

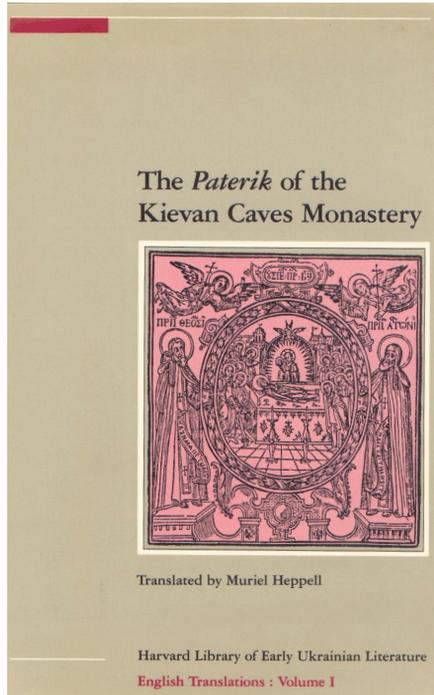


SLA 218

Ukrainian Literature and Culture

The *Pateryk* of the Kyivan Caves Monastery

These excerpts are from the Kyiv *Pateryk*. This text is from *The Paterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery*, translated by Muriel Heppell and published in 1989 by the Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University as volume 1 of the Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature.



*Discourse 8. May 3. The Life of our venerable father
Feodosij, superior of the Caves Monastery, written by
Nestor, a monk of that same monastery.*

I thank Thee, Jesus Christ, my Lord and Master, that Thou hast vouchsafed me, unworthy as I am, to recount the lives of Thy holy servants. For after first writing about the life, murder, and miracles of the blessed passion-sufferers Boris and Glëb,⁹¹ I have been moved to undertake a second narrative. The first one was beyond my powers, and I was not worthy of undertaking it, since I am crude and foolish; moreover, I had not been instructed in any kind of learning. But I remembered Thy word, O Lord: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Go and be planted in the sea; and without doubting it should obey you."⁹² I, the sinful Nestor, taking hold of these things in my mind and fortifying myself with the faith and hope that all things are possible from Thee,⁹³ began to write this account of the life of our venerable father Feodosij, formerly superior of the Caves Monastery of our holy Mistress, the Theotokos, the archimandrite of all Rus' and founder [of our monastic life].⁹⁴

Brothers, as I called to mind the life of this venerable man, which has not been written down by anyone, I was daily overcome by grief, and I would pray to God that He would consider me worthy to record everything in order about the life of His servant, our father Feodosij, so that the monks who come after us, having received and read this narrative and seen the valour of this man, might praise God, glorify His servant, and be strengthened to further endeavors, especially as such a man and servant of God appeared even in this land. For it was of him that the Lord said, "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,"⁹⁵ and also,

⁹¹ A reference to Nestor's *Lesson concerning . . . Boris and Glëb*. See above, Discourse 7, n. 72.

⁹² A partially garbled conflation of Matt. 17:20 and Luke 17:6.

⁹³ See Matt. 19:26; Mark 10:27, 14:36.

⁹⁴ The words "archimandrite of all Rus' and founder [of our monastic life]" (архимандрита всея Русіи и начальника) do not occur in the oldest copy of the Life of Feodosij, that of the *Uspenskij Shornik* (hereafter UspSb). They were presumably added by a later copyist or editor after it had become customary to bestow this title on the superiors of the Caves Monastery as a mark of special honor. The first superior to have this title was Polikarp, who died in 1182 (see Discourse 38).

⁹⁵ Matt. 8:11; cf. Luke 13:28–29.

“Many that are last shall be first.”⁹⁶ For this man, though he appeared late in time, showed himself superior to the first fathers, since in his life he emulated the holy founder of the monastic life, I mean the great Antony, and closely resembled his namesake Theodosios, archimandrite of Jerusalem, and the same things came to pass in his life. Both of them passed their lives in the same fervent service of our Lady, the Theotokos, and received from the One whom she bore the same recompense, and they pray to the Lord unceasingly for us, their children. It is indeed remarkable, as is written in the books of the fathers, that “the last generation will be weak.”⁹⁷ Yet in this last generation Christ revealed such a man as this as His husbandman, a shepherd for His monks, and a guide and teacher of universal truth for His holy sheep, for from his youth he was adorned by a pure life and good deeds, and especially by faith and understanding.

From now on I shall begin to tell you about the blessed Feodosij right from his youth. But listen, brothers, with close attention, since this discourse is full of profit for all who hear it. I beg you, beloved, do not despise my crudeness, for I am constrained by love of the holy man for whose sake I have tried to record all these things. Moreover, I take care that it should not be said of me, “Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou ought to have taken my money to the exchanges, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.”⁹⁸ So, brothers, it is not fitting to conceal God’s wonderful acts, especially since the Lord said to His disciples, “What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light, and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the housetops.”⁹⁹ It is my wish to write all these things for the profit and edification of all with whom we converse, so that they may thereby glorify God and receive their recompense and reward. Now I am about to begin my discourse and embark on my story, but first I shall pray to Thee, O Lord: “O Master Lord Almighty, giver of blessings, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, come to my aid and enlighten my heart so that it may understand Thy commandments, and open my lips so that they may proclaim Thy wonderful works

⁹⁶ Matt. 19:30; cf. Luke 13:30.

⁹⁷ Nestor refers here to a passage in the *Book of Holy Men*. See Introduction, pp. xx–xxi. Cf. PL 73, bk. 5, no. 4; *Cod. Slav. Vindob. 152*, item 152; *The Old Church Slavonic Translation of the Ἀνδρῶν ἀγίων βίβλος* [hereafter Ἀνδρῶν ἀγίων βίβλος], eds. D. Armstrong et al. (The Hague, 1975), 148.

⁹⁸ Matt. 25:26–27; cf. Luke 19:22–23.

⁹⁹ Matt. 10:27; cf. Luke 12:3.

and praise Thy servant, so that Thy holy name may be glorified, for Thou art the helper of all who hope in Thee, forever. Amen.”

*The birth of the holy Feodosij*¹⁰⁰

About fifty *poprišče* from Kiev, the capital city, there is a town called Vasyľ'kiv.¹⁰¹ Here the parents of the holy one lived in Christian faith and adorned with every kind of piety. They bore this blessed child, and on the eighth day they brought him to God's priest, as is the custom of Christians, to give the child a name. The priest looked at the child, foresaw within his heart that from his youth he would dedicate himself to God, and named him Feodosij.¹⁰² When the child was forty days old, he was baptized. He grew up under his parents' care and God's grace was with him, for from youth the Holy Spirit dwelt in him.

Who will proclaim the mercy of God? For He did not choose a shepherd and teacher for His monks from among wise philosophers or from rulers of cities but—for this may the Lord's name be glorified—a man who, although simple and unlettered, showed himself to be wiser than the philosophers. O hidden mystery! For the bright morning star shone forth for us from a place where it was not expected, so that we beheld its radiance from all lands and ran towards it, scorning all else, and satisfied by that light alone. O divine grace! For from the very beginning He marked out and blessed this place, since He wished His spiritual sheep to graze there until He chose a shepherd.

It happened that the blessed one's parents moved to another town, called Kursk,¹⁰³ by the prince's order, or rather I should say by God's will, so that the life of this valiant child might shine forth there. For it is fitting that our morning star should come from the east and gather round itself many other stars who await the sun of righteousness and say, “Master, here am I, and the children whom I have nourished with Thy

¹⁰⁰ These headings in the *Paterik's* version of the Life of Feodosij are absent in the copy of the UspSb, and these were probably not part of Nestor's original composition. They probably originated as marginal notes in a manuscript and were later entered into the text by a copyist.

¹⁰¹ Vasyľ'kiv is situated on the Stuhna River, southwest of Kiev, and was one of the key defensive points for Kievan territory. See Toločko, “Kievskaja zemlja,” 31–33. It was probably founded by Volodimer, whose baptismal name was Vasilij. On *poprišče* as a unit of measure, see below, n. 184.

¹⁰² Presumably Feodosij was the name he received when tonsured, not when baptized, as Nestor here implies.

¹⁰³ Kursk was situated on the River Sejm, a tributary of the Desna, about two hundred miles east of Černihiv.

spiritual food. Here, Lord, are my disciples. For I have brought to Thee those whom I have taught to despise all the things of this life and to love only Thee, the Lord God. Behold, Lord, this flock of Thy rational sheep, over whom Thou didst make me shepherd and whom I tended in Thy holy pasture and brought them to Thee, Lord, having kept them pure and undefiled.” Then the Lord said unto him, “O good servant, you have faithfully increased the talent entrusted to you. Take therefore the crown prepared for you and enter into the joy of your Lord.”¹⁰⁴ And to the disciples He said, “Come, good flock, rational sheep of a valiant pastor, who have hungered and toiled for my sake. Receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”¹⁰⁵ So, brothers, let us equal and imitate and follow the life of our venerable father Feodosij and his disciples, whom he sent to God before himself, so that we too may be deemed worthy to hear that voice which comes from our Almighty Master, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”¹⁰⁶

The holy Feodosij's childhood struggles

Let us now return, brothers, to the first narrative about this holy child. Growing in body and drawn in his soul to the love of God, he would daily go to God's church and listen to the divine Scriptures with the utmost diligence. Moreover, he would not approach other children when they were playing, as young people usually do, but despised their games. His clothes were patched; his parents often urged him to dress himself in fine clothes and go out to play with other children, but he would not obey them, preferring to be like one of the poor. He also begged his parents to let him study the divine books with one of the teachers. This they did, and he soon learnt all sacred Writ, so that everybody marveled at the child's wisdom and understanding and at the speed with which he learned. Who shall recount the submissiveness and obedience which he showed in his studies, not only towards his teacher, but to all who studied with him?

When the blessed Feodosij was thirteen years old, his father passed away. Henceforth he grew more zealous in his labors, so that he would go out to a village with his slaves to work with the utmost humility. But his mother restrained him from such activity and forbade him to do it,

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Matt 25:21–23.

¹⁰⁵ See Matt. 25:34.

¹⁰⁶ See Matt. 25:34.

and again begged him to dress in fine clothes and go and play with children his own age. She would say, "By going about this way, you bring disgrace on yourself and your family." But he did not heed her, so that she frequently became furious with him and beat him. For she had a strong, powerful body, like a man; anyone who heard her talking, but could not see her, would have thought she was a man.

The holy one's departure on a pilgrimage

Meanwhile this blessed youth was pondering how and by what means he might be saved. Then he heard about the holy places where our Lord walked in the flesh, and wanted to go there and revere them. He prayed to God, "My Lord Jesus Christ, hear my prayer and deem me worthy to go to Thy holy places and revere them." While he was then praying, some pilgrims came to the town. Seeing them, the blessed youth rejoiced and ran and greeted them, kissing them affectionately and asking where they were from and where they were going. They replied, "We are from the holy places and, God willing, we will go back there." The holy one begged them to take him as their traveling companion. They promised to take him and to conduct him to the holy places. When the blessed Feodosij heard their promise, he was filled with joy and went home.

When the pilgrims were about to leave they informed the youth about their departure. That night he arose, unbeknownst to anyone, and left home secretly, taking nothing with him except the clothes which he was wearing—and they were very shabby. Thus he departed in the wake of the pilgrims.

But the good God did not allow him to leave this land, since He had designated him from his mother's womb to be a shepherd of His rational sheep in this land. If the shepherd departed, the pasture which God had blessed would become desolate, thorns and briars would come upon it, and the flock would be scattered.¹⁰⁷ Three days later his mother learned that he had left with the pilgrims and set off after him, taking along her only [other] son, who was younger than the blessed Feodosij. They pursued him for a considerable distance, overtook them, and seized him. Out of fury and rage his mother took him by the hair, flung him on the ground, and trampled on him with her feet. The pilgrims protested greatly and she let go, but returned home, leading him tied up like some malefactor. She was so possessed by anger that she beat him until her

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Isa. 5:6, 7:23–24, 32:13; Matt. 26:31.

strength gave out. Then she took him into a room, tied him up, shut him in, and departed. The blessed youth accepted all these things with joy and prayed to God about them all.

Two days later his mother came and let him out and gave him something to eat, but as she was still gripped by anger she put irons on his feet and ordered him thus to walk about, taking care lest he run away from her again. He went about like this for many days. Then her heart softened towards him and she began to beg and urge him not to run away from her, since she loved him more than the others and accordingly could not bear to be without him. When he promised that he would not leave her, she removed the irons from his feet and told him to do whatever he wanted. The blessed Feodosij then returned to his former labors and went daily to church.

*How the holy one baked sacramental loaves*¹⁰⁸

He saw that often there were no sacramental loaves for the liturgy, because none had been baked. He was very grieved¹⁰⁹ about this, and in his humility he resolved to set himself apart for this task, which he did. So he began to bake loaves and sell them. If there was anything left over cost, he gave it to the poor. With the money he received he bought more grain, ground it with his own hands, and made more loaves. Thus was it God's will, so that pure loaves be brought to His church by a pure and innocent child. This went on for two years or more.¹¹⁰ All his young companions, prompted by the enemy, mocked and reproached him on account of this work, but the blessed one gladly accepted all their reproaches and maintained silence.

When the enemy—the hater of good—saw himself vanquished by the humility of this holy child, he did not give up, since he wanted to turn him away from this work. He began to incite his mother to forbid him to go on with this activity. Because she could not bear her son to be in disgrace and she began to speak to him affectionately, “I beg you, my child, give up this work, for you are bringing disgrace on your family. I cannot bear to hear you insulted by everybody because of this work. It is

¹⁰⁸ *Prosury* were round-shaped loaves with a cross imprinted on them, specially prepared for use in the liturgy.

¹⁰⁹ I have used here the Arsenian reading жал яше (so too the UspSb), as it makes better sense: see Abramovyč, *Pateryk*, 25, n. 42.

¹¹⁰ Both the UspSp and the Arsenian texts read “12 years” here (Abramovyč, *Pateryk*, 25, n. 48), but the Cas. II reading makes better sense. This is also the view of Golubinskij, *Istorija russskoj cerkvi*, 1, 2:572–73.

not fitting for you, a child, to do such work.” The blessed Feodosij answered her meekly, “Listen, mother, I entreat you! The Lord God Jesus Christ Himself became poor and was humbled, giving us an example, so that we might humble ourselves for His sake. He was reviled and spat upon and beaten and endured all these things for the sake of our salvation. How much more fitting it is for us to endure them, so that we might receive Christ. As for this work of mine, listen: When our Lord Jesus Christ sat down for supper with His disciples, He took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat, this is my body, broken for you and for many for the remission of sins.’¹¹¹ If our Lord called bread His flesh, should I not all the more rejoice that our God has considered me worthy to make His flesh?’” When his mother heard this, she marveled at the child’s great wisdom and from then on left him alone.

The enemy, however, did not desist, but goaded her to forbid her child to show such humility. For a year later, when she again saw him baking loaves and being blackened by soot from the oven, she was greatly distressed and again began to reproach him, now tenderly, now with threats; sometimes she beat him to make him stop doing such work. The blessed youth was very unhappy about this and perplexed as to what he should do. Then he got up at night and secretly left home and went to another town not far away; he lived with the priest and continued his work as usual.

His mother looked for him in her town and was in great distress when she failed to find him. Then many days later she heard where he was living and hurried after him in a great rage. When she came to the aforementioned town she looked for him and found him in the priest’s house. She took hold of him, beat him, and dragged him back to her town. After she had brought him home, she locked him up and said, “Henceforth you will not go away from me. Wherever you go, I shall come and find you and tie you up and bring you back to my town.” Then the blessed Feodosij prayed to God and daily went to God’s church.

The holy one’s service to the governor and his humility

He was indeed lowly in heart and submissive towards everyone, so that the governor of the town, seeing that the boy was so meek and

¹¹¹ Matt. 26:26, 28. The entire passage recalls the consecration of the communion loaf at the liturgy.

submissive, felt a great love towards him and told him to stay by his church. He also gave him some fine clothes in which to go about. The blessed one did this for a few days, as though he was carrying a heavy burden, but then took the clothes off and gave them to the poor; he himself dressed in shabby clothes and thus went about. The governor saw him thus going about and gave him another set of clothes, better than the first, and begged him to wear it. But he took this off too and gave it away; he did this many times. When the judge¹¹² learned of this he began to love him even more, and marvelled at his humility.

After this the blessed Feodosij went to one of the blacksmiths and told him to make him an iron chain, which he took and girded round his loins, and he went around like this. The iron was tight and cut into his body, but he went on as though this caused him no discomfort.

When many days had passed and a feastday came, his mother began to urge him to dress in fine clothes to serve at table, since all the town's magnates would be dining at the governor's table that day and the blessed Feodosij had been ordered to stand by and serve. This was why his mother had told him to put on fine clothes, especially when she had heard that the governor had arranged for all the town's magnates to dine with him. While he was putting the fine clothes on, being an innocent-minded youth he was not on his guard with her, but she was watching him closely and saw blood on his shirt. She wanted to find out the true state of affairs and realized that the blood was caused by the chain biting into him. She was inflamed with anger against him and got up in a furious temper, tore off his shirt, beat him, and snatched the chains from his loins. The blessed youth got dressed as though he had received no harm and went to serve the diners with the utmost meekness.

The holy one departs for Kiev, leaving his mother

Some time later he heard the Lord in the Gospel saying, "Whosoever hath not forsaken his father and mother and followed after me is not worthy of me,"¹¹³ and, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."¹¹⁴ Having heard these words, the divinely inspired Feodosij was inflamed with love for God; inspired by zeal towards God, he pondered

¹¹² Here the word is судя, apparently referring to the governor (властелинъ).

¹¹³ Matt. 10:37-38.

¹¹⁴ Matt. 11:28-29.

daily and hourly how and where he could be tonsured and hide from his mother.

By divine Providence his mother went away to a village and was to stay there many days. The blessed one rejoiced, and after praying to God, he secretly left home, with nothing but his clothes and a little bread on account of the weakness of his body. Thus he set out for the town of Kiev, since he had heard about the monasteries there.¹¹⁵ As he did not know the way, he prayed to God that he might find traveling companions who would direct him on the journey he wished to make. By divine Providence some merchants on heavily loaded carts came by that way. When the blessed one learned that they were going to that town, he rejoiced in his heart and praised God Who had fulfilled his heart's desire. He kept at a distance and did not reveal himself to them; when they stopped for the night the blessed one did not go up to them but simply kept within sight of them and rested there, God being his only protection. Traveling thus for three weeks, he reached the aforementioned town. Since he wanted to become a monk, after his arrival he went round all the monasteries and begged them to accept him. But when they saw the boy's simplicity and his shabby clothes, they were unwilling to take him. This was God's will, so that he should be led to that place to which God had called him from youth.

The holy one's visit to the great Antonij, and his tonsure

Then he heard about the blessed Antonij, who was living in a cave.¹¹⁶ His spirits soared, and he set out for the cave and came to the venerable Antonij. When he saw him he fell down and prostrated himself before him and begged him with tears to accept him. The great Antonij said to him, "My son, do you not see that this cave is a wretched place, narrow and confined? As you are still a child, I think, you will not be able to endure the discomfort of this place." He said this not only to test him, but he also had foreseen with prophetic vision that he would build up that spot and make a glorious monastery to assemble many

¹¹⁵ Almost nothing is known about monastic life in Rus' before the emergence of the Caves Monastery. The earliest known foundations were the monasteries of St. George and St. Irene founded by Jaroslav Volodimerovič in 1037 (PVL 1037, PSRL 1:151, 2:139). In his *Sermon on Law and Grace* (ca. 1049) Ilarion remarks that already in Volodimer's reign "monasteries arose on the mountains," but this may only be a rhetorical flourish. See Müller, *Des Metropoliten Ilarion Lobrede*, 106.

¹¹⁶ For a possible chronology of Antonij's life, see Heppell, "The *Vita Antonii*," 54-57.

monks. The divinely-inspired Feodosij answered him meekly, “You see, honored father, that Christ our God, Who cares for all His creatures, whosoever they are, has brought me to your holiness and told me to seek my salvation through you. Therefore, whatever you bid me, I shall do” The blessed Antonij said to him, “Blessed be God, my son, Who has sustained you for this undertaking. You stay in this place.” Once again Feodosij fell down and prostrated himself before him. Then the elder blessed him and commanded the great Nikon to tonsure him, since he was a priest and an experienced monk.¹¹⁷ He took the blessed Feodosij and tonsured him according to the custom of the holy fathers and dressed him in monastic garments in the year 1032,¹¹⁸ in the reign of the pious prince Jaroslav Volodimerovič.

Our father Feodosij dedicated himself entirely to God and the venerable Antonij, and henceforth gave himself up to a life of physical austerity: he spent whole nights in vigil, praising God and casting off the heaviness of sleep, striving to subdue his flesh. He also worked with his hands, remembering daily the words of the psalm: “Look upon mine affliction and my trouble; and forgive all my sins.”¹¹⁹ Thus he humbled himself by self-denial in every way and tormented his body with labors and abstinence, so that the venerable Antonij and the great Nikon marveled at his meekness and submissiveness and at such virtue, steadfastness, and good cheer in a youth, and they both glorified the all-merciful God on this account.

His mother's arrival in Kiev

His mother searched long for him in her own town and in neighboring towns. When she did not find him, she wept bitterly, beating her breast as though for the dead. An order was sent throughout the whole land that if anyone had seen such a child anywhere he should come and inform his mother and receive a reward for the information. Some

¹¹⁷ It has generally been assumed that Nikon tonsured Feodosij, and also Varlaam and Efrem, because Antonij was not a priest. The *Account*, however, states clearly that Antonij himself tonsured his first disciples (see above, pp. 20–21). Perhaps Antonij was already living as a recluse by the time Feodosij came to Kiev in the early 1050s, and Nikon was acting as head of the community. See Heppell, “The *Vita Antonii*,” 55–56.

¹¹⁸ This date, which is an interpolation in the Cas. I and Cas. II copies of the *Paterik* (Abramovyč, *Pateryk*, 29, n. 15), is erroneous, since it is clear from the context that Feodosij must have come to Kiev in the early 1050s. For an explanation of this insertion, see Heppell, “The *Vita Antonii*,” 53, n. 56, and 54, n. 59.

¹¹⁹ Ps. 24:18.

people came from Kiev and told her, "Four years ago we saw him walking about in our town, asking to be tonsured in one of the monasteries." When she heard this, the woman went there without delay, not lingering nor fearing the length of the journey. She came to the aforementioned town in search of her son, and after arriving there, she went round all the monasteries seeking him.

Finally she was told, "He is in the cave with the venerable Antonij." She went there to find him and began by summoning the elder deceitfully, saying, "Tell the venerable one that I have come a long way and ask him to come out. Say that I have come to converse with him and prostrate myself before his holiness and receive his blessing." The elder was informed about her, and he went out to her. When she saw the elder, she prostrated herself before him to the ground. The elder said a prayer and blessed her. After the prayer, they both sat down, and she began to talk to him at length. Finally she revealed the reason she had come. She said, "I entreat you, father, tell me if my son is here. I am greatly troubled about him as I do not know whether he is alive." Because of the simplicity of his mind the elder did not perceive her trick and said to her, "Your son is here. Do not grieve over him, for he is alive." Then she said to him, "May I not see him, father? I have traveled a long way and come to this town simply to see my son and then return to my town." The elder said to her, "If you want to see him, go away now and I shall go and tell him, because he does not want to see anybody. Then come back tomorrow morning and you will see him." When she heard this, she departed, expecting to see him the next day.

The venerable Antonij went into the cave and reported everything to the blessed Feodosij. When he heard this, he was very distressed that he could not hide from his mother. The next day the woman came again. The elder several times urged the blessed one to go out and see his mother, but he did not want to go. Then the elder went out and told her, "I have begged him many times to come out to you, but he is unwilling." She then began to address the elder not at all meekly, but shouted very angrily, "O the violence of this elder! He has concealed my son in the cave and does not want to show him to me. Bring out my son, elder, so that I may see him, for I cannot bear to live if I do not see him. Show me my son, lest I suffer a cruel death! For I shall kill myself before the doors of this cave if you do not show him to me!"

Then Antonij was very distressed and went into the cave and begged the blessed one to go out to her. He did not want to disobey the elder, and went out to her. When she saw her son in such a pitiable state—for his face had changed with so much labor and self-denial—she

embraced him and wept bitterly for a long time. When she had comforted herself a little, she began to urge Christ's servant, "Come home, my son, and whatever is necessary for the salvation of your soul do at home as you wish. Only do not leave me. When I die, you can bury my body and then return to this cave, if you want to. For I cannot bear to live if I do not see you."

The blessed one said to her, "Mother, if you want to see me every day, come to this town and enter one of the women's monasteries and be tonsured there. Thus you could come here and see me and also save your soul. But if you do not do this, I tell you truly that from now on you will not see my face." He daily continued to exhort his mother with such and many other precepts, but she did not want to do this and would not even listen to his words. Whenever she left him, the blessed one would enter the cave and pray to God fervently for his mother's salvation and that her heart might be turned to obey Him. God heard His servant's prayer, for as the Prophet said, "The Lord is near to all that call upon Him in truth. He will perform the desire of them that fear Him: and He will hear their supplication."¹²⁰

Now one day his mother came to him and said, "My son, I shall do everything you have told me to do. I shall not return to my town, but, God willing, I shall enter a women's monastery, be tonsured there, and abide there for the rest of my days. Your teaching has made me discern that this transient world is nothing." Hearing this, the blessed Feodosij rejoiced in his soul and went and told the great Antonij. When the venerable one heard the news, he glorified God Who had turned her heart to such penitence. The great Antonij went to her and instructed her at length for the good of her soul and told the princess¹²¹ about her. She admitted her to the women's monastery dedicated to St. Nicholas,¹²² and there she was tonsured and clad in monastic dress. After living a virtuous life for many years, she peacefully reposed in the Lord.

Such was the life of our blessed father Feodosij from his early years until he came to the cave. His mother related these things to one of the brethren named Feodor, who was cellarer in the time of our father

¹²⁰ Ps. 144:18–19.

¹²¹ Perhaps Jaroslav's wife Ingigerd, daughter of King Olaf of Sweden, but she died in 1050, which is rather early for Feodosij's arrival in Kiev some four years before Varlaam and Efrem (see Heppell, "The *Vita Antonii*," p. 53, n. 56). Possibly she was one of Prince Izjaslav's sisters.

¹²² Golubinskij, *Istorija ruskoj cerkvi*, 1, 2:746, no. 4, says that this women's monastery was founded by Izjaslav Jaroslavič but gives no further information.

Feodosij. I heard all these things directly from him, and I have written them down for the recollection of all who read them. But let me move on to the remaining story of the youth's perfection, and God, Who sets us aright, will indicate to me the fulfillment of the tale....¹²³

Our holy father Feodosij also showed himself to be victorious over evil spirits in the cave. After his mother was tonsured and he had cast off all worldly care, he strove with greater labors to acquire zeal towards God. Three lights shone forth in the cave, expelling the demonic darkness by prayer and fasting: I refer to the venerable Antonij, the blessed Feodosij, and the great Nikon. They were in the cave, praying to God, and God was with them, for it is said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."¹²⁴

Varlaam, the son of the boyar Ioann

At this time there was a certain man named Ioann who was foremost among the prince's boyars. This man's son often came to the venerable ones and enjoyed the honeyed words which flowed from the mouths of these fathers. He loved them greatly and wanted to live with them, since he despised all the things of this life and counted glory and riches as nothing. For he had been touched by the word of the Lord: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."¹²⁵ He told only Antonij about this idea, saying, "Father, if it is pleasing to God, I should like to be a monk and live with you." The elder said to him, "Your wish is a blessed one, and your idea is full of grace. But take care, my son, lest the riches and glory of this world turn you back. For the Lord said, 'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven.'¹²⁶ So a monk who returns to the world in thought and concerns himself with worldly things cannot set himself on the right path to eternal life." The elder talked to the youth about many other things, and a fervent love of God was kindled in his heart. Then he departed to his home.

On the next day he dressed himself in clean and sumptuous clothing, then got on his horse and came to the elder. Around him were his servants, leading other horses in splendid trappings in front of him, and

¹²³ The text appears to be unstable at this point: Abramovyč, *Pateryk*, 215, n. 42.

¹²⁴ Matt. 18:20.

¹²⁵ Matt. 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25.

¹²⁶ Luke 9:62.

thus in great splendor he came to the fathers' cave. They came out and prostrated themselves before him, as it is fitting before nobles, but he prostrated himself in front of them, right to the ground. Then he took off his boyar's dress and laid it before the elder and then set before him the horse with its trappings, saying, "Here, father, are all the fine allurements of this world. Do what you want with them, for I have already rejected these things and wish to be a monk and live with you in the cave. Henceforth I shall not return to my own house."

The elder said to him, "Take care, my son, to whom you make your vow and whose soldier you wish to be. For God's angels stand by unseen and receive your vows. If your father should come here to take you away, exercising his great authority, we would not be able to help you, and then you will appear before God as a liar and a traitor." The youth said to him, "I have faith in my God, father, so that even if my father should start to torture me I would not obey him and return to the world. I beg you, father, to tonsure me quickly." Then the venerable Antonij told the great Nikon to tonsure him and clothe him in monastic dress. After reciting the usual prayers, Nikon tonsured him, dressed him in the monastic habit, and gave him the name of Varlaam.

The eunuch

At that time there came a certain eunuch from the prince's household, a favorite of the prince, who looked after everything in his household. He begged the elder Antonij [to receive him], as he too wished to become a monk. After instructing him about the salvation of his soul, the elder entrusted him to the great Nikon to be tonsured. He tonsured him, dressed him in the monastic habit, and gave him the name of Efre^m.¹²⁷

It is not fitting to conceal the fact that the enemy brought trouble to the venerable ones on account of these two.¹²⁸ The enemy, the devil, the hater of good, seeing himself vanquished by the holy flock and realizing that henceforth this place would be glorified, wept at his downfall. Then he began with his evil trickery to inflame the heart of the prince against the venerable ones, so that he would at last scatter the holy flock. But he

¹²⁷ It is interesting that Efre^m was not refused admission to the monastery, although he was a eunuch. In theory eunuchs were not accepted on Mount Athos at this time. See Meester, *De monachico statu*, 350. But it appears that this prohibition was not strictly observed in the first half of the eleventh century. See P. Meyer, *Die Haupturkunden für das Athosklöster* (Leipzig, 1894), 173, 181.

¹²⁸ I.e., Varlaam and Efre^m.

was unable to do this, and was himself put to shame by their prayers, and fell into the pit that he had made.¹²⁹ For his trouble shall return on his own head, and his unrighteousness shall come down on his own crown.¹³⁰

The misfortune visited upon the holy ones

When Prince Izjaslav found out what had happened to his boyar and his eunuch, he was very angry and gave orders that he who had dared to do such things should be brought before him. [His servants] quickly went out and at once brought the great Nikon before him. The prince looked at Nikon angrily and said, "Are you the one who tonsured the boyar and the eunuch without my permission?" Nikon answered, "By God's grace I tonsured them with the permission of the heavenly King and of Jesus Christ, Who called them to the ascetic life." The prince said, "Either you persuade them to return home or I shall send you and your companions to prison and dig up your cave." To this Nikon answered, "My lord, you do whatever is pleasing in your eyes, but it is not fitting for me to turn away a soldier from the heavenly King."

Antonij and those with him took their clothes and left their own place, intending to go to another district.¹³¹ While the prince was still angrily reproaching Nikon, one of his servants entered and informed him that Antonij and those with him were about to leave the city for another district. Straightway the prince's wife said to him, "Listen, my lord, and do not be angry. The same thing also happened in our country: the monks fled because of some trouble, and much evil was done in the land on their account. Take care, my lord, lest this happen in your district."¹³² When the prince heard this, fearing the wrath of God, he dismissed the great Nikon and told him to go back to the cave. He sent after the others with a message begging them to return. When they were told this, just three days later, they returned to their cave, like brave men from battle who had vanquished their foe, the devil, and they prayed to

¹²⁹ Cf. Ps. 7:15.

¹³⁰ See Ps. 7:16.

¹³¹ On a later occasion Antonij incurred the anger of Prince Izjaslav, presumably by protesting against his treatment of Vseslav Brjačeslavič of Polack, and fled from Kiev, taking refuge with Svjatoslav Jaroslavič of Černihiv. See PVL 1074, PSRL 1:193, 2:185, and Heppell, "The *Vita Antonii*," 55, n. 70.

¹³² Izjaslav's wife was the Polish princess Gertrude, the sister of Bolesław II of Poland. The episode to which she refers is described in more detail in the account of Moisej the Hungarian (Discourse 30).

God continually day and night. But even so the devil took no rest in his struggle with them.

The firmness of the blessed Varlaam

When the boyar Ioann discovered that the Christ-loving prince Izjaslav had inflicted no harm on them, he was furious with them on account of his son. Taking a large number of servants, he went to the holy flock and scattered them. Entering the cave, he took hold of his son, the blessed Varlaam, and dragged him out. He took off his holy mantle and flung it into a deep hole. So also he removed the helmet of salvation on his head and cast it aside and seized hold of him and dressed him in fresh and sumptuous clothing befitting nobles. But Varlaam flung the clothes down and would not even look at them; he did this many times. Then his father ordered that his hands be bound, that he be dressed in his previous clothes, and that he thus go through the town to his home. But Varlaam, who was truly ardent in his soul in love of God, caught sight of a little cleft filled with rubbish along the way. He quickly entered it and with God's help tore off his clothing and trampled it under his feet in the filth, at the same time also trampling down the evil designs of the cunning enemy.

When they had entered their home, his father told him to sit down with him at table. He sat down, but refused to taste any food and remained downcast, looking at the ground. After the meal his father sent him to his own quarters but first placed servants there to see that he did not go away. Then he ordered his son's wife to dress up in all her finery in order to entice the youth, and that a multitude of servants serve in his presence. But Varlaam, a true servant of Christ, went into a room and sat down in a corner. His wife came up to him, as she had been ordered, and begged him to sit down on the bed. When he saw her foolish behavior he realized that his father had arranged for her to entice him, and he began to pray continually in the secrecy of his heart to the all-merciful God Who could save him from this temptation. He remained sitting in that place for three days without getting up or tasting any food or putting his clothes on, but remained in only his shirt.

The venerable Antonij, those with him, and the blessed Feodosij were greatly distressed on his account and prayed to God for him. God heard their prayer, for it is written: "The righteous cried, and the Lord hearkened to them, and delivered them out of all their afflictions. The Lord is near to them that are of a contrite heart; and will save the lowly

in spirit."¹³³ When blessed God saw the boy's meekness and endurance, He moved his father's hard heart to show mercy towards his son. His servants told him, "This is now the fourth day that he has not eaten or dressed." Hearing this, his father was very sad on his account and anxious that he should not die of hunger and cold. So he summoned him, kissed him affectionately, and let him go.

Then there was such a state of affairs: a great lament as though for the dead. The male and female servants lamented for their lord because he was leaving them; his wife came, sobbing bitterly because she was losing her husband; and his father and mother lamented because he was going away from them. So they all saw him off with lamentation. Thus did Christ's warrior depart from his father's house, like a bird set free from a net or a wild goat from a snare.¹³⁴ Running quickly, he came to the cave. The fathers were filled with joy when they saw him and stood up and glorified God, for He had heard their prayer. From then on many people came to the cave to receive the blessing of the holy fathers, and by God's grace some of them became monks.

The departure of the holy Nikon

At that time the great Nikon and another monk from the Monastery of St. Menas,¹³⁵ known as the Bulgarian,¹³⁶ took counsel and went away, as they wished to reside on their own.¹³⁷ Reaching the sea, they separated, just as the apostles Paul and Barnabas did to proclaim Christ,

¹³³ Ps. 33:16–18.

¹³⁴ Nestor borrowed this simile from the Life of St. Sabbas by Cyril of Scythopolis, one of his basic literary models. For the passage, see I. Pomjalovskij, ed., *Žitie svjatogo Savy Osvjaščennogo, sostavlennoe Kirillom Skifopol'skim* (St. Petersburg, 1890), 109.

¹³⁵ Golubinskij, *Istorija ruskoj cerkvi*, 1, 1:746, no. 6, says that it is not certain whether this monastery was in Kiev, although he so lists it; no other Rus' sources refer to it.

¹³⁶ The UspSb, Arsenian, and Cas. I copies give the alternate reading of боярина ("the boyar"): Abramovyč, *Pateryk*, 35, n. 44.

¹³⁷ The reasons for Nikon's departure from Kiev are not clear. Priselkov, *Očerki*, 174, has suggested that he left because of his resistance to Izjaslav over the tonsuring of Varlaam and Efrem. But since Izjaslav acquiesced and apparently bore the Caves Monastery no ill will, this is not a very convincing explanation. Possibly Nikon did not approve of the foundation of the Monastery of St. Demetrios by Izjaslav and feared that it might become a rival to the Caves Monastery (cf. the statement in the *Account*, Discourse 7, p. 22); or he may simply have wished to establish his own monastery, which is what he actually did.

as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles.¹³⁸ The Bulgarian went to Constantinople, found an island in the middle of the sea, and settled there. He lived for many years, enduring cold and hunger, and then reposed in peace. To this day that island is called Bolgarov.¹³⁹ But the great Nikon departed to the island of Tmutorokan', found an empty place near the town, and settled on it.¹⁴⁰ By God's grace the place flourished, and he built on it a church dedicated to the holy Theotokos. It became a glorious monastery even to this day, and it had the Caves Monastery as its model.

Some time after this the eunuch Efrem departed to Constantinople and lived in one of the monasteries there.¹⁴¹ Later he was brought back to this country and became bishop of Perejaslav.¹⁴² We have already added many stories to our main discourse, but from this point let us return to our subject.

The holy one's ordination

After the departure of these holy fathers our blessed father Feodosij was ordained priest by the order of the venerable Antonij. Every day he celebrated the divine liturgy with the utmost humility, for he was submissive by disposition, tranquil in his thoughts, innocent in mind, full of all spiritual wisdom, and possessing pure love for all the brethren. There were now fifteen brothers gathered together.

The departure of the great Antonij

As the venerable Antonij had been accustomed to live alone and could not endure all the noise and disturbance, he shut himself in a single cell of the cave, after placing the blessed Varlaam, the son of the boyar Ioann, in charge of the brotherhood in his stead.¹⁴³ From there again the

¹³⁸ Cf. Acts 15:39.

¹³⁹ I.e., "the Bulgar's." The other MSS read *болярвъ*, "the boyar's."

¹⁴⁰ No evidence suggests why Nikon chose to make the long journey to Tmutorokan'; possibly he had contacts with some of the leading families there.

¹⁴¹ It is not known why Efrem decided to leave the Caves Monastery. He probably settled in the Stoudios Monastery, since it was he who supplied Feodosij with information about the Stoudite "rule." See below, p. 44.

¹⁴² On the circumstances of his appointment and its "titular" character, see A. Poppe, "Russkie mitropolii konstantinopol'skoj patriarxii v XI stoletii," *Vizantijskij vremennik* 28 (1968):97-108.

¹⁴³ It was common practice in the early days of Byzantine monasticism for the leader of a small community to choose his own successor either just before his death or if he

venerable Antonij moved to another hill. Having dug out a cave, he lived in it, and never left that place;¹⁴⁴ his honored body lies there to this day.

The blessed Varlaam straightway built above the cave a small church dedicated to the holy Theotokos, so that the brotherhood could assemble there for divine worship. Henceforth the place was revealed to everyone, whereas formerly it had been unknown to many people.

At first they lived in the cave, and God alone knows how much discomfort and misery they experienced on account of the confined space; it cannot be related by human lips. In addition, their diet was only bread and water. On Saturdays and Sundays they ate pulses, but often no pulses were available on those days, so they boiled herbs and that was all they ate. They also worked with their hands: they either plaited sandals, or made cowls, or did other kinds of manual work. They took their products to town, sold them, and bought grain with the proceeds. They divided this, so that at night each ground up his share to make bread. Then they began to sing the morning office, and after that they did manual work. Some dug in the kitchen garden to grow herbs until it was time for the morning service. Then they all went into church together, sang the office, and celebrated the holy liturgy. Then they ate a little bread, and each one took up his work again. Thus they labored every day and dwelt in love towards God.

Our father Feodosij bore all these things in a humble and obedient frame of mind; because of his asceticism and bodily austerity he was physically gentle and submissive. He served everyone diligently, carrying water, bearing wood from the forest on his back, and keeping vigil every night in praise of God. Sometimes when the brethren were asleep, the blessed one took the grain which had been distributed, ground each person's share, and put it in his place. Sometimes when there were many gnats and flies he would go out at night onto the top of the cave, strip his body to the waist, and sit spinning wool and singing the Psalter. His whole body would become bloodied by the multitude of gnats and flies, and they ate his flesh and drank his blood. But our father Feodosij

wished to live as a solitary. See Meester, *De monachico statu*, 116, and the references there cited. If Antonij originally retired to a cave above the Dnieper ca. 1033, as I have suggested in "The *Vita Antonii*," 56, n. 80, Varlaam cannot have been his first successor, as Nestor implies here.

¹⁴⁴ For the chronology of Antonij's life as a recluse and his involvement in the life of the community during this period, see Heppell, "The *Vita Antonii*," 56-57.

remained unmoved and would not rise until it was time for the matins.¹⁴⁵ Then he was to be found in church before everybody, and remained undisturbed and unruffled in mind as he performed the divine service. Then he left the church last of all. Because of this they all loved him greatly, marveling at his meekness and submissiveness.

The appointment of the holy Feodosij as superior

After this the blessed Varlaam, the superior of the brethren in the cave, was transferred on the prince's order to the Monastery of the Holy Martyr Demetrios and appointed superior there.¹⁴⁶ Then the brethren in the cave assembled and informed the venerable Antonij that they had unanimously named the blessed father Feodosij as their superior, because he had mastered the monastic life and knew God's commandments well.¹⁴⁷ Although our father Feodosij accepted the position of seniority, he did not alter his humility and conduct, bearing in mind the Lord's words: "Whosoever among you will be elder, let him be the least of all and the servant of all."¹⁴⁸ So he humbled himself and made himself least of all and the servant of all, setting an example himself, going out to work before everybody and taking his place before them in the celebration of the holy liturgy. Henceforth the place flourished and grew through the prayers of the righteous man. For it is written: "The righteous shall flourish as a palm tree: he shall be increased as the cedar in Libanus."¹⁴⁹ For henceforth the brethren increased and the place flourished through their good deeds and their prayers for other pious people, so that many nobles came there for a blessing and gave them a small part of their possessions.

Our venerable father Feodosij, who was indeed an earthly angel and a heavenly man, saw that the place was uncomfortable and cramped and inadequate for them all (for the brotherhood had increased) and that the church was too small for them to assemble. But he never became

¹⁴⁵ Cf. a similar episode in E. C. Butler, trans., *The Lausiac History of Palladius* (Cambridge, Eng., 1904), 48–49, which describes how the Egyptian ascetic Macarius exposed his bare flesh to gnat bites.

¹⁴⁶ See above, Discourse 7, p. 22.

¹⁴⁷ This is the first reference to members of the community participating in choosing their superior. The *Account*, however, gives a different version of the appointment of Feodosij, stating that the monks left the decision to Antonij and that he chose Feodosij. See above, Discourse 7, p. 22.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Matt. 20:26–27; Mark 10:43–44; Luke 22:26.

¹⁴⁹ Ps. 91:12.

gloomy or despondent because of this, and daily comforted the brethren and taught them not to be anxious about the things of the flesh, and reminded them of the words of the Lord, "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of heaven; and all these things shall be added unto you."¹⁵⁰ Thus the blessed one thought, and God provided abundantly for their needs.

The building of the Caves Monastery

For then the great Feodosij found an empty place not far from the cave. Realizing that it was adequate for erecting a monastery, and enriched by God's grace, fortified by faith and hope, and filled with the Holy Spirit, he began to work to settle the brethren there. With God's help, in a short time on that place he built a church dedicated to the most glorious and holy Theotokos, the ever-virgin Mary, put a fence round it, established many cells, and then moved to that place with the brethren in the year 1062. Henceforth the place flourished by God's grace and became a famous monastery, which it is to this day. We call it the Caves Monastery, which was established by our father Feodosij.¹⁵¹

After this the blessed one sent one of the brethren to Constantinople to Efrem to have the entire rule of the Stoudios Monastery copied and brought back.¹⁵² He at once carried out the order of the venerable father, wrote down the complete monastic rule, and sent it to him.¹⁵³ After he

¹⁵⁰ Matt. 6:31–33; Luke 12:29–31.

¹⁵¹ Cf. the *Account* (above, Discourse 7, p. 22): "From that time it began to be called the Caves Monastery, which is under the blessing of the Holy Mountain." This reference to Mt. Athos may derive from the use of the "Antonij" source by one of the *Account's* compilers.

¹⁵² According to the *Account* (Discourse 7, p. 23), Feodosij first found out about the Stoudite Rule in Kiev from a monk named Michael, who had come from Constantinople with the metropolitan George; there is no mention of Efrem. But the two sources could be complementary. Feodosij made preliminary inquiries from Michael and then sent to Efrem for a copy of the rule.

¹⁵³ The typikon sent to Feodosij was presumably that of the monastery founded by Patriarch Alexios the Stoudite ca. 1034, whose Greek original is lost but which is preserved in a Slavic translation. See V. Grumel, *Les registres des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, vol. 1, fasc. 2 (Paris, 1936), 255–56 (no. 841). It is generally accepted that this typikon was based on the monastic life practiced in the Stoudios Monastery under its famous superior Theodore (d. 826), though this view was challenged by M. Lisicyn, *Pervonačal'nyj slavjano-russkij tipikon* (St. Petersburg, 1911), 167–71, 198, 208–9, 237–80, whose arguments are complicated and somewhat contradictory: they

had received this, our father Feodosij ordered it to be read out before the brethren, and henceforth he began to do everything in his monastery according to the rule of the holy Stoudite house, as his disciples maintain it, even to this day.

Whenever anyone who wished to be a monk came to him, he never refused anyone, rich or poor, but received them all eagerly, since he himself had been tested in this way, as has been said above, when he came from his town and wanted to become a monk, and he had gone round all the monasteries and they had not wanted to take him; for God had thus tested him. The venerable one remembered all these things and recalled the misery a man suffers if he is spurned when he wishes to be tonsured. For this reason he received with joy all who came to him. However, he did not tonsure a man immediately but would order him to go about in his own clothes, until he was accustomed to all aspects of the organization of the monastery. After that he would dress him in monastic clothing and test him further in all forms of service. Then he would tonsure him and dress him in a mantle. Only when he had been tried and tested in the life of purity did Feodosij consider him fit to receive the Great Angelic Habit, and then he placed on him the cowl.¹⁵⁴

Every year during Lent our father Feodosij departed to the cave where his honored body has been buried, and there shut himself up alone until Palm Sunday. On the Friday of that week at the hour of vespers he would come to the brethren, stand at the church doors, exhort them all,

show that while this typikon diverges from other texts of Stoudite provenance in details, it was certainly Stoudite in spirit. The Church Slavonic version of this typikon remains unpublished, although extracts are cited by Lisicyn, as well as by Golubinskij, *Istorija ruskoj cerkvi*, 1, 1:611–624. For a description of the MS in which the text is preserved, see A. Gorskij and K. I. Nevostruev, *Opisanie slavjanskix rukopisej Moskovskoj sinodal'noj biblioteki*, pts. 1 and 2 (Moscow, 1855, 1857), no. 330.

¹⁵⁴ Nestor appears to describe a graduated “novitiate” falling into four stages and culminating in the bestowal of the Great Habit, of which the cowl (*koukoulion*) was the symbol. He does not indicate the length of any of the stages, and it is interesting to note that Patriarch Alexios appears to have prescribed a novitiate of one year only. See Meester, *De monachico statu*, 359. But this might have been a “postulant” phase for a novice with no experience of any kind of monastic life rather than a period of formal training. Nestor’s description implies that the bestowal of the Great Habit was the culmination of a monk’s ascetic training, and Patriarch Alexios’s typikon provided a special form of service for this. See A. A. Dimitrievskij, *Opisanie liturgiĉeskix rukopisej xranjaščixsja v bibliotekax Pravoslavnogo Vostoka*, pt. 1, *Typika* (Kiev 1895), 228. However from Polikarp’s account of Pimin the Sufferer (below, Discourse 34, p. 200; Discourse 35, pp. 204–5), it seems that by the late eleventh century the Great Habit was conferred in the Caves Monastery only when death was imminent.

and comfort them in their fasting and asceticism, saying that he was unworthy because in a single week he could not equal their labors.

The holy one's victory over unclean spirits

In the cave he experienced much misery and visions from evil spirits, even receiving wounds from them, just as it is written about the holy great Antony.¹⁵⁵ But when he ventured to show himself to this man, he gave him invisible strength from heaven to vanquish them. For who will not marvel at this blessed man, who remained alone in such a dark cave and did not fear the multitude of unseen hosts of demons, but stood firm, like a strong and valiant man, praying to God and calling on our Lord Jesus Christ to help him? Thus he conquered them through Christ's power, so that henceforth they dared not come near him, though they still caused him visions from afar. For when he sat after the evening office he never lay down. If he wanted to sleep, he sat on a bench, and after a short nap would get up again, continue his nocturnal singing, and prostrate himself on his knees. When he sat down, as we said, there was a clattering sound made by the multitude of demons in the cave, as though some of them were riding on wagons and others were beating drums and yet others accompanying them on pipes, and they were shouting, so that the cave rocked from the din of the multitude of evil spirits.¹⁵⁶ When our father Feodosij heard all this, his spirit was not afraid, nor did he feel any terror in his heart. But fortifying himself with the sign of the cross, he got up and began to sing the Psalter, and straightway the great noise died away. Then he sat down once more, after saying a prayer, and again the voices of countless demons sounded again, as they had before. So the venerable one again got up and began to sing that Psalter, and the sound ceased again. Thus the evil spirits behaved towards him for many days and nights, not allowing him to sleep even for a short time, until he conquered them through Christ's grace and received power over them from God, so that henceforth they dared not approach the place where the blessed one was praying.

It also happened that damage was done by evil spirits in the room where the brethren made bread sometimes they scattered the flour, sometimes they upset the kvass set up to make the bread, and did much damage in other ways. Then the senior cook told the blessed Feodosij about

¹⁵⁵ See the Life of St. Antony, PG 26:85; *The Life of St. Antony by Saint Athanasius*, trans. R. T. Meyer, Ancient Christian Writers, 10 (New York, 1950), 27–29.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Meyer, *Life of St. Anthony*, 28.

the damage of the evil spirits.¹⁵⁷ And he, trusting that he had received power over them from God, got up in the evening and went to that building, shut the doors behind him and stayed there in prayer until matins, so that from that hour no demons appeared in that place, nor did they do any damage of any kind, on account of the venerable one's prohibition and prayer.

How the holy one watched over and admonished his disciples

Now the great Feodosij had the following custom: every night he would go round all the monks' cells, as he wanted to find how each was conducting his life and being diligent towards God. When he heard someone praying, he stood up and glorified God on his account, but when he heard someone chatting, if two or three had gathered together after vespers, he knocked on the door with his hand, and after thus signifying his visit he would go away. The next morning he would summon them, but he would not accuse them directly, but would admonish them indirectly through parables, saying that he wished to find out their diligence towards God. If a brother was gentle in his heart and ardent in his love for God, he would quickly realize his fault, prostrate himself, and beg for forgiveness. But if a brother's heart was clouded by demonic darkness, he would sigh, thinking that Feodosij was talking about someone else, and would make himself out to be innocent until the blessed one accused him and dismissed him, after fortifying him with a penance.

Thus he taught them all to pray diligently to God, and not to chatter after vespers nor go from cell to cell, but to pray to God in their own cells, each according to his ability, and to work daily with their hands, having the Psalter on their lips. He spoke to them as follows, "I beg you, brothers, that we should labor in prayer and fasting and be concerned about the salvation of our souls. Let us turn away from our sins and deceitful ways—adultery, theft, slander, idle chatter, strife, drunkenness, gluttony, and hatred of brethren. Let us shun these things, brothers, and abominate them, so that thereby we do not defile our souls. But let us travel along the Lord's road leading us to paradise, and let us seek God with tears and sobs, with fasting and vigils, and in humility and obedience, so that we may receive mercy from Him. Let us also hate this world still more, always bearing in mind the word of the Lord: 'If any

¹⁵⁷ The term "senior cook" (старѣи пекущимъ) suggests organized work in the kitchen, in which all monks had to take their turn. Cf. Bishop Simon's description of the three years spent by Svjatoša working in the kitchen (below, Discourse 20, p. 131).

man will not forsake father, and mother, and wife, and children, and such for my sake and that of the Gospel, he is not worthy of me;'¹⁵⁸ and also: 'He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.'¹⁵⁹ So, brothers, as we too have rejected the world and renounced those living in it, let us hate every kind of unrighteousness and do nothing that belongs to this world, and let us not return to our former sins like a dog to its vomit. 'For no man,' said the Lord, 'having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven.'¹⁶⁰ How shall we escape eternal torment if we complete the span of this life in idleness and without repentance? For us, brothers, who are called monks, it is fitting to repent our sins daily, for repentance is the key to the kingdom of heaven. It is not fitting for anyone to live without it; repentance is the way leading to paradise. Let us keep firmly to this way, brothers; let us keep our footsteps fixed on it. The wily serpent does not approach this road. The stages of the journey are now beset with afflictions, but in the end they will be full of joy. So, brothers, let us move forward towards that day, so that we may receive these blessings. Let us shun all those who wish to dwell in unrighteousness and not live in repentance.'¹⁶¹ Thus did the holy teacher speak and instruct the brethren. They received his words like earth thirsting for water and brought to God the fruits of their labors—some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. Though on earth they appeared as men, yet in their lives they were like angels, and the monastery was like heaven, in which our father Feodosij shone forth in his good deeds more brightly than the sun, as I have told you.

How the holy one was glorified, and a divine light shone forth

This is what appeared to Sofronij, the superior of the Monastery of the holy Archangel Michael. As he was heading for his monastery one night—it was a dark night—just above the monastery of the blessed Feodosij he saw a light. He marveled and praised God, saying, "How great is Thy goodness, O Lord, that Thou has shown forth such a lamp in this holy place—this holy man, who thus shines forth and illuminates his

¹⁵⁸ Matt. 10:37; Luke 14:26.

¹⁵⁹ Matt. 10:39; Luke 17:33.

¹⁶⁰ Luke 9:62.

¹⁶¹ In using sermons to train monks in the ascetical life, Feodosij was following the example of Theodore the Stoudite. See Dobroklonskij, *Prep. Feodor*, 526–34. On Feodosij's sermons, see Eremin, "Literaturnoe nasledie Feodosija Pečerskogo," 159–84.

monastery.” Many others saw the same thing and often related what they had seen.

When the princes and the boyars heard about the monks’ virtuous life, they would come to the great Feodosij, confess their sins to him, and depart after receiving much profit.¹⁶² They would also come again and bring him something from their possessions to comfort the brethren and help towards building the monastery. Some of them also gave villages for the needs of the church and the brethren.

The Christ-loving prince Izjaslav, who was then occupying his father’s throne, especially loved the blessed one. He often summoned Feodosij to his house, and many times went himself to see him; he would drink his fill of spiritual words and then depart. Henceforth God magnified that place and multiplied the blessed ones within it through the prayers of His servant.

Our father Feodosij had instructed the porter that he was not to open the gates to anybody after dinner time, and that no one was to enter the monastery until vespers, since the brethren rested in the middle of the day from the night prayers and the morning singing.

Prince Izjaslav’s visit

One day at noon the Christ-loving prince Izjaslav came, as was his custom, with only a few servants; for when he wished to go to the blessed one, he dismissed all his boyars to their own homes and came to him with only five or six servants.¹⁶³ He came, as I have said, and dismounted from his horse, since he never entered the monastery’s courtyard on horseback, and went up to the gates and told the porter to open them, as he wished to come in. The porter said to him, “Our great father has given orders that we are not to open the gates to anyone until it is time for vespers.” Then the Christ-loving prince told him, so that he would know who it was, “It is I, open the gates for me alone.” But the porter, not knowing that it was the prince, answered, “I told you, the superior ordered me that even if the prince should come, the gates are not to be opened. But if you will, be patient for a little while, until vespers.” He answered, “I am the prince. Won’t you open the gates for me?” The

¹⁶² Feodosij’s role as a spiritual father and counselor to members of the Kievan nobility must have contributed considerably to the spiritual and cultural influence of the monastery outside its walls.

¹⁶³ The words “five or six servants” occur only in the UspSb and Arsenian MSS: Abramovyč, *Pateryk*, 43, n. 8.

porter looked up and recognized the prince. He was filled with fear¹⁶⁴ but did not open the gates; he ran and told the blessed one. Meanwhile, the prince stood patiently before the gates, in this respect imitating St. Peter, the chief apostle. For when he was led out of prison by an angel and came to the house where the disciples were and knocked at the door, the maidservant got up and saw Peter standing there; for gladness she did not open the gate, but ran and told the disciples about his arrival.¹⁶⁵ Similarly this man from fright did not open the gates, but quickly ran and announced the arrival of the Christ-loving prince to the blessed one.

Then the blessed one came out, saw the prince, and prostrated himself before him. After this the Christ-loving prince Izjaslav said, "Father, what is your order about which this monk spoke, that even if the prince should come he is not to be admitted?" The blessed one answered, "The order, my good master, is so that the brethren should not depart from the monastery in the middle of the day, but should then rest on account of the service at night. Your zeal for our holy Lady, the Theotokos, is divinely inspired and full of blessing and profitable for your soul, and we rejoice at your arrival." They both went into the church, the blessed one said a prayer, and they sat down. And so the Christ-loving prince drank his fill of the honeyed words that came from our venerable father Feodosij and, receiving great profit from them, departed for his house, praising God. From that day he began to love Feodosij much more and considered him as one of the first holy fathers. He was very obedient to him and did everything which our great and venerable father Feodosij told him to do.

¹⁶⁴ I have followed the UspSb reading here: Abramovyč, *Pateryk*, 43, n. 22.

¹⁶⁵ See Acts 12:12–14.

However, let us now end our narrative here, since we have composed a history about Feodosij derived from many different kinds of information. For as much as I heard earlier by inquiring from fathers older than myself who were there in his time—this I, the sinful Nestor, the least of all the monks in the monastery of our venerable father Feodosij, have written down. I myself was received into the monastery by the venerable superior Stefan and was tonsured and invested with the monastic habit by him, and then ordained deacon by him, though I was not worthy of this, since I am crude and ignorant, and, moreover, I have been filled with a multitude of sins from my youth. Nevertheless, I have accomplished this task through God's will and out of love toward Feodosij.

Since, brethren, I often heard about the good and pure life of our venerable and God-fearing father Feodosij, I was filled with joy and gave thanks that he had lived and labored thus in most recent times. Then I saw that nobody had written it down, and my spirit was overcome with sadness and sorrow. So, constrained by my love for our great and holy father Feodosij, I tried in the crudeness of my heart to write down a few of the many things I had heard about him, to the glory and honor of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, now and forever, Amen.

Discourse 20. The venerable Svjatoša, prince of Černihiv.

The blessed and pious prince Svjatoša, who was David's son and Svjatoslav's grandson⁴⁰⁷ and whose name was Nikola,⁴⁰⁸ decided that the delusions of this vain world and everything in it flow on and pass away, whereas the blessings of the world to come are eternal and without limits and the heavenly kingdom, which God has prepared for those who love Him, is everlasting. So he abandoned his princely authority—his honor and glory and power—and considering these things to have no value, he came to the Caves Monastery and became a monk on February 17, 1106.⁴⁰⁹ All the monks there know about his virtuous life and his obedience. He spent three years in the kitchen working for the brethren, and with his own hands he chopped the wood needed to prepare the cooked pulses and often carried wood from the river bank on his own shoulders; his brothers Izjaslav and Volodimer⁴¹⁰ had difficulty in stopping him from doing such work. Since his obedience was sincere, he begged that he might work in the kitchen for the brethren yet another year. Thus he was tested and made perfect in every respect.⁴¹¹ After this he was placed at the monastery's gate, where he remained for three years without going anywhere, except to church. Then he was ordered to serve in the refectory. And so, by the wish of the superior and all the brethren he was ordered to have a cell for himself,⁴¹² which he built (to this day it is known as "Svjatoša's"), and also a garden, which he planted with his own hands. They say about him that throughout all the years of his monastic life no one ever saw him idle; his hands were always busy with some handiwork, and what he made with his hands sufficed for his own

⁴⁰⁷ Svjatoslav Jaroslavič was prince in Černihiv (ca. 1054–1073) and Kiev (1073–1076). His son David ruled briefly in Smolensk (1095–1096) and thereafter in Černihiv until his death in 1123.

⁴⁰⁸ Nikola was either his baptismal or monastic name, but Rus' sources usually refer to him as Svjatoša, a diminutive of the secular name Svjatoslav.

⁴⁰⁹ See PVL 1106, PRSL 1:281, 2:258. In 1097 Svjatoša had taken part in the campaign against David Igorevič, who had captured and blinded his cousin Vasil'ko (PSRL 1:272, 2:247).

⁴¹⁰ Izjaslav Davidovič ultimately ruled in Kiev three times (1155, 1157–58, 1161). Volodimer Davidovič died in 1154 as prince of Černihiv.

⁴¹¹ This seems to correspond to the "novitiate" described in Nestor's Life of Feodosij. See Discourse 8, p. 45.

⁴¹² This was presumably a reward for his long period of obedience and service, as well as a recognition of his spiritual maturity. Premature retirement to solitude, without the superior's permission, was discouraged; the potentially dangerous consequences are graphically illustrated in Discourses 25 and 36.

clothing. He had on his lips the Jesus Prayer continually: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me."⁴¹³ He had never tasted any food except what was provided by the monastery, and although he had considerable possessions, he gave everything away to provide for the needs of strangers and beggars and for maintaining the church buildings. Many of his books are still there.

While he was still ruling, the blessed prince Svjatoša had a highly skilled physician, a Syrian by birth named Peter, who came with him to the monastery.⁴¹⁴ When Peter saw Svjatoša's voluntary poverty and the way he worked in the kitchen and sat at the gate, he left him and went to live in Kiev, where he treated many people. He often came to the blessed one, and when he saw him in a very bad state and fasting immoderately, he admonished him, "Prince, you should consider your health, lest you destroy your body with so much labor and abstinence, because there are times when you are very weak and lack the strength to bear the yoke laid upon you, which you have chosen for God's sake. For God does not wish a man to fast and labor beyond his strength, but desires only a pure and contrite heart. You are not accustomed to these privations which you are inflicting on yourself by working like a slave who has no choice. Your pious brothers Izjaslav and Volodimer have been severely reproached on account of your poverty, and because you have come from such honor and glory to a state of extreme deprivation and are killing your body and destroying your health with unsuitable food. I am astonished at the moisture in your stomach, which used to be weighed down with tasty food and yet now takes raw vegetables and dry bread without complaint. Take care that your ill health does not some day spread to every part of you and that, if your strength fails, you soon lose your life. I shall not be able to help you, and you will leave your brothers weeping and inconsolable. Even the boyars who once served you and thought that they would become great and famous because of you are now deprived of your affection; they built large houses and reside in

⁴¹³ The passage about the Jesus Prayer does not occur in the oldest Arsenian redaction: Abramovyč, *Pateryk*, 114, n. 10. These words, therefore, cannot be taken as evidence that Svjatoša used the Jesus Prayer, but they are important as an indication of its use in the mid-fifteenth century, when the Second Cassian redaction of the *Paterik* was compiled.

⁴¹⁴ Syria was a well-established center of medical knowledge at this time. See S. H. Nasr, *Islamic Science. An Illustrated Study* (Westerham, Kent, 1976), 179–81, and also L. A. Oganess'an, *Istorija mediciny v Armenii*, vol. 5, pt. 2 (Erevan, 1946), 229–32, whose list of physicians practicing medicine in Armenia in the eleventh and twelfth centuries includes some Syrians.

them in a state of great distress. You have nowhere to lay your head, but you sit on this rubbish heap, and people think you have gone out of your mind. What prince has ever done this? Did your blessed father David or your grandfather Svjatoslav? Or who among the boyars has ever done this or wished to follow this path, apart from Varlaam who was formerly superior here? If you disobey me, you will receive judgment before judgment is due!” Peter often said such things to him, sometimes while sitting with him in the kitchen and sometimes by the gate, having been instructed to do this by Svjatoša’s brothers.

The blessed one replied, “I have often reflected on this subject, brother Peter, and I have decided not to spare my flesh, so as not to wage war against myself once more, and so that my body, crushed by the weight of toil, may find peace. For it is said, brother Peter, ‘strength is made perfect in weakness.’⁴¹⁵ The sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the future glory that will be revealed in us. I thank the Lord that He has freed me from worldly work and made me a servant of His servants—these blessed monks. As for my two brothers, let them look to themselves; everybody is responsible for his own time, and my princely authority is sufficient for them. I have left all these things for Christ’s sake—wife, children, home, power, kinsmen, friends, servants, and estates, and because of this I hope to inherit eternal life; indeed, to gain this I made myself a beggar for God’s sake. Whenever you treat patients, do you not order them to avoid food? For me, to die for Christ is gain; and as for sitting on this rubbish heap, I am sharing the throne with Job.⁴¹⁶ Even if no prince has done this before me, let me be the one to go ahead and show them the way. Whoever would attempt to do likewise, let him follow this way and me. In the future look to yourself and to those who have instructed you.”

When the blessed one fell ill, the physician would see him and prepare herbal remedies for every possible disease, whether it was a burning fever or cholera, but before he could arrive the prince would recover without taking any medicine. This often happened. Once Peter himself fell ill and Svjatoša sent him a message, saying, “If you don’t drink any more medicinal herbs, you will soon be well, but if you disobey me, you will suffer a great deal.” But Peter, wishing to display his skill and get rid of his disease, drank the herbal mixture and almost died. Through the holy one’s prayers, he recovered. Then he fell ill again, and the holy one sent him the message, “You will recover within three days,

⁴¹⁵ 2 Cor. 12:9.

⁴¹⁶ See Job 2:8.

provided you do not take any medicine.” The Syrian obeyed him, and within three days he was well, as the blessed one had said.

Then the blessed one summoned him and said to him, “Be tonsured, for in three months I will depart from this world.” He meant that he would die, but the Syrian did not understand what was going to happen to him. Peter fell at his feet and said to him with tears, “Woe is me, my lord, my benefactor, my very life! Who will look after me in a foreign land? Who will feed the many children of those in need? Who will protect the wronged and have mercy on the poor? Did I not tell you, prince, that you would leave your brothers weeping and inconsolable? Did I not tell you that I would be healed through God’s word and power, and by your prayers? Where are you going now, good shepherd? Tell me, your servant, about this deadly wound, so that if I cannot heal it, my head may be given for your head, and my soul for your soul. Do not depart silently from me, but tell me, my lord, where this knowledge comes from, so that I may give my life for you. If the Lord has informed you, entreat him that I may die for you. If you leave me, where shall I sit and lament my loss—on this footstool or at this gate, where you usually are? What shall I inherit from your property? You yourself are naked, but when you depart this life you will be buried in these patched garments. Give me your prayer, as in olden times Elijah gave Elisha his cloak,⁴¹⁷ so that I might part the depths⁴¹⁸ and pass over into the realms of paradise, the marvelous abode of the house of God. Wild beasts know how to herd together after sunset and lie down in their dens: a bird finds a shelter, and the turtledove a nest for its young. But you have been here six years⁴¹⁹ in the monastery, and I have not found out where your place is.”

The blessed one said to him, “It is good to put one’s trust in the Lord and not to rely on man. The Lord knows how to feed all His creatures and can protect and save the unfortunate. As for my two brothers, let them not weep for me, but for themselves and their children. I have no need of medicine during my life, for a dead man cannot see life, nor can physicians raise from the dead.” They went out together to the cave, and Svjatoša dug a grave for himself and said to the Syrian, “Which of us desires this grave more?” The Syrian said, “You know if

⁴¹⁷ See 4 Kings 2:13–14.

⁴¹⁸ Elisha struck the water of the Jordan with Elijah’s cloak; the waters then parted and he was able to pass over.

⁴¹⁹ The Arsenian text says five years: Abramovyč, *Pateryk*, 116, n. 41.

anyone wants it, but please stay alive and bury me here.” The blessed one said, “It shall be as you wish.”

So Peter was tonsured and wept without ceasing day and night for three months. The blessed one comforted him, saying, “Brother Peter, do you want me to take you with me?” He said with weeping, “I want you to let me go first, so that I may die for you, and you pray for me.” The blessed one said to him, “Have courage and prepare yourself. You will depart this life in three days.” Then Peter partook of the sacred, life-giving, and deathless mysteries, lay down on his bed, prepared himself for death, stretched out his legs, and commended his spirit into the hands of the Lord.

The blessed prince Svjatoša remained alive for a further thirty years, never leaving the monastery until he passed on to eternal life. On the day of his passing practically the whole town gathered together. When his brother heard about this, he sent to the superior and asked if he might have, as a token of blessing, the cross which his brother used to wear on his paramandyas,⁴²⁰ also his pillow, and the prayer stool on which he used to prostrate himself. The superior gave him these things, saying, “Be it unto you according to your faith.” The prince accepted these things and held them in honor and gave the superior three *grivna* of gold, so that he did not take these tokens of his brother without payment.

Once this same Izjaslav fell ill and everybody despaired of his recovery, since they saw that he was at the point of death; his wife, children, and all his boyars were sitting at his bedside. He raised himself, requested water from the well of the Caves Monastery, and then fell silent. They sent for some water and wiped the tomb of Feodosij, and the superior gave them a hair shirt from the prince’s brother Svjatoša to put on him. Before the man bringing these things entered [the room], the prince called out, “Go quickly outside the town to meet the venerable Feodosij and Nikola!” When the messenger entered with the water and the hair shirt the prince exclaimed, “Nikola! Nikola! Svjatoša!” They gave him some water to drink and dressed him in the hair shirt, and he recovered immediately. They all praised God and His servants. Whenever the prince fell ill, he would put on this hair shirt, and would recover.

Izjaslav wanted to march against his brother, but was restrained by the bishops then in office. Whenever he went on a campaign, he wore the hair shirt, and so remained unhurt. But once he had committed a sin

⁴²⁰ On the *парамандии* (*παραμανδύας*), see N. F. Robinson, *Monasticism in the Orthodox Churches* (London, 1916), 49–50.

and did not dare to put it on, and so he was killed in battle;⁴²¹ he had previously given instructions that he was to be buried in it.

Many virtuous deeds performed by this man are related, and there are monks who know about the blessed prince Svjatoša to this day.

To Polikarp

Again I address a sermon to you. Have you ever done anything like this? Have you abandoned great riches? You never had any! Have you renounced your glory? You did not attain to this [yourself]; you came to glory and all good things from poverty.⁴²² Consider this prince! No other prince in Rus' has done what he did, for none of them has entered monastic life voluntarily; this man was indeed superior to all Rus' princes. How can the insults you have suffered be compared to his hair shirt? You were called to nakedness, and you deck yourself with fine clothes! You will be stripped bare because of them, and you will be condemned for failing to wear the bridal robe of humility. What does the blessed John write in the *Ladder*? "A Jew longs for food, so that he might celebrate according to the Law."⁴²³ You are like them, concerned as you are with food and drink, and thereby making yourself renowned. Listen to the blessed Evagrius: "A monk, if he sins, has no festival on earth."⁴²⁴ Do not feed your body, lest it become your adversary, and do not go to extremes in seeking high office; when you fail to achieve this, you bring reproach upon yourself. Take the holy fathers as your model, so that you may not be deprived of divine glory. If you cannot succeed in being crowned with the perfect, at least try to win praise with those who have pleased [God]. Yesterday you entered the monastic life, and

⁴²¹ See *Hyp.* 1162, PSRL 2:518. Izjaslav Davidovič, Svjatoša's brother, was killed in an interprincely quarrel on March 6, 1162, and buried in the Church of SS. Boris and Glėb in Ćernihiv.

⁴²² A clear indication of Polikarp's humble origins, which are hinted at in Discourse 14.

⁴²³ Simon appears to be referring here to a passage in Step 14 of the *Ladder* (on Gluttony): "The Jew celebrates on Sabbaths and feast days." See *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 165.

⁴²⁴ Abramovyč, *Issledovanie*, IORJAS 7, no. 3 (1902):73, n. 99, refers to a sermon entitled *O umilenii duši* (On the Emotion of the Soul) but admits that he has been unable to find the Greek original. It does not correspond to any of the Evagrius writings in PG 40, nor is it certain that the author actually was Evagrius of Pontus. The full Church Slavonic text of the sermon is found in the *Prolog* under October 27, and in the Great Menologion compiled in the sixteenth century by Metropolitan Makarij. See *Pamjatniki slavjano-russkoj pis'mennosti* (St. Petersburg, 1880), 1963–66.

already you are making your vows.⁴²⁵ Before you have grown accustomed to the monastery you want to be a bishop and show yourself as a firm legislator; before becoming submissive yourself you want to subdue everybody else. You want to be wise in lofty matters, giving orders with the proud and contradicting others. I have heard these things from your own lips—how you think of earthly things and not those of heaven, of the things of the body rather than of the spirit, of bodily passions and not of self-control, of riches and not of poverty. You have abandoned the light and given yourself over to darkness; you have rejected life and prepared for yourself eternal torment. Having armed yourself against the enemy, you have turned those weapons against your own heart. Rise up, brother, and consider the danger to your life! Do not let your mind and your thoughts stray from that holy place!

And now, brother, I shall tell you about the monk Erazm—a story which deserves your close attention.

⁴²⁵ Such vows were normally made at the end of a lengthy trial period. See Discourse 8, p. 45, n. 154.

*Discourse 31. The monk Proxor, who by his prayers
made bread from pigweed and salt from ashes.*

As it pleases God, Who loves mankind, to take thought for the human race, His creatures, at all times and in all seasons, by giving us useful experiences in expectation of our repentance, He sends down upon us sometimes famines, sometimes wars to upset existing rulers. By this means our Lord restores human negligence to the path of virtue and to the remembrance of unseemly acts; for those who commit evil and unseemly deeds will be handed over to wicked and heartless rulers because of our sins. But the rulers will not escape judgment either, since he who does not show mercy will be judged without mercy. So it was when Svjatopolk was prince in Kiev.⁵⁴² Svjatopolk committed many acts of violence against people: he destroyed the houses of powerful individuals down to the foundations for no reason, and he took away many people's goods. Because of this the Lord allowed the pagans to have dominion over him, and there were many attacks by the Cumans. In

⁵⁴² Svjatopolk II Izjaslavič, prince of Kiev from 1093 to 1113.

addition, there was in those days civil strife, severe famine, and acute shortages of everything in the land of Rus'.⁵⁴³

Now at that time a certain man came from Smolensk to the superior Ioann,⁵⁴⁴ as he wished to become a monk; he was tonsured and given the name of Proxor. After he became a monk he devoted himself to a life of obedience and abstinence without limit, even depriving himself of bread. He used to gather pigweed, grind it with his own hands, and make himself bread; this was his food. He used to prepare this for a year, and in the next year prepare the same thing, and so was content to do without bread all his life. The Lord saw his endurance and great self-denial and added a sweet taste to the bitter flavor, so that after his sorrow he experienced joy, as it is said, "Weeping shall tarry for the evening, but joy shall be in the morning."⁵⁴⁵ Because of this he was called "Lobednik,"⁵⁴⁶ since he never tasted bread, except sacramental wafers, nor any kind of vegetables, nor any drink, but only water and pigweed, as was said above. He was never downcast, but always served the Lord with gladness. And he was never afraid when an invasion came, since he lived like one of the birds. He did not acquire estates or barns in which he gathered his goods.⁵⁴⁷ He did not say like the rich man, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, and be merry."⁵⁴⁸ For he had nothing but pigweed, and he prepared this only for the coming year. He used to say to himself, "This night the angels shall require thy soul of thee: then whose shall the pigweed be, which thou hast provided?"⁵⁴⁹ This man fulfilled in deed the word of the Lord: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them."⁵⁵⁰ Imitating them, the venerable Proxor went lightheartedly on his way along the path where there was pigweed. From there he put it on his shoulders, as though on wings, brought it to the monastery and prepared it for his food. His nourishment required neither plowed nor sown land.

⁵⁴³ See PVL 1093–1096, PSRL 1:218–234; 2:209–224, which gave detailed accounts of the Cuman raids.

⁵⁴⁴ Ioann held office from 1088 to 1108.

⁵⁴⁵ Ps. 29:5.

⁵⁴⁶ A name derived from *лобеда*, the Rus' word for pigweed.

⁵⁴⁷ See Ἄνδρῶν ἀγίων βίβλος, 305, lns. 4–7, for a similar description of Abba Serapion.

⁵⁴⁸ Luke 12:19.

⁵⁴⁹ Based on Luke 12:20.

⁵⁵⁰ Matt. 6:26.

When a great famine came and death from hunger descended on all the people, the blessed one kept to his task of gathering pigweed. A certain man saw him doing this and began to gather it too for himself and his household, so that they would be sustained during the famine. The pigweed on which the blessed one fed even increased at this time, and he gave himself extra work in those days, collecting plants, as I have said before, grinding them with his own hands, making bread, and distributing it to those who had nothing and had grown weak from hunger. Many people came to him during the famine, and he distributed bread to them all, and to all of them it appeared sweet, as though it contained honey. So no one wanted bread unless they received food made from a wild plant by the hands of this blessed man. To whomever he gave it with a blessing, it would be a sweet, pure, and light-colored loaf of bread; but if anyone took it secretly the bread turned out to be like wormwood.

One of the brethren secretly stole some of the bread and began to eat it without Proxor's permission, but he could not eat it because in his hands it was like wormwood and seemed to be extremely bitter. This happened several times. This brother felt so ashamed that he could not tell the blessed one about his transgression. Starving and unable to endure this natural need and seeing death before his eyes, he came to the superior Ioann, told him what had happened, and asked forgiveness for his sin. The superior could not believe what he had said, and ordered another brother to do the same thing, that is, to take some bread secretly, so that they could see whether this was really true. And when this loaf was brought it was found to be just like the brother who had stolen the loaf had said; indeed no one could eat it because of its bitterness. While the loaf was still in his hands, the superior sent and requested that they obtain a loaf from Proxor's hands and, as they were going out, to steal another loaf. When these loaves were brought back, the stolen one changed in their presence and became bitter, like dust, just like the first one, but the one which they had received from Proxor's hands was like honey and light in color. As a result of this miracle, Proxor's fame spread everywhere; he gave food to a large number of hungry people, and was of service to many.

When Svjatopolk, together with Volodar' and Vasil'ko,⁵⁵¹ whom Svjatopolk had blinded at the instigation of David Igorevič, began his

⁵⁵¹ Volodar' and Vasil'ko were great-grandsons of Jaroslav the Wise. Vasil'ko was prince of Terebovlja in western Rus', while his brother Volodar' ruled Peremyśl' (Przemysł) on the San in the same area. These territories were guaranteed by the inter-princely agreement concluded at Ljubeč in 1097. See PVL 1097, PSRL 1:257, 2:231.

campaign against David because of the blinding of Vasil'ko,⁵⁵² merchants were not allowed to come from Halyč,⁵⁵³ nor any ships from Peremyšl', and there was no salt throughout the land of Rus'. There was much confusion, disorder, and lawless plundering, just as the prophet said, "[Will not all the workers of iniquity know,] who eat up my people as they would eat bread? They have not called upon the Lord."⁵⁵⁴ It was obvious then that the people were in great distress, weakened by hunger and war, and they had neither wheat nor salt with which to get through the time of scarcity.

Then the blessed Proxor, who had his own cell, gathered a large quantity of ashes from all the cells without anyone's knowledge and distributed them to people who came to him; to all it became pure salt through his prayers. However much he distributed, it increased in proportion. He would not take anything [for it] but gave it to everybody free, as much as each person wanted. Not only was it sufficient for the monastery, but laymen came to him and would take an abundant supply to satisfy the needs of their homes. It was a sight: the marketplace was empty, but the monastery was full of people coming to get salt! This roused the envy of those who sold salt, since they were unable to get what they wanted. They had thought that they would become very wealthy from the sale of salt in those days, and they were very upset about it. For previously they had been selling salt at a high price, two measures for a *kuna*, but now they were selling it at ten measures for a *kuna*, but no one would take it. So all the salt merchants rose up, went to Svjatopolk, and denounced the monk, saying, "The monk Proxor in the Caves Monastery has robbed us of much wealth. He gives salt to everyone who comes to him. No one can stop him, and we are being reduced to poverty." The prince, who wanted to please them, thought of two things to himself: he could put a stop to the unrest among them and at the same time gain wealth for himself. With this plan in mind, after consulting with his advisers, he announced a very high price for salt; his idea was that he would take it from the monk and sell it. Then he promised

⁵⁵² Vasil'ko was kidnapped and blinded at the urging of David Igorevič of Volodymyr, who wanted to add Terebovlja to his own larger area. This incident, which is related in PVL 1097, PSRL 1:260–73, 2:234–48, was a breach of the Ljubeč agreement. The blinding of political opponents was common in the Byzantine Empire and occasionally practiced in contemporary Poland, but not in Rus'. Finally Svjatopolk II, as prince of Kiev, was persuaded to march against David Igorevič to punish him for his crime, even though Svjatopolk himself was partly culpable.

⁵⁵³ Halyč, an important source of salt, was in the territory of David Igorevič.

⁵⁵⁴ Ps. 13:4.

the conspirators,⁵⁵⁵ saying, "I will rob the monk for your sake," but he kept to himself his plan for gaining wealth. He wanted to afford them some small satisfaction by this means, though really he was doing them considerable harm, for enmity does not know how to perform a useful action.⁵⁵⁶

The prince then sent [some men] to remove all the monk's salt. When the salt was brought, the prince came, as he wanted to see it, and with him came the conspirators who had denounced the blessed one, and they all saw that what lay in front of their eyes was ashes. They marvelled greatly and asked each other what this could be; they could not understand it. As Svjatopolk wanted to find out what was at the bottom of it all, he ordered [the ashes] to be kept for three days, so that they could find out the truth; he told someone to taste them, and in his mouth they proved to be ashes. Many people came, as usual, wanting to get salt from the blessed one. When they found that the elder had been robbed, they returned empty-handed, cursing the man who had done it. The blessed one said to them, "When the ashes are scattered [on the ground], go and take them." The prince kept them for three days and then ordered them to be thrown away at night. When the ashes were thrown away they were at once transformed into salt,⁵⁵⁷ and when the citizens learned about this they came and seized the salt. Because of this remarkable miracle the man who had committed the original act of violence was filled with terror: he could not conceal the affair because it happened in front of all the citizens. He began to make inquiries about this matter. Then they told the prince about another affair—how the blessed one had fed many people with pigweed, and in their mouths it had become bread with a sweet taste, but some people had taken a loaf without his blessing, and in their mouths it was like dust and as bitter as wormwood.

Hearing this, the prince was ashamed of what he had done, and he went to the superior Ioann in the monastery and repented before him. Previously he had been on bad terms with him, because the superior had

⁵⁵⁵ The word *крамолникомъ* indicates that Svjatopolk had entered into a plot with the salt merchants, and possibly with some members of his retinue, to rob Proxor, although, as subsequently becomes clear in this narrative, he intended to double-cross them.

⁵⁵⁶ I have followed the Arsenian reading here, which omits the word *предпочитати* included in the Cas. II text, where it distorts the structure of the sentence: Abramovyč, *Pateryk*, 153, n. 9.

⁵⁵⁷ There may be a factual foundation to Proxor's miraculous production of salt, since pigweed only grows in salty soil and absorbs the salt into its tissues. Hence Proxor could obtain salt by burning his customary food. See A. H. Krappe, "L'arroche biblique et le *Paterik*," *Revue des études slaves* 13 (1933):244–45.

accused him of having an insatiable desire for wealth and of committing acts of violence. So Svjatopolk had seized him and imprisoned him in Turov,⁵⁵⁸ [and he would have remained there] if Volodimer Monomax had not risen up against Svjatopolk. Svjatopolk feared that he might start an insurrection, so he quickly restored the superior to the Caves Monastery with due honor. Because of this miracle Svjatopolk began to feel a great love for the holy Theotokos and the holy fathers Antonij and Feodosij, and henceforth he greatly honored and esteemed the monk Proxor, knowing that he was indeed a servant of God. He gave his word to God that henceforward he would not commit any acts of violence against anybody. The prince further confirmed this promise to him, saying, "If by God's will I depart from this life before you, lay me in my grave with your own hands, so that your innocence may appear on me. If you pass away before me and go to the relentless Judge, then I shall carry you to the cave on my own shoulders, so that the Lord will thereby grant me forgiveness for the many sins I have committed against you." Having said this, he departed from him.

The blessed Proxor lived for many years in the fullness of faith, leading a pure and blameless life, well-pleasing to God. After this the holy one fell ill, and the prince was then on a campaign. Then the holy one sent him a message, saying, "The hour of my departure from this body has approached. If you wish, come and receive my forgiveness and carry out your promise, so that you may receive remission of your sins from God, and lay me in my grave with your own hands. I await your arrival. If you delay and I depart [from this world], the battle will not go so well for you as it will if you come to me." Hearing this, Svjatopolk dismissed his soldiers that very hour and hurried to the blessed one. The venerable one instructed the prince at length about compassion, the coming judgment, eternal life, and endless torments. He gave him his blessing, kissed all those with the prince, lifted up his hands, and gave up his soul. The prince took hold of the elder's body, carried him into the cave, and with his own hands laid him in his grave.

After the blessed one's burial he went to war and won many victories over the godless Hagarenes; he took all their land and led them [captive] to his own land.⁵⁵⁹ This victory in the land of Rus' was granted

⁵⁵⁸ Svjatopolk had moved from Novgorod to Turov in 1088, after the assassination of his brother Jaropolk Izjaslavič in 1086, to whom Vsevolod Jaroslavič of Kiev had assigned it in 1078.

⁵⁵⁹ For these victorious campaigns against the Cumans, see PVL 1103, PSRL 1:277-79, 2:230-31.

by God according to the prophecy of the venerable one. Henceforth, when Svjatopolk went on a campaign or hunting expedition, he would come to the monastery with a thank-offering and worship before [the icon of] the Theotokos and at the tomb of Feodosij. He would go out into the cave to the holy Antonij and the blessed Proxor, prostrate himself before all the venerable fathers, and go on his way. So his reign, watched over by God, was in good order. For he himself had witnessed and openly confessed the miracles and remarkable signs of the renowned Proxor and the other venerable ones. May we all obtain grace with them through Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit now and forever.

*Discourse 32. Venerable Marko the Cave-dweller,
whose orders the dead obeyed.*

We sinners emulate the holy men of old by means of the written word, which explains what they were seeking with great effort and labor in the deserts, on the hills, and in the bowels of the earth. In some cases the writers themselves saw what they recorded; in others they heard about the lives, miracles, and God-pleasing deeds of venerable men; in yet others they heard of the lives and miracles and activities of those who lived before them, as we find in the *Paterik* of the Caves Monastery, in which they collected material and spoke about them.⁵⁶⁰ As we read about them, we derive much pleasure from these spiritual anecdotes. I, unworthy as I am, have not attained understanding of the truth, and I have seen nothing of such men. But following what I have heard, that is, what I have been told by the venerable Bishop Simon, I have written these things down for your fatherhood.⁵⁶¹ Nor have I ever traveled round the holy places nor seen Jerusalem or the mountains of Sinai, which would have enabled me to add to my tale some of those things with which people with literary skill are wont to embellish their works. So let there be no glory for me, but only for this Caves Monastery and the holy monks who formerly lived there, and for their lives and miracles, which I recall with joy, since I, sinner that I am, desire the prayers of these holy

⁵⁶⁰ Polikarp apparently refers to some written source containing material about the early monks of the monastery. As he also refers on other occasions to “the chronicle” (the PVL) and the “Life of Antonij,” this source is presumably something different, though without further information it is impossible to identify it.

⁵⁶¹ КЪ ТВОЕМУ ОТЕЧЕСТВУ: The Greek ἡ πατρότης σου, was an honorific address for bishops and superiors. See Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1053.

fathers. From this point I shall make a start on my tale about the venerable Marko the Cave-dweller.

The holy Marko spent his life in the cave, and during his lifetime our holy father Feodosij was carried out of the cave into the great and holy church.⁵⁶² The venerable Marko dug many [burial] places in the cave with his own hands, carrying out the earth on his shoulders every day and night, laboring hard in God's work. He dug many graves for the brethren and took nothing for the service, but if anyone did give him something he would take it and distribute it to the poor.⁵⁶³

One day, as he was digging away as usual and working very hard, he felt a sudden weakness and left the place he was digging narrow and not of the usual width. It happened that one of the brethren fell ill and departed to God that day, and there was no other grave available except this cramped one. The dead man was brought into the cave and placed in the grave with some difficulty, because of its tight fit. The brethren grumbled at Marko, since they could not prepare the dead man for burial or anoint him with oil because the place was so narrow. The cave-dweller, prostrating himself before them, said, "Forgive me, fathers! I did not finish my job because I suddenly felt weak." They reproached him all the more and made insulting remarks. Marko said to the dead man, "Since this place is tight, brother, sprinkle yourself with holy water, and take the oil and pour it over yourself." The dead man stretched out his hand, raised himself up a little, took the oil, anointed himself with the sign of the cross on his breast and face, and returned the vessel. Then in front of them all he prepared himself for burial, lay down, and fell asleep. When they saw this miracle they were all seized by fear and trembling at what happened.

Another brother died after a long illness. One of his friends wiped him with a sponge and went into the cave, as he wanted to see the place where his beloved friend would be buried, and so he asked the blessed one. The venerable Marko replied, "Brother, go and tell the dead brother, 'Wait until the morning, so that I will be able to dig a place for you. Then you will depart in peace to the future life.'" The brother who had come said to him, "Father Marko, I have wiped his body with a sponge; he is dead. To whom are you telling me to speak?" Marko repeated, "You can see that his place is unfinished. I am telling you to

⁵⁶² Feodosij's relics were translated in 1091. See Discourse 9, pp. 89–93.

⁵⁶³ This indicates that, contrary to the Stoudite Rule and in spite of the efforts of Feodosij, by the late eleventh century the monks of the Caves Monastery did pay for and accept money for services.

go and say to the dead man, 'Brother, the sinful Marko says you are to stay [alive] for one more day, until he prepares a place for your burial and sends for you; in the morning you can depart to the Lord we desire.'"

The brother who had come [to the cave] obeyed the venerable one and returned to the monastery. He found all the brethren singing the customary hymn over the deceased brother. He stood at his side and said, "Marko tells you that no place is ready for you, brother, so wait until tomorrow morning." They were all amazed at his words. When the brother had spoken them before everybody, the dead brother suddenly opened his eyes, and his soul returned to his body. He remained alive throughout the day and entire night with his eyes open, not uttering a word to anyone. The next morning the brother who had previously gone [to Marko] went to the cave to find out whether the place was ready. The blessed one said to him, "Go and tell the dead man, 'Marko says that you are to leave this transitory life and come to the life eternal, since a place has been prepared for your body. Give up your spirit to God. Your body will be buried here in the cave with the holy fathers.'" The brother went and told all this to the monk who had come back to life, and he at once closed his eyes and gave up his soul in front of everyone who had come to visit him. Then he was buried with due honor in the aforementioned place in the cave. They all marveled at this miracle, that a dead man had returned to life at the word of the blessed Marko, and then died again at his command.

There were two brothers in this great Caves Monastery who had been united by sincere love from their youth, and who had one mind and one will towards God. They begged the blessed Marko to dig one grave for the two of them, so that they might both⁵⁶⁴ be buried there when the Lord commanded it. A long time after this Feofil, the senior, went away somewhere on business. The younger one fell ill and departed to the future life, and was buried in the place that had been prepared. Some days later Feofil came back and learned about his brother. He was deeply grieved and, taking some people with him, he went to the cave, wishing to see the dead man and the location and place where he was buried. Seeing that he had been laid in the higher place,⁵⁶⁵ he was displeased and complained at length to Marko, saying, "Why have you put him [there]? I am senior to him, but you have put him in my place."

⁵⁶⁴ I follow the Arsenian reading оба (both), in preference to the Cas. II аѣіе: Abramovyč, *Pateryk*, 157, n. 65.

⁵⁶⁵ This indicates that Marko had dug the grave in the form of two bunks.

The cave-dweller, who was a humble man, prostrated himself and said, "Forgive me, brother, I have sinned against you." Having said this, he said to the dead man, "Get up, brother, and give your place to the brother who has not yet died. You lie in the lower place." Suddenly, at the venerable one's words, the dead man got up and lay down in the lower place before everyone present. It was very obvious that this was a terrible and awe-inspiring miracle. Then the brother who had complained and grumbled at the blessed one fell at Marko's feet and on account of his brother's burial said to him, "Father Marko, I have sinned in moving my brother from his place. I beg you, tell him to lie in his own place again." The blessed one said to him, "The Lord has removed the enmity between us. He did this because of your grumbling, so that you would not hate me forever and have evil thoughts about me. But even a body without a soul shows such love towards you that it has yielded to your seniority, even after death. I had not wanted you to go away from here, so that you would inherit your place of seniority and be buried here this very hour. But you are not ready to depart this life, so go and take thought for your soul. After a few days you will be brought back here. As for raising the dead, that is God's work, and I am but a sinful man. But this dead man, who feared your insults and my subjection by you, could not bear this and has left you half the place prepared communally for you both. God can move him, but I cannot say to a dead man, 'Rise up, and lie down again in the higher place.' You lift him up and see whether he will obey you, as he did just now."⁵⁶⁶

Hearing this, Feofil was terribly cast down by Marko's terrible words. He thought he would drop dead immediately and did not know whether he would reach the monastery. When he came to his cell, he was seized by inconsolable weeping. He gave away all his possessions, right down to his shirt, leaving himself only one garment and his mantle, and waited for the hour of his death. No one could make him stop his bitter weeping or even make him take some tasty food. When daybreak was drawing near he would say, "I do not know whether I will live till evening." When night came he would say, still weeping, "What shall I do if I do not live till morning?"⁵⁶⁷ For many people have gotten up [in the morning] and not lasted until the evening, or have lain down on their beds and not gotten up from them. So what will happen to me, who has received an intimation from the venerable one that my end will come

⁵⁶⁶ There are numerous examples of "speaking corpses" in early monastic literature, which may well have influenced Polikarp's presentation of this story.

⁵⁶⁷ Cf. Ἀνδρῶν ἀγίων βίβλος, 106, lns. 15–18.

soon?" And he prayed to God with tears to give him time for repentance. He spent every day in this way—fasting, praying, and weeping hourly, expecting the day and hour of his death and separation from his body; he wasted his flesh so much that all his limbs withered. Many people tried to comfort him, but this only drove him to greater sobbing. Through his copious weeping he lost his eyesight, and thus he spent all of the days of his life in great abstinence, pleasing God by his good life.⁵⁶⁸

The venerable Marko, having learned the hour of his departure to the Lord, summoned Feofil and told him, "Forgive me, Brother Feofil, because I made you unhappy for many years. Now I am leaving this world. Pray for me! If I receive boldness to speak before God, I shall not forget you. May God grant that we may soon see each other and find ourselves in the same place as the fathers Antonij and Feodosij." Feofil answered with weeping, "Father Marko, why are you leaving me? Either take me with you, or grant me the restoration of my sight." Marko said to him, "Do not be sad, brother. For God's sake your physical eyes have lost their sight, but with your spiritual vision you have acquired the power to discern Him. I am the cause of your blindness, brother. I told you that you would die, as I wanted to do something that would benefit your soul and bring your exalted ideas about yourself to a state of humility, for a broken and humbled heart God will not despise."⁵⁶⁹ Feofil said to him, "You saw, father, how I fell down before you because of my sins. I should have died in the cave, when you raised up the dead man, but the Lord granted me my life, thanks to your holy prayers, in expectation of my repentance. Now I request of you: let me depart with you to the Lord, or restore my sight." Marko said, "There is no need for you to see this transitory world. Request of the Lord that you may see His glory there [in the next world]. Do not wish for your death, for it will come to you, even if you do not desire it. Let this be a sign of your departure: three days before your passing, you will be able

⁵⁶⁸ This account of Feofil's prolonged penitential weeping indicates how highly the gift of tears, as a sign of contrition, was valued in the Caves Monastery. Possibly Feofil (or Polikarp) was influenced by the Egyptian monk Arsenios the Great, who collected his tears in a basket (see *Vitae Patrum*, III, 1, PL 73:860). I. Hausherr, *Penthos*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 132 (Rome, 1944):42, in his study of compunction, cites Arsenios as the greatest exponent of contrition in the records of early Christian monasticism. For an interesting study of the spiritual significance of tears, drawing widely on the early monastic literature, especially Syriac, see Maggie Ross, "Tears and Fire: Recovering a Neglected Tradition," *Sobornost* 9, no. 1 (1987):14–23.

⁵⁶⁹ Ps. 50:17.

to see, and then you will depart to the Lord and there behold endless light and indescribable glory.” After saying this, the blessed Marko passed away in the Lord and was buried in the cave, where he had dug himself a place.

Feofil redoubled his sobbing. He was sorrowful in his heart because of his loss of eyesight, and he shed a fountain of tears, which increased even more. He had a bowl, and when he was occupied in prayer the tears would come, and he would put the bowl down and weep over it. For many years he filled it with tears, since every day he was expecting the venerable one’s prophecy to be fulfilled. When he realized that his end and [departure] to God [was near] he prayed fervently to God that his tears might be acceptable before Him. Lifting up his hands, he began to pray saying, *Prayer*: “O Lord Master Jesus Christ, Who loves mankind, my most holy king, Who does not desire the death of sinners, but awaits their turning from their sins, Thou knowest our weakness. O good comforter, health to the sick, salvation to sinners, strength to the weak, rising up to those who have fallen! I pray, O Lord, show forth Thy grace upon me at this hour, unworthy as I am, and pour upon me the inexhaustible fount of Thy mercy, that I may not be tried by the ordeals of the princes of the air and vanquished by them. [I ask this] through the prayers of Thy servants, our great fathers Antonij and Feodosij, and all the saints who pleased Thee throughout the ages. Amen.”

Immediately a handsome man stood in front of him and said, “Your prayer is good, but why do you boast about the loss of your tears?” Taking up a bowl much larger than Feofil’s and filled with fragrant perfume, like sweet-smelling myrrh, he said, “Look, this comes from the tears you shed from your heart in prayer to God, which you wiped away with your hand or a towel or your clothing, or which fell from your eyes onto the ground. I have collected them all in this bowl and concealed them by the order of our Creator. Now I have been sent to bring you joyful news: you will depart to Him with gladness, for He said, ‘Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.’”⁵⁷⁰ After saying this he disappeared.

The blessed Feofil summoned the superior⁵⁷¹ and told him about the angel’s appearance and speech, and he showed him the two bowls, one filled with tears and the other filled with fragrant perfume; he ordered this to be poured over his body. In three days he himself departed to the Lord and was buried in the cave near Marko the Cave-

⁵⁷⁰ Matt. 5:4.

⁵⁷¹ Ioann, who held office from 1088 to 1108.

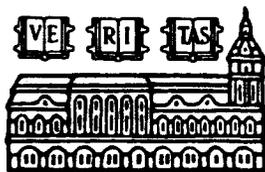
dweller, as was fitting. He was annointed with the perfume from the angel's bowl, so that the entire cave was filled with the fragrant odor, and the bowl of tears was poured over him. For he that sows in tears shall reap in joy. They went on and wept and they cast their seed.⁵⁷² They shall be comforted in Christ, to Whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now [and for ever and ever. Amen].

⁵⁷² Ps. 125:5–6.

The *Paterik*
of the
Kievan Caves Monastery

Translated by Muriel Heppell

with a Preface by Sir Dimitri Obolensky



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