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Letopisi, chronographs, paratexts. Some remarks on the Eastern Slavic historical literature in the Middle Ages, on the Margins of the book by Timofei V. Guimon: *Historical Writing of Early Rus' (c. 1000–c. 1400) in a Comparative Perspective*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2021 [= East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, 71], pp. 778*

The monograph by Timofei V. Guimon undeniably constitutes an essential reading for all scholars involved in studying the medieval literature from the region of *Slavia Orthodoxa* and the history of Eastern Slavs in the period from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. Distinguishing itself through a thorough and insightful analysis, a broad perspective from which its main topic is viewed, a novel approach to issues under investigation, and a remarkable precision in recapitulating the findings of other scholars (along with lengthy references to the literature of subject), the monograph under review is certainly on a par with the classic works of such distinguished specialists as Gerhard Podskalsky (1937–2013)¹ or Simon Franklin (1953–)². Just like the scholars mentioned above, the author, aware of the fact that it is impossible for a one-volume work to cover the material that is typologically so diverse and so broad as East Slavic medieval literature, focused his attention only on one genre – the historical writing. The result is a compendium that is

useful not only to historians specializing in the Middle Ages, but also to scholars representing other disciplines, including paleoslavists.

It should be stressed that the author unconventionally defined the timespan to be covered in his analysis. He did not follow the divisions of the history of the Old Rus' literature which were applied in previous works, and which involved, for example, the specification of the pre-Mongol era (until 1237) or the periods in which the point of gravity of political life in Rus' (if only ideologically) shifted from Kiev to Vladimir on the Klyazma River and to Moscow. Instead, he decided to include under the category of *early Rus'* those monuments whose manuscript copies, while still surviving, were prepared before 1400. The author refers to the epoch as a “parchment period”, realising, however, the conventional nature of the concept. As he explains in chapter I, until the beginning of the fifteenth century, parchment was neither the only, nor the numerically prevailing material that texts were written on (some texts were also written i.a. on birch bark). The concept should thus be taken to apply to the period before the widespread use of paper, or, to be more precise, of paper codices (p. 16–17). Although it is not explicitly stated in the monograph, in terms of political history, the period was parallel to that preceding Moscow's rise to dominance in the region inhabited by the Eastern Slavs.

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¹ G. PODSKALSKY, *Christentum und theologische Literatur in der Kiever Rus' (988–1237)*, München 1982.

² S. FRANKLIN, *Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus, c. 950–1300*, Cambridge 2002.

The choice of the codices as the criterion by which to define the period to be placed under analysis has significantly reduced the studied material, a fact of which Timofei V. Guimon was fully aware. The initial examination of primary sources for the period from the eleventh to the beginning of the fifteenth centuries allowed him to identify only fifteen parchment monuments of old Rus' origin (14 in Church Slavic and 1 in Byzantine Greek). The author discusses them in detail in appendix 2 (p. 405–408), providing their catalogue/accession numbers and offering a general overview of the basic literature devoted to them. He stresses in the preface that there are only three complete codices in this group, of which two contain original historical texts of Rus' origin: ГИМ, Син. 786 (which is now considered to be the oldest surviving East Slavic *letopis*³, the manuscript-convolute from Novgorod the Great, written around 1234, 1330 and in the years 1330–1352) and РНБ, Ф.п.IV.2 (known as the *Laurentian Codex*, compiled in 1377, probably in Nizhny Novgorod, and based on earlier sources of, among others, Kievan origin)⁴. The fact that both manuscripts contain works closely related to the two oldest and most dynamic centres of the early Rus' historical writing – ГИМ, Син. 786 constitutes the only known copy of the *Novgorod First Letopis* of older redaction and РНБ, Ф.п.IV.2 contains the text of the *Povest vremennykh let* (hereafter referred to as *PVL*) in the section that runs to AM 6618/AD 1100 – enabled him to weave into the two following chapters an account of the medieval historiography of Kiev and Novgorod the Great. Later monuments, created in other parts of Rus' and/or preserved in manuscripts dated to the

period after 1400, such as for example the *Galician-Volhynian Chronicle*⁵, are mentioned only as part of the context.

In the first chapter, the author undertakes a successful attempt to present – against a wide background of the Eastern Slavs' medieval literature – the Old Rus' historical writing, outlining the specificity of its language and characterizing the diversity of its genres (this issue I discuss in greater detail in a later part of my article). This introductory chapter is followed by the part devoted to the Kievan historiography in the first centuries of its existence. It opens with a discussion of *PVL*, probably the oldest surviving East Slavic historical work, created in Kiev around 1110. In the course of recapitulating, and sometimes challenging, views expressed in previous studies of the work, the author presents the reader with the corpus of its existing copies (five manuscripts created over the period from 1377 to mid-sixteenth century), their interrelations, and the text's different variants and redactions. He then goes on to describe the sources that its authors could draw on at the beginning of the twelfth century, and invokes different hypotheses regarding earlier texts/records/compilations that can be assumed to have appeared in Kiev as early as the eleventh century: the *Initial Compilation* of the 1090s, the *Compilation of Monk Nikon* from 1073, the *Oldest Compilation* from 1039, the *Oldest Tale* originating in the reign of Vladimir the Great (978–1015), records maintained in the Church of the Tithes in the first half of the eleventh century.

It should be stressed that Timofei V. Guimon not only develops the views of his scholarly predecessors, but also advances an original thesis regarding the oldest historical text created in Kiev, and perhaps the earliest work of this kind created in the lands of the Eastern Slavs. In his opinion, this relic served as the direct source for the *Memorial and Encomium for Prince Vladimir*, a text written by Jacob the

³ Unlike the author I think it is more preferable for English language texts to use the term *letopis*, pl. *letopisi* (Church Slavic: *лѣтопись*, pl. *лѣтописи*) rather than 'annals' or 'chronicle', which are characteristic of the Western medieval historiography.

⁴ The third Old Rus' historical codex which was created before 1400 and which survives in its entirety is, according to the author, the oldest copy of the Old Church Slavic translation of the Byzantine chronicle by George the Monk known as *Намартолос* – РГБ, 173.I.100 (of the Tver provenance) from the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century (p. 46, 407).

⁵ On this work, which in view of its generic specificity can be (unlike the majority of the monuments of the Old Rus' historical literature) referred to as a chronicle, cf.: A. Јусуповић, *The Chronicle of Halych-Volhynia and Historical Collections in Medieval Rus'*, Leiden–Boston 2022 [= ECEEMA, 81].

Monk using earlier texts unknown to us, perhaps as early as the eleventh century. Because of the absence of the early manuscript tradition, this monument was dealt by experts with a dose of reserve (even though there is a wealth of literature on it; in Poland, it was studied e.g. by Andrzej Poppe)⁶. The oldest copy to which scholars had access at the beginning of the nineteenth century was dated to 1414. It burned in the fire of Moscow in 1812. The other copies range in date from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. However, this does not change the fact that the *Memorial* is an important source to which we owe our knowledge i.a. of the origin of the cult of the Saint Rurikid rulers, Olga and Vladimir.

The author advances a thesis that this earlier source on which Jacob the Monk based his account, and which was at the same time the first historical text created in Rus', was the *royal inscription* enumerating Prince Vladimir I's accomplishments. In all probability, it was created shortly after the consecration of the Church of Tithes in Kiev (around 995/996). In the years 996–1043, clergymen associated with the church added brief annalistic notes to it. Eventually, monks from the Kiev-Pechersk Monastery linked it with the material from the *Oldest Tale* into a single compilation. In the latter half of the eleventh century, it became one of the foundations of the Kievan *letopis* (p. 128–144).

This hypothesis deserves attention for several reasons. In line with the comparative perspective applied in the monograph (and mentioned in its title), the author points out that inscriptions commemorating rulers' deeds (i.a. Christianisation of a country) were created in Scandinavia in the tenth and eleventh centuries – the contacts that the region had with Rus', and the influence it exercised upon the culture of the Eastern Slavs are not, in view of the recent archaeological studies, to be doubted⁷.

In addition, as is also stressed by the author, analogical epigraphic material is known from the First Bulgarian State, which was linguistically and culturally related to Rus' (through the complex influence of the Byzantine civilization). This holds true both for the pagan period of its history as well as for the years which followed the acceptance of baptism by Prince Boris in 865/866⁸. Worth noting is also the fact that almost all the authors of the earliest texts produced in Kievan Rus' (historical, homiletical, hagiographical) focused their attention on two rulers from the reigning dynasty: Princes Olga and her grandson Vladimir. In East Slavic literature from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, these two rulers are often cast as figures reproducing the scheme, derived from the Byzantine culture, of a “new Helen” and a “new Constantine” – perfect monarchs spreading the Christian religion among their subjects⁹. This motif appears to have been a ‘pretty’ theme to be included in a commemorative inscription, from which it could penetrate into other forms of writing.

The third chapter deals with the historical writing in Novgorod the Great. Since the book, written in English, is addressed to the Western reader, Timofei V. Guimon decided to precede a discussion of Novgorod's historiography with a brief account of the specificity of the Novgorod culture and literature, and of the unique character of its constitution (which was in force from the 1130s) – although the view that it bore republican traits is treated in the book with reserve (p. 172). In the pages following this introduction, the author presents medieval historical texts of Novgorod provenance, drawing on the findings of other scholars, as well as using his own research into the topic on which he has already published a number of articles in Russian¹⁰. He shows the interdependence between

⁸ Cf. i.a. В. БЕШЕВЛИЕВ, *Първобългарски надписи*, София 1979, p. 139–140.

⁹ Z.A. BRZOZOWSKA, *The Ideal Christian Rulers – Sts. Constantine and Helena in the Spiritual and Political Culture of Kievan Russia*, [in:] *Sveti car Konstantin i hrišćanstvo*, vol. I, ed. D. BOJHOVIĆ, Niš 2013, p. 497–508 (with references to the earlier literature).

¹⁰ Cf.: Т.В. ГИМОН, *К генеалогии новгородских летописей XIII–XV вв.*, [in:] *Новгород и Новгородская земля. История и археология*, Великий Новгород

⁶ Cf. i.a. A. POPPE, *How the Conversion of Rus' Was Understood in the Eleventh Century*, HUS 11, 1987, p. 299 (= A. POPPE, *Christian Russia in the Making*, London–New York 2007, III).

⁷ W. DUCZKO, *Viking Rus. Studies on the Presence of Scandinavians in Eastern Europe*, Leiden–Boston 2004 [= NW, 12].

the *letopisi* of northern Rus': the *Novgorod First Letopis* of older redaction, preserved only in one manuscript (ГИМ, Син. 786) from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; the younger variant of this text from mid-fifteenth century; *letopisi* from the Novgorodian-Sophian group and the *Tver Compilation*. The author has demonstrated that the *letopis* kept at the Novgorod Archiepiscopal Cathedral from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries served as the common source for all of the texts mentioned above (p. 181–193).

Much space in the chapter is devoted to discussing the origin of the *Novgorod Archiepiscopal Letopis*. Its creation, it is believed, was preceded by the tradition of making brief historical notes, and of preparing the list of the lay and ecclesiastical dignitaries. The notes appeared in Novgorod in the mid-eleventh century and the list began to be made in the 1090s. Combining these sources with some local compilation from the 1090s, which was based to a significant extent on the Kievan *Initial Compilation*, gave rise, around 1115, to the *Archiepiscopal Letopis*. The *letopis* was then continued by scribes who, in all probability, served as secretaries to successive heads of the Novgorodian eparchy (p. 213). The author has even made an attempt to establish the identity of those scribes, and in several cases his efforts have proved successful: an example of such an attempt is provided by Kirik the Novgorodian, the Old Rus' mathematician, who worked on the text in the years 1132–1156 (p. 215). The author has also examined the way in which the *letopis* was created, the redactions and changes it went through,

and the topics which were raised in its entries. A separate subchapter is devoted to the manuscript ГИМ, Син. 786 (p. 243–253). The author has proved it to be a copy of the *Archiepiscopal Letopis*, which was prepared around 1234 for the St. George monastery in Novgorod the Great. Around 1300, the copy was complemented with information taken from the same source. Monks from the St. George monastery added to it some own entries regarding the events from 1330–1352 (the entries bear marks of paratexts).

Of great interest are also the remarks closing the third chapter. They pertain to other monuments of Novgorod's historiography: short excerpts from the *Archiepiscopal Letopis* that appear in the typikon of the Annunciation Monastery from the end of the twelfth century; graffiti and inscriptions discovered on the walls of different churches, paratexts from manuscripts created in the region under discussion, and relics of the oral tradition. I shall return to this issue in a further part of this article.

In the lengthy fourth chapter, Timofei V. Guimon, following the latest tendencies in the Western studies of medieval literature, attempts to outline the social context in which the Old Rus' *letopisi* were created. As he informs the readers in the first words of his monograph, his aim is to give answers to the following questions: *What were the Rus' annals (letopisi) written for? How did the annalists understand the purpose of their work? In what situations were the annals supposed to be read (used, consulted)? And in which cases were the annals read (used, consulted) in reality? Who were the intended (and real) readers (users) of the annals?* (p. 277). After discussing the hypotheses that have hitherto been advanced in relation to these questions (p. 280–289), the author goes on to conduct an in-depth analysis of the source material. It is worth noting that the geographical range of his research is extended here to include – in addition to works produced in Kiev (*PVL* and the *Kievan Letopis* compiled around 1198) and in the areas that came under the cultural influence of Novgorod the Great (the corpus of texts derived from the *Archiepiscopal Letopis*, including the manuscript ГИМ, Син. 786) – the historiographical tradition of the Northeastern Rus',

2003, p. 231–239; ИДЕМ, *Как велась новгородская погодная летопись в XII в.?*, [in:] *Древнейшие государства Восточной Европы. 2003 г. Мнимые реальности в античных и средневековых текстах*, Москва 2005, p. 316–352; ИДЕМ, *Редактирование летописей в XIII–XV вв. Разночтения между списками Новгородской 1 летописи*, ТОДЛ 57, 2006, p. 112–125; ИДЕМ, *Новгородское летописание XI–середины XIV в. как социокультурное явление*, Москва 2014; ИДЕМ, *Летописание и развитие письменной культуры (Новгород, XI–первая половина XII в.)*, *Slov* 4.1, 2015, p. 94–110; ИДЕМ, *Рубеж XII–XIII вв. в новгородском летописании*, *Slov* 6.2, 2017, p. 163–187.

which took shape under the patronage of i.a. the bishops of Rostov and the Great Princes of Vladimir, and which is represented mainly by the *Laurentian Codex* from 1377.

Timofei V. Guimon has posed a number of research questions, to which he has tried to provide as precise answers as possible. Left unanswered are the questions with regard to which the source material provides no basis for drawing any specific conclusions. Below, I cite those questions and summarize the answers given to them by the author:

- *Who were the patrons of the annals and the annalists themselves?* – In Novgorod the Great, in the period from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, the *letopisi* was kept under the patronage of local bishops by people who served as their secretaries. Novgorod monasteries ordered its copies (ГИМ, Син. 786 was, for example, created for the St. George monastery) or made excerpts, which were then included as paratexts in manuscripts devoted to non-historical topics (the typicon from the Annunciation Monastery). In the historiography of Northeastern Rus', an important role was played by the bishops of Rostov who were dependent on the Princes of Vladimir. The *Laurentian Codex* was made for the monastery in Nizhny Novgorod. In Kiev, annalistic records were made in the Pechersk Monastery, but the most important compilations, *PVL* and the *Kievan Letopis* were brought into being in the Vydubychi Monastery (p. 290–303).
- *What kinds of events were written down into the annals?* – More than half of the text of all the *letopisi* is made up of the accounts of military and political events of which the representatives of the Rurikid family are the main heroes. Much less frequent are the entries pertaining to events from the life of the ruling family (births, weddings, deaths), appointments to church posts, the construction of churches and other buildings, natural disasters, and natural phenomena (p. 303–325). It should be noted that the Novgorodian *letopisi* distinguish themselves through their content (which may have something to do with the socio-political specificity of Novgorod the Great).
- *How were the annals maintained and revised?* – From the moment the practice of their creation took shape in Rus' in the 1110s, the *letopisi* were maintained on an ongoing basis in the important writing centres (for example, at the Cathedral of St. Sophia – Divine Wisdom in Novgorod the Great, or at the Pechersk Monastery in Kiev). Sometimes their text was thoroughly reworked. Such reworking gave rise, for example, to *PVL*, the *Kievan Letopis*, or the compilation in the Northeast of Rus' from the beginning of the thirteenth century. Various institutions (e.g. monasteries) ordered copies of different *letopisi* (e.g. ГИМ, Син. 786; the *Laurentian Codex*). Introducing changes to the existing manuscripts was also possible (p. 325–334).
- *Did the annals exist in several copies, did they circulate widely?* – The copies of particular *letopisi* were small in number, and the circle of their readers was limited. Monasteries that could not afford to order a copy of the full historical text resorted to other, minor forms of historical writing; we know of graffiti records made on the walls of churches and of paratexts included in manuscripts from monastic libraries (p. 334–337).
- *What were the interrelations between the annals and purely juridical texts?* – Texts of a legal nature were also included in the *letopisi* (e.g. Byzantine-Rus' agreements from the tenth century, abridged versions of the *Rus' Truth*, princely documents), as were messages that had been exchanged between princes (either in writing or in oral form). This last tendency grew stronger in the 1130s and the 1140s, that is, in the period that was marked by many changes to the princely throne in Kiev and by the growth of Novgorod's political independence (p. 338–359).
- *How did the annalists treat the sphere of politics and what was the role of 'non-political' themes in the annals?* – Authors of the *Kievan letopis* sought to present an objective assessment of the situations to which they

referred, regardless of their personal likes or dislikes. Novgorod the Great's historical records were made in keeping with loyalty to local bishops (the protectors of scriptorium) and in the spirit of fidelity to the community of 'free' Novgorodians. The annalists in the Northeast Rus' seem to have been most dependent on the secular authorities. The tendency to glorify rulers is particularly pronounced in the *letopisi* from this region. The accounts of non-political events, which make up 37% of all the surviving compilations, must have been considered by most of their authors, except for those from the Novgorod circle, to be of secondary importance (p. 359–389).

The author of this book should be commended not only for providing a detailed study of the Eastern Slavs' historical writing to the fifteenth century, in which he advances an original hypothesis regarding its obscure origin, but also for adopting a *comparative perspective* to the topic, which he declares in the title, and to which he consistently adheres throughout his narrative. However, it should be noted that the material with which he compares the Old Rus' historical writing is very diverse. Sometimes, it comes from the areas that were neither culturally nor geographically distant from the lands of the Eastern Slavs, and its creation took place at about the same time as the texts it is compared to. Analysing this kind of material allows the author to make some very interesting observations. A good example of this is provided by the thesis (chapter II) regarding the existence of the *royal inscription* commemorating Prince Vladimir I. It is based on the analogy drawn with epigraphic monuments from Scandinavia and the First Bulgarian State (both of which had contacts with Rus' in the tenth century). Equally promising could be the idea of conducting comparative research on the literature of the neighbouring monarchies (the Piasts and the Premyslids). The Czech medieval literature contains, for example, a motif, nearly identical to that known from Kiev, of two saint rulers Christianizing their subjects: Princes Ludmila and her grandson Vaclav. It has even been confirmed

that some texts devoted to these rulers became assimilated in Rus'¹¹.

Analogies drawn between artefacts originating in the areas that are as distant from each other as China and Mesopotamia (p. 146) may prove interesting to literary studies specialists. This kind of analysis may show that under certain circumstances, different communities tend to create texts that are similar to each other, both in form and in content. However, such an approach is less useful in terms of studying historical processes. Similarly questionable is the use, most frequent, of the material from Anglo-Saxon England. First, it consists of works created between 597–1066, and as such does not coincide chronologically with the earliest period of the existence of the Old Rus' literature – a fact of which Timofei V. Guimon is clearly aware (p. 73). Second, the contacts between the British Isles and Eastern Europe were so limited at that time that it is impossible to speak in this regard of any kind of cultural transmission (p. 71–72). Consequently, it seems more advisable to focus on the search for a common (Roman-Byzantine) source of inspiration under which the compared texts were created. The author has so far been able to establish that the only foreign work that was known both in the Anglo-Saxon and the Old Rus' world was the *History of the Jewish War* by Joseph Flavius (p. 76). In this context, it would be worthwhile to take a closer look at the works that may have been read by Bede the Venerable (672/3–735), an erudite who is known to have been familiar with works by, among others, Eusebius of Caesarea (circa

¹¹ *The Martyrdom of St. Ludmila*, [in:] *An Anthology of Czech Literature. 1st Period: from the Beginnings until 1410*, ed. W. SCHAMSCHULA, Frankfurt am Main–Bern–New York–Paris 1991, p. 14–15; M. HOMZA, *The Role of St. Ludmila, Doubravka, St. Olga and Adelaide in the Conversions of their Countries (The Problem of Mulieres Suadentes, Persuading Women)*, [in:] *Early Christianity in Central and East Europe*, ed. P. URBAŃCZYK, Warszawa 1997, p. 187–202; G. PAC, *Kobiety w dynastii Piastów. Rola społeczna piastowskich żon i córek do połowy XII w.*, Toruń 2013, p. 50–58, 200; M. HOMZA, *Mulieres suadentes – Persuasive Women. Female Royal Saints in Medieval East Central and Eastern Europe*, Leiden–Boston 2017 [= ECEEMA, 42], p. 20–22, 148–155.

264–340), a ‘forefather’ of the Byzantine model of the Christian ruler embodied by Constantine the Great and his mother Helena (which was well-known to Old Rus’ authors, including Metropolitan Hilarion and Jacob the Monk). Pope Gregory the Great (c. 540–604) was one of those who introduced this model to Anglo-Saxon rulers. He referred to it in his letters addressed to them (XI, 35–37). It was also known to Gregory of Tours (538–594) with whose works Bede the Venerable was acquainted¹². Similarities found, for example, in the accounts of Bede and Metropolitan Hilarion (p. 157–170) can be linked to the fact that they both read the same works and relied on the same literary inspirations, which flowed, in both cases, but independently of each other, from Constantinople.

The value of the book undoubtedly lies in its attempt to create a comprehensive typology of the Old Rus’ historical texts. The author signals the need to create it in the preface (p. 6) and offers his own proposal of it in the first chapter (p. 30–70), while at the same time suggesting the standardization of the English language terminology relating to the Eastern Slavs’ medieval historiography. In the following paragraphs he discusses the specificity of the two main genres of Rus’ historical literature: the *letopisi*, that is, texts devoted to the history of the motherland, and chronographs, that is, compilations based on the Church Slavic translations of Byzantine works recounting the general history. The claim that both genres arose as a continuation of the Byzantine historiography is attested to by their names: the first name (*лѣтописць*) is a translation while the second is a Slavic calque of the Greek term *χρονογράφος* (p. 30–32, 50). Timofei V. Guimon, taking into account the specificity of working on the *letopisi* in their mature form, a practice which showed some similarities

to the Western style of annals-writing, postulates for the texts of this kind to be referred to by the English term “annals”. However, it seems to me that to adopt such a solution is to run the risk of making scholars start viewing the *letopisi* as representing the same genre as the Western (also Latin) annals (this attitude, for example, can be discerned among Polish medievalists). In reality, they form a distinct genre of medieval historical writing which took shape in a culturally different environment, under the influence not of Latin but of Byzantine-Greek writing. The term that accurately reflects their specificity – a form halfway between the annals and the chronicles – is ‘annalistic chronicles’, which the author suggests, but does not use in his work (p. 31).

The paragraphs that come between those discussing the *letopisi* and the chronographs are devoted to Byzantine historians’ works that were known in Rus’ in their Church Slavic translations (p. 44–50). Unfortunately, the list of those works is incomplete. Absent from it are *Epitome historiarum* by John Zonaras and Constantine Manasses’s *Chronicle*. The reason why the works have not been included in the list seems to stem from the fact that no East Slavic manuscripts of them are confirmed to have existed before 1400.

In the following subchapters, the author discusses other monuments of the Old Rus’ literature. These monuments, which are usually shorter, are generically different from both the *letopisi* and chronographs, but because of the issues to which they are devoted, they can (and even should) be regarded as falling into the category of historical writings. Among the works included in this group are: the *Sermon on Law and Grace* by Kiev Metropolitan Hilarion from the mid-eleventh century; works created in the circle of the Pechersk Monastery in Kiev (woven into the text of PVL or inserted into the *Kiev-Pechersk Paterikon*); the *Tale of the Blinding of Vasilko of Terebovl* (which is also preserved as part of PVL); the *Galician-Volhynian Chronicle* from the thirteenth century whose formal originality, which allows us to include it in the group of chronicles, may result from the influence of the Western literature in southeastern Rus’ (p. 55–57);

¹² G. PODSKALSKY, *Christentum...*, p. 36; R.A. MARKUS, *Gregory the Great and his World*, Cambridge 1997, p. 82–85, 181; C.B. KENDALL, *Modeling Conversion: Bede’s “Anti-Constantinian” Narrative of the Conversion of King Edwin*, [in:] *Conversion to Christianity from Late Antiquity to the Modern Age: Considering the Process in Europe, Asia, and the Americas*, ed. C.B. KENDALL, O. NICHOLSON, W.D. PHILLIPS JR., M. RAGNOW, Minneapolis 2009, p. 137–159.

the *Life of Aleksandr Nevskii* from the thirteenth century; the *Tale of Dovmont* from mid-fourteenth century; the *Word on the Life and the Heath of Great Prince Dmitry Ivanovich*, written around 1400; the *Memorial and Encomium for Prince Vladimir* by Jacob the Monk (the eleventh century?); works by Prince Vladimir Monomakh from the end of the eleventh century (included in the *Laurentian Codex*), and even the lists of the lay and church dignitaries, records made on Paschal tables, graffiti preserved on the walls of churches in Kiev and Novgorod the Great and paratexts.

Let us take a closer look at the last category. Timofei V. Guimon, as one of the few scholars dealing with the Eastern Slavs' medieval literature, pays attention to the important role that texts of this kind (colophons and glosses found in the margins of manuscripts) play in the studies of the Old Rus' historiography. Recapitulating the findings of the research (conducted by Lubov Stoliarova as early as the 1990s) into the manuscript material from before 1400¹³, he states that it contains as many as 514 paratexts made by scribes, illuminators and people who bound codices. 29 of them can be categorized as historical records, of which 14 have the compositional structure that is typical of the *letopis* and starts with a phrase: *In the year...* (*В льто...*). The oldest of them are dated to the thirteenth century (p. 64–65).

Timofei V. Guimon returns to the issue of paratexts a number of times. He does so while discussing Novgorod the Great's historical writing. It is worth noting that scribes could add glosses, which appeared in the margins of the main text, either while working on an original *letopis* text or while preparing its different redactions. According to the author, each of Old Rus' writing centres kept one main manuscript

of *letopis* (that of Novgorod the Great was kept at the archbishop's seat, in the scriptorium of the St. Sophia Cathedral). Other institutions (especially monasteries), eager to have the *letopis* of their own, ordered its handwritten copies. At a later period, such copies were sometimes complemented with new entries, which, however, were introduced on an irregular basis. This pertains especially to those communities that did not have the permanently functioning scriptoria. A good example of this phenomenon is provided by the codex ГИМ, Син. 786 – a copy of the *Archiepiscopal Letopis*, made for the St. George Monastery in Novgorod. In the years 1330–1352, monks from the monastery added new entries to it. It is worth noting that we are in a position to distinguish between the original *letopis* text and its later additions only when we have at our disposal the original manuscript to which these additions were added (such as ГИМ, Син. 786). It can be presumed that while another copy was being prepared, different paratexts were merged into the main text.

The phenomenon of paratexts, as found in the tradition of Novgorod's historiography, has one more dimension to it. As the author notes, poorer monasteries that could not afford to order a separate *letopis* copy confined themselves to making excerpts from it, which usually pertained to their history. These excerpts were included as paratexts on a blank page of one of the manuscripts from the monastery's library. An example of such a practice, which has been analysed by the author, is provided by the copy of Alexios Studites' *typikon* from the Novgorodian Annunciation Monastery, ГИМ, Син. 330 from the end of the twelfth century – brief notes of a *letopis* nature were found on one of its pages, fol. 281' (p. 253–259). This case shows that thorough research of paratexts (especially those created after 1400) may result in significant discoveries adding to the number of historical records known from Rus'. In line with the author's thesis, it would be advisable to examine in this way manuscripts from monastic collections as well as codices prepared for them, e.g. *typicons* and *menaions*.

¹³ Л.В. Столярова, *Записи исторического содержания XI–XIV вв. на древнерусских пергаменных кодексах*, [in:] *Древнейшие государства Восточной Европы. Материалы и исследования. 1995 год*, Москва 1997, p. 3–79; ЕАДЕМ, *Древнерусские надписи XI–XIV вв. на пергаменных кодексах*, Москва 1998; ЕАДЕМ, *Свод записей писцов, художников и переплетчиков древнерусских пергаменных кодексов XI–XIV вв.*, Москва 2000.

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