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Two Exceptional Saints of Kievan Rus'¹

Abstract: From the christianization of Kievan Rus' in 988 until the capture of Kiev by the Tatars in 1240, the dynasty of Chernigov was blessed with the largest number of canonized saints. These included four princes and one princess. Two of these dynastic saints, namely Prince Svyatoslav (Svyatosha) and Princess Feodula (Evfrosinia), were exceptional. Contrary to tradition, they voluntarily chose to enter monasteries at a young age. Moreover, they were among the first dynasts of Rus' to become renowned for either writing spiritual treatises or for commissioning the translation of classical theological texts in defence of Christian doctrine.

Key words: Svyatoslav, Svyatosha, Feodula, Evfrosinia, Caves Monastery, Rizpoloženskiy monastyr', *Paterik*, *Zhitie*, translation, books

Povzetek: Dva izredna svetnika Kijevske Rusije

Od pokristjanjenja Kijevske Rusije leta 988 do tatarskega zavzetja Kijeva leta 1240 je bila černigovska dinastija blagoslovljena z največjim številom kanoniziranih svetnikov. Mednje so spadali štirje principi in princesa. Dva od teh dinastičnih svetnikov, namreč princ Svjatoslav (Svjatoša) in princesa Feodula (Evfrozinija), sta bila izjemna. V nasprotju s tradicijo sta se že mlada prostovoljno odločila za vstop v samostan. Poleg tega sta bila med prvimi dinasti Kijevske Rusije, ki sta zaslovela po pisanju duhovnih razprav ali po naročilu prevajanja klasičnih teoloških besedil za obrambo krščanskega nauka.

Ključne besede: Svjatoslav, Svjatoša, Feodula, Evfrozinija, Pečerska lavra, Rizpoloženski samostan, *Paterik*, *Žitje*, prevod, knjige

From the Christianization of Kievan Rus' in 988 until the capture of Kiev by the Tatars in 1240, the dynasty of Chernigov, a town located on the Desna River some 150 km northeast of Kiev, was blessed with the largest number of canonized saints. These included four princes: David Svyatoslavich who died in 1123 as a layman in Chernigov; his son Svyatoslav, nicknamed Svyatosha, who died in 1143 as a monk in Kiev; Igor' Ol'govich who was killed by a Kievan mob in 1147 and became a »passion sufferer« (*strastoterpets*); and Mikhail Vsevolodovich who as prince of Kiev was martyred in 1246 by the Tatars at Saray. Also included among the number of canonized Chernigov saints was Mikhail's daughter Feodula who

¹ This article is a revised and expanded version of the article Dimnik 2007.

died in 1250 as a nun in Suzdal'. Two of these dynastic saints, namely Svyatosha and Feodula, were exceptional for their interest in theological and spiritual texts.

The princes of Kievan Rus' almost never voluntarily chose the monastic habit as their life's vocation. Nevertheless, many took monastic vows on their deathbeds so that they died as monks. From the evidence of a handful of recorded instances for the period from the ninth to the middle of the thirteenth century, however, most princes who became monks earlier in life were tonsured against their wills.² The only prince in Kievan Rus' who is known to have chosen the life of a monk early in life as a vocation was Svyatoslav (Svyatosha) Davidovich. Like princes, princesses also customarily entered monasteries shortly before their deaths. Feodula, whose existence is not reported by the chronicles but about whom we learn from her *Life (Zhitie)*, was an exception. She chose to live the life of a nun in preference to living the worldly life of a mother and the wife of a ruling prince. The purpose of this article is to examine the exceptional monastic lives of these two Chernigov dynasts. Contrary to tradition, they voluntarily chose to enter monasteries at a young age and they were among the first dynasts of Rus' who became renowned for either writing or commissioning the translation of spiritual and theological texts.

1. Svyatosha

The chronicles tell us the little that we know about Svyatosha's early life. The *Paterik* of the Kievan Caves Monastery, written at the beginning of the thirteenth century, records anecdotes from his life as a monk. It has been suggested that, given the detailed description of a number of events, the authors of the *Paterik* perhaps had access to a *Life (Zhitie)* of Svyatosha that has been lost (Heppe-ll 1989, xli). Finally, as we shall see, a sermon written in the middle of the twelfth century holds him up as a model for princely conduct.

Svyatoslav was born around 1080. In baptism he was given the name of either Nicholas or Pankraty (Zotov 1892, 261; Filaret 1882, 222). His mother, whose name was probably Feodosia, may have been a Greek. His father David Svyatoslavich, a grandson of Yaroslav the Wise, ruled the dynasty's capital of Chernigov. At some unspecified date before 1100 David arranged for his son to marry Anna, the daughter of Svyatopolk Izyaslavich, prince of Kiev at that time. They had one daughter (Zotov 1892, 258; 261–262). Svyatoslav was the eldest of five brothers and probably had the usual upbringing for his day (Dimnik 1994, 178; 252–253). According to custom he would have been placed on a horse at the age of three. At the age of seven he would have been taught how to read and write. Indeed, as we shall see, he developed a great fondness for books. At the age of twelve his father

² The chronicles report the earliest known instance under the year 1035 when Yaroslav the Wise incarcerated his brother Sudislav in a monastery (Ipat'evskaya letopis' 1962, 151; Lavrent'evskaya letopis' 1926, 162). In 1204 Rurik Rostislavich of Kiev was forcibly tonsured by his son-in-law Roman Mstislavich (Moskovskiy letopisniy svod 1949, 101).

would have sent him on his first military campaign. At that time he was probably also given a domain to govern under the watchful eye of a governor (*posadnik*). Significantly, he demonstrated an exceptional inclination towards piety from an early age. This can be inferred from his nickname Svyatosha a diminutive form of Svyatoslav, which can be interpreted as »Holy One« or »Holy Man«. Later, his decision to become a monk further testified to his great love of piety and his determination to pursue it.

Svyatosha would have been exposed to holiness through the pious example of his father, whose sanctity is attested to by the miracles that allegedly accompanied his burial (Dimnik 1994, 301–302). He would also have learnt to revere the Church from the examples of his princely relatives who founded monasteries and built churches. His father David built the Church of SS Gleb and Boris in Chernigov (Dimnik 1994, 262–264). His uncle Oleg rebuilt the Church of SS. Boris and Gleb in Vyshgorod north of Kiev; he probably founded a monastery dedicated to the two saints in Tmutarakan' located on the Taman' peninsula on the Black Sea; and he built the Assumption Cathedral in the Elets'kiy Monastery of Chernigov (Dimnik 1988, 361–363; 1994, 261–264; 419–421). His grandfather Svyatoslav founded the dynasty's patrimonial monastery of St. Simeon in Kiev and the Elets'kiy Monastery in Chernigov. Moreover, he probably completed constructing the St. Saviour Cathedral in Chernigov and founded the Church of SS. Boris and Gleb in Vyshgorod (Dimnik 1994, 24; 102–104; 111–115; Dimnik 1988, 351–352). He also donated the plot of land on which Abbot Feodosy built the Church of the Assumption in the Caves Monastery of Kiev, and gave 100 *grivny* of gold towards its construction (Ipat'evskaya letopis' 1962, 173; Kotkov 1971, 124). What is more, on his deathbed, Abbot Feodosy entrusted the monastery into Svyatoslav's care. He requested that it be supervised by Svyatoslav and after him by his descendants (Dimnik 1994, 120–121). The most illustrious descendant to patronize the Caves Monastery was to be his grandson Svyatosha. Indeed, Svyatoslav's promise to the abbot may have influenced his grandson to enter the Caves Monastery as a monk.

Nevertheless, additional considerations also must have prompted Svyatosha to choose the Caves Monastery. It was the most renowned monastery in Rus'. As the main center of spirituality it had produced many holy monks. Its founder, the anchorite St. Antony of Chernigov, and its great abbot, St. Feodosy, had been canonized. Many of its monks had become abbots of other monasteries and bishops of many towns in Rus'. Moreover, the young prince may have been attracted to the coenobitic style of life that St. Feodosy had introduced to the Caves Monastery in imitation of that lived at the Studion Monastery of Constantinople.

The Caves Monastery was also renowned for its literary tradition. It had the best collection of books and manuscripts in the land. It had a scriptorium for copying, translating, and writing original works. Its monks produced chronicles such as *The Tale of Bygone Years* (*Povest' vremennykh let*), wrote *Lives* (*Zhitiya*) of such eminent monks as SS. Antony and Feodosy, and after Svyatosha's death compiled the monastery's *Paterik* which also recorded episodes from his life. The monastery boasted such celebrated authors as Metropolitan Hilarion, and the monks Ne-

stor, Sylvester, and Nikon. These considerations – renown, sanctity, and learning – must have all played a part in Svyatosha's decision to join the Caves Monastery in Kiev.

On 17 February 1106, some six years after marrying Anna and when he was in his mid twenties, Svyatosha left his wife and daughter, became a monk, and adopted the religious name Nikola (Ipat'evskaya letopis' 1962, 258, note 30). His decision was novel because it went counter to the tradition of princely self-aggrandizement. He renounced all earthly honours and all princely prerogatives. He became politically dead, as it were, and the right of succession to political seniority in the dynasty passed to his younger brother.

In the monastery Svyatosha became celebrated for his piety and humility. The *Paterik* describes how he subjected himself to all manner of mortification. He spent three years working in the kitchen. He chopped wood and often carried it up the hill from the Dnepr River on his shoulders. Later he was appointed porter at the monastery's main gate, a duty he also performed for three years. Although he had many possessions he gave them away to provide for the needs of strangers, beggars, and for the upkeep of church buildings. He also bequeathed some of his property in the Chernigov lands to the Caves Monastery.³ According to tradition the so-called »Holy Gates« (*Svyatye vorota*) and the Trinity Chapel above them, that is, the main entrance to the monastery where he was the porter, were constructed at his expense.⁴ It is believed by some that the chapel also served as the first infirmary of Rus'. By giving benefactions to the Caves Monastery, Svyatosha lived up to the promise of his grandfather Svyatoslav to Abbot Feodosy that his descendants would patronize the monastery. In recognition of his piety he was allowed to build a separate cell and to plant a garden. When the prince-monk earned the privilege of having a private cell, it is possible that he also took the vows of the great habit (*skhima*), the strictest monastic observance in the Orthodox Church. It would seem, however, that he was never ordained a priest.

Svyatosha's Syrian physician, Peter, accompanied him to the Caves. But on seeing the prince's voluntary poverty and the way he performed menial tasks, Peter moved to nearby Kiev. After the death of their father David, Svyatosha's brothers Izyaslav and Vladimir wanted him to assume his place as the political head of the family. Consequently, Peter frequently visited Svyatosha to beseech him to abandon the monastery and return to his court. His brothers, Peter explained, had to endure great humiliation from their retainers because of his self-imposed poverty. Peter declared: »People think you have gone out of your mind. What prince has ever done this?« Svyatosha remained unmoved by these entreaties and re-

³ Svyatosha evidently owned a residence in the suburb of Leskovitsa located between the Eleitskiy Monastery and the later Trinity Monastery. On becoming a monk he gave Leskovitsa to the Caves Monastery (Markov 1847, 24). Others suggest that he owned the districts of Navoz and Pakul' near the Dnepr, which he also gave to the Caves (Filaret 1882, 223).

⁴ Archaeological evidence shows that the construction techniques used in building the chapel were typical for the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century, that is, for the period when Svyatosha lived in the monastery (Aseev 1982, 93).

plied: »I have left all [worldly] ... things for Christ's sake – wife, children, home, power, kinsmen, friends, servants, and estates, and because of this I hope to inherit eternal life.« (Heppell 1989, 132–133.)

The prince-monk was also a lover of learning and his manuscripts formed an important part of the monastery's library. Bishop Simeon of Vladimir and Suzdal', who wrote about Svyatosha in the *Paterik*, reported that many of his books were still being used in the monastery in his day, that is, almost a hundred years after Svyatosha's death (Heppell 1989, 131–132). The best known was the translation that he directed a certain monk named Feodosy to make of a fifth century Greek letter. This was the so-called Epistle that Pope Leo I (440–461) wrote to Bishop Flavian of Constantinople against the monk Eutyches who espoused the Monophysite heresy. This held that Christ had only one nature, the divine (Dimnik 1994, 427). Svyatosha's knowledge of the letter suggests that he had studied patristic texts and had knowledge of theological disputes in the early Church. We have no record however, that he instructed monks from his books. Nor are we told that he himself wrote any treatises. Just the same, he was evidently the first prince who made the study of theological and spiritual books a vocation.

We are not told why Svyatosha wanted the letter translated. But since his order for the translation was recorded by his contemporaries, they evidently considered the text to be relevant for their beliefs. Perhaps there was a resurgence of the Monophysite heresy in Kievan Rus' and Svyatosha hoped to combat it with the letter. This is suggested by the evidence that the letter became an aid to Kievan preachers and polemicists. When the translation was finally completed after Svyatosha died, one of the first clerics to use it was Klim Smolyatich, who became metropolitan of Kiev four years after Svyatosha's death (Franklin 1991, lxxi). In ordering the translation, Svyatosha imitated his grandfather Svyatoslav who had two miscellanies (*izborniki*) translated from Bulgarian anthologies that Tsar Simeon had commissioned. Svyatoslav's collections of texts served as models for many later Slavic copies, and Svyatosha probably had copies made as well.

For helping us to determine the types of books Svyatosha had in his library and would have read, his grandfather's two *Izborniki* serve as good guides. The first, the so-called *Izbornik of 1073*, was a collection of Greek texts from the ninth and tenth centuries. It contained many excerpts from books of the Bible and treatises by Greek theologians, preachers, and Fathers of the Church. These included works by Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Maksim the Confessor, and Cyril of Alexandria. The *Izbornik* had the oldest surviving list of apocryphal books from Rus'. It contained historical essays on the ecumenical councils and on cathedrals in various lands. It also had a handbook on rhetoric written by George Choïroboskos (*Concerning Figures of Speech*), which served as a manual of poetics in Rus'. All together, the *Izbornik of 1073* contained over 380 entries written by 25 authors (Tvorogov 1987, 194–196).

The so-called *Izbornik of 1076* also contained a variety of texts. It began with an introduction on the benefits of reading; it had three different »Precepts« by

parents for children (*Instruction from a Father to a Son* and the instructions of Xenophon and St. Theodore); it had excerpts from two uncanonical books of the Bible (*The Book of Wisdom* and *Sirach*); it had religious treatises by Fathers of the Church such as John Chrysostom and Basil the Great; and it had the discourse (*Athanasius' Replies*), which explained difficult Scriptural passages. Of special interest were its compilations of religious and moral advice for laymen, its directives for practicing charity to the poor (the treatise *Advice to the Rich* and the story *The Charitable Sozomenus*), its cautions against opposing the powerful of the world, and its warnings against drunkenness. It also had a series of quotations, phrases, and proverbs (*One Hundred Maxims*). The miscellany was of special value as an example of the philanthropic ideology in Rus', and a model of Christian demands on the layman (Chyzhevs'kyi 1975, 97–98).

Although Svyatosha spent his entire life as a monk in the monastery, the year before his death his cousin Prince Vsevolod Ol'govich of Kiev summoned him to act as mediator in a dynastic dispute. He therefore left his cell to entreat his brothers, the Davidovichi, and his cousins, the Ol'govichi, to be reconciled with Vsevolod. He succeeded. He therewith demonstrated his dedication to that virtue of brotherly love that their great-grandfather Yaroslav the Wise had advocated in his so-called testament (Dimnik 1987, 373).

To judge from the available information the prince-monk did not leave the monastery on any other occasion although two in particular would have beckoned to him. In 1123 his father David died in Chernigov. In the same year, his only reported offspring, a daughter, married Prince Vsevolod Mstislavich of Novgorod (Dimnik 1994, 253). We have no record that he left his cell either to visit his dying father or to attend his daughter's wedding. On 14 October 1143, Svyatosha-Nikola died in the Caves Monastery and, according to popular tradition, was buried in the Nearer Caves or St. Antony's Caves (Golubinsky 1903, 203–204). He had been a monk for some thirty-seven years and was probably in his early sixties when he died.

Soon after, miracles were recorded happening through his intercession. According to the *Paterik*, demons fled from the wooden bench on which he had sat as porter at the Holy Gates. When Svyatosha's younger brother Izyaslav became mortally ill he requested his retainers to bring water from the well of the Caves Monastery. The abbot sent him water with which the monks had washed the relics of St. Feodosy, and he sent Svyatosha's hairshirt. Izyaslav drank the water, put on his brother's garment, and was cured. After that, we are told, he always donned the hairshirt when he went into battle to ensure his safe return. According to pious tradition, Izyaslav was killed on one campaign because he failed to take that precaution (Heppell 1989, 135–136).

In 1156 Bishop Nifont of Novgorod travelled to Kiev where he fell ill and died. Three days before his illness he dreamt that he was in Svyatosha's stall in the Church of the Assumption in the Caves Monastery beseeching the Mother of God to let him see Abbot Feodosy. In answer to his prayers one of the monks led him

to the altar and showed him the abbot's body. The saint arose from his tomb, blessed him, and foretold his death (*Ipat'evskaya letopis'* 1962, 483–484). From this chance reference to Svyatosha in Nifont's dream we see that his memory as a holy monk was flourishing thirteen years after his death. This is confirmed by the news that after Svyatosha's death his contemporaries considered his stall and his cell to be hallowed places. The bishop's testimony to Svyatosha's sanctity further fortified his cult. Moreover, it is noteworthy that in the two recorded instances of Svyatosha's posthumous interventions - Izyaslav's cure and Nifont's dream - he is associated with Abbot Feodosy, the holy founder of the monastery. This association suggests that the Orthodox faithful attributed to Svyatosha a spiritual eminence comparable to that of Abbot Feodosy.

In addition to the cult at the Caves Monastery in Kiev, Svyatosha was also venerated in his dynasty's capital of Chernigov. In the Caves Monastery of that town located on the Boldiniy Hills near the Church of St. Elias, the monks dedicated an underground chapel to St. Nikola, which was Svyatosha's monastic name (*Rudenok* 1990, 68).

The prince-monk was also held up as a model for other princes. This is testified to by the so-called *Sermon on princes (Slovo o knyaz'yakh)* (Loparev 1894, 1–30; Hollingsworth 1992, 219–228). The unidentified preacher was addressing princes embroiled in an internecine conflict. He urged them to imitate SS Boris and Gleb, who had refused to raise a hand against their brother Svyatopolk when he deprived them not only of their domains but also of their lives. Moreover, he singled out Svyatosha's father David as an ideal prince who pardoned those who offended him and forgave those who broke their oaths. Finally, the preacher encouraged his listeners to emulate David's son Svyatosha who had renounced his princely position and had chosen to live the life of a monk. The sermon was probably given some thirty years after Svyatosha's death. Since the Orthodox Church was formally promoting Svyatosha as a saintly model, it appears that he had been canonized by that time. The day of his death, 14 October, became celebrated as his feast (*Eristov* 1836, 208–209).

2. Feodula

Just as Svyatosha of Chernigov was exceptional as a monk from among the princes of Kievan Rus', some hundred years later Feodula, the eldest daughter of Mikhail Vsevolodovich and his wife Elena of Chernigov was also exceptional from among the princesses. The chronicles never mention her. One source, however, the *Zhitie* of St. Evfrosinia written in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, tells us that Mikhail and Elena's first child and daughter, born in 1212, was named Feodula (*Filaret* 1882, 120–121; *Dimnik* 1981, 11, 23). At fifteen years of age she was betrothed to a certain Prince Mina Ivanovich who is also not mentioned by the chronicles. Before she arrived in Suzdal' for the wedding, however, Mina died. Instead of returning to Chernigov to her parents she entered the convent in Suz-

dal' dedicated to the Deposition of the Precious Robe of the Mother of God at Blachernae (*Rizpolozhenskiy monastyr'*). There she adopted the religious name of Evfrosinia (Georgievsky 1899, 73–172; Klyuchevsky 1871, 283–286). In this way Feodula, unlike the other princesses of Kievan Rus', voluntarily renounced the vocation of motherhood and chose to devote her life to religious chastity.

According to the *Zhitie* Feodula was favoured by God from birth. Her parents, unable to have children, made a pilgrimage from Chernigov to the Caves Monastery in Kiev where they prayed to Mary the Mother of God and to the holy founders of that monastery, SS. Antony and Feodosy, that they be blessed with a child. Later, Mary appeared to Mikhail and Elena and foretold the birth of a daughter whom they were to name Feodula (Georgievsky 1899, 83–85). As a young girl Feodula had a vision of Mary who showed her heaven and hell. In another vision an angel counseled her to seek salvation in a monastery (89–90). As a nun she became renowned for her piety, healing powers, and apparitions. She had visions of Mary, the infant Jesus, and the Holy Cross (95; 111–112). In 1238, through her intervention, fire from heaven prevented the Tatars from attacking her monastery, and on another occasion Suzdal' was saved from an earthquake (112–113; 126–127). Her visions also included visitations from the devil who tempted her under various guises. As her reputation for sanctity grew, many women came to her to be instructed in the life of holiness (95–105).

According to the *Zhitie*, she demonstrated a love of learning from her childhood. When she was nine years of age her father Mikhail taught her to read and instructed her in other »wisdom« (*premudrosti*) (Georgievsky 1899, 88). Although these may be pious topoi, Feodula, probably developed a love for the written word as a young girl. The author of the *Zhitie* reports that in 1246 when she was in her convent in Suzdal' she was informed of her father's trial at the khan's court in Saray. She learnt that he was being cajoled by the Tatars and by his grandson Boris of Rostov into apostatizing and succumbing to the khan's demands to worship a golden idol. Horrified lest her father weaken in his resolve to remain faithful to his Orthodox beliefs, she wrote »books« (*knigi*) to him. She endeavoured to dissuade him from capitulating to the pagan demands by entreating him to persevere in his faith. She implored him that he refuse to listen to the »friend of the devil«, her nephew Prince Boris Vasil'kovich of Rostov, but heed the true counsel of his boyar Fedor, who was a »philosopher's philosopher.« Mikhail, the author of the *Zhitie* explains, received his daughter's »books« before he was put to death and, inspired by her admonition, persevered in the Orthodox faith (116–118). The account therefore implies that in her »books« she expounded Christian doctrine in which she was well versed. Nevertheless, despite the claim of Evfrosinia's hagiographer that she was a spiritual counselor to nuns and lay women and that she wrote »books«, no manuscripts have survived to confirm that she wrote treatises on theological themes for instruction to women.

The *Zhitie* gives additional evidence of Evfrosinia's close association with her father. It describes how, after their deaths, Mikhail and his boyar Fedor who was executed with him appeared to her in numerous visions, but most significantly,

twice: once to report their own martyrdom and once to foretell her death (119–120; 121; 127). Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that, after her father's saintly defence of his faith with the help of spiritual »books« that she had written, she also promoted his cult. Indeed, a seventeenth-century account reports the existence of a wooden chapel in Suzdal' dedicated to the two Miracle-Workers of Chernigov, as Mikhail and his boyar Fedor became known (Arkhivnye materialy 1900, 7). We have no way of determining if Evfrosinia founded the chapel, but she evidently had the means to do so. She undoubtedly had entered the monastery with the dowry that her father had given her for her marriage.

Evfrosinia died on 25 September 1250 and was buried at the *Rizpolozhenskiy monastyr'*. She was the only princess of Chernigov to be canonized. The Orthodox Church honoured her with a *Zhitie*, a canon (*kanon*), and canticles (*stikhiry*). Her feast day on 25 September is celebrated to this day (Georgievsky 1899, 132–142; Barsukov 1882, 179–181; Bushkovitch 1992, 98).

3. Conclusion

In conclusion we have seen that Svyatosha was exceptional in the history of Kievan Rus'. He was the only prince who merited official recognition as a saint by the Orthodox Church because early in life he voluntarily discarded the prince's mantle and donned the monk's habit out of devotion to God. In giving up his family and his princely status, he set an example to other princes. In the monastery he became a model of piety, poverty, humility, and obedience. In his charity he gave away his wealth to the poor and to the Church. The chapel that he built for the Caves Monastery evidently also served as the first infirmary of Rus'. As the mediator between warring relatives he became a model for brotherly love. Above all he was exceptional in that he patronized learning by assembling a library and by commissioning the translation of polemical religious texts in defence of correct Christian doctrine.

Feodula was also an exceptional dynastic saint. She was the only known princess in Kievan Rus' to renounce her worldly privileges in her youth and dedicate herself to a life of monastic piety. Even though raising a family and heirs for her husband was looked upon as the ideal vocation for a princess, Feodula chose to forsake that calling and devote herself to religious chastity. She was a visionary from her youth. In the monastery she became renowned for her sanctity and for her healing powers. She also acted as a spiritual director by counseling nuns and lay women in the life of holiness and, according to her hagiographer, wrote »books« on spiritual subjects. Thus we see that owing to the exemplary monastic lives led by Svyatosha and Feodula, who were also the first reported lettered dynasts of the House of Chernigov, the Orthodox Church deemed them to be worthy of canonization.

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