

The Life of Saint Euphrosyne of Polack

translated and annotated

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Saint Euphrosyne (c. 1105-1167) was the granddaughter of the famous prince of Polack, Usiaslaū (Vseslav) whose long reign (1044-1101) and many exploits — in particular his determined struggle against Kiev — made such an impression on his contemporaries that they refused to believe him to be an ordinary mortal. Thus the contemporary Kievan chronicle ascribed his birth to enchantment: "In that year (1044 — *A. N.*) Bračyslaū died ... and his son Usiaslaū, born to his mother by means of sorcery, sat on the throne. When he was born there was a mark on his head and the wizards told his mother: 'Put a band round his mark, and let him wear it all his life.' Thus Usiaslaū wears it till the present day: that is why he is merciless when it comes to the shedding of blood."¹ Almost a century later the author of the *Lay of Igor's Campaign* gave the following description of Usiaslaū: "Prince Usiaslaū judged the people, granted cities to the princes, but at night he prowled about in the guise of a wolf. He would race from Kiev to Tmutorokan' before cock-crow and, in the shape of a wolf, would cross the path of the great Chors. For him the bells of the cathedral of the Holy Wisdom at Polack would toll for mattins in the early morning, and he heard them by the time he reached Kiev."

Young Pradsłava — such was the name of Euphrosyne before she took the veil — seems to have inherited many traits of her grandfather's character, in particular his strong will, energy and determination to persevere in a chosen path. This became manifest early in her life when she refused all proposals of marriage and, without her parents' knowledge, ran away to the convent of which her aunt was the abbess. Later she founded a convent of her own and was joined there by her sister, her cousin and two nieces. This was no mean achievement, for — unlike the custom in the West and in Byzantium — it was unusual for a young girl in Byelorussia and the other East Slav lands of that time to choose the monastic life in preference to marriage. This may partly explain why Euphrosyne has up to the present day remained the only East Slav virgin saint.

In addition to a convent of nuns Saint Euphrosyne founded a monastery for monks and remained superior of both establishments — another unusual occurrence in the East, although not unknown in the West. Finally, towards the end of her life, she undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where she died sometime after 1167. Her body, after the conquest of Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187, was carried by

the monks to Kiev and deposited there in the Monastery of the Caves. It was only in 1910 that the relics of the saint were brought back to her native city of Połack.²

There are in existence several manuscript copies of the *Life* of Saint Euphrosyne, the earliest of them dating from the 14th century. However, the essentially archaic Church Slavonic language with only a few traces of the vernacular, as well as the wealth of concrete details seem to indicate that the original *Life* must have been written much earlier, perhaps at the end of the 12th or beginning of the 13th century. The author was a native of Połack and either knew Saint Euphrosyne personally or had recorded first-hand accounts from those who knew her.

The best known copy of the *Life* of Saint Euphrosyne is one which was in the possession of the Metropolitan of Moscow Macarius (1542-1563), who included it in his *Četji-mineji* (Martyrologium) and «*Stepennaja kniga* (Book of Degrees).³ Kljucevskij has this to say about the version: "The *Menea* of Macarius has preserved the *Life* of the Połack princess Saint Euphrosyne. Its composition and literary style remind one of the rhetorical *Lives* of the 15-16th centuries; however, the liveliness of the narrative and the abundance of biographical details, together with some traces of archaic language, lead one to the conclusion that the biographer had in his possession an older source."⁴ Gorskij and Nevostrujev in their description of the *Četji-mineji* make the following comment: "Judging by the preserved linguistic traits and by the description of events, the story is ancient, most probably not far removed from the lifetime of the saint."⁵ Other scholars concur with this judgment.

Hagiography is a special genre of religious literature, having its own particular style and means of expression. In the Middle Ages the chief aim of the hagiographer was not so much to give an exact description of the life of a saint, as to edify his reader. This is why so many *Lives* are similar to one another and are often lacking in individuality. The *Life* of Saint Euphrosyne has much in common with such standard *Lives*, but at the same time it does have many distinctive elements, in particular the concrete details which bring out the strong individual personality of the saint. Fedotov has remarked that among the East Slav female saints "Euphrosyne alone appears in her *Life* with distinctive characteristics which show her to be an ecclesiastical figure endowed with an exceptionally strong will and having a sound education."⁶

Połack in the 12th century was an important seat of learning. According to Aleksejev, "having independent connections with Byzantium, Western Europe and, probably, the East, Połack became a great cultural centre with its own original school of architecture which absorbed the best traditions of world culture at that time, and with its monasteries — the centres of education and learning — cultivating their own style of chronicle writing, precisely like Kiev, Novgorod and other East Slav centres. The cultural achievements of Połack were highly esteemed in ancient times. The innovatory ideas of its architects served as a stimulus to a number of other East Slav



12th Century Fresco, believed to be of Saint Euphrosyne, from the Church of the Holy Saviour

cities for the rethinking of the concept of the Byzantine temple, and the educational and cultural activities of Euphrosyne of Połack were widely known beyond its frontiers."⁷ The *Life* of Saint Euphrosyne lends strong support to this estimation, whilst providing valuable information on the role played by the saint in the cultural development of her native city.

A striking feature of the *Life* of Saint Euphrosyne is the hagiographer's insistence on her intellectual accomplishments. As a young girl she was "exceedingly fond of learning" Later as a nun in the cathedral

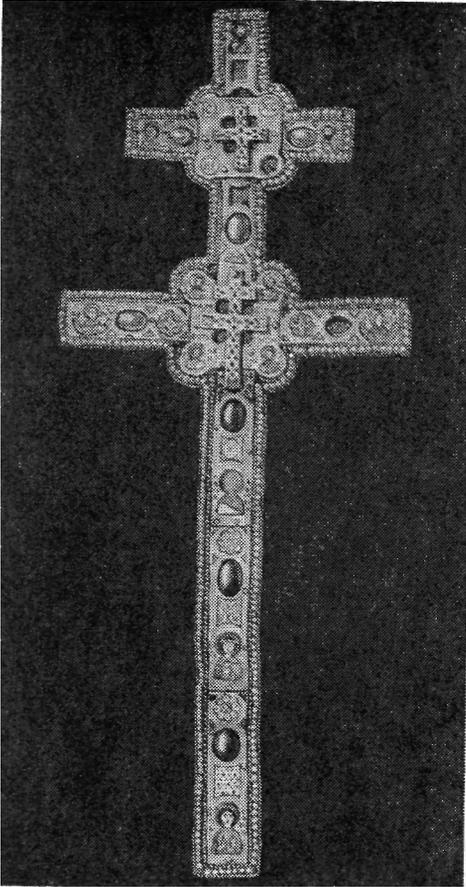
of the Holy Wisdom, she spent her time copying books, and the money she thus earned she distributed amongst the poor. Finally, when she moved to the church of the Holy Saviour, among her scanty possessions were books, in which — according to the words put into her mouth by the hagiographer — "my soul finds consolation and my heart rejoices." It is interesting also to note that when she wanted her father to give permission to her sister to come to the convent, her argument was: "Let my sister Hardzislava come to me so that she may learn to read and write."

It was not only in the world of learning that the activities of Saint Euphrosyne were being felt. She also built two churches in the monasteries founded by her. Of these two, the church of the Holy Saviour still stands and is considered to be the most precious monument of early Byelorussian architecture. Aleksejev has called it "the highest expression of the architectural concept of the land of Połack",⁸ whereas Voronin has this to say about it: "The dynamics of the 'tower-like' composition had no parallel in the whole of previous East Slav and Byzantine architecture, and was rightly understood to be a manifestation of the 'native' taste, sharply upsetting the traditional (i. e. Byzantine — *A. N.*) cross-domed plan of the church."⁹ The author of this early Byelorussian masterpiece

was a local architect, John, and we owe the knowledge of his name to the *Life* of Saint Euphrosyne.

The name of Saint Euphrosyne is linked with another remarkable example of early Byelorussian art (not mentioned in her *Life*), namely with the famous six-armed golden cross which was presented by her to the church of the Holy Saviour in 1161. The cross, richly decorated with enamels and precious stones, was made by the Polack craftsman, Łazar Bohša.¹⁰

Another interesting point in the *Life* of Saint Euphrosyne is the stress laid on her close relationship with Byzantium and the emperor on the one hand, and the complete silence on the other about Kiev which was at that time the most important of all East Slav cities and the capital of the ecclesiastical metropolitan province to which Połack belonged. A possible explanation of this may be sought in the political situation at that time. Połack, the most ancient of all Byelorussian cities (first mentioned in the chronicles under the year 862), was in the 11-12th centuries the capital of a powerful state which comprised the whole of northern Byelorussia, extending southwards as far as Słuck, Minsk and the present-day site of Mahiloŭ. The history of Połack at that period was therefore, to a great extent, the history of Byelorussia, and it can be almost entirely written in terms of wars with Kiev. According to the Kievan chronicle the roots of the hostility between the two states went back to the 10th century, when the prince of Kiev (then of Novgorod) Vladimir took Połack in about 980, killed the prince of that city Rahvalod,¹¹ and forced Rahvalod's daughter Rahmieda to become his wife. Of this marriage he had a son Iziasłaŭ (d. 1001) to whom he restored Połack. From thence forth "the grandsons of Rahvalod raise their swords against the grandsons of Jaroslav" (a son of Vladimir, who in 1019 became prince of Kiev — *A. N.*)¹² More probably, however, the reasons for the conflict were somewhat different and less romantic. In the year 1021 the prince of Połack Bračysłaŭ attacked and took Novgorod and thus brought upon himself the wrath of Jaroslav of Kiev who considered that city to be within his "zone of influence." Although defeated by Jaroslav while returning from his Novgorod expedition Bračysłaŭ succeeded in obtaining possession of the cities of Viciebsk and Ušviač — key points on the great international waterway trade-route from the Black Sea to the Baltic and Scandinavia. At Viciebsk the route divided, one of its branches going westwards down the river Dźvina and passing through Połack, while the other went northwards along the river Lovat up to the city of Novgorod and then along the rivers Volchov and Neva to the Baltic Sea. It is also in the regions of Viciebsk and Ušviač that the boats of travellers had to be carried overland from the rivers of the Baltic watershed to those of the Black Sea. Thus Połack gained control of the key position on the route and this was perhaps the real motive for Bračysłaŭ's attack on Novgorod. Bračysłaŭ's son Usiasłaŭ attacked Novgorod again in 1066 and sacked that city, removing even the church bells and ornaments.¹³ This involved him in a prolonged conflict with Kiev, during which he even occupied



*The Cross of Saint Euphrosyne (1161)
made by Lazar Bohša*

the throne of Kiev for a certain time, but which also brought a great deal of misery for himself and for Polack, a fact which prompted the author of the *Lay of Igor's Campaign* to remark: "Though he had a wizard's soul in a valiant body, yet he often suffered misfortune." The struggle continued into the 12th century. So it was that in 1128, in the time of Saint Euphrosyne, a huge coalition of East Slav princes, headed by Kiev, attacked Polack. The campaign failed to achieve its aims, but it weakened Polack to such an extent that in the next year the prince of Kiev Mscislav managed to take the city, force the members of the House of Polack (including the father of Euphrosyne) into exile at Byzantium and put his representative in their place. This he did apparently as a punishment for the refusal of Polack to help him in his struggle against the Cumans. However, as early as 1132 the assembly (*vieča*) of the citizens of Polack succeeded in expelling the Kievan

governor and invited Vasilko, son of the exiled prince Sviataslaŭ, to be their ruler. It is therefore hardly surprising to find Polack among the allies of Prince Andrej Bogolubskij of Suzdal' when he sacked Kiev in 1168.

In those circumstances it may well have been a manifestation of patriotism and local pride to extol the importance of one's own city by underlining its close links with Byzantium, while at the same time observing a silence about the adversary.¹⁴ On the other hand it is beyond dispute that close relations did exist between Polack and Constantinople in the 12th century. Indeed, it could hardly have been otherwise, since members of the House of Polack had spent several years in exile in Constantinople, some of them not returning until after 1140. Moreover, it seems established that the princes of Polack were related to the Comneni, although the exact nature of

their kinship is not altogether clear.¹⁵ The Byzantine influence was making itself felt in many ways. To give just one instance, it is interesting to note that the rather unusual six-armed form of the cross of Saint Euphrosyne was then much in vogue in Byzantium.¹⁶

Some Byelorussian 16th century chronicles include a story of a Saint Parasceve of Połack, supposedly a descendant of the Lithuanian Prince Mingajlo who ruled that city after conquering it. He was succeeded by his son Ginvil who "married the daughter of the prince of Tver' Barys, called Mary, for whose sake he was baptised in the Ruthenian (i. e. Orthodox — *A. N.*) faith, assuming the name of Barys . . . And this Prince Barys had by his wife a son Rahvalod, who was baptised Basil. . . And prince Basil, whilst he was reigning in Połack, had a son Hleb and a daughter Parasceve. This Parasceve made a vow to remain a virgin for the whole of her life. And she became a nun in the convent of the Holy Saviour on the river Pałata, and remained in that convent for seven years, serving God and copying books for the church. Then she went to Rome and, while living in Rome, she assiduously served God. And she dwelt there some years and became known as a saint under the name of Saint Praxede — from the Ruthenian Parasceve, — and they built in Rome a church in her honour and buried her there."¹⁷

The parts of the Byelorussian chronicles dealing with the origin and early history of the Lithuanian people are considered to be of late origin and of purely legendary character. This does not prevent them from relating some real events, though often distorted, as in the present case. Prince Barys was not a son of the legendary Mingajlo, but of Usiasłaū. He reigned in Połack from the year 1127 till his death in 1128, succeeding his brother David. It was probably during this period that he witnessed the donation of the church of the Holy Saviour and the Sialco estate on the outskirts of Połack to his niece Euphrosyne by the bishop Elias, as told in the *Life* of the saint. His son Rahvalod, christened Basil (d. c. 1171) succeeded him on the throne of Połack, but not immediately. His was a tempestuous reign. In 1151 he was expelled by the assembly of the citizens of Połack, and his place was taken by his cousin Raścisłaū, son of Hleb. In 1159 the people of Połack had second thoughts and sent a message to Rahvalod, saying: "Our Prince, we have sinned before God and against you, because we rose against you without any cause . . . If you will not remember our folly and kiss the cross, then we are your people and you are our prince; and we shall take Raścisłaū and deliver him up into your hands, so that you can do with him as you wish . . ." ¹⁸ Thus Rahvalod regained the throne of Połack, while Raścisłaū, having received a timely warning, escaped. Rahvalod's sister Žvienislava became a nun in the convent of the Holy Saviour and accompanied Saint Euphrosyne on her pilgrimage to the Holy Land. His son Hleb became prince of Druck, a principality dependent on Połack. There is no record of his having had a daughter, although such a possibility cannot be excluded. When one examines the story of Saint Parasceve, however, one is struck by its resemblance to the *Life of Saint Euphro-*

syne, with the difference that Parasceve made her pilgrimage to Rome and not to the Holy Land. This and the fact that she is represented as being of Lithuanian descent seem to link the story of Saint Parasceve with the legend of the Roman origin of the Lithuanian people. This legend came into vogue in the 16th century as a reaction against the increasing influence of Poles in the affairs of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. As might be expected, the *Life* of Saint Parasceve became very popular among Catholic writers of the 17-18th centuries. One of them, the Basilian Uniate monk I. Stebelski, even wrote her life in conjunction with the life of Saint Euphrosyne.¹⁹ It is very doubtful, however, whether Saint Parasceve of Połack ever existed.

The *Life* of Saint Euphrosyne, despite its conventional, rhetorical style, has succeeded in portraying a striking personality, in some ways more reminiscent of a Theresa of Avila than an East Slav female saint. It is also a useful source on 12th century Połack and its culture, made more valuable by the fact that most other written documents regarding the early history of that city have long since been destroyed or lost. Some present-day Byelorussian scholars have come to regard the *Life* as an example of early Byelorussian literature. There is something to be said for this view, provided one does not attempt to apply to the *Life* present-day criteria of what constitutes a literary work. Byelorussian literature in the 12th century was only in its beginnings, and in Byelorussia, as in the other East Slav countries of that period, to use the words of Gudzij "the concept of literature as an autonomous branch, separate from other branches of cultural activity . . . did not exist."²⁰ Moreover the difficulties of judging the literary merits of the *Life* are increased by the fact that it has come down to us not in its original form, but in later copies.

The present translation is based on a 14-15th century manuscript copy, published for the first time in 1959 by A. Koršunaū.²¹

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On the 23rd Day of the Month of May:
THE LIFE OF THE BLESSED EUPHROSYNE, ABBESS OF THE
CONVENT OF THE ALMIGHTY HOLY SAVIOUR IN THE CITY
OF POŁACK.

Lord, give blessing!

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob. He is not the God of the dead but of the living.

The righteous live after death, as Solomon says in his proverbs: "The just shall live for evermore, and their reward is with the Lord and the care of them with the most High. Therefore shall they receive a crown at the hands of the Lord."

In what follows we shall tell you all as it happened, but now we wish to say this: Come all you who live in the deserts and in the

mountains, all those who lead the angelic life — the old, having cast away your infirmities, and the young, leaping like deer. Come all of you: I would offer you a banquet, so that you in eating it may rejoice in your hearts. For this banquet consists not of perishable delicacies which delight your palate and fill your stomach, but of food which makes your heart rejoice and confirms your mind to the accomplishment of good deeds. Those who partake of this food will be filled and feel no hunger evermore, as it is written in the scriptures: "The Lord will not let the souls of the just go hungry."

Now, having said this, let us cease and begin our tale. Harken to it all you good people — princes, noblemen, churchmen, all you honourable gathering of saints who live in monasteries, as well as all simple people. Listen attentively: open your ears and soften your hearts to receive the salutary example of the life of this blessed woman, of her holy deeds and labours and of her love of God. We shall tell you how she was born, who her parents were, how she was brought up, at what age she resolved to follow her Bridegroom, the Christ. All this we shall relate to you presently. So let us now commence in due order.

There lived in Połack a prince called Usiasłaŭ. He had many sons. One of his sons was called George.²² It was he who was the father of the blessed maiden. The parents and all the household rejoiced at her birth. After a number of days they expressed the wish that she should be christened. And she was baptised in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. And she was fed by a nurse and grew apace. And as the child's body, nourished with milk, grew stronger, even so her soul was filled with the Holy Spirit.

It so happened that the maiden was endowed with the gracious fruits of a righteous disposition and was exceedingly fond of learning. The news of her wisdom and scholarship, and of her bodily beauty — for she was fair of face — spread round about. Her beauty attracted to the house of her father many famous princes, each contriving to secure her hand for his son. However, to all the envoys sent by them on behalf of their sons, her father's answer was: "May it be according to the will of God." Among all those princes there was one, far superior to all the others in power and riches. He also sent envoys, asking her to become his son's wife.

And she became of age and was 12 years old. Seeing this, her father began to talk to his wife: "It is time for us to give Pradsłava in marriage to the prince." But she answered: "May it be according to God's will and yours, my prince." Having heard this, Pradsłava — for that was how she was called by her parents before her baptism — began to think, saying: "May the Holy Spirit inspire my thoughts." Her mind being illuminated, she said to herself: "It appears that my father wishes to give me away in marriage, and if this happens I shall not escape the cares of this world." Then she continued thus: "Our ancestors who lived before us — what did they achieve? They took wives and were given away in marriage, they ruled, but they did not live forever. Their life passed away, their fame was consumed like

dust, being more flimsy than a spider's web. But on the other hand there were women who, filled with manly courage, followed in the footsteps of Christ, their Bridegroom and submitted their bodies to torments and their heads to the sword. There were others, too, who did not bow their necks to the steel, but cut away all the desires of the flesh with a spiritual sword and subjected their bodies to fasting, vigils, genuflections and prostrations. Their memory lives on the earth, whilst their names are written in heaven where they praise God unceasingly together with the angels. This earthly fame is but dust and ashes: it will disperse like smoke and melt away like a vapour."

While she was thus reasoning in her heart, her mind became more and more drawn to the service of God. One thought persisted in her: "Would not my life be better if I became a nun? I would be then under an abbess and sisters, learning how to pass the days of my life with fear of God constantly in my heart." Having resolved thus, she — covertly from her father and mother — made her way to a convent.

In those days the widow of Prince Raman was a nun.²³ It was to her that she came in her quest for the angelic life, begging to be admitted among other nuns and to be allowed to take up the yoke of Christ. The blessed nun, seeing her youth and beauty, became disturbed and began to feel pain and torments in her heart. She inclined her head to the ground and remained for a long time in that position, refusing to let her become a nun. Then again she bent down, then looked at her youthful beauty, sighed and at last said with tears: "My child, how can I do this? Your father, when he learns what has happened, in his wrath will pile up all manner of injuries upon my head. You are still young and you are not strong enough to support the hardships of monastic life. And how will you abandon the princely life and the joys of this world?"

However, the blessed maiden answered: "My lady and mother! All visible things of this world are beautiful and pleasing, but they soon vanish like a dream, and wither away like flowers. On the other hand, the eternal and invisible things endure forever, as it is written: 'That eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for them that love him.' You will not let me become a nun for the fear of my father? Do not be afraid, my lady! Fear the Lord who rules all creatures and bar me not from the way to the angelic life." The blessed princess, astonished by the wisdom of the maiden and her love of God, let it be according to her wish. She summoned the priest who, having cut her hair, gave her the name of Euphrosyne and dressed her in black robes. And the abbess blessed her with the blessing of the holy fathers, saying: "Follow, my child, in the footsteps of the holy women — Feuronia and Eupraxia and many others²⁴ — who lived before you and who suffered for Christ's sake. May the Lord give you strength and victory over our enemy, the devil." Having said this, she dismissed her to her cell.

When her father learned what had happened, he came to the

convent. He began to tear the hair from his head and to kiss her lovingly, saying: "Woe is me, my child! Why did you do it to me, bringing sadness to my soul? Why did you not disclose your thoughts to me? I suffer cruelly, my sweet child, sadness of my heart. Woe is me, my darling daughter! How will you now in your innocence withstand the cunning wiles of the enemy? It is now the duty of my afflicted soul to cry to the Lord God that you may enter the bridal chamber of His kingdom."

There was great sadness in the whole household because of her. However, the blessed Euphrosyne paid no heed to the despair of her father, but, like a good soldier, having taken up her arms against her enemy the devil, she remained in the convent, obeying the abbess and the sisters, surpassing others in fasting, prayers and vigils. From then on she began to lead a still more austere life, gathering good thoughts in her heart as a bee gathers honey.

Having remained in the convent for some time, she asked the bishop, called Elias,²⁵ who then occupied the see of the Holy Wisdom in Połack,²⁶ to allow her to settle in the basement cell in the cathedral church of the Holy Wisdom.²⁷ And he gave her permission. And she, having established herself there, took up her ascetic life with fasting. She also began to copy books with her own hand, and the money thus earned she distributed among the needy.

After she had been there for some time, one night, when she laid down to rest a little after the long vigil of prayers to God, she saw a vision. An angel took her and led her to the church of the Holy Saviour, the chapel-of-ease of the church of the Holy Wisdom, in a place which the people called Sialco.²⁸ And the angel of the Lord showed this place to Euphrosyne and said to her: "It is here that you must be." And she was astonished and said to herself in wonderment: "What may all this mean?" She saw this vision two or three times that night. When she woke up, she began to praise God with trepidation, saying: "Glory be to you, O God, glory be to you for making me worthy to see today the face of your angel." Then she began to recite the psalm: "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready", and another: "I was cast upon you, from my mother's womb you are my God. You have done as you wished to me, your servant."

As she was finishing her prayers the bishop came. The same angel told him: "Establish the servant of God Euphrosyne in the church of the Holy Saviour in the place called Sialco. For it is a holy place. She is worthy of the kingdom of heaven, and her prayer rises to God as a fragrant myrrh. The Holy Spirit rests on her head as a crown on the head of the Church. Her life shines before the angels of God as the sun shines over the earth." And the bishop, overcome by fear and trembling, rose up and went to see her. When Euphrosyne saw the bishop, she made a deep bow and said: "Holy master, give the blessing." And he answered: "May God bless you, my child, and give strength to overcome all visible and invisible enemies." And she, having made a bow, said: "Amen. May it be according to your word, holy master."

The blessed archbishop, having seated himself, opened his mouth and began to converse with her about the salvation of the soul. And the blessed Euphrosyne received his words like seed in the field of her soul, so that they might bring fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold and some an hundredfold. Thus he discoursed for some time, and finally said: "I would tell you a word, and you should receive it with love." And she answered eagerly: "Venerable father, I shall receive it as a precious gift." Then the bishop said to her: "You know, my daughter, that this is a cathedral church where you live. All sorts of people come here. It is therefore not good for you to remain here. I give you the church of the Holy Saviour in Sialco, where my brethren, the bishops who were before me, are resting. May God by their prayers and through your toils make it into a great place." When Euphrosyne heard this from the bishop she rejoiced in her soul and felt happiness in her heart, seeing in his words the confirmation of her angelic vision and of everything she had seen and heard. And she answered thus: "May God, through your prayers, speed me on this task, holy father."

The bishop summoned Prince Barys²⁹ — her uncle — and her father, as well as the blessed Euphrosyne herself and honest men from among the nobles. Then, placing them under obedience, he said: "You are witnesses that I am giving the place of the Holy Saviour to Euphrosyne. Let no one revoke my gift after my death." When the two princes and the noblemen heard this, they made a deep bow to the bishop and said: "Yea, holy father! It is God Himself who inspired this thought in your heart and made you take care of this maiden." And to Euphrosyne they said: "And you go and obey the bishop's command: he is the father of us all, and it is our duty to listen to him." Euphrosyne, on hearing this, looked at them with a mild gaze and said with joy: "I am going. Let it be according to God's will. May the will of God be fulfilled in me." The two princes and the noblemen, when they heard those words of Euphrosyne, were filled with joy. Then, having received the blessing from the bishop, and having made a bow to the blessed Euphrosyne and kissed her, they departed.

And Euphrosyne made a bow in the direction of the church of the Holy Wisdom, asked the blessing from the bishop and in the same night, having taken one nun with her, she went to the place called Sialco, where the church of the Holy Saviour stands. She entered the church, made a prostration and began thus: "O Lord, you said to your apostles: 'Take nothing with you save a staff.' Following your commandment I came to this place bringing nothing with me, except your word which I keep within me and which I constantly repeat: 'Lord, have mercy.'³⁰ My only other possessions are these books. It is in them that my soul finds consolation and my heart rejoices. Apart from them and three loaves of bread I have nothing except you, my Help, my Protector and the Provider of my needs. For you are the Father of the poor, Shelter of the naked, Help of the wronged, Hope of the despairing. May your name be blessed in your servant Euphrosyne from now for evermore. Amen."

After this she began to lead a still more austere life of prayer to God. Thus she remained for some time. Then she sent to her father, saying: "Let my sister Hardzislava — that was how she was called by her parents — come to me so that she may learn to read and write." And he let her go. Euphrosyne began to teach her assiduously about the salvation of the soul, and she learned with alacrity and, having softened her heart, received the doctrine like a seed in fertile soil. Finally she said: "May the Lord God with your prayers my lady, do all that is necessary for the salvation of my soul." On hearing this Euphrosyne took her into the church and gave orders to the priest to robe her in the habit of a nun, giving her the name of Eudoxia. After some time the father sent to her saying: "It is time for you to send your sister Hardzislava back to me." But she answered: "She has not mastered all her grammar yet." However, the father discovered that she was made a nun secretly from him, and he was filled with anger against the blessed Euphrosyne. He came to the convent, saying: "My child, what have you done? You have added affliction upon affliction and sadness upon sadness to my soul." Thus he spoke with his heart full of bitterness and tears streaming abundantly from his eyes. Then, having embraced Eudoxia, he continued: "My daughter, is it for this that I gave you life? Or is it for this that I have lovingly brought you up? How is it that the wedding feast, the palaces and rich dresses which I have prepared for you have turned into an affliction for me? My dear children! What will you give me in return to dispel the sadness and bitterness that fill my heart?" And all the nobles, seeing their prince's torment and sadness that could not be consoled, wept bitterly. But the blessed Euphrosyne answered her father: "Why do you afflict yourself for our sake? It is God Himself who is our help and who takes care of us." Having thus received small comfort from the blessed Euphrosyne, her father went home. And Eudoxia remained in the convent in obedience to her sister. And the blessed Euphrosyne spared no effort and prayed to God that he make this a secure dwelling place for her.³¹

After some time the daughter of Prince Barys, called Žvienstlava, came to the convent to Euphrosyne, bringing with her all her gold ornaments and beautiful garments, and said: "My lady and sister, all the beauty of this world is nothing to me. I wish to offer all this to the church of the Holy Saviour and to bend my neck to the yoke of Christ." And she received her with joy and gave orders to the priest to make her a nun, giving her the name of Eupraxia. Thus they remained in the convent together, passing their time in prayer to God, and having but one thought and one soul in two bodies.³²

Afterwards the blessed Euphrosyne erected the stone-built church of the Holy Saviour. It took 30 weeks to build the church from beginning to completion. Now, brothers, I wish to tell you of a miracle. There was a man called John, the chief of the church builders.³³ He had a vision which repeated itself several times and in which it was said to him: "At daybreak — so it was said — John, get up and start the work in honour of the Saviour, the Lord of all." When

day came he got up and went to the blessed Euphrosyne and said: "Was it you, my lady, who sent for me, bidding me to start work?" But she answered: "No." Then, after a moment's reflection, she added: "However, even if it was not me, but someone else who prompted you to this task, you must obey him with eagerness." And I shall tell you of another miracle, my good listeners. All the bricks were used in the construction and there was nothing left to finish the top of the church. Then she, full of anxiety, began to pray with sighs thus: "O Lord, the lover of mankind! You have deigned to grant me great things: grant also this small one, so that your church may be finished." Thus she prayed, and on the next day they found that, by God's providence, the kiln was full of bricks.³⁴ On the same day the church was finished and the cross was erected on the top. And the blessed Euphrosyne, seeing the church completed, rejoiced in her heart. There was great feasting and rejoicing among all Christians. Princes, noblemen, monks and nuns, as well as simple folk gathered for the feast, and their joy was great. The festivities lasted for several days, after which they dispersed to their homes.

Euphrosyne, seeing that the desire of her heart had been fulfilled, entered the church and fell to the ground. With many sighs from her heart and from the depth of her soul she began thus: "O Lord, our benefactor, good and merciful God who knows the hearts of men! Look down, O Lord, upon this temple which I have built in honour of your name. As Solomon says: 'The Almighty lives in the temple not made by the hands of men.' Look down, O Lord, upon me, your unworthy servant Euphrosyne, and upon all your servants whom I have assembled here in your name. Make them worthy to take upon themselves your light burden and to follow you. And make them members of your fold, be their shepherd and guardian, so that not one of them may be snatched away by the wolf — the evil one, the destroyer. Be unto them a strong armour and a fortress, so that the devil may not descend upon them, and no wound may be inflicted upon their bodies. Do not let us perish with all our iniquities, for we have put all our trust in you, knowing you to be our God and giving you our praise forever until our last breath. Amen."

And she instructed the sisters, saying thus: "I have gathered you, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, or as sheep are gathered into one fold: may you graze on the pasture of God's commandments so that the task of teaching you may become a joy to my heart. However, I perceive that the fruit is scarce and, although I water the field plenteously, it remains barren, and you make no upward progress. But the years go by, and the winnowing fan is ready on the threshing ground. I fear lest you may be weeded out and abandoned to the perpetual fire. Take care, my children, so that you may escape this fate. Be like wheat that is ground between the millstones of humility, prayer and fasting, so that you may be offered as pure bread at the banquet of Christ."

Thus she taught them incessantly, showing her love towards them, like a mother towards her children. But, brothers, let us continue.

Seeing her monastery thus well adorned and furnished with all kinds of treasures, the blessed Euphrosyne resolved to build another brick church in honour of the Holy Mother of God. When it was finished, adorned with icons and consecrated she gave it to the monks. And it became a large monastery.³⁵

Seeing both monasteries well established, flourishing and abounding in riches, she said in herself: "Glory be to you, O God! Glory be to you, O Lord! I thank you, Almighty, for you have given me everything I wished and fulfilled all the desires of my heart, O Lord." Then she continued: "Be merciful with me to the end, O Lord, and grant that I may see the icon of the Holy Mother of God, the *Odigitria*, in this church." And she sent her servant Michael to the Emperor called Manuel and to the Patriarch Luke³⁶ with many gifts, asking them for the icon of the Holy Mother of God, one of the three icons which the evangelist Luke painted during the lifetime of the Holy Mother of God, leaving one in Jerusalem, one in Constantinople and one in Ephesus. She wished particularly to have the icon of the Holy Mother of God which was in Ephesus. The Emperor, seeing her love, sent to Ephesus one hundred of his armed men, and they brought the icon to Constantinople. The Patriarch Luke assembled a synod of bishops in the church of the Holy Wisdom, blessed the icon and gave it to the servant of the blessed Euphrosyne.³⁷ And he, having received it with joy, carried it to his mistress the blessed Euphrosyne who took it to the church of the Holy Mother of God and placed it there. Then, lifting her hands, she said: "Glory be to you, O Lord! And I say again: glory be to you! Glory be to you, Almighty, because you have deigned to cause me to see this day the icon of your most pure Mother." After she had said this, she embellished the icon with gold and precious stones and ordered that it should be carried in procession every Tuesday through all the churches.³⁸

Having thus sanctified the land of Połack and seeing that God made her monasteries prosper, she said with great yearning: "If only I could, O Lord, come to the city of Jerusalem, to adore your sepulchre and all the holy places, to kiss them and to end my life there! For I have seen a great many sheep of the Lord gathered into one fold, and I have rejoiced in their salvation as if it were my own."

In the meantime she continued to teach her nuns. To the old she counselled patience and self-restraint, and the young she taught purity of soul and body, exemplary penance, modest walk, subdued talking, eating and drinking in silence, keeping peace in front of their superiors, respect for the elders, love of their equals and juniors without hypocrisy, how to talk little and to think much.

Euphrosyne had this gift from God: if someone asked her for advice, she would tell what should be done. And those who listened to her counsel found it to be right. And she did not wish to see any hostility among men — whether between a prince and a prince, or a nobleman and a nobleman, or a servant and a servant — but she would that all of them live as though they had but one soul.

And she sent messages to her brothers, telling them of her intention

to go to Jerusalem. When they heard the news, they came to the blessed Euphrosyne very sad and implored her with tears not to leave them orphans. And she consoled them with kind words, as a loving mother consoles her children. She had a favourite brother, called Viečaslāu. He came to her with his wife and children and, having greeted her, said: "My lady, mother and sister! Why do you seek to abandon me, ruler of my soul, and light of my eyes?" Whilst he was thus lamenting bitterly, Euphrosyne ordered him to go home and to leave his daughters in the care of her sister Eudoxia.

The blessed Euphrosyne had this gift from God: it was sufficient for her to look at a person in order to know whether it was the will of God that this person should become his chosen vessel. And the blessed Euphrosyne looked at her nieces and said to them: "I wish to betroth you to the immortal bridegroom and to introduce you into the bridal chamber of the heavenly kingdom." While they were listening to the words of the most blessed Euphrosyne, their hearts were filled with sweetness, as if with honey, and they fell down at her feet and said: "May the will of God be fulfilled in accordance with your prayers, our lady. Do with us as you wish." Then the blessed Euphrosyne sent quietly for her brother and told him with joy: "I wish Kyrianna and Olga to become nuns." For that was how they were called by their parents. The father was deeply perturbed by her words and said: "My lady, what do you intend to do with me? You pile affliction on affliction upon my soul: I weep because of your departure and remain disconsolate because of my daughters." And their mother was also filled with sadness. But the blessed Euphrosyne sent for the bishop called Dionysus,³⁹ who then occupied the see of the Holy Wisdom, and he took them into the church and gave to Kyrianna the name of Agatha and to Olga — that of Euphemia. And he blessed them with the blessing of the holy fathers.

The blessed Euphrosyne gave rich endowments to the two monasteries — the one where the nuns lived and the other with the monks — and placed her sister Eudoxia in charge of both of them. Then the blessed one prayed in the church of the Holy Wisdom and of the Holy Mother of God, saying: 'O Lord, you know the hearts of men! Here I leave your house open to everyone and ask you, O Lord, that you may not shut the gates of heaven against us.' And thus she left for Jerusalem, accompanied by her brother David and sister Eupraxia. All the monks and nuns wept, seeing the departure of their mistress. And all the burghers came out to take leave of her. The old people wept like little babes, saying: "Woe unto us, guide of our old age, light of our souls." And the young people said: "Why do you set, light of our eyes? Do not leave us orphans and do not forget us in your prayers to God." And she, having kissed and blessed everyone, lifted her eyes to heaven and said: "O Lord who knows the hearts of men, you who were the travelling companion of Abraham: be also with us, your servants Euphrosyne, David and Eupraxia." And thus they set off.

O wonderful miracle! She who had never travelled before and had

never been to a strange country or city, or village, now summoned up manly courage and travelled through all the foreign lands and cities, being received by all princes with great honour. The Emperor, who was on his way to war with the Hungarians, met her and sent her on with all due respects to Constantinople.⁴⁰ On her arrival there she worshipped in all the holy places and in particular in the great church of the Holy Wisdom, and went to pay her homage to the Patriarch and to receive his blessing. She also bought all kinds of incense and a golden censer. When she had finished her devotions, she proceeded on her way to Jerusalem.⁴¹ And she sent her servant Michael before her to the Patriarch, asking: "Holy master! Grant me a favour and give orders for the gate of Christ to be opened for me."⁴² He consented to her request and gave orders to open the gate. And she came to the gate, fell to the ground and said: "O Lord Jesus Christ! Do not hold it against me that I have dared to walk in your footsteps." Then she entered the Holy City and proceeded to the tomb of the Lord. When she arrived there, she made a prostration and kissed the tomb of Christ, then incensed the tomb of the Lord with the golden censer and many kinds of incense and departed. She stopped at the Ruthenian monastery of the Holy Mother of God.⁴³ On the next day she went again to the tomb of Our Lord. As on the previous day, she adored and kissed it, then incensed it and went away. On the third day she did the same, and left rich gifts of gold and placed the golden censer with all kinds of incense on the tomb; then, standing by the tomb of the Lord, she lifted up her arms to heaven, sighed from the depth of her heart and said: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God who was born of the ever-Virgin Mary for our salvation! You said: 'Ask, and it will be given to you.' I, a sinner, have received from you everything I asked for. Now I ask you again, my Lord and Master, to grant me this last favour: receive my spirit here in your holy city of Jerusalem, and transfer me to the Heavenly Jerusalem, granting me peace together with the patriarch Abraham and all those who have found favour with you. Amen." After this she went back to the church of the Holy Mother of God, where she stayed. There, by the leave of God, she began to ail and fell ill. And she lay down on her bed and prayed: "Glory be to you, O Lord, for you have done to me, your servant, according to your will." Because of her illness she could not go to the river Jordan. And thus her brother David and sister Eupraxia and all those who were with her went there alone, while she remained lying in bed, praising God and praying: "O Lord, look upon me, your servant Euphrosyne, and have mercy on me." Those who went to the river Jordan came back and brought Jordan water with them. She got up with joy, drank the water, poured it all over her body, then lay down again in her bed and said: "Blessed be the Lord God who enlightens every man that comes into this world. I pray to you, O God the Lover of men, and emulate the repentance of Peter who wept bitterly after his denial. O Lord, receive my repentance, and receive me, your unworthy servant Euphrosyne who prays to be delivered from her enemy the devil. Do not let the evil one

speak against me on the day of judgment, for, having put my hope in your mercy, I have trodden on the head of the serpent and have resisted his accursed insolence."

And God heard her prayer and sent to her his angel who said: "You are blessed among women, and blessed are your works. The triumphal gateway already stands open, and all the angels have assembled with lighted candles in expectation of your arrival; and the gift which you have asked of God has been granted to you." Having said this, the angel departed.

The blessed Euphrosyne rejoiced in her heart and soon afterwards sent a messenger to the *Laura*,⁴⁴ saying: "My time is drawing near, and God wants to grant me peace. Receive my body in the church of Saint Sabba." However, the monks who lived there gave the following answer: "We have orders from Saint Sabba not to receive any women. There is the common monastery of the Holy Mother of God for you. It is there that the holy women — the mother of Saint Sabba, mother of Saint Theodosius, mother of the holy selfless physicians Cosmas and Damien, called Theodora and many others — lie at rest. That is where you also should be buried."

The messenger came back and announced their decision to the blessed Euphrosyne. And she praised God for everything and sent the messenger to secure for her a grave in the precincts of the church of the Holy Mother of God. After that she remained alone for twenty four days. And when she felt that her end was near, she said: "Call the priest that he may give me Holy Communion. I have heard the call and my end is near. I am expecting orders from the Lord." The priest came with the Blessed Sacrament. And she got up, made three prostrations, received the most pure Body of Christ and then laid down again. Thus she gave her soul into the hands of the living God on the 24th day of May and departed to the heavenly peace.⁴⁵

What tongue, brothers, is capable of rendering worthy praise to the shining memory of the blessed bride of Christ, Euphrosyne? She was the defender of the oppressed, the consoler of the sorrowing, she clothed the naked, visited the sick, and was counsellor to all. Such was Euphrosyne whose heart was filled with divine wisdom; Euphrosyne — the unwithering flower from the heavenly garden; Euphrosyne — the high-flying eagle that flew from west to east, the light illuminating the land of Połack. That is why, while Thessalonika is proud of its Demetrius and Vyšgorod of its Martyrs,⁴⁶ we sing our praises in the following manner: Blessed be the city of Połack where such a flower — the blessed Euphrosyne — has blossomed; blessed are the people living therein; blessed are her parents; blessed is the womb from which the blessed Euphrosyne came; blessed is her birth, blessed is her growing up! O Euphrosyne, worthy of all praise! Blessed are your works and your heroic deeds in honour of God; blessed are your monasteries; blessed are all those who dwell in the monasteries of the Holy Saviour and the Holy Mother of God; blessed are the people who have you as their intercessor, O blessed bride of Christ our God.

Pray for the fold which you have assembled and united to the Lord who is worthy of all praise and adoration, Father, Son and Holy Ghost now and forever.

NOTES

1. *Polnoje sobranije russkich letopisej* (cited hereafter as *PSRL*), 2nd ed., Leningrad, 1926, I, p. 155.
2. Danilevič has suggested that Euphrosyne never went farther than Kiev. (Cf. V. E. Danilevič, *Očerki istorii Polockoj zemli do konca XIV stoletija*, Kiev, 1896, p. 241.) He is, however, alone among all other authors in holding this opinion. The modern biographer of Saint Euphrosyne, L. Haroška, supposes that the body of the saint was originally deposited in the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev only temporarily, as some unforeseen circumstances had prevented its transportation to Połack. (Cf. L. Haroška, *Sv. Jeŭfrasinia-Pradslava Połackaja*, Paris, 1950, p. 69.)
3. Cf. *PSRL*, StP., 1908, XXI, pp. 206-220. The complete title of the work is *The Book of Degrees of the Tsars' Genealogy*, and one may wonder what connection there was between a Połack saint of the 12th century and the tsars of Moscow of the 16th. The fact is that Metropolitan Macarius was a man of great political perspicacity and foresight, quite taken by the newly born idea of "Moscow — the Third Rome." In his *Četji-mineji* and *Book of Degrees* he tried to establish religious and historical foundations for Moscow's claim to supremacy over all the East Slavonic lands. The Russian historian Barsov has this to say about it: "The external unification of the state (i. e. the Muscovite state — *Tr.*) was accomplished, but internal unity was still lacking... Macarius ... began to gather all the local churches into one all-Russian church ...

The saints are the glory of the church. In local churches canonization was done by bishops, and local saints were a sure symbol of the autonomy and separate identity of a given province... sometimes reinforced by political motives. It was necessary to collect information about all East Slav saints, and to make the most outstanding of them objects of all-Russian veneration ... and thus Macarius... begins to lay stable foundations for the canonization of saints by one central all-Russian ecclesiastical authority.

Every province had its own historical traditions and genealogies; there existed local chronicles, differing not only in the extent of the events described, but also in spirit and ideas. It was necessary to put forward a story embracing the whole of *Ruś*; it was imperative to underline the all-Russian importance of the political authority of Moscow. And thus, through the efforts of Macarius, there appeared the *Book of Degrees*, not impartial to the historical personages who in one way or another contributed to the elevation of Moscow, and demonstrating that the House of the tsars, and the Russian history directed by it, shine with a bright light and glory and are favoured by particular Divine protection." (Cf. 'Opisanije velikich Četjich-minej Makarija Mitropolita vsereossijskogo A. V. Gorskogo i K. I. Nevostrujeva, s predislovijem i dopolnenijem Je. V. Barsova', *Čtenija v Obšč. istorii i drevnostey rossijskich*, Book 1, Moscow, 1884, Introduction, pp. III-V.) That is how Euphrosyne, along with other non-Muscovite historical personages, came to be included not only in the calendar of saints of the Church of Moscow, but also among the ancestors of Ivan the Terrible. Before the time of Macarius in Moscow, to use the words of another Russian historian, "manuscript copies of the *Life* of Euphrosyne did not exist, probably because for the Muscovite *Ruś*... Euphrosyne was, so to say, a foreigner." (Cf. Je. Golubinskij, *Istorija russkoj cerkvi*, Moscow, 1901, I, 1, p. 772, footnote.)

4. Cf. V. Klučevskij, *Drevnerusskije žitija svjatykh kak istoričeskij istocnik*, Moscow, 1871, p. 262.
5. Cf. 'Opisanije velikich Četjich-minej...' (Note 3), p. 183.
6. Cf. G. P. Fedotov, *Svjatyje drevnej Rusi*, Paris, 1931, p. 225.
7. Cf. L. V. Aleksejev, *Polockaja zemlja*, Moscow, 1966, p. 291.
8. Cf. Aleksejev, *op. cit.*, p. 217.
9. Cf. N. N. Voronin, 'U istokov ruskogo nacional'nogo zodčestva', *Ježegodnik Instituta. Istorii Iskusstv*, Moscow, 1952, p. 261. Although admitting that the architecture of the church of the Holy Saviour was the expression of local taste, Voronin adds at once: "This remarkable fact has been interpreted from an idealistic position as a manifestation of taste, typical of the tribal and racial character of the 'Byelorussian people' (the quotation marks are Voronin's — *A. N.*)". What the realistic interpretation of this fact is Voronin does not say. Perhaps he thinks that the title of his article, 'At the Sources of Russian National Architecture', is self-explanatory. This small aberration in the field of national politics, however, does not diminish the value of the whole work of this distinguished historian of art. The Byelorussian scholar M. Kacer writes of the church of the Holy Saviour: "How can one explain the appearance of such a composition as in Euphrosyne's church of the Holy Saviour? There are no reasons to suppose that the idea was borrowed from the neighbouring countries, for in those countries similar architectural examples did not exist. Most probably the source of inspiration... is to be found in the wooden architecture of the East Slavs... One cannot help noticing certain common traits, characteristic of Euphrosyne's church of the Holy Saviour on the one hand, and the wooden architecture of the western provinces of *Ruś* (i. e. the present-day Byelorussia — *A. N.*) on the other." (Cf. M. S. Kacer, *Belorusskaja arhitektura*, Minsk, 1956, p. 24.)
10. For the best study of the cross of Saint Euphrosyne see: L. V. Aleksejev, 'Lazar Bogša — master-juvelir XII v.', *Sovetskaja archeologija*, 3, Moscow, 1959, pp. 224-244; also his *Polockaja zemlja*, pp. 221-227. The cross, which until 1941 was in the Byelorussian State Museum in Minsk, disappeared during the war and all attempts to find it have been without success. Fortunately very good detailed photographs have been preserved. Apart from its artistic value, the cross presents great interest because of the lengthy inscription giving the date of its execution, the name of the donor, the church and the artist. It is one of the few authentic early East Slavonic texts which have come down to us.
11. The chronicle says that Rahvałod "came from beyond the sea". (Cf. *PSRL*, I, p. 299.) This, and his name (which is a Slavonic adaptation of Scandinavian Rögnwold), suggests that he was of Scandinavian origin. There is nothing surprising in this fact, for relations between Połack and the Scandinavian countries were quite close in the 10-11th centuries. The city is mentioned in some Scandinavian sagas, and there is even a legend of a 10th century Icelandic saint, Thorwald, who was buried near Połack. (Cf. Vera Rich, 'Rannija sviatynia na Bielarusi', *Božym šlacham*, 1, London, 1965, pp. 3-4.)
The name *Rahvałod* almost became the family name of the princely House of Połack, and it occurs quite often among the members of that family in the 11-12th centuries. It was not used by any other East Slavonic princely family.
12. Cf. *PSRL*, I, p. 301.
13. Old memories died hard in those times. In 1178 Novgorod organised an unsuccessful campaign against Połack, allegedly to revenge the humiliation suffered by their grandfathers at the hands of Usiasłaŭ more than a century before. (Cf. *PSRL*, II, p. 608.)
14. It may be noted that Kievan sources were also very reticent about Połack.
15. Some authors (Karamzin, Turčynovič) think that a daughter of Usiasłaŭ was married to a son of Alexius Comnenos. This view is shared by Aleksejev. (Cf. his *Polockaja zemlja*, p. 227, footnote.)

16. Of the very few examples of the six-armed cross among the East Slavs in the 12th century, the majority are found in the Połack region. Apart from the cross of Euphrosyne, there are the so-called stones of Prince Barys, dating from about 1128. They are large boulders, each of them having a six-armed cross carved on it together with the inscription: "Lord, help your servant Barys." There is also a similar stone of Rahvalod, son of Barys, dated 1171. (Cf. V. P. Taranovič, 'K voprosu o drevnich lapidarnych pamjatnikach s istoričeskimi nadpisjami na territorii Belorussii', *Sovetskaja archeologija*, VIII, Moscow, 1946, pp. 249-260; also Aleksejev, *Polockaja zemlja*, pp. 230-232.)
17. Cf. PSRL, StP., 1907, XVII, pp. 232, 301, 479.
18. Cf. PSRL, StP., 1908, II, pp. 494-5. The passage describing the events of 1159 in Polack, as preserved in the so-called 'Chronicle of Hypatius', is considered by some authors to be a fragment of the original Polack chronicle. (Cf. V. Čamiarycki, 'Da pytańnia ab rańnim letapisañni Belarusi', *Vieści Akademii Navuk BSSR, Seryja hramadskich navuk*, 3, Minsk, 1965, pp. 90-98.)
19. I. Stebelski, *Dwa wlekkie światła na horyzoncie polockim*, 2nd ed., Lvov, 1866 (1st ed. Vilna, 1781).
20. N. K. Gudzij, *Istorija drevnej rusckoj literatury*, 7th ed., Moscow, 1966, p. 8.
21. A. Koršunaŭ (edit.), *Chrestamatyja pa starażytnaj bielaruskaj litaratury*, Minsk, 1959, pp. 68-81.
22. Historians do not agree on the number of Usiasłaŭ's sons. Some (Karamzin, Solov'jev, Pogodin, de Baumgarten) consider that there were seven of them: Raman, David, Hleb, Barys, Rahvalod, Raścisłaŭ and Sviatasłaŭ. Bonnel, on the other hand, identifies Barys with Rahvalod. (Cf. E. Bonnel, *Russischlitwlandische Chronologie von der Mitte des neunten Jahrhunderts bis zum Jahre 1410*, StP., 1862, p. 33.) This view, which seems the most probable, is today held by Aleksejev. (Cf. his *Polockaja zemlja*, p. 261.) It was the custom among the East Slavs in the 11-12th centuries to give two names to their children: one traditional Slavonic (or Scandinavian) and another Christian, given during the child's baptism. It is usually held that George was the Christian name of Usiasłaŭ's youngest son Sviatasłaŭ. The only dissenting voice is that of de Baumgarten who has produced very interesting arguments in favour of George being the baptismal name of Raścisłaŭ. (Cf. N. de Baumgarten, 'Genealogies et mariages occidentaux des Rurikides Russes du X^e au XIII^e siècle', *Orientalia Christiana*, IX, 35, Rome, 1927, pp. 32-36.)
23. Prince Raman died in 1116. (Cf. PSRL, II, p. 284.) This is therefore the earliest date for his widow to become a nun. The name of the convent where she took the veil is unknown. Most probably it was not a properly constituted convent, but a rather loosely organised community, leading a monastic life near some parish church. There were many similar communities among the East Slavs in that period. (Cf. E. Golubinskij, *Istorija rusckoj cerkvi*, Moscow, 1904, I, 2, pp. 559-565.)
24. St. Feuronia (d. 310) and St. Eupraxia (d. 395) were two early virgin saints, one from Mesopotamia and the other from Egypt. Feuronia preferred martyrdom to a forced marriage.
25. Bishop Elias occupied the see of Połack from about 1115 to 1129.
26. The cathedral church of the Holy Wisdom in Polack was built by Prince Usiasłaŭ sometime before 1066. Very little is left of the original structure, as the church was rebuilt in 1750 by the Uniate archbishop of Połack Florian Hrebnički. For a more detailed description of the church see Aleksejev, *Polockaja zemlja*, pp. 193-197.
27. There is no record of any convent attached to the cathedral church of the Holy Wisdom. In all probability it was a religious community such as that described in Note 23. The members of such communities were generally elderly persons, many of them widows. It was rather unusual for a young

- girl, such as Euphrosyne, to choose this kind of religious life. Perhaps it was this consideration that prompted the bishop Elias to give her the Sialco estate where she could establish a proper convent. (Cf. *infra*.)
28. Sialco was a property belonging to the bishops of Połack, situated some two miles from the city. The wooden church of the Holy Saviour already existed there.
 29. Barys-Rahvalod, son of Usiasłaū, was the prince of Połack during the years 1127-1128. It was during that period that the donation of Sialco to Euphrosyne, described in her *Life*, must have taken place. The name of Barys is connected with the founding of the city of Barysaū. (Cf. V. N. Tatiščev, *Istorija rossijskaja*, Moscow, 1963, II, p. 123.) It is also connected with the monastery of Saints Barys and Hleb in Bielčycy on the outskirts of Połack. (Cf. A. Sapunov, *Reka Zapadnaja Dvina*, Viciebsk, 1893, p. 421.)
 30. This is one of the earliest mentions of the practice of repetitive short prayer among the East Slavs. The practice of the invocation of the name of the Lord has been very popular in Eastern spirituality. The most widespread short prayers are "Lord, have mercy", and the so-called prayer of Jesus, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me." The first form is more ancient, but the second one gained popularity in later times, especially among the hesychasts. On the relation between the two prayers see I. Hausherr, 'Noms du Christ et voies d'oraison', *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 157, Rome, 1960, pp. 263-267.
 31. Hardzislava must have entered the convent before 1129, since in that year her father was sent into exile at Byzantium. (Cf. Introduction.)
 32. Perhaps the events of 1129 had some effect on Żvienislava's decision to become a nun. On the other hand from the account in the *Life* it is evident that she and Euphrosyne were very close to one another.
 33. Little is known of the architect John. In the *Book of Degrees* he is once referred to as *father*, which suggests that he might have been a monk, probably in the monastery of Bielčycy. (Cf. Note 29.) The church of Saints Barys and Hleb in that monastery, which has come down to us in ruins, corresponds most closely to the church of the Holy Saviour. Thus it might be that it was John's first major work. By the time he undertook the building of the church of the Holy Saviour, he must have been an experienced architect, since he succeeded in completing it in the short time of 30 weeks, presumably during the spring and summer months, before the winter cold set in. (Cf. Voronin, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-64.)
 34. The builders of that time were also skilful brickmakers, and the kilns were built near the building site. (Cf. Voronin, *op. cit.*, p. 265.)
 35. When, in 1159, the citizens of Połack began to plot against the Prince Raścislau in order to give him into the hands of Rahvalod (see Introduction), they invited him for the feast of St. Peter to the "Church of the Mother of God the Old." (Cf. *PSRL*, II, p. 495.) Voronin suggests that the church was so called in order to distinguish it from another, new, church of the Mother of God. In all probability that was the church built by Saint Euphrosyne, which thus already existed in 1159. The church of the Holy Saviour must have been built earlier. Nothing is left today of the church and monastery of the Holy Mother of God built by Euphrosyne.
 36. The Emperor was Manuel Comnenos (1143-1180) and the Patriarch Luke Ohryzobergos who occupied the see of Constantinople from 1156 till 1169. The cross presented by Euphrosyne to the church of the Holy Saviour in 1161 contained relics of saints and a particle of the true Cross. Most probably those relics were brought from Constantinople together with the icon of the Mother of God. Thus the icon must have been brought to Połack after 1156 but before 1161.
 37. It must have been only a copy of the Ephesus icon. Even a patriarch would not dare to bless an icon which was believed to be painted by Saint Luke himself!

38. In Constantinople there existed the custom of carrying the icon of the Mother of God in procession every Tuesday.
39. Dionysus became bishop of Połack sometime after 1156. He died in 1183.
40. The Emperor Manuel's third — and last — campaign against the Hungarians was at Easter in 1167.
41. Communication between Byzantium and Jerusalem in the time of Manuel Comnenos was quite good and comparatively safe.
42. By the "Gate of Christ" is meant the Golden Gate, by which Christ was supposed to have entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Of course, in Euphrosyne's time, the city had the walls built by the crusaders. The old walls were destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70.
43. "Ruthenian" here means "Orthodox."
44. The famous monastery (today Mar Saba) founded by Saint Sabbas (439-532) outside Jerusalem on the way to the Dead Sea. It exercised a very strong influence on the formation of the liturgical customs of the Byzantine Church.
45. Usually the feastday of a saint is on the day of his or her death. In the case of Saint Euphrosyne there is a discrepancy, since her feastday is on the 23rd May, while, according to the *Life*, she died on the 24th. The year of her death, without any particular reason, is generally given as 1173. The year 1167 or 68 seems to be more probable.
46. The martyrs here mentioned are Boris and Gleb, the most popular of all East Slavonic saints.