

IAN WOOD (LEEDS)

## Martyrdom in early Christian Rus'

**Słowa kluczowe:** kult świętych, Ruś Kijowska, Brunon z Kwerfurtu, Włodzimierz Wielki

**Keywords:** cult of saints, Kievan Rus', Bruno of Querfurt, Vladimir the Great

**Abstract:** The author hypothesizes that the corpses of Bruno of Querfurt (+1009) and his companions were buried among the Rus', possibly in Svyatopolk's city of Turov. Such burial and cult could have influenced both the placing of the tomb of Vladimir and decorations of the St. Sophia church.

Our knowledge of the history of Kievan Rus' is inevitably dominated by the *Primary Chronicle*, even though, being set down at the beginning of the twelfth century, it cannot be regarded as reliable for the reigns of Vladimir or Iaroslav *Mudryi*, „the Wise”<sup>1</sup>. There are important texts from eleventh century Rus', not least the writings of Ilarion<sup>2</sup>, and the earliest versions of the Boris and Gleb legends<sup>3</sup>, together with the laws of Iaroslav contained within the Rus' legal text, the *Russkaya Pravda*. Vladimir does, however, appear in Latin sources of the early eleventh century, as does his son Svyatopolk. Above all up until 1018 Thietmar of Merseburg provides a record

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<sup>1</sup> I am greatly indebted to Miłosz Sosnowski, Jonathan Shepard and Aleksandr Musin for comments on various drafts of this paper, and for the supply of articles that would have been inaccessible. Most of the research was carried out during the course of a Fellowship held at the Polish Institute for Advance Study (PIASt) in Warsaw in the Spring and Summer of 2017.

<sup>2</sup> See S. Franklin, *Sermons and Rhetoric of Kievan Rus'*, Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature, English Translations, vol. 2, Cambridge Mass. 1991, pp. 3–29.

<sup>3</sup> See P. Hollingsworth, *The Hagiography of Kievan Rus'*, Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature, English Translations, vol. 2, Cambridge Mass. 1992.

of the relations between the Polish ruler, Bolesław Chrobry and Kiev, and most especially of his involvement in the succession crisis of 1015, following the death of Vladimir<sup>4</sup>. Yet although Thietmar was an exact contemporary his information is sometimes confused.

One eyewitness account that we have of Vladimir comes in Bruno of Querfurt's Letter to Henry II, written apparently in the winter of 1008/9, between the end of his mission to the Pechenegs, in November or December 1008, and (probably, as we shall see) his departure from Kiev on the mission that would lead to his death on 9<sup>th</sup> March (or just possibly 14<sup>th</sup> February) 1009<sup>5</sup>. This, and the sources that relate the subsequent martyrdom and burial of Bruno raise interesting questions, which impinge on some longstanding puzzles in early Rus' history.

Bruno, a Saxon aristocrat with close ties to the Ottonian dynasty, was a missionary archbishop, consecrated by the archbishop of Mainz in Merseburg in c. 1004, following instructions issued originally by Silvester II before his death in 1003, and apparently reaffirmed by John XVII<sup>6</sup>. At some point Bruno was in Poland, though it is not easy to date his visit, or visits (both 1004 and 1008 are plausible)<sup>7</sup>. He was certainly in Hungary in 1006/7 and in Kiev for a month, probably in the summer of 1008, when he sought backing from Vladimir to evangelise the Pechenegs<sup>8</sup>. Despite Vladimir's opposition he spent five months among the nomads, where he had

<sup>4</sup> For Thietmar on Vladimir see A. Мусин, Князь Владимир Святой и культура Киевской Руси глазами Титмара Мерзебургского, Княжа доба: історія і культура 10 (2016), pp. 165–198.

<sup>5</sup> The best edition is that of J. Karwasińska, *Epistola ad Henricum regem*, Monumenta Poloniae Historica n. s., IV, 3, Warszawa 1973, pp. 85–106. I follow the chronology of M. Sosnowski, *Kilka uwag o chronologii życia i twórczości Brunona z Kwerfurtu*, Roczniki Historyczne 82 (2016), pp. 63–79.

<sup>6</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon* VI, 94 – *Thietmar von Merseburg, Chronik*, ed. W. Trillmich, Darmstadt 1957. The best biography remains that of H.G. Voigt, *Brun von Querfurt: Mönch, Eremit, Erzbischof der Heiden und Märtyrer: Lebenslauf, Anschauungen und Schriften eines deutschen Missionars und Märtyrers um die Wende des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart, 1907. But see also R. Wenskus, *Studien zur historisch-politischen Gedankenwelt Bruns von Querfurt*, Münster – Köln 1956.

<sup>7</sup> For his time in Poland, Thietmar, *Chronicon*, VI, 94; V. Múcska, *Bruno z Querfurtu a Uhorsko*, *Historia Slavorum Occidentis* (2014), 1(6), pp. 62–73.

<sup>8</sup> The most recent attempts to provide a chronology are those of V. Múcska, *Bruno z Querfurtu a Uhorsko*, and M. Sosnowski, *Kilka uwag o chronologii życia i twórczości Brunona z Kwerfurtu*. Where the dates of Múcska and Sosnowski are in conflict I have been persuaded by the latter. A more traditional chronology can be found in W. Falkowski, *The letter of Bruno of Querfurt to King Henry II*, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 43 (2009), pp. 417–438, at pp. 419–420.

some missionary success in three out of the four quarters of their territory<sup>9</sup>. At the end of that time he negotiated a peace between the Rus' and the Pechenegs, which was confirmed by the sending of one of Vladimir's sons as hostage. This is a point worth remembering, for it suggests that the Rus' *kniaz* held Bruno in high enough regard to have involved him in diplomacy with his aggressive southern neighbours. In addition, Bruno consecrated a bishop for the Pechenegs from among his own followers. The mission would seem to have taken place from the end of June to the end of November 1008, or just possibly from the beginning of August to the end of December. The moment of departure is determined by the liturgy that Bruno sang immediately before leaving Rus' territory on his Pecheneg mission. The responso-rium *Petre, amas me, pasce oues meas* would have been appropriate for 29<sup>th</sup> June or 1<sup>st</sup> August (although not for 22<sup>nd</sup> February, as was suggested by Meysztowicz)<sup>10</sup>. One might add that missions to nomads are known to have taken place in the autumn and winter months: that, after all, was the time when they were most likely to be gathered in central places: missions during the late spring and early summer would have necessitated following dispersed groups over vast distances<sup>11</sup>. After his five months among the nomads Bruno set off, presumably via Kiev, to evangelise the Prussians.

In his letter to Henry II, written immediately before he left on his final mission, Bruno associates himself firmly with the Polish ruler Boleslaw Chrobry<sup>12</sup>. No doubt this was partly to shame the emperor for his alliance with pagan enemies of the Poles<sup>13</sup>, but his statements are supported by Thietmar's comments that Bruno received many donations from the Polish ruler and other rich men, which he promptly distributed to churches, his followers and the poor (*multa a Bolizlavo ceterisque diuitibus bona suscepit, que mox ecclesiis et familiaribus et pauperibus nil sibi retinendo*

<sup>9</sup> One might note that Constantinus Porphyrogenetus, *De administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik and R.J.H. Jenkins, *Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae* 1, Washington DC. 1967, chapter 37, pp. 166–171, talks of eight provinces.

<sup>10</sup> M. Sosnowski, *Kilka uwag o chronologii życia i twórczości Brunona z Kwerfurtu*, pp. 69–71.

<sup>11</sup> T.T. Noonan, *The Khazar Qaghanate and its impact on the early Rus' State: the translatio imperii from Itil to Kiev*, [in:] *Nomads in the Sedentary World*, ed. A.M. Khazanov and A. Wink, London 2001, pp. 76–102, at p. 85, citing the evidence of Istakhri.

<sup>12</sup> Bruno, *Epistola ad Henricum regem*, ed. J. Karwasińska, pp. 101 (*huic seniori fidelitatem, et maiorem amicitiam porto, hoc uerum est: certe diligo eum ut animam meam, et plus quam uitam meam*), p. 102–105.

<sup>13</sup> W. Falkowski, *The letter of Bruno of Querfurt to King Henry II*, provides a close reading of the contents of the letter.

*divisit*)<sup>14</sup>. So too, Thietmar claims that the martyred Bruno provided solace for Bolesław's family<sup>15</sup>. This, naturally, has led to an assumption that the saint set out for Prussia from the centre of Polish power (in other words the Gniezno/Poznań region)<sup>16</sup>. But there is nothing in Bruno's letter to Henry II to prove that he was actually at Bolesław's court at the time of writing<sup>17</sup>. Although he was keen to make peace between the Polish ruler and the emperor, the crucial sentences relating to the support that he received for his missionary work from Bolesław are clearly in the past tense, and relate to the period before war between Henry and the Poles had rendered his earlier missionary intentions impossible<sup>18</sup>.

Since Bruno wished to follow in the footsteps of Adalbert of Prague<sup>19</sup>, it is thought that he headed to the same region as his role model<sup>20</sup>, in other words to the area to the south-east of Gdańsk. But not one of our sources states that Bruno entered Prussian territory from that of the Poles, nor do they suggest that he died in the region of Adalbert's martyrdom. The location of Bruno's death must remain a matter of doubt (despite the valiant and stimulating efforts of Darius Baronas)<sup>21</sup>, although it would seem to have taken place on the borders of Russian and Prussian territory. The account by Wipert, who calls himself a chaplain of Bruno and claims to have been a witness of his death, says only that the saint was martyred while preaching in Prussia<sup>22</sup>. Thietmar, however, writing in his retrospective entry for the

<sup>14</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, VI, 95.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>16</sup> D. Baronas, *The year 1009: St Bruno of Querfurt between Poland and Rus'*, *Journal of Medieval History* 34 (2008), pp. 1–22, at p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> There is no information on Bruno's route, nor even on his whereabouts at the time of writing the letter to Henry. Traditionally Bruno is thought to have written from Poland, as stated by W. Falkowski, *The letter of Bruno of Querfurt to King Henry II*, pp. 421–422. Aleksandr Musin suggests that he was in Magdeburg. To my mind the chronology suggests that he wrote from somewhere in Rus', although the comments on Bolesław would seem to suggest that the letter was taken to Germany via Poland.

<sup>18</sup> Bruno, *Epistola ad Henricum regem*, p. 103 (*Primum senior Boleszlauo qui viribus animi et corporis consolari me ad conuertendos Pruzos libentissime uoluit, et nulli pecuniae ad hoc parcere decreuit*).

<sup>19</sup> Bruno, *Epistola ad Henricum regem*, p. 103; Bruno, *Vita Quinque Fratrum*, ed. J. Karwasińska, in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* n. s. IV, 3, Warszawa 1973, 10, 11, 13, and 2, 6, pp. 7–84, at pp. 52, 54–54, 63, and 33–37, 41.

<sup>20</sup> D. Baronas, *The year 1009: St Bruno of Querfurt between Poland and Rus'*, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>22</sup> Wipert, *Hystoria de predicatione episcopi Brunonis cum suis capellanis in Pruscia et martirio eorum*, ed. M. Sosnowski, *Anonimowa Passio s. Adalperti martiris (BHL 40) oraz Wiperta Historia de pre-*

year 1013, states that Bruno, who was his cousin, entered Prussia (*ad Pruciam pergens*), and was martyred between Prussia and Rus' (*in confinio praedictae regionis et Rusciae*) on 14<sup>th</sup> February<sup>23</sup>. The *Annals of Quedlinburg* (which were being compiled between 1008 and 1030, and which are likely to reflect information from the Ottonian court) give the more generally accepted date of 9<sup>th</sup> March, and state that the martyrdom occurred on the boundary between the Rus' and the Lithuanians (*in confinio Rusciae et Lituae*)<sup>24</sup>. The version of events given by Peter Damian, set down in c. 1042, claims that Bruno was preaching to a king of the Rus' (*rex Russorum*)<sup>25</sup>. Ademar of Chabannes, in the third version of his Chronicle, written probably in 1027/8, talks about the saint being killed while preaching to the *Pincenati* (which is surely a confused reference to Bruno's previous mission to the Pechenegs)<sup>26</sup>.

If, following Sosnowski's dating of the Pecheneg mission<sup>27</sup>, Bruno did not leave Kiev before December 1008 (or even January 1009), he is unlikely to have approached Prussian territory from the coast: the time lapse between his departure from Rus' territory and his death makes such a route unfeasible. He may have passed through the eastern fringes of the territories controlled by the Poles, but his point of departure would seem to have been Kiev, and it would seem significant that three out of five of our contemporary or near-contemporary sources place Bruno's death in a Russian context: Poland is nowhere mentioned<sup>28</sup>.

What is more interesting, however, is what then happened to his body and to those of his companions, who are said by the *Quedlinburg Annals* to have numbered 18<sup>29</sup>, although Wipert only gives the names of four chaplains who were killed alongside Bruno: Tiemic, Aic, Hezich and Apich<sup>30</sup>. Exactly how we should reconcile this

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dicatione episcopi Brunonis (*BHL 1471b*) – komentarz, edycja, przekład, Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej 43 (2012), pp. 5–74, pp. 70–73.

<sup>23</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, VI, 94.

<sup>24</sup> *Die Annales Quedlinburgenses*, ed. M. Giese, MGH SRG 72, Hannover 2004, p. 527.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Damian, *Vita Romualdi*, ed. G. Tabacco, *Petri Damiani Vita beati Romualdi*, Fonti per la Storia d'Italia 94, Roma 1957, chapter 27.

<sup>26</sup> Ademar, *Chronicon*, ed. P. Bourgain, R. Landes and G. Pon, CCSL Continuatio Medieualis 129, Turnhout 1999, III, 31. For the date, R. Landes, *Relics, Apocalypse and the Deceits of History*, Cambridge Mass. 1995, pp. 214–227.

<sup>27</sup> M. Sosnowski, *Kilka uwag o chronologii życia i twórczości Brunona z Kwerfurtu*.

<sup>28</sup> D. Baronas, *The year 1009: St Bruno of Querfurt between Poland and Rus'*.

<sup>29</sup> *Annales Quedlinburgenses*, p. 527.

<sup>30</sup> Wipert, *Hystoria de predicatione*, pp. 70–71.

discrepancy is unclear. We might reject one or other testimony, but Wipert claims to have been an eyewitness of the martyrdom, while Quedlinburg was well connected with the Ottonian court. On the other hand, we might think that Wipert lists only „German” chaplains – the names suggest that three came from Saxony and one from Italy<sup>31</sup>. Perhaps these were men who were of particular interest to Wipert’s intended audience, while the remainder were helpers (perhaps including Rus’ interpreters) who were also killed.

Equally important, although he was supposedly present at the martyrdom of Bruno and his companions, Wipert shows no knowledge of the fate of the bodies. Thietmar, by contrast, says that Bruno’s corpse was ransomed by the Polish ruler Bolesław Chrobry, and he goes on to say that the martyr will protect Bolesław’s house<sup>32</sup>. Of the whereabouts of the physical remains, however, he says nothing. The failure to say anything about a Polish burial is all the more striking in that Thietmar had almost certainly met Bolesław in Merseburg in 1013, shortly before writing his account of Bruno’s death<sup>33</sup>. The Pole may well have been the source for his account of the martyrdom: the silence over the relics of the martyrs would, therefore, seem to be significant. Ademar, on the other hand, talks of the body being redeemed by the Rus’ (*Corpus ejus Russorum gens magno precio redemit, et in Russia monasterium ejus nomini construxerunt, magnis que miraculis coruscare cepit*)<sup>34</sup>. Although Ademar is not highly regarded for his trustworthiness<sup>35</sup>, he did have a particular interest in the cult of relics at precisely this moment in time<sup>36</sup>. Moreover, it has been shown that he had good Byzantine sources, and, since his account of Bruno’s martyrdom is followed by a reference to a subsequent Greek mission to the same region, we should probably reckon that his information about Rus’ in this instance was of Byzantine origin<sup>37</sup>. There may be some further support for this in the fact that Ademar shows a remarkable interest in the Pechenegs – perhaps a single Byzantine source supplied him with information on both Bruno and the nomads. In addition, his reference to

<sup>31</sup> Wolfgang Haubrichs, personal communication.

<sup>32</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, VI, 95.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, VI, 91.

<sup>34</sup> Ademar, *Chronicon*, III, 31.

<sup>35</sup> The basic assessment is that of R. Landes, *Relics, Apocalypse and the Deceits of History*.

<sup>36</sup> R. Landes, *Relics, Apocalypse and the Deceits of History*, esp. pp. 46–49.

<sup>37</sup> R.L. Wolff, *How the news was brought from Byzantium to Angoulême; or, the pursuit of a hare in an Ox Cart...*, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 4 (1978), pp. 139–189; R. Landes, *Relics, Apocalypse and the Deceits of History*, pp. 157–167, esp. pp. 161–162, n. 43, for a modification of Wolff.



a cult of Bruno in Rus' is supported by Peter Damian<sup>38</sup>, who was certainly in contact with religious communities in Constantinople<sup>39</sup>. He, like Ademar, talks of a cult of Bruno at a Russian monastery (*quem [Brunonem] nunc felicissimum martirem se habere Russiana gloriatur ecclesia (...) Nam continuo poenitentiam sui criminis flebitur expeunt, baptismi sacramenta cum magna alacritate suscipiunt, super corpus quoque beatissimi martiris ecclesiam construunt*). Although it is tempting to believe that Thietmar's account is the most reliable – he was after all Bruno's cousin – it should be stressed that he has no knowledge of the whereabouts of Bruno's burial, even though he talks of the martyr protecting Boleslaw's house – and it may be significant that he talks of the *domus* and not the ruler himself<sup>40</sup>. Nor is there any evidence for a Polish cult of Bruno in the early eleventh century, even though the martyr was personally close to Boleslaw<sup>41</sup>. And there is no indication that the Czechs seized the martyr's relics from Poland in 1038/9, when they took those of Adalbert of Prague, of his half-brother Radim-Gaudentius of Gniezno, and of the so-called Five Brothers (Benedict, John, Matthew, Isaac and Christinus), whose *Passio* was written by Bruno<sup>42</sup>. By contrast, both Ademar and Damian are specific about a Russian cult of the Saxon missionary, and since both authors would seem to have had some Byzantine sources of information, in this instance we should probably prefer their detail to Thietmar's (perhaps deliberately) vague assertion. Of course, Boleslaw may well have tried to secure the body, and he may even have paid money for it, but he may have been forestalled by Vladimir or his son Svyatopolk, both of whom would have been in a very much better position to get hold of the relics, if the martyrdom occurred on the Russian border. Ironically, given Thietmar's normal hostility towards Boleslaw, he may well have set down an overly optimistic view of an attempt by the Piast ruler to secure

<sup>38</sup> Damian, *Vita Romualdi*, 27.

<sup>39</sup> K.N. Ciggaar, *Western Travellers to Constantinople: the West and Byzantium, 962–1204: cultural and political relations*, Leiden 1996, p. 266; B. Crostini, *Resolving Humbert's Crux: Anti-Greek polemics and the question of crucified saints* (forthcoming), sheds much light on the exchange of ideas between Constantinopolitan monks and the West at this moment. See also, id., *Navigando per il Salterio: riflessioni intorno all'edizione elettronica del manoscritto Londra, British Library, Addit. 19.352. Seconda parte. Il significato storico del Salterio di Teodoro'*, *Bolletino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* 55 (2001), pp. 191–215. I am indebted to Jonathan Shepard for these references, and for a good deal of other information and discussion.

<sup>40</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, VI, 95.

<sup>41</sup> Bruno, *Epistola ad Henricum regem*, pp. 101–105.

<sup>42</sup> Cosmas of Prague, *Chronica Boemorum*, II, 3–5 – *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, ed. B. Bretholz, MGH, SRG 2, Berlin 1923; Bruno, *Vita Quinque Fratrum*.

the body of the martyred Bruno. In other words, although Bruno is assumed to have died somewhere to the east of Gdańsk, and to have been buried in Poland, there is no evidence to support this reading. By contrast, our documentation, albeit inconsistent, points to martyrdom on the borders of Rus' and Prussia, and a cult in a monastery within Rus' territory.

That Vladimir was concerned about Bruno and his missionary companions is clearly stated by the saint himself. Before he embarked on the Pecheneg mission Bruno spent a month with the *senior Ruzorum*, as he calls Vladimir. During that time the *kniaz* tried to dissuade him from embarking on his intended mission. At the end of the month Vladimir and his *maiores*, together with Bruno and his fellow missionaries, travelled for two days to the edge of the kingdom, and then waited on what must have been part of the Serpent Walls, while Bruno sang the *responsorium* appropriate for one of the feasts of St Peter. When he finished, Vladimir made one last attempt to dissuade him from his mission, sending one of his *maiores*, who explained that it would be a stain on the ruler if one young life were lost: *Duxi te ubi mea desinit, terra inimicorum incipit; propter Deum rogo, ad meum dedecus ne perdas iuuenem uitam*<sup>43</sup>. Exactly what is meant by *iuuenem uitam* is unclear. W.L. North translated Vladimir's words as „I have brought you to where my land ends, and the land of the enemy begins; I ask, for God's sake that you not lose your young life to my shame; I know that tomorrow, before the third hour, you shall taste a bitter death, without profit, without reason”<sup>44</sup>. The Latin, however, does not specifically identify the *iuuenem uitam* as Bruno, who by this time was in his mid to late thirties. The reference would, therefore, seem to be a general one to the life of one of his young followers. But if Vladimir regarded the potential loss of one missionary life as a mark of shame (and *dedecus* is clearly a powerful word), how much more shameful was the loss of Bruno and perhaps 18 companions, killed on the frontier between Rus' and Prussia, and perhaps even by a group of Rus', if we are to follow Damian's account?<sup>45</sup> This, surely, is enough to suggest that Vladimir would have felt obliged to ransom and honour the bodies of Bruno and his martyred companions.

It is worth emphasising Vladimir's address to Bruno: this is, after all, the only contemporary record by an eyewitness of any speech by the *kniaz*. Of course, Bruno

<sup>43</sup> Bruno, *Epistola ad Henricum regem*, p. 99.

<sup>44</sup> W.L. North, *The Letter of Bruno of Querfurt to King Henry II: On His Alliance with the Pagans*, online at [https://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/mars/assets/Bruno\\_of\\_Querfurt\\_Letter\\_to\\_Henry\\_II\\_for\\_MARS\\_website.pdf](https://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/mars/assets/Bruno_of_Querfurt_Letter_to_Henry_II_for_MARS_website.pdf).

<sup>45</sup> Peter Damian, *Vita Romualdi*, 27.



has rendered it in Latin, although he would have communicated with Vladimir and his *maiores* in some other language, perhaps in Greek or German, but more probably in Slavonic. The emphasis placed on the need to learn the Slavonic tongue in the *Life of the Five Brothers*<sup>46</sup> suggests that Bruno himself made an attempt to master a Slavonic language.

It seems likely, then, that Ademar and Damian were right in claiming that Bruno's body was ransomed by the Rus' and that it was buried in a monastery in Rus'<sup>47</sup>. The question that then follows is where might we look for this monastery. The Cave monastery in Kiev does not seem to have been in existence at the moment at which Bruno's cult was established<sup>48</sup>, and there is no indication of a monastic community attached to the Tithe Church, although in his *Sermon on Law and Grace* Ilarion does talk about the foundation of churches and monasteries following Vladimir's conversion<sup>49</sup>. We may have to postulate a small community practising Latin rituals that was subsequently destroyed and forgotten. Certainly a western monastic community is not impossible at this moment in time: discourses from the *Paterik of the Cave Monastery* from the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries express clear hostility towards Latin ecclesiastical practices, suggesting that they could be found in Rus'<sup>50</sup>. Intriguingly Ademar concludes his account of Bruno with an obscure statement that, after the martyr's death and the recovery of his body, a Greek bishop came to Rus' and converted the part of the *provincia* that had remained pagan, and also introduced the Greek style of beards<sup>51</sup> – which perhaps suggests that Bruno had encouraged

<sup>46</sup> Bruno, *Vita Quinque Fratrum*, 6, 10, pp. 41, 54.

<sup>47</sup> I follow D. Baronas, *The year 1009: St Bruno of Querfurt between Poland and Rus'*, p. 3, in thinking that the accounts of Damian and Ademar have been undervalued.

<sup>48</sup> M. Heppel, *The Paterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery*, Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature, English Translations, vol. 1, Cambridge Mass. 1991, p. xvii.

<sup>49</sup> Ilarion, *Sermon on Law and Grace*, 48, [in:] *Sermons and Rhetoric of Kievan Rus'*, translated and with an introduction S. Franklin, Cambridge 1991, p. 19.

<sup>50</sup> *The Paterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery*, Discourse 1, trans. M. Heppel, 33, 37, pp. 2, 5, 188. 211–214. Friendly attitudes towards the West are noted in H. Janson, *Scythian Christianity*, [in:] *Early Christianity on the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks*, ed. I. Garipzanov and O. Tolochko, (Ruthenica Supplement 4), Kiev 2011, pp. 33–57, at p. 34, n. 4; O. Tolochko, *Varangian Christianity in tenth-century Rus*, *ibid.*, pp. 58–69; J.H. Lind, *Christianity on the move: the role of the Varangians in Rus and Scandinavia*, [in:] *Byzantium and the Viking World*, eds. F. Androshchuk, J. Shepard, M. White, Uppsala 2016, pp. 409–440. See below for a question relating to the siting of the tombs of Vladimir, Boris and Gleb.

<sup>51</sup> Ademar, *Chronicon*, III, 31.

a clean-shaven Latin style (among the clergy?), and thus that he had been active as a missionary in Rus' itself during the month that he had stayed there, before his Pecheneg mission. Bruno himself may even have received support from the Kievan Church, particularly in consecrating a bishop to the Pechenegs. As Jonathan Shepard has noted, in the early eleventh century, in contrast with the period that followed, conflict between the eastern and western Churches was rarely significant, and Vladimir, like other rulers, exploited whatever religious resources were at hand<sup>52</sup>.

There is a further complication that needs mentioning when considering the fate of the martyr's relics, and this might provide a clue as to the whereabouts of Bruno's burial. At roughly the time of the martyrdom Vladimir's son Svyatopolk married one of Bolesław's daughters. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure whether the marriage took place before or after Bruno's death – it may have been as late as 1012/3 – but a date earlier than 1009 would seem to be very likely. Shortly after the marriage, however, Vladimir concluded that Svyatopolk and his Polish wife were working against him<sup>53</sup>. It is possible that the ransom of Bruno's body took place in the context of the marriage, or subsequently, at the moment when Vladimir thought that Svyatopolk was asserting his independence. It may be, then, that it was Svyatopolk who secured the release of Bruno's body, perhaps even with funds from Bolesław – which would account for Thietmar's comments, and would fit with Ademar and Damian: and if Svyatopolk was already married to the Bolesław's daughter, this might account for Thietmar's statement that the dead Bruno provided solace for the house of the Polish ruler. It may be significant that the entry on Bruno's death appears after Thietmar's account of a meeting of Henry II and Bolesław in Merseburg in 1013, when the emperor backed a Polish assault against the Rus' – by which one should perhaps understand that Bolesław was intervening in support of his son-in-law Svyatopolk against Vladimir. Interestingly, at the start of the campaign the Poles were supported by the Pechenegs<sup>54</sup>, which might suggest a connection with those interested in the cult of Bruno, who had preached to them.

If Svyatopolk, rather than Vladimir, was responsible for the cult of Bruno, we might think that the monastery was in the prince's city of Turov – ideally placed

<sup>52</sup> J. Shepard, *Storm clouds and a thunderclap: east-west tensions towards the mid-eleventh century*, in: *Byzantium in the eleventh century: Being in between. Papers from the 45th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, Oxford, 24–26 March 2012*, eds. M.D. Lauxtermann and M. Whittow, London 2017, pp. 127–153, at pp. 129–130.

<sup>53</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, VI, 72.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*, VI, 91, 95.

on the route between Kiev and Lithuania, and thus also accessible to the penitent killers of Bruno, who according to Damian frequented the shrine, which he actually places at the site of the martyrdom<sup>55</sup>. One might note the Oleg Iov uncovered important buildings of the tenth and eleventh centuries at Yurkovichi, near Turov, and has suggested that these should be understood as part of a proto-urban centre with a multi-ethnic population, which was the predecessor of Turov<sup>56</sup>.

It is worth remembering that the cult of Bruno would not have been a small-scale affair. We are not just dealing with a single martyr: according to the *Quedlinburg Annals* Bruno was martyred along with 18 companions, even if Wipert lists only four martyred chaplains. In all probability these had been with him for some period of time. There is no obvious moment when Bruno could have recruited missionaries between his departure from Kiev and the time of his death. This would suggest that the eighteen, plus at least Wipert, who was not among those killed, had been with him in Kiev and on the Pecheneg mission – an intriguing possibility is that some of Bruno's fellow martyrs actually joined him in Rus', which might explain the selective nature of Wipert's list. Vladimir, or Svyatopolk, presumably ransomed the bodies not only of Bruno, but also of all his companions. Vladimir's involvement would certainly fit well with the statement in the Letter to Henry, that the *kniaz* would have regarded the death of even one young man as a stain on his reputation. And it would have been no less galling to him if his increasingly independent son were responsible for ransoming the bodies.

It may be that we can see the reverberations of a cult of Bruno if we look further into events in Rus' in the second decade of the eleventh century. At almost exactly the time that Bruno was in Kiev another western bishop, Reinbern of Kołobrzeg, was in Rus'<sup>57</sup>. Reinbern was not only a bishop, but he had also been a leading counsellor of Bolesław<sup>58</sup>, who sent him to accompany his daughter when she married Svyatopolk, perhaps as early as c. 1009. When Vladimir turned against his son and daughter-in-law, accusing them of plotting against him, he imprisoned the two of them, along with Reinbern, who died in prison, perhaps in 1012<sup>59</sup>. Thietmar did not

<sup>55</sup> Peter Damian, *Vita Romualdi*, 27.

<sup>56</sup> О. Іов, К вопросу о местонахождении летописного Турова X – начала XI вв., in: Беларусь праз прызму рэгіянальнай гсторыі. Калінкавічы і Калінкавіцкікрай, Мінск 2016, pp. 68–86. I am indebted to Aleksandr Musin for the reference.

<sup>57</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, VII, 72.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, IV, 44; VI, 10.

<sup>59</sup> A.P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom*, Cambridge 1970, p. 275. The breakdown of

like the bishop, above all because as Boleslaw's adviser, he was involved in the Polish opposition to Henry II. The chronicler may also have been hostile to Reinbern because his diocese was one of a cluster created uncanonically by Otto III, without the approval of the archbishop of Magdeburg, when he set up a new archdiocese of Gniezno, endowing it with suffragans in Poznań, Kraków, Wrocław and Kolobrzeg<sup>60</sup>. But although he was critical of Reinbern in the course of his lifetime, he regarded him as a martyr, and as one who would be posthumously active against Vladimir. Talking of Svyatopolk Thietmar wrote „[m]eanwhile, King Vladimir heard that his son had secretly turned against him, at the urging of Duke Boleslaw. He then seized not only his son and wife, but also Reinbern as well, placing each of them in solitary confinement. With tears and through the sacrifice of constant prayers offered from a contrite heart, Reinbern reconciled himself to the highest priest. Then, freed from the narrow prison of the body, he joyfully crossed over to the freedom of perpetual glory”<sup>61</sup>. And a few lines later he adds the statement that „[s]itting in the security of heaven, Bishop Reinbern can laugh at the threats of that unjust man and, in his twofold chastity, contemplate that fornicator's fiery punishment since, according to our teacher Paul, God judges adulterers”<sup>62</sup>. What is striking is not the condemnation of Vladimir as a fornicator (Boleslaw is condemned in similar manner), but rather the image of Reinbern gazing down from heaven. This raises the possibility that Reinbern was regarded as a martyr by Svyatopolk, who may even have encouraged a cult after Vladimir's death.

In the years immediately after 1009 there may, thus, have been at least one and possibly two cults of western clergy in Rus: that of Bruno, and his eighteen companions, and possibly one of Reinbern, both of which may have been based in

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relations between Boleslaw and Vladimir may have ended any hopes that the Polish ruler had of securing Bruno's relics. On the general background to marriage contacts between Rus' and the West, Ch. Raffensperger, *Reimagining Europe: Kievan Rus' in the Medieval World*, Cambridge Mass. 2012.

<sup>60</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, IV, 44.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*, VII, 72: *Quem predictus rex [Vladimir], audiens filium suimet ortatu Bolizlavi tacito reluctatum sibi, cepit cum eodem et uxore et in singulari custodia claudit. In qua pater venerabilis [Reinbern], quod in aperto fieri non potuit, in secreto studiosus in divina laude peregit. Hic cum se lacrimis assidueaque orationis ex corde contrito prolatae hostia summo sacerdotali reconciliaret, ex arto corporis carcere solutus ad libertatem perennis gloriae gaudens transit, transl. D. Warner, *Ottonian Germany: The Chronicle of Thietmar of Merseburg*, Manchester 2001, p. 358.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*, VII, 73: *In caelesti securitate sedens episcopus ille ridet viri minas iniusti et castitate gemina potitur ac fornicatoris illius ultrices flammis speculatur; quia nostro doctore Paulo teste adulteros iudicat Deus, transl. D. Warner, *Ottonian Germany*, p. 358.*

Svyatopolk's heartlands – perhaps in Turov. It is worth bearing this in mind when considering the origins of the cult of Boris and Gleb, whose cult was established at some disputed point after the succession of Iaroslav, following Svyatopolk's death in 1019. It is possible that the promotion of the cults of Boris and Gleb was Iaroslav's response to one, if not two, pre-existing cults of German martyrs, of Bruno and his companions, and conceivably also of Reinbern. Although scholars have emphasised a Byzantine background for the earliest hagiographical texts relating to the two martyred sons of Vladimir<sup>63</sup>, it may be that the immediate inspiration for a cult was that of Bruno.

One indication that there was Latin influence in the burial of both Boris and Gleb, and also of Vladimir and his wife has been highlighted by Aleksandr Musin<sup>64</sup>. According to Thietmar the Russian *kniaz* was buried *in medio templo*<sup>65</sup>. So too were Boris and Gleb<sup>66</sup>. This, however, was the Latin and not the Byzantine tradition<sup>67</sup>. Could the model for all these burials be that of Bruno and his companions?

It is worth noting that certain aspects of the sanctity of Boris and Gleb are common to the depiction of Bruno. All three are said to have sung psalms at, or just before, their martyrdom<sup>68</sup>. Wipert, for instance, states that while undergoing a trial by fire (from which in fact the martyr emerged unharmed), his *capellani* sang seven psalms<sup>69</sup>. In addition Bruno in his second account of the martyrdom of Adalbert of Prague, written perhaps while he was in Hungary or Kiev, inserts four verses of Psalm 115<sup>70</sup>. Of course, the singing of Psalms was not unique to the western tradition, but it was certainly an aspect of the lives of western martyrs who had died

<sup>63</sup> P. Hollingsworth, *The Hagiography of Kievan Rus'*, pp. xvi, XIX–XXIV, L–LII; M. White, *Byzantine saints in Rus' and the cult of Boris and Gleb*, [in:] *Saints and their Lives on the Periphery: veneration of saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200)*, eds. H. Antonsson and I.H. Garipzanov, Turnhout 2010, pp. 95–114.

<sup>64</sup> А. Мусин, *Князь Владимир Святой и культура Киевской Руси глазами Титмара Мерзебургского*, p. 193, with nn. 113 and 114.

<sup>65</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, VII, 74.

<sup>66</sup> G. Revelli, *Monumenti literari su Boris e Gleb*, Genoa 1993, p. 547.

<sup>67</sup> F. Oswald, 'In medio ecclesiae'. *Die Deutung der literarischen Zeugnisse im Lichte archäologischen Funde*, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 3 (1969), pp. 313–326.

<sup>68</sup> *The Tale and Passion of Boris and Gleb*, transl. P. Hollingsworth, [in:] *The Hagiography of Kievan Rus'*, pp. 97–116, at pp. 104, 109.

<sup>69</sup> Wipert, *Hystoria de predicatione*, pp. 70–71.

<sup>70</sup> Bruno, *S. Adalberti Vita Altera, Redactio Brevior*, 31, ed. J. Karwasinska in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* n. s., IV, 2, Warszawa 1969, p. 67.

on the fringes of Rus' less than a decade before the killing of Boris and Gleb, and probably less than half a century before the composition of the first account of their martyrdom<sup>71</sup>.

That some western influence may lie behind the cult of Boris and Gleb is also suggested by the allusion to Wenceslas in the *Tale and Passion of Boris and Gleb*. It is, of course, possible that the reference to the Bohemian martyr points to influence from Prague, and perhaps to knowledge of one of the Slavonic versions of Wenceslas' martyrdom<sup>72</sup>. We should not, however, ignore the possibility that traditions relating to Wenceslas were first brought to Kiev by Bruno. Wenceslas was a model and a central point of reference for Adalbert of Prague. Bruno himself mentions the Bohemian martyr on a number of occasions in both of his *Vitae* of Adalbert, and he may well have been composing the second, shorter text during his visit to Kiev<sup>73</sup>. He also alludes to Wenceslas in the *Vita Quinque Fratrum*<sup>74</sup>. It is highly likely that Bruno brought information on both Wenceslas and Adalbert to the Rus'. In other words, the reference to the royal Bohemian martyr to be found in the *Tale and Passion of Boris and Gleb* may have depended on information brought originally by Bruno. One might even be tempted to wonder whether there is an echo of Bruno's writings in the person of the evil cook Torčín in the *Tale and Passion*<sup>75</sup>: Bruno had described a virtuous, but equally physical, cook, Christinus, in his *Life of the Five Brothers*<sup>76</sup>. Was the hagiography of Boris and Gleb concerned to eclipse any remaining Latin hagiographical traditions associated with Bruno and his cult?

One further indication of the centrality of the idea of martyrdom in Kiev in the first half of the eleventh century is the iconography of the church of St Sophia. The construction of the building has been assigned variously to the second and to the

<sup>71</sup> L. Müller, *Die altrussischen hagiographischen Erzählungen und liturgischen Dichtungen über die Heiligen Boris und Gleb*, Munich 1967, argued for a cult of Boris and Gleb as early as the 1020s or 1030s, while A. Poppe, *La naissance du culte de Boris et Gleb*, Cahiers de civilisation médiévale 24 (1981), pp. 29–53, and id, *The Assassinations of Boris and Gleb in the making of eleventh-century Rus'*, *Quaestiones medii aevi novae* 8 (2003), pp. 133–168, argued for the recognition of their sanctity around 1072.

<sup>72</sup> *Tale and Passion of Boris and Gleb*, p. 103; N. Cornwell, N. Christian, *Reference Guide to Russian Literature*, London 1998, p. 487.

<sup>73</sup> Bruno, *S. Adalberti Vita Altera, Redactio Longior*, 21, ed. J. Karwasińska in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, n. s., IV, 2, Warszawa 1969, p. 27; *Redactio Brevior*, 21, p. 59–60.

<sup>74</sup> Bruno, *Vita Quinque Fratrum*, 11, p. 54.

<sup>75</sup> *Tale and Passion of Boris and Gleb*, p. 110.

<sup>76</sup> Bruno, *Vita Quinque Fratrum*, 13, p. 65–66.



fourth decade of the eleventh century<sup>77</sup>. Whether one accepts 1011, or the more widely accepted date of 1037, as the foundation date, the iconography of the paintings and mosaics would seem to belong to c. 1050, when they were perhaps alluded to in Ilarion's *Sermon on Law and Grace*<sup>78</sup>. They thus date to the last years of Iaroslav *Mudryi*, and within a decade of Damian's comment on the existence of a flourishing cult of Bruno among the Rus'.

A notable feature of the iconography is the representation of the 40 martyrs of Sevaste. There is a depiction of the martyr scene, in the baptistery<sup>79</sup>. This, however, can be paralleled elsewhere in Late Roman and Byzantine churches<sup>80</sup>. More remarkable is the individual portrayal of each of the 40 martyrs around the arch of the eastern apse<sup>81</sup>, which at the very least is unusual. Perhaps one should see here a deliberate portrayal of a larger group of martyrs than that of Bruno and his 18 companions. Moreover, in the East the 40 martyrs were culted on 9<sup>th</sup> March, as is clear from the nearly contemporary *Menologion* of Basil II<sup>82</sup>. This also happens to be the date of Bruno's death, according to the *Quedlinburg Annals*. The 40 Sevaste martyrs might thus have been promoted deliberately in order to eclipse the 19 martyrs (Bruno and his companions), with whom they shared a feast-day. Certainly, martyrdom must have been very much to the fore in the mind of whoever planned the iconographic programme of St Sophia. Obviously the martyrdom of Boris and Gleb must have provided a point of reference, but so too might that of Bruno.

<sup>77</sup> The early date (1011–19) is proposed by H. Lohvin, *On the construction of the cathedral of Saint Sophia in Kiev*, *Ukrainian Historical Journal* 2 (1987), pp. 129–136, and supported by N.N. Nikitenko and V.V. Kornienko, *Eschatological dates in graffiti on the frescoes of St Sophia Cathedral as a historical source*, *Archives of the Ukraine* 6 (2009), pp. 43–63. A later date of 1036 is championed by A. Poppe, *The Building of St Sophia in Kiev*, *Journal of Medieval History* 7 (1981), pp. 15–66, who is backed by E. Boeck, *Believing is seeing: Princess spotting in St Sophia in Kiev*, [in:] *Dubitando: Studies in History and Culture in Honor of Donald Ostrowski*, eds. B.J. Boeck, R.E. Martin, D. Rowland, Bloomington 2012, pp. 167–178, and by S.C. Simmons, *Rus' dynastic ideology in the frescoes of the south chapels in St Sophia, Kiev*, [in:] *From Constantinople to the Frontier: the city and the cities*, eds. N.S.M. Matheou, T. Kampianaki, L.M. Bondioli, Leiden 2016, pp. 207–225, at p. 210, n. 8.

<sup>78</sup> Ilarion, *Sermon on Law and Grace*, 59, transl. Franklin, [in:] *Sermons and Rhetoric of Kievan Rus'*, pp. 23–24.

<sup>79</sup> N. Nikitenko, *Mosaics of St. Sophia of Kyiv*, Kyiv 2016, pp. 88–89.

<sup>80</sup> Z. Gavrilovic, *The Forty in Art*, [in:] id., *Studies in Byzantine and Medieval Art*, London 2001, pp. 70–74.

<sup>81</sup> N. Nikitenko, *Mosaics of St. Sophia of Kyiv*, pp. 87–93.

<sup>82</sup> *Menologion of Basil II*, PG 117, col. 345–346.

It is possible, then, that one of the early keystones of Rus' spirituality, the martyr cult of Boris and Gleb, supposedly murdered by one son of Vladimir, Svyatopolk, and championed by his half-brother, Iaroslav, may have had antecedents in the cults of western clergy which already existed in Rus'<sup>83</sup> – perhaps that of Reinbern, if indeed he was culted by Svyatopolk, and more certainly that of Bruno and his fellow martyrs, which would seem to have been promoted by Vladimir or, once again, by Svyatopolk. Moreover, like the cult of Boris and Gleb, that of Bruno may well have been taken up within the complex and brutal politics of the last years of Vladimir and those of the succeeding struggle for power. By the late eleventh century, of course, the Christian traditions of Rus' looked firmly to Byzantium, but it is worth considering that for a brief period western martyrs provided the model of martyrdom as it evolved in Kiev.

Nadesłany: 12 VII 2018

Nadesłany po poprawkach recenzyjnych: 10 VIII 2018

Zaakceptowany: 15 VIII 2018

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## Martyrdom in early Christian Rus'

Bruno of Querfurt was martyred on the border between the lands of the Rus' and of the Prussians in 1009, probably on 9<sup>th</sup> March. The accounts of the martyrdom and of the saint's burial differ strongly. Thietmar of Merseburg claims that the body of the martyr was ransomed by Boleslaw Chrobry, but he does not say where it was buried. Ademar of Chabannes, however, says that the saint was buried in the lands of the Rus', where Peter Damian also says there was a cult of Bruno. It is, therefore, possible that, the corpses of Bruno and his companions, they were buried among the Rus', perhaps in Svyatopolk's city of Turov. It is also possible that the burial and cult of Bruno influenced both the placing of the tomb of Vladimir and also the decorative scheme of the Church of Santa Sophia in Kiev, which places remarkable emphasis on the cult of the 40 martyrs of Sevaste, who were commemorated on 9<sup>th</sup> March, as was Bruno.

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<sup>83</sup> For links between the Rus' and Central Europe, Ch. Raffensperger, *Reimagining Europe: Kievan Rus' in the Medieval World*.