

Concluding Remarks

by Jonathan Shepard

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

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

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

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

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

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

4 This is to simplify a complex and ever-changing series of trading-nexuses across Eastern Europe. But in my view there is still merit in the arguments presented by Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus, 750–1200* (Longman: London, 1996), pp. 14–27, 30, and 42–43.

5 Ibn Khurradadhbih, *Kitab al-Masalik wa'l Mamalik*, ed. and French tr. de Goeje, pp. 115–16.

6 On Ibn Khurradadhbih, see *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edn, III (Leiden: Brill, 1971), p. 839 (Mohammad Hadj-Sadok).

7 Masudi, *Les prairies d'or*, tr. by Charles Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, rev. by Charles Pellat, I (Paris: Société Asiatique, 1962), pp. 162–64.

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

A second key manner in which Ibn Khurradadhbih's remarks bear on our theme is that they invite comparison of the routes he describes with the development of the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks. One may surmise *a priori* from his remarks and from the other instances noted above that traders initially plied this route, too, more or less in its entirety, with segmentation into shorter stretches of the journey to Byzantium developing only subsequently. The route was distinctive, in so far as it offered almost continuous water-links and yet necessitated careful organisation, especially for negotiating the portages between the northern Rus' river-systems and the Dnieper, and for navigating or portaging past the Dnieper Rapids. Nonetheless, there are hints of a similar progression from fairly long-haul (and small-scale) commercial enterprises to segmentation, with emporia developing along the way, and local supply-chains branching out in many directions. If, as is most likely, the earliest treaty of the Rus' with the Byzantines was negotiated on behalf of a Rus' leadership still ensconced in the north, at Riurikovo Gorodishche, this bespeaks long-range operations, as does the apparent naming of the towns of Polotsk, Rostov and Liubech in the accord of 907.⁹ So,

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

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

too, does the depiction in Emperor Constantine VII's *De administrando imperio* of wooden craft for transporting goods to Constantinople being marshalled from as far north as Gnezdovo-Smolensk and, even, Novgorod.¹⁰ In time, stopping-places and emporia developed and multiplied along the way as, for example, on Veliko Potemkin island in the Dnieper estuary¹¹ and at the fortified harbour of Voyn.¹² And Gnezdovo-Smolensk, already becoming an important service-station for travellers between the northern rivers and the Dnieper at the time Constantine was writing, developed into a massive emporium and manufacturing centre.¹³ By the eleventh and twelfth centuries, elaborate distribution networks branched out from Smolensk and other conurbations based on the major riverways. Groups of traders would transport commodities originating in the Byzantine south, notably wine and oil, to smaller towns and on to rural settlements, where the finds of shards of amphorae offer partial hints of the trafficking: much of the produce may have travelled in cheaper containers, in the form of leather skins or bags.¹⁴ Novgorod's role as an emporium is well-known, while the contents of the birch-bark letters unearthed there provide evidence of the day-to-day engagement of many of its inhabitants in various commercial nexuses, the majority being local or regional.¹⁵ There are indications not only from Novgorod but also from other cities of semi de luxe ornaments and other imports from the Byzantine world being marketed and circulating at social levels well below the ruling elite, and some of these items made their way to rural settlements even in northern Rus'.¹⁶ Furthermore, regional

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

- 10 Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, ch. 9, ed. and tr. by Gyula Moravcsik and Romilly J. H. Jenkins (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967), pp. 56–57.
- 11 A. L. Sokul'sky, 'K lokalizatsii letopisnogo Olesh'ia', *Sovetskaia arkheologiya*, 1980, no. 1, 65–73.
- 12 I. I. Morgunov, 'O pograničnom stroitel'stve Vladimira Sviatoslavicha na Periaslavskom Levoberezh'e', *Rossiiskaia Arkheologiya*, 1999, no. 3, 69–78 (p. 73).
- 13 See, e.g. Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, pp. 127–28, 140–1, and 334–35; *Put' iz Variag v Greki i iz Grek: katalog vystavki*, ed. by N. I. Astashova (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyi istoricheskiĭ muzeĭ, 1996), pp. 22–26; Wladimir Duczko, *Viking Rus: Studies on the Presence of Scandinavians in Eastern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 160–70 and 187–88. Gnezdovo-Smolensk's importance as a centre for manufacturing amulets was emphasised in Alexander Musin's unpublished paper, 'The Scandinavians in Eastern Europe between Paganism and Christianity'.
- 14 Thomas S. Noonan and Roman K. Kovalev, 'Prayer, Illumination and Good Times: the Export of Byzantine Wine and Olive Oil to the North of Russia in Pre-Mongol Times', *Byzantium and the North: Acta Byzantina Fennica*, 8 (1995–96), 73–96 (pp. 89–91); repr. in *The Expansion of Orthodox Europe*, ed. by Jonathan Shepard (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 161–84 (pp. 177–79).
- 15 See contributions to *Novgorod: Das mittelalterliche Zentrum und sein Umland im Norden Rußlands*, ed. by Michael Müller-Wille and others, *Studien zur Siedlungsgeschichte und Archäologie der Ostseegebiete*, 1 (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 2001); and *Novgorod: the Archaeology of a Russian Medieval City and Its Hinterland*, ed. by Mark Brisbane and David Gaimster (London: British Museum, 2001). See also Franklin and Shepard, *Emergence of Rus*, pp. 282–85 and 331–34.
- 16 Alexander Musin, 'The Archaeology of Northern Russia's Urban Sites as a Source for the Study of Middle and Late Byzantine Culture', *Byzantinoslavica*, 67 (2009), 41–49 (44–45 and 47). See, for rural northern finds, e.g. Noonan and Kovalev, 'Prayer, Illumination and Good Times', pp. 78–79 and 91 (repr. pp. 166–67 and 179).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

martyrs'.²² This episode dates, admittedly, from before Volodimer's baptism and acceptance of Byzantine forms of Christian doctrine and worship, and from c. 988 onwards his ability to enforce a degree of outward and visible conformity to Byzantine religious norms was formidable. Yet together with the influx of southern goods after Volodimer's conversion and the establishment of a Byzantine metropolitan in Kiev came traders, teachers and texts that did not necessarily observe niceties of Constantinopolitan church teaching or impeccable religious practice. Traces of 'apocryphal' writings appear even on the waxen writing-tablets from the beginning of the eleventh century that archaeologists have unearthed in Novgorod.²³ The sheer number of churches raised in towns like Novgorod and Kiev²⁴ impeded enforcement of religious correctness — and all the more so if, as Fedir Androshchuk infers from analogies with the situation in Lund, many stood in the private compounds of nobles and the well-to-do.²⁵ Conversely, one of the leitmotifs emerging from our conference is the thinness of ecclesiastical organisation in rural areas of Scandinavia and Rus', the dearth of evidence for parish structures in place there during the eleventh or twelfth centuries.²⁶

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

27 Ilarion, *Slovo o zakone i blagodati*, in *Biblioteka literatury drevnei Rusi*, 1, ed. by D. S. Likhachev (St Petersburg: Nauka, 1997), pp. 26–56 (esp. pp. 44–52). See Jonathan Shepard, 'The Coming of Christianity to Rus: Authorized and Unauthorized Versions', in *Conversion to Christianity from Late Antiquity to the Modern Age: Considering the Process in Europe, Asia and the Americas*, ed. by Calvin B. Kendall and others (Minneapolis, MN: Center for Early Modern History, University of Minneapolis, 2009), pp. 185–222 (esp. pp. 185–87 and 211–13).

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

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 51–52.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Neither our conference's proceedings nor the fruits published here can lay claim to utter comprehensiveness. They do, however, present materials of sufficient quantity and variety to permit collation of items of data. At the very least, they prompt reinterpretation of anomalous-seeming scraps of evidence and of statements in our sources that have met with scholarly scepticism. For example the *Íslendingabók's* mention of three 'Armenian bishops' at large in Iceland in the eleventh century³⁷ looks far less suspect in light of the data which Ildar Garipzanov assembles from non-narrative sources of eastern Christian elements in the Nordic world, whether cults of unmistakably eastern saints or rites prescribed in local ecclesiastical texts.³⁸ One might fruitfully compare the *Íslendingabók's* evidence with Adam of Bremen's report that 'Greeks' were frequenting the port of Jumne in the mouth of the river Oder at the time he was writing, the 1070s. These near-contemporaries of the Armenian churchmen were, almost certainly, traders, and responsible for an unusual commodity on sale there 'which the inhabitants call Greek Fire'.³⁹ They, too, had most probably plied the waterways north from the Byzantine world, and there is no need to suppose that Adam used *Greci* as a general term for practitioners of the eastern orthodox rite in general.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

46 Ingmar Jansson, 'Eastern Christianity in Sweden? – Viewpoints from an Archaeologist' (an unpublished paper). Further evaluation of the evidence from rune-stones of Scandinavians' journeys to the Byzantine world should come from R.-J. Lilie and others, *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*, 1, 2 (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2009–).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Наукове видання

Ruthenica. Supplementum 4

EARLY CHRISTIANITY ON THE WAY
FROM THE VARANGIANS TO THE GREEKS

Edited by
Ildar Garipzanov and Oleksiy Tolochko

УДК

Early Christianity on the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks / Ed. by Ildar Garipzanov and Oleksiy Tolochko. — Kiev: Institute of Ukrainian History, 2011), 148 p. (Ruthenica. Supplementum 4)

Свідоцтво про державну реєстрацію
серія КВ № 6937 від 04.02.2003 р.

Редактор

Оригінал-макет підготувала
Анжела Корженівська

Підписано до друку 29.11.2011. Формат 70×108/16
Ум. друк. арк. 11,86. Обл.-вид. арк. 11,8.
Наклад 300 прим. Зам. 49. Ціна договірна.
Поліграфічна дільниця Інституту історії України НАН України
Київ-1, вул. Грушевського, 4