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The Baptism of the Bones of the Princes Oleg and Yaropolk : (on the Interpretation of the Chronicle Entry of 1044)

Średniowiecze Polskie i Powszechne 1 (5), 43-65

2009

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

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The Baptism of the Bones of the Princes Oleg and Yaropolk (On the Interpretation of the Chronicle Entry of 1044)

The Russians and Scandinavians understood baptism as an event appealing not only to the future but partially to the past as well, to the pre-Christian history of their peoples. After the Conversion, the new-born continued to be given names that connected them with all the preceding history of the family. In some cases people tried to connect their relatives, who died as pagans, with the Christian tradition, making the new religion an age-old attribute of their own ancestors.

In 1044 Yaroslav the Wise exhumed the remains of two princes, Oleg (had died in 977) and Yaropolk (had died in 980). According to the chronicle, the remains were carried to the Desyatinnaya church and reburied there¹. By that time several members of the princely family who had died Christians had been buried in that church: the princess Olga (baptized as *Elena*), prince Vladimir (baptized as *Vasilij*), and his Greek wife Anna.

Yaropolk and Oleg were Yaroslav's uncles. Thus, Yaroslav reburied the remains of his close relatives in the male line who had died before the official conversion of Rus'. After exhumation, as we know from the chronicle, the bones of the princes "were baptized". Although, the verb "baptize" is not quite trans-

¹ *Выгребоша 2 князя, Ярополка и Ольга, сына Святослава, и крестиша кости его, и положиша я въ церкви святыя Богородица.* [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles] Полное собрание русских летописей. СПб./Пг./Л.; М., 1841—2004. Т. 1—43. Sankt Petersburg—Moscow—Leningrad, T. 1, p. 155; T. 2, p. 143; T. 3, p. 16. (further cit. CCRC).

parent in this context, we can assume that Oleg and Yaropolk died unchristened and were buried according to the pagan rite².

One of the difficulties in the analysis of the chronicle data is the absence of some evident pattern that Yaroslav could have followed when he reburied and christened the remains. The isolation of Yaroslav's action in the context of the epoch is generally explained by the fact that church canons prohibited administering baptism to the dead. One such canon, the twenty-sixth of the Synod of Carthage³, was well known in the Slavic world⁴, and in any case it is generally accepted that such ritual practice completely disappeared long before the Baptism of Rus': no cases are on record from either Eastern or Western Christianity since the beginning of the VI century.

The clearly non-canonical character of Yaroslav's action of baptizing bones raises a number of questions that have yet to be addressed by scholars⁵. It seems necessary to me to determine the limits of the rite itself. What exactly did Yaroslav do with the remains of his relatives? Baptism, generally speaking, would imply on the Russian ground giving Christian, baptismal names to the princely remains. However, first of all, it is necessary to elucidate what was the reason for Yaroslav's non-canonical actions and what could serve as the direct precedent for them. Below I will draw some parallels that will allow us to consider Yaroslav's actions in a new context that has not until now been discussed.

Yaroslav's action undoubtedly shows the family character of the princely power in Rus'. Indeed, the baptism of the remains of Yaropolk and Oleg and their burial in the Desyatinnaya church are directly connected with the cult of the family, i.e., of the clan. This cult was extremely important for the princely families of the studied period (cf. the reburial of the princess Olga by the prince

² Otherwise: J. Korpela: "I krestiša kosti eju": *Zur Vorgeschichte des Märtyrerkults von Boris und Gleb*. "Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas" 1998. Bd. 46, H. 2, p. 167; A.W. Nazarenko: *Древняя Русь на международных путях: Междисциплинарные очерки культурных, торговых и политических связей IX—XII веков*. Москва 2001, pp. 339—390, especially 379—380, 389—390.

³ See: E. Dinkler: *Totentaufer*. In: *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. B. 6. Tübingen 1962, p. 958; B.M. Foschini: *Baptism for the Dead*. In: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 2. New York 1967, pp. 68—69; R. Schnackenburg: *Totentaufer*. In: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*. B. 10. Freiburg 1965, p. 279; J.N. Shchаров: *О составе древнеславянской кормчей Ефремовской редакции*. In: *Источники и историография славянского средневековья*. Москва 1967, pp. 208—212; Idem: *Устав князя Ярослава и вопрос об отношении к византийскому наследию на Руси в середине XI в.* In: "Византийский временник" 1971, T. 31, pp. 72—73.

⁴ See: J.N. Shchаров: *О составе...*, pp. 208—212; Idem: *Устав князя...*, p. 73.

⁵ Compare the discussion of the details of this problem: J.N. Shchаров: *Устав князя...*, pp. 72—73; J. Korpela: "I krestiša kosti eju"..., pp. 161—163; P. Sokolov: *Русский архиерей из Византии и право его назначения до начала XV в.* Киев 1913, pp. 44—45; A. Poppe: *Państwo i kościół na Rusi w XI wieku*. Warszawa 1968, pp. 101—102.

Vladimir in the same Desyatinnaya church). The baptism of the bones strengthened Yaroslav's authority since as a result he had not only Christian parents and a Christian great-grandmother but also two "Christian" members of the princely family.

The theme of family or clan prestige is key to another event, one which presents the closest parallel for Yaroslav's actions. About 80 years before Yaroslav, a similar procedure was performed by Harald the Bluetooth (died around 985—987) "that Harald who ruled all Denmark and Norway and made the Danes Christians" as was said of him in the famous runic inscription⁶. Soon after his conversion (about 960) the king Harald built a church in Jellinge, the place where his father, founder of the dynasty Gorm the Old, had been buried with his wife. Harald's parents, apparently, died pagan⁷, or at least they were buried according to the pagan rite: to the North of the church there is a burial mound where originally the king Gorm lay.

Having erected the church, Harald the Bluetooth, judging from the results of archeological excavations, carried the remains of his parents to bury them under the floor of the church in a specially made chamber⁸. It is significant that Harald,

⁶ See: *Danmarks runeindskrifter*. № 42. Eds. L. Jacobsen, E. Moltke. B. 1: *Text*. København 1942, pp. 66—81.

⁷ Compare the data of the Middle Ages Danish chronicles (*Gammeldanske Kroniker*. Udg. M. Lorenzen. København 1887—1913, pp. 38, 39, 94, 158). The fact that Gorm and Thyra were buried according to the pagan rite was also mentioned by Svein Aggesen: "Uc autem precluis illa regina cum rege marito omnes etatis sue annos complisset, Haraldus Blaatand (The Bluetooth) filius superstes, qui et regni extitit heres, iuxta ritum gentilium in tumulus gemellis et paribus, quasi illustribus maosoleis, secus Regis curiam in Jelling utrumque parentem fecit humari" (*Scriptores minores historiae Danicae medii aevi*, c. VII. B. 1. Ed. M.C.I. Gertz. Hafniae 1917, pp. 116—117). Paganism of Gorm was particularly underlined in the works of Adam of Bremen (*Magistri Adami Bremensis Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, l. 1, c. 55, 58. Hrsg. B. von Schmeidler. Hannover—Leipzig 1917, pp. 56—57).

⁸ See: E. Dyggve: *La fouille par le musée national danois du tertre royal sud à Jellinge en 1941*. "Acta Archaeologica" 1942, Vol. 13, p. 89 ff.; Idem: *Jellingkongernes Mindesmærker*. In: *Vejle Amts Historiske Samfunds Festskrift: Jelling. Det gamle Kongesæde*. København 1955, p. 17 ff.; K.J. Krogh: *The royal Viking-Age monuments at Jelling in the light of recent archaeological excavations. A preliminary report*. "Acta Archaeologica" 1982, Vol. 53, pp. 199, 200—201, 205; I. Gabriel: *Ein Herrschergürtel mit Sphaera in Jelling*. In: *Mare Balticum. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Ostseeraums in Mittelalter und Neuzeit. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Erich Hoffmann*. Hrsg. W. Paravicini, F. Lubowitz, H. Unverhau. Kiel 1992, pp. 39—40. E. Dyggve also suggested that Harald had destroyed some heathen temple, found in Jellinge. Not all the archeologists agreed with this hypothesis, for details of their discussion, see: J. Olsen: *Hørg, Hov og Kirke: historiske og arkæologiske vikingetidsstudier*. København 1966, p. 247; P.V. Glob: *Kong Haralds Kumer*. Skalk 4 1969, p. 18 ff.; A.A. Christensen, C.J. Becker, review of: J. Olsen: *Hørg, Hov og Kirke: historiske og arkæologiske vikingetidsstudier*. København 1966. "Historisk Tidsskrift" 1966—1967, B. 12, H. 2, pp. 441, 446—452. There was also discussion of the mausoleum in Jellinge in: "Medieval Scandinavia" 1974.

like Yaroslav, reburied the last members of his dynasty who had died pagan not long before the introduction of Christianity in the country⁹. As the possibility of the deliberate burial of a pagan inside the church is excluded, it is natural to assume that Harald administered some ritual procedure with the remains of his parents, corresponding to the function that Yaroslav administered with the bones of his uncles.

What exactly was the procedure of the reburial — we do not know. However, the hypothesis of its existence during the first decades after the conversion would allow us to explain the cases of the pagan burials within churches in the Middle Ages. For example, a church in Herning (Northern Jutland) was built in the place of the burial mound made in the tenth century, only two or three generations earlier. During the building of the church the burial mound was razed to the ground but the burial chamber was left untouched. Thus, the originally heathen grave of a noble woman ended up under the floor of the church itself¹⁰.

Churches in Scandinavia were not infrequently built near or above heathen burial places¹¹. The bones of an inveterate pagan could, therefore, be found in sanctified ground, a situation which, strictly speaking, contradicted canonical prohibitions. These prohibitions were widely known, and this situation with the pagan graves could be regarded as unseemly. This incongruity is reflected in a saga recorded in the thirteenth century, which tells about the bones of a pagan witch that were found under the floor of one of the first churches in Iceland¹². The witch comes in the dream to the hostess of the church and demands that she be allowed to rebury the remains: being under the church and having to hear the prayers is considered evil by the pagan character. It is significant that the author of the saga is not indifferent to the problem of the burial of a pagan under a church. Also compare the cases of transference of the remembrance runic stones to the churchyard and their use as building material for a church¹³. One should, however, bear in mind, that a runic stone did not serve as a gravestone and was not connected with the burial place of the person it was dedicated to.

⁹ Nevertheless, in the memory of the following generations Harald, not Gorm, appeared to be “the first Danish king buried in the sanctified ground” (*Sögur Danakonunga. Sögubrot af fornkonungum. Knýtlingasaga*. Udg. C. Petersen, E. Olsen. København 1919—1925, p. 32). Moreover, in the relatively late Danish chronicles it was mentioned that during Gorm’s reign Christians were persecuted, see: *Gammeldanske Kroniker...*, pp. 39, 158; *Middelalderlig historisk litteratur paa modersmaalet: indledning og supplement til M. Lorenzens Gammeldanske Kroniker*. Udg. E. Jørgensen. København 1930, p. 36.

¹⁰ See: K.J. Krogh, O. Voss: *Fra hedenskab til kristendom i Hørning*. Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark 1961.

¹¹ Cf.: J. Olsen: *Hørg, Hov og Kirke...*, pp. 267—275.

¹² See: *Laxdæla saga*, c. 76. Udg. K. Kálund. København 1889—1891, pp. 283—284.

¹³ See: P. Sawyer: *The process of Scandinavian Christianization in the tenth and eleventh centuries*. In: *The Christianization of Scandinavia*. Eds. B. Sawyer, P. Sawyer, I. Wood. Alingsås 1987, p. 86.

Thus, the wish to accustom the pagan ancestors to Christianity was rather strong in Scandinavia; however, to do it in practice, some additional reasons, apparently, were required besides the wish of the grandsons.

Also of interest are those pagan interments, which, on the contrary, have distinct marks of destruction. Among them, in addition to the burial mound of Gorm the Old in Jellinge, there is a burial ship in Lådby. From this rich interment no jewelry but only remains were found¹⁴. From this circumstance scholars have advanced a hypothesis about the destruction of the grave by the relatives of the deceased, for the purpose of the second burial of the remains near the church, in accord with the Christian rite¹⁵.

The Scandinavian archeological data testifying to the practice of reburial of relatives who had died as pagans are confirmed, to some extent, by written sources. For example, there is a story about the reburial of the remains of Snorri Goði, a powerful and noble Icelander, a personage of many family sagas. Snorri died Christian in 1031 and was buried in the yard of the church that had been built according to his own arrangements. In the late twelfth—beginning of the thirteenth century, his bones were exhumed with witnesses present and brought to the church, where they were, apparently, placed under the church floor. Together with the remains of Snorri, the bones of his close relatives, who had died as pagans, Þórdís, Snorri's mother, and Fat Börk, his uncle, were dug out and reburied in the same church¹⁶.

Generally speaking, such actions break at least two canons: the prohibitions against burying laymen inside the church¹⁷ or burying pagans in sanctified ground. The latter could be avoided only by breaking a third by baptizing the remains of the dead. The canon against interring a pagan within a church was undoubtedly well known in Scandinavia, for it is found in the Icelandic code of law *Grágás* and in Norwegian regional laws¹⁸.

¹⁴ See: K.J. Krogh: *The royal Viking-Age monuments...*, p. 216.

¹⁵ Cf. K. Thorvildsen: *Ladby-Skibet. (Nordiske Fortidsminde)*. Copenhagen 1957.

¹⁶ See: *Eyrbyggja saga*. Hrsg. H. Gering. Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek 6. Halle 1897, pp. 241—242.

¹⁷ The prohibition to bury in the church is one of the regularly broken and regularly discussed prohibitions. For the history of the question in detail, see: B. Kötting: *Der frühchristliche Reliquienkult und die Bestattung im Kirchengebäude*. Köln 1965, pp. 7—41.

¹⁸ A kind of "twin plot" for the story of the witch under the church may be the story of the king Hakon (died at about 960), the first Norwegian Christian king, who was buried in the burial mound, according to the pagan rite (S. Sturluson: *Heimskringla*, c. 32, Vol. I. Udg. F. Jónsson. København 1893, pp. 218—219). It is interesting that according to one of the saga versions, the king's friends before his death suggested taking his dead body to England and burying it at the church, but the Christian king refused point-blank, explaining his unwillingness by the fact that he had lived as a pagan and wanted to be buried as a pagan (*Fagrskinna*. Udg. F. Jónsson. København 1902—1903, p. 47). In the literary tradition of the thirteenth through fourteenth centuries, there are a number of stories about the first Christians who died

In the *Eiríks saga Rauða* a mass epidemic in Greenland is described. One of the personages, coming after his death to his wife, complained of the fact that people who died in the epidemic were buried in unsanctified ground, and asked that he be brought to the church. Having noted that the deceased after those complaints to his wife “died for the second time” the author of the saga introduces the following comment to this episode: “In Greenland, since Christianity had been brought there, a custom existed of burying people in unsanctified ground in the estate where they died. A pole was driven in the ground above the breast of the deceased, and later, when the priest arrived, the pole was taken out, holy water was poured into the hole remaining from the pole, and a funeral was conducted, though it happened much later”¹⁹. Such practice, apparently, was applied in Norway and Iceland as well; at least, in Norwegian legislation we find rules that allow, in the case of the absence of the priest, burial of the deceased by this very procedure²⁰.

before the conversion of their motherland. In their wills they expressed a desire to be buried apart from the pagans, in order to lie in sanctified ground, when Christianity reigned in the country. A Christian Órvar-Oddr, in the saga of the same name, stipulated that he be buried in a special sarcophagus, apart from pagans (*Órvar-Odds saga*. Hrsg. R.C. Boer. Leiden 1888, p. 197). In *Landnámabók* one can read about an Icelandic settler Ásólfr, who being Christian, lived and died in the tenth century among the pagans. After the conversion of Iceland, Ásólfr appeared to Halldór Illugason in his dream, showed the place of his own interment, and demanded that he rebury him and erect a church above his remains. His demand was fulfilled and his remains were placed above the altar (*Landnámabók*. Ed. J. Benediktsson. Íslenzk fornrit 1. Reykjavík 1968, p. 65, cf. also p. 63). In the same book there is a story about a Christian woman Auð who asked that she be buried on the seashore, in the sand, in the place covered by ocean tidal waters, as she didn't want to lie in the unsanctified ground together with the pagans (*Landnámabók*..., pp. 146—147). It should be noted that in the places where water covers the sand or the ground, according to sagas and the laws, berserks, criminals, and, later, unchristened children, were buried (Ó. Lárusson: *Ping Þórólfs Mostrarskeggs*. Skírnir 1935, pp. 192—194; P.E. Wallén: *Die Klage gegen den Toten im nordgermanischen Recht*. Lund 1958, pp. 261—263). It is also interesting, that according to another source, this woman, on the contrary, was buried in the burial mound, by the pagan rite (in a ship with a lot of property) (*Laxdæla saga*..., c. 7, p. 15). For details of Auð's interment, see: S. Karlsson: *Grefstrun Auðar Djúpuðgu*. In: *Menning og Meinsemdir: Ritgerðasafn um mótunarsögu íslenskrar þjóðar og baráttu hennar við hungur og sóttir*. Reykjavík 1975, p. 153. Apparently, all these stories show later reflection concerning the prohibition to bury pagans together with Christians, to bury non-christened people in sanctified ground. It cannot, however, be excluded that here the practice of reburying the remains is interpreted which existed at the early stage of Christianity in Scandinavia.

¹⁹ “Sá hafði háttur verit á Grœnlandi, síðan kristni kom þangat, at menn váru grafnir á bæjum, þar sem önduðusk, í óvígðri moldu. Skyldi setja staur upp af brjósti inum dauða, en síðan er kennimenn kómu til, þá skyldi upp kippa staurinum ok hella þar í vígðu vatni ok veita þar yfirsöngva, þótt þat væri miklu síðar” (*Eiríks saga Rauða*. Eds. E.Ól. Sveinsson, M. Þórðarson. Íslenzk fornrit 4. Reykjavík 1935, p. 217).

²⁰ See: *Norges gamle Love indtil 1387*, c. 23, Vol. 1. Eds. G. Storm, E. Hertzberg, R. Keyser, P.A. Munch. Christiania 1846, p. 14.

Doesn't this mean that some ceremony was performed with the bones, which allowed considering them the remains of a Christian? Judging by the data of the written sources, the first half of the eleventh century in Scandinavia is a time of confusion of Christian and pagan principles in the funeral rite. In the absence of an established ceremony much was determined by the individual choice. For example, the prohibition of putting the property of the deceased into the grave was known but at the beginning was not completely obeyed. The first Christian king of Norway, Hakon the Good was buried in the burial mound, fully armed and in his best clothes but, according to Snorri, with no other property of his²¹.

In the saga tradition, burying in the burial mound was always associated with paganism. We read in the works of Snorri Sturluson about "the age of burning" and "the age of burial mounds" preceding the epoch of Christianity²². One of the sons of Ketill Flatnose, a famous first-settler in Iceland, is said that he (Björn Ketillsson) was buried according to the ancient rite in the burial mound, as he was the only of Ketill's sons who had refused to be baptized (*var óskirðr*)²³. In the Norwegian legislation it is noted that if a man buries a dead body in the burial mound or under a pile of stones, he must dig it out, pay a fine to the bishop, take the body to the church, and bury it in sanctified ground²⁴.

Apparently, similar confusion of pagan and Christian elements in the funeral rite could be observed in Rus' as well. In this respect, rather significant is the description of the funeral of prince Vladimir the Saint in the chronicle under 1015: «Оумре же на Берестовемъ-и потаиша и-бе бо Святополкъ Кыеве ночью же межю [двема] клетми проймавше помость обертевше в коверъ и оужи съвесиша на землю възложше и на сани везше поставиша въ святей Богородици-юже бе създаь самъ»²⁵. A similar custom existed or, at least, was remembered in princely families in the twelfth century. We may recollect as an example the dream of the prince Svyatoslaw in *Слово о полку Игореве* (The Song of Igor's Campaign) where he saw his castle without finials on the roof and understood it as the omen of approaching his death hour.

The carrying out of the deceased through a breach in the wall is a measure taken in part so that he would not return to the world of the alive. The necessity of these measures is universal in various pre-Christian cultures. A remnant of them remains in the funeral ceremony after conversion. It is, however, significant that in Rus' in the eleventh through twelfth centuries the custom of carrying out the deceased through a break in the wall or the roof was used for the members of the ruling prince family. Later, it does not seem possible to be done

²¹ See: *Heimskringla*..., c. 34, Vol. 1, pp. 217—219.

²² See: *Heimskringla*..., c. 5, Vol. 1.

²³ See: *Landnámabók*..., p. 122; *Flateyjarbók*. B. 1. Udg. G. Vig ffússon, C.R. Unger. Christiania 1860, p. 264.

²⁴ See: *Norges gamle Love indtil 1387*..., c. 14, Vol. 1, p. 431.

²⁵ See: CCRC, T. 1, p. 130; T. 2, p. 115; T. 3, p. 169.

in the case of some noble Christians. Judging by the data we have, only magicians and other “evil ones” could be buried in this way.

It cannot be excluded that the custom of carrying the deceased through the wall in Rus’ was borrowed from the Scandinavians and its common occurrence among the Rurikids is explained by their Varangian origin. It should be noted that in Scandinavia, as well as in Rus’, in the time of Christianity only evil ones or dubious people were buried this way. In particular, according to the *Eyrbyggja saga* an Icelander Þórólfr the Crooked Leg was buried this way, and he appeared to people in different aspects many times after his death²⁶. A similar funeral of Skalla-Grímr, father of the skald Egill is described below.

It is most likely that in the pre-Christian epoch this rite was applied to all the deceased. In any case, the later revision of the once generally accepted pagan rites, as the rites used by magicians or against magicians, is rather a universal phenomenon²⁷. It is significant that in the twelfth century in Rus’, the funeral rite for a pagan was distinctly opposed to that for a Christian. And the choice of the place of interment for a pagan completely corresponds to the known practice of burying²⁸.

A personage of an Icelandic family saga, Bui, was buried under the church wall and nothing except the arms was put in his grave, because “a christened man he had been and never had made a sacrifice”²⁹. The remains of the Christian Grettir Ásmundarson, who died an outlaw, were buried by parts: his head in one church and his body in another one³⁰. During the transfer of the latter church to another place, his bones were dug out and exposed for identification, and reburied. It should be noted, that the pagan king Hálfðan the Black had been buried

²⁶ See: *Eyrbyggja saga*..., c. 33, pp. 123—124.

²⁷ For details, see: M. Þórðarson: *Um dauða Skalla-Gríms og hversu hann var heygður*. In: *Festskrift til Finnur Jónsson 29. maj 1928*. København 1928, pp. 95—112; F. Uspenskij: *Борис и Глеб. Восприятие истории в Древней Руси*. Москва 2000, p. 125.

²⁸ Cf.: «наоутрея же налезюша Тугоркана мертва. И взя и Стополкъ аки стя [тестя] своего и врага и привезъше Киневу и погребоша и на Берестовомъ на могыле межи путемъ грядущимъ на Берестовое а другимъ идущимъ в монастырь» (CCRC, T. 2, p. 222 sub anno 1096). It is peculiar that in the cited text from the chronicle the funeral of the pagan Polovtsian is described not at all as abuse to the deceased but as paying the last honours to a non-blood relative.

²⁹ See: *Kjalnesinga saga*, c. 18. Íslenzk fornrit 14. Reykjavík 1959, p. 43. In the epoch of saga writing not only the arms but also a rich garment (not to mention things of everyday life, treasures, armour, and domestic animals) buried with the deceased were definitely associated with the pagan burial tradition (for detail, see: Kr. Kålund: *Familielivet på Island i den første sagaperiode (indtil 1030)*. Aarbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie 1870, p. 369; O. Almgren: *Vikingatidens grafskick i verkligheten och i den fornordiska litteraturen*. In: *Nordiska studier tillagnade Adolf Noreen*. Uppsala 1904, p. 342; M. Þórðarson: *Um dauða*..., pp. 103—111).

³⁰ See: *Gretis saga*, c. 84. Hrsg. R. Boer. Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek 8. Halle 1900, pp. 292—293.

in a similar way: his head was put into the burial mound in Hringaríki and his body was divided into four parts and buried in different parts of Norway³¹. However, his remains, naturally, had never been transferred to the church.

Some cases of the reburial of bones are mentioned as well in several written sources³². Of these cases, the description of the burial of Egill Skalla-Grímsson seems particularly important. It is said in an Icelandic family saga that a famous skald Egill, who had died in about 990, was buried in the burial mound with his arms and garment. When in 1000 Christianity came to Iceland, Egill's niece Þórdís took his body to a new church where it was reburied under the altar³³.

Egill died before the conversion of Iceland and was not baptized. Nevertheless, for the greater part of his life he was not, strictly speaking, a pagan: in his youth being at court of the Anglo-Saxon king Æhelstan (895—933) Egill and his brother Þórólf got *prima signatio*, i.e., became catechumens³⁴. The procedure involved making the sign of the cross over an un-baptized person and reading prayers driving away the devil.

Perhaps this fact was taken into account in Egill's reburial according to the Christian rite. It is also possible that other cases of reburial of ancestors who had died heathen in Scandinavia were connected with the *prima signatio* procedure those ancestors underwent.

The details of the procedure varied from time to time and place to place, but it was consistently done outside of a church building³⁵. In some variants, sanctified salt was given to the catechumen, or he could pronounce the Symbol of Faith and renounce the devil. What exactly was done with the first Scandinavians who wished to get *prima signatio* — we do not know. Perhaps, this depen-

³¹ See: *Heimskringla...*, c. 9, Vol. 1, p. 97.

³² See, for example: *Bjarnar saga Hitdælakappa*. Hrsg. R. Boer. Halle 1893, p. 72, cf. 23; *Floamanna saga*, c. 35. Udg. F. Jónsson. København 1932, pp. 70—71. An attempt to explain all this evidence by the influence of the hagiographic literal tradition is contained in the paper: B. Einarsson: *Hörð höfuðbein*. In: *Minjar og menntir. Afmælisrit helgað Kri-stjáni Eldjárni*. Reykjavík 1976, pp. 47—54.

³³ See: *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*, c. 86. Hrsg. F. Jónsson. Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek 3. Halle 1894, pp. 293.

³⁴ See: *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar...*, c. 50, p. 145. About *prima signatio* (Old Icelandic *primsigning*) in Scandinavia see: E. Molland: *Primsigning*. In: *Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for nordisk Middelalder*. Vol. 12. København—Malmö 1968, pp. 439—444; Å. Sandholm: *Primsigningsriten under nordisk medeltid*. Åbo 1965; W. Lange: *Studien zur christlichen Dichtung der Nordgermanen 1000—1200*. Göttingen 1958, pp. 170—181.

³⁵ The most complete order of catechization by the tenth—eleventh centuries is preserved in the Eastern Orthodox Church (see: A. Musin: *Scandica Orthodoxa. Византия и Русь*. In: *XIII конференция по изучению истории, экономики, литературы и языка скандинавских стран и Финляндии*. Тез. докл. Петрозаводск 1997, p. 134; M. Arranz: *Чин оглашения и крещения в древней Руси*. In: *Символ 19. Июнь*, 1988). About the details of this procedure in Scandinavia see: H. Fæhn: *Dǫp*. In: *Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for nordisk Middelalder*. Vol. 3. København—Malmö 1958, pp. 416—417; E. Molland: *Primsigning...*, p. 443.

ded on where the procedure was performed. The Latin term *prima signatio* “the first sign of the cross” literally meant the initial part of this rite, when a catechumen was blessed by cross that corresponded to the first stage of the more complex order of *prima signatio* in the Eastern Church. Before the general conversion of the Peninsula, the Scandinavians sometimes underwent this procedure abroad, in England, for example (like Egill and his brother Þórólfr), in Germany (like Gestr Þórðarson) and in Byzantium (like Óláfr Tryggvason, and possibly, Haraldr the Hard ruler³⁶). An adult person could become Christian only by being baptized, after which they could stay in the church during the whole service and take part in the Eucharist.

The catechization or *prima signatio* gave a special status to a person: it gave the opportunity without being baptized to attend the service in church and enter into full association with Christians. Apparently, in the period of Christianization and at the time preceding it, three statuses of a man concerning baptism could be clearly distinguished. A person could be non-christened (compare, in this connection, the nickname *Ókristni* ‘non-christened’, ‘not Christian’)³⁷; a catechumen (got *prima signatio*); or christened. Those in the latter status had passed the whole ceremony of baptism with immersion (cf. in this connection, the nickname *Kristni* ‘christened, Christian’ held by the people who lived in the tenth—early eleventh centuries)³⁸.

There is no doubt that the newly converted themselves strictly distinguished the two last statuses. For example, a character of *Óláfs saga helga*, Toki Tokason in response to a question of king Ólaf Haraldsson (Ólaf the Saint) as to whether he is christened, answers — “I got *prima signatio* but was not christened”³⁹. The same answer, testifying to the substantial differentiation between the status of catechumen and that of baptized, is given by Gestr Þórðarson to the king Óláfr Tryggvason in the *Norna-Gests þáttur*⁴⁰.

³⁶ An assumption was advanced that Harald the Hard ruler not only got *prima signatio* but baptized by the Byzantine rite (for detail, see: A.O. Johnsen: *Harald Hardrådes Død i Skaldediktingen*. Maal og Minne 1969, pp. 47—50; A.D. Jørgensen: *Den nordiske Kirkes Grundlæggelse og første Udvikling*. København 1874—1878, pp. 691—695; H. Kuhn: *Das älteste Christentum Islands*. Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum B. 100 [1971], pp. 14—15; Ja. Dashkevich: *Армяне в Исландии (XI в.)*. In: *Скандинавский сборник*. Vol. 33. Таллинн 1990, pp. 95—96; A. Musin: *Scandica Orthodoxa...*, p. 135).

³⁷ Cf.: *Norsk-Isländska Personbinamn från Medeltiden*. Samlade och utgivna med Förklaringar av E.H. Lind. Uppsala 1920—1921, p. 271.

³⁸ Cf.: *ibidem*, p. 220.

³⁹ “ek er primsignndr en æigi skidr” (*Flatexjarbók...*, B. 2, p. 137).

⁴⁰ See: *Flatexjarbók...*, B. 1, p. 357. It is stated in the saga that “in the evening Gestr crossed himself as other people did (at court of Óláfr Tryggvason) but in fact he was pagan”. “Gestr signnde sig um kueldit sem adrir menn en uar þo reyndar hæidinn” (*Flatexjarbók...*, B. 1, p. 346).

In the epoch when sagas were being written and legislation created, when the history of Christianity already numbered about two hundred years on the Scandinavian Peninsula, a catechumen was by an order higher than a pagan, but, undoubtedly, a step lower than a Christian. As for the transition period from paganism to Christianity, the intermediate status of the catechumen gave to its owner practical and political profit. The catechumen enjoyed many advantages of a member of the Christian community, yet without having broken off from the pagan world. Various contacts between pagans and Christians became more and more frequent, and some pagans were at the border of the two worlds and more or less freely entered both. Apparently, the opportunity of not fully abandoning the religion of the ancestors was most urgent for a ruler, a chief, a prince with his armed force⁴¹. It is significant that the refusal of the prince Svyatoslaw, son of Igor', to be baptized is explained in the chronicle by his being reluctant to separate from his armed force (*дружина*)⁴². In Scandinavia the necessity for the king to follow the family tradition gave rise to the story of the ruler who was christened before the conversion of the country but after a short time returned to paganism.

It cannot be excluded that the status *prima signatio* allowed avoiding the difficulties that arose for the ruler-military leader with his accepting a new faith. The case of Egill Skalla-Grímsson shows that in the transition epoch a person was not always baptized soon after taking *prima signatio*. In the *Vita sancti Anskarii*, where the missionary activities of this saint among the Danes and other Scandinavians in the eleventh century were described, it was said that many Danes had been already baptized by that time, but many pagans preferred to get *prima signatio* in order to have the opportunity to go to the church and be present at administration of holy sacraments. Those who were catechumens took their time before being baptized, planning to be baptized on the deathbed and, cleansed from sins, get to Heaven without stain⁴³.

⁴¹ Almost the best-known example of this double status of the ruler in the early Christianity epoch is the case with Constantine the Great. He was known to patronize the Christians, to take a very active part in the actions of the Church, to found the Church Universal Assembly, remaining only catechumen but not christened. Constantine the Great was baptized only at the end of his life.

⁴² «[...] како азъ хочю ивъ законъ прияти единъ а дружина [моа] сему смеятися начнуть». CCRC, T. 1, p. 63.

⁴³ "Quia libenter quidem signaculum cruces recipiebant, ut catecumini fierent, quo eis ecclesiam ingredi et sacris officiis interesse liceperet, baptismi tamen perceptionem differabant, hoc sibi bonum diiudicantes, ut in fine vitae suae baptizarentur, quatinus purificati lavacro salutary, puri et immaculati vitae aeternae ianuas absque aliqua retardatione intrarent" (*Vita Anskarii auctore Rimberto*, c. 24. In: *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der Hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches*. Hrsg. R. Buchner, W. Trillmich. Darmstadt 1990, pp. 80, 82).

Thus, a catechumen like Egill could live most of his life in that status. He could die unchristened, without breaking off from paganism. Moreover, *prima signatio*, did not necessarily imply the intention on the part of the individual undergoing the ritual to be baptized in the future; sometimes this act was conditioned by non-confessional, worldly reasons. Compare the description of similar practice in the *Egils saga*: “England was a Christian country (*var kristit*) when these events were taking place. King Athelstan was a staunch Christian, and people called him Athelstan the Pious (*Aðalsteinn enn trúfasti*). He asked Þórólfr and his brother (Egill) to accept preliminary baptism (*láta þrímsiganast*) as was the custom in those days both for merchants and mercenaries serving Christian rulers (*kristnum mönnum*), since people who had been given this form of baptism (*þeir menn, er þrímsignadir váru*) could mix equally with Christian and heathen and were free to hold any belief that suited them. So Þórólfr and Egill did what the King wanted and received preliminary baptism (*létu þrímsignask báðir*). They had three hundred and sixty men under them, all on the King’s payroll”⁴⁴.

In this context, the catechumen living in a pagan country, apparently, could behave in various ways and have various intentions concerning his future. He did not unambiguously intend to be christened and did not always follow all the directions of the Christian Church.

When *prima signatio* was taken for practical advantages or under the pressure of circumstances, the catechumen did not necessarily make any fundamental change in his attitude to paganism. This was, apparently, the case with Egill⁴⁵. As we know from the saga, Egill could carve magical runes, was not a stranger to witchcraft, took part in pagan rites, and strictly followed them in the burials of his close relatives — his father, his brother, and his son. Egill seemed to be never baptized.

It should be stressed that Egill buried his brother Þórólfr who, like himself, had got *prima signatio*, by the pagan rite. It is significant, as well, that Egill buried Þórólfr in England, i.e. in a completely Christian country. According to the saga, for Þórólfr a grave was dug out, and he was placed there. Then, Egill

⁴⁴ See: *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar...*, c. 50, p. 145.

⁴⁵ However, one of the manuscripts of *Egils saga* (cod. Arn. 453, 4 (K)) known by the copy performed in the 17th century contains details very interesting for us. After the description of Egill’s burial in the burial mound, that coincides with other versions, it was said there, that Egill as a man who had got *prima signatio*, had never made a sacrifice (*Egill var þrímsignaðr maðr; en blotaði aldrei, Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*. Udg. F. Jónsson. København 1886—1888, p. 320). In other manuscripts of the saga this phrase does not occur. According to the opinion of the publisher of the saga, Finnur Jónsson, “die Abschrift des Ketill Jörundarson stellt unbedingt die jüngste redaktion der saga dar. In der textbehandlung nimmt sie eine mittelstellung zwischen M und W ein und bestätigt vielfach das von uns charakterisierte Verhältnis der beiden Membranen. K ist die am wenigsten ‘klassische’ Recension: sie vertauscht häufig ältere redensarten mit moderneren und ist auch durch einige interpolierte Geschmacklosigkeiten entstellt” (*Egils saga Skallagrímssonar...*, p. XXXVI).

put a gold bracelet on each of his arms. After that, stones were put on the grave and it was covered with earth⁴⁶. The funeral of Egill's father, Skalla-Grímr, is described in the saga as follows: "Egill went up to the bench, took hold of Skalla-Grímr's shoulder and pulled him backwards, forcing him down onto the bench. Then he gave him the last rites. Next he asked for digging tools and broke a hole through the south wall. When that was done, he got hold of Skalla-Grímr's head, while others took his feet, and in this way they carried him from one side of the house to the other and through the hole that had been made in the wall. Without delay they next carried the body down to Naustaness, and pitched a tent over it for the night. The following morning, at high tide, Skalla-Grímr was put into a boat and taken out to Digraness. Egill had a burial mound raised there on the tip of the headland, and inside it Skalla-Grímr was laid with his horse, weapons and blacksmith's tools. There's no mention of any money being placed in the mound with him"⁴⁷. Egill's son, Böðvarr, who drowned in the river, was buried by Egill in the same burial mound as Skalla-Grímr⁴⁸.

Sometimes, a catechumen, in accord with his intermediate status, rejected a part of the pagan customs. For example, it was said of the famous Icelander Gísli the son of Súr that having returned from Denmark he rejected some customs accepted in pre-Christian Iceland. "At that time it was a custom among many people to celebrate the beginning of the winter with feasts and sacrifices. Gísli did not make sacrifices since he had been in Vébjörg, however, he was giving parties, as before and with all splendor"⁴⁹. Flósi a character of the *Njáls saga*, taking *prima signatio*, at the *þing* promised to give his support to the Christians⁵⁰.

If a catechumen decided to change his status — to be baptized and thus become Christian forever — this decision was often taken gradually, not without

⁴⁶ See: *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar...*, c. 55, p. 158.

⁴⁷ See: *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar...*, c. 58, pp. 190—192. For detail of Skalla-Grímr's funeral see: M. Þórðarson: *Um dauða Skalla-Gríms...*, *passim*.

⁴⁸ See: *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar...*, c. 78, p. 251.

⁴⁹ See: *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, c. 10. Hrsg. F. Jónsson. Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek 10. Halle 1903, pp. 23—24. In this wording of the saga, it is not said directly that Gísli in Denmark got *prima signatio* — an indication of this in the diffuse wording (S) made by the publisher, Finnur Jónsson considers the later interpolation (see: *Gísla saga Súrssonar...*, c. 10, p. 23), cf.: W. Lange: *Studien...*, pp. 44, 180; E. Molland: *Primsigning...*, p. 442. In the diffuse wording it was said that Gísli with his friends got *prima signatio* in Denmark, "as it was generally accepted among those who made trade journeys" for contacts with the Christians "Í þenna tíma var kristni kominn í Danmörk, ok létu þeir Gísli félagar primsignaz; því at þat var í þann tíma mikill siðvani þeirra manna, er í kaupferðum voro, ok voro þeir þá í öllu samneyti með kristnum mönnum" (*Tvæf sögur af Gísla Súrssyni*. Udg. K. Gíslason. Kjöbenhavn 1849, p. 96).

⁵⁰ See: *Brennu-Njáls saga*, c. 101. Udg. E. Ól. Sveinsson. Íslenzk fornrit 12. Reykjavík 1954, p. 259.

some hesitation. For example, the mentioned Toki Tokason having lived for a long time in the status of catechumen, only after long conversations with the king came to him to be baptized. Another Scandinavian, Ormr Stórolfsson is said, according to stories of other people, to take *prima signatio* while in Denmark, and to be baptized only when he was in Iceland⁵¹. The Icelander Gestr Bárðarson decided to get *prima signatio* in Norway with the only purpose being to stay at court of Óláfr Tryggvason⁵². But even “fighting with the alive dead-man” in the barrow, under the threat of death he makes a vow to be baptized if he gets out of the barrow alive. Some time later, Óláfr Tryggvason proposes to Gestr that he accept baptism, and he, remembering his vow gets baptized⁵³.

During the conversion of Scandinavia and in the immediately following period, the difference between the christened and the catechumen was remembered and effective⁵⁴. However, baptism at that time directly and regularly enough

⁵¹ “þat segia menn at Ormr væri primsignndr j Danmorku en hafui kristnatst a Jslande” (*Flateyjarbók*..., B. 1, p. 529).

⁵² See: *Barðar saga Snæfellsass*, c. 17. Udg. G. Vigfússon. Kjøbenhavn 1860, p. 37.

⁵³ See: *Barðar saga Snæfellsass*..., c. 21, p. 44.

⁵⁴ Describing the conversion of Iceland the author of the saga wrote that, although many Icelanders were baptized by the bishop Friðrek and Þorvaldr Koðrannson, two aristocrats — Eyófr Valgerðarson and Þorkell Þorgrímsson got only *prima signatio* (*Biskupa sögur*. B. 1. Kaupmannahöfn 1858, pp. 5, 6; *Kristni saga*. Hrsg. B. Kahle. Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek 11. Halle 1905, pp. 6, 8). Only “the sign of the cross” received another famous Icelander, Gestr the Wise from the priest Þangbrandr. As it was noted in the saga, he got *prima signatio* together with several friends (*Kristni saga*..., p. 29). However, sometimes the author of *Kristni saga*, describing the Christianization of Iceland, considers *prima signatio* a part of the baptismal rite and does not give the corresponding more precise definitions. For example, one of the initiators of the conversion of Iceland, Hjalti Skeggjason, succeeds, people are baptized at the þing, and among those who are to be baptized is Hjalti’s enemy, goði Runólfr Úlfsson from Dalr. According to the saga, at Runólfr’s baptism Hjalti uttered a mocking phrase: “They have taught the old goði to munch salt (with his lips) Hjalti mælti, er Runólfr var skirðr: ‘Gömlum kennu vér nú goðanum at geifla á saltinu’” (*Kristni saga*..., c. 12, p. 42). This phrase, alliterating in the original, does not allow the understanding of what was the ceremony they performed with Runólfr. It was noted in the saga, that Runólfr was baptized (*skirðr*), but salt was usually given during the procedure *prima signatio*, and later at baptism (see: K. Maurer: *Die Bekehrung des norwegischen Stammes zum Christentume in ihrem geschichtlichen Verlaufe quellennässig geschildert*. B. 1. München 1855, p. 435; cf.: L. Koep: *Salz*. In: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*. B. 9. Freiburg 1964, pp. 284—285; D. Daschner: *Salz*. In: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*. B. 8. Rom—Wien—Freiburg 1999, pp. 1501—1502). Indeed, in another saga we find indication of the fact that goði Runólfr, a zealous pagan, after it had been decided at the þing to introduce Christianity in the country, got only *prima signatio* (*en er hann var primsignndr; þá mælti Hjalti: gömlum kennum vér nú goðanum at geifla á saltinu*. Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta, c. 229. B. 2. Udg. Ó. Halldórsson. København 1958, p. 198; *Formanna sögur*. B. 2. Kaupmannahöfn 1827, p. 243). More than that, according to this saga, after the þing all Icelanders got *prima signatio* and a lot of people were baptized (*Voro þa allir menn primsignadir: þeir er þar voro aa þinginu ok margir skirðir. þeir er aðr voro heidnir. Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*..., c. 229, B. 2, p. 198; *Formanna sögur*..., B. 2. p. 243). It

followed catechization. The pagan medium that was previously closely connected with the catechumen gradually disappears. Baptism after being proclaimed catechumen becomes more and more a question not of choice but of time⁵⁵. Thus, the sons and grandsons of a catechumen could think that their ancestors in some sense just “did not manage” to be baptized.

Later, when the process of Christianization completed, and baptism was no more the matter of personal choice, catechization was regarded from another viewpoint. The understanding of a clear distinction between being christened and being a catechumen became rare, as in that epoch *prima signatio* and baptism were separated by minimal time intervals; in practice one immediately

should be noted, that in the *Kristni saga* this episode is quite different — it was said that after the *þing* all present at the *þing* were baptized (*skírðr*). The fates of some of those Icelanders are known from other sources. For example, we can read about Þorkell Þorgrímsson in one of the wordings of *Landnámabók* and a family saga (besides, the fact that Þorkell at first got only *prima signatio* are confirmed in the *Gretis saga* (*Gretis saga...*, c. 13, p. 37)). According to the family saga, Þorkell refused to receive *prima signatio* from the Bishop Friðrekr and got baptized (*var skírðr*) only when Christianity was adopted at the *þing* in Iceland, i.e., in 999 or 1000 (*Vatnsdæla saga*, c. 46. Hrsg. W.H. Vogt. Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek 16. Halle 1921, p. 127; cf. p. XXX, paragraph 16). Nothing is said there of his taking *prima signatio*. Contrastingly, in one of the wordings of *Landnámabók*, Þorkell was baptized (*tók skirm*) by the Bishop Friðrekr, built a church and chose beforehand the burial places at the church for his converted countrymen (see: *Landnámabók Íslands*. København 1925, p. 101). Of Eyófr Valgerðarson it was known that he drowned, and as a person who had got *prima signatio*, he was buried in the ground in the yard of his own farmstead (*Litlu síðar drukkaði Eyjólfur í Gnupufellsá; hann jarðarðr á Möðruvöllum í túnvellingum heima ok var primsignðr áðr. Valla-Ljóts saga*, c. 2. Udg. J. Kristjánsson. Íslenzk fornrit 9. Reykjavík 1956, p. 237).

⁵⁵ Cf. the description of baptism in the sagas and Old Norse sources of the bookish tradition. In *Barlaams ok Josaphats saga* the conversion of a pagan Nachor was described. Nachor found some anchorite who was a priest, fell down on his knees and asked him “at hann skyldi geva honum hælga skirnn. En sa hinn hælgi maðr er fullr var guðs miskunnar. þa fann þegar at þetta var guðs gíof. oc primsignaðe hann first. oc síðan nokkora daga eptir synndi hann honom hælga tru. skírði hann síðan eptir síðueniv” (*Barlaams ok Josaphats saga*, c. 149. Udg. R. Keyser, C.R. Unger. Christiania 1851, p. 147). In *Lárentiuss saga erkidjákns*, the saint, to convert a blind pagan Lucillum, crosses him with the first sign of a cross, sanctifies the water and baptizes Lucillum (“þa primsignði Laurencius Lucillum ok vigdi vatn ok skirdi hann sidan”) (*Heilagra manna sögur*. B. 1. Udg. C.R. Unger. Kristiania 1877, p. 425). In *Tveggja postola saga Petrs ok Pals* Titus and Lucas give *prima signatio* to three pagans: Longine, Megyst, and Akest, then tell them to fast all the day till the evening and only in the evening baptize them (*Tveggja postola saga Petrs ok Pals*. In: *Postula sögur*. Udg. C.R. Unger. Kristiania 1874, p. 318). Although, in *Marteins saga biskups* it was told that the saint took *prima signatio* (*tok primsingh*) at ten years of age and was baptized (*hann var skirdr*) at eighteen (*Heilagra manna sögur...*, B. 1, pp. 554, 575, 608). As a rule, in the Church practice, a system for the time intervals between *prima signatio* and the baptism was developed. These time intervals were different for a child, for a native and for a foreigner, but with time baptism more and more frequently followed catechization, and often, as it has been already said, catechization was followed immediately by baptism.

followed the other, and the rite of *prima signatio* itself more and more became a part of the baptismal rite⁵⁶. Nevertheless, this distinction did not completely fade⁵⁷. At least one group of people remained that could die while still in the status of catechumen — the newly born. For them, a strict differentiation between being christened and being a catechumen remains important, and it was specially described in the codes of law what to do with the remains of those who died in the latter status. For example, by the Icelandic laws, an infant who had died without baptism but had got *prima signatio* was to be buried at the edge of the churchyard “where the sanctified ground comes close to the unsanctified ground”⁵⁸. An infant born with a significant physical abnormality, according to the Norwegian laws, could not be christened but was to get *prima signatio* and be left at the church doorstep until it was dead. After that one should bury it in the churchyard and pray with diligence for its soul⁵⁹.

Having reburied bones of Egill who had only taken *prima signatio*, his niece, Þórdís somehow corrected “the annoying incident” and continued the Christian history of her family. Here, she was breaking the canonical codes, in her fervor making the man equal to the Christians. It is interesting that later, when a new church was built and no living relatives of Egill remained, his bones were reburied again. A priest aware of the story of Egill’s life subjected his bones to identification. Then the bones were buried at the edge of a graveyard, as was appropriate for the remains of a catechumen, not with those of the baptized⁶⁰. The reason for such actions, apparently, was the *prima signatio* received by Egill in his youth.

⁵⁶ For example, catechization (*prima signatio*) and baptism (*skírn*) appear as the procedures connected with each other in some Old-Icelandic compositions of the thirteenth—fourteenth centuries (cf.: *Leifar fornra kristinna fræða íslenzkra: Codex Arna-Magnaeanus 677 Ato auk annara enna elztu brota af íslenzkum guðfræðisritum*. Udg. Þ. Bjarnarson. Kaupmannahöfn 1878, p. 24) and it was the duty of a godfather at that time: 1) to hold the godchild during *prima signatio* (*at halde barni under primsignan*); 2) to take the child out of the font; 3) to be the child’s godfather during confirmation, etc. (*Norges gamle Love indtil 1387...*, B. 1, 16, pp. 150, 350; *Grágás. Íslændernes Lovbog í Fristatena Tid*. B. 1—2. Udg. V. Finsen. København 1852—1879, pp. 47, 62, and p. 31). Cf.: B. Kahle: *Die altnordische Sprache im Dienste des Christentums*. “Acta Germanica” 1890, Vol. 1, pp. 364—365; H. Lie: *Skaldestil Studier*. Maal og Minne 1952, pp. 66—67; H. Foehn: *Dáp...*, pp. 416—418; E. Molland: *Primsigning...*, pp. 440, 443.

⁵⁷ Cf., for example: *Gammel Norsk Homliebog (Codex Arn. Magn. 619. Q.V)*. Udg. G.R. Unger. Christiania 1864, p. 205; *Homiliu-bók. Ísländska Homilier efter en handskrift från tolfte århundradet. Isländska skinnboken 15 qv. å Kungl. Bibliotheket i Stockholm*. Udg. Th. Wisén. Lund 1872, pp. 70, 124.

⁵⁸ See: *Grágás...*, B. 1, p. 7.

⁵⁹ See: *Norges gamle Love indtil 1387...*, B. 1, pp. 132—133, 339, 353, 363.

⁶⁰ About the reburials of Egill from the viewpoint of the Icelandic laws in twelfth—thirteenth centuries, see: J. Steffensen: *Menning og Meinsemdir. Ritgerðasafn um mótnarsögu íslenskar þjóðar og baráttu hennar við hungur og sóttir*. Reykjavík 1975, p. 153;

Thus, the unusual actions of Yaroslav the Wise, though contradicting the practice accepted in the whole Christian world, in our opinion, agreed with the Scandinavian burial tradition created after conversion. The episode with the remains of Egill Skalla-Grímsson allows a hypothesis that Yaropolk and Oleg also could have taken *prima signatio* during their lives. By the version of M. Arranz, Saint Vladimir, the brother of Yaropolk and Oleg, at first received *prima signatio* in Kiev and later took holy baptism in Chersonesus⁶¹. In the chronicle, the *prima signatio* taken by Vladimir was never mentioned as an independent procedure, although the author was aware of the discrepancy in the opinions of the place and time of his conversion⁶². It cannot be excluded that in such a way the memory of this two-stage event was interpreted. As we remember, conversion of Óláfr Tryggvason begins with getting *prima signatio* in Byzantium, and later he was baptized near the coast of Ireland⁶³.

cf. also: J. Буок: *Skull and bones in Egil's saga*. "Viator" 1993, Vol. 24, pp. 25—33. It should be noted, that in the above mentioned wording of *Egils saga* (K) one could read that Egill's bones dug out of the ground under the altar, differed in size and appearance from the bones of other Christians (*Egils saga Skallagrímssonar...*, p. 320).

⁶¹ See: M. Arranz: *A propos du baptême du prince Vladimir*. In: *988—1988: un millénaire. La christianisation de la Russie ancienne*. Textes révisés par Yves Hamant. Paris 1989, pp. 81—98; M. Arranz: *Чин оглашения и крещения в древней Руси*. In: *Символ 19. Июнь*, 1988.

⁶² See: CCRC, T. 1, p. 111.

⁶³ This is the version of events presented in some Scandinavian sources (besides the above-mentioned sources, see: *Monumenta Historica Norvegiae. Latinske kildeskrifter til Norges historie i middelalderen*, c. 7. Udg. G. Storm. Kristiania 1880, pp. 13—14, 113—114). It is supplemented by data of an Anglo-Saxon Chronicle which tells that Olav was confirmed in England and the English king Æthelred was the godfather. The confirmation was conducted by the Bishop Ælfheah who was much respected by the Anglo-Saxon Church (see: *Monumenta Historica Britannica. From the earliest period to the end of reign of king Henry VII*. Eds. H. Petrie, J. Sharpe. London 1848, p. 401, sub anno 994; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Ed. D. Whitelock. London 1961, pp. 82—83, sub anno 991). The event described in the chronicle (indirectly showing that Óláfr came to England after his baptism at the coast of Ireland) was mentioned by other Anglo-Saxon authors of the twelfth century: Henry of Huntingdon, Florence of Worcester, William of Malmesbury, and Simeon of Durham. Of all those chroniclers only William of Malmesbury wrote that Óláfr had been baptized but not confirmed in England (*Willelmi Malmesbiriensis monachi. De gestis regum Anglorum libri quinque 1—2*. Ed. W. Stubbs. London 1887—1889, I, book II, c. 165, p. 188, sub anno 994); while all other chronicles underlined that the king was confirmed (see: *Florentii Wigorniensis monachi Chronicon ex Chronicis*. Vol. 1. Ed. B. Thorpe. Londini 1848, p. 152; *Henrici archidiaconi Huntendunensis historia Anglorum*. Book V. Ed. T. Arnold. London 1879, pp. 169—170; *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*. Vol. 2. Ed. T. Arnold. London 1882, p. 135; cf.: K. Maurer: *Die Bekehrung des norwegischen Stammes zum Christentume in ihrem geschichtlichen Verlaufe quellenmässig geschildert*. B. 1. München 1855, pp. 276—277; P.A. Munch: *Det Norske Folks Historie*. B. 1:2. Christiania 1852, p. 242). A.D. Jørgensen believed that the event in question is most adequately described by William of Malmesbury, as in his opinion, with the adults, the procedures of baptism and confirmation were most often carried out simultaneously: "[...] hos den voxne foretoges dáb og konfirmation næsten samtidig, og såle-

There is no need to underline the Scandinavian roots of the Russian princely family and the closeness of Rus' and Scandinavia in tenth and the first half of eleventh centuries. I will only mention that Óláfr Tryggvason lived for a long time at the court of the prince Vladimir, and by the version of some Old-Icelandic sources he participated in the conversion of prince Vladimir, Óláfr being catechumen at that time.

No doubt, if a person was baptized, his taking *prima signatio* lost its importance: the fact that the person was close to conversion could not attract attention of his offspring. Contrastingly, if a person for some reason was not baptized during his life, then, the fact of his taking *prima signatio*, apparently, could be regarded as an important event by the nearest of kin.

In the light of this interpretation Yaroslav's actions seem quite understandable and show the subtle differentiations in the statuses of ancestors, and the possibilities for them to be introduced into the Christian paradigm. Apparently, during Yaroslav's reign the all-Russian reverence of his father prince Vladimir of the Rus' appeared⁶⁴. Still in Vladimir's reign, glorification of princess Olga began, who, as we know, was baptized some decades before the conversion of Rus'. A revision of some kind of the latest history of the princely family was observed; in accord with it the cult of the baptized relatives was developed: and in particular, during Vladimir's reign the imperishable relics of the princess Olga were transferred to the Desyatinnaya church. The fact of her being baptized was broadly known, though she lived and died in pagan social surroundings. As the chronicler writes, Olga decreed that there be no funeral feast after her death, and she was buried according the Christian rite by the priest who stayed at her

des er kroniken også bleven forstået af de gamle forfattere, idet William af Malmsbury udtrykkelig siger, at han <Óláfr> blev døbt, medens Florens af Worcester vel bruger ordet 'confirmari ab episcopo fecit, sibi in filium adoptavit', men ikke anderledes end at du Cange ansér det for et frit udtryk for 'baptismari' (s.v. confirmatio: quod igitur baptismum confirmatio statim subsequeretur, pro ipso baptismo interdum usurpatui)" (A.D. Jørgensen: *Den nordiske Kirkes Grundlæggelse og første Udvikling*. København 1874—1878, pp. 310, 321, 330; cf.: A. Taranger: *Den angelsaksiske kirkes indflydelse paa den norske*. Kristiania 1890, pp. 124—125). About the difference between baptism and confirmation in the works of Anglo-Saxon authors, see: *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia...*, Vol. 2, pp. 125—126, sub anno 943 (about the baptism of another Óláfr and the confirmation of Reginald, the leader of the Normans): "Eodem anno idem rex Anlafum regem, cujus supra meminimus, de lavacro sanctæ regenerationis suscepit, regioque munere donavit; et parvo post tempore Reingnoldum Northanhymbrorum regem dum ab episcopo confirmaretur tenuit, sibique in filium adoptavit". A hypothesis was advanced that the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle described the confirmation of Óláfr Skötkonung, the king of Sweden, but not Norwegian king Óláfr Tryggvason (see: E. Gamby: *Olof Skötkonung, Sven Tveskägg och Ethelred den Rådville*. "Scandia" 1990, T. 56, pp. 19—29). However, this viewpoint, based mainly on the data of numismatics, was not accepted by specialists (for details, see: B. Malmer: *Numismatiken, Olof Skötkonung och slaget vid Svolder*. "Scandia" 1993, T. 59, pp. 5—14).

⁶⁴ See: F. Uspenskij: *Бопуч и Глеб...*, pp. 44—46, 84—87.

deathbed⁶⁵. It may be supposed that if Yaropolk or Oleg were baptized during their lives, that this fact could hardly be unknown to Yaroslav, their nephew⁶⁶.

However, nothing is known of any attempts to venerate Yaropolk and Oleg in Yaroslav's reign or later. In chronicles, Yaropolk is not anywhere described as a Christian⁶⁷. On the contrary, we have direct evidence from the chronicle that

⁶⁵ See: CCRC, T. 1, p. 67—68, sub anno 969; T. 2, pp. 55—56.

⁶⁶ The supposition advanced by A.V. Nazarenko, that Yaropolk was baptized by the Roman rite which implied subsequent confirmation (A.W. Nazarenko: *Древняя Русь на международных путях: Междисциплинарные очерки культурных, торговых и политических связей IX—XII веков*. Москва 2001, pp. 379—380), in my opinion cannot explain the chronicle entry in question and, first of all, cannot explain the amazing fact of baptism of remains. Having baptized an already christened man, Yaroslav would have broken even greater number of Church prohibitions than merely baptizing a dead man, and there could be no motive for breaking such severe prohibitions. If he had known that Yaropolk had been baptized during his life, it would be natural to accentuate this fact and inform everybody of it, as the reburial of the remnants in the Desyatinnaya church was undoubtedly a public event. Besides, it remains unknown why the same procedure was carried out both with the remains of the christened Yaropolk and unchristened Oleg. If we assume that the baptism of Yaropolk was so secret that his own nephew was unaware of it, then this fact is very interesting from the viewpoint of Russian-German relations — it hardly fits in the cultural space of the XI century. In any case, it by no means explains the peculiarity of the chronicle entry of 1044.

It is also impossible to discuss the fact that Yaropolk, christened by the Roman rite, in due time did not undergo confirmation, which was the reason for a kind of “additional” christening of his remains. In the Eastern ritual tradition originating from Constantinople, to which Yaroslav himself and his social surroundings belonged, the rite of confirmation did not exist. That is why the absence of the second anointing of Yaropolk could not be significant for Yaroslav and could not induce him to do anything. Moreover, in the Western Church, baptism represented a separate rite, an individual sacrament as compared to the Bishop's anointing. When in the twelfth century in the Catholic Church the list of the seven sacraments is ultimately established, baptism figures there as the first sacrament and confirmation as the second one. In any case, a person who had passed the sacrament of baptism in the Western tradition, too, was considered a full value Christian who should not (and need not!) be christened for the second time.

The combination of the procedures *prima signatio*, baptism, and confirmation (anointing) both in the Eastern and the Western traditions in the eleventh century underwent a number of complex changes. From the one hand, “the first cross” in the Christian countries could be recognized as an element of the original part of the baptismal procedure, although, in case of emergency, at the meeting of the pagan world, apparently, they recollected the more ancient, independent meaning of this act (the act of catechization). On the other hand, the question of how, immediately after baptism or some time later, and who, the priest or the Bishop, must anoint the forehead (confirmation) was one of the important issues that differed between Eastern Christianity and Western. However, no doubt a person who was baptized was regarded as a Christian, and, a special, intermediary status applied to those who took only *prima signatio*. In other words, a baptized Christian was the person who passed the procedure of baptism, all other were considered non-christened.

⁶⁷ In the *Иоакимовская летопись* reconstructed by the retelling of V.N. Tatishchev it was said that the inhabitants of Kiev disliked Yaropolk: «бе муж кроткий и милостивый ко всем,

Yaroslav baptized their bones. Apparently, he was aware of the special situation of his uncles concerning the Christian faith. Taking into consideration all the above said, it is most likely that he knew that Yaropolk and Oleg had received (or, at least, could have received) *prima signatio*. Therefore, Yaroslav decided to baptize and rebury the remains of these very relatives of his.

By baptizing their bones and putting them in the Desyatinnaya church⁶⁸, he made them stand out amongst both his pagan relatives and his Christian ones. As for Yaropolk, the supposition of *prima signatio* is confirmed by the data of his West-European contacts that could be rather close⁶⁹. He seems to have been the war ally of the emperor Otton II, under whose aegis very active missionary activities were realized⁷⁰. Sources refer to a marriage between a relative (niece?) of Otton II with some king of Rus', and some scholars believe this to be Yaropolk. If that marriage was really planned, it cannot be excluded that *prima signatio* of Yaropolk had been conditioned by his intention to marry a Christian

любляша христианы и аще сам не крестися народа ради, но никому же претяше» (V.N. Tatischev: *История Российская 1—4. Подгот. К печати М.П. Ирошниковой, З.Н. Савельевой. Ред. А.И. Андреева, С.Н. Валка, М.Н. Тихомирова. Москва—Ленинград 1962, Т. 1, pp. 111—112; cf.: Макарий: История Русской церкви. Т. 1. Науч. ред. С.А. Беляева. Москва 1994, p. 223; A.W. Nazarenko: Древняя Русь..., p. 345). This behavior of the prince seems to ideally correspond to the status of *prima signatio* for the ruler in a non-baptized country, though it is impossible to rely on the data of the *Иоакимовская летопись*.*

⁶⁸ In this connection it should be noted, that the Desyatinnaya church (built in 996), judging by archeological data, was erected on some burial place. It was supposed to be pagan interment; however, there is an opinion that this had been the graveyard of the Christians who had died before the conversion of Rus' (for details, see: M.F. Муганов: *О Десятинной церкви князя Владимира*. In: *Восточная Европа в древности и Средневековье*. Москва 1978, pp. 171—175). We would also point to the fact that in the *Повесть временных лет* some Olma (= Hólmr, Hólmi?) was written to erect a church of the St. Nikolas above Askold's grave: «И оубиша Асколда и Дира [и] несоша на гору, и погребша на горе, еже ся ныне зоветь Оугорьское, где ныне Ольминь дворь на той могиле поставилъ церковь свягата Николу а Дирова могила за святою Ориною» (CCRC, Т. 1, p. 23). This evidence, in particular, allowed some researchers to think that Askold had been Christian (see for example: Макарий: *История Русской церкви...*, p. 204; W.A. Parkhomenko: *Начало христианства на Руси. Очерки из истории Руси IX—X вв.* Полтава 1913, p. 72; O.M. Раров: *Русская церковь в IX — первой трети XII в. Принятие христианства*. Москва 1988, p. 119; otherwise: E.E. Golubinsky: *История русской церкви. Период первый, киевский или домонгольский*. Т. 1:1. Москва 1901, p. 38).

⁶⁹ Cf., for example, the evidence from the *Никоновская летопись* of the ambassadors of the Pope of Rome to Yaropolk in 979 (CCRC, Т. 9, p. 39), although the authenticity of this communication is doubted by some scholars.

⁷⁰ It is peculiar, that by some versions it was Otton II who baptized Harald the Bluetooth (the latter reburied his father Gorm). In honor of Otton the son of Harald the Bluetooth, Swein-Otto Haraldsson Forkbeard got his Christian name (died in 1014). See: F. Uspenskij: *Name und Macht. Die Wahl des Namens als dynastisches Kampfinstrument im mittelalterlichen Skandinavien*. Frankfurt am Main 2004, pp. 72, 105.

woman. We must, however, note, that *prima signatio* was not sufficient in itself for a marriage with such a noble person, although we have no definite evidence that the marriage took place.

As for Oleg, the only reason to suppose that he also received *prima signatio* is Yaroslav's action making him equal to Yaropolk. It should be born in mind that both brothers had lived together with a Christian grandmother. There is a version that due to the princess Olga they became Christian in childhood⁷¹. If this supposition is right, then, in my opinion, they, under the influence of their grandmother, got only *prima signatio*. On the one hand, in Byzantine practice it was generally accepted and even recommended to baptize little children not immediately after catechization but after some rather long period of time⁷². On the other hand, *prima signatio* (not baptism) seems to be the only thing that the princess Olga could do for the brothers who at the same time had a heathen father, and from this father they had to inherit the power of the still not converted country.

So, we have no direct evidence of *prima signatio* of Yaropolk and Oleg; however, the hypothesis of their receiving it explains all of the above-listed facts. With this hypothesis we find the explanation of the chronicle entry in question concerning the baptism of the bones and their reburial in the church which breaks the Church canons: the Christian prince Yaroslav the Wise baptized the bones of his uncles, thereby completing the move they had already undertaken to join the Christian Church, and by this he extended the Christian history of his family. His deeds have direct correlation with the practice of reburial of remains accepted among the Scandinavians during the first decades after conversion of their countries.

⁷¹ See: Makarij: *История Русской церкви...*, p. 223.

⁷² Cf.: M. Arranz: *Чин оглашения...*, p. 74.

Fjodor Uspenskij

Chrzest szczątków książąt Olega i Jaropelka (O interpretacji zapisów kronikarskich od 1044 roku)

Streszczenie

Artykuł dotyczy sprawy przeniesienia szczątków dwóch książąt z dynastii Rurykowiczów, Olega (zm. w 977 roku) i Jaropelka (zm. w 980 roku), którego dokonał w 1044 roku książę kijowski Jarosław Mądry. Z kronikarskich opisów dowiadujemy się, że przy tej okazji kości obydwóch władców „zostały ochrzczone”, a z tego wynika, iż obydwaj Rurykowicze zmarli jako poganie i zostali pierwotnie pochowani według pogańskiego rytuału. Jako że mamy do czynienia z wydarzeniem na Rusi wyjątkowym, pojawiają się pytania o cele, jakie przyświecca-

ly Jarosławowi, oraz o zakres czynności, którymi objęty został „chrzest” obydwu książąt. Wiele wskazuje na to, że Jarosławowi chodziło o wzmocnienie prestiżu dynastii oraz powiększenie liczby jej chrześcijańskich członków, przodków ówczesnie panującego księcia. Jako dość ścisłą analogię do czynu Jarosława można wskazać decyzję króla Danii Haralda Sinozębego, który po wybudowaniu w Jelling kościoła około 960 roku, nakazał przenieść do niego szczątki swoich rodziców Gorma Starego i Thyry, którzy dotąd byli pochowani według pogańskich zwyczajów. Można założyć, że przed złożeniem w nowym grobie szczątki obojga także zostały „ochrzczone”. Na istnienie podobnego rytuału w Europie północnej wskazują znaleziska pogańskich grobów w średniowiecznych kościołach. Związane z tym zjawisko powtórnego grzebania pogańskich zmarłych musiało być dość popularne w średniowiecznej Skandynawii, co pokazują z jednej strony znaleziska archeologiczne, z drugiej — przekazy pisane, sagi, a także najstarsze kodeksy prawne. Wiele wskazuje też na to, iż zarówno w Skandynawii, jak i na Rusi, jeszcze długo po konwersji dochodziło do mieszania się chrześcijańskich i pogańskich zwyczajów pogrzebowych. Dotyczy to np. zwyczaju przenoszenia zmarłego przez dziurę w ścianie. Obrzęd ten zawędrował na Ruś ze Skandynawii i, co ciekawe, wiąże się go jedynie z rządzącą dynastią. Należy także brać pod uwagę, że mieszkańcy Skandynawii w różnych okolicznościach oraz w różnych miejscach przyjmowali tzw. *prima signatio* i dzięki temu stawali się katechumenami. Choć nie byli ochrzczeni, mogli uczestniczyć w kościelnych ceremoniach i współtworzyć grupę wiernych. Katechumenat był zapewne bardzo praktyczny w Skandynawii w czasie zarzucania starych wierzeń na rzecz nowej wiary. Pozwalał cieszyć się korzyściami wynikającymi z przynależności do grupy wyznawców Chrystusa, nie oznaczał jednak definitywnego zerwania z pogańską sferą. Świadomość ta cechowała też władców, dla których umiejętność balansowania między światem starych i nowych wierzeń była sprawą niezwykle ważną. Przykłady takiej postawy mamy również na Rusi.

Wiele wskazuje na to, że Oleg i Jaropełk otrzymali *prima signatio* i przed śmiercią nie zostali ochrzczeni. Niemniej jednak, ich status pozwalał Jarosławowi uczynić to przy okazji przeniesienia ich szczątków. Być może, status katechumena był Jaropełkowi potrzebny, gdy stawał się sojusznikiem Ottona II oraz, jak chcą niektórzy, żenił się z jego krewną. Oleg, podobnie zresztą jak jego brat, mógł otrzymać *prima signatio*, będąc jeszcze dzieckiem, dzięki swojej babce, Oldze. To jednakże pozwalało braciom dziedziczyć władzę po swoim pogańskim ojcu Świętopelku we wciąż pogańskim kraju. Jarosław Mądry dokonał „chrztu” szczątków swych wujów zgodnie z obyczajem znanym i praktykowanym w Skandynawii, który pozwalał władcy rozszerzyć chrześcijański zakres jego dynastii.

Fjodor Uspenskij

Die Taufe der sterblichen Überreste von den Prinzen Oleg und Jaropełk (Zur Auslegung der ab 1044 geschriebenen Chroniken)

Zusammenfassung

Der vorliegende Artikel handelt über die Verlegung der sterblichen Überreste von zwei Prinzen der Rurikowitsch Dynastie, Oleg (gest. 977) und Jaropełk (gest. 980), die im Jahre 1044 vom Kiewer Prinzen, Jaroslav dem Klugen durchgeführt wurde. Aus den Chroniken kann man erfahren, dass die Knochen der beiden Herrscher auch „getauft“ wurden, was davon zeugt, dass die Prinzen als Heiden gestorben und nach dem heidnischen Ritual begraben worden sind. Da es in Ruthenenland ein ungewöhnliches Geschehnis war, muss man nach dem Ziel der „Taufe“ und deren Verlauf fragen. Viel deutet darauf hin, dass Jaroslav das Prestige

der Dynastie durch Vermehrung deren christlichen Mitglieder, Vorfahren des damals herrschenden Priesters verstärken wollte. In Analogie zu Jaroslavs Tat hat auch der dänische König, Harald Blauzahn die sterblichen Überreste seiner der heidnischen Sitte gemäß beerdigten Eltern, Gorm des Alten und Thyra in die etwa 960 neugebaute Kirche zu Jelling verlegt. Vermutlich wurden diese Überreste vor der Beerdigung auch „getauft“. Von ähnlichen Praktiken in Nordeuropa zeugen die in mittelalterlichen Kirchen entdeckten heidnischen Gräber. Eine wiederholte Beerdigung der heidnischen Verstorbenen müsste in mittelalterlichen Skandinavien ziemlich populär sein, wovon sowohl archäologische Funde, wie auch skandinavische Sagen und älteste Gesetzbücher zeugen können. Möglicherweise kam es noch lange nach der Konversion sowohl in Skandinavien, wie auch in Ruthenenland zur Vermischung von christlichen und heidnischen Beerdigungsbräuchen. Das betrifft beispielsweise den aus Skandinavien stammenden und lediglich mit der herrschenden Dynastie verbundenen Brauch, nämlich die Versetzung eines Verstorbenen durch ein Loch in der Wand. Es ist beachtenswert, dass die Skandinavier in verschiedenen Situationen und an verschiedenen Orten sog. *prima signatio* annahmen, um Katechumenen zu werden. Obwohl sie nicht getauft worden waren, konnten sie an kirchlichen Zeremonien teilnehmen und der Gläubigergruppe angehören. Als alte Volksglauben zugunsten dem neuen Glauben außer Gebrauch kamen, war das Katechumenat in Skandinavien wahrscheinlich sehr praktisch, denn es bedeutete, dass man mit dem Heidnischen nicht definitiv gebrochen hatte, aber aus der Angehörigkeit den Christusbekennern profitieren konnte. Die damals Herrschenden, darunter die in Ruthenenland, hielten es für sehr wichtig, zwischen dem Bereich von alten und neuen Glauben schwanken zu können.

Alles deutet darauf hin, dass Oleg und Jaropelk auch *prima signatio* bekommen haben und vor dem Tod nicht getauft wurden, doch ihr Status erlaubte Jaroslav, ihre sterblichen Reste bei deren Verlegung taufen lassen. Es kann sein, dass Jaropelk ein Katechumen werden musste, um zum Alliierten des Kaisers Otto II. werden zu können, oder wie es andere Historiker auch wollen, um dessen Verwandte heiraten zu können. Genauso war es auch mit seinem Bruder, Oleg, der *prima signatio* dank seiner Großmutter, Olga noch als Kind bekommen hat. Doch die beiden Brüder durften von seinem heidnischen Vater, Świątopelk die Herrschaft über dem immer noch heidnischen Land erben. Jaroslav der Kluge „taufte“ die sterblichen Reste seiner beiden Onkel gemäß dem in Skandinavien bekannten und praktizierten Brauch, der dem Herrscher möglich machte, den christlichen Bereich seiner Dynastie zu erweitern.