ed. by Mark Brisbane and David Gaimster (London: British Museum, 2001). See also Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, pp. 282–85 and 331–34.

16   Alexander Musin, 'The Archaeology of Northern Russia's Urban Sites as a Source for the Study of Middle and Late Byzantine Culture', *Byzantinoslavica*, 67 (2009), 41–49 (44–45 and 47). See, for rural northern finds, e.g. Noonan and Kovalev, 'Prayer, Illumination and Good Times', pp. 78–79 and 91 (repr. pp. 166–67 and 179).

surveys have charted distinctive patterns of settlement and pointed to the dynamics of constant exchange across the northern forest zone. N. Makarov, in particular, has shown that the 'compact nests' of seemingly rural settlements in areas like Lake Beloe Ozero belonged to intricate and intensive commercial nexuses. In essence, these settlements' inhabitants looked mainly to urban centres such as Novgorod for glass beads, women's jewellery and supplies of bronze, silver and lead from which they manufactured ornaments for themselves. The main ultimate source of these semi-precious metals, the greater part of which arrived in the form of coins, was Western Europe. The principal commodity which earned the country folk of northern Rus´ these wares — some of them quite functional — was furs, and commercial exchanges within Rus´ were correspondingly vigorous.[17] No less significantly, despite this internal market and despite the evidence for Byzantine or Byzantine-style artefacts reaching the extreme north — and even the island of Vaigach (between Novaia Zemlia and the mainland) — the bulk of archaeological data indicates the strong pull exerted on Rus´ by two quite different trading zones from the later tenth century onwards. Northern Rus´ was importing large quantities of silver German denarii and other forms of precious and semi-precious metals from the Baltic region and Western Europe, while the Byzantine world was the main source for the precious metals and de luxe and semi de luxe goods flowing into the south of Rus´.[18]

Consideration of the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks in light of Ibn Khurradadhbih's evidence proves its worth on three counts. Firstly, because the development of the Way seems to fit the general tendency of long-haul trade-routes to become segmented, after the initial phases of all-the-way journeying. Admittedly, the directness of the waterway between the markets of Constantinople and

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17 Nikolai A. Makarov and S. D. Zakharov, 'Regional´naia sistema rasseleniia i ee razvitie v X–XIII vv.', *Srednevekovoe rasselenie na Belom Ozere*, ed. by Nikolai A. Makarov and others (Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul´tury, 2001), pp. 70–94 (pp. 87, 89–90, and 92–93); id., 'Drevnerusskoe Beloozero i nekotorye obshchie voprosy izucheniia srednevekovogo rasseleniia', in *Srednevekovoe rasselenie na Belom Ozere*, ed. by Makarov and others, pp. 217–26 (pp. 220–25); id., 'Rural Settlement and Landscape Transformations in Northern Russia, A. D. 900–1300', in *Land, Sea and Home: Proceedings of a Conference on Viking-Period Settlement, at Cardiff, July 2001*, ed. by John Hines and others, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monographs, 20 (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2004), pp. 55–73 (pp. 56, 62–63, and 66–69).

18 Nikolai A. Makarov, 'Sever i Iug Drevnei Rusi v X – pervoi polovine XIII veka: factory konsolidatsii i obosobleniia', in *Rus´ v IX–XIV vekakh: Vzaimodeistvie Severa i Iuga*, ed. by Nikolai A. Makarov and A. V. Chernetsov (Moscow: Nauka, 2005), pp. 5–10 (pp. 8–9); N. V. Eniosova and T. G. Saracheva, '"Ot Grek zlato…iz Chekh zhe, iz Ugor´ srebro" (Puti postupleniia iuvelirnogo syr´ia na Sever i Iug Drevnei Rusi v IX–XI vv.)', in *Rus´ v IX–XIV vekakh*, ed. by Makarov and Chernetsov, pp. 11–19; Kirill A. Mikhailov, 'Uppland-Gotland-Novgorod: Russian-Swedish Relations in the Late Viking Age on the Basis of Studies of Belt-mountings', in *Cultural Interaction Between East and West: Archaeology, Artefacts and Human Contacts in Northern Europe*, ed. by Ulf Fransson and others (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2007), pp. 205–11 and appendices I and II, p. 211; and I. I. Eremeev, 'Northern European Objects of the 9th–11th Centuries from the Upper Reaches of the Western Dvina and the "Route from the Varangians to the Greeks"', in *Cultural Interaction Between East and West*, ed. by Fransson and others, pp. 250–62 (esp. pp. 254–57 and 261, and fig. 15 on p. 259).

of Kiev favoured commercial travel along its entire length, and the Rus´ traders regularly plying the route bore the name of *grechniki*.[19] But they do not seem to have extended their travels far north of Kiev in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the evidence of persons from the Baltic world making the journey all the way to Byzantium for specifically commercial purposes is somewhat oblique.[20] Secondly, Ibn Khurradadhbih's evidence illustrates the multiplicity of cultures with which the Rus´ were simultaneously dealing more or less from the start of their long-distance commercial enterprises across the eastern lands. Thirdly — and, for our conference's purposes, most importantly — his testimony, viewed alongside the fore-mentioned archaeological data and regional surveys, illustrates the degree to which trading patterns or travellers' professions of religious affiliation were beyond the dictates of any individual ruler or ruling elite. The treaties negotiated with Byzantine emperors from the early tenth century onwards may have inaugurated regular trading with the south, but they reflected a general appetite for southern goods on the part of the Rus´. The Rus´ political leadership merely reflected and catered for that widespread appetite in negotiating the treaties and in attempting to enforce them.

From the later tenth century onwards, Prince Volodimer's extension of the settled zone into the steppes and construction of fortified harbours like Voyn did much to protect trading vessels heading or coming from the south. But even in this, the most regulated sector of the Kievan Rus´ economy, the limitations of princely power are shown by the ultimate ineffectiveness of Prince Iaroslav's military response to what he took to be Byzantine mistreatment of Rus´ traders in Constantinople.[21] The orientation of Rus´ towards external markets was determined essentially by economic and political conditions and developments in those markets, as also by the security of communications with them. And yet, as noted above, settlement patterns in northern Rus´ seem to have built up on the assumption of fairly ready access to commercial centres that were themselves reliant on exchanges with external markets. Viewed from this socio-economic perspective, the obstacles facing ruling elites that tried to supervise or control the personal devotions, cults, and normative values of persons arriving in the wake of extraneous goods from other societies become more evident. Even that archetypally ruthless ruler, Volodimer Sviatoslavich, encountered religious dissenters among well-to-do returnees from Byzantium: as Oleksei Tolochko indicates, there is no reason to dismiss outright the historicity of the *Primary Chronicle*'s tale of the two 'Varangian

19 *Ipatevskaia letopis´*, ed. by A. A. Shakhmatov, PSRL, 2 (St Petersburg: Tipografiia M. A. Aleksandrova, 1908; repr. Moscow: Izdatel´stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962), cols. 528 and 541.

20 See Elena A. Melnikova, 'Vizantiia v svete skandinavskikh runicheskikh nadpisei', *Vizantiiskii Vremennik*, 64 [89] (2005), 160–80 (pp. 165–66 and 179–80).

21 John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. by Hans Thurn (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1973), p. 430. See Jonathan Shepard, 'Why Did the Russians Attack Byzantium in 1043?', *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher*, 22 (1978–79), 147–212 (pp. 147, 151–54, and 182–203).

martyrs'.[22] This episode dates, admittedly, from before Volodimer's baptism and acceptance of Byzantine forms of Christian doctrine and worship, and from *c.* 988 onwards his ability to enforce a degree of outward and visible conformity to Byzantine religious norms was formidable. Yet together with the influx of southern goods after Volodimer's conversion and the establishment of a Byzantine metropolitan in Kiev came traders, teachers and texts that did not necessarily observe niceties of Constantinopolitan church teaching or impeccable religious practice. Traces of 'apocryphal' writings appear even on the waxen writing-tablets from the beginning of the eleventh century that archaeologists have unearthed in Novgorod.[23] The sheer number of churches raised in towns like Novgorod and Kiev[24] impeded enforcement of religious correctness — and all the more so if, as Fedir Androshchuk infers from analogies with the situation in Lund, many stood in the private compounds of nobles and the well-to-do.[25] Conversely, one of the leitmotifs emerging from our conference is the thinness of ecclesiastical organisation in rural areas of Scandinavia and Rus´, the dearth of evidence for parish structures in place there during the eleventh or twelfth centuries.[26]

There were, then, many undercurrents, a profusion of culturo-religious notions and artefacts circulating along the Way from the Greeks to the Varangians or from the Varangians to the Greeks. And, as Ibn Khurradadhbih testifies, there had long been powerful cross-currents from the Orient. These receive only passing allusions or caricature in the main literary sources emanating from Rus´ and the Nordic world. Not that they are silent about the implantation of Christian worship and ecclesiastical organisation in the north, or that they fail to offer any kind of narrative or attempt at historical contextualisation. Some writers are only too prompt to offer an 'authorised version' of the coming of Christianity or to take issue with aberrant Christian practices and beliefs or with alternative — and abhorrent — forms of belief and religious devotion. Prime examples are the Rus´ churchman Ilarion and the composers of the *Primary Chronicle*, who offer vivid and compelling accounts of Volodimer's conversion to Christianity and imposi-

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22 *Povest´ vremennykh let*, ed. by Adrianova-Peretts and Likhachev, pp. 38–39. As Oleksiy Tolochko shows, the *Primary Chronicle* drew heavily for its account of the Varangians on a *Life* of Chersonite martyrs: '"Varangian Christianity" in Tenth-century Rus´', pp. 62–64.

23 The waxed wooden tablets were for educational purposes, see A. A. Zalizniak and V. L. Ianin, 'Novgorodskii kodeks pervoi chetverti XI v. – drevneishaia kniga Rusi', *Voprosy Iazykoznaniia*, 2001, no. 5, 3–25.

24 There were, by the early eleventh century, 'more than 400 [churches]' in Kiev, together with eight markets (presumably drawing in traders from afar), according to Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, 8. 32, in *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der Hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches*, ed. by Robert Holtzmann and Werner Trillmich, Ausgewählte Quellen zur Deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters, 9 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1957), p. 474.

25 Fedir Androshchuk, 'Cemeteries and Shaping of Early Christian Urban Landscape in Scandinavia and Rus´'(an unpublished paper).

26 Parish structures were far from all-embracing in much later periods of Russian history: Vera Shevzov, 'Chapels and the Ecclesial World of Pre-revolutionary Russian Peasants', *Slavic Review*, 55 (1996), 583–613, esp. 593–607.

tion of the cult on his subjects. Their bias is towards simplifying and glossing the course of events. Ilarion presents the conversion of Rus´ and its transformation into a wholly Christian land as an extension of sacred time; his account is essentially self-referential, focusing on the initiatives of the ruler, Volodimer, so that even the providers of ecclesiastical organisation and means of worship, the Byzantines, feature only on the sidelines.[27] The *Primary Chronicle*'s depiction of Rus´ conversion is drawn more freely. In fact, with their representation of Volodimer's 'Investigation of the Faiths' the composers signal their awareness of the multiplicity of choices available to him, of the cross-currents from Islam and Judaism swirling through the eastern lands.[28] But their main purpose is to denounce these alternative forms of religion, which — certainly in the case of the Jews, probably in the case of Muslims — still had their practitioners in the Rus´ urban network at the time of the *Chronicle*'s completion early in the twelfth century. Chroniclers and authors of prescriptive texts tended, in fact, to pick on variant forms of Christian worship and lifestyle, treating them as foils against which to contrast the virtues of total religious correctness, 'orthodoxy'. 'Latins' (western Christians) made an easy target and their use of unleavened bread — azymes — for Holy Communion and other alleged malpractices feature fairly prominently in the *Primary Chronicle*'s account of Rus´ conversion.[29] This was no mere literary conceit. By the time the *Primary Chronicle* was composed, a substantial corpus of treatises denouncing Latin religious practices was accumulating in Rus´.[30] Yet the sheer vehemence of churchmen's and monks' condemnations of the Latins' ways and of social intercourse with them suggest that such intercourse was, in fact, commonplace throughout the Rus´ urban network (where encounters with Latin traders and clerics were likeliest). Several contributors to our conference have pointed out the paradox, and noted that Rus´ princes employed western craftsmen, used western artefacts and formed marriage-alliances with western and Scandinavian ruling houses throughout the twelfth century.[31] This in itself shows how mislead-

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27 Ilarion, *Slovo o zakone i blagodati*, in *Biblioteka literatury drevnei Rusi*, ɪ, ed. by D. S. Likhachev (St Petersburg: Nauka, 1997), pp. 26–56 (esp. pp. 44–52). See Jonathan Shepard, 'The Coming of Christianity to Rus: Authorized and Unauthorized Versions', in *Conversion to Christianity from Late Antiquity to the Modern Age: Considering the Process in Europe, Asia and the Americas*, ed. by Calvin B. Kendall and others (Minneapolis, MN: Center for Early Modern History, University of Minneapolis, 2009), pp. 185–222 (esp. pp. 185–87 and 211–13).

28 *Povest´ vremennykh let*, ed. by Adrianova-Peretts and Likhachev, pp. 39–49.

29 Ibid., pp. 51–52.

30 See Gerhard Podskalsky, *Khristianstvo i bogoslovskaia literatura v Kievskoi Rusi (988–1237 gg.)* (St Petersburg: Vizantinorossika, 1996), pp. 280–92. See now on an anti-Latin tract which seems to have been available to the *Primary Chronicle*'s composers, Angel Nikolov, *Povest polezna za Latinite: Pametnik na srednevekovnata slavianska polemika sreshchu Katolitsizma* (Sofia: Pam P'blishing K'mpani OOD, 2011), esp. pp. 27–35.

31 See in particular Tatjana N. Jackson, 'Rus´ and Scandinavia: The Orthodox-Latin Division in Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and in Reality', esp. pp. 130–31; Ildar Garipzanov, 'Early Christian Scandinavia and the Problem of Eastern Influences', esp. pp. 28–29. Anti-Latin polemics against a background of toing and froing of Christians from Scandinavia and Western Europe and from the east along the Way from the Varangians also featured in the papers of John Lind ('"Varangian Christianity" Revisited', an

ing is the line which chronicles and normative texts — nearly all written by monks or churchmen — take, and which they enjoin on their readers and hearers. They paint a picture of culturo-religious spheres almost hermetically sealed off from one another, a picture bearing little resemblance to untidy realities.

No counterblasts to the extensive anti-Latin polemics of eastern churchmen emanated from monastic or other writers in the Nordic world of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. One might perhaps conclude that eastern Christians and their texts and cult-practices were too thin on the ground in the Nordic world for them to be worth denouncing. There are, after all, few explicit references to Rus´ or other easterners frequenting the region in extant Scandinavian narratives or other sources from the period. However, this reductionist argument fails to allow for the sparseness of such early sources or for the narrow scope of those purveying some sort of account of events in the Nordic world. The composers of sagas and narratives about saints had quite specific agendas, praising local heroes and promoting cults, when not simply aiming for entertainment. They tended to recast the deeds of Christian champions in moulds borrowed from the scriptures. Their concerns were primarily didactic, highlighting the interplay between the protagonists, their foes, and divine aid, rather than enumerating the heroes' contacts with variant forms of Christianity. Thus, as Sverre Bagge showed in his presentation,[32] the eastern ports of call of the well-travelled Olaf Tryggvason receive fairly short shrift from writers, even though they dilate upon his early life, covering his indubitably historical spell in Rus´. It was, in any case, kings like Olaf Haraldsson who put down roots and managed to initiate dynasties that received fullest treatment as missionary-heroes. In other words, our earliest narrative sources from the Nordic world do not offer a full picture of the varieties of religious experience available. And, from the late twelfth century on, affinity with the Roman papacy and respect for the ecclesiastical discipline and canon law it promulgated was intensifying. This predisposed clerical narrators or revisers of accounts of eleventh- and twelfth-century events in Scandinavia to omit such details of eastern Christian priests and observances as they found in their sources. They lacked the animus of eastern Christian authors' polemics against the Latins. But in their penchant for straightforward stories of the arrival of the true faith and their respective communities' acquisition of a Christian identity and tradition, they were simplifying and glossing events from a stance comparable — albeit ultimately antithetical — to that of Metropolitan Ilarion. Ildar Garipzanov shows this process already underway among clerical writers in Denmark in the earlier twelfth century.[33]

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unpublished paper); Henrik Janson ('Scythian Christianity'); and Elena Melnikova ('The Perception of the Great Schism of 1054 in Early Rus´ and Scandinavia', an unpublished paper).

32 Sverre Bagge, 'Olav Tryggvason's Connections with Russia and Eastern Christianity: a Critical Overview' (an unpublished paper).

33 Ildar Garipzanov, 'Early Christian Scandinavia', pp. 24–25.

These are the serious distortions created by our literary sources, a jumble of self-referential, in fact self-centred, stories of rulers' conversions and the formation of ecclesiastical structures, polemics of eastern churchmen against westerners, and deliberate omissions, and they have dominated the field. Fortunately, they are not our only sources. And here the proceedings of our conference should do something to fill a historiographical gap. They shed light on a feature of the Way that is rather peculiar, amounting almost to paradox. Whereas few traders performed the long haul, sailing from the Baltic zone to Byzantium and back, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the selfsame period saw a more or less continuous stream of travellers heading for the Byzantine world from North Atlantic waters, from Iceland and the British Isles, as well as from Scandinavia proper and northern Rus´. There is thus asymmetry between, on the one hand, long-distance trading patterns with their forementioned tendency to segment and, on the other hand, the movements of groups and, above all, individuals, often ranging the entire length of the Way, from northwest Europe to the Byzantine world before eventually returning all or part of the way.

No less importantly, our proceedings show very clearly that the flow of persons was two-way. The 'internal diaspora' of the Byzantine empire, the ease of mobility within the imperial envelope of individuals or peripheral groups such as the Armenians, has received scholarly attention.[34] But comparable movements around the broader cultural sphere of Byzantium, the 'Byzantine commonwealth', have received less study, and scholarship naturally inclines towards well-documented, high-profile individuals such as the Bulgarian-born churchman, Kiprian, who made his mark on fourteenth-century Rus´.[35] Individuals or groups of lowlier status, without positions in ecclesiastical or political hierarchies, journeying north from the Byzantine empire to Rus´ and regions beyond, as visitors or long-term residents, seldom feature in the chronicles or other texts composed in Rus´ or the Scandinavian world. Scholars have occasionally noted hints that Byzantine Greek-speakers, perhaps churchmen, perhaps craftsmen or traders, may have had more of an impact on everyday terminology and society than our narrative sources lead one to suppose.[36] But the hints come from scraps of evidence that are recherché and often controversial; taken in isolation, they escape sustained, well-rounded scholarly evaluation. A comprehensive survey of such evidence spanning the length and breadth of the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks would require

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34 See Nina G. Garsoïan, 'The Problem of Armenian Integration into the Byzantine Empire', in *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire*, ed. by Hélène Ahrweiler and Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, 1998), pp. 53–124 (esp. pp. 56–59 and 103–104).

35 Dimitri Obolensky, *Six Byzantine Portraits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 173–200.

36 Ihor Ševčenko, 'To Call a Spade a Spade, or the Etymology of Rogalije', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 19 (1995), 607–26.

a massive research-team, including art-historians and philologists specialising in Scandinavian, Slavonic and Finnic languages.

Neither our conference's proceedings nor the fruits published here can lay claim to utter comprehensiveness. They do, however, present materials of sufficient quantity and variety to permit collation of items of data. At the very least, they prompt reinterpretation of anomalous-seeming scraps of evidence and of statements in our sources that have met with scholarly scepticism. For example the *Íslendingabók*'s mention of three 'Armenian bishops' at large in Iceland in the eleventh century[37] looks far less suspect in light of the data which Ildar Garipzanov assembles from non-narrative sources of eastern Christian elements in the Nordic world, whether cults of unmistakably eastern saints or rites prescribed in local ecclesiastical texts.[38] One might fruitfully compare the *Íslendingabók*'s evidence with Adam of Bremen's report that 'Greeks' were frequenting the port of Jumne in the mouth of the river Oder at the time he was writing, the 1070s. These near-contemporaries of the Armenian churchmen were, almost certainly, traders, and responsible for an unusual commodity on sale there 'which the inhabitants call Greek Fire'.[39] They, too, had most probably plied the waterways north from the Byzantine world, and there is no need to suppose that Adam used *Greci* as a general term for practitioners of the eastern orthodox rite in general.

If modern scholars tend to doubt the scraps of evidence for eastern Christians at large in the north, they receive every encouragement from the silence of Byzantine narrative sources about commercial or ecclesiastical enterprises beyond the imperial borders. The same source-problem applies to operations in other regions. For example, it was only careful re-examination of evidence from the Cairo Genizah and from Arabic chronicles that disclosed how actively and effectively Byzantine traders exploited commercial opportunities in Egypt in the later tenth and eleventh centuries, frequenting the markets of Alexandria and Cairo. One may note in passing that linen from Rusʹ, most probably brought down via Constantinople, was among the commodities valued highly there; some of it was re-exported to India.[40] That Greek-speaking traders from places on the empire's northern periphery, notably from Cherson, should have been venturing northwards in this period is no less likely. Constantine VII himself attests the journeys of Chersonites to the Dnieper Rapids and Rusʹ already in the mid-tenth century.[41] Presumably the

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37 Garipzanov, 'Early Christian Scandinavia', p. 21.

38 Ibid., pp. 25–29. Early Norse texts prescribing what kind of flesh is fit for human consumption and proscribing consumption of animals slain by women have far-flung parallels in Ireland and Byzantium, as Alexander Busygin signalled in 'Eastern Echoes in the Earliest Norwegian and Icelandic Christian Laws: the Case of Food Prohibitions' (unpublished).

39 Adam, *Gesta*, 2. 22 [19], p. 79.

40 David Jacoby, 'Byzantine Trade with Egypt from the Mid-tenth Century to the Fourth Crusade', *Thesaurismata*, 30 (2000), 25–77 (pp. 45–46), repr. in *The Expansion of Orthodox Europe*, ed. by Jonathan Shepard (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 107–59 (pp. 127–28).

41 Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, ch. 9, ed. and tr. by Moravcsik and Jenkins, pp. 60–61.

Chersonites' purpose at that time was mainly commercial, but the institution of Byzantine Christianity in Rus´ gave rise to additional forms of contact, on the level of religious culture and the circulation of texts, as Oleksiy Tolochko shows.[42] At the level of evangelism and monastic enterprises to the north, our Byzantine narrative sources are, unfortunately, equally coy. The most extensive *Lives* of historical Byzantine-born missionaries, Constantine-Cyril and Methodios, were, significantly, composed beyond the imperial borders, and in Slavonic. We have only one extant missionary *Life* written in Greek, and by the time of its composition the see of its hero, Clement of Ohrid, lay well within Byzantine territory.[43] Yet here, too, scraps of material evidence can tell a different story and for all the ambivalence of archaeological data, rightly emphasised by Ildar Garipzanov, finds of Byzantine-based churchmen's seals suggest written communications with the far north. One may note the unearthing at Staraia Ladoga of the seal of an earlier eleventh-century metropolitan of Laodicea, Leo.[44]

The two-way flow of individuals and smallish groups along the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks entailed strong currents across the North Sea as well as the Baltic. Fjodor Uspenskij singles out a suggestive yet neglected ripple from this: the probability of some connection between the naming of the Rus´ prince Sviatoslav and that of a Danish princess of the following generation, Sviatoslava. The bearer of this name, with all its overtones of authority, had as her brother the Danish ruler Cnut (Knútr), whose dominions stretched in the 1020s and earlier 1030s from the Irish Sea to what is now southern Sweden.[45] Explicit, verbal, evidence of the travels of individuals of slightly lower status across the Baltic and on to the south comes from the rune-stones of Sweden. They loom large among the topics discussed by Ingmar Jansson, and he observes the terminology of the numerous inscriptions commemorating travellers to the east: they tend to refer to the deceased as having 'passed away', implying Christian sensibilities and, probably, beliefs.[46] This tendency accords with the hints from finds of artefacts such as cross-pendants of the so-called 'Scandinavian type' of a certain commonality of Christian cults and devotions among the noble and well-to-do in the Baltic world

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42 Tolochko, '"Varangian Christianity" in Tenth-Century Rus´', pp. 62–63. The likelihood that Cherson was the place of manufacture of many of the cross-pendants found along the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks was demonstrated by Alexander Musin, 'The Scandinavians in Eastern Europe' (unpublished paper).

43 Sergey A. Ivanov, 'Mission Impossible: Ups and Downs in Byzantine Missionary Activity from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth century', in *The Expansion of Orthodox Europe*, ed. by Jonathan Shepard (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 251–65 (pp. 258–59).

44 Victoria Bulgakova, *Byzantinischen Bleisiegel in Osteuropa: Die Funde auf dem Territorium Altrusslands* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), pp. 85–88.

45 Fjodor Uspenskij, 'The Advent of Christianity and Dynastic Name-giving in Scandinavia and Rus´', pp. 111–14.

46 Ingmar Jansson, 'Eastern Christianity in Sweden? – Viewpoints from an Archaeologist' (an unpublished paper). Further evaluation of the evidence from rune-stones of Scandinavians' journeys to the Byzantine world should come from R.-J. Lilie and others, *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*, I, 2 (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2009–).

and Rus´. In other words, those embarking on 'the East-Way', or their families and friends, seem already to have had a penchant for Christianity in general, and for eastern Christian forms in particular. The implications of this insight have a bearing on several other contributions to these proceedings, notably Ildar Garipzanov's.

Jansson further notes that some individuals mentioned on the rune-stones had gone to Jerusalem or 'Langobardland' as well as visiting 'the Greeks'. The inscriptions are, in other words, registering both pilgrimages to the Holy Land and periods spent in the emperor's service in southern Italy, in the Byzantine province of 'Langobardia'. They fit very well with the theme of Tatjana Jackson's paper. She adduces data from the Norse sagas to show how Byzantium and its world continued to exercise fascination over northerners during the thirteenth century.[47] This was partly a matter of material wealth and splendour, but the Greek emperor still stood out as a figure of overriding authority: in some northerners' eyes, at least, he had the status of a teacher, and his realm had sacred qualities.

There is a certain irony, here, in light of the remarks of Ibn Khurradadbih about Rus´ traders' subterfuges in the ninth century. In his view, their readiness to profess Christian beliefs and, presumably, to adopt Christian observances was a ruse, to lessen the burden of taxes they had to pay the Muslim authorities (above, p. 134–135). Their driving consideration was materialistic, the desire to minimise avoidable outlay, and thus maximise profit. Similarly pragmatic considerations accounted for the discontinuance of such very protracted journeys of the Rus´ all the way from the north to Muslim markets. This accords with the pattern of segmentation discernible in other long-distance trade routes of the pre-modern era and, as noted above, the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks seems to conform with this pattern of development, too. That, at least, is the case in strictly economic terms, the transport of commodities for commercial exchange. Yet the number of persons travelling as individuals or in groups vast distances along the Way from south to north, as well as north to south, was probably much greater in the eleventh and twelfth centuries than previously. Without denying the commercial motivation of some — for example, the *Greci* frequenting the Oder estuary or the *grechniki* heading south from the Middle Dnieper region — one may reasonably attribute other motives to the majority. These need not have been purely spiritual or otherworldly. The Swedish rune-stones attest the social status deriving from time spent among 'the Greeks', and the emperor's gold was clearly one of the attractions for Swedes as for other northerners heading for Byzantium. Yet there was more to it than that, an aura emanating from the Greek emperor's court and realm, as well as from the Holy Land. And the demand for oil and wine that was one of the drivers for commerce between Rus´ and the Byzantine world was in large measure liturgical, the need for materials for unction and the Eucharist. It was, in other words, partially non-materialistic considerations that impelled very

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47   Jackson, 'Rus´ and Scandinavia: The Orthodox-Latin Division', pp. 127–130.

many of the travellers from the north down the Way in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a far cry from the hard-headed calculus of profit-and-loss that Ibn Khurradadbih imputes to the ninth-century Rus´. How this change came about, and why, may become a little clearer thanks to the amassing and reassessment of disparate literary and material evidence achieved at this conference.[48] Making sense of apparently random and11 unrelated data may be no substitute for a grand narrative. But it does justice to the significance of wandering individuals and to the kaleidoscopic character of the kin-groups, communities and population clusters partaking in the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks, societies still in the process of coagulation in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is the complexity, undercurrents and vitality of this process that the papers arising from the conference and on offer here aim to illuminate.

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48   See the introduction to this volume, note 4. A comparable bid to bring together the work of historians, literary scholars and archaeologists on this subject was made at the conference convened by Maciej Salamon and Marcin Wołoszyn at the Jagiellonian University, Cracow, 21–25 September 2010: *Rome, Constantinople and Newly-Converted Europe: Archaeological and Historical Evidence, Cracow, Poland, 21–25 September 2010: Book of Abstracts and Addresses*, ed. by Maciej Salamon and others (Cracow and Rzeszów: Mitel, 2010).