SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:
IMPACT OF THE WARRIOR SAINTS’ INFLUENCE ON
CONTEMPORARY POLICY FOR SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The article deals with the cultural, artistic, and historical aspects of the emergence of the Old Russian Warrior Saints cult in Kyivan Rus and their profound impact on sustainable development policies throughout the 10th to 13th centuries.

Methods: Special attention is paid to the veneration of Warrior Saints in Russian culture as defenders and guardians of the Old Russian state as well as patrons of Old Russian princes. The authors analyze the hagiographic texts common in Russia over the 10th-13th centuries as sources of acts of the holy Warrior Martyrs.

Results: Works of ancient Russian art depicting Warrior Saints are examined, including those on princely seals, which have a patronal nature and personify the rulers of the Old Russian state. The results of this research reveal a compelling connection between the veneration of Warrior Saints, princely unity, and the development of sustainable governance policies.

Conclusion: Authors conclude the historical significance of Old Russian Warrior Saints in the context of sustainable development policies and political cohesion during the 10th to 13th centuries in Rus. The study reveals that the veneration of saints like Boris and Gleb, characterized by their commitment to non-violence and unity, exerted a profound influence on the socio-political landscape. This research will be a valuable source for policymakers seeking to address contemporary challenges in the realm of sustainable development and peacekeeping.

Keywords: Warrior Saint, Old Russian state, Kyivan Rus, cult, prince, patron, icons, frescos, seals.

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GOVERNANÇA SUSTENTÁVEL EM PERSPECTIVA HISTÓRICA: IMPACTO DA INFLUÊNCIA DOS SANTOS GUERREIROS NA POLÍTICA CONTEMPORÂNEA DE SUSTENTABILIDADE

RESUMO

Objetivo: O artigo trata dos aspectos culturais, artísticos e históricos do surgimento do culto dos Antigos Santos Guerreiros Russos na Rússia de Kiev e seu profundo impacto nas políticas de desenvolvimento sustentável ao longo dos séculos X a XIII.

Métodos: É dada especial atenção à veneração dos Santos Guerreiros na cultura russa como defensores e guardiões do Estado da Antiga Rússia, bem como patronos dos princípios da Antiga Rússia. Os autores analisam os textos hagiográficos comuns na Rússia ao longo dos séculos 10 a 13 como fontes de atos dos santos Guerreiros Mártires.

Resultados: São examinadas obras de arte russa antiga representando santos guerreiros, incluindo aquelas em selos principescos, que têm natureza patronal e personificam os governantes do antigo estado russo. Os resultados desta investigação revelam uma ligação convincente entre a veneração dos Santos Guerreiros, a unidade principesca e o desenvolvimento de políticas de governação sustentável.

Conclusão: Os autores concluem o significado histórico dos antigos santos guerreiros russos no contexto das políticas de desenvolvimento sustentável e da coesão política durante os séculos X a XIII na Rússia. O estudo revela que a veneração de santos como Boris e Gleb, caracterizada pelo seu compromisso com a não violência e a unidade, exerceu uma influência profunda no cenário sócio-político. Esta investigação será uma fonte valiosa para os decisores políticos que procuram enfrentar os desafios contemporâneos no domínio do desenvolvimento sustentável e da manutenção da paz.


1 INTRODUCTION

Church and religious life in Old Rus were closely connected with the socio-political one. The fight against enemies and the formation of the Old Russian state became the basis for the emergence of the cult of Warrior Saints. That is why their figures can often be seen in the decoration of Orthodox churches.

The origin of this cult in the sacred art of Byzantium is described in the works by Ch. Walter (2003), V.S. Shandrovskaia (1994), and M. White (2013), the latter partly concerned with the appearance of this phenomenon in Russian culture. The origination of the cult of St. George in Byzantium and its development on the territory of Kyivan Rus were considered separately by V.P. Stepanenko (2000; 2002; 2019). Several studies are
devoted to the veneration of such Warrior Saints as Demetrius of Thessaloniki (Turilov, 2007; Shults, 2021), Theodore Tiron (Bakhtina, 2012), Saint Eustace (Gladkova, 2013, 2015), and Archangel Michael (Antonov, 2020; Maizuls, 2009). The veneration of Warrior Saints in the prince era is mentioned in studies (Saenkov and Gerasimenko, 2008; Litvina and Uspenskii, 2019). However, in general, this information does not reflect the cultural and historical factors influencing the formation of this phenomenon in Old Russia.

The purpose of the article is to highlight the cultural and historical situation in the 10th–13th centuries, which led to the emergence of the cult of Warrior Saints, by systematizing the studies published to date; expound on their veneration as guardians and defenders of the Russian state, patrons of ancient Russian princes; analyze the works of art of that time with the corresponding ideological content.

According to the purpose of the study, the following goals are set:
- to analyze the factors of the formation and spread of the cult of Warrior Saints on the territory of Russia;
- to characterize the cult of Warrior Saints as patrons of Russian princes;
- to consider the cult of the holy martyr princes and passion-bearers Boris and Gleb as the first national Warrior Saints.

Research hypothesis: the cultural and political ties between Russia and Byzantium, the popularity of hagiographic literature as well as the efforts of ancient Russian princes, whose patron saints were Warrior Saints, were factors in the formation and spread of the cult of Warrior Saints on the territory of the ancient Russian state.

2 METHODS

A qualitative study of the historical, cultural, and artistic aspects of the Old Russian Warrior Saints cult in the 11th–13th centuries was carried out using the following research methods: analysis of academic literature and an expert survey to assess the reliability of selected sources.

The method of analysis of academic literature allows one to collect a variety of information in the face of a large number of assessments and opinions. Considering the existing limitations in the application of the academic literature analysis method (the quality of the selected sources, their completeness, and the authors' subjective
viewpoints), an expert survey was conducted to assess the reliability of the selected sources (Bezpalov et al. 2023).

At the first stage of the study, the sources of information necessary to fulfill the purpose of the study were selected: hagiographic texts as well as articles and monographs devoted to cultural studies of the historical period under consideration.

In the study, we used two hagiographic works dedicated to the holy martyrs Boris and Gleb: "The Tale of the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb" by an unknown author (presumably 1015) and "Account about the Life and Martyrdom of the Blessed Passion-Bearers Boris and Gleb" by Nestor the Chronicler, a monk of the Kyiv Monastery of the Caves, presumably in the period from 1108 to 1115, which already met the requirements of the classical hagiography. The Account begins with an extensive introduction: an appeal to God with a request for help in writing the hagiography. It is followed by a brief outline of world history from Adam and Eve to the baptism of Rus meant to demonstrate the worldwide significance of the baptism of Rus and the appearance of its first saints – Boris and Gleb, with a detailed description of their childhood years, when the grace of God rested on them, which is not described in the Tale. A significant place in the Account is occupied by the story of the posthumous miracles performed by Boris and Gleb.

In the second stage of the study, an expert survey was conducted to assess the reliability of the selected sources, in which 12 experts took part (Kosorukova et al. 2023). The criteria for the selection of experts were the presence of at least three studies on the culture and hagiography of Old Russia published in journals included in the Scopus or Web of Science citation databases. The experts were emailed requests to evaluate the reliability of the selected material for this study. The experts rated the selected documents at an average high level.

At the third stage of the study, based on the selected hagiographic texts and academic literature, a consistent analysis was carried out of the factors of formation and spread on the territory of Rus of the cult of Warrior Saints, Warrior Saints as patrons of Russian princes, as well as the cult of the holy martyr princes and passion-bearers Boris and Gleb as the first national Warrior Saints.
3 RESULTS

3.1 THE FACTORS OF THE FORMATION AND SPREAD OF THE CULT OF WARRIOR SAINTS ON THE TERRITORY OF RUS

The emergence of the cult of Warrior Saints in the early Christian period is associated with Ancient Rome, where Warrior Saints were originally soldiers of the Roman army who suffered persecution from the emperor because of their religion (White, 2013). In the Byzantine Empire, which arose as a result of the division of the Roman Empire into the Western and Eastern parts, the Warrior Saint was revered as a martyr who died for the Christian faith, and as the patron of the Byzantine Caesars (Walter, 2003). It was from Byzantium that this cult spread to the lands of Kyivan Rus (Stepanenko, 2000). Its most prominent representatives in the Christian Church were Saints George, Demetrius of Thessaloniki, Theodore Tiron, Saint Eustace, and the Archangel Michael.

The cult of Warrior Saints on the territory of Rus was formed gradually and was determined by several historical and political factors.

Already in the "The Tale of Bygone Years" story about Oleg's campaign against Constantinople in 907, one can find the image of Demetrius of Thessaloniki: "And the Greeks were terrified, and exclaimed, ‘This is not Oleg, but St. Demetrius, whom God has sent upon us’" (Inkov, 2016, p. 27). These words testify to the permeation of the cult of Warrior Saints into the territory of Kyivan Rus (Ramazanov et al. 2023). The Rus-Byzantine treaty, which was concluded as a result of two campaigns (in 941 and 944) by Prince Igor (878-945) against Constantinople, contributed to the establishment of even closer intercultural ties between the two states.

The missionary work of Cyril (827-869) and Methodius (815-885) also had a great influence on the spread of the cult of Warrior Saints in Rus. Many researchers are convinced that the Canon of Demetrius of Thessaloniki was created by Methodius, a native of Thessaloníkē (today Thessaloniki (Greece), where St. Demetrius comes from) (Turilov, 2007). Methodius' disciple Clement of Ohrid at the beginning of the 10th century distributed among the Slavs a translation of the collection "A panegyric to Demetrius of Thessaloniki" (Shults, 2021).

Without a doubt, Prince Vladimir the Great (mid-10th century – 1015) played an important role in the spread of the cult in Russian culture. After the baptism of Russia in 988, numerous monks, priests, architects, and artisans arrived in the ancient Russian lands
from Byzantium, bringing with them new traditions, including established norms in the view of Warrior Saints (Kovalev and Koklev, 2023).

In the 10th-century Rus, the tendency to syncretic veneration of saints, a kind of accumulation and association of patron saints, prevailed. Thus, a prince, having received at baptism a name in honor of a particular saint, honored not only the saint but also all the saints with the same name. This united all bearers of the name; the living and the dead, the princes and the saints. In Rus, this custom was successfully combined with the tradition of likening a newborn to their deceased ancestor through the name. A person also had a special relationship with the patron saints of their closest relatives: father, mother, etc.

With the adoption of Christianity in Old Rus, hagiographic works were popularized (Sakhov, et al., 2021). These works described the lives of various saints, including warriors. The hagiographic literature widespread in Russia was divided into two types: translated (of foreign origin – Roman, Byzantine texts) and writings about the life of ancient Russian saints.

Hagiographic literature greatly contributed to the spread of the cult of saints in the first half of the 10th century. Among the most famous works, one can name the collection of saints’ lives by Simeon the Metaphrast (his Greek menologion). Simeon the Metaphrast not only collected ancient legends but also reworked them, hence his nickname. An equally important role in the spread of the cult of saints was played by Leo IV, the Byzantine emperor, known for his numerous homily, including those spoken in honor of saints.

Among the well-known literary sources in the context of the study, one should highlight: the translated posthumous acts of St. George ("The Miracle of the Serpent", as well as the "Miracle of the Blind Man", presented in the work "The Tale of the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb" (Boguslavskii, 2007)); "The Suffering of Demetrius of Thessaloniki" (translation by the 10th century) (Turilov, 2007); translation of "Stories about the feat of Theodore Tiron", part of the "Prologue" from the Sophia collection No. 1324 (12th-13th centuries) (Bakhtina, 2012); "Life of Saint Eustace" from the collection of literature by Simeon the Metaphrast in the 10th century, "The Passion of the Holy Martyr Eustace and his wife Theopiste and his children Theopistos and Agapios" written under September 20 in the calendar of the Ostromir Gospels (1056-1057) (Gladkova, 2015).
In the 11th – beginning of the 12th centuries, the original lives of the first Old Russian saints – Boris and Gleb, the first venerated Warrior Saints in Rus, were compiled. The most important literary works in which they are mentioned are the Chronicle Tale (the story of the death of the princes, included in the Tale of Bygone Years, in 1015), the Novgorod edition close to it in the Novgorod First Chronicle called "On the Murder of Boris and Gleb", the anonymous "The Tale of the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb", and "Account about the Life and Martyrdom of the Blessed Passion-Bearers Boris and Gleb" by Nestor the Chronicler (Boguslavskii, 2007). All hagiographic versions of the life of the Warrior Saints have the same plot: a noble Christian who serves at the court of the emperor refuses to worship pagan gods, openly preaches the Christian faith, and suffers martyrdom from a pagan master.

In Kyivan Rus, holidays were introduced to honor the Warrior Saints, each of whom had their memorial day in the church calendar (Litvina and Uspenskii, 2019). This practice was also adopted from Byzantium, where feasts in honor of saints were established. As emperors who spread the cult of saints, Basil I the Macedonian, his son Leo VI the Wise, as well as numerous following rulers of Byzantium, should be noted. We should also mention the significance of the Menaion and other canons and kontakia written by Joseph the Hymnographer for all saints celebrated daily.

3.2 WARRIOR SAINTS AS PATRON SAINTS OF RUSSIAN PRINCES

During the reign of Vladimir the Great, the interpretation of the image of the Warrior Saints as the defenders of the ancient Russian princes became widespread. This was due to the need to create a cult of national saint heroes and became an effective means of shaping the necessary public sentiments and nationally-oriented mass consciousness. In those harsh times, whole and uncompromising personalities were brought up, who personified the ideals and ideas about the beauty of a courageous and energetic young man worthy of imitation. The inhabitants of Kyivan Rus had a poetic attitude towards their homeland and heroic military dignity. Both of these concepts were interrelated: love for one's native land gives rise to a willingness to make every effort for its defense. From time immemorial, our ancestors had to fight the destructive raids of the steppe nomads, protecting their independence. Therefore, the constant concern in Rus was the education of the people in the spirit of courage and stoicism. Hence the social significance of the image of a holy warrior, who combined strength, fearlessness, and faith.
During this period, an original image of a hero-warrior appears, endowed not only with outstanding physical but also with high moral qualities that were highly valued in Kyivan Rus: sincerity, masculinity, and self-sacrifice.

Gradually, the ideal of a prince was also created, whose individual heroism was of national importance. The feat of the entire army was transferred to the prince-hero – this is how a collective image appeared, embodying the best qualities of all Russian warrior-defenders. In the popular mind, an idea was formed of courageous and generous heroes who selflessly fulfill their duty to their native land, striving for evil to be punished and for justice to triumph. Along with the ideas of the defense of the Russian land and Christianity, there is also the theme of glorifying princely power, which has a heavenly origin (Maizuls, 2009). According to S.M. Dušanić (Marjanovic-Dušanic, 2016), similar motives for glorifying the imperial power emerged in the 11th century in Serbia in connection with the spread of martyrdom and monastic ideals in the Byzantine world, as well as the popular cult of the martyr king, Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas, prone to asceticism and close to the monks of Athos and, for his useful activity for the state and the Church, venerated as a saint. Based on the analysis of Serbian hagiography, Dušanić concludes that the cult of the New Martyrs was very popular at the end of the Middle Ages in Serbia, which explains, in particular, the influence of the cult of Nikephoros II Phokas even in the post-Byzantine period (Marjanovic-Dušanic, 2016).

All this was repeatedly emphasized in ancient Russian chronicles. The glorification of princes had a powerful educational and consolidating potential for the Old Russian population. The heroes, who were set as an example and whose behavior was used as a reference, served as a factor of spiritual consolidation.

It is telling that at baptism each of the princes received his heavenly patron, a holy warrior, who guarded him and helped him to protect the native land. Special prayers were said for help in military affairs. Since the ruler of Rus personified the unity and power of the state, the Warrior Saints were his support on a spiritual level.

The patron of Vladimir the Great was St. Eustace, although, at the time of baptism, the prince received the name Vasily. In "Account about the Life and Martyrdom of the Blessed Passion-Bearers Boris and Gleb", Nestor calls Vladimir (Vasily) Svyatoslavich, Equal-to-the-Apostles, the new Saint Eustace (Gladkova, 2013). The chronicler claims twice that Vladimir, like St. Eustace, had a miraculous vision that prompted him to be baptized. O.V. Gladkova (2013) notes that the similarity between
Vladimir and St. Eustace is that both were ruling men, noble generals, and faithful servants of God who converted their own families to Christianity. The comparison of Vladimir with St. Eustace can also be traced in the 14th-century work "Tales of the Mamai Battle" (Gladkova, 2015). Researchers suggest that the basis of the saint's image, which first appears in the frescos in Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv, is precisely the baptist of Russia (Sarabyanov, 2014). In Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv, the figure of the holy warrior Saint Eustace is depicted on the pillars of the Eastern Compartmen, and the saint is depicted as a middle-aged man with wavy graying hair and a small black beard. Saint Eustace is accompanied by his sons, saints Agapios and Theopistos who were associated with Vladimir's sons. According to researchers, the associative connection can also be traced to the relationship of St. Eustace's sons with princes Boris and Gleb (Sarabyanov, 2014). The grandson of Prince Vladimir, the son of Mstislav of Chernihiv, was baptized in the name of Eustace (Litvina and Uspenskii, 2019).

The patron of the son of Vladimir the Great, Yaroslav the Wise (977-1054), was St. George, which is also confirmed by the second name given to him at baptism (Litvina and Uspenskii, 2019). Images of the heavenly guardian were present on the prince's seals and coins (there seemed to be ideological and political reasons for this because Byzantine emperors also minted coins with images of their own patrons – Warrior Saints). One of the seals of the Kyivan times of Yaroslav's reign features an image of George the warrior, and on the reverse side, there is a portrait of the prince and an inscription in Greek: "Lord, help your servant George, the archon" (Stepanenko, 2000), that is, the prince, the ruler. This image is almost identical to the numerous portraits of the saint on the seals of the Byzantine emperors. A holy warrior is also engraved on the coins of Yaroslav the Wise, but on the reverse, there is already a princely emblem.

The British researcher M. White (2013) notes that the tradition of depicting Warrior Saints on seals in Byzantium was less common than in Kyivan Rus since in the empire the connection "holy warrior – family patron" was not as important. There the image was interpreted as an image of a martyr, and not a family protector or patron.

The large-scale construction of temples and monasteries named after these patrons of princes testifies to the cult of Warrior Saints in the ancient Russian lands. Yaroslav the Wise, in particular, dedicated a lot of churches to his patron. According to the 1037chronicle, the prince founded the St. George monastery in Kyiv, thus giving thanks for the victory over the Pechenegs. The prince honored his heavenly patron by erecting
an altar in the Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv. Yaroslav even named the "town of Yuri" founded by the prince in 1031 after his saint (Stepanenko, 2005).

After the death of Yaroslav the Wise, the throne of Kyiv was taken by Izyaslav (1024-1078), baptized as Demetrius. The prince also had images of his patron, **St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki**, on bullas. The images mostly depicted the iconographic type of warrior – a half-length or full-length figure with a spear in his right hand. On the reverse side, there was a multi-petalled rosette, an equilateral cross-rosette, and a bust of the Holy Mother (Shults, 2021). In the life of Theodosius, the hegumen of the Kyiv Monastery of the Caves, Nestor the Chronicler mentions the monastery of St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki in Pechersk, built by Izyaslav in the early 1070s (now St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery is located there) (Turilov, 2007).

Many works of the sacred art of Kyivan Rus are dedicated to St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki in various iconographic versions, in which the face of Prince Izyaslav can be seen. Most researchers associate the mosaic image of Demetrius of Thessaloniki with the name of this Old Russian ruler. The image was created to decorate St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral in Kyiv (1108-1113). The icon "St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki on the Throne" (second half of the 12th century, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow), which is also associated with the Kyiv prince Izyaslav, also survives to this day (Shults, 2021).

With the assistance of the son of Izyaslav, the Kyivan prince Svyatopolk (1050-1113), who also had the middle name Michael, a church in honor of **St. Archangel Michael** (St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral) was built in the capital of Russia during 1108-1113 (Maizuls, 2009). Svyatopolk's patron was also engraved on the princely seals (half-length figure). Starting from the 12th century, the image of the Archangel Michael became the dynastic sign of the Monomakhovich princes – Mstislav I (1125-1132) and his descendants.

An earlier example of honoring the Archangel of God's army as a heavenly guardian is the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael built in 1070 by Vsevolod Yaroslavich (1030-1093) on the occasion of the birth of his son Rostislav, baptized as Michael (today the Mikhailovsky Vydubitsky Monastery is on this site) (Antonov, 2020).

**Theodore Tiron** was the patron of the Kyivan prince Mstislav Vladimirovich (1076-1132), in whose honor Mstislav founded a stone church in Kyiv in 1129 (it has not survived to this day). The temple was built after the victory of Mstislav over prince Oleg of Chernihiv (Bakhtina, 2012).
The image on the seal of the prince is also known from the Mstislav charter of the 12th century. On one side of the impression, one can see the Almighty sitting on the throne, blessing with his right hand, and holding the Gospel in his left. On the other side, there is a holy warrior in single combat with a serpent. The warrior is striking the serpent with a spear, simultaneously drawing a sword from its scabbard. In the 19th century, researchers assumed that it was the Archangel Michael or St. George or Mstislav himself. The most reliable, however, was the opinion that in fact, it was St. Theodore defeating the serpent (because let us remember that it was he who was Mstislav's patron) (Bakhtina, 2012). On other seals, St. Theodore is shown in full length, with a shield and a spear in his hand.

3.3 THE CULT OF FAITHFUL SAINT PRINCES PASSION-BEARERS BORIS AND GLEB

Let us separately consider the cult of faithful saint princes passion-bearers Boris and Gleb – the only Warrior Saints who did not belong to the host of traditional martyrs because they were victims not of religious beliefs but political intrigues. Even in ancient literary monuments, the brothers were already referred to using a completely new term – passion-bearers (that is, saints who endure suffering not directly related to faith), thus emphasizing the special nature of their feat – good-naturedness and non-resistance to enemies (Boguslavskii, 2007), and also the rejection of the material for the sake of the spiritual, despite the bearing of passions, martyrdom (Milyutenko, 2006). An analysis of the circumstances of the death of Emperor Nicephoros II Phokas and his subsequent canonization also suggests that this tradition of canonization could have influenced the Russian tradition and entailed the veneration of the holy martyr princes Boris and Gleb.

In the scholarly community, there is still debate about whether Boris and Gleb should be classified as Warrior Saints. The first argument in favor of this is the similarity in the images of the representatives of the holy might and the brothers from Kyiv. The brothers are also considered heavenly protectors and patrons of a particular territory. We learn about this, in particular, from "The Tale of the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb", where Boris and Gleb are compared with Demetrius of Thessaloniki and Vyshgorod is named with the second Thessaloniki. However, St. Demetrius was the patron of only one city, while the brothers were the patrons of the entire Rus (Boguslavskii, 2007). In addition, there was no cult in any region of the Orthodox world, except for Old Rus, which in its strength could be compared with the veneration of Boris and Gleb.
Another weighty argument about the belonging of the saints in the heavenly hierarchy of warriors is that they had a military career and died martyr's death. As for other Warrior Saints, earthly life is of little value to them. A sacrificial act in the name of the Lord gives hope for eternal life. The heroic path and suffering for the sake of love for people in the name of their salvation are the meaning of the act of a warrior. In the cult of the holiness of a Byzantine warrior, the first reason to consider him a saint is his tragic death and not military deeds. It is only when the emperors began to call the holy warriors their guardians that we can see a change in the hagiographic works.

The veneration of the ancient Russian princes Boris and Gleb (in baptism – Roman and David, 990s–1015) as saints was primarily promoted by Yaroslav the Wise. Boris and Gleb were the younger sons of Vladimir Svyatoslavovich. According to Nestor's evidence in the "Account about the Life and Martyrdom of the Blessed Passion-Bearers Boris and Gleb" and "The Tale of the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb", during his father's life, Boris occupied the princely throne in Rostov, and Gleb – in Murom. When the Pechenegs attacked Russia, the sick Vladimir could no longer go on a campaign himself and therefore entrusted the troops to Boris. Having returned to Kyiv, Boris meets a messenger who reports that his father has died. At this time, Svyatopolk begins to rule the capital, and, seeing a competitor in his brother, decides to kill him treacherously. Boris died a martyr's death on the banks of the Alta River near Russian Pereyaslav. Having learned about the tragedy, Gleb goes to Kyiv to talk with Svyatopolk. However, the latter, being convinced that Gleb was planning to avenge his brother, ordered to kill him on the way. The fratricide was not destined to reign for a long time – brother Yaroslav opposed him (Milyutenko, 2006).

After the victory over Svyatopolk in 1019, Yaroslav the Wise found the bodies of the brothers and transferred them to the church of St. Vasily in Vyshgorod. In 1037, according to D. Donskoy (2007) (and the German historian L. Müller (1995) who, however, does not specify the exact date), due to the efforts of the prince, the Byzantine Church in the person of the Kyiv Metropolitan John I, appointed to the Kyiv diocese of Constantinople, recognised the brothers as saints. Other researchers (Golubinsky, 1903; Poppè, 2003; Poppè, 1995) believe that the veneration of Boris and Gleb as saints occurred during (or immediately after) the transfer of their relics to a new stone church on May 2, 1072 with the participation of the children of Yaroslav the Wise, princes Izyaslav, Svyatoslav, and Vsevolod, Metropolitan George of Kyiv, several other bishops,
and Kyiv monks. According to A.N. Uzhankov (2005), the veneration of the brothers as saints was not local but general making them the patrons of the Russian land and the first saints of the Russian Church.

For church veneration of the first Russian saints Boris and Gleb, between 1086 and 1088 Metropolitan John II compiled an extended service for them on July 24, the day of Boris’s death, which became the main day of memory of the saints in the church service. The first, simple service, was written by Metropolitan John I.

In this context, the study by C. Caridi (2016) is of interest. The author explores the concept of martyrdom as it has developed in the Russian Orthodox Church since the 10th century. While the fundamental concepts of martyrdom and sainthood, inherited from the practice of the first millennium, remained untouched, the Russian Church, according to Caridi, introduced several deviations from this practice but did so without strict codification. For example, the concept of martyrdom was expanded to include passion-bearers, i.e. factors other than martyrdom, such as asceticism or the correct bearing of hardships, began to play their part. Beginning with Boris and Gleb in the 11th century, these were people who met violent death with calmness and peace, offering a Christ-like response to violence, but who did not die for their Christian faith. In addition, new requirements for holiness were added, such as performing miracles and confirming that the remains of a potential saint were incorruptible. Russians preserved the ancient tradition, according to which, the local bishop (metropolitan) determined who would be venerated as a saint. According to the author, sacred biographies (lives) and the opinion of the laity also were of great importance.

We believe that Prince Yaroslav used the established cult of Saints Boris and Gleb primarily to preserve state unity. On the one hand, it was about internal stability (hence the stubborn struggle against all attempts by other princes to violate the integrity of the state) and, on the other hand, about strengthening the international position and external security. The introduction of Christianity as the state religion created the preconditions for Byzantine intervention in the affairs of the Old Russian state. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the Metropolitan of Kyiv was Greek and appointed by the Patriarch of Constantinople. Therefore, Yaroslav the Wise began the struggle for the independence of the Russian church organization. Strengthening its position, the prince took care of the introduction into the pantheon of saints generally recognized by the
Christian church and national martyrs. Their images showed the independence and self-sufficiency of the Russian church and hence the state (Bagratuni et al. 2023).

Since, as G. Fedotov (1991) notes, the type of holiness of Boris and Gleb was not borrowed from Byzantium, the recognition of the brothers as saints was accompanied by doubts. None of the literary sources indicates that these great martyrs were killed because of the Christian faith. However, in all the texts their unwillingness to shed the blood of brother Svyatopolk is emphasized. Their devotion to God is also often noted (Angold, 2006; Cross & Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953).

The cult of St. Boris and Gleb was also popularized by other princes, for whom the political ideas of the tribal foreman in the system of princely succession law, the glorification of feudal fidelity, and the strengthening of state order were very important (Fedotov, 1991). On the site of a wooden church built by Yaroslav the Wise that burned down in a fire, Prince Izyaslav ordered the construction of a new large wooden five-domed church, into which, after the completion of construction, the shrines of the Kyiv brothers were transferred, and it became the first mausoleum church in their honor. A large stone temple dedicated to these martyrs was established by Svyatoslav Yaroslavich and continued by Vsevolod Yaroslavich (Fedotov, 1991).

The veneration of the brothers Boris and Gleb was also widespread outside Kyivan Rus, in particular in Byzantium (from the end of the 11th century). This conclusion can be drawn from the establishment of an icon depicting these Warrior Saints in the Church of St. Sofia in Constantinople (Fedotov, 1991).

There is an opinion among researchers that the recognition of Boris and Gleb as saints took place in parallel, while initially there was a special cult of each of the princes. According to researchers, at first, St. Gleb was venerated as a patron of Svyatoslav Yaroslavovich (1073-1077), who even named his son after the saint (Fedotov, 1991). The thesis is also supported by archaeological finds of metal encolpion crosses that appeared in Rus at the end of the 11th – the middle of the 12th century. However, from the end of the 11th to the beginning of the 12th century, the cult of St. Boris, who was recognized as the patron of the dynasty of Vladimir Monomakh, began to dominate (Fedotov, 1991).

The most famous images of these saints include the icon "Boris and Gleb" (12th century, Museum of Russian Art, Kyiv) (Kotovchikhina, et al., 2022). The icon features the full-length figures of the two brothers holding a cross in one hand and a sword pointing down in the other. The integrity and elegance of the figures, their solemn
appearance and tranquility correspond not to the Byzantine military ideal but to the popular idea of prince-heroes based on a call for unity and an end to internal struggles.

4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the following theses can be put forward that confirm the study hypothesis:

1. The cult of Warrior Saints in the ancient Russian state was implemented after the adoption of Christianity, spreading to Russia from Byzantium due to cultural and political ties.
2. Due to the ancient Russian princes, a cult of Warrior Saints as princely patrons, guardians, and defenders of the state was formed. The figures of these saints were identified with the images of the princes themselves since they were considered heroes, courageous warriors who were an example to follow among the people.
3. Introduction of the tradition of veneration of Warrior Saints in the 10th–13th centuries contributed to the fact that all princes were baptized after them. The ruling elite built churches dedicated to their patrons decorated with mosaics, frescoes, and icons and depicted these saints on the attributes of power (coins and seals). Through the efforts of Yaroslav the Wise, the martyr princes Boris and Gleb became local saints.
REFERENCES


