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Millennialism and the Jubilee Tradition In Early Rus' History and Historiography

One cannot help beginning a lecture on a subject like this in the year 2001¹ without referring to the latest millennial experience, which, indeed, offers an appropriate starting point for our discussion. The turn of the new century and millennium has once again shown what a great impact round numbers can have on the human imagination. Among the various forms of response, which the crossing of this threshold evoked, the most traditional one was the Great Jubilee celebrated by the Roman Catholic Church. Compared to previous *anni santi*, the jubilee celebrations of 2000 were especially solemn and wide-ranging. In particular, an unusually large number of new saints (predominantly martyrs of the twentieth century) were canonized during the Holy Year.

The Russian Orthodox Church also celebrated the turn of the second millennium of Christianity. On this occasion the Jubilee Council of Bishops was held in Moscow. The celebrations reached their climax on 20 August with the re-consecration of the Cathedral Church of Christ the Savior and canonization of a host of new martyrs, including the last Russian tsar Nicholas II and his family. On a local level, numerous churches and monasteries were re-consecrated.

Despite the obvious similarities between the millennial celebrations in Rome and Moscow, the differences are even more striking. The Roman Jubilee has a centuries-long tradition, going back to the Jubilee of 1300 inaugurated by Pope Boniface VIII. As an ecclesiastical practice, its chief feature is the plenary indulgence, which is granted by the Pope to pilgrims to Rome on the occasion of certain round dates (at present every twenty fifth year of the century). On the other hand, the Moscow Jubilee of 2000 was an exceptional event; it had nothing to do with indulgences, which simply do not exist in the same form in Orthodoxy, and had no obvious roots in the history of the Russian church. The absence of a solemn closing ceremony of the orthodox Jubilee official web-site of Vatican explains by the "Eastern tradition's indifference to dates as such, over and above their liturgical recurrences."² The word 'jubilee' (*юбилей*) does not occur

1 The present paper is based on the text of my lecture at Yale University (Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures) on 26 February 2001, which for this publication has been slightly extended and supplied with minimal apparatus. I would like to express my gratitude to the *Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation* for the financial support of my research. I am also very grateful to Luba Smirnova and Monika White for correcting the English version of this article.

2 International Fides Service. January 12th 2001, no. 4230 — NE 16 (<http://www.fides.org>)

in Church Slavonic except for a few cases where it denotes the Old Testament institution;³ in its modern meaning it enters the Russian literary language only in the eighteenth century as a borrowing from Western European languages. The tradition of celebrating round anniversaries (in the form it acquired in the nineteenth century in both ecclesiastical and lay circles) also appears to be a feature of the new, Europe-oriented Russia.

Does this mean that Rus' was unfamiliar with the phenomenon of jubilees? Was the Old Rus' Church really so indifferent to round dates? As I shall try to show, this was not the case. In fact, it seems that from the time of the conversion of Rus' to Christianity, jubilee played a significant role in the ecclesiastical and cultural life of East Slavic society as a concept of chronology.⁴

It will serve our purposes to begin with a brief excursus into the origins of the jubilee tradition in the West.⁵ During the last decade, as a scholarly response to the popular appeal of the millennium, this topic has been thoroughly studied by medieval historians.⁶ This scholarship has helped to clarify many points, yet much of the discussion remains controversial. Nevertheless it seems clear that the medieval jubilee tradition was neither a continuation of the centennial celebrations in ancient Rome known as *ludi saeculares*⁷

3 *Словарь русского языка XI–XVII вв.* М., 1975. Т. 12. С. 222 (сл. овилео).

4 The problem "jubilees in Rus'" has not been totally neglected by the modern scholarship. Most recently a number of events in ecclesiastical life of Kievan Rus' (including the foundation of the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev in 1037 and certain stages in the development of the cult of SS. Boris and Gleb) have been interpreted as having jubilee significance by: Ужашков А. Н. *Из лекций по истории русской литературы XI — первой трети XVIII в. "Слово о Законе и Благодати" Илариона Киевского.* М., 1999. С. 17–21 (with reference to the Hebraic tradition); Idem, *Святые страстотерпы Борис и Глеб: к истории канонизации и написания житий. Древняя Русь.* 2000. № 2. С. 28–50; 2001, № 1–3). С. 37–49). See also Хорошев А. С. *Политическая история русской канонизации (XI–XVI вв.).* М., 1986. С. 23 (the second translation of the relics of SS. Boris and Gleb in 1115, on the hundredth anniversary of their assassination in 1015); Клосс Б. М. *Избранные труды.* 1. *Житие Сергия Радонежского.* М., 1998. С. 148 (compilation of the encomium to St. Sergij in 1412, on the twentieth anniversary of his death); Буров В. А. *Очерки истории и археологии средневекового Новгорода.* М., 1994. С. 181 (foundation of the Church of Our Lady of the Sign in Novgorod in 1355, connected to the 400th anniversary of the baptism of Princess Olga in Constantinople). Degree of plausibility of such assumptions is very different, but without general study of the topic all of them remain mere speculations.

5 V. Schimmelpfennig, *Holy Year, Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (6, 1985), 280.

6 See J. Petersohn, *Jubiläumsfrömmigkeit vor dem Jubelablaß, Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* (45, 1989); M. Mitterauer, *Anniversarium und Jubiläum. Zur Entstehung und Entwicklung öffentlicher Gedenktage, Der Kampf um das Gedächtnis. Öffentliche Gedenktage in Mitteleuropa*, ed. E. Brix, H. Stekl (Wien, 1997), 23–89; E. Bünz, *Papst Bonifaz VIII., die Christenheit und das erste Jubeljahr, Der Tag X in der Geschichte. Erwartungen und Enttäuschungen seit Tausend Jahren*, ed. E. Bünz u. a. (Stuttgart, 1997), 50–78; G. Dickson, *The Crowd at the Feet of Pope Boniface VIII: Pilgrimage, Crusade and the First Roman Jubilee (1300), Journal of Medieval History* (25, 1999), 279–307.

7 See Nilsson, *Saeculares ludi, Säkularteil, Säkulum, Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumwissenschaft* (2, 1920), 1696–1720.

nor a direct borrowing from the Hebraic tradition, although it was closely connected to the latter.

Allow me to remind you that the word *jubilee* is of Hebrew origin.⁸ According to the legislation of the Old Law, every fiftieth year was to be celebrated and sanctified. During this year every household was supposed to recover its absent members, the land was supposed to be returned to its former owners, Hebrew slaves set free, and debts remitted. “Thou shalt sanctify the fiftieth year, and shalt proclaim remission to all the inhabitants of thy land: for it is the year of Jubilee” (Leviticus 25:10). The term appears to derive from the Hebrew word *jobel*, which means “ram’s horn”, an instrument used in proclaiming the celebration.

This Old Testament tradition was re-interpreted spiritually by early Christian exegetes, who understood the jubilee remission of slaves and debts as a *typos* for the Christian remission of sins.⁹ This made it possible in the twelfth century to associate the idea with official papal indulgences granted on special occasions. One example of this phenomenon was the second Crusade of 1147, the year which Bernard of Clairvoux, who inspired the expedition, called *annus remissionis*, *annus vere jubileus*. It was, therefore, the full indulgence granted to the pilgrims in 1300, which was responsible for the revival of the biblical concept in the form of papal Holy Years.

Yet the biblical model does not explain the date of the first Roman Jubilee and its coincidence with the turn of a century.¹⁰ In the bull of Boniface VIII proclaiming the Jubilee indulgence, no reference was made to the Jewish tradition. Instead, the special power of the hundredth year (*annus centesimus*) was emphasized: “The rumor reached the pope, that thanks to the power of the centennial year, whoever visited St. Peter’s basilica would enjoy the fullest pardon for all his sins.”¹¹ It should be remembered that, initially, the Jubilee was intended to be celebrated only once in a hundred years. It was the enormous success of the Boniface’s action, which entailed subsequent shortening of the jubilee period to fifty and later on to thirty-three and twenty-five years.

In order to understand the reasons for celebrating the hundredth year, one must consider the exact circumstances surrounding the announcement of the papal Jubilee of 1300. In his bull issued on 22 February 1300, Boniface inaugurated the first Holy Year retrospectively, dating its official commencement from Christmas 1299. According to the account of the pope’s advisor, Cardinal Stefaneschi, the official promulgation of the *anno santo* was preceded by an unusually large influx of pilgrims into the city. On Christmas eve 1299 the crowd flooded into St. Peter’s basilica, expecting something extraordinary to happen. On the 1 January the same crowd gathered again to listen to an anonymous preacher who spoke to them about the coming

8 For the history of the word and notion see H. Grundmann, Jubel, *Festschrift Jost Trier zu seinem 60. Geburtstag am 15. Dezember 1954* (Mansenheim, 1954), 477–511.

9 J. Petersohn, Jubiläumsfrömmigkeit vor dem Jubelablaß, 32–35.

10 On the Jubilee of 1300 see A. Frugoni, Il Giubileo di Bonifacio VIII, *Bulletino dell’Istituto Storico Italiano per il medio evo e Archivio Muratoriano* (62, 1950), 1–81.

11 A. Frugoni, Il Giubileo di Bonifacio VIII, 14.

of the new century and its importance. It was this outbreak of popular religious enthusiasm that caused the pope to act. Gary Dickson writes in his fascinating study on the subject: “Before it became papal and official, the Jubilee was popular and informal [...]. Boniface used the power of keys to legitimate a popular movement which was already underway.”¹²

There is little doubt about the eschatological nature of this popular religious excitement. As Gary Dickson puts it: “As the old century neared its end, a sense of prophetic discontinuity was pervasive.”¹³ One of the enemies of Boniface VIII, Cardinal Pietro Colonna, reputedly exclaimed, referring to the jubilee crowds pouring into Rome: “Why are these fools expecting the end of the world?” Evidently, the turn of the century was perceived as a special, prophetic time. The Italian scholar Raul Manselli explains the religious enthusiasm arising around this date as a manifestation of what he calls “jubilee religiosity.”¹⁴

This eschatological aspect has also been perceptible in subsequent centennials up to the year 2000.¹⁵ It is also unlikely that 1300 was the first centennial year to cause such an eschatological agitation. In his bull Boniface alludes to the “trustworthy tradition of our elders”, which affirms that “great remissions and indulgences are granted to those, who visit in this city the venerable Basilica of the Prince of the Apostles,” a tradition that would continue “each succeeding hundredth year”. There is some ground to believe that the year 1200 had been awaited as a prophetic date too.¹⁶ The turn of the twelfth century was also marked by an event of a clear eschatological significance — the capture of Jerusalem by the First Crusade in 1099. Considering the role eschatological prophecies played in the Crusades as a whole, it seems impossible that such a coincidence (if indeed it was one) could have gone unnoticed by contemporaries.¹⁷

Continuing in this survey we reach one of the most controversial dates in the history of medieval Europe — the famous year 1000. The dramatic picture of mass apocalyptic expectations climaxing in that year drawn by the historians of the mid-nineteenth century was rejected by the end of the century as a romantic myth which had little

12 G. Dickson, *The Crowd at the Feet of Pope Boniface VIII*, 290, 292.

13 *Ibid.*, 290.

14 R. Manselli, *La religiosità giubilare del 1300: Proposte di un' interpretazione*, *Roma Anno 1300. Atti della IV Settimana di studi di storia dell'arte medievale dell'Università di Roma "La Sapienza" (19–24 maggio 1980)*, a cura di Angiola Maria Romanini (Roma, 1983), 727–730.

15 See H. Schwartz, *Zeitenwende — Weltenende? Visionen beim Wechsel der Jahrhunderte von 990–1990* (Braunschweig, 1992); A. Bredecke, *Die Jahrhundertwenden: eine Geschichte ihrer Wahrnehmung und Wirkung* (Frankfurt, N. Y., 1999); *Jahrhundertwenden. Endzeit- und Zukunftsvorstellungen vom 15. bis 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. M. Jakobovski-Tiessen u. a. (Göttingen, 1999).

16 R. Manselli, *La religiosità giubilare del 1300*, 728.

17 Curiously, in 1300, with no connection to the Jubilee of Boniface VIII but obviously not coincidentally, the rumor spread in the West that Jerusalem had been captured by the Mongols and then handed over to the Christians. See S. Schem, *Gesta Dei per Mongolos 1300: the Genesis of a Non-Event*, *English Historical Review* (94, 1979), 805–19; G. Dickson, *The Crowd at the Feet of Pope Boniface VIII*, 288.

to do with the reality of the late tenth and early eleventh century European society. Appropriately, an article summarizing the new scholarly consensus was published by the American medievalist George Burr in 1901, at the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁸ For nearly a hundred years the problem seemed to be closed forever for serious scholarship. But at the turn of the new century and millennium the scholarly paradigm seems to be changing once again. Richard Landes, Director of the Harvard Center for Millennial Studies, wrote in his article published in 2000: “The argument dismissing the presence of any significant apocalyptic agitation around the year 1000 is flawed both factually and conceptually. On the contrary, looked at with an understanding of both the dynamics of apocalyptic beliefs and the dynamics of cultural memory, the period around 1000 may well mark one of the high-water marks of such beliefs in European — or any — civilization.”¹⁹

Let us turn now to Rus'. To what extent were the problems sketched above relevant to the Old Rus' religious mind? Before the Julian calendar was introduced by Peter the Great in 1700, Rus' had used a dating system based not on *annus Domini*, but on *annus mundi*, which in Western Europe was generally abandoned in the eighth century. This chronological system was imported to Rus' in its Byzantine version, which placed the Incarnation in the year 5508. Thus, Old Rus' round dates did not coincide with European ones.

Adherence to *annus mundi* did not make Old Rus' society less subject to millennialistic experience in the least. Indeed, it made this experience even more profound and prolonged. Millennialism was expressed in Rus' predominantly in the form of the so-called sabbatical millennium: eschatological teaching comparing the history of mankind to the biblical week of Creation and dividing it into seven periods of one thousand years based on Psalm 90: “1000 years is a day in the sight of the Lord”. Hence, the thousand-year kingdom promised in the Revelation (20:1) corresponding to the Sabbath of Genesis 1 was supposed to begin in the year 6000, which had been awaited with a great deal of apocalyptic agitation both in Byzantium and in Western Europe.²⁰

By the time of the conversion of Rus' to Christianity in the late tenth century the threshold of 6000 had long past and a new eschatological belief had been developed, according to which the end of the world would take place at the end of

18 G. Burr, The Year 1000 and the Antecedents of the Crusades, *American Historical Review* (6, 1901), 429–439.

19 R. Landes, The Fear of an Apocalyptic Year 1000: Augustinian Historiography, Medieval and Modern, *Speculum* (75, 2000), 144.

20 See R. Landes, Lest the Millennium Be Fulfilled: Apocalyptic Expectations and the Pattern of Western Chronology 100–800 CE, *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, ed. W. Verbeke, D. Verhelst, A. Welkenhuysen (Löwen, 1988), 141–211.

the seventh millennium, i. e. 1492 AD. This date marked the culmination of Old Rus' millennialism and one of the most important milestones in the history of Rus' spirituality. The expectations for the apocalyptic year 7000 defined the spiritual life of fifteenth century Rus'.²¹ When in 1408 the great Easter cycle of 532 years expired and new Easter tables were compiled, they were calculated only until the year 7000. Any continuation was apparently regarded as useless: there was simply nothing to be continued. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 contributed significantly to the feeling of the approaching end. During the last decades of the fifteenth century a wide range of millennial trends are evident: the outbreak of heresies, the proliferation of apocalyptic prophecies and esoteric treatises, increased interest in computistical matters, etc. When the terrible year passed and nothing happened, the sense of failed prophecy entailed a deep spiritual crisis, which resulted in a new ideological doctrine: the famous concept "Moscow — the third Rome".

The impact of the year 1492 on Rus' society has been studied in detail. The subject of the present study is the chain of events that preceded that millennial moment. The eschatological concept of "seven thousands" had preoccupied the religious mind of medieval Rus' long before the direct approaching of the prophetic date made it the matter of universal apocalyptic fear. The main source, from which early Rus' society became aware of this conception, was a Byzantine apocalyptic treatise of Syrian origin known as the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodios* (*Otkrovenie Mefodija Patarskogo*). As early as the late eleventh century this work had gained wide popularity in Kievan Rus', as is shown by two citations from the *Otkrovenie* in the *Primary Chronicle*. The time remaining until the completion of the seventh millennium was perceived by Rus' intellectuals of late eleventh and early twelfth centuries as the "last time". The introduction to the so-called *Initial Chronicle Compilation*, apparently written in the late eleventh century declared that "God has chosen our land to be the land of the last time."²² The same feeling is expressed by Nestor in his *Life of SS. Boris and Gleb*, also a work of late eleventh century.

This "last time", separating the present from the Eschaton must have been a subject of various calculations. These have been preserved in the form of mathematical treatises, the so-called *semitysjachniki*. In their standard form they contain calculations of the number of months, weeks, days, and hours contained in seven thousand years. The remaining time in the last millennium may also have been divided into larger units, which in the decimal system were periods of ten and one hundred years. And

21 See Сахаров В. А. *Эсхатологические сочинения и сказания в древнерусской письменности и их влияние на народные духовные стихи*. Тула, 1879. С. 1—17; Зелинский А. Н. Конструктивные принципы древнерусского календаря. *Контекст*, 1978. М., 1978. С. 98; Плигузов А. И., Тиханюк И. А. "Послание Дмитрия Траханиота повгородскому архиепископу Геннадию Гонзову о седмичности счисления лет". *Естественно-научные представления Древней Руси*. М., 1998. С. 52; Беляков А. А., Белякова Е. В. О пересмотре эсхатологической концепции на Руси в конце XV века. *Архив русской истории*. 1. 1992. С. 7—31; Юрганов А. Л. *Категории русской средневековой культуры*. М., 1998. С. 306—329.

22 *НПЛ*. С. 103.

indeed, some of *semitysjachniki* do include calculations of the number of months, weeks and hours contained in ten years and in a hundred years.²³

It is especially interesting that in a number of fifteenth century texts the authors explicitly label their time as “the last hundred years” of the seventh millennium or simply “the last hundred.”²⁴ If there was a “last hundred”, one may well ask whether earlier periods of one hundred years were also perceived as such. Of course, there are absolutely no grounds for extrapolating the modern concept of century as an historical period to medieval Rus’. Our present concern is not a century itself but the turn of a century, not a period of one hundred years, but the *hundredth* year, the *annus centesimus*, which, as the Western tradition demonstrates, could be perceived as a special prophetic time, evoking various manifestations of “jubilee religiosity”. Can this tendency be detected in the spiritual life of medieval Rus’?

The “last hundred” began in 1392 AD, or 6900 AM. Curiously, it was at this time that Metropolitan Kiprian launched his church reform. Some innovations in ecclesiastic life of the last decade of the fifteenth century (as, for example, the high iconostasis, consisting of five rows of icons) have recently been re-interpreted in light of eschatological expectations attached to the year 7000.²⁵ In terms of Old Rus’ chronology, it is reasonable to assume that it was the crossing of the threshold of the “last century” that triggered this eschatologically colored activity. Unfortunately, it is impossible to prove this assumption, since 1392 marks not only the turn of the “last hundred” but also the beginning of Kiprian’s term as Moscow metropolitan. This date appears, therefore, to be of little value for our discussion, despite its possible eschatological significance for contemporaries.

At this point I will skip over the year 6800, to which I will return later, and turn to the pre-Mongol era. One example in particular is especially demonstrative, and was in fact the starting point of the present study.

Under the year 1191 the *First Novgorod Chronicle* (the oldest and most important of the Novgorodian chronicles) reports the building of four churches and the consecration of a fifth one: “The same year prince Jaroslav built a church of St. Nicholas in the Gorodishche, and the *vладыка* (archbishop) one of the Purification of the Virgin Mary in his own court; Vnezd Nezdinich in the same year also one of the Sacred Image; and Kosnjatin with his brother one of the St. Paraskeva in the market place. The same year the God-loving *vладыка* Gavriilo consecrated the church of the Holy Ascension erected by the *tysjatski* Miloneg.”²⁶ Very few years in the twelfth century

23 Турилов А. А. О датировке и месте создания календарно-математических текстов — “семи-тысячников”. *Естественно-научные представления Древней Руси*. М., 1998. С. 31.

24 Русская историческая библиотека. Т. 6. 1908. Стб. 810 (“Правило Пасхалии седмья тысяча последнего ста... по 7000 год”, mentioned by archbishop Gennadij); *Акты исторические, собранные и изданные археографическою комиссиею*. Т. 1. СПб., 1841. № 57 (letter of Archbishop Feodosij of Rostov, 1455).

25 See Евсеева Л. М. Эсхатология 7000 года и возникновение высокого иконостаса. *Иконостас: происхождение — развитие — символика*. М., 2000. С. 411–431.

26 *НПЛ*, с. 39.

saw the building of more than two churches in Novgorod. In practically all other cases the churches in question were simply rebuilt after a fire. No conflagration had preceded the building activity of 1191. Its anomalous character becomes even more clear when one takes into account who the builders were. The church of St Nicholas was erected by Prince Jaroslav Vladimirovich, the church of Purification of the Virgin Mary by Archbishop Gabriel, and the church of the Holy Ascension by the *tysjackij* (the head of the non-bojar population of Novgorod) Miloneg. The Church of the Holy Image built by Vnezd Nezdinich was a family church of *posadnik* (the elected head of the Novgorod republic) Miroshka Nezdinich. The church of St Paraskeva built by Kosnjatin and his brother belonged to the city's most influential corporation of merchants who were responsible for the international trade of the city. The events of 1191 constituted, therefore, an unprecedented unanimous demonstration of piety on behalf of the whole Novgorod establishment, including the prince, the archbishop, the *posadnik*, the *tysjackij* and the merchants.

This enormous building activity was carried on, in a different form, in 1192, when two new monasteries, both dedicated to the Transfiguration of the Savior, were founded in Novgorod and its hinterland. The first one was founded in Khutyn near Novgorod by one Aleksa Mikhailovich, who was later canonized and became one of the heavenly patrons of Novgorod, St. Varlam Khutynskij. The monastery in Rusa (the most important among Novgorod's satellites) was founded by the Abbot Martirij, who became the archbishop of Novgorod the next year. The foundation of two monasteries during one season has no parallels in ecclesiastical history of Novgorod.

These two years also saw unusual ecclesiastic activity in other centers of Rus'. The year 1191 marks one of the most important milestones in the church history of Smolensk. In August 1191 the old wooden coffins of the first Rus' saints, martyred princes Boris and Gleb, assassinated in 1015 by their brother Svjatopolk, were translated from Vyshgorod near Kiev to the monastery on the river Smjadyn' near Smolensk where, allegedly, Gleb was killed. On this occasion the monastery church dedicated to the martyrs was rebuilt and re-consecrated, and a new church of St. Vasilij was erected. Surely, all this was designed by the prince David Rostislavich to enhance the sacred potential of the Smolensk principality and his own authority.²⁷ Yet, no political considerations can explain the choice of the time for the translation of the relics.

What the figures of SS. Boris and Gleb were for Smolensk, St. prince Vsevolod-Gavriil Mstislavich became for Pskov. The relics of the prince, who died in the city in 1138, were solemnly discovered in November 1192 in presence and by initiative of the Novgorod prince Jaroslav Vladimirovich.²⁸ A new cult was thus founded, which soon became a banner of Pskov in its opposition to its "elder brother", the city

²⁷ See Воропин Н. Н., Жуковская Л. П. К истории смоленской литературы XII в. *Культурное наследие Древней Руси*. М., 1986. С. 71; Раппопорт П. А. *Русская архитектура X–XIII вв.* М., 1982. С. 82–83.

²⁸ *ПСРЛ*. Т. 21. С. 205.

of Novgorod. There is enough evidence to assume that the stone cathedral of the Holy Trinity was founded or rebuilt in the year 1192 on the same occasion.²⁹

The north-east principality of Vladimir and Suzdal also contributed to this religious agitation. In August 1191 its sovereign, the powerful prince Vsevolod Jurjevich “the Great Nest”, started building a stone cathedral dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin and founded a monastery.³⁰ The canonization of St. Leontij, the patron saint of Rostov, another center of north-east Rus’, can not be dated as precisely, but it took place some time between 1191 and 1194 and probably belonged to the same wave of ecclesiastic revival.³¹

This surge of ecclesiastical activity in 1191–1192 could not occur independently in Novgorod, Pskov, Smolensk, Vladimir, and Rostov. There must have been one reason for it. And yet no such reason can be detected in the historical circumstances of the time. The beginning of the last decade of the twelfth century was a relatively quiet period in Rus’ history: there were no large military confrontations, no harvest failures or epidemics. The main political and ecclesiastical figures — princes and bishops — involved in the building activity had by that time occupied their positions for some years. Of course, the stability of the political and ecclesiastic situation itself was favorable to the rise of church building. But this circumstance doesn’t explain the enormous concentration of events in these two years in particular.

For lack of other plausible explanations, this enormous ecclesiastical revival may be interpreted as a response to a purely chronological stimulus: the year 1192 AD was 6700 AM. It was the turn of a new hundred, which was celebrated by the foundation and consecration of churches and monasteries, the canonization of saints and the translation of relics.

There is important additional evidence, which contributes to this hypothesis. It also derives from the *First Novgorod Chronicle* in its oldest *Synodal copy*, which is, in fact, the oldest surviving Old Rus’ chronicle manuscript. Fortunately, the first scribe of this famous manuscript, who worked in the mid-thirteenth century, reproduced the original — the official annals of St. Sophia cathedral — with utmost accuracy. This is particularly true for the sizes and forms of the initial letters, which vary considerably throughout the manuscript, reflecting the differences between the individual manners of archiepiscopal scribes. One can also observe a correlation between the size of the initial letters and contents of the annals: the largest initials evidently mark the years, which saw the most important events. The initial letter of the annal for 6700 (1192) is not only the largest in the whole manuscript, it also has the most complicated design. The letter Ψ in the date, denoting 700, is also unusually large. It was the round date itself, the turn of a new century (or, more likely, the end of the old one), to which the scribe wanted to draw his readers’ attention.

29 Раппопорт П. А. *Русская архитектура*. С. 79.

30 *ПСРЛ*. Т. 1. Стб. 409.

31 See G. Lenhoff, Canonization and Princely Power in Northeast Rus’: the Cult of Leontij Rostovskij, *Die Welt der Slaven*, N. F. (16, 1992), 359–380.

I have been concentrating on the threshold of 6700 since it appears to exemplify most clearly the Old Rus' tradition of centennial celebrations. With this model in mind, let us turn to other analogous moments.

The year 6800(1292) did not exhibit much jubilee activity. Outside Novgorod there is simply no evidence for it. This is not surprising: by the end of the thirteenth century Rus' had only started to recover from the blow of the Mongol invasion, which caused discontinuity in many cultural traditions. Yet in Novgorod, which was not destroyed by the Mongols, the tradition of centennial celebrations seems to have survived. In 1292, a new stone church of St. Nicholas was built by the Archbishop Clement and another one of St. Theodore was reconstructed.³² This happened after a period of more than sixty years when no stone churches and only very few wooden churches were built in the city. Two stone churches built in 1292 mark the beginning of the new revival of Novgorod architecture. That this new start fell on the threshold of a new century can hardly be a coincidence.

Turning to the threshold of 6600 one should first be aware how little is known about the ecclesiastic life of Novgorod in the late eleventh century. The only eleventh century church mentioned in the *First Novgorod Chronicle*, is the cathedral of St. Sophia built in 1045–1050. A bit of additional information is contained in the *Third Novgorod Chronicle*, which reports the building of two churches, one of SS. Peter and Paul, another of the Holy Ascension, under the year 6600 (1092)!³³ The turn of the seventh hundred of the seventh millennium appears, therefore, to have left its mark on the ecclesiastical history of Novgorod as well.

This date is also remarkable in the history of Old Rus' writing. The *Archangel'skoe Evangelium*, one of only two dated eleventh century Russian Gospel manuscripts was copied in 6600. (The first one is the *Ostromirovo Evangelium*, copied in 1056–57). It is very likely that this codex was written for one of the churches built in the jubilee year 1092.

As we have already seen, the translation and discovery of holy relics played a prominent role in the centennial celebrations of 6700. The same was true of 6600, which was preceded by two acts of this kind, both extremely important in the history of Old Rus' church and spirituality. The year 1191 saw the translation of the relics of St. Feodosij of the Caves, the third Rus' saint after Boris and Gleb. The same year some relics of St. Nicholas were brought to Kiev from Bari and a church feast commemorating the translation of the relics from Myra was instituted.³⁴

When we take into consideration the fact that only a few acts of this kind are known from the pre-Mongol period, their concentration at the turns of centuries becomes astonishing. It seems reasonable to assume that these actions were deliberately

32 *НПЛ*, с. 327.

33 *Новгородские летописи*. СПб, 1879. С. 176.

34 Красовский А. Установление в русской церкви праздника 9 мая в память перенесения мощей святителя Николая из Мир Ликийских в г. Бар. *Труды Киевской духовной академии*. 1874. №. 12. С. 521–585.

timed to coincide with centennials, which were perceived as special and prophetic times. The pervasiveness of this phenomenon becomes clear from the *Primary Chronicle*, whose entries for 1091–1092 (aside from the account of the translation of the relics of St. Feodosij) consist almost entirely of descriptions of apocalyptic signs of various kinds. Nowhere else in the *Primary Chronicle* do we find such an intense eschatological atmosphere.³⁵

The next and the last centennial threshold we have to consider — 6500 AM — brings us very close to the date of the conversion of Rus to Christianity in 988 AD. Did this threshold mean anything for the newly converted people? Among the ecclesiastical events surrounding this date, the most important one was the foundation of the Church of the Mother of God in Kiev (the Tithe Church or *Desjatinnaja cerkov*), the main Kievan church during the reign of Vladimir. According to the *Primary Chronicle*, it was founded in 989.³⁶ The *First Novgorod Chronicle*, allegedly containing an earlier version of the text, gives another date — 991.³⁷ Can we go so far as to establish a connection between the foundation of the Tithe Church and the eschatological agitation associated with the year 6500? At first glance such a connection may seem too speculative. And yet it deserves to be taken seriously. Let us recall that one of the churches built in the jubilee year 1192 was the monastery church of the Transfiguration of the Savior in Rusa. Five years later the original wooden church was replaced by a stone one. The chronicle account of the ceremony of its consecration includes a solemn speech by Archbishop Martirij.³⁸ Upon closer examination, this speech turns out to reproduce the speech of Prince Vladimir on the occasion of the consecration of the Tithe Church. The Novgorod jubilee building activity in 6700 thus seems to have been associated with the Kievan cathedral, founded by Vladimir on the eve of 6500.

To appreciate the meaning, which this date had for the first generations of Russian Christians, the following chronological paradox should be taken into account. As noted above, the dating system in use in Byzantium (*annus mundi* in its Constantinople version) differed from that accepted in Western Europe (*annus Domini*) by 5508 years. This number is known to every student of medieval Russian history: we subtract it from the chronicle dates AM to obtain the modern date AD. Yet neither in Byzantium, nor in Rus was 5508 AM ever considered to be the date of the Incarnation, which since early Christian times had been placed in year 5500 AM, according to the so-called Antiochian era.³⁹ Thus, from a Byzantine as well as an Old Rus' point of view (which were, of course, incompatible with that of the Western church), round

35 It was Roman Jakobson who pointed out at this peculiarity of the text and associated it with the eschatological meaning of the date 6600 — a rare example of scholarly comprehension of the special meaning of centennial dates for the Old Rus' religious mind (see R. Jakobson, *La Geste de Prince Igor*, *Selected writings*, 4, 246).

36 *ПСРЛ*. Т. 1. Стб. 121.

37 *НПЛ*, с. 165.

38 *НПЛ*, с. 43–44.

39 See Водолазкин Е. Г. *Всемирная история в литературе Древней Руси* (München, 2000), 155.

dates AM coincided with round dates AD. Centennials from the Creation were centennials from the Incarnation as well. The most significant implications of this coincidence are for the year 6500 AM: within the framework of this mixed chronology it was not 992, as we call it — it was the year 1000 AD, the end of the first Christian millennium.

As mentioned above, in the light of the latest research this prophetic date indeed appears to have triggered strong apocalyptic expectations in the West. Evidently, this was the case in the East too. Two short prophetic articles contained in a thirteenth century Serbian manuscript (the so-called *Sbornik popa Dragolja*), originally written in the tenth century, state clearly that the end of the world should be expected in the “middle of the seventh thousand” (*prepolovlenie sedmye tysesci*) which, as the work explains, would be the thousandth year after the Incarnation.⁴⁰

Two fundamental eschatological ideas are being combined here: first, the “sabbatical millennium”, dividing world history into seven periods of one thousand years with the seventh millennium as the last one, and secondly the prophecy of Revelation (20: 1), foretelling that the devil would be released after one thousand years. This combination makes the year 992 a great millennial moment in the history of Eastern Christendom. Seen from this perspective, not only the foundation of the Tithe Church in 991 or 989 (whichever is true), but the very conversion of Rus in 988 may well be interpreted as having millennial significance. One should remember that, according to the account in the *Primary Chronicle*, the Greek philosopher persuaded Vladimir to accept the Christian faith by showing him a picture of the Last Judgment.⁴¹ In 988 the Last Judgment was around the corner.

The Old Rus’ tradition of centennial celebrations, which I have attempted to outline above appear, therefore, to stretch between two great millennial dates — 6500 (992) and 7000 (1492), the middle of the seventh millennium (which was also perceived as the first Christian millennium) and the end of it. Echoing the former and foreshadowing the latter, centennials like 6600 and 6700 were obviously perceived as intermediate milestones. They intensified eschatological expectations and elicited various forms of response on the part of the lay and ecclesiastical elite, who effectively used these occasions to buttress their authority.

What is perhaps most surprising about this tradition is that, despite being rooted in Byzantine eschatology, it finds no clear parallels in Byzantium. Such parallels,

40 Тъшкова-Займова В., Милтенова А. *Историко-апокалиптичната книжнина във Византия и в средновековна България*. София, 1996. С. 184.

41 Concerning the eschatological background of Vladimir’s conversion, with special reference to the year 1000 see Петрухин В. Я. “Запона” с “судищем Господним”: к интерпретации текста Начальной летописи. *Византийский мир, искусство Константинополя и национальные традиции: Тезисы докладов международной конференции*. СПб., 2000. С. 57–59.

however, are abundant in the West. The closest equivalent is the Catholic tradition of Holy Years mentioned above. Unlike Roman Jubilees, Old Rus' centennial celebrations never became institutionalized. Yet both in the West and in Rus' we encounter the same perception of the century's end as a special time, evoking similar forms of response to its eschatological stimulus.

Both traditions were closely related to the cult of saints and relics. It was the broadest demonstration of holy relics which, together with the promise of full indulgence, attracted crowds of pilgrims to Rome in 1300. As in Rus', ceremonies of canonization and beatification of new saints were often timed to coincide with Jubilees. For example, in 1450 the canonization of Bernardin of Siena, who was highly venerated throughout Italy, became the central event of the Jubilee program.

In the West, events like canonizations or translations of relics could be timed not only to coincide with "absolute" or "Christocentric" Jubilees (as the round dates from Incarnation are called). They could also fall on the round anniversaries of the saint's death. The oldest example of such a "relative" or "hagiocentric" Jubilee appears to be the beatification of the Venerable Bede by the Aachen church council of 836, one hundred years after Bede's death in 736.⁴² The translation of the relics of St. Thomas Becket, which took place in 1220 in Canterbury, fifty years after the martyrdom of the saint in 1170, is sometimes interpreted as a precedent to the first Roman Jubilee of 1300.⁴³ Eventually Canterbury developed its own jubilee tradition; the sources mention, for example, the Jubilee of 1420, the 250th anniversary of the saint's death. Recently another Jubilee of this kind has been discovered: the year 1189 saw the translation of St. Otto of Bamberg, who died in 1139.⁴⁴ Sermons written on these two occasions pay special attention to the sacred meaning of the fiftieth year, which according to the Bible is the year of remission.

In Rus' the closest parallel to these "hagiocentric" jubilees is the already mentioned second translation of the relics of SS. Boris and Gleb, which took place in 1115, on the hundredth anniversary of their assassination in 1015. Taken in itself, this round date can of course be disregarded as merely coincidental. Yet in the light of other examples, both Old Rus' and Western, this seems not to be the case.

Another typical jubilee event is the foundation or consecration of churches. Here too, the Western tradition offers examples of both "absolute" and "relative" Jubilees. The second type is exemplified by the Jubilee in Santiago di Compostella celebrated in 1126, on the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the new cathedral of St. James in 1076.⁴⁵ Another prominent example is found in the history of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, which was rebuilt and re-consecrated during

42 *Bibliotheca sanctorum* (2, 1962), 1053.

43 R. Foreville, L'idée de jubilé chez les théologiens et les canonistes (XIIe–XIIIe) avant l'institution du jubilé Romain (1300), *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* (56, 1961), 401–423.

44 J. Petersohn, Jubiläumsfrömmigkeit vor dem Jubelablaß, 31–53.

45 B. Schimmelpfennig, Die Anfänge der Heiligen Jahre von Santiago di Compostela, *Journal of Medieval History* (4, 1978), 285.

the Second Crusade. The new structure was solemnly dedicated on 15 July 1149, the fiftieth anniversary of the fall of the city in 1099.⁴⁶

Close to that date, in 1150 or 1151 thousands of miles from Jerusalem the Cathedral of the Assumption in Smolensk was re-consecrated in the fiftieth year of its foundation in 1101.⁴⁷ Three years earlier, in 1148, another prominent church, the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Virgin in Suzdal built sometime between 1096 and 1101, was also re-consecrated.⁴⁸ Scholars have puzzled over possible reasons for these “great consecrations” (as contemporary documents call them). Yet, the most probable explanation is the round anniversary itself, which was a cause for celebration.⁴⁹ The tradition of these celebrations can be traced back to the consecration in 1039 of the Tithe Church, founded, according to the *Primary Chronicle*, in 989.⁵⁰

One of the main cathedrals of pre-Mongol Rus', for which the Tithe Church served as a model, was the Cathedral of the Assumption in Vladimir, founded in 1158. According to the account in the supplement to the *First Novgorod Chronicle*, Prince Andrej Bogoljubskij erected the church fifty years after the city itself was established by Vladimir Momomach.⁵¹ The explicit emphasis on the gap of 50 years separating the events is especially important here.

The fact that not only hundredth, but also fiftieth anniversaries were celebrated in Rus' may be relevant to a discussion of the origins of this tradition. The prescription to sanctify the fiftieth year underlies, as discussed above, the Biblical concept of the Jubilee, which was used in 1300 by Boniface VIII to institutionalize the outbreak of eschatological agitation at the turn of new century. Could the Old Rus' tradition have exploited the same biblical precedent?

As mentioned above, the term *jubilee* was not completely unfamiliar to Old Rus' authors. The corresponding passages of the Old Testament (Leviticus, 25:8–55) are not found in the *Paremejnik* and were not among the biblical passages that were widely known in Rus'. However, there can hardly be any doubt, that at least the ecclesiastical elite possessed a better knowledge of the Bible and was familiar with this notion. Moreover, as has been revealed by recent research in the field,

46 S. Runziman, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge* (München, 1957/1960), 1155.

47 Папов Я. Н. *Княжеские уставы и церковь в Древней Руси*. М., 1972. С. 145.

48 *НПЛ*. С. 28; on the date of the foundation see Вороши Н. Н. *Зодчество Северо-восточной Руси XI–XV вв.* I. М., 1961. С. 27; Поппю А. Русские митрополии Константинопольской патриархии в XI столетии. *Византийский временник*. Т. 28. 1968. С. 107.

49 The number of similar examples can be extended. The wooden church of the Transfiguration of the Saviour in the Khutyn monastery near Novgorod built in the jubilee year 6700 (1192) appears to have been rebuilt in stone in 1242 (see Прудников О. А. О времени строительства первого каменного собора Хутынского монастыря. *Древнерусское искусство. Русь и страны византийского мира, XII век*. СПб., 2002. С. 314–321). The same distance of fifty years separates the dedications of the wooden and stone churches of the Assumption in the Pskov Cave Monastery which took place on 15 August 1473 and 1523 resp. (see Малков Ю. Г. “Повесть” о Псковско-Печерском монастыре (К истории сложения свода монастырских сказаний). *Книжные центры Древней Руси. XI–XVI вв.* СПб., 1991. С. 186–187).

50 *ПСРЛ*. Т. 1. Стб. 153.

51 *НПЛ*. С. 467.

the Old Testament played a great role in the spiritual life of early Rus' society, which to some extent identified itself as the "new Israel" and fashioned its development as a new Christian state on the biblical model.

The clearest example of this biblical inspiration is offered by the history of the Tithe Church. As mentioned above, the speech of Prince Vladimir on the occasion of the consecration of his building was later used by the Novgorod annalist as a model for the speech of archbishop Martyrij. The passage in the *Primary Chronicle*, however, is not in the least original: it cites the speech of King Solomon on the consecration of the Temple in Jerusalem.⁵² The Tithe church was evidently intended to become a Kievan equivalent of the Temple. Not surprisingly, Vladimir's grant of a tenth part of his possessions to the Tithe Church (hence its name) also appears to have been based, at least partially, on the biblical pattern.⁵³ Given these precedents, the re-consecration of the church on the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation may also have been inspired by the Old Testament.

A hint regarding a possible connection between the Old Rus' jubilee celebrations and the biblical-Hebraic tradition is offered by the textual history of the *Primary Chronicle*. As has been shown by Simon Franklin, a surprising number of non-canonical Old Testament tales in the *Primary Chronicle* turn to be derived from the so-called *Little Genesis*, more commonly known as the *Book of Jubilees*, a pseudepigraphal text of the second century, originally written in Hebrew and surviving in full Ethiopic version as well as a number of extracts copied by Latin and Byzantine chroniclers and theologians.⁵⁴ The *Book of Jubilees* tells the history of the mankind from the Creation to the Exodus, dividing it into fifty-year jubilee periods.

It is of course unthinkable that the Kievan chroniclers had a direct access to the full text of the *Book of Jubilees*. Franklin hypothesized that they used a Greek compilation which relied heavily on the *Book of Jubilees* and which was translated, at least partially, into Slavonic. A Greek compendium, which seems to be close to this hypothetical source of the *Primary Chronicle*, was discovered by Franklin in the Bodleian library in Oxford. Curiously, this text even contains an explanation of the word *jubilee* as a chronological term.⁵⁵ An acquaintance with a similar text may have inspired some Kievan intellectuals to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Tithe Church.

Another fact about the Tithe Church deserves to be mentioned. The Jerusalem Temple had the same prototypical meaning for Vladimir's church as it did for the famous Palace Chapel of Our Lady in Aachen built by Charlemagne c. 800.

52 See Данилевский И. Н. Замысел и название Повести временных лет. *Отечественная история*. 1993. № 1. С. 150–151.

53 Щапов Я. Н. *Государство и церковь в Древней Руси*. М., 1989. С. 85; Петрухин В. Я. *Древняя Русь: Народ, религия. Из истории русской культуры*. Т. 1. Киевская Русь. М., 2000. С. 278–279.

54 S. Franklin, Some Apocryphal Sources of Kievan Russian Historiography, *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, N. S. (15, 1982), 1–25.

55 *Ibid.*, 22.

The construction of the latter was evidently connected with the coronation of Charlemagne on Christmas day 800. Until very recently historians have paid no attention to the symbolic value of this date. Yet it was not only a “Christocentric” Jubilee, but also, according to the version of *Annus mundi* accepted in the West, the apocalyptic year 6000 AM.⁵⁶ As shown above, the foundation of the Tithe Church was also linked to a great millennial date — the middle of the seventh millennium AM, coinciding, from a Byzantine point of view, with the end of the first millennium after the Incarnation. It should be mentioned that the year 1000 AD is marked in the history of the Palace Chapel in Aachen as well. On Pentecost of that year Emperor Otto III opened the tomb of Charlemagne.⁵⁷ Strikingly, again, no contemporary chronicler mentioned the symbolic meaning of this date. So it was again in 1414, when the new Gothic choir of the Chapel was consecrated on 28 January, the 600th anniversary of Charlemagne’s death in 814. The straightforward symbolism of the round date went unmentioned in the sources.

These examples shed light on a very important aspect of the Old Rus’ tradition. They show how an historical event, undoubtedly timed to coincide with a certain round date, can pass unmentioned in this respect in the relevant documentation. As Richard Landes put it with regard to Charlemagne’s coronation, this event “unquestionably held millennial significance despite the reluctance of the written sources to elaborate. The Coronation was, in this sense, like the ‘Emperor’s New Clothes’: everyone in the court knew of the date AM, but no chronicler mentioned it.”⁵⁸ This seems to have been the case with the vast majority of medieval jubilees preceding the inauguration of the Holy Year as a church institution by Boniface VIII in 1300. The outbreak of religious fervor in northern Italy in 1233 (the so-called “Great Hallelujah”) can serve as a final example. Although this movement was evidently triggered by the 1200th anniversary of the Passion, this stimulus was passed over in silence by contemporary chroniclers.⁵⁹

In Rus’, where jubilees never became institutionalized, they were doomed to remain in the shadows. Another serious obstacle hindering the formal acknowledgement of this phenomenon, was the lack of a suitable term: there was no special word for Jubilee in the Church Slavonic Bible which, following the Septuagint, unlike the Vulgate, rendered this Hebrew notion by a word combination (Ѭѣтѡ ѡсѣааѣннѣа). The Novgorodian annalist of 1192, who evidently wanted to stress the significance of the date 6700, could only point it out with an exceptionally large and intricate initial letter.

Being apparently reluctant to report jubilee activity as such, Old Rus’ chronicle-writing testifies to its existence in a different way. To wit, a number of chronicles

56 R. Landes, *Lest the Millenium Be Fulfilled*, 16.

57 H. Beumann, *Grab und Thron Karls des Grossen zu Aachen, Karl der Grosse: Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, ed. L. Braunfels (Dusseldorf, 1967), 4, 8–39.

58 R. Landes, *Lest the Millenium Be Fulfilled*, 16.

59 V. Fumagalli, In margine all’ Alleluia del 1233, *Bulletino dell’Istituto Storico Italiano per il medio evo e Archivio Muratoriano* (80, 1968), 75–83.

and chronicle compilations appear to have been written down or finished on the occasion of jubilee dates. This was also the case in the West, where the most prominent example is the *Chronica Maiora* of Mathew Paris, the most extensive monument of Middle English historical writing. This work was finished in 1250, which Mathew explicitly calls *annus jubileus*, emphasizing the eschatological importance of the date.⁶⁰ The first Roman Jubilee of 1300 also gave a considerable impulse to historical writing. In particular, it inspired Giovanni Villani to begin his Florentian chronicle.⁶¹ The “relative” Jubilees stimulated literary activity too, although, as we have seen above, the resulting works did not usually mention the jubilee occasion explicitly. This appears to have happened, for example, in the small Benedictian abbey of Lippoldsberg in Germany, where in 1151 a local chronicle was compiled, apparently on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the monastery church.⁶²

Given these examples, it is not surprising that some of the jubilees discussed above coincide with certain stages in the history of Old Rus’ chronicle-writing. The year 1091 (5599 AM) is the most plausible date for the *Initial Compilation* (*Nachal’nyj svod*), preceding the *Primary Chronicle*.⁶³ This chronicle seems to have been written down in the Kievan Cave Monastery on the occasion of the translation of the relics of St. Feodosij, which itself, as we have seen, appears to have been timed to coincide with the turn of the new century. Exactly two hundred years later, the *Halician-Volhynian Chronicle* comes to an abrupt end with the entry for 6800 (1282), which has caused many scholars to speculate about a lost continuation of the work.⁶⁴ Yet just as in the case of Mathew Paris, the chronicle had obviously been kept up to the jubilee date. The great millennial date of 7000 AM also appears to be marked in the history of Rus’ chronicle writing. An explicit, but not highly reliable evidence to this is the chronicle part of the so-called *Kubasov’s chronograph*, which ends at this date with an account of the council of bishops, gathered in Moscow on the occasion of the end of the seventh millennium.⁶⁵ It is also questionable, whether the so-called *Moscow Chronicle Compilation* of the late fifteenth century had been continued up to 7000 AM.⁶⁶

60 *Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora*, ed. H. R. Luard, vol. 5 (London, 1880), 197; cited in R. Landes, *Lest the Millenium Be Fulfilled*, 127.

61 See G. Dickson, *The Crowd at the Feet of Pope Boniface VIII*, 288.

62 H. Schmidt, E. Govärts, *Die Lippoldsberger Chronik von 1151* (Lippoldsberg, 1961).

63 Cf. Алешковский М. Х. “Повесть временных лет”. М., 1971. С. 24–25; А. Timberlake, *Redactions of the Primary Chronicle. Русский язык в научном освещении*, № 1 (2001), 207–208.

64 Cf. Котляр Н. Ф. “Галицко-Волынская летопись” (источники, структура, жанровые и идейные особенности). ДГ. М., 1997. С. 163.

65 See Зиборов В. К. Летописная часть хронографа С. Кубасова. *Проблемы истории СССР*. 8. М., 1979. С. 58–73.

66 Cf. Ужанков А. Н. “Совестные книги” Древней Руси (Русское летописание и Страшный суд), *Россия XXI*. 1999. № 4. С. 158.

There are also good grounds to assume that the *Primary Chronicle* was compiled in 1115 and was connected with the translation of the relics of SS. Boris and Gleb on the hundredth anniversary of their assassination.⁶⁷ On the next centennial anniversary of this event in 1215 another chronicle compilation came into being — the so-called *Chronicle of Pereslavl Suzdalskij*, containing a new version of the tale of Boris and Gleb.⁶⁸ Wide-ranging jubilee celebrations occurred in Novgorod in 1439, apparently on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the conversion of the city to Christianity, which, according to the local chronicles, took place in 989. Not surprisingly, 1439 is the date of the last entry common for the mss. of the *Younger version* of the *First Novgorod Chronicle*.⁶⁹ Hence, “relative” Jubilees seem to have been a stimulus for the development of historical writing in Rus as well.

To summarize: despite not being mentioned as such in contemporary chronicles, jubilee celebrations appear to have been responsible for a large number of important dates and events in the early Rus’ ecclesiastic and cultural history, including chronicle-writing itself. In this paper I have been able to focus on a few such celebrations, and much of the Old Rus’ jubilee activity remains beyond the scope of the present discussion.

What I call the jubilee tradition in Rus was a complex socio-cultural phenomenon, which can be described and interpreted on different levels. In a more general sense, it can be regarded as a typical manifestation of “jubilee religiosity” — eschatological agitation, triggered by the round dates themselves, which were perceived as special and prophetic times. More specifically, within the framework of Byzantine eschatology, this tradition may be seen as taking its inspiration from the millennial expectations which were initially attached to the year 5500 AM (considered to be year 1000AD) and subsequently shifted to the year 7000 AM. And last but not least, the biblical concept of the Jubilee year also seems to have contributed to the Old Rus’ jubilee tradition, not surprisingly, given the role the Old Testament played in the historical and religious identity of Rus’ as a new Christian state.

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67 Черепнин Л. В. “Повесть временных лет”, ее редакции и предшествующие ей летописные своды. *Исторические записки*. Т. 25. 1948. С. 309–310.

68 *ПСРЛ*. Т. 41. С. IX; Милютешко Н. И. Переяславское сказание о Борисе и Глебе в составе Летописца Переяславля-Суздальского. *ТОДРЛ*. Т. 47. 1993. С. 65–81.

69 Cf. Бобров А. Г. *Новгородские летописи XV в.* СПб., 2001. С. 73–74 (with different interpretation).