The Cult of St Olaf and Early Novgorod

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The present chapter aims to discuss the veneration of Latin saints in north-western Rus' in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with a particular focus on St Olaf (*Óláfr helgi*), king and patron saint of Norway (*c.* 995–1030). The cult of St Olaf is a wide topic, some aspects of which are discussed in other contributions to this volume. Hence, this chapter will only briefly touch upon the spread of St Olaf's cult that resulted in the collection of his miracles and discuss in detail the four 'Russian' miracles of the saint preserved in Old Norse-Icelandic sources and the Church of St Olaf in Novgorod. The latter has long been in need of a critical study, notwithstanding that we do not have enough source material to date when exactly the church was founded. What is certain is that a 'Varangian' — that is, Catholic — church existed in twelfth-century Novgorod, and that the veneration of a Latin saint like St Olaf was not an exceptional phenomenon there.

'Russian' Miracles of St Olaf

Olaf Haraldsson, king of Norway, was killed in the Battle of Stiklestad on 29 July 1030. The process of his sanctification began almost immediately after the battle,[1]

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[1] As Haki Antonsson, 'The Cult of St Ólafr in the Eleventh Century and Kievan Rus'', *Middelalderforum*, 1–2 (2003), 143–60 (p. 143), points out, 'the sources relating to the emergence of the cult of King Ólafr Haraldsson (d. 1030) of Norway are in decidedly short supply. Essentially we rely on two types of sources in reconstructing the historical background to Ólafr's *translatio*, or

and according to Adam of Bremen by *c.* 1070 St Olaf's feast had been 'worthily recalled with eternal veneration on the part of all the peoples of the Northern Ocean, the Norwegians, Swedes, Goths, Sembi, Danes, and Slavs'.[2] The establishment of St Olaf's cult resulted not only in the local production of liturgical books,[3] but also in the appearance of his life (*vita*) and a collection of his miracles.[4] The miracles performed by Olaf are mentioned already in skaldic poems composed soon after his death. These are Þórarinn loftunga's ('praise-tongue') *Glælognskviða* (*Sea-calm Poem*) dated to 1031–35, Þórðr Sjóreksson's *Róðudrápa* (*Rood-poem*), and Sigvatr Þórðarson's *Erfidrápa* (*Memorial Poem*) dated to the early 1040s. John Lindow has argued very convincingly 'that a miracle presented in skaldic language was to some ears a more powerful miracle than one recounted in prose or in the language of the church'.[5] Still, skaldic miracles were not a part of written culture, and thus we should date the appearance of the *miracula* not earlier than a century after Olaf's death. Numerous miracles performed by the King are described in the poem *Geisli* (*Sunbeam*) by the Icelandic priest Einarr Skúlason, which he recited in Christ's Church in Nidaros in the winter of 1152–53; this, along with other source material, indicates the existence of a group of 'basic miracles' ('kernemirakler', 1–10) before the establishment of the archdiocese of Nidaros, which means

local canonisation, in 1031 and the development of his cult in the eleventh century: contemporary skaldic poetry on one hand and Norwegian and Icelandic writings of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries on the other hand'.

[2] Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, trans. by Francis J. Tschan, 2nd edn with new introduction and bibliography by Timothy Reuter (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 97. 'Agitur festivitas eius IIII° kal. Augusti, omnibus septentrionalis occeani populis Nortmannorum, Sueonum, Gothorum, [Semborum,] Danorum atque Sclavorum aeterno cultu memorabilis': *Adam Bremensis gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, II. 61, ed. by Bernhard Schmeidler, MGH SRG, 2 (Hannover: Hahn, 1917), p. 122.

[3] There are no surviving books or texts from the eleventh century; still, local liturgical book production in Norway is likely to go back to approximately 1070. Cf. Lars Boje Mortensen, 'Sanctified Beginnings and Mythopoietic Moments: The First Wave of Writing on the Past in Norway, Denmark, and Hungary, *c.* 1000–1230', in *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom (c. 1000–1300)*, ed. by Lars Boje Mortensen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2006), pp. 247–73 (pp. 252–54).

[4] Cf. Anne Holtsmark, 'Sankt Olavs liv og mirakler', in *Festskrift til Francis Bul på 50 årsdagen*, ed. by Sigmund Skard (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1937), pp. 121–33.

[5] John Lindow, 'St Olaf and the Skalds', in *Sanctity in the North: Saints, Lives, and Cults in Medieval Scandinavia*, ed. by Thomas A. DuBois (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), pp. 103–27 (p. 120).

that the miracles were 'perhaps written down in the 1140s, or even earlier'.[6] The collection of miracles underwent certain changes thereafter, and after Eystein Erlendsson (Archbishop of Nidaros in 1161–88) extended the *Passio Olavi* and updated the miracles in the 1170s or 1180s, the collection included forty-nine (fifty) miracles. Alongside the *Passio Olavi*, Olaf's miracles are recounted in a number of vernacular texts, such as the *Old Norwegian Homily Book* (comprising a short *vita* and twenty-one miracles), in the *Legendary Saga of St Olaf*, in Snorri Sturluson's separate *Óláfs saga helga*, and in *Heimskringla*.

All in all there are four miracles of St Olaf that had been displayed in early Rus'. One of them is related by an eleventh-century Icelandic skald alone. The second one is narrated only in the sagas of St Olaf, while the third and the fourth miracles appear in both 'ecclesiastical' texts and 'historical' works (to use Carl Phelpstead's terminology[7]).

The first 'Russian' miracle is mentioned only in *Erfidrápa Óláfs helga*, by the Icelandic skald Sigvatr Þórðarson (*c.* 995–1045). One strophe of this poem (namely, the 23rd stanza[8]) is quoted by Snorri Sturluson in his *Óláfs saga helga* (in a separate saga, in *Heimskringla*, and in compilations) in order to verify his story of Olaf's hair and nails growing as they did when he was alive: 'The bishop tended the sanctuary of King Óláf, clipping his hair and nails, because both grew as they did when he was living in this world. As says the skald Sigvat ....'[9] Here follows the strophe:

> Lýgk, nema Ǫleifr eigi
> ýs sem kykvir tívar,
> gœðik helzt í hróðri,
> hárvǫxt, konungs ǫru.

[6] Cf. Lars Boje Mortensen, 'Olav den Helliges mirakler i det 12. årh.: Streng tekstkontrol eller fri fabuleren?', in *Olavslegenden og den latinske historieskrivning i 1100-tallets Norge*, ed. by Inger Ekrem and others (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2000), pp. 89–107 (p. 97); Mortensen, 'Sanctified Beginnings and Mythopoietic Moments', p. 257; and Lars Boje Mortensen and Else Mundal, 'Erkebispesetet i Nidaros: arnestad og verkstad for olavslitteraturen', in *Ecclesia Nidrosiensis 1153–1537: Søkelys på Nidaroskirkens og Nidarosprovinsens historie*, ed. by Steinar Imsen (Trondheim: Tapir, 2003), pp. 353–84 (pp. 363–68).

[7] Carl Phelpstead, 'Introduction', in *A History of Norway and The Passion and Miracles of the Blessed Óláfr*, trans. by Devra Kunin, ed. by Carl Phelpstead (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2001), pp. ix–xlv (p. xli).

[8] *Den Norsk-Islandske Skjaldedigtning*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, A: *Text efter håndskrifterne*, I: *800–1200* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1967), p. 263.

[9] The English translation is from Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla: History of the Kings of Norway*, trans. by Lee M. Hollander (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), p. 530.

Enn helzk, þeims sýn seldi,
svǫrðr, þanns óx, í Gǫrðum
hann fekk læs, af liósum,
lausn Valdamar, hausi.

[I lie not, if I say that Olaf's hair has grown like on live men. I gladly praise the king's men in my poem. He cured Valdamarr in Garðar (Rus') from illness. The hair that grew out of the bright skull of the one who gave sight still maintains itself.][10]

The strophe thus contains information not only on the growth of Olaf's hair after his death, but also on Olaf's miracle performed *in his lifetime*. This is how the text is understood by Finnur Jónsson and translated by Erling Monsen and A. H. Smith and by Anne Holtsmark and Didrik Arup Seip.[11] Hollander's translation was also accepted by Omeljan Pritsak,[12] and this is how John Lindow reads this strophe.[13] In my own translation (published in 1994), it is also a miracle performed *in Olaf's lifetime*.[14] Olga Smirnitskaja's translation offers a different reading:[15] here we find 'a lock' 'that healed Valdamarr', which looks like *posthumous relics* of St Olaf. However, the accompanying commentary reads as follows: 'The strophe tells about a certain man, Valdamarr by name, who was healed by St Olaf when he was in Rus'.'[16] The translation and the commentary are definitely in contradiction.

[10] Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, 2, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Íslenzk fornrit, 27 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1945), p. 406. The prose translation is mine with the assistance of Ilja Sverdlov. Cf. John Lindow's translation: 'I lie, if Olaf does not have growth of hair like live gods of the yew [= bow; its gods = men]; I adorn the king's envoys [= men] in my praise [= poem]; the hair that grew out of the bright skull of the one who gave sight to Valdamar in Russia maintains itself; he got freedom from injury' (Lindow, 'St Olaf and the Skalds', p. 126).

[11] *Den Norsk-Islandske Skjaldedigtning*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, B: *Rettet text*, I: *800–1200* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1973), p. 244; *Heimskringla, or the Lives of the Norse Kings*, trans. by Erling Monsen and A. H. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), p. 469; and *Snorres Kongesagaer*, trans. by Anne Holtsmark and Didrik Arup Seip (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1934), p. 447.

[12] Omeljan Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus'*, vol. I: *Old Scandinavian Sources other than the Sagas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1981), p. 277.

[13] Lindow, 'St Olaf and the Skalds', p. 126.

[14] T. N. Jackson, *Islandskie korolevskie sagi o Vostochnoj Evrope (pervaja tret' XI v.): Teksty, perevod, kommentarij* (Moscow: Ladomir, 1994), p. 83.

[15] Snorri Sturluson, *Krug Zemnoj*, ed. and trans. by A. Ya. Gurevich and others (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), p. 374.

[16] Snorri Sturluson, *Krug Zemnoj*, p. 652, n. 174.

Two translations by Elena Melnikova,[17] though they differ in details, leave no doubt that she understands this miracle as a *posthumous* one. Moreover, she states in her argumentation: 'This plot, unknown from other sources, is still clear: Olaf's lock, cut off by Olaf himself when he was in Rus', or kept as a relic by a certain Scandinavian (Sigvatr tells also that Bishop Grimkel has cut Olaf's hair), has healed from blindness a certain Valdamarr, a Russian, judging from his name.'[18]

Scholars are not unanimous in assessing the character of this miraculous healing. Thus, according to Finnur Jónsson, the healing resulted in the restitution of Valdamarr's eyesight,[19] while Anne Holtsmark thinks that Valdamarr was relieved from pain and suffering.[20] According to John Lindow, St Olaf had restored the eyesight of a certain Valdamarr in Russia and perhaps cured him of other ills.[21]

Still, the most complicated issue in this connection is the figure of Valdamarr mentioned by the skald. The study of a broader context is of little help here, as there is no information in the sagas about any blindness or suffering of a man called Valdamarr who would have been healed by Olaf Haraldsson in *Garðar* (Rus'). Anne Holtsmark suggests that the skald might have referred to the story of *Óláfs saga helga* of St Olaf's healing in *Hólmgarðr* (Novgorod) a boy with a boil in his throat, although the boy was not named in the saga.[22] If we check the indexes to *Heimskringla* translations, we may notice that some editors leave the name *Valdamarr* without any comments.[23] Some note that it is 'a certain man in Rus',[24]

[17] E. A. Melnikova, 'Kul't Sv. Olava v Novgorode i Konstantinopole', *Vizantijskij vremennik*, 56 [81] (1996), 92–106 (p. 95); and Melnikova, 'Baltijskaja politika Jaroslava Mudrogo', in *Jaroslav Mudryj i ego epokha* (Moscow: Indrik, 2008), pp. 78–133 (p. 127).

[18] Melnikova, 'Kul't Sv. Olava', p. 95.

[19] *Den Norsk-Islandske Skjaldedigtning*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, B, I, 244. This opinion is shared by Lee M. Hollander (Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, trans. by Hollander, p. 530), Omeljan Pritsak (*Origin of Rus'*, I, 277), and E. A. Melnikova ('Kul't Sv. Olava', p. 95).

[20] Holtsmark, 'Sankt Olavs liv og mirakler', p. 122, n. 2: 'jeg leser dette verset anderledes enn Finnur Jónsson, Skjd. B. I, s. 244, og tar sammen *í Görðum hann fekk læs lausn Valdamar*: hann fridde Valdemar i Gardar fro pine'. Cf. O. A. Smirnitskaja's translation in Snorri Sturluson, *Krug Zemnoj*, p. 374.

[21] Lindow, 'St Olaf and the Skalds', pp. 119 and 126.

[22] Holtsmark, 'Sankt Olavs liv og mirakler', p. 122, n. 2. See below about the second 'Russian' miracle.

[23] Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, 2, p. 477.

[24] Snorri Sturluson, *Krug Zemnoj*, p. 652, n. 174; Melnikova, 'Kul't Sv. Olava', p. 95 ('a certain Valdamarr, a Russian, judging from his name'); cf. Lindow, 'St Olaf and the Skalds', p. 119 ('one Valdamar of Russia').

while others identify him either with the Russian prince Vladimir Jaroslavich[25] or with his grandfather, Vladimir Sviatoslavich.[26]

'Whatever the interpretation of the miraculous event may be', writes Elena Melnikova, 'the most important thing about the miracle-story itself is the localization of the event': a decade after the death of the holy king, an Icelandic skald tells the story about St Olaf healing a Russian (*Valdamarr*) in Rus' (*í Görðum*). In her opinion, 'it is hardly probable that such a story could have originated in the milieu other than Scandinavian residents in and travellers to Rus'. Correspondingly, 'they must have had permanent and tight connections with Norway for the news of Olaf's canonization to reach them and for its echo, a story about St Olaf's miracle, to return to Norway by 1040'.[27] I am afraid this elegant construction comes to nothing because of the name *Valdamarr* used by the skald.

The stories of miraculous healings (gaining sight among them) usually have nameless characters: 'a certain boy', 'a certain matron', 'a certain priest', and so on. Most notably this is the case with the collection of miracles in the *Passio Olavi*,[28] but in the sagas we also encounter situations when 'a blind beggar gained sight', 'two blind people gain sight and a mute his speech', etc.[29] These stories are stereotypical in character, and if they include any names then they are the names of places and peoples, demonstrating the geographical spread of the miraculous powers of the saint. In those cases when an object of Olaf's miracle is called by name, this is inevitably an atypical miracle. The character is someone well known; for instance, the Norwegian magnate Thórir the Hound (whose wounds were healed by Olaf's blood), King Magnús the Good (assisted by his father in the battle against the Wends), or Harald Sigurdarson (released from prison in Byzantium by a lady on St Olaf's request).[30] The saga story of healing the boy with a boil in his throat is

[25] *Heimskringla*, trans. by Monsen and Smith, p. 469: 'Valdamar, the eldest son of King Jarizleif of Russia'; cf. Pritsak, *Origin of Rus'*, I, 277: 'Valdamar, son of Yaroslav'.

[26] Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, trans. by Hollander, p. 853: 'Valdamar (king of Gartharíki)'.

[27] E. A. Melnikova, 'The Cult of St. Olaf in Novgorod', in *Sagas and the Norwegian Experience, 10th International Saga Conference, Preprints* (Trondheim: NTNU, Senter for middelalderstudier, 1997), pp. 453–60 (p. 456).

[28] *Passio et miracula beati Olaui*, ed. by F. Metcalfe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881), passim.

[29] See Diana Whaley, 'The Miracles of S. Óláfr in Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*', in *Proceedings of the Tenth Viking Congress*, ed. by James Knirk (Oslo: Universitetets Oldsaksamling, 1987), pp. 325–42.

[30] Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, 2, p. 387; 3, pp. 43–45 and 85–87; trans. by Hollander, pp. 516, 561–63, and 588.

stylistically similar to all other stories of miraculous healings. It is hardly possible that this saga character, unlike others healed by Olaf, should have had a name, moreover a name preserved by the skald in oral tradition — that is why I find it difficult to agree with Anne Holtsmark.[31] But even without any connection with the story of healing the boy in *Hólmgarðr*, the *Valdamarr* named by Sigvatr is absolutely atypical of this context. Only the name of someone in fact well known would have been mentioned.

All Russian names that we know from the sagas are the names of Russian princes, their wives, and their children; even *Kaldimarr* from *Bjarnar saga Hítdælakappa*, an invented character with an invented name, is said to be a relative of *konungr Valdimarr*.[32] There are not many of these names, and *Valdamarr/Valdimarr* stands out as this is the name of *three* Russian princes familiar to the sagas: namely Vladimir Sviatoslavich (Prince of Kiev, 978–1015), Vladimir Jaroslavich (Prince of Novgorod, 1034/36–52), and Vladimir Vsevolodovich Monomakh (Prince of Kiev, 1113–25). This name also passes on to the dynasty of Danish kings; namely, to the great grandson of Vladimir Monomakh, the Danish king Valdemar I (1157–82). Out of three Russian *konungar* with the name *Valdamarr*, the best known is Vladimir Sviatoslavich. Sagas do not give the name of his father, which is not typical, for the sagas are very keen on genealogies. But he sometimes is nicknamed 'the Old' in the sagas, which reminds us of 'Óðinn the Old', the forefather of Scandinavian gods. Thus, this Valdamarr is thought to be the founder of the Russian ruling dynasty. He is also famous for having been the foster father of Olaf Tryggvason: according to the sagas, Olaf had spent about nine years in early Rus' at the court of Vladimir Sviatoslavich. Furthermore, he is the only Russian ruler mentioned in skaldic poetry: Eyjólfr dáðaskáld says in *Bandadrápa* (*c.* 1010) that the Norwegian earl Eiríkr Hákonarson 'laid waste Valdamarr's land' and 'harried east in Garðar'.[33] The situation with the other two Valdamarrs is more complicated, as the sagas of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries (with the exception of the S redaction of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* by Oddr Snorrason) confuse *Valdamarr*, a son of Jaroslav the Wise, with *Valdamarr*, a grandson of Jaroslav. Thus, we can be sure that by the time of Sigvatr Þórðarson the only well-known Russian figure in Scandinavia with the name *Valdamarr* was the Russian prince

[31] See note 22 above.

[32] *Bjarnar saga Hítdœlakappa*, ed. by Sigurður Nordal and Guðni Jónsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 3 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1938), p. 120.

[33] *Den Norsk-Islandske Skjaldedigtning*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, A, I, 201.

Vladimir Sviatoslavich, famous (and this is attested to by the sagas as well) as a ruler who had brought early Rus' to Christianity.

In its narration about this prince, the *Primary Chronicle* includes the story of his temporal blindness ('By divine agency, Vladimir was suffering at that moment from a disease of the eyes, and could see nothing, being in great distress'), and of his subsequent baptism and the return of his eyesight as a result ('and as the Bishop laid his hand upon him, he straightway received his sight').[34] Alexander Nazarenko shows that the blindness motif had not been originally present in the so-called *Cherson Legend* of Vladimir's baptism, but was added to it from a somewhat older life of St Vladimir that might have existed at least in oral tradition. He finds traces of this hypothetical life in Latin works of the early eleventh century, in particular in the *Chronicon* by Thietmar of Merseburg (completed before 1018) and the *Life of St Romuald* by Peter Damian (written between 1026 and 1030). Thus, the life of St Vladimir seems to have been popular in the first decades of the eleventh century.[35]

The skald Sigvatr was hardly familiar with the dates of the lives of Russian princes. He barely knew much about Olaf's trip to Rus' except that the Norwegian king had left for the court of *konungr Jarizleifr Valdamarsson*. Sigvatr was hardly bothering himself with chronological accuracy in his poems. Sigvatr himself had never been to early Rus' (according to *Austrfararvísur*, he travelled no further east than to Gautland); neither was he in Norway at Olaf's court when the King left for Rus', came back, and was killed in his last battle (the skald was on pilgrimage to Rome at that time). Sigvatr expressed his sorrow for the killed king in a number of *lausavísur*, and *c.* 1040 he composed the *Erfidrápa*. What is important is that still in Olaf's lifetime, as Russell Poole has demonstrated, Sigvatr 'composed verses (*Nesjavísur*), pointedly and programmatically associating Óláfr with Christ'.[36] Why could not Olaf then, godlike and luminiferous, 'return eyesight' (I mean, in

[34] *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, ed. by Samuel H. Cross, Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature, 12 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930), pp. 200–01.

[35] A. V. Nazarenko, *Drevniaja Rus' na mezhdunarodnykh putiakh: Mezhdistsiplinarnye ocherki kul'turnykh, torgovykh, politicheskikh svjazej IX–XII vekov* (Moscow: Jazyki russkoj kul'tury, 2001), pp. 435–50.

[36] Russell Poole, 'How Óláfr Haraldsson Became St Olaf of Norway, and the Power of a Poet's Advocacy', in *Margaret and Richard Beck Lectures: Icelandic Symposium – University of Victoria. November 20, 2004*, at <http://gateway.uvic.ca/beck/media/text/RP-sym-lec-text.htm> [accessed 1 May 2008].

Sigvatr's poem) to *Valdamarr í Görðum*, as the oral story of Vladimir's baptism (keeping in mind that Vladimir was popular in Scandinavia) could have been brought to the Scandinavian north by those who travelled along the way 'from the Varangians to the Greeks'? I think that what we observe here in the poem is the historical tradition developed from different available stories, but with inevitable chronological mistakes. To my mind, the skald Sigvatr not only synchronized (in strophe 15) Olaf's death at Stiklestad with the eclipse of the sun ('as parallel to Christ's Passion') — which, as astronomers have calculated, 'occurred on 31 August 1030, little more than a month after the battle'[37] — but also, based on his knowledge of earlier displays of Olaf's saintly powers to restore sight to the blind (which he mentions in strophe 24), ascribed to the King the restoration of the sight of the famous Russian prince Vladimir Sviatoslavich, *Valdamarr í Görðum*. This chronological contamination is quite evident to us today, but was hardly clear to the Icelandic skald and his audience.

The second 'Russian' miracle is that of the healing of the boy with a boil in his throat in *Garðaríki* (early Rus'). On the one hand, it is not included in the collection of miracles in *Passio Olavi*; on the other hand, it is the only 'Russian' miracle related by Snorri Sturluson.[38] This is the miracle mentioned above, the one that Holtsmark thought was meant by Sigvatr when he spoke in his *Erfidrápa* about the healing of Valdamarr. This story, no doubt, presents Olaf's miraculous powers during his lifetime. As Carl Phelpstead has noted, 'Robert Folz's comparative study of European royal saints demonstrates that it is not at all unusual for a royal saint to have few miracles attributed to the period during which he was alive on earth'.[39] Moreover, the majority of a royal saint's miracles would be healings, which is true of the miracles of St Olaf.

Snorri Sturluson tells that 'when King Óláf was in Gartharíki, the son of a well-to-do widow had a boil in his throat'. The boy could no longer swallow any food, 'so it was thought he would die. The mother of the boy went to Queen Ingigerth, for she was acquainted with her, and showed her the boy'.[40] A comparison of the *Legendary Saga* and Snorri's saga demonstrates how the plot developed. In the

[37] See Lindow, 'St Olaf and the Skalds', p. 118.

[38] E. A. Melnikova ('Cult of St. Olaf in Novgorod', p. 456) erroneously insists that this miracle story is attested to in the *Legendary saga of Saint Olaf* only. However, it occurs as well in Snorri's separate saga, in *Heimskringla*, and in compilations.

[39] Phelpstead, 'Introduction', p. xliv.

[40] Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, 2, p. 341. The English translation is from *Heimskringla*, trans. by Hollander, pp. 484–85.

Legendary Saga, Ingigerðr, while addressing the sick boy's mother to Olaf, stresses that people did not call him a healer. But the act of healing was followed by the remark that 'they immediately started calling him thus in the town'. In Snorri's text, on the contrary, Ingigerðr says: 'Go to King Óláf. He is the best healer here', and the woman did so. Although the King asserted that he was no physician, the woman bade him to apply the remedies of which he knew. By placing some bread on his palm crosswise and making the boy swallow it, Olaf healed the boy. Snorri summarizes his story with the following words:

> The common opinion was then at first that King Óláf had such good healing power in his hands as is ascribed to such persons who excel in the art of having healing hands; but later, when it became known that he performed miracles, this was taken to be a true miracle.[41]

To answer the question why Snorri had selected only this 'Russian' miracle from the three miracles in his source, the *Legendary saga*, we should probably pay attention to the conclusion Carl Phelpstead comes to, namely that 'Snorri recounts those stories in which there is the most honour to St Óláfr'.[42] In fact, this story is the most honourable one, as it deals with the moment when the saint's miraculous powers exemplified in his healing abilities were revealed to people.

The Church of St Olaf in Novgorod

In the Middle Ages, churches dedicated to St Olaf were erected in various regions: Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Orkney, the Faroe Islands, the British Isles, northern France, Spain, Estonia, and even in Byzantium and early Rus'. The latter two are considered to be 'the most exotic places in the long list'.[43]

A church of St Olaf in Novgorod is mentioned in the Old Norse-Icelandic sources describing two more (the third and fourth) miracles of St Olaf. Both miracles are posthumous. The third 'Russian' miracle — which occurs in the short and the long versions of the *Passio*,[44] the *Old Norwegian Homily Book*, the *Legendary Saga*, and in *Óláfs saga helga* in *Flateyjarbók* — is a miracle connected to the icon

[41] Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, 2, pp. 341–42; trans. by Hollander, p. 485.

[42] Carl Phelpstead, 'In Honour of St Óláfr: The Miracle Stories in Snorri Sturluson's *Óláfs Saga Helga*', in *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 25 (2000), 292–306.

[43] Lars Roar Langslet, *Olav den Hellige* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1995), p. 131.

[44] This is miracle no. 15 in the Latin collection. In my text, I follow the numbering of the miracles from Lenka Jiroušková, 'Textual Evidence for the Transmission of the *Passio Olavi* Prior to 1200 and its Later Literary Transformations', in this volume.

of St Olaf at the time of a big fire in *Hólmgarðr* (Novgorod). The fourth one is a miraculous healing of a dumb slave in the church dedicated to St Olaf in *Hólmgarðr*. Like the latter miracle, it occurs in the same set of texts,[45] with the exception of *Flateyjarbók*. Elena Melnikova has argued very convincingly that 'the emphasis placed on St Olaf's church in Novgorod and on its priests might indicate the temple origins of miracles 3 and 4 and their emergence among the clergy and the parishioners of the church'.[46] However, she is hardly correct in asserting that these two miracles belong to the '"canonical" corpus of miracles'. In her opinion, Eystein compiled his *Passio et miracula beati Olavi c.* 1170, and soon after 1170 the *Passio Olavi* was reworked into the *Acta sancti Olavi regis et martyris*, in which Eystein started the process of the 'canonization' of twenty of Olaf's miracles. Finally, at the turn of the thirteenth century this '"canonical" corpus of miracles' was translated into Norwegian as part of the *Old Norwegian Homily Book*.[47] This hypothetical construction looks to be based on the outdated editions of G. Storm (1800) and F. Metcalfe (1881). Recent research has demonstrated that the process had an opposite trend and that the number of miracles was increasing from one redaction of the *Passio Olavi* to the next.[48] What is important about the miracles in question is that they belong to the early collection of miracles.[49] As far as their dating is concerned, we can be sure that 1153 is a terminus post quem for both of them.[50]

Russian chronicles mention a *varjazhskaja* ('Varangian', meaning 'Scandinavian') church in Novgorod, albeit without the name of its patron saint, and the earliest mention on record is somewhat earlier than the possible inclusion of the discussed miracles into the *Passio Olavi*. Under the year 1152 (6660), the *First Novgorodian Chronicle* reports on a big fire 'in the middle of the market place' in Novgorod, in which 'eight churches were burnt down, and a ninth, the Varangian one'.[51] Three

[45] This is miracle no. 20 in the Latin collection.

[46] Melnikova, 'Cult of St. Olaf in Novgorod', p. 457.

[47] Melnikova, 'Kul't Sv. Olava', p. 94; Melnikova, 'Cult of St. Olaf in Novgorod', p. 454; and Melnikova, 'Baltijskaja politika Jaroslava Mudrogo', p. 128.

[48] See note 6 above.

[49] According to Lenka Jiroušková's analysis (see 'Textual Evidence for the Transmission of the *Passio Olavi*', this volume), the third Russian miracle belongs to a 'special branch' of the earliest miracle collection and the fourth Russian miracle to the second phase of the collection.

[50] See Lenka Jiroušková, 'Textual Evidence for the Transmission of the *Passio Olavi*', in this volume.

[51] *The Chronicle of Novgorod, 1016–1471*, trans. by R. Michell and N. Forbes, Camden Third Series, 25 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1914; repr. New York: AMS Press, 1970), p. 21; and

incidents involving the 'Varangian' church are mentioned in the following two hundred years: it was burnt down once again in 1181 (6689), 'all the countless merchandise was burnt' there in 1217 (6725), and finally the church suffered from a fire in 1311 (6819) along with other stone churches.[52] Thus, the initial wooden church must have been rebuilt in stone after the fire of 1181.[53]

In the late eleventh or early twelfth century — half a century before the 'Varangian' church was first recorded in the Novgorodian chronicle — the rune carver Öpir (**ØpiR**) produced a runic inscription on a boulder at Sjusta in central Sweden, mentioning a certain *Spjallboði* who 'died in *Hólmgarðr* in Olaf's church'.[54] This interpretation was proposed by Otto von Friesen and supported by other Swedish runologists like Elias Wessén and Sven B. F. Jansson. This reading is also shared by Elena Melnikova, Kristel Zilmer, and many others.[55] As for the exact dating of the inscription, it remains uncertain. But based upon what is known about the activity of the carver Öpir, several scholars have argued that he was active in the second half of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth century.[56]

Some thirteenth-century sources (the Novgorodian *Schra*, Latin and German versions of the trade treaty of 1270 between Novgorod and German towns and Gotland, and some Russian chronicles) indicate that two foreign yards had existed in Novgorod by the late twelfth century: a German one with the church dedicated

PSRL, vol. III: *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopis' starshego i mladshego izvodov* (Moscow: Akademija Nauk SSSR, 1950), pp. 29 and 215.

[52] *Chronicle of Novgorod*, trans. by Michell and Forbes, pp. 31, 58, and 118; and PSRL, III, 37, 57, 93, 226, 258, and 334.

[53] Unfortunately, we have no traces of St Olaf's wooden church. Still, archaeological material in Novgorod demonstrates Scandinavian influence on Novgorodian church building (see V. Ja Konetskij, K. G. Samoilov, 'K voprosu o vlijanii skandinavskikh traditsij na formirovanie rannekhristianskoj kul'tury drevnego Novgoroda', in *Proshloe Novgoroda i Novgorodskoj zemli: Tezisy dokladov* (Novgorod: Novgorodskij gosudarstvennyj universitet, 1996), pp. 5–8).

[54] '**an uar . tauþr . i hulmkarþi . i olafs kriki**' (U 687). See Kristel Zilmer, *'He drowned in Holmr's sea — his cargo ship drifted to the sea-bottom, only three came out alive': Records and Representations of Baltic Traffic in the Viking Age and the Early Middle Ages in Early Nordic Sources*, Nordistica Tartuensia, 12 (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2005), pp. 161–62.

[55] For the discussion and bibliography, see E. A. Melnikova, *Skandinavskie runicheskie nadpisi: Novye nakhodki i interpretatsii: Teksty, perevod, kommentarij* (Moscow: Vostochnaja literatura, 2001), pp. 338–39; and Zilmer, *'He drowned in Holmr's sea'*, pp. 161–62.

[56] Marit Åhlén, *Runristaren Öpir: en monografi* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 1997), pp. 25–27.

to St Peter and a Gotlandic one with the church dedicated to St Olaf.[57] These two yards are also mentioned in late medieval Hanseatic documents. However, there is no doubt among scholars that their location at the time was the same as when they had been founded.[58] According to written sources, the German Yard was located to the east of *Jaroslavovo Dvorishche*, opposite the Nikolskij cathedral. Since the sources mention conflicts between the visitors of the Gotlandic Yard and the inhabitants of Mikhajlovskaja Street — located to the south of *Jaroslavovo Dvorishche*, in the trading district of Novgorod (*Torgovaja storona*) near the Volkhov River — it has been suggested that the Gotlandic Yard must have been situated in this street. Archaeological excavations carried out in that part of medieval Novgorod in 1968–70 confirmed this assumption.[59] Moreover, Oleg Ioannisian suggests that the fragments of a stone construction found there in 1969 could have been the remains of St Olaf's church erected in the place of a former wooden church. The stone church must have been a rotunda, which was typical of the 'trade' churches of Scandinavia and northern Germany in the twelfth through the thirteenth century.[60]

After a thorough examination of the *Tale of Novgorodian posadnik Dobrynja* and a number of other Old Russian written sources, Elena Rybina has concluded that the church of St Olaf in the Gotlandic Yard in Novgorod was built in the lifetime of *posadnik* Dobrynja (who died in 1117); that is, in the late eleventh or early twelfth century.[61] Thus, the early Russian and Old Norse-Icelandic sources suggest the turn of the twelfth century as the earliest date for the appearance of St Olaf's

[57] I. P. Andreevskij, *O dogovore Novgoroda s nemetskimi gorodami i Gotlandom, zakljuchennom v 1270 g.* (St Petersburg: Tipographija Treja, 1855), p. 30, n. 93; M. Berezhkov, *O torgovle Rusi s Ganzoj do kontsa XV veka* (St Petersburg: Tipographija V. Bezobrazova, 1879), pp. 58–61; G. Svahnström, 'Gutagård och Peterhof: Två handelsgårdar i det medeltida Novgorod', *Gotländskt arkiv*, 32 (1960), 35–50; and E. A. Rybina, *Inozemnye dvory v Novgorode XII–XVII vekov* (Moscow: Nauka, 1986).

[58] For details, see E. A. Rybina, *Torgovlja srednevekovogo Novgoroda* (Velikij Novgorod: Novgorodskij gosudarstvennyj universitet, 2001), pp. 175–76.

[59] Rybina, *Torgovlja srednevekovogo Novgoroda*, p. 175.

[60] About the *Kaufmannskirchen* in Scandinavia and Northern Europe, see O. M. Ioannisian, 'Arkhitektura Drevnej Rusi i srednevekovoj Skandinavii: Ikh vzaimosvjazi', *Trudy Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha*, 34 (2007), 99–135 (pp. 107–13 and ills. 3–17). However, I can hardly accept his dating of this construction to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, as it is based on a non-critical reading of the entry *s.a.* 1275 in the *First Novgorodian Chronicle* (ibid., p. 112). This record does not allow us to believe that the wooden 'Varangian' church was burnt down in that very year.

[61] E. A. Rybina, 'Povest o novgorodskom posadnike Dobryne', in *Arkheograficheskij jezhegodnik za 1977 god* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978), pp. 79–85.

church in Novgorod. The suggestion that it was erected at the time of Harald Sigurdarson's stay in Russia in the second quarter of the eleventh century[62] is based on deductive reasoning only and cannot be supported by any source material.[63] Even the fact that the thirteenth-century Novgorodian legal document *Regulations of Paving* (*Ustav o mostekh*) contains the place name *Garal'dov vymol* (Harald's landing place) at Novgorod's *Torgovaja Storona*[64] does not prove King Harald's participation in the erection of the church. To sum up, we can state that the surviving sources strongly indicate that the church of St Olaf existed in Novgorod as early as the late eleventh or early twelfth century, but no source material supports the tempting hypothesis that the church was erected at the time of Jaroslav the Wise by his Swedish wife Ingigerðr and his Norwegian guest Harald Hardruler.

The existence of a 'Varangian' church in twelfth-century Novgorod is mirrored in another contemporary source, the so-called *Voproshanije Kirika* (*The Questions of Kirik, Savva and Ilija, with the answers of Niphont, the archbishop of Novgorod*). The three priests asked the Archbishop about the church rules and penances that various religious offences deserve. Their questions are in fact an attempt to adapt the canonical norms to the everyday life of the Novgorodian Christian community. The questions demonstrate that Novgorodians (and even priests) could interrupt fasting and that they did not know how to act in different situations according to Christian norms. Two of these questions directly relate to our topic:

> Kirik 10. If someone baptized into 'the Latin faith' wants to be rebaptized, to change his belief, what should he do? — Let him attend the Russian church for seven days, get a Christian name and read four prayers a day [...].
>
> Savva 16. What should be done if there are people who would take their children to the 'Varangian priest'? — These people are considered to be dual believers, and they deserve six weeks of penance (*epitimja*).[65]

[62] Melnikova, 'Baltijskaja politika Jaroslava Mudrogo', pp. 130–31.

[63] In fact, Harald visited early Rus' twice, in *c.* 1031–34 and *c.* 1043–44. For details, see T. N. Jackson, *Chetyre norvezhskikh konunga na Rusi: Iz istorii russko-norvezhskikh politicheskikh otnoshenij poslednej treti X – pervoj poloviny XI v.* (Moscow: Jazyki russkoj kul'tury, 2000), pp. 117–55.

[64] M. N. Tikhomirov, *Drevnerusskie goroda* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoj literatury, 1956), p. 381; and A. I. Semjonov, 'Drevnjaja topografija juzhnoj chasti Slavenskovo kontsa Novgoroda', *Novgorodskij istoricheskij sbornik*, 9 [19] (2003), 55–73 (p. 68).

[65] '10. Оже боудеть кыи человѣкъ и крещенъ въ латиньскую вѣроу и въсхощеть приступити къ намъ? — Ать ходить въ церковь по 7 днии, а ты первѣе нарекъ емоу имя, та же 4 молитвы стваря и емоу на день; [...] 16. А оже се носили къ варяжьскомоу попу дѣти на молитвоу? 6 недѣль опитемье, рече, занеже акы двовѣрци

Thus, *Voproshanije Kirika* demonstrates that by the 1130s there had been 'Varangian priests' in Novgorod and people who were either 'baptized into the Latin faith' or considered taking their children to a 'Varangian priest'. Hence, it is likely that St Olaf's church was not at all alien or hostile to local people; on the contrary, some Novgorodians could have visited it from time to time.

'The Teaching of the Latins'

The previous discussion has demonstrated that a 'Varangian' church dedicated to St Olaf existed in Novgorod in the early twelfth century. The question then arises whether the existence of a 'Varangian' — that is, Catholic — church in twelfth-century Novgorod was something exceptional, or whether 'the teaching of the Latins'[66] was practised by a section of the local populace.

Preachers of Christianity came to early Rus' not only from Byzantium and Bulgaria, but also from Western Europe. The first 'Latin' bishop, Adalbert, was sent to Rus' by Otto I *c.* 961 on the request of Princess Olga. This fact has been registered in the anonymous (albeit ascribed to Adalbert himself) continuation of the *Chronicon Reginonis Prumiensis*,[67] in a number of tenth- and eleventh-century annals of *Hersfeldensis* tradition independent of the latter source,[68] in the *Chronicon* of Thietmar of Merseburg (early eleventh century),[69] in *Gesta archiepiscoporum Magdeburgensium* (mid-twelfth century),[70] and in two official documents dealing with the establishment of the archbishopric of Magdeburg in 968.[71] Although the fact of

соуть': *Pamjatniki drevnerusskogo kanonicheskogo prava*, vol. I, ed. by A. S. Pavlov (St Petersburg: Tipographija M. A. Aleksandrova, 1880), cols 21–62 (cols 26 and 60).

[66] *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. by Cross, p. 203.

[67] *Reginonis abbatis Prumiensis Chronicon cum continuatione Treverensi*, ed. by F. Kurze, MGH SRG, 50 (Hannover: Hahn, 1890), pp. 169–72.

[68] *Annales Hildesheimenses*, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH SRG, 8 (Hannover: Hahn, 1878), pp. 21–22; *Annales Altahenses maiores*, ed. by E. L. B. Oefele, MGH SRG, 4 (Hannover: Hahn, 1891), p. 9; *Annales Quedlinburgenses*, ed. by Georg H. Pertz, MGH SS, 3 (Hannover: Hahn, 1839), p. 60; *Annales Ottenburani*, ed. by Georg H. Pertz, MGH SS, 5 (Hannover: Hahn, 1844), p. 4.

[69] *Die Chronik des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg und ihre Korveier Überarbeitung*, ed. by Robert Holtzmann, MGH SRG ns, 9 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1935), p. 64.

[70] *Gesta archiepiscoporum Magdeburgensium*, ed. by W. Schum, MGH SS, 14 (Hannover: Hahn, 1883), p. 381.

[71] For a discussion, see A. V. Nazarenko, *Nemetskie latinojazychnye istochniki IX–XI vekov: Teksty, perevod, kommentarij* (Moscow: Nauka, 1993), pp. 112, 119–20, 125–26, and 144–47.

Adalbert's mission to Rus' is beyond doubt, Olga's motives in addressing her request to Otto I but not to the Pope are less certain. It is difficult to say whether Olga had in mind purely political purposes — as in a manoeuvre in Russian-Byzantine political relations — or that she was confident in the unity of the Christian world, in the spirit of the tradition of Cyril and Methodius.[72] For the missionary bishop, however, this errand was unsuccessful, since he arrived in Kiev after a two-year delay with Olga's rule already over and Sviatoslav, a staunch heathen, ruling in Kiev.

Olga's grandson Prince Vladimir Sviatoslavich welcomed another messenger from Rome, Bruno of Querfurt, half a century later. In 1008, Bruno was sent by Boleslaw of Poland on a mission to the Pechenegs, and he visited Kiev. The missionary bishop's own letter addressed to the German king Henry II has been preserved; it was written immediately after the described events, in the autumn of 1008.[73] Early Rus' was located on the routes 'from the Varangians to the Greeks' and 'from the Varangians to the Arabs', the result of this being that in this region, mostly due to well-developed trade, the local population came into contact with different belief systems: heathen, Muslim, Christian, and Judaic. This situation is reflected in the *Primary Chronicle*, which describes Vladimir's deliberations on the choice of faith.[74] Although the chronicle states that the people of Rus' rejected the 'German' faith in the tenth century (the Germans had come to Vladimir as emissaries of the Pope), this statement is likely to have developed later,[75] since the material considered above 'provides circumstantial evidence of the fact that there was no essential opposition between the Greek and Latin rites in the ninth and tenth century, and that the Latin missionaries were accepted in early Rus' at that time on a par with the Greek ones'.[76]

The beginnings of monastic life in Novgorod are also thought to be of Latin origin. At least, the founder of the first monastery in this land, the *Antoniev*

[72] H. Paszkiewicz, *The Origin of Russia* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1954), p. 43.

[73] *List Brunona do króla Henryka*, ed. by J. Karwasińska, Monumenta Poloniae Historiae, n.s., 4 (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, 1973), pp. 97–100.

[74] *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. by Cross, pp. 178–205.

[75] This text must have been added to the chronicle in the late eleventh century. Cf. Andrzej Poppe, 'The Political Background to the Baptism of Rus': Byzantine-Russian Relations between 986–89', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 30 (1976), 197–244 (p. 209); and Poppe, 'Two Concepts of the Conversion of Rus' in Kievan Writings', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 12/13 (1988/89), 488–504 (p. 496).

[76] Otets Bronislav Chaplitskij, *Istorija katolicheskoj tserkvi v Rossii*, at <http://residentdevil.clan.su/publ/9-1-0-14> [accessed 27 October 2008].

Rozhdestvenskij monastery, is St Anthony the Roman (*Antonij Rimljanin*, 1067(?)–1147). According to his life,[77] Antonij was born in Rome into the family of noble well-off citizens and was brought up in Christian devotion. After his parents had passed away, Anthony gave all he had to the poor and took monastic vows. Anthony left the city of his birth after the Great Schism, when the persecution of the adherents of the Greek (Orthodox) rite in Rome gained strength. Having settled on a desolate seashore, he spent time in endless prayers on a big rock. On 5 September 1105, a great storm carried the rock with Anthony through warm seas, the Neva River, the Ladoga Lake, and the River Volkhov, so that he arrived in Novgorod on the eve of the Nativity of the Mother of God. Thereafter, he founded a monastery of the Nativity of the Mother of God at Novgorod's *Torgovaja Storona*. Anthony is mentioned repeatedly in the *First Novgorodian Chronicle*. In 1117, 'the *Igumen* Anton laid the foundation of the stone church of the monastery of the Holy Mother of God', which was completed in 1119. In 1125, the chapel in the monastery named after him was painted. In 1127, 'the *Igumen* Anton built a refectory of stone in Novgorod'. In 1131, quite surprisingly, '*Vladyka* Nifont made Anton *Igumen*'. And finally, '*Igumen* Onton died' in 1147.[78]

The Life of Antonij is of late origin. Its longer redaction was compiled by the monk Niphont of the *Antoniev* monastery in 1597 for the ceremony of revealing of St Anthony's relics. As V. O. Kljuchevskij has argued very convincingly, Niphont had old written sources at his disposal while writing the life. Among them was a short hagiographic text (*prolozhnoe zhitie*) preserved in the monastic archives.[79] The author of this short redaction must have been Andrew (*Andrej*), in whose name the longer redaction was written.[80] *Andrej* is a real person; he was a

[77] *Skazanie o zhitii prepodobnogo i bogonosnogo ottsa nashego Antonija Rimljanina i o prikhozhdenii ot grada Rima v Velikij Nov grad*; the earliest manuscripts of this text can be dated to the sixteenth century (Sbornik Solovetskoj biblioteki, no. 834; Sbornik muzejnogo sobranija GIM, no. 1236). For the latest edition, see *Svjatye russkie rimljane: Antonij Rimljanin i Merkurij Smolenskij*, ed. by N. V. Ramazanova (St Petersburg: Dmitrij Bulanin, 2005).

[78] *Chronicle of Novgorod*, trans. by Michell and Forbes, pp. 9–12 and 19; and PSRL, III, 20–22, 28, 204–06, and 214.

[79] V. O. Kljuchevskij, *Drevnerusskie zhitija kak istoricheskij istochnik* (Moscow: Izdanie K. Soldatenkova, 1871), pp. 306–11.

[80] Still, there are scholars who would completely disallow Andrej's connection to this text: Gerhard Podskalsky, *Khristianstvo i bogoslovskaja literatura v Kievskoj Rusi (988–1237 gg.)*, 2nd edn, trans. by A. V. Nazarenko, ed. by K. K. Akentjev (St Petersburg: Vizantinorossika, 1996), p. 237.

disciple of St Anthony. The details of the saint's life, as they are described in his *vita*, have parallels in Anthony's own testament (*dukhovnaja*).[81] Thus, we have reasons to believe that the veneration of Anthony started as early as the twelfth century.[82] Church historians are prone to think that Anthony might have been an Irish monk, since the motif of travelling on a rock was not rare in the lives of Irish hermits. Moreover, in their opinion his nickname (*Rimljanin*, 'the Roman') must have reflected not the place of his birth but instead his Latin devotion, as the people from Western Europe, such as Germans or Swedes, were called 'Romans' by the Novgorodian chronicle.[83] However, some scholars tend to treat Anthony's 'Roman origin' as a legendary motif. V. N. Toporov, for instance, calls him 'an alien local' (*chuzhoj svoj*) and argues that the idea of presenting him as coming from Rome originated in oral tradition and was later included into the saint's written life.[84] Unfortunately, we have no data to prove Anthony's Roman or Irish origin. Still, the presence of this information in his sixteenth-century life, along with the possible veneration of the saint in the early twelfth century, allows us to suppose that in popular consciousness the idea of monasticism had western connections. This situation might have resulted from some popularity in Rus' of St Benedict of Nursia (d. 547), the founder of western Christian monasticism. Traces of this popularity can be found, for instance, in the *Mstislav Gospel* (*Mstislavovo evangelie*), an aprakos-gospel commissioned by Mstislav (Prince of Novgorod in *c.* 1091–95, 1096–1117, known for his active political and cultural contacts with both Byzantium and Western Europe[85]) for a church in Novgorod. Its *menologion* (*mesiatseslov*) lists the feast of St Benedict not only on 14 March according to the Byzantine tradition, but also on 21 March according to the Latin tradition. Olga Loseva explains such 'duplication' of some feasts by the fact that the saints involved were

[81] *Gramoty Velikogo Novgoroda i Pskova*, ed. by S. N. Valk (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1949), no. 103, p. 160; and V. L. Janin, 'Novgorodskie gramoty Antonija Rimljanina i ih data', *Vestnik MGU*, *Istorija*, 1966, no. 3, pp. 69–80.

[82] A. S. Khoroshev, *Politicheskaja istorija russkoj kanonizatsii (XI–XVI vv.)* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1986), pp. 70–72.

[83] Otets Bronislav Chaplitskij, *Kurs lektsij po istorii Tserkvi* (St Petersburg: Vysshaja duhovnaja seminarija 'Marija Tsaritsa Apostolov', 1998), pp. 41–43. For example, see PSRL, III, 289–95, *s.a.* 1240.

[84] V. N. Toporov, *Svjatost' i svjatye v russkoj dukhovnoj kul'ture*, vol. II: *Tri veka khristianstva na Rusi (XII–XIV vv.)* (Moscow: Jazyki russkoj kul'tury, 1998), pp. 22 and 42–45.

[85] See A. V. Nazarenko, 'Neizvestnyj epizod iz zhizni Mstislava Velikovo', *Otechestvennaja istorija*, 1993, no. 2, 65–78.

considered to be not simply Catholic saints, but those common to all Christianity. She argues that the presence of such 'Latinizing' feasts in Russian *menologia* was the result of a short time gap from 'the epoch of the Undivided Church'.[86] Since the feast of St Benedict on 21 March is not mentioned in the *Ostromir Gospel* and the *Arkhangelsk Gospel* from the second half of the eleventh century, its inclusion in *Mstislav Gospel* is in fact impressive, as is his fresco in one of the most famous churches of the Novgorodian land, the Church of Our Saviour on Nereditsa.[87]

As the *First Novgorodian Chronicle* reports under the year 1198:

> The *veliki Knyaz* Jaroslav, son of Volodimir, grandson of Mstislav, founded the stone church of the Transfiguration of the Holy Saviour in Novgorod on the hill, called Nereditsa; and they began to make it on June 8, on St Fedor's Day, and finished in the month of September.[88]

The immediate cause for the foundation of the church was most likely the death of Jaroslav's two underage sons, Iziaslav and Rostislav, in the spring of 1198. This event must have found reflection in the system of the wall paintings of this church (carried out in 1199),[89] which means that the church was founded and decorated as a memorial temple. According to N. V. Pivovarova, the choice of saints for the frescoes was regulated by a tendency 'to mark different aspects of monastic deed and to point to numerous ways to salvation'.[90] The murals in the upper register of the apse present the group of three saints: namely St Acacius of Sinai, St Zosimas of Palestine, and St Benedict of Nursia. The knowledge of the latter in the Orthodox Church is witnessed not only by the *menologia* discussed above but also by a Slavonic translation of his *vita*.[91] Furthermore, his image was included into the mural paintings of the Church of the Mother of God in Akhtala, in Armenia.[92] The inclusion of St Benedict's image into the system of frescoes in

[86] O. V. Loseva, *Russkie mesjatseslovy XI–XIV vekov* (Moscow: Pamjatniki istoricheskoj mysli, 2001), pp. 66–67 and 72.

[87] N. V. Pivovarova, *Freski tserkvi Spasa na Nereditse v Novgorode: Ikonographicheskaja programma rospisi* (St Petersburg: Dmitrij Bulanin, 2002).

[88] *Chronicle of Novgorod*, trans. by Michell and Forbes, p. 41; and PSRL, III, 44, 237–38.

[89] *Chronicle of Novgorod*, trans. by Michell and Forbes, p. 42.

[90] Pivovarova, *Freski tserkvi Spasa na Nereditse*, pp. 56–57.

[91] Cf. A. I. Sobolevskij, *Zhitija svjatykh v drevnem perevode na tserkovno-slavjanskij s latinskogo jazyka* (St Petersburg: Tipografija A. P. Lopuhina, 1904), pp. 38–54.

[92] Cf. A. Lidov, *The Mural Paintings of Akhtala* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1991), fig. 23, diagr. 4, no. 6.

the church of Nereditsa could have been dictated by its monastic character. Pivovarova suggests that the images of saints around the altar could emphasize the universal character of monasticism and demonstrate different facets of monastic devotion.[93] Thus, there are no grounds to believe, as M. F. Murjanov does, that the western saints appeared among the frescoes of Nereditsa as a result of a straightforward influence from the Latin tradition.[94] On the contrary, the repertory of the saints in this church[95] points to a common Christian context of Novgorod in the late twelfth century.

Conclusion

To sum up, Old Norse-Icelandic sources have preserved information about four miracles of St Olaf that happened in early Rus' (*Garðaríki*) and Novgorod (*Hólmgarðr*) in particular. Two of them, preserved in the skaldic poem and the sagas, happened in Olaf's lifetime, while the other two miracle stories are posthumous and mention the church of St Olaf in Novgorod; it is likely that they originated in the circles of the clergy or the parishioners of this church. The church belonged to the Gotlandic Yard, where merchants from Scandinavian countries stayed during their visits to Novgorod. The church of St Olaf in Novgorod is mentioned in the Swedish runic inscription and by the *First Novgorodian Chronicle* — though without the name of its patron saint — and also by a number of late medieval Russian sources. Yet none of these sources connects the foundation of the church with the time of Prince Jaroslav the Wise, as has been suggested in the scholarly literature. So, the precise date of its foundation remains an open matter. The original wooden church was rebuilt in stone after the fire of 1181. The stone one might have been a rotunda, which was typical of the 'trade' churches of Scandinavia and northern Germany in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

St Olaf was not the only Latin saint venerated in Novgorod in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. For instance, the *Prayer to the Holy Trinity* studied in good detail

[93] Pivovarova, *Freski tserkvi Spasa na Nereditse*, p. 57.

[94] To prove this thesis, M. F. Murjanov, 'K kul'turnym vzaimosvjazjam Rusi i Zapada v XII veke', *Ricerche Slavistiche*, 14 (1966), 29–41, includes in their number, along with St Benedict, *Alexij chelovek Bozhij* and St martyr Akakij.

[95] Note also the image of St Clement in the Church of Our Saviour on Nereditsa mentioned by Ildar Garipzanov, 'Novgorod and the Veneration of Saints in Eleventh-Century Rus': A Comparative View', in this volume.

by John Lind provides another piece of evidence showing that by the mid-twelfth century the veneration of some Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon saints was still acceptable within the early Russian church.[96] The material discussed in this chapter demonstrates that 'the teaching of the Latins' was not completely alien to early Rus'. After all, Christian missionaries from Western Europe visited Rus' around the time of conversion. In Novgorod, the beginnings of monastic life were thought to have been of Latin origin, and the founder of western monasticism, St Benedict of Nursia, was venerated there. Traces of this veneration can be found not only in the *menologion* of the *Mstislav Gospel*, but also in the mural paintings of the Church of Our Saviour on Nereditsa. In my opinion, one of the main reasons why 'the teaching of the Latins' was not completely rejected lies in the foreign policy of the Rurikids that led to a number of dynastic marriages between the representatives of the Russian princely house and the ruling houses of Europe, and to the broad contacts of Rus' with Western and Northern Europe (such as trade contacts and mutual cultural influences).[97] But this problem deserves a special investigation.

[96] John H. Lind. 'The Martyrium of Odense and a Twelfth-Century Russian Prayer: The Question of Bohemian Influence on Russian Religious Literature', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 68 (1990), 1–20.

[97] See V. T. Pashuto, *Vneshnjaja politika Drevnej Rusi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1968); N. I. Shchaveleva, 'Pol'ki – zheny russkikh knjazej (XI–seredina XIII v.)', in *Drevnejshie gosudarstva na territorii SSSR, 1987 god* (Moscow: Nauka, 1987), pp. 50–58; Nazarenko, *Drevniaja Rus' na mezhdunarodnykh putiakh*; and T. N. Jackson, 'Rjurikovichi i Skandinavija', in *Drevnejshie gosudarstva Vostochnoj Evropy, 2006 god* (Moscow: Indrik, 2008), pp. 203–27.