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Death and burial in Kyivan Rus' according to written sources

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Abstract: *The spread of Christianity in the lands of Kyivan Rus caused radical, but not rapid, changes in the religious, philosophical, and mental worldviews of contemporary society. Funeral rites were a significant factor in which the feature of the spiritual transformation of local societies was reflected. The proposed study is devoted to the peculiarities of the Christian funeral rite and ceremony in the lands of Kyivan Rus' and the Galician-Volhynian state, which are covered in written sources of the time. Therefore, the upper chronological date of the study is the XIV century. Their elaboration and systematization led to the construction of the article in a linear way – starting with pre-death, and then post-mortem preparations, directly funeral and memorial service. The analysis and generalization of the funeral rite, characteristic for the Christian Orthodox tradition as a whole, is carried out. At the same time, their separate local elements are highlighted. Some comparisons and parallels between the Rus' and Byzantine funeral traditions were made.*

Key words: Middle Ages; Christianity; Kyivan Rus'; Byzantium; funeral rites; princely burials

Introduction

The religious and ideological paradigm of Kyivan Rus' existed in the context of paganism and Christianity.¹ O. Motsia notes that until 988 (official baptism) it was Christianity in paganism, and after – paganism in Christianity.² Gradual development, transformation, and interpenetration of which led to the formation in this area of pagan-Christian syncretism (not religious dualism)³ and at the end of dominant Christianity.

The Christianization of the Kyivan Rus'lands led to the development and spread of book-writing in its territories. However, among the few surviving monuments of Rus canon law, there is none that describes in detail the norms

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¹ BRAICHEVSKYI, 1988; RYBAKOV, 1987; MOTSIA & RYCHKA, 1996; KHAMAIIKO, 2010: 431-442.

² MOTSIA, 2003: 206-207.

³³ KHAMAIIKO, 2007: 86-114; KHAMAIIKO, 2010: 439.

of Christian burial at that time.⁴ The first attempts to generalize these types of monuments before and after the Mongol period in the late 19th century carried out by Ye. Golubinsky,⁵ however, some of the author's conclusions were later critically revised.⁶ Analysis of written sources and illuminated manuscripts of Rus' heritage through the prism of the funeral rite, although sometimes using different sources and approaches to the study, carried out in the works of T. Panova⁷ and A. Musin.⁸ Elaboration, systematization and analysis of canonical and historical texts, as well as pictorial sources are still relevant and necessary in the context of studying the funeral culture of the princely era, as it can significantly supplement the knowledge about the subject of this study.

In different editions of *Primary Chronicle*, which partly complement each other, and mainly the lists of the *Ipatiev Letopis* and the *Laurentian Letopis*, recorded several types of funeral rites, which corresponded to the traditions of the time. These are the rite of cremation, burial under a mound and burial without a mound (inhumation), usually in the interior of sacred buildings, etc.⁹

Cremation corresponded to the pagan funeral rites of the Slavic tribes, including the Vyatychi trib at the beginning of the 12th century “иже творять (В) ВЯТИЧИ И ННѢ” [as the Vyatychi do today].¹⁰ Obviously, burial under the mound – “МОГИЛѢ” recorded in the descriptions of the interments of princes Askold and Deer (882), Oleh (912), whose graves were located on the “горѣ” [hill], Ihor Riurykovych (945), Oleh Sviatoslovych (977), Sviatopolk Volodymyrovych (1019) and finally the Cumans khan Tuhorkan (1096).¹¹ Mounds are also mentioned in 1147 “Черная Могила” [Black Mound] in Chernihiv and in 1206 “Галицинѣ могилѣ” [Halych Mound] in Halych.¹²

The episode of Ihor's Riurykovych interment is illustrative in this case: “и плакаса по мужи своемъ . и повелѣ людѣмъ съсуги могилу велику . и яко съспоша повелѣ тръзну творити” [And wept for husband. And she commanded her people to make a great grave and when they poured, ordered to do trizna].¹³ The last of the Rus' princes, who was buried under the mound, the chronicler noted Sviatopolk Volodymyrovych. The infamous ‘glory’ of which probably could not have foreseen burial in the interior of any shrine. And as a consequence “въ смърть немлѣвно въгна . и по смърти вѣчно мучимъ естъ . и связанъ естъ же могила его в пустыни тои и до

⁴ MUSIN, 2002: 73.

⁵ GOLUBINSKIJ, 1904: 453-460; GOLUBINSKIJ, 1911: 565-573.

⁶ PAVLOV, 1881: 344-351; ПИХОЖА, 1987: 73-86; BARANKOVA, 2006: 29-58; MUSIN, 2002: 80.

⁷ PANOVA, 2004: 26-43.

⁸ MUSIN, 2002: 73-90.

⁹ *Ipatiev Letopis*, 1908; *Laurentian Letopis*, 1926–1928.

¹⁰ *Ipatiev Letopis*, 1908: stb. 10.

¹¹ *Ipatiev Letopis*, 1908: stb. 16–17, 29, 43, 45–46, 63, 132, 222.

¹² *Ipatiev Letopis*, 1908: stb. 357, 722.

¹³ *Ipatiev Letopis*, 1908: stb. 46.

сихъ днии . исходить же ѿ неѣ смрадъ золь” [And after death he is eternally tormented at the bottom of hell, being bound. There is his grave in the desert, and to the end of the day, and a strong stench comes out of it].¹⁴ Henceforth, the term ‘могила’, which was used to denote a mound, is missing in written sources.

In 1044, the bones of the already mentioned princes Oleh and his brother Yaropolk were exhumed from mounds. This means that at the end of the 10th century they were buried according to the rite of inhumation. But the most interesting thing of the chronicler story is that later, their remains were ‘baptized’ and reburied in the Church of the Tithes: “Выгребена быста . в . княза Ярополкъ . и Олгъ . снѣ Стѣславѣ . и крѣтиша кости ею . и положи æ въ цркви сѣѣѣ Бѣѣ” [Two princes, Yaropolk and Oleh, sons of Sviatoslav, were excavated. And baptized their bones and laid them in the church of the Holy Mother of God].¹⁵



Fig. 1. ‘Baptism’ of exhumed bones of Oleh and Yaropolk Sviatoslovychi (1044). *Radzyvill Chronicle*. Miniature № 202

This exceptional case of post-mortem ‘baptism’ in Kyivan Rus’ caused a lively discussion in the scientific community, primarily because baptism and communion for deceased were officially banned by the rules of the Council of Carthage in 397.¹⁶ The apostle Paul also condemned this custom: “Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for

¹⁴ *Ipatiev Letopis*, 1908: stb. 132.

¹⁵ *Ipatiev Letopis*, 1908: stb. 143.

¹⁶ NIKODIM, 1912: 163-164.

them? If the dead will not be raised, what point is there in people being baptized for those who are dead?”¹⁷

Some researchers suggest that at the time of their death, these princes were already Christians. This is indicated by the rite of mound inhumation and is probably hinted at by written sources.¹⁸ A. Musin argues that the mention of the chronicler should not be taken so literally, and the chronicle ‘крѣтиша’ [baptized] should be understood as synonymous with ‘омыша’ [immersion / washing (ablution)]. Rite of ablution with a mixture of water and wine of exhumed remains before their reburial in coemeterium corresponded to the Greek funeral rite. On the Mount Athos, this custom appeared no later than the second half of the 11th century. The researcher also appeals to the fact that the same burial practice is known in Anthony’s Caves in Chernihiv.¹⁹

F. Uspenskij thinks that both princes at the time of their death were pagans. Instead, the rite of catechesis (proclamation), known as – *primo signatio*, could take place during one’s lifetime. The proclamation provided an opportunity, being not a Christian, to participate in church service and enjoy the benefits of a member of the Christian community.²⁰ According to O. Alekseev, *primo signatio* was accepted by the Polotsk prince Andrii Olherdovych. However, this fact does not mean that it was applied to princes Oleh and Yaropolk.²¹ In support of his hypothesis, F. Uspenskij cites similar cases of reburial remains of pagan rulers by Christian descendants in Scandinavia and Iceland during the 10th-13th centuries²² or priest performance of the proper rites at the grave after body interment. Such cases occurred in the absence of a priest at the time of burial. Under such circumstances, the tomb was marked with a pillar. The column removed, and holy water poured into the remaining hole.²³ According to Icelandic law, the deceased without baptism, but proclamation children were to be buried on the outskirts of the churchyard “where the consecrated land connected to unconsecrated”.²⁴ Notable in this case is the medieval practice of secret burial of unbaptized children near sacred places.²⁵ They were often buried under the outer walls of the church so that rainwater rolling down from the roof would sanctify the graves.²⁶

Considering the baptism of the bones of Oleh and Yaropolk as one of the possible options, O. Nazarenko and V. Petrukhin saw in these actions

¹⁷ *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* 15:2.

¹⁸ MUSIN, 2002: 82; VOITOVYCH, 2006: 228-229; NAZARENKO, 2001: 339-390; SHHAVELEV, 2011: 78-87.

¹⁹ MUSIN, 2002: 80, 82.

²⁰ USPENSKIJ, 2001: 407-414; USPENSKIJ, 2009: 9-22; ROMENSKIJ, 2016: 67-68.

²¹ ALEKSEEV, 2003: 103.

²² USPENSKIJ, 2001: 408-413.

²³ ALEKSEEV, 2003: 105.

²⁴ USPENSKIJ, 2001: 413.

²⁵ ZAWADZKA-ANTOSIK, 1973: 365-371; MIECHOWICZ, 2007: 517-535; DUMA, 2010: 15-57.

²⁶ ALEKSEEV, 2003: 105.

an ideological motive. In this way, nephew of the deceased – Yaroslav the Wise probably sought to emphasize the dynastic nature of his power as a Christian ruler, as well as the integrity of the Rus' land, which had previously suffered from princely controversy for the Kyiv throne.²⁷ A kind of 'cult of ancestors' can be traced in the tradition of prayer requests for intercession to deceased relatives “Андрѣи же . имаше надежю велику на Бѣ съ всеми людми своими . и на ѿца своего . млѣтву . надѣашеться” [Andrii had great hope in God with all his people, and he hoped in his father's prayer]²⁸ – “deceased's prayer for an alives”.²⁹ The use of Old Testament phraseology in princely panegyrics complements this assumption: “приложиса къ ѿцѣмъ ѿдавъ вѣщии долгъ” [executed a common duty and joined to his fathers].³⁰ According to researchers, this is a kind of identification of the princely dynasty with the righteous Old Testament kings.³¹

Instead, L. Voitovych is convinced that both brothers were already Christians at the time of their death. And the chronicle of the baptism and transfer of the remains of Yaropolk could be added by later editors in the place where it was about the reburial of the bones of prince Oleh. The researcher notes: “Yaropolk was the initiator of the fratricidal war, he organized Oleh's death and it was not appropriate to bury him next to last. Volodymyr's campaign against Yaropolk was official revenge for Oleh's death and restoration of justice. It is not very probable that the remains of Yaropolk were transferred in the Yaroslav the Wise's time. Yaroslav was brought up by the same Blud, who was one of the perpetrators of the Prince Yaropolk death”.³²

In my opinion, we need to pay attention to a few more important points. The Athos rite of reburial of the remains of the deceased 3 years after the burial ('Law of Mount Athos') really took place in Rus'. However, the practice of such burials concerned only the monastic order and is known only in the cave burials in Kyiv and Chernihiv, as well as the stone ossuaries in Vasyliv and Vikno in Bukovyna.³³ So, could the rite of ablution be applied to princes Oleh and Yaropolk, even if we assume that both were Christians if they belonged to the rank of the laity? At the same time, none of the Rus' written sources mentions the practice of wine and water ablution during the transfer of mortal remains of either local monks or princes. Although the concept “омовение телес святыхъ” [ablution of holy bodies] mentioned in the *Pandect Antiochus* translation in 11th century.³⁴ Besides, the act of saint's relics

²⁷ NAZARENKO, 2001: 389-390; PETRUHIN, 2011: 339.

²⁸ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 287.

²⁹ SAZONOV, 1995: 508-517; KOMAROVICH, 2002: 11-15; ALEKSEEV, 2003: 104.

³⁰ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 551.

³¹ ALEKSEEV, 2003: 105.

³² VOITOVYCH, 2006: 228-231.

³³ MOTSIA & RUDENOK, 1992: 31-34; PYVOVAROV, 2006: 72.

³⁴ MUSIN, 2003: 379-380.

ablution has become widespread since the 14th century and played the role of a small water consecration.³⁵

The rite of reburial is known in some parts of Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria and used in some places until the 20th century. It is associated with the South Slavs beliefs that the soul is liberated after the complete body decomposition. The grave was usually excavated after 3, 5, 7, rarely 9 or more years on Saturday before Great Lent, Pentecost, St. Dmytro's Saturday or requiem. In Macedonia, the bones of the deceased were washed first with water and then with wine. Depending on regional features, the excavated bones were kept in the church for a period from one day to a year. After that, they were returned to the grave or taken to the ossuary. A kind of reburial was the interment of the deceased in the grave of his ancestor.³⁶ In Slovenia, there was a rite of 'head washing'. The whole skeleton or just the skull was washed with ordinary or holy water and wrapped in a clean, new cloth, and buried in the same grave. The custom is interpreted as a last service to the deceased. It frees from sins and is an expression of respect, love and gratitude.³⁷ The existence of such a custom in Rus' is not reflected in any sources, and therefore, it is rather about the differences of the local funeral tradition from the then widespread in some areas of the Byzantine Empire.

At the same time, in the work of Rus' canon law of the 12th century, widely known as the *Kyryk's Questions*, reported the imposition of penance for "доушигубыѣ" [murder] on the parents or priest, due to the negligence of which the child died unbaptized.³⁸ The same source states that when a person does not know whether he is baptized or not and there are no witnesses to confirm this – it is necessary to baptize.³⁹ The *Kyryk's Questions* is a kind of collection of answers to the most pressing questions that troubled the lower clergy in the 12th century. Thus, the question arises as to whether the norms of canon law at the time of the transfer and 'baptism' of the remains of Oleh and Yaropolk in 1044 were strictly regulated and well known? Some researchers suggest that due to the conflict between Rus' and Byzantium, which began in 1043, the Kyivan Metropolitan – Theopempt, by the way, was the one who re-baptized the Church of the Tithes in 1039,⁴⁰ was outside the state and this could affect non-compliance with all canons.⁴¹ A. Plakhonin denies the absence of the bishop at the metropolitan department.⁴² However, in fairness, it should be added that there are no reliable sources that would confirm or refute this fact.

³⁵ ZHELTOV, 2006: 81-86.

³⁶ TOLSTAJA, 2015: 445-446.

³⁷ TOLSTAJA, 2015: 449-450.

³⁸ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 52.

³⁹ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 62.

⁴⁰ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 141.

⁴¹ ALEKSEEV, 2003: 102.

⁴² PLAKHONIN, 2013: 290.

Obviously, this discussion has gone beyond the canonical justification but also makes us think about the historical veracity of the facts described by the chronicler. At the same time, it must be stated that there are no sufficient arguments in favour of at least one of the proposed hypotheses. But the very fact of the existence of multi-vector theories suggests that the problem must be considered in the broad context of the religious and ideological paradigm of the entire Middle Ages.

Instructions on the norms of the Christian funeral rite – inhumation was first mentioned in 986 in the story of the Greek philosopher addressed to Prince Volodymyr the Great about the burial of Abel: “и плакастасѧ по Авѣлѣ . лѣт . л̄ . и не съгни тѣло его . и не оумѣста погresti его . и повелѣньемъ Биймъ птѣнца два прилетѣста . единъ сѹ оумре . и единъ же ископа ѧму . вложи оумѣраго и погребе . видѣвша же се Адамъ и Євга . ископаста єму . и вложиста Авѣла . и погребоста и с плачем” [And they both wept for Abel thirty years, and his body did not rot, and they could not bury him. And at the command of God, two chicks flew. One of them died, and the other dug a pit, laid the deceased and buried. When Adam and Eve saw this, they dug a pit for him, laid Abel down, and buried him weeping].⁴³ The urgent need to bury the dead is recorded in the *Kyryk's Questions*: “Єже кости мертвыхъ валаютьсѧ кдѣ , то велика челоѣуоу тому мѣзда , оже погребоуть ихъ” [If anyone bury the bones of a corpse lying anywhere, he deserves a great reward].⁴⁴ A. Musin sees in this message one of the spiritual problems of the society of that time – the unburied remains of the dead.⁴⁵

Events related to the deaths of Rus' princes, members of their families, or clergy have been repeatedly mentioned on the pages of the *Primary Chronicle*. However, most often these records do not reflect the peculiarities of the funeral rite, but instead record only the very fact of the death of one of the dignitaries: “В се же лѣто оубьенъ бысѣ Мьстиславъ снѣ Сѣополчъ . оу Володимери . мѣца . июня . в̄ . днѣ” [In the same year, Mstyslav, the son of Sviatopolk, was killed in Volodymyr on the twelfth day of June].⁴⁶ Often these data are supplemented by information about the time and place of burial of the deceased: “Того же лѣтѣ престависѧ Галичький кнѣзь Ярославъ снѣ Володимеръ . мѣца . октбѣ . вѣ . а̄ . днѣ а во вторъи днѣ положенъ бысѣ во цркви сѣѣѧ Бѣѧ” [In the same year, the Galician prince Yaroslav, son of Volodymyr, died on the first day of October, and on the second day he was laid to rest in the Church of the Holy Virgin].⁴⁷

Less often, the chronicler went into details of the funeral, features of the burial structure, the ceremony, and so on. However, the detailed elaboration and systematization of all these messages, as well as other written sources, at least in part,

⁴³ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 77.

⁴⁴ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 37.

⁴⁵ MUSIN, 2002: 73.

⁴⁶ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 248.

⁴⁷ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 656.

makes it possible to recreate the funeral rite inherent in the Rus' elite from pre-death and then post-mortem preparations, funerals and memorial services.

Death preparations

Testament

Since the beginning of the 10th century there was a regulated right of inheritance in Rus': by law, testament and custom. Officially, this right was first stipulated by the clauses of the Rus'-Byzantine treaty of 911.⁴⁸ Codified rules of inheritance – “задницѣ” different social groups of the population are reflected in the articles of the Extensive Edition of the *Russkaya Pravda*: № 85–89; 92–98, 100.⁴⁹

In the Middle Ages, the form of a testament was usually oral. Much less often it was written (‘spiritual letters’).⁵⁰ Analyzing the content of only certain testaments of the period of Kyivan Rus' and mainly of the Moscow Tsardom, O. Morkovina distinguishes three main categories: 1) burial orders; 2) order of memorial service; 3) order, teaching about the agreement between the heirs.⁵¹

The testaments of the members of the princely and spiritual elite of the princely era are only partially reflected in the pages of the *Primary Chronicle* and the *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon* and mostly in general terms reflect the content of the last will of the deceased. This, in turn, does not apply to the testament of the Volhynian prince Volodymyr Vasylkovich, the text of which – “КНАЗА Володимера роукописане” [Prince Volodymyr's manuscript] is an integral part of the *Galician-Volhynian Chronicle*⁵². Long and seriously ill, the prince wrote the testament in early 1288, less than a year before his death. It consisted of two charter: the first, addressed to a cousin – Mstyslav Danylovych, which was about reign transfer and custody of the daughter⁵³ and second to his wife – Olha (Olena?), which provided the transfer part of the land and the monastery to her possession.⁵⁴

An interesting point of the testament addressed to the princess Olha, is that the princess after his death can decide for herself go to her monastery or not: “а княгини моа . по моемъ животѣ . вже восхочеть в черничѣ поити поидеть . аже не восхочеть ити . а како еи любо . мнѣ не воставши смотреть что кто иметь чинити . по моемъ животѣ” [And my princess, after my death, if she wants to go to the nun – let her go, and if she doesn't want to go – as they please. I can't get up to see what someone will do after my death].⁵⁵ Usually, after the death of monarchs,

⁴⁸ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 27.

⁴⁹ *Russkaya Pravda*, stb. 85–89; 92–98, 100; DOLYNSKA, 2014: 210-211; LYVAK, 2014: 15-17.

⁵⁰ DOLYNSKA 2014: 210; MORKOVINA, 2003: 102.

⁵¹ MORKOVINA, 2003: 106.

⁵² *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 903–905.

⁵³ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 903–904.

⁵⁴ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 904.

⁵⁵ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 903–904.

their wives went to the monastery. We meet a case when the wife of the Rostov prince Constantine Vsevolodovich took a monastic vow directly over the grave of her dead husband: “кнѧгыни же Костантинова ту и пострижеса надъ гробомъ мужа своего . и нарекоша има еи ГѢгафѧ” [Constantine’s princess tonsured over her husband’s grave and was named Agafia].⁵⁶

All other death orders, which are briefly reflected in written sources, can be divided into: 1) burial orders: princess Olha;⁵⁷ Varlaam of Pechersk;⁵⁸ Theodosius of Pechersk;⁵⁹ Svyatopolk Izyaslavich and Prokhir of Pechersk;⁶⁰ Izyaslav Davydovich;⁶¹ Kyiv Metropolitan Constantine;⁶² Rostyslav Mstyslavych;⁶³ Polikarp of Pechersk.⁶⁴ 2) orders to reign transfer and instruction to the successors: prince Yaroslav the Wise;⁶⁵ Vsevolod Olhovych;⁶⁶ Mstyslav Izyaslavych;⁶⁷ Mstyslav Rostyslavych;⁶⁸ Maria Shvarnivna;⁶⁹ Kostiantyn Vsevolodovich.⁷⁰ 3) donation orders: Varlaam of Pechersk.⁷¹

In part, this category should include ‘Edification’ (*Volodymyr Monomakh’s Pouchenia*) by Volodymyr II Monomakh.⁷² But of course this work is not a testament. ‘Edification’ the prince wrote, in his own words “сѣда на санехъ” [sitting on a sleigh] at a very old age.⁷³ “На санехъ” [on a sleigh], before his death, the last instructions of the fraternity were given by Theodosius of Pechersk.⁷⁴ Thus, the phraseology ‘sitting on a sleigh’ used in the chronicle is supposed to have been used to denote old age and imminent death, while the sleigh itself performed the function of the last bed. In addition, we should partially agree with O. Morkovina, who notes that the similarity of Volodymyr’s ‘Edification’ with the wills of the princely era is not genre, but thematic.⁷⁵

⁵⁶ *Laurentian Letopis*, stb. 444.

⁵⁷ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 55–56.

⁵⁸ *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 44.

⁵⁹ *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 73. *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 178.

⁶⁰ *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 154.

⁶¹ *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 118.

⁶² *Laurentian Letopis*, stb. 349; *Vladimir chronicler*, 68; TOLOCHKO, 1993: 30-48.

⁶³ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 529.

⁶⁴ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 627.

⁶⁵ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 149–150.

⁶⁶ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 320.

⁶⁷ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 559.

⁶⁸ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 609.

⁶⁹ *Book of Degrees of the Royal Genealogy*, 227–228.

⁷⁰ *Book of Degrees of the Royal Genealogy*, 257.

⁷¹ *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 44.

⁷² *Laurentian Letopis*, stb. 240–256.

⁷³ *Laurentian Letopis*, stb. 241.

⁷⁴ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 176.

⁷⁵ MORKOVINA, 2003: 108-109.

An important source for the study of funeral culture of this era are the birch-bark letters. The content of one of the oldest official testaments is reflected in the text of the *Zvenyhorod birch-bark letter № 2* – 1110-1120 years:⁷⁶

+ ѿ ГОВѢНОВОЕ : КО НѢЖЬНЬЦЮ ДАЕ : ѿ : ДЕСА
КОУНО ЛОДИЕНОУЮ ПОВѢДАЛО ГОВѢНО ИДА НА СОУѢ
ДО : А ПОПЪ ѿЛЪ : А ДАЕ : ЛОУЦѢ ОЛИ НЪ ВОДАСИ ТО А Ѿ
КОНАЗА ПОЕМА ОТРОКО ПРИЖЬ ПРИЕДЮ
А ВО БОЛЕ ТИ ВОИИДЬ :

[From Hovin's [widow] to Nizhenets. Give sixty boat-kunas (meaning: sixty kunas for the boat). Hovin said [this], going to Judgment (meaning: God's Judgment (dying)), and the priest wrote [it] down. And give [it] to Luka. If you don't give [it], then I will come, taking an official (meaning: bailiff) from the prince and come quickly (or with him); and it will go into more (meaning: expense) for you].

It is implied that the addressee of the birch-bark letter owed the deceased, as the latter indicated in the death will, which was written down by the priest. And that is why the letter is written by his widow, not himself.

During the 12th-15th centuries wills, or their drafts, were often made on birch-bark. All their known finds come from Novgorod: letters № 28, 42, 138, 148, 213, 307, 519/520, 580, 692, 818, 1077, 1078.⁷⁷ The birch-bark letters of the 12th-13th centuries, of the corresponding content, concern questions of distribution of property after death. I assume that the debt relations, identical in content, in connection with the death of the lender, are reflected in Novgorod birch-bark letter № 148 of the late 13th century:

ПОКЛНО ѿ ИЕВА КО ПРОКОПѢ ГОСПОД(ИНЕ) ...
ѿКАЗАЛЕ ТОБИ Ѿ МЕНЕ ·І· ГРИВЕНО С(ЕРЕБРА) ...
НЕ ЗАИМАЕ АЗЪ КАКО БО ДАСТЕ ...
ѾВИДАЮСА

⁷⁶ SVIESHNIKOV, 1994: 6-7; GIPPIUS 1991: 3-5; JANIN & ZALIZNJAK & GIPPIUS, 2004: 208-209. JANIN & ZALIZNJAK & GIPPIUS, 2015: 274-275.

⁷⁷ *Drevnerusskiye berestyanyye gramoty* 2020.

[Greeting from Iev to Prokopii. Sir, [such] bequeathed to you from me (meaning: from what I owe to him) ten silver hryvnias. ... don't borrow – I, as God will give, ... will pay out [with you]].⁷⁸ The only difference is that the borrower, unlike Nizhenets (the debtor), intended to fulfil the debt obligations in accordance with the will of the deceased.

In the first part of the 15th century cases of falsification of documents, including wills, were recorded not only in cities but also in rural areas, which testifies in favour of the widespread use of spiritual letters by various social groups.⁷⁹

Before death tonsure to the monk

Another element of pre-death preparations is the vows of monks.⁸⁰ At least twenty three such cases are known in Rus' during the 12th-13th centuries. Starting with the second part of the 13th century most of them are recorded in the territory of North-Western and North-Eastern Rus', later the territory of the Moscow Tsardom. The period of the greatest spread of the practice of pre-death tonsure corresponds to the second part of the 14th – the first part of the 15th century, and its decline at the end of the 16th century.⁸¹

In general, written sources describe this ritual very succinctly, usually reporting only the very fact of the tonsure: “престависѧ кнѣзь Всеволодъ . снѣ Мѣстиславль приемь мнискѣи ѡбразъ” (died prince Vsevolod, son of Mstyslav, taking the monastic order).⁸² However, an interesting feature of this phenomenon was not only the ordination to the monks, but also to the Great Schema: “престависѧ князѣ Володимерь . наречѣнии в сѣмѣ крщѣнии Дмитрии . постригѣсѧ и в скиму” (died prince Volodymyr, named in the holy baptism – Dmytro, tonsure in the Schema), “Престависѧ Мстиславъ . Мстиславиѣ . в черньцихъ и в скимѣ” (Mstyslav Mstyslavych died in the monks and in the Schema).⁸³

The first information about the pre-death tonsure dates to circ. 1113, when it was received by the doctor of prince Mykola Sviatosha (Sviatoslav Davydovych) – Peter the Syrian. The prince prophesied his imminent death and, in view of this, instructed him to accept monasticism.⁸⁴

The adoption of monasticism was usually preceded by a serious illness. It was under this pretext that in 1147 in Pereyaslav a monastic vow was taken by a prisoner, a seriously ill grand prince of Kyiv – Ihor Olhovych: “и бѣ Игорь разболѣлсѧ

⁷⁸ ZALIZNJAK, 2004: 504-505.

⁷⁹ ARCIHOVSKIJ & BORKOVSKIJ, 1963: 137-140.

⁸⁰ ZHARKYKH, 2015; TOLOCHKO, 2019: 91-100.

⁸¹ ZHARKYKH, 2015: 188.

⁸² *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 682–683.

⁸³ *Laurentian Letopis*, stb. 450.

⁸⁴ *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 117.

в пороубѣ и бѣ боленъ велми . и присла Игорь къ Изаславоу . молаѣа и кланяѣа река тако . братъ се боленъ есми велми . а прошю оу тебе постриженіѣ . бѣла бо ми мѣсль на пострижение . еше въ кнѣженьи своемъ . ны же оу ноужи сеи боленъ есмь велми . и не чаю собѣ живота” [And Ihor fell ill in the porub (meaning: in log cabin prison) and became very ill. And Ihor sent [an ambassador] to Iziaslav, begging and bowing, [and] saying: “Brother! I am very ill. Therefore I ask tonsure, because I intended to tonsure during my reign. Now in this affliction, I am very ill and I don’t hope to survive”]. Later tonsure in the Great Schema in the Kyiv Monastery of St. Fedor.⁸⁵ A serious illness preceded the tonsure of princess Maria Shvarnivna (1205/1206),⁸⁶ Novgorod mayor Tverdyslav (1220), Prince Olexandyr Yaroslavovych (Nevskiy) (1263).⁸⁷



Fig. 2. Ihor Olhovych tonsured (1147). *Radzyvill Chronicle*. Miniature № 429

Interestingly, the desire to take monastic vows was expressed by prince Rostyslav Mstyslavych in 1164, after the news of the death of Sviatoslav Olhovych, fearing “напрасныѣ смрѣти” (sudden death).⁸⁸ Then the prince was denied this decision by his priest – Symeon. He returned to this idea for the second time in 1168, seriously ill, on the eve of his death. The monastic vows were considered as a way to get rid of sins, and thus the salvation of the soul, quoting Emperor Constantine: “аще быхъ вѣдалъ сель чѣстнъ ликъ чернецьскіи . въсходаща съ анѣлы къ прѣтлу Гнѣю бес пристава сналъ быхъ вѣнець . и багрѣницю” [If I had known that such

⁸⁵ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 337–338.

⁸⁶ *Suzdal Chronicle*, 126.

⁸⁷ *Novgorod First Chronicle*, 60, 83–84.

⁸⁸ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 529.

a worthy rank of a monk was that he ascended with the angels to the throne of the Lord without hindrance, I would have removed the crown and the purple].⁸⁹

Except for individual, there are precedents for mass tonsure. In 1238, during the siege of Vladimir on the Klyazma River by the troops of Khan Batu, prince Vsevolod Yuriyovych, his family and townspeople in anticipation of imminent death took the monastic vows and Great Schema: “яко уже взяту быти граду, внидоша въ церков святую Богородицю, и истригошася вси въ образъ, таже въ скиму, от владыкы Митрофана, князь и княгыни, дчи и сноха, и добрии мужи и жены” [when the city was captured, they entered to the church of the Holy Mother of God, and all were tonsured monks, as well as in the Great Schema, from Bishop Mytrophan, prince and princess, daughter and daughter-in-law, good men and women].⁹⁰ Cases of mass tonsure are known during the plague epidemic in 1352⁹¹ and 1420 in Pskov,⁹² 1417 in the cities of Northern Rus.⁹³ He foresaw the care of own life and soul: “промышляше о своемъ животѣ или о души, да сего ради мнози идяху в монастыри, моужі и жены, и постригахуся въ мнишьскіи чинъ...” [those who worry about their lives or souls, for this reason, many of them go to the monastery, men and women, accept the monastic order...].⁹⁴ And death in monasticism was considered nothing more than God’s grace: “Многихъ же крестьянь Богъ помилова своею милостию: отъидоша житіа сего въ аггельскомъ и мнишескомъ чину” [By His grace, God had mercy on many peasants: leaving life in the angelic and monastic order].⁹⁵

Protodeacon S. Shalberov notes that the pre-death vows of seriously ill mantle monks with a well-deserved ‘experience’ are justified by the fact that in the phrase of Theodore Studit “the Great Schema is nothing more than a promise to accept the death of the cross for the Lord”.⁹⁶

It is worth noting that the attitude of the clergy to the pre-death vows was not unambiguous. Back in the 12th century Pymen Posnyk, abbot of the Kyiv-Pechersk Monastery (1132-1141), drew attention to the abuse of pre-death vows of monks. Reverend Pimen noted that those who did not want to tonsure in life and only before death would ask for a tonsure, faith in them is scanty and “таковымъ бо постриженіе скимное ничто же пользуетъ, аще сего дѣла добра от муки не избавяють” (for such a tonsure in the Schema does not help, and that good deed will not free from pain).⁹⁷ It is possible that this position of the clergy of the Kyiv-Pechersk Monastery influenced

⁸⁹ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 531.

⁹⁰ *Novgorod First Chronicle*, 75.

⁹¹ *Novgorod Fourth Chronicle I*, 282–283.

⁹² *Pskovskiye letopisi* 1955: 38.

⁹³ *Novgorod Fourth Chronicle II*, 417; ZHARKYKH 2015: 169-170.

⁹⁴ *Novgorod Fourth Chronicle I*, 282–283.

⁹⁵ *Novgorod Fourth Chronicle II*, 417.

⁹⁶ *Predsmertnyy postrig v skhimu i mantiyu*, 2020; St. Theodore the Studite, 168.

⁹⁷ *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 184.

the relatively small number of death vows in the territory of Southern Rus' in the future.

The tradition of tonsure as a phenomenon is also known in Byzantium and most likely came to the territory of Kyivan Rus' from there and further spread to the north.

He was adopted by the following emperors: Michael IV of Paphlagonia (1041),⁹⁸ Isaac Comnenus (1059),⁹⁹ Manuel Comnenus (1181),¹⁰⁰ Manuel II Palaeologus (1425),¹⁰¹ Empress Irene of Hungary (1134).¹⁰²

Before death prayer and repentance

If the testament and tonsure were an individual matter, the pre-death prayer and repentance were obligatory and were based on the principles of Christian canon law.

In *Kyryk's Questions* speak of the importance of pre-death repentance, and those who don't do so are threatened with singing without vestments: "...надъ великымъ челоувѣкомъ непокаѣвшимся иному попу велаше пѣти, а безъ ризь. Азь слышахъ, идохъ къ нему, и рече ми: тобѣ повѣдаю, Кюриче: того ради възбраниваю инѣмъ, ать и друуги боѣся тогоже, аже безъ ризь [поють], покаются" [over a man who has not repented, the priest was ordered to sing without vestments. I heard about it, went to him and he (the bishop) told me: I will tell you Kyryk, why I forbid some people, in order to others afraid that without vestments will be sung and therefore repented].¹⁰³ After repentance, it was necessary to take Eucharist: "Аще бесъ покаѣниѣ былъ боудеть челоувѣкъ и разболиться на смерть, а оже сѣ къ тобѣ покаеть добрѣ, да иже аще и велми грѣшень есть, причащанию даи юмоу" [If a person is without repentance and falls ill to death and then repents well that he is very sinful, then give him Eucharist].¹⁰⁴

Over the very sick, used the accelerated Eucharist procedure. Gave the Holy Gifts and drank water. At the same time prepared a clean vessel in case the participant vomits (then poured it into the river).¹⁰⁵ It is emphasized that before death (though not only) it was allowed to take Eucharist with patients with epilepsy.¹⁰⁶

Certain norms of canon law also applied to women in labour. It is known that a woman was considered unclean after childbirth, but if she was threatened with death,

⁹⁸ Michael Psellos, 50–51.

⁹⁹ Michael Psellos, 164, 171.

¹⁰⁰ *Byzantine historians...*, 285–286.

¹⁰¹ BARKER 1969: 383.

¹⁰² *Pravoslavnaya entsiklopediya*, 2011: 373–374.

¹⁰³ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 36–37.

¹⁰⁴ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 40.

¹⁰⁵ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 37.

¹⁰⁶ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 28.

she was allowed to be taken to another room and: “дати ю и причащениѣ, омывше ю” (wash and give her Eucharist).¹⁰⁷

The need for repentance was also emphasized by Archbishop St. Symeon of Thessalonica (14th-15th centuries). Moreover, he allowed the possibility, in the absence of strength to call a priest, to repent of thoughts. After that, the obligatory component of the pre-death preparations was anointing.¹⁰⁸

The significance of the pre-death prayer and Eucharist, in particular, is indicated in the chronicles.¹⁰⁹ On the eve of their own demise, they were carried out by the following Rus' princes: Ihor Olhovych (1147),¹¹⁰ Rostyslav Mstyslavych (1167),¹¹¹ Andrii Yuriiovych (1174),¹¹² Mstyslav Rostyslavych (1180),¹¹³ Davyd Rostyslavych (1197/98)¹¹⁴ and Volodymyr Vasylkovych (1288).¹¹⁵ P. Tolochko notes that despite the different authorship of these prayers, the prayer of Ihor Olhovych became protographic for at least four of them. And each subsequent became textually closer to the previous one.¹¹⁶

Funeral rites

Depending on the rank (*archiereus*/bishops and *iereus*/priests, monks, laity, children), the deceased was prepared for burial in different ways. Information about these differences is reflected in the oldest surviving *Studites' Charter* of the Novgorod Arkazh Monastery end 12th-beginning 13th century¹¹⁷, *Answers* of Kyiv Metropolitan Cyprian (14th century – 1406) addressed to Abbot Athanasius (letter № 32)¹¹⁸ and the works of Archbishop Symeon of Thessalonica – *Sacred Rituals and Sacraments of the Church*.¹¹⁹

a) *Archiereus* and *iereus* are prepared for burial by *iereus*. The body of the deceased is washed crosswise (not denude), leading a sponge on the forehead, mouth, chest, knees and arms. Then gird on top and put on clean clothes according to the rank (*sticharion*, *epitrachelion*, *phelonion*), put on new shoes and give the Gospel into the hands, which has been read over him. The deceased's face covered with an *Aër*. Then, accompanied by illuminator, carried to the temple. Probably at the burial place, laid in the grave body, starting from the head, is cruciformly watered with anointing oil mixed with wine. The chalice with the mentioned contents is placed at the feet of the deceased. Afterwards, the burials are covered with a board (coffin lid) and covered with earth.¹²⁰

¹⁰⁷ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 51–52.

¹⁰⁸ St. Symeon of Thessalonica, 587.

¹⁰⁹ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 854.

¹¹⁰ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 350–351.

¹¹¹ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 531–532.

¹¹² *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 587–589.

¹¹³ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 609.

¹¹⁴ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 705–706.

¹¹⁵ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 916–917.

¹¹⁶ TOLOCHKO, 2017: 407-413.

¹¹⁷ MANSVETOV, 1882: XXV-XXXIII; MUSIN, 2002: 75.

¹¹⁸ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 245–246, 250.

¹¹⁹ St. Symeon of Thessalonica, 588–601.

¹²⁰ St. Symeon of Thessalonica, 588–589; *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 245.



Fig. 3. Metropolitan Constantine burial in Chernihiv Saviour Cathedral (1159). *Radzyvill Chronicle*. Miniature № 510

b) The bodies of the deceased monks were prepared for burial by the brotherhood. Dead monks are wiped crosswise with a sea sponge or handkerchief (not denude): face, chest, palms, knees, metatarsus. And then put on a clean shirt. A klobuk is put on the head, if the deceased was in a Great Schema on the head wear a koukoulion. Face covered completely. Gird up an analvos. Put on sandals. The mantle is sewing up on the top, making it like a grave “a monk is considered dead for worldly life and as if he is already in a tomb, insofar as the mantle is like a coffin”. The Psalms are read over the monks. The body placed in the tomb is cruciformly watered with anointing oil mixed with wine.¹²¹



Fig.4. Burial of Isaac by Abbot John (11th century). *Radzyvill Chronicle*. Miniature № 258

¹²¹ St. Symeon of Thessalonica, 589, 389; *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 246. *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 156. MANSVETOV, 1882: XXV-XXXIII.

Nevertheless, Theodosius of Pechersk, abbot of the Kyiv-Pechersk Monastery, who introduced the *Studites's Charter* in Rus' in the 11th century, neglected one and the prescriptions of the funeral rite. The monk ordered the brothers to bury him in the same clothes in which he was and asked not to wash the body so that no one could see it.¹²² Consequently, exceptions to the rules occurred. In addition, there were innovations made by the same Theodosius, including writing on a sheet of absolution prayer, which was placed in the hands of the deceased for the remission of sins.¹²³ The existence of such practices known in the Kursk province in the early 20th century¹²⁴.

The place for burial in the caves of the Kyiv-Pechersk Monastery was arranged by the monks themselves, and for some of them, this function was permanent. The most famous example is Marko Pechernyk (11th-12th centuries), also known as the Gravedigger. From the vita of St. Mark we learn about the practice of burial according to age differentiation: the elders were buried in the highest place: “Выдѣв же его положена на вышнем мѣстѣ негодоваше и ропташе много на Марка, глаголя: «почто его положиль еси? Яко азъ старѣйши его есмь, ты же положиль его на моем мѣстѣ»” [When he saw that him was in the highest place, he was angry and complained a lot about Mark, saying: “ Why put it [here]? Because I am older than him. You put it in my place”].¹²⁵

A characteristic feature of cave burials is the tradition of Easter swing thuribles of the mortal remains of the monastery fraternity. And on the territory of the monastery allowed to bury even those persons who repeatedly left the monastic service.¹²⁶

According to the Novgorod birch-bark letter № 681, the burial of a monk could be arranged for the cost of deerskin: “...(п)родаво [о]--ниноу : оуцини же погрѣбание чърне-ческое : ать сьрочьке и поль [дь]в[а]т[ь] ...” [...selling a deerskin (most likely), arrange a monastic burial. But (or: and this is) forty and eight and a half (probably kun) ...].¹²⁷

c) Layman are also dressed in new and clean clothes, and the top is covered with a holy veil as a sign that the deceased is under the protection of Christ. An icon is placed on top, often of the saint, who was especially revered by the deceased.¹²⁸ An icon, however, forbade burying with the dead, as indicated by Kyryk's concern about the accidental burial of the icon of St. Michael: “Иконоу погребли бѣхоу съ мертвецемъ свѣтотоу Михаила, и не повелѣ възгребати: крестыѣнинь, рече ѣсть” [Icon of St. Michael was buried with the dead man and did not order the excavation, saying that buried was a Christian].¹²⁹ However, as we see, even such circumstances did not become a good reason for exhumation, which contradicted Christian canons. Bishop Serapion (13th century) also disapproved of the excavations a hangmen

¹²² *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 39, 73.

¹²³ *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 4.

¹²⁴ SVIENTSITSKYI & HNATIUK, 2019: 413.

¹²⁵ *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 158.

¹²⁶ *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 193, 56.

¹²⁷ ZALIZNJAK, 2004: 386.

¹²⁸ St. Symeon of Thessalonica, 590; *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 250.

¹²⁹ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 37.

and drowning people Excavation of hangers and drowning people from their graves was forbidden by Bishop Serapion.¹³⁰

The bodies of the deceased layman were prepared for burial by family members. The most detailed description of this process is known in the chronicle of the burial of Volodymyr Vasylykovich: “киагиии же его гами. дворьными . вмывше его . и оувиша и вксамитомъ . со кроуживомъ аекоже достоить цсрмь” [His princess with the servants washed him and wrapped him in velvet and lace, as befits the emperors].¹³¹ Yaroslav the Wise’s body was prepared for burial by his favourite son – Vsevolod: “спрата тѣло вѣа своего . възложивъ на сани и повезоша Кыеву” [having prepared his father’s body, he put it on a sleigh and drove it to Kyiv].¹³² The prince commanded Vsevolod to be buried nearby: “егда Бѣ ѿведеть та ѿ житьа твоего . то ту лажеши идѣже азъ оу гроба моего . понеже люблю та паче братьа твоеа” [When God takes you away from your life, you will lie here by my grave, because I love you more than your brothers].¹³³ The practice of burial in ‘отчих’ (parental) was traditional and widespread throughout Kyivan Rus’.¹³⁴ Usually, before transportation, the body of the deceased is wrapped in “коврѣ” (carpet), in some cases in ‘шатерѣ’ (tent) чи ‘корзно’ (mantle).¹³⁵

In addition to the recorded cases of burial in new clothes, there were cases of burial in wedding clothes. In particular, prince Volodymyr the Great intending to kill his wife Rohneda offers her to dress “во всю тварь цсрскую. аекоже в днѣ посага” [in royal things, as on the wedding day],¹³⁶ and in 1261 the boyar nobility preparing for death in besieged by tatars Sudomyr town “израдившеса во брачныа порты и ризы” [dressed in wedding attire and clothes].¹³⁷

And, as is known from the description of prince Volodymyr Volodarovich’s burial (1153): family members and courtiers wore black as a sign of mourning: “Петръ же поѣха въ градъ и приѣха на кнѣж дворъ . и ту снидоша противу ему съ сѣнѣи слугы кнѣжи вси в чернихъ матлихъ и видивъ се Петръ и подивиса . что се есть . и аеже взиде на сѣни . и види Ярославъ сѣдаща на втни мѣстѣ . в черни матли и въ клобуцѣ . тако же и вси мужи его ” [Petro went to the city and came to the prince’s court. And then the prince’s servants came out to meet him from the entryway, all in black capes. And when Petro saw it, he wondered, “What is this?” And when he went down to the entryway, he saw Yaroslav, who was sitting in his father’s place in a black cape and hat, as well as all his men].¹³⁸

¹³⁰ KUZELIA, 1907: 12.

¹³¹ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 918.

¹³² *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 150.

¹³³ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 207.

¹³⁴ DIMNIK, 2008: 70-103.

¹³⁵ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 63, 115, 120, 234, 590–591.

¹³⁶ *Laurentian Letopis*, stb. 300.

¹³⁷ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 854.

¹³⁸ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 463–464.



Fig. 5. Volodymyr Volodarovykh burial (1152/1153). *Radzyvill Chronicle*. Miniature № 490

The use of black mourning clothes was also characteristic of Byzantium. This practice was described by Anna Komnene in the book *Alexiad* in the part about the Alexios I Komnenos's death.¹³⁹

The whole funeral procedure was accompanied by mourning lament, more than thirty of which were recorded in the pages of the *Ipatiev Letopis*, and six admissions were illustrated in the *Radzyvill Chronicle*.¹⁴⁰ It is noteworthy that in the *Lives of prince Constantine of Murom* (Yaroslav Svyatoslavich † 1129) such a manifestation of sorrow – ‘плача безмѣрнаго’ (immeasurably crying) was interpreted as pagan also like burial mounds, trizna, fight (?), mournful skin cutting, face scratching: “Невѣрнии же люди, видяще сѣя, дивляхуся, еже не по ихъ обычаю творимо бѣ погребеніе, яко погребѣаему бе сыну самодержцеву въ зник на востокъ лицемъ, могилы верхъ холмомъ не сыпаху, но равно съ землею ни тризнища, ни дани (по др. сп. дымы) ни битвы, ни кожекроенія, ни лицедранія, ни плача безмѣрнаго, не творяху” [Unfaithful people (pagans), seeing this, marveled that it was not according to their bury custom, how to bury the ruler's son in a straightened position, facing east, don't fill the hill with graves, but level with the ground, no trizna, no tribute (according to other lists of smoke), neither fight (?), nor skin cutting, nor face scratching, nor immeasurable crying].¹⁴¹

Ritual lament in Byzantium were accompanied by torn hair, which women often prudently attached to their own, while men tore their beards and tore their clothes. At the same time they inflicted wounds on themselves, bleeding. There were also professional mourners. In Constantinople, at least eight had to go in front of the coffin, and three behind it. The clergy condemned this manifestation, interpreting it as a small belief in the resurrection.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Anna Komnene, 432.

¹⁴⁰ *Ipatiev Letopis*; *Radzyvill Chronicle*.

¹⁴¹ POGODIN, 1871: 544.

¹⁴² CONSTAS, 2006: 128-131; RAPP, 2012: 269, 274, 284; SOROCHAN, 2013: 96.

d) Mentions of the peculiarities of the funeral rite of infants in the princely era are extremely limited. We learn about them for the first time from Bishop Nyfont's answer to Kyryk's question whether to sing over a small child, obviously alluding to their innocence before reaching the age of seven, to which he answered in the affirmative: "А во-ть часть, во-нже крестившесѧ; не грѣховъ бо дѣла поємъ надъ мертвыми, но ꙗко надъ святыми: дѣлжи бо ѳсмы, рече, всакого хрестъѧнина, ꙗко свата мнѣти, а Богъ соудитъ всѣмъ. Такоже и о сорокооустѣи слоужити повелѣ" [From the moment of baptism, not for the sake of sins, we sing over the dead, but as over the saints. We must, he said, to consider every Christian a saint, and God will judge everyone. The 40th Day after death he also ordered to sing].¹⁴³ Metropolitan Cyprian had the same opinion: "Надъ младенцемъ преставлешимся пѣти" [Sing over deceased babies].¹⁴⁴ At the same time, it is difficult to say whether the burial of infants was different from the secular one during this period. It is possible to speak confidently about its separation only from the 15th century.¹⁴⁵

The way of hands

Sources of Christian canon law testify to the cruciform manner of the hands-on the chest of the deceased. In particular, it is discussed in the vita of Theodosius of Pechersk, which describes the death of the saint (1074): "и нозѣ простъръ, и руцѣ на пьрьсѣхъ крѣстообразнѣ положъ" (and he stretched out his legs, and put his hands on his chest in a cross);¹⁴⁶ at the same time, attention is focused on the peculiarities of this Orthodox tradition in the works *Proclamation* Metropolitan Nykofor to Yaroslav Svyatopolkovich (1103-1121),¹⁴⁷ and *About the Franks and other Latins* (second half of the 11th century).¹⁴⁸ Instead, we find a different arrangement of hands on the miniatures of the *Radzyvill Chronicle* (15th century): along the body (1), crossing on the chest (7), the position can not be identified with certainty (9), but 7 of them tend to the position on the chest and 2 on the pelvis, in another case the right-hand rests on the abdomen, and the left is plausibly along the body.¹⁴⁹ T. Panova noted the differences in the way of hands-on the pages of the *Illustrated Chronicle of Ivan the Terrible* (16th century). According to the researcher's calculations, in 46 cases the arms were crossed on the abdomen, 12 crossed on the chest, 6 below the waist, 2 along the body.¹⁵⁰ The importance of proper body position is also mentioned in the *Kyiv-Pechersk Pateryk*, namely the concern of monks in connection with unsuccessful attempts to straighten the body of the deceased and properly lay scattered arms, close open eyes and mouth.¹⁵¹

¹⁴³ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 36.

¹⁴⁴ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 250.

¹⁴⁵ PRILUCKIJ, 1912: 290-297.

¹⁴⁶ Zhitiye Feodosiya, 142.

¹⁴⁷ GOLUBINSKIJ, 1904: 827.

¹⁴⁸ ПОПОВ, 1875: 65.

¹⁴⁹ *Radzyvill Chronicle*, m. 85, 102, 158, 162, 163, 192, 243, 248, 249, 258, 276, 287, 490, 495, 510, 539, 544, 558, 610.

¹⁵⁰ PANOVA, 1987: 118.

¹⁵¹ *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 123.

Burial structures

As it was mentioned above, with the spread of Christianity, burial mounds were replaced by inhumation without embankments. However, the Chronicle describes the elite burials, in a sarcophagus, carried out mainly inside the temples. They were made of stone and wood. In the chronicles, they are named: “гробѣ мраморани” (marble tomb),¹⁵² “корсту мороморану” (marble coffin),¹⁵³ “гробѣ камень” (stone tomb),¹⁵⁴ “рацѣ мороморанѣ” (marble shrine – sarcophagus),¹⁵⁵ “деревани ракъ” (wooden shrine – sarcophagus), “раку камѣну” (stone shrine – sarcophagus).¹⁵⁶ Interesting in this context is the dispute between princes Volodymyr with Davyd and Oleh over the location of the coffin with the mortal remains of St. Borys and Glib in 1115. The first offered to build over them “теремъ серебрянъ” (a silver terem) in the middle of the church, and the seconds to put them in “комару . идеже шцѣ мои назнаменаль . на правои сторонѣ . идеже баста оустроѣнѣ . комарѣ има” [in arcosolias, ‘where my father appointed’ on the right side, where they were made arcosolias].¹⁵⁷ On top of the sarcophagus and arcosolias were bind round with “сребромъ и златомъ . и оукраши гроба ею тако же и комарѣ покова сребромъ . и златомъ” (silver and gold, he decorated their tombs and in the same way, he binds round the arcosolias with silver and gold).¹⁵⁸ In 1130, Rostov tsysyatsky – Heorges Szymanowych spent 500 silver hryvnias and 50 gold hryvnias to bind round the sarcophagus of Theodosius of Pechersk.¹⁵⁹ The sarcophagus of princess Olha, described by Yakiv Mnykh (11th century), stands out against the background of the mentioned objects. Volodymyr Sviatoslavych transferred the remains of his grandmother to the Church of the Blessed Virgin. The peculiarity of the sarcophagus was that a window was made on top of it: “In the coffin of Blessed princess Olha, a window is made on top, and through it you can see the body of Blessed princess Olha, which lying unharmed”.¹⁶⁰

Body transportation to the burial place

The body delivered to the burial place as follows: 1) at close range and provided that the weight is not too heavy to carry the coffin “на плечах” [on

¹⁵² *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 115.

¹⁵³ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 130.

¹⁵⁴ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 592.

¹⁵⁵ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 151.

¹⁵⁶ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 171–172; *Radzyvill Chronicle*, m. 85, 158, 163, 192, 243, 266, 269, 271, 276, 287, 490, 495, 539, 544, 546, 558, 610.

¹⁵⁷ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 281.

¹⁵⁸ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 282.

¹⁵⁹ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 293; *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 84.

¹⁶⁰ Yakiv Mnykh.

the shoulders] or on the stretcher “нарадита носилицѣ” [preparing a stretcher];¹⁶¹ 2) at short and long distances, regardless of the season on a sleigh “на сани и везоша” [on a sleigh and carried].¹⁶² T. Panova noted that in the texts of the Novgorod birch-bark letter of the 12th century № 601, 609 refers to the costs associated with the organization of the funeral, including the rental of sledges.¹⁶³ As a type of funeral transport, it was used in the early 20th century;¹⁶⁴ 3) for a long and short distances – by cart “възложиша и на кола” [put on the cart];¹⁶⁵ 4) at long distances by boat “привезоша в лодыи” [brought in a boat].¹⁶⁶

We can confidently say about the existence of the profession of coffin seller. In particular, while the epidemic during the period from November 14, 1092 to February 14-20, 1093, they sold 7,000 coffins: “г҃л҃ху продающе корсты. ꙗко продахомъ корсты. ѿ Филипова днѣ до мѣсопуста. . 3 . тысячъ” [said those who sell coffins: “We sold seven thousand coffins from Philip’s Day to Meat-Fare Sunday”].¹⁶⁷ However, in the *Ipatiev Letopis*, probably wrong, written not “корсты” (coffins), but “хрестъ” (crosses).¹⁶⁸



Fig. 6. Transportation of the relics of St. Borys (1072). *Radzyvill Chronicle*. Miniature № 243

¹⁶¹ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 171, 593.

¹⁶² *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 115, 150, 172, 176, 193, 275, 197, 918; ANUCHIN, 1890.

¹⁶³ PANOVA, 2004: 42.

¹⁶⁴ CHEBANIUK, 2020: 30.

¹⁶⁵ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 120, 235, 280.

¹⁶⁶ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 193, 275, 626.

¹⁶⁷ *Laurentian Letopis*, stb. 215.

¹⁶⁸ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 206.



Fig. 7. The body of Volodymyr the Great is placed on a sleigh (1015). *The legend of Boris and Gleb*, f. 57



Fig. 8. The sarcophagus of Andrii Yuriiovich is transported by cart from Bogolyubovo to Vladimir on the Klyazma River (1174). *Radzyvill Chronicle*. Miniature № 546



Fig. 9. Transportation of Iziaslav Yaroslavych's body in a boat (1078). *Radzyvill Chronicle*. Miniature № 266

Funeral procession

The burial of princely persons was accompanied by crowded processions with the participation of the entire clergy, princely and boyar elite, local residents and more. The most comprehensive information about the order of such a procession is reflected in the descriptions of the reburial of the remains of St. Borys and Hlib.¹⁶⁹ The procession took place in the following sequence: monks – deacons – presbyters – bishops – metropolitans – princes with a coffin.

Burial time

According to Rus' canon law, it is necessary to bury the deceased before sunset, because this is the last sun that catches the deceased before the common resurrection: “Зашедшю сонцю, не достоить мертвеца хоронити; не рци тако: «борзо дѣлаємъ, нѣли како оусиѣємъ до захода»; но тако погрести, ѣко и кще высоко, како и вѣнецъ ѣще не сыметса съ него: то бо послѣднею видить солнце до общаго воскресениѣ» [The dead should not be buried after sunset. Don't say that: “Let's do it faster, maybe we'll still have time before sunset”. But then to bury, when it is still high, when the crown has not yet been removed from it. Because for the last time he sees the sun before the common resurrection].¹⁷⁰ Because “быс поздно”

¹⁶⁹ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 171, 280–281.

¹⁷⁰ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 37.

[was late], the body of prince Volodymyr Vasylykovich brought from Lyubomy and was left for the night in the Church of the Blessed Virgin.¹⁷¹

And almost the only cases of burial in the night concern the last will of St. Theodosius of Pechersk¹⁷² and the burial of cuman's khan Tuhorkan (1096).¹⁷³

On the territory of Kyivan Rus' tried to bury the dead as soon as possible. This is evidenced by the message of the *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon* in which criticize the circumstances under which the body of the deceased for the second day lay unburied: “человѣк Божій сей шмать два дѣни непогребенъ, ты же вселишся” [the God's man is not buried for two days, but you are rejoicing].¹⁷⁴ However, the chronicles do not provide a definitive answer to this question, as in part only one date is reported – death or burial, at the same time recorded cases of burial on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th, 46th day, etc. after death. The absolute record holder is Volodymyr Vasylykovich, whose body was not buried during four months.¹⁷⁵ If the postponement of burial for a few days can be explained at least by the circumstance of transporting the body, then the case of the Volyn prince is extremely mysterious. And the reason for such a long delay may be in the desire of Volodymyr's bishop Eusignius to canonize a right-believing prince or have a political basis associated with the long absence of prince Mstyslav Danylovych, to whom he bequeathed the throne.¹⁷⁶

Memorial service

The end of the cycle of funeral rites is memorial service for the dead. The structure of them is quite specifically represented in Rus' canon law. The 40th Day after death served for: hryvnia – five times, for 6 kuna one and for 12 kuna twice times. At the same time, it was necessary to bring wine, incense, candles and prosphorons.¹⁷⁷ There should be 2 or 4 lighted candles over the kutia (consisting of boiled beans, cereals and vegetables), which were brought for rest, but there should be 3 or 5 for health.¹⁷⁸ There were cases when the 40th Day after death for a rest was served in advance, for those who were still alive.¹⁷⁹

According to the chronicler, after the death of Vyacheslav Volodymyrovych in 1154, his son prince Rostyslav distributed all his property to charity, leaving part of the wealth for the organization of a memorial service and the purchase of candles and prosphorons: “а прокъ имѣннѣ да . чимъ же над нимъ дѣати на послѣднѣи дѣи

¹⁷¹ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 918–919.

¹⁷² *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 178–179.

¹⁷³ *Radzyvill Chronicle*, m. 297.

¹⁷⁴ *Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon*, 111.

¹⁷⁵ *Ipatiev Letopis*, stb. 927.

¹⁷⁶ LUTSYK, 2018: 256-257; LUTSYK, 2020: 12.

¹⁷⁷ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 23–24.

¹⁷⁸ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 32.

¹⁷⁹ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 51.

чимъ свѣчю и просфору еѣ побѣдѣти” [And he gave the rest of the property to make a memorial service for him, for which he bought a candle and prosphora].¹⁸⁰

Conclusions

Summarizing the above, we can state the presence of complex funeral rites, which was based not only on the foundations of the canon law of Orthodox Christianity but also on the peculiarities of their worldviews and ideas and culture. The society of that time respected death and future burial. Thus, deaths were preceded by pre-death preparations (testament; care for the purification of the soul, which was accompanied by vows to monks and repentance, including prayer and communion). After death, depending on the rank (archiereus (bishops) and iereus (priests), monks, laity, children), the deceased was prepared for burial in various ways according to the Orthodox tradition. The care of the body was assigned to the inner circle or family. However, we can state that there were exceptions that differed from the canonical rules. The wide variety of hand positions of the deceased is indicative. However, their interdependence is difficult to trace. In addition to widespread mournful laments, the tradition of wearing black mourning clothes has been noted since at least the 12th century.

Speaking of elite burials, they are made in sarcophagi (stone and wooden), which are partly decorated with precious metals. Dynastic temples were often the final resting place of members of the Ruthenian elite. The body was transported to the burial site (at close range) mainly on shoulders, stretchers or sledges, accompanied by a funeral procession. Burial before nightfall was necessary. In general, such an analysis of written sources can significantly complement the archaeological component of research on Christian burial sites of Rus' period. And their comparative characteristics in the future will recreate a holistic image of the funeral culture of that period.

¹⁸⁰ *Monuments of Old Russian canon law*, stb. 473.

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