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MERCENARIES AND SAINTS. VARANGIAN CHURCHES IN CONSTANTINOPLE

This paper examines the problem of Varangian churches in Constantinople.¹ This subject is much debated as part of the topic of the veneration of saints among the Varangians and of their role in the transfer of cult and relics from Byzantium to the North.² While Raymond JANIN does not note any Varangian church in Constantinople,³ Krijnie CIGGAAR has recently pointed out several churches, dedicated

¹ I wish to thank the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies in Edmonton, for supporting my research during much of the time (The Teodota and Ivan Klym Memorial Endowment Fund).

² Blöndal Sigvur, Benedikt Benedikt. *The Varangians of Byzantium*. Cambridge, 1978. Pp. 178–192; Ciggaar Krijnie. *Western Travellers to Constantinople. The West and Byzantium, 962–1204*. Leiden ; New York ; London, 1996. Pp. 102–128; Eadem. *Denmark and Byzantium from 1184 to 1212. Queen Dagmar's cross, a chrysobull of Alexius III and an "ultramarine" connection*. *Mediaeval Scandinavia*. 2000. Vol. 13. Pp. 118–142. For detailed information on Byzantine–North relations see, Androshchuk Fedir. *Vikings in the East. Essays on Contacts along the Road to Byzantium (800–1100)*. *Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia*. Uppsala, 2013. Vol. 14. Pp. 91–131, which includes an initial discussion of the subject. For details and references, see Shepard Jonathan. *How St James the Persian's Head was brought to Cornery? A relic collector around the time of the First Crusade*. *Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie. Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur* / ed. L. M. Hoffmann and A. Monchizadeh, Mainz. Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik, 7. Wiesbaden, 2005. S. 316–327; Garipzanov Ildar. *Early Christian Scandinavia and the Problem of Eastern Influences. Early Christianity on the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks* / ed. I. Garipzanov and O. Tolochko. Ruthenica. Supplementum, 4. Kyiv, 2011. Pp. 17–33.

³ Janin Raymond. *La Géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin*. Paris, 1953. Vol. 3. Les églises et les monastères.

to two saints.⁴ Whatever is known about their existence originates in non-Byzantine sources, which raises the methodological question of reliability of these texts. The reluctance of Byzantine emperors to build churches for foreigners is well known. Thus, for instance, in February 1142, Emperor Conrad III asked Emperor John II Comnenos to facilitate the construction of a church for the Germans living in Constantinople, including the knights in Byzantine service.⁵ The letter makes it clear that it was actually a reminder and that Conrad had already asked John II Comnenos about that church beforehand. In his response John II Comnenos completely bypasses the question of the church for the Germans, while fully accepting all others requests.⁶ After John II's death,

⁴ Ciggaar Krijnie. Harald Hardrada: his Expedition against the Pechenegs. *Balkan Studies*. 1980. Vol. 21. Pp. 385–401; van Arkel-De Leeuw van Weenen Andrea, Ciggaar Krijnie. St Thorlac's in Constantinople, built by a Flemish emperor. *Byzantion*. 1979. Vol. 49. Pp. 428–446; Ciggaar Krijnie. Flemish Mercenaries in Byzantium their later History in an Old Norse Miracle. *Byzantion*. 1981. Vol. 51. Pp. 44–74; Eadem. Visitors from North-Western Europe to Byzantium. *Vernacular Sources: Problems and Perspectives. Byzantines and Crusaders in Non-Greek Sources* / ed. M. Whitby. Proceeding of the British Academy, 132. Oxford, 2007. Pp. 123–157.

⁵ Ottonis et Rahewinin Gesta Friderici I imperatoris / ed. G. Waitz, B. de Simson. MGH SS rer. Germ, 46. Hannover, 1912. Pp. 39.22–32: Preterea de Reutenis, qui ad contemptum imperii nostri, occisis hominibus nostris, pecuniam nostram sibi usurpaverunt, sicut convenit in causa amici et propinqui tui, et sicut nobis scripsisti, ita facias. Militibus quoque imperii nostri, Alemannis scilicet, qui apud te sunt, sicut decet magnificentiam tuam, benignus existas. Nichilominus etiam te rogamus, ut hominibus imperii nostri, Teutonicis videlicet, qui Constantinopoli morantur, locum, in quem ad honorem Dei aecclesiam edificent, concedas, tum respectu divinae remunerationis, tum etiam interventu ac petitione nostrae dilectionis.

⁶ Ottonis et Rahewinin Gesta Friderici I imperatoris / ed. G. Waitz, B. de Simson, 40.28–33: De causa, quae facta est in Rossia, sicut imperio meo scripsisti, sicut convenit imperio meo facere in causa amici et propinqui sui, sic et feci. Sed de caballariis nobilitatis tuae, quod scripta tua nominatim comprehendebant, et magis de eo qui defecit in viventibus ex eis, sic fecit imperium meum, ut scripsisti. On the reconstruction the letter of John II Comnenos. See Kresten Otto. Zur Rekonstruktion der Protokolle kaiserlich-byzantinischer Auslandsschreiben des 12. Jahrhunderts aus lateinischen Quellen. *Polypleuros Nous, Miscellanea für Peter Schreiner zu seinem 60. Geburtstag* / hrsg. von C. Scholz, G. Makris, Byzantinisches Archiv, 19. München; Leipzig, 2000. S. 125–163; Gastgeber Ch. Das Schreiben Kaiser Ioannes' II. Komnenos an König Konrad III. in der Überlieferung bei Otto von Freising. *Polypleuros Nous, Miscellanea für Peter Schreiner zu seinem 60. S.* 17–36.

Conrad III raised the same question again in a letter to his son and successor Manuel I Comnenos,⁷ but it would seem that the church for the Germans was never built.⁸

I. The church of St. Olav in Constantinople

'Byzantine' Miracles of St. Olav

Olav Haraldsson was killed at the Battle of Stiklarstadir (modern Stiklestad) on July 29, 1030. Shortly after his death, Olav's body was exhumed and transferred to Christ Church in Nidaros. Since that time many miracles occurred at the Olav's tomb⁹ and Olav's cult spread

⁷ Ottonis et Rahewinin Gesta Friderici I imperatoris / ed. G. Waitz, B. de Simson, 42.31–43.9: De Ruthenis vero, pro quibus patri tuo divae recordationis Iohanni imperatori per fidelissimum capellanum nostrum Adalbertum et per comitem Alexandrum de Gravina scripsimus, et de loco, in quo nostris Teutonicis ad honorem Dei aecclesiam edificare volumus, et de nobilibus baronibus Apuliae, Alexandro videlicet Clarimontis, Philippi de Surris et Heinrico comite et Senne Pustellis, ille noster precordialis Wirciburgensis episcopus et caeteri familiares nostri voluntatem nostram tibi referent; quibus tamquam nobis credas. Super his omnibus fidelem apocrisiarium tuum Nikoforum, licet in principio legationis suae nos conturbaverit, tibi attentius commendamus, et quia constanter perduravit, ut eum remuneres, rogamus.

⁸ Jacoby David. The Venetian Quarter of Constantinople from 1082 to 1261: Topographical Considerations. *Novum Millennium. Studies on Byzantine History and Culture dedicated to Paul Speck* / ed. C. Sode and S. A. Takács. Aldershot, 2001. Pp. 161–162. Manuel I Comnenos granted the land for the Germans in Constantinople, which was later confiscated by Isaac I Angelos and handed it to the Venetians, see Todt Kl.-P. Deutsche in Byzanz. *Byzantina Mediterranea*. Festschrift für Johannes Koder zum 65. Geburtstag / ed. K. Belke, E. Kislinger. Wien, 2007. S. 657.

⁹ Adam of Bremen. History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen / trans. by Fr. J. Tschan. New York, 2002; 'Metropolis civitas Nortmannorum est Trondemnis, quae nunc decorata ecclesiis magna populorum frequentia celebratur. In qua iacet corpus beatissimi Olaph regis et martyris. Ad cuius tumbam usque in hodiernum diem maxima Dominus operatur sanitatum miracula, ita ut a longinquis illic regionibus confluant hii, qui se meritis sancti non desperant [posse] iuvari': Adam of Bremen. *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*. IV. 33 / ed. B. Schmeidler, MGH SRG, 2. Hannover, 1917. S. 267–268.

beyond Norway.¹⁰ Adam of Bremen noted that the saint, at his feast, was ‘worthily recalled with eternal veneration on the part of all the peoples of the Northern Ocean, the Norwegians, Swedes, Goths, Sembi, Danes, and Slavs.’¹¹ Skaldic poems from *Glælognskviða* by Þórarinn loftunga (‘praise-tongue’) to *Róðudrápa* by Þórðr Sjóreksson and *Erfidrápa* by Sigvatr Þórðarson enhanced the veneration of the saint.¹² The formation of miracles was part of the written culture associated with the establishment of the Norwegian archiepiscopal see at Nidaros after the visit to Norway in 1152/1153 of the papal legate Cardinal Nicholas Breakspear.¹³ Probably during the 1140’s, Einar Skúlason gathered a large group of miracles in his poem *Geisli* (‘Sunbeam’),¹⁴ read at the saint’s tomb in the Christ Church in Nidaros during the feast. His collection included ‘early miracles’ that were recorded shortly after the transfer of the relics in the 1030s,

¹⁰ The ‘Gesta Normannorum Ducum’ of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni / ed. by E. van Houts. Oxford, 1995. Pp. 24–28.

¹¹ Adam of Bremen. History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen. P. 97. ‘Agitur festivitas eius IIIlo kal. Augusti, omnibus septentrionalis oceani populis Nortmannorum, Sueonum, Gothorum, [Semborum,] Danorum atque Sclavorum aeterno cultu memorabilis’: Adam Bremensis. *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*. II. 61, 122.

¹² Poetry from the King’s Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c. 1035 / ed. D. Whaley. Turnhout, 2012. P. 865; the edition *Róðudrápa* Þórðr Sjóreksson’s see, 242 and the *Erfidrápa* Sigvatr Þórðarson’s see, 614. On the perception this poems and their influence on the veneration of St Olav see Lindow John. St Olaf and the Skalds, in: Sanctity in the North: Saints, Lives, and Cults in Medieval Scandinavia / ed. by Th. A. DuBois. Toronto, 2008. Pp. 103–27; Townend Matthew. Knútr and the Cult of St Óláfr: Poetry and Patronage in Eleventh-Century Norway and England. *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*. 2005. Vol. 1. Pp. 251–279.

¹³ Østrem Eyolf. The Early Liturgy of St Olav. *Gregorian Chant and Medieval Music: Proceedings from the Nordic Festival and Conference of Gregorian Chant*. Trondheim, St. Olav’s Wake, 1997 / ed. by A. Dybdahl and others. Senter for Mid-delalderstudier, Skrifter, 7. Trondheim, 1998. Pp. 43–58; Eadem. The Office of St Olav: A Study in Chant Transmission. *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Musicologica Upsaliensia*. Uppsala, 2001. Vol. 18; Mortensen Lars Boje. Recent Research in the Legend of Saint Olav. *Lateinische Biographie von der Antike bis in die Gegenwart: Scripturus vitam. Festgabe für Walter Berschin zum 65. Geburtstag* / ed. D. Walz. Heidelberg, 2002. S. 1011–1018; Eadem. Writing and Speaking of St. Olaf: National and Social Integration. *Saints and their Lives on the Periphery: Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200)* / ed. H. Antonsson, I. Garipzanov. *Cursor Mundi*, 9. Turnhout, 2010. Pp. 207–218.

¹⁴ Einar Skúlason’s ‘Geisli’: A Critical Edition / ed. by M. Chase. Toronto Old Norse-Icelandic Series. Toronto, 2005.

but also some new miracles that took place not long before the composition of the poem.

The rise of the cult of St. Olav after 1153 prompted the emergence of a more complete collection of his miracles, the *Passio et Miracula Beati Olavi*, written by Archbishop of Nidaross Eysteinn Erlendsson (1161–1188) and preserved in a manuscript dating from 1200.¹⁵ Lenka JIROUŠKOVÁ has argued convincingly that the first ten miracles of this collection were written down much earlier than others¹⁶. Some miracles of St. Olaf appear in the *Morkinskinna*, the *Fagrskinna*, *Heimskringla* by Snorri's Sturluson and the so called *Legendary Saga of St. Olav*.¹⁷ Also the *Old Norwegian Homily Book*, written around 1200, includes a short collection of 21 miracles.¹⁸

The geography of miracles reflects the spread of St. Olav's cult. They occur not only at the saint's tomb in Nidaros, but also in Rus' and Byzantium.¹⁹

¹⁵ *Passio et miracula Beati Olavi*, Edited from a Twelfth-Century Manuscript in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Oxford / ed. F. Metcalfe. Oxford, 1881; Mortensen Lars Boje. The Nordic Archbishoprics as Literary Centres around 1200. *Archbishop Absalon of Lund and his World* / ed. Karsten Friis-Jensen, I. Skovgaard-Petersen. Roskilde, 2000. Pp. 133–157.

¹⁶ Jiroušková Lenka. Textual Evidence for the Transmission of the *Passio Olavi* Prior to 1200 and its Later Literary Transformations. *Saints and their Lives on the Periphery: Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200)*. Pp. 219–239. According to the classification by Lenka Jiroušková, Eysteinn Erlendsson has gathered the almost complete collection of 49 miracles. The lost miracle is presented in others manuscripts of *Passio et Miracula Beati Olavi*. For more details, see Jiroušková Lenka. *Der heilige Wikingerkönig Olav Haraldsson und sein hagiographisches Dossier. Text und Kontext der Passio Olavi (mit kritischer edition)*. Leiden, Boston, 2014. S. 32–57.

¹⁷ *Morkinskinna* / ed. F. Jonsson. København, 1932; *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings (1030–1157)* / translated with Introduction and Notes by Th. M. Andersson and K. E. Gade, *Islandica*, LI. Cornell University Press, 2000; *Fagrskinna* / ed. F. Jonsson. København, 1902–1903; *Fagrskinna. A Catalogue of the Kings of Norway* / ed. A. Finlay, *The Northern World*, 7. Leiden, Boston, 2004; *Sturluson Snorri. Heimskringla* / ed. F. Jonsson. København, 1911.

¹⁸ *Gammel norsk homiliebog (Codex Arn. Magn. 619 qv.)* / ed. C. R. Unger. Christiania, 1862–1864; *Codex AM 619 quarto. Old Norwegian Book of Homilies Containing the Miracles of Saint Olaf and Alcuin's De virtutibus et vitiis* / ed. G. T. Flom. University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, 14. Urbana, 1929.

¹⁹ Melnikova E. A. Cult sv. Olava v Novgorode i Konstantinopole. *Vizantiiskii vremennik*. 1996. Vol. 56. Pp. 92–106; Antonsson Haki. The Cult of St Olaf in the Eleventh Century and Kievan Rus. *Middelalderforum*. 2003. Vol. 1–2. Pp. 143–159; Pritsak Omelian. *Pokhodzhennia Rusi*. Kyiv, 2003. Vol. 2. Starodavni Scandynavs'ki

My study focuses on the four 'Byzantine' miracles featuring Varangians in Byzantine service. These four stories appear in different collections of miracles:

1. St. Olav helps Harald Sigurðarson and his Varangians in a war against 'pagans'. This account appears in the late version of *Saga of Harald Hardrade* (*Haralds saga harðráða*) preserved in *The Flatey Book* (*Flateyjarbók*), the largest medieval Icelandic manuscript written in 1394.
2. St. Olav releases Harald Sigurdarson from prison in Constantinople. The miracle is found in the different versions of *Saga of Harald Hardrade* (*Haralds saga harðráða*) preserved in the great compendia *Morkinskinna* (ca 1220), *Fagrskinna*, (ca 1220), and *Heimskringla* (ca 1230) by Snorri Sturluson.
3. St. Olav helps Varangians to defeat enemies in battle. This miracle is told in the *Passio et Miracula Beati Olavi*, *Geisli* by Einarr Skúla-son, the *Saga of Hakon Herdebreid* by Snorri Sturluson (*Heimskringla*), and in the so-called *Legendary Saga of St. Olav* (ca 1200).
4. Miracle of the sword St. Olav. This miracle is present in the *Geisli*, *Passio et Miracula Beati Olavi*, *Saga of Hakon Herdebreid* and the *Old Norwegian Homily Book*.

Dating these 'Byzantine' miracles is important. The first two are variously presented in the late versions of the *Haralds saga harðráða*. The third and the fourth are included in the *Passio et Miracula Beati Olavi*, yet only the third was originally part of this collection, while the fourth was added later. The early inclusion of the third miracle in the collection could be associated with the return from Constantinople to the North of the famous Varangian Eindriði the Young. Einar's Skúla-son indicates that stories told by Eindriði the Young were an important source for him.²⁰ Eindriði the Young could also be the source of the

sagy i Stara Scandynaviia. Pp. 78–91; Jackson Tatjana N. The Cult of St Olaf and Early Novgorod. *Saints and their Lives on the Periphery: Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200)*. Pp. 147–167; Garipzanov Ildar H. Novgorod and the Veneration of Saints in Eleventh-Century Rus': A Comparative View. *Saints and their Lives on the Periphery: Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200)*. Pp. 135–136.

²⁰ See, especially, Blöndal Sigvur, Benedikz Benedikt. The Varangians of Byzantium. Pp. 217–218; for an overview of the whole discussion, see Shafer J. *Saga-Accounts of Norse Far-Travellers*. Durham (UK), 2010. Pp. 98–105.

fourth miracle, added later. The miracles attest to the spread of St. Olav's cult among the Varangians in Byzantine service, and the building of the saint's church in Constantinople is the central theme for all four of them. The question, however, is whether there was such church?

The saint on the field of battle

The first two miracles tell the story of building the church of St. Olav in Constantinople. In the *Morkinskinna* and the *Fagrskinna*, Harald Sigurðarson asks the saint for help and along with his soldiers he promises to build a church for his glory. After the saint helps him in war against anonymous pagans, Harald and his men, upon their victorious return, fulfill their promise and build the church. The emperor, however, refuses its consecration. The Varangian leader accuses the emperor of being unfair to his warriors and makes him cede; then the emperor not only authorizes the ceremony but also throws a greater feast than Harald himself had planned. The church of St. Olav had 'better bells than any place else Constantinople'.²¹

V. G. VASIL'EVSKIJ admitted the veracity of the *Flateyjarbók* in regard to the emperor's reluctance to consecrate a church in honor of the saint patron of the Varangians, but he also rejected the possibility of such church having actually been built in Constantinople.²² E. A. MELNIKOVA points out that the emperor might have been weary not so much of St. Olav's image as of the power acquired by Harald; she allows for the existence of the church of St. Olav in Constantinople since the time of Harald Sigurðarson (1033–1043).²³ Likewise, Krijnie CIGGAAR admits the possibility of the church of St. Olav having been built in Constantinople in the times of 'Emperor Michael' after the saint's appearance on the battlefield.²⁴

Miracle 1 develops a hagiographic topos. The 'pagan konung', a 'blind king', suddenly recovers his sight and sees a warrior on a white horse, who causes fear among his army. This is St. Olav, who has heard the Varangians' request and came to their help. V. G. VASIL'EVSKIJ linked this story to the participation of Harald and his men in the war against

²¹ *Morkinskinna*. Pp. 65–66.

²² Vasil'evskij V. G. *Varyago-russkaya i varyago-angliyskaya družhina v Konstantinopole*. Vasil'evskij V. G. *Trudy*. St. Petersburg, 1908. Vol. 1. 284 p.

²³ Melnikova E. A. *Kul't sv. Olava v Novgorode i Konstantinopole*. P. 105.

²⁴ Ciggaar Krijnie. *Harald Hardrada: his Expedition against the Pechenegs*. Pp. 385–401.

the Bulgarians in 1040, the description of the miracle being very similar to the miracle of St. Demetrios during the Bulgarian rebellion described by John Scylitzes.²⁵ The ‘blind konung’ sees a warrior on a white horse just as as the Bulgarians saw ‘a young horseman leading the Roman ranks, exuding a fire which burnt up the enemies.’ Then, the Bulgarians ‘were not in the least willing to offer a sustained or courageous resistance for the martyr was leading the Roman army and smoothing a path for it.’²⁶ Kekeumenos mentions Harald and his men in the Bulgarian campaign.²⁷ V. G. Vasil’evskij suggested that the miracles of St. Demetrios could influence the formation of St. Olav’s miracles, but it is hard to believe that the legend of St. Demetrios and, in particular, the story told by Scylizes were transferred by the Varangian to the North and used by the much late editors of *Haralds saga harðráða*. It would be also difficult to explain why such an early appearance of St. Olav to Harald was not recorded among the first miracles, collected in 1140s, and only came at a much later time. Its editor had access to the third miracle, which also dealt with Olaf’s appearance on the battlefield. There are many common places, images and characters between the first and the third miracles (unknown ‘pagans’, ‘blind konung’ etc.). By transforming the third miracle, the editors of *Haralds saga harðráða* were able to emphasize Harald’s role in spreading the cult of St. Olav beyond the North by building a church for the saint in Constantinople.

²⁵ Vasil’evskij V. G. *Varyago-russkaya i varyago-angliyskaya družhina v Konstantinopole*. Pp. 283–284.

²⁶ Ioannis Scylitzae *Synopsis historiarum* / ed. H. Thurn. CFBH, 5. Berlin, 1973. 413.13–414.26: μιῆ δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν τῷ τάφῳ τοῦ μεγαλομάρτυρος Δημητρίου προσελθόντες οἱ ἐπιχώριοι, καὶ πάννουχον ἐπιτελέσαντες δέησιν καὶ τῷ μύρῳ τῷ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τάφου βλύζοντι χρισάμενοι, ὡς ἐκμῖαζ ὀρμῆς ἀναπετάσαντες τὰς πύλας ἐξέρχονται κατὰ τῶν Βουλγάρων. συνῆν δὲ τοῖς θεσσαλονικεῦσι τὸ τάγμα τῶν μεγαθύμων. ἐξεληθόντες δὲ καὶ τῷ ἀπροσδοκίτῳ καταπληξάμενοι τρέπουσι τοὺς Βουλγάρους, μηδ’ ὄλως πρὸς ἄμυναν ἢ ἀλκὴν στήναι βουλευθέντας, τοῦ μάρτυρος προηγούμενου τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς στρατιᾶς καὶ τὴν πορείαν προομαλίζοντος, καθὼς ἐνωμότως διεβεβαίουν οἱ αἰχμαλωτισθέντες Βούλγαροι, λέγοντες νεανίαν ἐφιππον ὀρᾶν προηγούμενον τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς φάλαγγος, ἐξ οὗ πῦρ ἐξ ἀλλό μενον ἐπυρπόλει τοὺς ἐναντίους. ἔπεσον οὖν πλεῖω τῶν πεντεκαίδεκα χιλιάδων, δορυάλωτοι δὲ ἐλήφθησαν οὐκ ἐλάττους τοῦτῶν. οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ αἰσχίστως σὺν τῷ Ἄλουσινᾶν πρὸς τὸν Δελεάνον διασφάζονται.

²⁷ Kekaumenos. *Sovety i rasskazy*. 298.11–299.7.

Miracle 2 tells the story of St. Olav releasing Harald from prison. Snorri Sturluson describes the emperor's decision to throw Harald in prison and continues:

When Harald drew near to the prison King Olaf the Saint stood before him and said he would assist him. On that spot of the street a chapel has since been built and consecrated to Saint Olaf and which chapel has stood there ever since. The prison was so constructed that there was a high tower open above, but a door below to go into it from the street. Through it Harald was thrust in, along with Haldor and Ulf. Next night a lady of distinction with two servants came, by the help of ladders, to the top of the tower, let down a rope into the prison and hauled them up. Saint Olaf had formerly cured this lady of a sickness and he had appeared to her in a vision and told her to deliver his brother.²⁸

The only detail provided by Snorri Sturluson regarding the location of the chapel dedicated to the saint is very uncertain: on the same street as Harald's prison. The chapel built in the place of St. Olav's appearance was a place of memory for the Varangians in Constantinople. Snorri Sturluson also describes the healing of a noble woman by the saint whose power was beneficial not only for Varangians, but also for Byzantines. Thus, Miracles 1 and 2 speak of a church and a chapel in the saint's honor. Krijnie CIGGAAR tends to accept this double testimony and admits that there could be several church of St. Olav in Constantinople.²⁹ This is not very plausible. The chapel could be built in Constantinople during the second half of the 11th century. The story the construction of the church represents the paraphrase of Miracle 3, which adds only a story about Harald Sigurðarson and his war against the unknown pagans. This miracle was added to the collections of the first ten miracles, probably after 1150s.³⁰ The story appears in much modified form in the *Morkinskinna* and the *Fagrskinna*, and in an abbreviated version in *Geisli* by Einar Skúlason. It describes the building of a church by the Emperor and the Varangians after a battle:

I heard [that] the ruler of all [= Byzantine emperor] paid with the fire of the gull's land for the sword which Óláfr had owned; I smooth [my] poem with the tools of poetry. The supreme king of princes [= Byzantine

²⁸ Sturluson Snorri. *Heimskringla* / ed. F. Jonsson. P. 455.

²⁹ Ciggaar Krijnie. Harald Hardrada: his Expedition against the Pechenegs. Pp. 385–401.

³⁰ Jiroušková Lenka. Textual Evidence for the Transmission of the *Passio Olavi* Prior to 1200 and its Later Literary Transformations. Pp. 238–239.

emperor] then caused the harm of the yard of the point-storm to stand there over the altar adorned with gold.

Haraldr's very useful heir [= Óláfr] makes clear signs, which sword-showers manifest in Greece; talk arises among men about that. I hear that Óláfr's fame rides all across the day-roof; you, doers of battle, will not be able to find a more worthy king.

A battle was held on the wide Pezina plains; the gull of battle laked well [its] heavy hunger in the noise of spears. There the Greeks fled away, so that people sank by the thousands before the sword; the helmet-harming storm of Hamðir's <warrior> clothing increased.

Most of the kingdom, Constantinople and the territories, would have lain under enemies – the army of the sorrowful breaker of the flame of the sea [= Byzantine king] did well – except that a very few Varangians pushed [their] shields forward in the fair breeze of swords; weapons gleamed in the storm of the sun of the prow-ox.

Strong men called hard with confidence on glorious Óláfr in the noise of steel weapons the distress of the destroyer of terror [= Byzantine emperor] increased, where sixty men [*lit.* six tens of men] were against one in the flight of arrows; Reifnir's <sea-king> houses, reddened with the wound-wave were cloven.³¹

Saga of Hakon Herdebreid by Snorri Sturluson gives us the most detailed narrative of St. Olav's role in this battle:

It happened once in the Greek country, when Kirjalax was emperor there, that he made an expedition against Blokumannaland. When he came to the Pezina plains, a heathen king came against him with an innumerable host. He brought with him many horsemen, and many large waggons, in which were large loop-holes for shooting through. When they prepared for their night quarters they drew up their waggons, one by the side of the other, without their tents, and dug a great ditch without; and all which made a defence as strong as a castle. The heathen king was blind. Now when the Greek king came, the heathens drew up their array on the plains before their wagon-fortification. The Greeks drew up their array opposite, and they rode on both sides to fight with each other; but it went on so ill and so unfortunately, that the Greeks were compelled to fly after suffering a great defeat, and the heathens gained a victory. Then the king drew up an array of Franks and Flemings, who rode against the heathens, and fought with them; but it went with

³¹ Einarr Skúlason's 'Geisli': A Critical Edition / ed. by M. Chase (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/skaldic>).

them as with the others, that many were killed, and all who escaped took to flight. Then the Greek king was greatly incensed at his men-at-arms; and they replied, that he should now take his wine-bags, the Varings. The king says that he would not throw away his jewels, and allow so few men, however bold they might be, to attack so vast an army. Then Thorer Helsing, who at that time was leader of the Varings replied to the king's words, "If there was burning fire in the way, I and my people would run into it, if I knew the king's advantage required it". Then the king replied, "Call upon your holy King Olaf for help and strength". The Varings, who were 450 men, made a vow with hand and word to build a church in Constantinople, at their own expense and with the aid of other good men, and have the church consecrated to the honour and glory of the holy King Olaf; and thereupon the Varings rushed into the plain. When the heathens saw them, they told their king that there was another troop of the Greek king's army come out upon the plain; but they were only a handful of people. The king says, "Who is that venerable man riding on a white horse at the Head of the troop?". They replied, "We do not see him". There was so great a difference of numbers, that there were sixty heathens for every Christian man; but notwithstanding the Varing went boldly to the attack. As soon as they met terror and alarm seized the army of the heathens, and they instantly began to fly; but the Varings pursued, and soon killed a great number of them. When the Greeks and Franks who before had fled from the heathens saw this, they hastened to take part, and pursue the enemy with the others. Then the Varings had reached the waggon-fortification, where the greatest defeat was given to the enemy. The heathen king was taken in the flight of his people, and the Varings brought him along with them; after which the Christians took the camp of the heathens, and their waggon-fortification.³²

The Varangians want to build the church of St. Olav in Constantinople, but the narrative does not indicate the implementation of their plan.

According to *Passio et Miracula Beati Olavi*, the emperor lost courage and turned to blessed martyr:

In the royal city of Constantinople his memory is renowned, and in that city a church has been built in honour of the martyr. For it befell at one time that the emperor of the aforesaid city, having assembled his army, went forth to do battle against a certain king of the heathens. The armies on both sides being arrayed for warfare and positioned with martial skill, they entered into combat. The foreigners fell upon the Christians most

³² Sturluson Snorri. *Heimskringla* / ed. F. Jonsson. Pp. 612–613.

fiercely, and in the first encounter they were the victors. The greater part of the Greeks fell and the might of the Christian army was enfeebled. A small force remained which expected nothing but death. The emperor, stricken and well-nigh heartbroken, turned to divine aid, and with many tears they all together implored the help of the blessed martyr, who they knew by report often came to the aid of those fighting for righteousness. They vowed that they would build a church in the royal city, in the name of the martyr and in honour of the blessed Virgin Mary, if, by Olaf's intervention, they should return as victors. O glorious and extraordinary miracle! The martyr appeared to some of the soldiers and standard-bearer. Dread seized the enemy army, and they all turned to flee, smitten with divine terror. Defended by the aid of the martyr, a force by no means large harried those fierce savages, although a great and powerful army, not long before, had been unable to withstand them. Inestimable slaughter was made of the pagans, and the Christian victors returned with great spoils. Having returned to Constantinople victorious, and mindful of the vow to the blessed martyr, by which they had bound themselves, the emperor therefore built a church in honour of the blessed Virgin Mary, and the people's offering to the fabric-fund was so devout and eager that, when an immense church had been completed and everything necessary for its adornment had been done, a great deal of the money that had been offered was still left over. And by the splendour of the many precious things that were sent from Constantinople, the church in which Saint Olaf rests bears witness that the hearts of all were devoted to the service of the blessed martyr, because of these and many other extraordinary acts of grace.³³

After the battle emperor built a church in honor of the Mother of God.³⁴ When this church has been built?

*Two narratives the Battle
at Eski Zagra (Veroia) of 1121*

The battle, described in Miracle 3, took place in *Blokumannaland* or the land of 'Cumans and Vlachs', where Emperor Kirjalax (Κύριος) 'Αλέξιος) campaigned. His army was not numerous and consisted mainly of mercenaries: 450 Varangians led by Thorer Helsifg, Franks and Flemings. The 'blind konung' used exotic defensive tactics.

³³ A History of Norway and the Passion and Miracles of the Blessed Óláfr / ed. C. Phelpstead and trans. D. Kunin. Viking Society for Northern research, texts series, XIII. Pp. 34–35.

³⁴ Passio et miracula Beati Olai. Pp. 77–78.

When the attack of the Byzantines and the Franks was repulsed, the emperor sent the Varangians who soon were able to capture the nomads' camp. R. DAWKINS concluded that the description of the battle in Miracle 3 was very similar to the battle fought by Emperor John II Comnenos against Pechenegs at Eski Zagra (Veroia) in 1121.³⁵ The Byzantine historians note the important role of Varangians in this battle.

John Cinnamos in his *Epitome* describes the specific tactics of the nomads and the action of the Varangians:

When the armies clashed with one another, the battle was for some while in balance, and then the emperor himself was hit in the leg by an arrow. But since the Romans fought courageously, the Petchenegs were severely defeated: some of them fell, others were taken in captivity. No insignificant portion [of the Petchenegs] who returned to their camp considered it unworthy to flee, but chose to endure peril there with their wives and children. They fought in front of their wagons, which they had overspread with ox hides and neatly fitted together: in them they placed their wives and children. So again a fierce battle occurred and a slaughter ensued on both sides. The Petchenegs treated the carts like a fortress and wrought great harm to the Romans. Perceiving this, the emperor desired to dismount from his horse and continue the struggle on foot with the soldiers. When the Romans did not agree to this, he ordered the ax-bearers around him (this is the British nation, which has been in service to the Romans' emperors from a long time back) to cut apart with their axes the opposing [wagons]. Since they at once entered the conflict, the emperor thus become master of the Petchenegs' camp. Of the others who had sought safety in flight, most came voluntarily to the emperor out of affection for the captives; they were trained in the Romans' ways and, after they had been enrolled on the military registers, they served for a long time.³⁶

Nicetas Choniates also emphasizes the Varangians' key role in the victory of Emperor John II Comnenos:

Setting out from the regions of Beroe (where they were encamped), John engaged the Patzinaks in combat in the morning twilight, and there

³⁵ Dawkins R. An Echo in the Norse Sagas of the Patzinak War of John II Komninos. Boisacq Mélanges E. *Annuaire de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales*. [5]. Brussels, 1937. Pp. 243–249. In another article R. Dawkins dated the miracle to the reign Alexios Comnenos, see Dawkins R. Greeks and Northmen. *Custom is King: Essays Presented to R. R. Marett*. London, 1936. Pp. 35–47.

³⁶ Cinnami Ioannis. *Epitome*, 8.1–18; Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus / Ch. M. Brand. New York, 1976. P. 16.

ensued one of the most frightful and terrifying battles ever fought. The Patzinaks met our troops bravely, making resistance difficult with their cavalry charges, discharge of missiles, and war cries. Once the Roman had joined in battle, they were committed to fighting to the death or to victory. The emperor, escorted by his companions and bodyguards, provided assistance all the while to his beleaguered troops. In the thick of battle the Patzinaks, inspired by necessity, resorted to the following base stratagem. After collecting all of their wagons and deploying them in a circle, they positioned a goodly number of their troops on them and fashioned a palisade. They cut many oblique passageways through the wagons, enabling them to take refuge behind them as though they were walls whenever hard pressed by the Romans and forced to turn their backs. When rested, they sallied out as though through gates thrown open and wrought brave deeds with their hands. This tactic devised by the Patzinaks, which, in effect, was the same as that of fighting from walls, frustrated the Roman assault. Then John devised a cunning plan for his troops; not only was he valiant and a cunning tactician by nature but he was also the first to execute the instructions he gave his generals and soldiers. His behavior on the battlefield gave witness to his great piety: whenever the Roman phalanxes were hard pressed by the enemy falling furiously upon them, he would look upon the icon of the Mother of God and, wailing loudly and gesturing pitifully, shed tears hotter than the sweat of battle. It was not in vain that he acted thus; donning the breastplate of the power from on high, he routed the Patzinak battalions just as Moses had turned back the troops of Amalek by raising his hands. Taking with him his bodyguards, who were armed with long shields John Komnenos and single-edged axes, John went forth like an unbreakable wall to meet the Patzinaks. When the rampart of wagons had been demolished and the fighting had turned into hand-to-hand combat, the enemy was put to inglorious flight, and the Romans pursued them boldly. The wagon folk” fell by the thousands, and their palisaded camps were seized as plunder. The captives were beyond number. Eager to defect to our side, many were sent to settle in the villages along the western borders of the Roman empire, some of which still survive; not a few were enrolled as allied forces, and many captured divisions were assigned to the army. John, having achieved such a glorious victory over the Patzinaks, raised a huge trophy and offered prayers to God and, as a remembrance and thanksgiving for these deeds, established what we today call the festival of the Patzinaks.³⁷

³⁷ Nicetae Choniatae historia, 15–16; 0 city of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates / trans. H. J. Magoulias. Detroit, 1984. Pp. 10–11.

Choniates does not indicate that these bodyguards were of ‘the British nation’, but his description is very close to the text of Cinnamus. Most likely, Choniates used the work of Cinnamus or the lost common source for the description of the campaign.³⁸ He adds some details for dramatic effect: the crying emperor and his prayer to the Mother of God. This prayer to the Mother of God could explain why the Emperor built a church in her honor after the battle of Veroia. As R. DAWKINS has noted, some identical facts suggest that John Cinnamus and Nicetas Choniates speak of the same event as our Miracle 3. The location of the battle – ‘land of Cumans and Vlach’ does not contradict the geography of John II Comnenos’ campaign in 1121 and the localization of the battle of Eski Zagra.³⁹ One could object that the nomad tactics, as described in the three sources, are too traditional to provide a decisive argument for identifying the battle, while the Varangian tactics are described differently by the Byzantine historians and in Miracle 3. What is more, Miracle 3 names the emperor Kirjalax (Κύριος) ‘Ἀλέξιος), Alexios Comnenos, rather than John Comnenos, even though Kirjalax became the stereotypical name for Byzantine emperors in sagas and could be introduced at a later date. The Byzantine narratives of battle know nothing about the Flemings.

A strong argument against identifying the battle in Miracle 3 with battle of Eski Zagra has been produced by Krijnie CIGGAAR. She points out that the Flemish in Byzantine service are attested only on one occasion: after Robert I of Flanders swore allegiance to the emperor Alexios Comnenos and send him 500 warriors, who arrived shortly before the battle with the Pechenegs at Lebounion on April 20, 1091.⁴⁰ The Flemish presence on the battlefield according to the saga suggests to Krijnie CIGGAAR the identification of the battle described as the one at Lebounion.⁴¹ However, some arguments contradict Krijnie Ciggaar’s hypotheses. 1. Anna Comnene in her detailed narrative of the battle does

³⁸ Kazhdan Alexander. *Nikita Choniat i ego vremya*. St. Peterburg, 2005. Pp. 330–336; Simpson Alicia. *Niketas Choniates. A Historiographical Study*. Oxford ; New York, 2013.

³⁹ On the tactics Alexios Comnenos in the battle at Lebounion see Birkenmeier John. *The development of the Comnenian army. History of Warfare*. Leiden, Boston, 2002. Vol. 5. Pp. 76–77, without the miracles of St Olav.

⁴⁰ *Comninae Annae. Alexias* / ed. D. R. Reinsch and A. Kambylis. CFHB 40/1. Berlin ; New York, 2001. 218.51–56; 221.57–60.

⁴¹ Ciggaar Krijnie. *Flemish Mercenaries in Byzantium their later History in an Old Norse Miracle*. Pp. 44–74.

not mention the Flemings, indicating that Alexios Comnenos sent the Flemings against the Turks.⁴² 2. The Flemings are only mentioned in the *Saga of Hakon Herdebreid* by Snorri Sturluson, but not in the short description. Thus, the source of the short description, Eindriði the Young, told Einar Skúlason the story of the battle without mentioning the Flemings. They appear on the battlefield only in the imagination of Snorri Sturluson.

The sources cited as well as the so-called *Legendary Saga of St. Olav* describe the church built after the battle as St. Olav's. Only Eysteinn Erlendsson claims that this church was dedicated in honor of the Virgin Mary; he also notes gifts and money sent from this church in Constantinople to Nidaros. Frederick Metcalfe suggested that this church was dedicated to both Virgin Mary and Olav,⁴³ as actually stated in the *Old Norwegian Homily Book* that removes the discrepancy between the sources. There the emperor sanctifies the church in honor of St. Olav and the Virgin Mary.⁴⁴

Miracle 4 describes the invention of the saint's relics and their transmission to the church St. Olav:

It happened at the battle of Stiklestad, as before related, that King Olaf threw from him the sword called Hneiter when he received his wound. A Swedish man, who had broken his own sword, took it up, and fought with it. When this man escaped with the other fugitives he came to Svithjod, and went home to his house. From that time he kept the sword all his days, and afterwards his son, and so relation after relation; and when the sword shifted its owner, the one told to the other the name of the sword and where it came from. A long time after, in the days of

⁴² The Alexiad of the Princess Anna Comnena / trans. by E. Dawes. London, 1928. P. 182: The horsemen sent by the Count of Flanders, about five hundred picked men, arrived and brought as a present to the Emperor one hundred and fifty selected horses: moreover they sold him all the horses they did not require for their own use. The Emperor welcomed them very graciously and returned hearty thanks. Next he received a message from the East saying that Apelchases, the governor of Nicea (who the Persians usually call a 'satrap; and the Turks, who now imitate the Persians an 'ameer'), was all but starting on an expedition against Nicomedia, so he sent those horsemen to protect that district.

⁴³ Passio et miracula Beati Olai. Pp. 78.

⁴⁴ Gammel norsk homiliebog (Codex Arn. Magn. 619 qv.) / ed. C. R. Unger. Christiania, 1864. P. 162; Codex AM 619 quarto. Old Norwegian Book of Homilies Containing the Miracles of Saint Olaf and Alcuin's De virtutibus et vitiis / ed. G. T. Flom. University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, XIV. Urbana, 1929. P. 164.

Kirjalax the emperor of Constantinople, when there was a great body of Varings in the town, it happened in the summer that the emperor was on a campaign, and lay in the camp with his army. The Varings who had the guard, and watched over the emperor, lay on the open plain without the camp. They changed the watch with each other in the night, and those who had been before on watch lay down and slept; but all completely armed. It was their custom, when they went to sleep, that each should have his helmet on his head, his shield over him, sword under the head, and the right hand on the sword-handle. One of these comrades, whose lot it was to watch the latter part of the night, found, on awakening towards morning, that his sword was gone. He looked after it, and saw it lying on the flat plain at a distance from him. He got up and took the sword, thinking that his comrades who had been on watch had taken the sword from him in a joke; but they all denied it. The same thing happened three nights. Then he wondered at it, as well as they who saw or heard of it; and people began to ask him how it could have happened. He said that his sword was called Hneiter, and had belonged to King Olaf the Saint, who had himself carried it in the battle of Stiklestad; and he also related how the sword since that time had gone from one to another. This was told to the emperor, who called the man before him to whom the sword belonged, and gave him three times as much gold as the sword was worth; and the sword itself he had laid in Saint Olaf's church, which the Varings supported, whereit has been ever since over the altar. There was a lenderman of Norway while Harald Gille's sons, Eystein, Inge, and Sigurd lived, who was called Eindride Unge; and he was in Constantinople when these events took place. He told these circumstances in Norway, according to what Einar Skulason says in his song about King Olaf the Saint, in which these events are sung.⁴⁵

Miracle 4 was added to the collection St. Olav's miracles only after 1150s. Einar Skúlason describes the discovery of the sword and its purchase by emperor.⁴⁶ For E. A. MELNIKOVA, this is the typical story of a church obtaining the relics of its patron, the sword being the only relic of St. Olav in Constantinople.⁴⁷ This relic was redeemed for gold from a person who had no rightful claim to it.⁴⁸ If, however, this was a church of the Virgin Mary, associated by the Varangians with their saint patron,

⁴⁵ Sturluson Snorri. *Heimskringla* / ed. F. Jonsson. Pp. 611–612.

⁴⁶ Einarr Skúlason's 'Geisli': A Critical Edition / ed. by M. Chase.

⁴⁷ Melnikova E. A. *Cult sv. Olava v Novgorode i Konstantinopole*. P. 105.

⁴⁸ Jackson Tatjana N. *Meči vikings. Krayeugolnyi kamen'. Arheologija, istoriia, isskustvo, kul'tura Rossii i sopredel'nykh stran*. St. Peterburg; Moskva, 2009. Vol. 1. Pp. 262–268.

it is unlikely to have been dedicated with a sword St Olav on the altar. What is more, a church dedicated in honor of Virgin Mary and in some way connected with the Varangians is, in fact, known in the Byzantine sources.

Church of Varangiotissa

An act in the Register of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, dated from 1361, mentions the church of Virgin Mary Varangiotissa in Constantinople, located near the St. Sofia.⁴⁹ The name of the church shows some connection with the Varangians, but this relationship obviously belongs in the past. According to V.G. VASIL'EVSKIJ, 'the existence of the Orthodox church of St. Varangiotissa provides a simple explanation for the church of Virgin Mary supposedly built in Constantinople by Harold and his warriors.'⁵⁰ In his scheme, some kind of association of the church with the Varangians entitled them to speak of its dedication to St. Olav. I would like to propose a different explanation for the contamination of the Βαραγγιωτίσσα church with St. Olav. Our detailed analysis of the texts leads to the conclusion that Emperor John II Comnenos built a church which had a chapel dedicated to St. Olav. This is St. Olav's chapel known to Snorri Sturluson, who transposes its dedication, however, in the time of Harald and his warriors. The church of Virgin Mary associated with the Varangians through the presence of St. Olav's chapel gets the name of Βαραγγιωτίσσα.

2. Church of St Nikolaos and St Augustine

The *Miracula Sancti Augustini* by Goscelin mention another Varangian church in Constantinople. Their author, a Flemish who came to England in the early 1060s, wrote many hagiographic works devoted to Canterbury saints and archbishops, including an elaborate

⁴⁹ Acta Patriarchatus Constantinopolitani / ed. Fr. Miklosich et I. Müller. Wien, 1860. T. 1. P. 423: Ἐπεὶ τὸ ὄπισθεν τοῦ ἱεροῦ βήματος τοῦ παμμεγίστου καὶ θειοτάτου ναοῦ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγου Σοφίας διακεῖμενον μονῦδριον, τὸ εἰς ὄνομα τιμώμενον τῆς πανπεράγνου δεσποίνης καὶ θεομήτορος καὶ ἐπικεκλημένον τῆς Βαραγγιωτίσσης.

⁵⁰ Vasil'evskij V. G. O varyago-russah (Otvét D. I. Ilovaiskomu). Vasil'evskij V. G. *Trudy*. St. Petersburg, 1908. Vol. 1. P. 397.

description of transfer of St. Augustine's relics in September 1091.⁵¹ During his stay in Canterbury, Goscelin composed numerous hagiographic texts dedicated to St. Augustine: *Historia maior* (*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* [BHL] 777), *Historia minor*, *Historia maior de miraculis* (BHL 779), *Historia minor de miraculis*, *Historia translationis* (BHL 781), *Sermo in festiuitate sancti Augustini Anglorum apostoli*, *Historia translationis*.⁵² He wrote the *Miracula Sancti Augustini* after the ceremony of 1091, in the 1090's, since he died on December 15 of some year before 1099.⁵³ Goscelin tells about a noble Anglo-Saxon warrior, who went into exile along with many others after the Norman conquest of 1066 and entered the imperial service in Constantinople. This noble mercenary was 'to receive command over prominent troops' and

⁵¹ Not much is known about the life of Goscelin, see Wilmart Andre. Eve et Goscelin. *Revue Benedictine*. 1934. Vol. 46. Pp. 414–438; Eadem. La Legende de Sainte Edithe en Prose et Vers par le Moine Goscelin. *Analecta Bollandiana*. 1938. Vol. 56. Pp. 5–101, 265–307; and recently, Ambrose Shannon. The Social Context and Political Complexities of Goscelin's Sermon for the Feast of Saint Augustine of Canterbury, the "Apostle of the English". *Studies in Philology*. 2012. Vol. 109/4. Pp. 364–380, with references to previous bibliography.

⁵² *Miracula Sancti Augustini* exist in many manuscripts, see 1. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 312:8 (Goscelin, *Miracula s. Augustini* (BHL 779) (104–187), Goscelin, *Historia minor de miraculis s. Augustini* (BHL 778) (213–273), see his description, Sharpe Richard. A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland before 1540. Vol. 1. Publications of the Journal of Medieval Latin. Turnhout, 2001. No. 395, and James M. R. A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge, vol. 2. Cambridge, 1912. Pp. 112–114 and recently, see Ambrose Shannon. The Social Context and Political Complexities of Goscelin's Sermon for the Feast of Saint Augustine of Canterbury, the "Apostle of the English". Pp. 367–368; 2. London, British Library MS Cotton Vespasian B. xx:7 (Goscelin, *Historia minor de miraculis s. Augustini* (BHL 780) (fols. 18v–23v), Goscelin, *Historia maior de miraculis s. Augustini* (BHL 779) (fols. 61–85v)); see his description, Gneuss Helmut. Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100. *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 241. Tempe, 2001. P. 387; Gameson Richard. The Manuscripts of Early Norman England (c. 1066–1130). Oxford, 1999. P. 414. For details on this manuscript and the time of its composition, see Ambrose Shannon. The Social Context and Political Complexities of Goscelin's Sermon for the Feast of Saint Augustine of Canterbury, the "Apostle of the English. Pp. 368–369.

⁵³ Vasiliev Alexander. The Opening Stages of the Anglo-Saxon Immigration to Byzantium in the Eleventh Century. *Seminarium Kondakovianum*. 1937. Vol. 9. P. 60.

‘obtained favor with Emperor and Empress.’ The story of the church constitutes the central passage of Goscelin’s narrative:

He married a noble and wealthy women, and, remembering the gifts of God, built, close to his own home, a basilica in honor of the Blessed Nicholas and of Saint Augustine, his patron, and he had made a very beautiful icon of both Saints, i.e. the Blessed Augustine on the southern side and the Blessed Nicholas on the northern. And in addition before the scared image of his native protector, he lit by night lamps, candles, and shining lampads with burning oil, that might make their own day at night when the windless air under a clear sky permitted. This is of course a beautiful custom of his fatherland. Thus this basilica in memory of Augustine and his icon were to the English exiles as a comforting sister of their mother, their own fatherland; there they frequently prayed; there, foreigners and orphans, they found pleasure in addressing their benignant patron.⁵⁴

The construction of the church of St. Nicholas and St. Augustine occurred many years after 1066 since the noble exile had served for a long time before he received great honor from ‘Emperor and Empress’ and decided to dedicate a church to his saint patron. It is unclear who these Emperor and Empress were. The editor of *Miracula Sancti Augustini* proposed Romanus IV Diogenes and his wife Eudoxia.⁵⁵ A. A. VASILIEV argued for Alexius Comnenos and his wife Irene Ducas, because the Anglo-Saxon warriors play a prominent role in the Byzantine army only after 1081.⁵⁶ The association of St. Augustine with St. Nikolas, one of the most prominent Byzantine saints, could be meaningful for Goscelin mainly after 1087, when the Normans stole the saint’s relics

⁵⁴ The translation by A.Vasiliev, see *Acta Sanctorum. Maius. T. VI. Paris, 1866. P. 406 (caput III, 56):* Duxit uxorem nobilem & opulentam, memorque beneficiorum Dei, in honorem B. Nicolai sanctique Patroni sui Augustini construxit Basilicam domui suae contiguam, & utriusque Sancti, id est, B. Augustini ab Australi & B. Nicolai ab Aquilonali latere, quam formose depingi fecit iconiam. Addidit & luminaria, cereos vel lampades flabrante oleo perspicuas, coram sacra imagine domestici Protectoris sui noctibus accendere, quae etiam diem suum referent in nocte, quoties placida aura concederet sub sereno aethere. Haec ibi videlicet splendida consuetude est patriae. Haec italiq̄ue Augustinianae memoriae Basilica & iconia Anglis exulibus erat patriae suae consolatrix matertera; hic orations frequentare; hic dulcem Parentem, velut advenae orphani, repetere dulci habebant.

⁵⁵ *Acta Sanctorum. Maius. T. VI. Paris, 1866. P. 406.*

⁵⁶ Vasiliev Alexander. *The Opening Stages of the Anglo-Saxon Immigration to Byzantium in the Eleventh Century.* P. 60.

and carried them to Bari; this is when the cult of St. Nikolas became popular in the West.⁵⁷ St. Augustine's commemoration outside his monastery was critical for the hagiographer, his link to St. Nikolas was honorable, but I suppose that in Byzantium it was actually to St. Nikolas that the church was dedicated.

I believe that this church, unlike the other Varangians churches, is also mentioned in another source. The *Chronicon universale anonymi Laudensis* mentions a church built by Coleman, a noble Anglo-Saxon in Constantinople (*Coleman, hic vir sanctus Constantinopoli habet templum*).⁵⁸ The evidence available does not allow localizing the church,⁵⁹ which seems to have been associated with Anglo-Saxons or Varangians for a long time. In 1208, in a privilege for Latin churches in Constantinople, Pope Innocent III singled out Dane and English churches.⁶⁰ Unless there were several churches of Anglo-Saxon exiles, which is hardly plausible, the English church was the one built by the noble mercenary in Constantinople at the end of the 11th century.

3. Church of St Þorlákr

The *Miracles* of St. Þorlákr Þórhallsson contain a story of a church built in the saint's honor by the one of the Latin Emperors of Constantinople. Þorlákr Þórhallsson was bishop of Skálholt from 1178 until his death in 1193. In 1198 his body was moved to the church in Skálholt and next summer the bishop of Skálholt Páll Jóhanson (1195–1211)

⁵⁷ Garipzanov Ildar H. The Cult of St Nicholas in the Early Christian North (c. 1000–1150). *Scandinavian Journal of History*. 2010. Vol. 35/3. Pp. 229–246.

⁵⁸ Ciggaar Krijnie. L'émigration anglaise a Byzance après 1066. Un nouveau texte en latin sur les Varangues à Constantinople. *Revue des Études Byzantines*. 1974. Vol. 32. P. 326.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, situates this church at the Vlacherns, but without arguments.

⁶⁰ Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig / ed. G. L. Fr. Tafel, G. M. Thomas. Wien, 1856. Vol. 2. P. 68: Sua nobis venerabilis frater noster, Constantinopolitanus Patriarcha, inisuatione monstavit, quod Pisani, Lombardi, Longobardi, Amalfitani, Dani, Anglici et quaedam aliae nationes apud Constantinopolim commorantes in parrochiis sibi subjectis ipsi et Ecclesiis. For details and references, see Richard Jean. The Establishment of the Latin Church in the Empire of Constantinople (1204–1227). *Mediterranean Historical Review*. 1989. Vol. 4. P. 50.

wrote the Life and the *miracula* of the saint.⁶¹ Both texts, originally written in Latin, are only preserved in Old Norse translations and adaptations. The Old Norse version of the miracles and the Saga of Saint Þorlákr, presented in many editions,⁶² were composed later: the miracles closer to 1211 and the saga in 1220.⁶³ Only version 'C' of the miracles, the most complete one, contains the story of the saint's church in Constantinople, allegedly built in the reign of 'Philip of Flanders', king of Miklagard.⁶⁴ The Varangians ask the saint to help them in battle and promise to build a church in honor of the saint. When the victorious Varangians return to Constantinople, 'Philip of Flanders' decides to build the church, provides all materials and lays the first stone.⁶⁵ S. BLONDAL believed that the author of this miracle used as model hagiographic narratives glorifying St. Olav.⁶⁶ Krijnie CIGGAAR rejected this view and tried to prove the reality of the events described.⁶⁷ She linked the miracle to the battle of Philippopoliss (1208), where the army of Latin emperor Henry (1206–1216) defeated the forces of Bulgarians, Vlachs and Cumans.

According to Krijnie CIGGAAR, the name 'Philip of Flanders' contaminates the name of Philip, who commanded the army in this battle, and the Flemish origin of Latin emperors, allegedly known to the

⁶¹ On the veneration St Þorlákr see Cormack Margaret. The Saints in Iceland. Their Veneration from the Conversion to 1400. *Subsidia hagiographica*, 78. Bruxelles, 1994. Pp. 63–65; Wolf Kirsten. A Translation of the Latin Fragments Containing the Life and Miracles of St. Þorlákr along with Collections of Lectiones for Recitation on His Feast-Days. *Proceedings of the PMR Conference*. 1989. Vol. 14. Pp. 261–276; Wolf Kirsten. Pride and Politics in Late-Twelfth-Century Iceland: The Sanctity of Bishop Þorlákr Þórhallsson. *Sanctity in the North* / ed. Th. A. DuBois. Toronto, 2008. Pp. 241–270; Vésteinsson Orri. The Christianization of Iceland: Priests, Power, and Social Change 1000–1300. Oxford, 2000. Pp. 157–158, 167–168, Fahn Susanne Miriam, Jensson Gottskálk. The Forgotten Poem: A Latin Panegyric for Saint Þorlákr in AM 382 4to. *Gripla* XXI. 2010. Pp. 19–22.

⁶² See Wolf Kirsten. The Legends of the Saints in Old Norse–Icelandic Prose. Toronto, 2013.

⁶³ Fahn Susanne Miriam, Jensson Gottskálk. The Forgotten Poem: A Latin Panegyric for Saint Þorlákr. P. 21.

⁶⁴ Byskupa sögur / ed. G. Jónsson. Reykjavík, 1948. Vol. 1.

⁶⁵ Ibid. Pp. 363–364.

⁶⁶ Sigvur Blöndal and Benedikt Benedikz. *The Varangians of Byzantium*. Pp. 168–169.

⁶⁷ van Arkel-De Leeuw van Weenen Andrea, Ciggaar Krijnie. St Thorlac's in Constantinople, built by a Flemish emperor. Pp. 428–446.

Icelandic hagiographer. She further suggests that the person who brought to Iceland the story of the construction of St. Þorlákr's church in Constantinople could be one of mercenaries, perhaps Reidar, a former envoy of Emperor Isaac Angel to the Norwegian king. Reidar served Emperor Henry and died in 1214 in Constantinople.⁶⁸ Yet, the Varangians' participation in the battle at Philippopoliss is not known from other sources, while the battle description in the miracle is very similar to stories in St. Olav's miracles. Unlike St. Olav, St. Þorlákr does not appear on the battlefield, but the differences between the two miracles is not as striking as it appears to Krijnie CIGGAAR. In both texts the Varangians attack the pagans described as 'terrible people'. The only distinction between the two miracles pointed out by Krijnie CIGGAAR is that the miracle of St. Þorlákr took place in the reign of a Latin Emperor, not an Orthodox one, as in the case of St. Olav. Otherwise, the two narratives are so similar that the appearance of the church of St. Þorlákr seems very much like the transposition of the hagiographer's knowledge about the miracles St Olav in Constantinople. In the writer's eyes, the existence of his saint's church in Constantinople was the evidence of the St. Þorlákr's cult beyond Iceland.

In summarizing the comparative analysis of sources on the Varangian churches in Constantinople, my main conclusion is that one can hardly speak of several such churches. The evidence is often evasive, but it would seem to support only the existence of a chapel dedicated to St. Olav in the church of Virgin Mary and of the church of St. Nikolaos that could be associated with St. Augustine and the Varangians.

⁶⁸ van Arkel-De Leeuw van Weenen Andrea, Ciggaar Krijnie. St Thorlac's in Constantinople, built by a Flemish emperor. P. 436.