

Oleksiy Tolochko

## ‘Jubilee’ Consecration of Churches in Rus’

It is a well-known fact that sources do not report on initial consecrations of the two most important ecclesiastical institutions of pre-Mongol Rus’: the Mother of God ‘Tithe’ Church built by St. Volodimer soon after the conversion and its successor the metropolitan cathedral of Saint Sophia built by his son Iaroslav<sup>1</sup>. This is rather strange, but the anomaly is further enhanced by the existence of reports on consecrations not tied to the church’s initial completion and performed years later. These later reports are the enduring puzzle that so far escapes a reasonably convincing explanation. This paper aims at advancing just such an explanation which, although hypothetical, nevertheless has at least the advantage of offering a single interpretative principle.

Let us start with the second report, on the St. Sophia Cathedral of Kyiv.

### Saint Sophia Cathedral of Kyiv

In the synaxarion included into the so-called *Mstislav Gospel* (commissioned most probably in 1106<sup>2</sup> by Prince Mstislav, son of Volodimer Monomakh), under December 4 we read:

въ тѣ\* днѣ сщєніє сѣѣа софинє. иже єсть въ кыєвѣ гра<sup>а</sup> сщѣна Ефремѣмъ митрополитѣмъ.<sup>3</sup>

The same day consecration of Saint Sophia, which is in the city of Kiev, consecrated by the metropolitan Ephraim.

The notice, naturally, provides no year date, but the metropolitan named here is usually identified as Ephraim of Kyiv whose tenure is believed to have lasted

---

1 The *Tales* on consecration of the Tithe Church (under May 12) and of St. Sophia (under December 4) in the *Prolog* are of late date and also too heavily depend on the *Primary Chronicle* to be considered the prime sources (see: Olga Loseva, *Zhitia russkikh sviatykh v sostave drevnerusskikh prologov 12 — pervoi tretii 15 vekov* (Moscow, 2009), 167–168, 179–180.

2 Nikolai Lisovoi, “K datirovke Mstislavova Evangelia,” *Mstislavovo Evangelie XII veka. Issledovaniia* (Moscow, 1997), 710–720.

3 *Aprakos Mstislava Velikogo*, ed. by Lidia Zhukovskaia (Moscow, 1983), 234.

from 1055 to 1065. By that time, St. Sophia Cathedral was completed and consecrated and no event that would warrant its additional consecration so soon after the first one has been suggested. The incident is thus labeled ‘somewhat enigmatic’. The enigma is illusory, however. Ephraim of Kyiv is a fictitious character cooked-up in the fifteenth century in the later chronicles of Novgorod<sup>4</sup>. There was no metropolitan of Kyiv by this name in the eleventh century, and the notice in the *Mstislav Gospel* must refer to another man and another period.

Which period exactly? The modifier after the name of the cathedral in our notice — “Saint Sophia, *which is in the city of Kyiv*” — was clearly called to distinguish this church from another one of the same name, St. Sophia of Novgorod (which is to be expected, since the manuscript was commissioned by the then prince of Novgorod for the church in his Gorodishche residence). Construction of St. Sophia of Novgorod began in 1045 and although no consecration date is documented, by 1052 it was, most probably, completed<sup>5</sup>. Also, the absence of records (similar to the *Mstislav Gospel*) in the two oldest extant synaxaria, the *Ostromir Gospel* of 1056–1057 and in the *Archangel Gospel* of 1093, might be of chronological significance. That would indicate that by the time the *Mstislav Gospel* was produced, the consecration of St. Sophia of Kyiv by Ephraim was still a relatively recent event, one not yet integrated into other synaxaria.

Apparently, guided by similar observations, Kapiton Nevostruev, proposed that the record in the *Mstislav Gospel* (and the event it describes) must be close in time to the date of the manuscript. The scholar identified the metropolitan in question as Ephraim of Pereiaslavl, who sometime between 1090 and 1096, must have performed the second consecration of St. Sophia of Kyiv<sup>6</sup>. Recently, Aleksandr Nazarenko has independently reached the same conclusion, having conjectured that if, as was the custom, the consecration was performed on Sunday, it must have been done in 1089 (December 4 fell on a Sunday that year)<sup>7</sup>. Elaborating on this idea, Savva Mikheev further suggested that the second consecration might have been occasioned by the fiftieth anniversary of the cathedral’s foundation, counting

4 Aleksei Tolochko, “Zamechaniia o pervykh mitropolitakh kievskikh,” *Vertograd mnogotsvetnyi. Sbornik k 80-letiiu Borisa Flori* (Moscow, 2018), 73–90.

5 That year its founder, prince Volodimer, son of Iaroslav, was buried there (*PSRL* 2: 149).

6 Petr Biliarsky, “Sostav i mesiatseslov Mstislavova spiska evangelia (Iz vlecheno iz sochinenia prof. K.I. Nevostrueva),” *Izvestia Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk po Otdeleniu russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti*, 10, 2 (1861), 118).

7 Aleksandr Nazarenko, *Drevniaia Rus i slaviane* (Moscow, 2009), 263. Nazarenko argued that in order to feature so conspicuously in the Gospel commissioned by a member of Prince Vsevolod’s family, Ephraim should have been especially close to or somehow favoured by the family. Indeed, Ephraim would meet these requirements, being a metropolitan of Vsevolod’s patrimonial Pereiaslavl. This reasoning can be enhanced by a chronological observation as well. Metropolitan John II of Kyiv died in 1089 and Vsevolod’s daughter, Anna, went to Constantinople to fetch a new one. She returned the following year with John III (*PSRL* 2: 199–200). That means that for the better part of 1089 and 1090, there was no metropolitan in Kyiv, and Ephraim of Pereiaslavl remained the senior acting hierarch of realm. As such, he was perfectly capable of consecrating St. Sophia in the last month of 1089.

from 1039, when December 4 also was Sunday<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, 1039 must be the ‘true’, that is, not the ‘chronicle adjusted’, date of St. Sophia’s foundation. Thus, there are reasons to believe that the second consecration of the metropolitan church of Rus’ was performed exactly fifty years after its foundation. This concludes the hypothetical section of this paper. What follows is simple arithmetic, the material reality of which cannot be denied, even if interpretations may vary.

### The Tithe Church

The previous section has brought us to the year of 1039. This is a notable year. Its single entry in the *Primary Chronicle* reads:

В лѣтѣ . ҃҃҃҃ . ѿ . мѣсѣца . свѣдѣна бы҃хъ цр҃кви ст҃ыа Б҃҃҃҃а . юже созда Володимеръ ѿць  
Ирославль . митрополитомъ Феупеньтомъ<sup>9</sup>.

In the year 6547 the church of Holy Virgin which had been founded by Volodimer, father of Iaroslav, was consecrated by the metropolitan Theopemptos.

No additional information is provided and the entry looks quite isolated within the narrative of the *Primary Chronicle*<sup>10</sup>. Its form, however, suggests that it was copied from a synaxarion or some other commemorative notice found among the chronicler’s sources<sup>11</sup>.

The Tithe Church was completed and supposedly consecrated in 996<sup>12</sup>. Thus, the entry for 1039 traditionally baffled scholars, while its brevity makes it open to interpretation as to the reason for a second consecration. Perhaps it was due to the completion of the church’s outer galleries<sup>13</sup>; the consecration of the chapel

8 Savva Mikheev, “Kogda byl postroen Sofiiskii sobor v Kieve?,” *Imenoslov. Istoria iazyka. Istoria kultury* (Moscow, 2012), 239.

9 *PSRL* 2: 141.

10 Thus, metropolitan Theopemptos figures only in this record and it would seem that the chronicler learned of his existence, as well as of the office he represented, from the source that served as the basis for this entry. Moreover, it would seem that the chronicler, against his better judgement, was led to believe that this was the *only* consecration of the Tithe Church and thus did not mention the act under 996 when writing about the completion of the church. He substituted the formal act for the story of Volodimer, upon having seen the church built, offering a prayer to the Lord (*PSRL* 2: 124).

11 Cf. the record in the *Mstislav Gospel* cited above and also the *Tale* of the consecration of the church of St. George in Kyiv: “Въ тѣхъ днѣхъ сѣна бы҃хъ цр҃кы ст҃го Геургия . в Киевѣ на горѣ . кнѣземь блговѣрнымъ Ирославомъ [и ст҃и ю Лариономъ митрополитомъ . мѣца ноябра въ . кс. днѣ]” (“The same day the church of Saint George in Kyiv on the Hill was consecrated by the pious prince Iaroslav [by the metropolitan Hilarion in the month of November on the 26<sup>th</sup> day]”) (Olga Loseva, *Zhitia russkikh sviatykh v sostave drevnerusskikh prologov*, 154, 325).

12 *PSRL* 2: 124.

13 Mikhail Karger, *Drevnii Kiev*, vol. 2: *Pamiatniki kievskogo zodchestva 11–13 vv.* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1961), 11. It is doubtful that works of this kind would necessitate the new consecration of the church building. Even if so, recent archeological investigations of the Tithe Church demonstrate that the galleries were built at a much later time (see: Hlib Ivakin, Oleh Ioannisian, Denys Iolshyn, “Arkhitekturno-arkheolohichni doslidzhennia tserkvy Bohorodytsi Desiatynnoi v Kyievi u 2008 — 2011 rokakh,” *Sloviany i Rus: arkheolohiia ta istoriia. Zbirka prats na poshamu P.P. Tolochka* (Kyiv, 2013), 73–80).

dedicated to St. Clement<sup>14</sup>; the rededication of the church<sup>15</sup>; its seizure by some heretics or even pagans<sup>16</sup>; or a misattribution of this event, originally applied to the St. Sophia cathedral<sup>17</sup>. The sheer number of solutions offered, as well as their purely speculative nature, suggest that none of them has probably hit the target.

However, if we apply the same principle as in the previous case of St. Sophia, by subtracting fifty years from 1039 we will arrive at 989, which is the year the Tithe Church was founded<sup>18</sup>. One implication of this arithmetic is that re-consecration of the Tithe Church and founding of Saint Sophia in the same year do not accidentally overlap. The setting up of the new metropolitan see by Iaroslav was orchestrated to take place in 1039 so it would fall on the fiftieth anniversary of the Tithe Church’s foundation by Volodimer.

### Dormition Cathedral of Smolensk

The church of Dormition of the Mother of God that was to become the cathedral of the bishopric of Smolensk was founded by Volodimer Monomakh in 1100.<sup>19</sup> The episcopal see was instituted there in 1136<sup>20</sup>, and one may think that by that time the structure had been finished and consecrated, although the precise date is not recorded in the sources. Instead, we have a record on the cathedral’s consecration in 1150:

стилице стые бци. встиса ѿ манѹила перваг епѣкпа града смолеѣска. мѣца авгѹста  
ѿ. днь индикѣта .гѣ. в лѣта .ѿСХННІЕ<sup>21</sup>.

- 
- 14 Aleksei Karpov, *Issledovaniia po istorii domongolskoi Rusi* (Moscow, 2014), 95. No such chapel is documented by the sources.
- 15 Vadym Aristov, “The Tithe Church of Saint Sophia in Kyiv: Thietmar of Merseburg’s Account Reinterpreted,” *Palaeoslavica* 29 (2021), 89–109.
- 16 Mikhail Murianov, “O letopisnykh statiakh 1039 i 1132 gg.,” *Letopisi i khroniki. 1973*. (Moscow, 1974), 111–114. No incidents of this kind are recorded and their very possibility in Kyiv in the 1030s is highly unlikely.
- 17 Aleksei Shakhmatov, *Razyskaniia o drevneishykh russkikh letopisnykh svodakh* (Saint Petersburg, 1908), 415.
- 18 *PSRL* 1: 121–122. Witnesses of the *Hypatian* branch have 991 as the date, since here two additional ‘empty years’ are inserted between the account of Volodimer’s baptism and the one on the founding of the church (*PSRL* 2: 106).
- 19 The date accepted in the literature is 1101. Indeed, the chronicle reports the event under 6609 (*PSRL* 2: 250), which is believed to be a so-called ‘March year’ (covering March 1101 — February 1102). There is, however, a possibility that, like almost all dates of ecclesiastical origin, this one, too, is given according to the ‘September year’ (covering September 1100 — August 1101). Judging from the event’s placement within the annual entry (after the one dated to September 15), the foundation of the church in Smolensk could have taken place in the autumn or early in the ‘September’ year of 6609 (1100). The date of the cathedral’s second consecration supports this assertion. The *Novgorod Fourth Chronicle* reports the event as having taken place under 6608 (1100) (*PSRL* 5: 138).
- 20 Iaroslav Shchapov, *Kniazheskie ustavy i sterkov v Drevnei Rusi 11–14 vv.* (Moscow, 1972), 137.
- 21 For the text, see: Tatiana Sumnikova, “‘Povest o velikom kniaze Rostislave Mstislaviche smolenskom i o tserkvi’ v krugu drugikh smolenskikh istochnikov 12 v.,” *Vostochnoslavianskie iazyki: istochniki dlia ikh izuchenia. 1973* (Moscow, 1973), 133. See also: Iaroslav Shchapov, *Kniazheskie ustavy i tsterkov v Drevnei Rusi*, 140–141.

Consecration of the Holy Mather of God. Consecrated by Manuel, the first bishop of the city of Smolensk on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month of August, in the 13<sup>th</sup> indiction of the year 6658.

Explanations of this act were not unlike those offered in the previous case, with archeologists favouring unspecified construction works, while historians divining some power struggle in the background or desecration of the church<sup>22</sup>.

The second consecration of the Dormition cathedral happened exactly fifty years after its foundation, on August 15, 1150. There is little doubt that it was linked to the issuing, shortly after September 30, 1150, of an additional charter for the cathedral that invokes its foundation by Volodimer Monomakh and confirms his initial grant<sup>23</sup>. The title had been granted to the cathedral by an earlier charter, of 1137/1138, which also expresses concern that the foundation might be alienated in the future<sup>24</sup>.

### The Church of Holy Sepulchre

Upon seizing Jerusalem, the Crusaders inherited the church of Holy Sepulchre after it had been partially restored by the Byzantines in the 1030s and 1040s, following its destruction in 1009 by caliph Al-Hakim<sup>25</sup>. In the early 1140s, the Latins launched their own project of renovation and enlargement of the church believed to have been completed in 1149<sup>26</sup>. To mark the event, a commemorative inscription was made above the chapel of the Calvary stating that the edifice was consecrated on July 15, 1149, when “fifty years from the taking of the city” had passed<sup>27</sup>. This is the only example when the figure of fifty is explicitly stated in connection with consecration, and so must be discussed, albeit briefly, here. There is little doubt that the figure was of sufficient symbolism for the patrons (Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Fulcher, and probably Queen Melisende) to be included into the inscription. The exact nature of this symbolism is not revealed, however.

Although this example had been invoked in the context of ‘jubilee events’ in Rus’<sup>28</sup>, it is unclear how relevant this case may be to our discussion. The church of Holy Sepulchre was not founded in 1099 and so, from a formal point of view,

22 Pavel Rappoport, *Russkaia arkhitektura II–13 vv. Katalog pamiatnikov* (Leningrad, 1982), 89; Iaroslav Shchapov, *Kniazheskie ustavy i tserkov*, 145–146.

23 For the text, see: *Drevnerusskie kniazheskie ustavy II–15 vv.*, ed. by Iaroslav Shchapov (Moscow, 1976), 146.

24 *Drevnerusskie kniazheskie ustavy*, 141.

25 Robert Ousterhout, “Architecture as Relic and the Construction of Sanctity: The Stones of the Holy Sepulchre,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 62, 1 (2003), 7–9.

26 Jaroslav Folda, “The Crusader Church of the Holy Sepulchre: Design, Depiction and the Pilgrim Church of Compostela,” *Tomb and Temple. Re-Imagining the Sacred Building in Jerusalem*, ed. by Robin Griffith-Johnes and Eric Fernie (Woodbridge, UK; Rochester, NY, 2018), 95–99.

27 Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. A Corpus*, vol. 3: *The City of Jerusalem* (Cambridge, 2007), 68.

28 Aleksei Gippius, “Millennialism and Jubilee Tradition in Early Rus’ History and Historiography,” *Ruthenica II* (2003), 166–167.

its re-consecration does not belong to the same category as the Rus' cases. Moreover, the inscription most probably referred to the consecration of the particular Golgotha chapel, which happened to be finished in 1149, and not of the whole of the Holy Sepulchre whose restoration lasted up until the late 1160s<sup>29</sup>. Be that as it may, this instance postdates the early Rus' cases considerably, and also have been rooted in cultural and historical contexts quite alien to those which would be meaningful in Rus'. Soon after 1099, a new festival was added to ecclesiastical calendar of Jerusalem marking the conquest of the city on July 15. The day was celebrated with major processions (on par with those held on Palm Sunday, at Easter, and on Ascension Day) starting at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The new dedication of the Holy Sepulchre on the same day fifty years later was thought as directly linked with and a further extension of this annual celebration of the city's capture, as evidenced by entries in liturgical books (cf.: *Dedicatio ecclesie S. Sepulchri, et festivitas Ierusalem quando capta fuit a christianis*)<sup>30</sup>.

### Jubilee Year

The recurrent figure of fifty years naturally invokes the notion of jubilees and jubilee years. Christian interpretation of the concept, if it existed in the Eastern Church, has not found its way into Slavonic texts.<sup>31</sup> Yet the concept would have been known in Rus' in its original form and directly from its source, the Old Testament. According to Leviticus 25, after a lapse of seven sabbaths of years (i.e. a full 49 years), every fiftieth year was to be announced as a jubilee year. All property should automatically revert to its original owner (Levit 25: 10), and those who, compelled by poverty, had sold themselves as slaves, should regain their liberty<sup>32</sup>.

Two particulars of Levit 25 draw our attention: the manner in which jubilee years are computed and their connection with property rights.

Rus' practiced a particular way of counting, the so-called 'inclusive' system, which includes the first and the last year in the time interval. Hence, between 1100 and 1150, for instance, 51 years would pass; conversely, the fiftieth year from 1100 would arrive in 1149. The fact that in all of our three cases, they acted against their better instincts, means that a particular model was followed, the one

29 Martin Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ* (Stroud, 1999), 92–98; Colin Morris, *The Sepulchre of Christ and the Medieval West: From the Beginning to 1600* (Oxford, 2005), 193–195.

30 Jaroslav Folda, "Commemorating the Fall of Jerusalem. Remembering the First Crusade in Text, Liturgy, and Image," *Remembering Crusades. Myth, Image, and Identity*, ed. by Nicolas Paul and Suzanne Yeager (Baltimore, 2012), 125–127.

31 On the notion of Jubilee years in Rus, see: Aleksei Gippius, "Millennialism and Jubilee Tradition in Early Rus'," 154–171.

32 On Jubilee year in Jewish tradition, see: Jonathan Safren, "Jubilee Year and the Day of Atonement," *Proceedings of the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division A: The Bible and Its World* (Jerusalem, 1999), 107\*–113\*.

suggested by Leviticus: the next jubilee year arrives after a full 49 years have passed, on the fiftieth<sup>33</sup>.

In the case of the Dormition cathedral of Smolensk, where dry arithmetic is supplemented by documentary evidence, we discover that re-consecration of the church was followed by a property grant of a very peculiar kind. The wording of the charter is somewhat perplexing and cannot be fully appreciated in the absence of the ‘jubilee’ notion:

А се и еще и холмъ даю стѣи Бѣи и епѣкпоу, такъ \* дано дѣдѣмъ моимъ Володѣмерѣ Семенѣви пре\* епѣкпоу строиѣ нарадъ црквиныи и оутвѣрже<sup>е</sup><sup>34</sup>.

And I also give the hill to the Holy Mother of God and to the bishop, as my grandfather Volodimer had given it to Simeon, who had been bishop earlier, to build up and to strengthen Church affairs.

Technically, this is not a confirmation of the initial grant. What Prince Rostislav says is, literally, that he gives to the church again what had already been given to it by his grandfather. That is exactly what the jubilee year was supposed to be: a moment when property rights were to be reverted to the initial owner.

The Dormition cathedral stands out for it inaugurated the creation of a separate bishopric in Smolensk. In that sense, it was the ‘first’ church and it was to this ‘first’ church that the material sustenance of the bishopric was bound. Its re-consecration was a constitutive element in the renewal of the land grant and to perpetuate it.

### The Tithe

What the Dormition cathedral was for Smolensk, the Tithe Church was for all of Rus’. It was the first church in a very literal sense. In the wake of the baptism of Rus’, the Tithe Church stood for the whole ecclesiastical organisation of the realm and was identified with it. Its special, indeed, its unique role was that the tithe instituted by Prince Volodimer to support the new religion was donated to and owned by the Tithe Church (hence its name)<sup>35</sup>. The tithe was initial, foundational grant for the church of Rus’.

The state-sponsored institution of the tithe was not known in Byzantium and could not have been imported to Rus’, together with the first ecclesiastical

33 John S. Bergsma, “Once Again, the Jubilee, Every 49 or 50 Years?,” *Vetus Testamentum* 55, 1 (2005), 121–125.

34 *Drevnerusskie kniazheskie ustavy*, 146.

35 The nature of the tithe in its original form, is a matter of speculation. The wording in the *Primary Chronicle* reveals its report to be a retrospective modernisation from the standpoint of different conditions that emerged a century and a half later: “се даю цркви сеи . стѣи Бѣѣ ѿ имѣннѣа своего . и ѿ мой<sup>ѣ</sup> гра<sup>ѣ</sup> . десатую часть . и положи написавъ . клатьву въ цркви сеи рекъ . аще сего посудить кто да будетъ проклатъ” (“I bestow upon this church of the Holy Virgin a tithe of my property and of my cities.’ Then he wrote out a sanction and deposited it in the church, declaring: ‘If anyone violates this promise, may he be accursed’”) (*PSRL* 2: 109). “Клатъва” here clearly means the sanction clause of a charter. Nothing suggests that written documents were in existence in the 990s.

structures, at the time of the conversion. It must have been improvised 'after the fact' and within the framework of East European social realities. Scholars thus had to look elsewhere for its source or model. The Old Testament roots of the Rus' tithe or, at least, the Scripture sanction for the novel institution of tithe had been discussed in the literature<sup>36</sup>.

The implantation of an alien institution into a society totally lacking the legal and structural means for sustaining it, indeed, probably skeptical of the very idea of supporting it, would have needed ideological justification, and the best sanction is the one provided by the faith itself, the one found in its sacred books. The Church organisation must be provided for as a matter of faith and here the Old Testament supplied just the model, the tithe. Yet the church found itself in the environment deficient of a legal system based in written law, the one without notions of land property and its ownership perpetuated by written documents (grants, charters, deeds, testaments, contracts). There were no institutional guarantees for maintaining the property title once received. Here another model from the Old Testament, the jubilee years, came useful. Property owned as a matter of tradition would be reaffirmed and confirmed in course of performative act of the church re-consecration on a jubilee year.

Earlier, we have noted a remarkable detail: the foundation of the new metropolitan cathedral of St. Sophia, which was to take over the role of the Tithe Church as the principal ecclesiastical institution of the land and the owner of the tithe, was done in such a way, so no time gap with the re-consecration of the predecessor emerges. This peculiar timing might find its explanation if it has to do with the translation of property rights, where institutional succession should run uninterrupted<sup>37</sup>.

### **Martyrium of SSt. Boris and Gleb in Vyshgorod**

The consecration of what was probably the largest church in Rus', serving as the martyrium for SSt. Boris and Gleb, took place on May 1, 1115. It was a prominent event followed the next day by the translation of the martyred princes' relics to the newly-dedicated cathedral. The jubilee overtones of the whole endeavour are quite apparent. The church itself had been founded forty years earlier by Sviatoslav, Prince

36 See: Petrukhin V., "K probleme proiskhozhdenia drevnerusskoi desiately: 'Vetkhii zavet' i drevnerusskaia traditsiia," *Florilegium. K 60-letiu B.N. Flori. Sbornik statei* (Moscow, 2000), 265–276, where the previous literature.

37 A similar case, although less decisively, can be stated for yet another cathedral church, the Nativity of Mother of God in Suzdal. It was reconsecrated in 1148, under somewhat ambiguous circumstances, by the bishop of Novgorod Niphont (*NPL*: 28). Of the cathedral's beginnings, we learn only that it was founded by Prince Volodimer Monomakh and the metropolitan of Pereiaslav Ephraim whose documented activity falls within the 1090s (*PSRL* 1: 445). It would be reasonable to assume that the cathedral was founded in 1098, while its reconsecration fifty years later was a preparatory step for the relocation of the seat of bishops of Rostov (and also the tithe they were due) to Suzdal, where indeed we found them in the latter half of the twelfth century.



of Kyiv, who died in 1076 when the church walls were eight cubits high. The building was finished by his successor, Vsevolod (died in 1093), but soon after the church's roof collapsed. Sviatopolk, who succeeded Vsevolod, would not allow the church to be completed (thus preserving the one built by his father). Finally, Sviatoslav's son, Oleg, finalised his father's foundation with wall-paintings done in 1112, but the Prince of Kyiv, Sviatopolk, would resist its consecration up until his death in 1113. His successor Volodimer Monomakh, too, would drag his feet for two more years, and finally gave his consent to consecrate the church only in 1115, exactly on the centennial of the martyr's death. The moment thus was deliberately chosen.

The church of the Holy Martyrs was the first and the only martyrium in Rus', specifically created to house the relics of the saints. It also stands out for in its conception, it was endowed by Prince Iaroslav with the tithe, the only one besides the Tithe Church to have been so endowed in the eleventh century<sup>38</sup>. The tumultuous history of dynastic rivalry and competition over the patronage of the cult of the brother martyrs would not have allowed for the churches of the Holy Martyrs to conform evenly to jubilee years<sup>39</sup>. However, a fiction of sorts was created in 1115 by consecrating the church and reaffirming its grant on the second jubilee from the time of the martyrdom, rather than from the time of the foundation of the church<sup>40</sup>.

### The Church of the Holy Martyrs in Smolensk

Another Jubilee reconsecration of a church, also linked to the cult of the Holy Martyrs SSt. Boris and Gleb, should be mentioned. In 1191/6699, 'the old coffins' of SSt. Boris and Gleb (presumably those caskets in which the saints had been initially interred) were translated from Vyshgorod to Smolensk by prince Davyd Rostislavich. The relics were placed in the church of the Holy Martyrs of the Smiadynia monastery (founded on the site of St. Gleb's martyrdom). On the occasion, the rite of the 'grand consecration' of the church was performed<sup>41</sup>.

38 As reported by Nestor in his *Lecture* on Boris and Gleb: "таче потомъ х°любѣць въ столныи гра<sup>а</sup>. повелъ властелиноу гра<sup>а</sup> того даяти ѿ дани цркви стою десатю часть" ("then the Christ-lover (prince) returned to his city having ordered the governor of the town to give the church of the saints one tenth of its revenue"); for the text, see: Serhii Buhoslavsky, *Pamiatky 11–18 vv. pro kniaziv Borysa i Hliba. Rozvidka j teksty* (Kyiv, 1928), 200. This tithe, so it would seem, was allocated from the revenues of the province of Vyshgorod.

39 Before the Sviatoslav's and Oleg's foundation (1112), two previous churches had been built by Iaroslav (1052) and by his son Iziaslav (1072). All three had been dedicated to the Holy Martyrs and might have been seen as the consecutive incarnations of the same martyrium continually reconstructed. One cannot help but note the symbolism in the 'round' years on which these churches were built: 6560, 6580, 6620, as well as intervals of 20 and 40 years between constructions.

40 For that, the princes would have to wait for another ten years. Yet time was running out for Oleg Sviatoslavich: he died three months later. Symbolically, Volodimer Monomakh died in 1125, on the exact jubilee year of the last Vyshgorod martyrium (founded, most probably, in 1075), and in another church of the Holy Martyrs, built by him on the spot of St. Boris' martyrdom on the Alta River. The church was founded in 1117, probably in anticipation of the centennial of Iaroslav's victory, on this very place, over Sviatopolk, which avenged the martyrdom.

41 For the text, see Olga Loseva, *Zhitta russkikh sviatykh v sostave drevnerusskikh prologov*, 449–450.

This was clearly the second consecration since the church had been founded in 1145 (as we read in the *Novgorod First Chronicle*: “That year the stone church was founded, Boris and Gleb, in Smolensk”<sup>42</sup>). However, the year 1191 was not chosen at random and it was indeed a Jubilee one. As we learn from the short chronicle notes on Smolensk (survived in a later manuscript but rather trustworthy), the city of Smolensk was renovated (literary, “built anew”) by prince Rostislav in 1141, exactly fifty years earlier: “In the year 6649 Rostislav Mstislavich founded the grand city of Smolensk and erected the church of the Holly Saviour on the Smiadyn”<sup>43</sup>. It would seem that the translation of the relics associated with SSt. Boris and Gleb, as well as the second grand consecration of the church to house them, was tied to this fiftieth anniversary of the city’s ‘foundation’.

### Recapitulations

This article was aimed at explaining the mysterious re-consecrations of some churches, without their re-dedications, fifty years after their foundation. All the churches in our sample appear to be the ‘first’ of their kind, inaugurating either the church institution as a whole or one of its divisions, or else a particular type. In all the cases featured in the sample, a church’s association with specific royal grants of the tithe is prominent. Three churches (the Tithe Church, St. Sophia Cathedral of Kyiv, and the Dormition Cathedral of Smolensk) were re-consecrated on the jubilee year of their foundation, while the fourth (the Holly Martyrs’ Cathedral in Vyshgorod) was re-consecrated on the jubilee year of its dedication event. A compelling case for similar re-consecrations of some other churches (the Nativity of Mother of God in Suzdal and the Holy Martyrs in Smolensk) can be made. Where documentary evidence is available, we discover that the church’s foundational grants were returned upon its re-consecration in the jubilee year. It is hard not to read an intrinsic connection between tithe and jubilee into this correlation. Both notions were inspired by the Old Testament as the only written sanction for the church’s existence. It would seem that in the newly-converted society of Rus’, one not yet equipped for the institutional support of the Church, authorities, ecclesiastical and secular, devised an ingenious solution by chaining two concepts together: the notion of the tithe would institute the endowment of the church, while the notion of jubilee would ensure that the endowment would be perpetuated.

Institute of Ukrainian History  
National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine

42 “Въ то же лѣто заложиха церковь камяну на Смядинѣ, Борис и Глѣб, Смольньскѣ”(NPL: 27).

43 For the text, see Nikolai Petrov, *Opisanie rukopisnykh sobranii, nakhodiashchichsia v gorode Kieve. Вып. 2: Sobranie rukopisei Kievo-Pecherskoi Lavry, kievskikh monastyrei Zlatoverkho-Mikhailovskogo, Pustynno-Nikolskogo, Vydbetskogo i Florovskogo i Desiatinnoi tserkvi* (Moscow, 1897), 153.