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СИНКРЕТИЧЕСКИЙ ОБРАЗ СВЯТОГО В ЖИТИИ СВЯТОГО КАТБЕРТА АВТОРСТВА СВЯТОГО БЕДЫ ДОСТОЧТИМОГО

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Рассматривается образ святого в произведении ранней английской агиографии – Житии святого Катберта авторства святого Беды Досточтимого – для выявления специфики синтеза, положенного в основу структуры созданного образа. Святой в работе святого Беды Досточтимого сочетает черты эпического героя, аскета, отшельника, чудотворца, провидца, епископа и мученика. Синкретический характер образа объясняется стремлением автора рассказать о реальном английском монахе, следовать римскому канону агиографического жанра (после Уитбийского собора 664 г.) и использовать Евангелия как прототип агиографии, а также наследованием практики кельтской (ирландской) церкви агглютинировать христианские, античные и языческие фольклорные и мифические источники. Показывается, как структурный синкретизм связан с рассмотрением образа святого на семантическом и прагматическом уровнях. Исследуются композиция, авторские интенции и некоторые черты агиографического стиля. Затрагиваются соответствующие религиозные, культурные, политические и литературные контексты. Упоминаются источники, к которым прибегал святой Беда Досточтимый с целью рассказать собратьям о реальном человеке и одновременно создать идеал эпохи таким, каким его видела римская церковь. Конфликтность интересов святого Беды Досточтимого отражена в мотивах жития, а именно в необходимости примирить идеи отшельничества святого Катберта и его епископства. Большое внимание уделяется изучению мотивов пророчества, помощи, отшельничества, чудес, благочестия, любви и смерти, а также рассмотрению видения как мотива (и потенциально как жанра). Методология исторической поэтики, предложенная А. Н. Веселовским, придает исследованию как парадигматическое, так и синтагматическое звучание. Образ святого в интерпретации святого Беды Досточтимого остается одним из самых влиятельных в английской литературе (как в религиозной, так и в светской) с VIII в. до настоящего времени. Впервые в белорусском литературоведении анализируется английская агиография.

Ключевые слова: житие; агиография; агиология; образ святого; мотив святости; синкретический образ; святой Беда Досточтимый; святой Катберт; английская литература Средних веков; историческая поэтика; история идей; А. Н. Веселовский.

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СІНКРЭТЫЧНЫ ВОБРАЗ СВЯТОГА Ў ЖЫЦІІ СВЯТОГА КАТБЕРТА АЎТАРСТВА СВЯТОГА БЭДЫ ВЯЛЕБНАГА

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Разглядаецца вобраз святога ў творы ранняй англійскай агіяграфіі – Жыціі святога Катберта аўтарства святога Бэды Вялебнага – для выяўлення спецыфікі сінтэзу, пакладзенага ў аснову структуры створанага вобраза. Святы ў працы святога Бэды Вялебнага спалучае рысы эпічнага героя, аскета, пустэльніка, цудатворца, прадказальніка, епіскапа і пакутніка. Сінкрэтычны характар вобраза тлумачыцца імкненнем аўтара распавесці пра рэальнага англійскага манаха, прытрымлівацца рымскага канона агіяграфічнага жанру (пасля Уітбійскага сабору 664 г.) і выкарыстоўваць Евангеллі як прататып агіяграфіі, а таксама пераемнасцю практыкі кельцкай (ірландскай) царквы аглюцініраваць хрысціянскія, антычныя і язычніцкія фальклорныя і міфічныя крыніцы. Паказваецца, як структурны сінкрэтызм звязаны з разглядам вобраза святога на семантычным і прагматычным узроўнях. Даследуюцца кампазіцыя, аўтарскія інтэнцыі і некаторыя рысы агіяграфічнага стылю. Закранаюцца адпаведныя рэлігійныя, культурныя, палітычныя і літаратурныя кантэксты. Згадваюцца крыніцы, да якіх звяртаўся святы Бэда Вялебны з мэтай распавесці сабратам пра рэальнага чалавека і адначасова стварыць ідэал эпохі такім, якім яго бачыла рымская царква. Канфліктнасць інтарэсаў святога Бэды Вялебнага адлюстравана ў матывах жыція, а менавіта ў неабходнасці прымірыць ідэі пустэльніцтва святога Катберта і яго епіскапства. Вялікая ўвага надаецца вывучэнню матываў прароцтва, дапамогі, пустэльніцтва, цудаў, набожнасці, любві і смерці, а таксама разгляду прывіду як матыву (і патэнцыяльнага як жанру). Метадалогія гістарычнай паэтыкі, прапанаваная А. М. Весялоўскім, надае даследаванню як парадыгматычнае, так і сінтагматычнае гучанне. Вобраз святога ў інтэрпрэтацыі святога Бэды Вялебнага застаецца адным з самых уплывовых у англійскай літаратуры (як у рэлігійнай, так і ў свецкай) з VIII ст. да сучаснасці. Упершыню ў беларускім літаратуразнаўстве аналізуецца англійская агіяграфія.

Ключавыя словы: жыціе; агіяграфія; агіялогія; вобраз святога; матыў святасці; сінкрэтычны вобраз; святы Бэда Вялебны; святы Катберт; англійская літаратура Сярэднявечча; гістарычная паэтыка; гісторыя ідэй; А. М. Весялоўскі.

THE SYNCRETIC IMAGE OF A SAINT IN *THE LIFE OF SAINT CUTHBERT* BY SAINT BEDE THE VENERABLE

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The study considers the image of a saint in the work of early English hagiography (*Vita Sancti Cuthberti* by Saint Bede the Venerable) to show a syncretic structure of this image. It combines the features of an epic hero, an ascetic, a hermit, a wonder worker, a visionary, a bishop, and a martyr. Its syncretic nature is explained by Saint Bede the Venerable's attempt to involve the tradition of Celtic (Irish) Church of accepting pagan folklore and mythic sources, to tell the story of a real English monk, to follow the Roman canon of hagiographic genre (after the Synod of Whitby of 664) and the example of Gospels as a prototype of hagiography. Syncretism is observed on semantic, structural, and paradigmatic levels of the image. The article dwells upon the composition, the author's intentions and the style. The relevant religious, cultural, political, and literary contexts are touched upon. Saint Bede the Venerable's sources are mentioned to show that the author's purpose was to tell his brethren about a real man and about the ideal of the age as the Roman Church saw it. His conflicting intentions are reflected in the motives of the life. Much attention is paid to the motives of prophecy, help, hermitage, wonders, piety, love, death as well as to the vision as a motive (and potentially a genre). The methodology of historical poetics by A. N. Veselovsky provides the research with both paradigmatic and syntagmatic dimensions. The image of a saint in Saint Bede the Venerable interpretation is one of the most influential images of English literature (both religious and civil) since the 8th century until now. This is the first study on English hagiography conducted in Belarus.

Keywords: life (vita); hagiography; hagiology; the image of a saint; the motive of sanctity; syncretic image; Saint Bede the Venerable; Saint Cuthbert; English medieval literature; historical poetics; the history of ideas; A. N. Veselovsky.

Introduction

The 8th century was a golden age for England. Between the wars of the 7th century and Viking invasions, Christianity embraced everybody, and monasteries were flourishing along with hagiography, historiography, and poetry. At the beginning of the 8th century, much thought was invested in the image of a saint, for it reflected English mentality at a new stage of development. The ideal of the age was realised in the first hagiographies. «The image of man, the interpretation of man… the way to connect contemporary works with the memory of culture is always in the centre of literature, and man is the beginning, thanks to which and for the sake of which the whole mechanism of moral and rhetorical verbal creativity is launched»[1] [1, p. 38].

The image of a saint owes much to new Christian and historical contexts, but it was also formed under the influence of earlier legends from the continent and Irish monasteries. The first image of a saint appeared in the Gospels, but the notion «saint» cannot be reduced to that of Jesus Christ and his apostles as in its most basic sense, a saint is a holy one, someone who is set apart for God's special purposes. Imitating the rhetoric of The Old Testament, Saint Peter addresses believers: «But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light» (*1 Peter 2:9*). The phrase means that the word can be applied to every follower of Jesus Christ. The latter becomes a model both in practical life and in literature. The problem of interpretation arises from the very beginning. That is why even nowadays there is no universally accepted definition of sanctity.

The image did not remain as it was in The New Testament, but underwent changes as soon as religious, political, and cultural contexts changed. The image of a saint as a martyr developed with the advent of Christianity, for the need to suffer for their persecuted faith. It embodied the dominant ideal of the early Middle Ages and took shape in early hagiography of the 3rd and 4th century: acts (interrogations), passions, martyrologies, and legends [2, p. 409].

When Christianity became the dominant religion, the need for martyrs vanished (not forever and not everywhere), but Christianity faced the problem of justifying itself in front of other religions and heresies. The need led Holy Fathers to the philosophical thought (Hermeticism, Gnosticism, Cynicism, Stoicism, and Neoplatonism), from which, despite all their differences, they borrowed ideas appealing to Christian consciousness: the bipolarity of the world, matter as evil, self-control and self-sufficiency, ascent and purification of the soul, taming the flesh, speculation, education of mind and spirit, contempt for the world, etc. From these ideas emerged the central thesis of Christianity about the necessity of continuous strenuous human effort in attaining divine grace for the salvation of the soul and the attainment of the kingdom of heaven. The linearity of Christian time made it possible to see the ideal cultural code as the way to salvation through asceticism. The textually fixed exemplar of asceticism was found in the treatises of Coptic monasteries (available to the Celtic Church), so asceticism was associated with anchoritism and hermitage and transmitted to hagiography. Naturally, the image of Christ did not cease to be thought of as ideal, and many evangelical motives are found in the legends about ascetics. What is astounding is that the lifestyle of a hermit persuaded the idea of sanctity during their lifetime, but the notion of a saint still included the semantics of being dead, as it was the case of a martyr. The conflict seems to have been solved not in an obvious way: a hermit (later an anchorite) was considered a hallow during their lifetime, but their legend (vita, life) could be created only after his death. Moreover, their dying should have been thoroughly depicted as a kind of proof of the person's holiness.

The further development of Western European society by the 6th century (when Christianity was the dominant religion and strived to embrace all European peoples) one of the most significant characteristics of a saint became wonderworking. On the one hand, wonders were impressive and could attach pagans to the power of the Christian God. On the other hand, Christianity struggled to assign pagan magic to Christianity. Thus, Irish Church was wise enough to use the knowledge of the Druids. Attention to the magical was also explained by the increasing influence of Neoplatonism and mysticism. Wonderworking integrated in the image of a saint. However, its mixed origin resulted in complexity and ambiguity of the process of beatification, as the saint in question was to demonstrate its autonomy from pagan practices such as witchcraft [3].

Later mysticism led to the development of dream visions and arising of people imitating saints such as Margery Kempe. It was a pivotal step for the image of a saint: it crossed the line between hagiography and other genres, or even the religious discourse and reading for everybody. A century later, the image of a saint will appear in the works of civilian writers. Based on the foregoing, there was no single canon of sanctity universally observed in western Christendom during the Middle Ages.

Methods

The purpose is to specify the structure of the image of an English saint as a character represented in *The Life of Saint Cuthbert* by Saint Bede the Venerable, as well as a model of the hero of hagiography and generally any literary works where the image of a saint appears in all its variants.

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[1]Hereinafter translated by us. – *N. Z.*

The problem of the image of a saint is usually framed by the genre canon and is rarely researched outside of theology and spiritual literature. It seems important to show that with the decline of hagiography and the loss of significance of religious prose in general, the image of a saint does not disappear, but continues to be transmitted to the reader, being refracted through new cultural codes. The reason for this vitality lies in the original syncretic nature of the image and in the ambiguity of the idea of sanctity.

Being an extremely complex phenomenon, the idea of sanctity has raised much discussion [3; 4]. R. Otto, a German protestant theologist, is the author of a very profound book written in 1917, when the history of ideas was popular among German scholars but was far from being well-shaped and developed. Consequently, R. Otto could not avoid rather contentious statements (from the point of view of today's academic thought) either of Platonic or Erigena (and clearly mystical) nature that sanctity was not a concept, and could not be captured by mind or perceived through feelings, but it could «only be evoked, awakened in the mind» [5, p. 26]. Nevertheless, he was the first to point out that the idea of sanctity had been changed greatly through the centuries: while in the Middle Ages the semantics of sanctity included the meaning of irrationality and its pragmatics was to draw believers into admiration, nowadays *saint* means 'very good', and its pragmatics is more of an axiological dimension. The book presents sanctity through the notion of the numinous as at once dreadful, majestic, and fascinating, and rejects the conceptual approach to sanctity, which became the ground for critical remarks in its address, for example in H. Lelen's work [6]. The Polish linguist demonstrates that sanctity functions as a composite semiotic phenomenon, a symbolic entity and an archetype and as such, it affects the texts in which it appears and illuminates the stories that it entails [6]. Belarusian medievalist L. V. Levshun criticises the theory of the uniformity of the medieval literary style and method, backed up by many scholars in the 20th century, such as V. P. Adrianova-Peretts [7], and points at the motley picture of the stylistic features of Eastern Slavic hagiographies, which depend on the author's pragmatic intentions and axiology of the image [8]. A. C. de la Rosa and L. G. de Jones view a hallow as an archetype and dwell rather upon typical features of a saint in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam because it derives from the ordinary experiences of human communities [9]. Purely linguistic approach is usually based on the same assumptions [10]. It is clear that they mostly ignore the national and (or) historical and local specificities of their images.

A. Macintyre also opposes the mythological school and all types of unifications: «Of all the mythological ways of thinking which have disguised the Middle Ages for us none is more misleading than that which portrays a unified and monolithic Christian culture and this not just because the medieval achievement was also Jewish and Islamic. Medieval culture, insofar as it was a unity at all, was a fragile and complex balance of a variety of disparate and conflicting elements» [3, p. 166]. The opinion is backed up by T. J. Heffernan and T. E. Burman whose publication [11] proceed from the idea of complexity induced by religious, historical, and cultural contexts of different medieval periods. Contextual analysis also leads J. S. Ott to the idea of randomness, illogicality, and inappropriateness of recognition many Western saints as such [12, p. VII; 13, p. 117–118].

Therefore, two traditions have been thriving in hagiographic studies: archetypical typifying approach and the history of ideas. The aim of this research can be followed with the tools of historical poetics because it does «not only investigates the genesis of certain techniques and principles of verbal creativity, but also "deciphers" the works of other epochs – artistic, religious and scientific, etc., i. e. it raises the question of a certain cultural code, which should be known by a scholar, who is engaged in cultural interpretation of the work of another historical epoch» [14, p. 49].

This is the aim of historical poetics by A. N. Veselovsky, which uses motive analysis, the comparative method, and the history of ideals [15]. A multi-vector approach is extremely relevant for medieval religious literature, which has been either considered in isolation from any literary tendencies, trends and ultimately outside literary studies or was imposed by norms, rules, and assumptions of the poetics of modern literature. Beyond that, historical poetics takes into account theologists', anthropologists', sociologists' observations.

The idea of sanctity as the core of the image of an English saint has been paid much attention in Western hagiographic studies [16]. The best results are obtained when this approach goes together with textological work provided by such scholar as B. Colgrave [17] and (or) theological insight, for example introduces by Pope Francis' article[2]. Among Russian scholars, English saints became the object of literary, historical, cultural, and linguistic studies of M. R. Nenarokova [18], M. P. Omel'nitskii [19], N. Yu. Chekhonadskaya [20]. Sanctity as a motive of a literary work has been much considered by the researchers of F. M. Dostoevsky's and L. N. Tolstoy's novels. M. N. Klimova conducted an extensive research of hagiographical motives and the idea of sanctity in Russian literature of the 19th–20th centuries [21; 22].

To reveal the syncretic structure of the image of a saint in English hagiography this article also takes into consideration the common perspective of contemporary Belarusian, Ukrainian, and Russian scholars whose research

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[2]Apostolic exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate* of The Holy Father Francis on the call to holiness in today's world [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html#REJOICE_AND_BE_GLAD (date of access: 10.07.2023).

object is Byzantine and Old-Russian hagiography [23–33], who argue that «the study of the phenomenon of sanctity in the context of culture allows us to understand the system of values, moral and ethical guidelines, and spiritual aspirations of the society in different historical periods» [34, p. 99].

Thus, in addition to the general aim of identifying the syncretic structure of the image of an English saint, the research is to fulfil the following objectives: to proceed from the idea of continuity of images in religious and secular literature; to apply the methodology of historical poetics to hagiography, and, therefore, to overcome a methodological gap between hagiology and hagiography; to present the image paradigmatically and syntagmatically, i. e. as an exemplar of the literary canon and as a concrete image of Saint Cuthbert in the early 8th century Celtic manuscript; to identify the reasons for the syncretism of the image of the saint, i. e. to analyse the historical, cultural, religious, and literary contexts that had a direct influence on its formation and transformation; to lay basis for the beginning of research devoted to the motive of sanctity and the image of a saint in British literature. It is necessary to point out their semantic, structural, and pragmatic features before further advancement.

Results and discussion

C. Sanok identifies three hagiographical groups: passio, miracula, and vita [35, p. 420]. A passio (Latin for *suffering*) is a species of martyr legend that focuses on the saint's trials, torture, and death. Miracula dwells upon wonder workers. Vita is a fairly detailed and complete description of the birth, childhood, adolescence, mature life, and death of a saint. It falls into the subgenres of legends about apostles, virgins, prelates, monks, and hermits. Sometimes two other groups are distinguished: inventions, i. e. narratives of the discovery or ritual placement of relics in a shrine, which inaugurated their public veneration, and translations, i. e. stories about the transfer of the relics. According to R. Bartlett, «in this form Christian hagiography was forever formed by the authors of the 4th century hagiographies Athanasius, Sulpicius Severus, and Jerome (Stridonian. – *N. Z.*)» [36, p. 20].

Nevertheless, all researchers stipulate the high frequency of the syncretism of these groups [35–37]. These genres do not always correlate with the forms of existence of hagiographic works: they could function as an independent text, as a part of a chronicle, a calendar, a book of hours or a monthly prayer book, in a collection of both pagan and Christian legends, inquests held into the life of a candidate for canonisation, accounts of the discovery or movement of relics, bulls of canonisation, liturgical books, sermons, visions, etc. Stories of miracles either circulated in separate collections or were appended to saints' lives. There were a lot of hagiographical poems. Most Europeans did not read about the life of a saint, but listened to them. The stories of their lives were read in churches on the day of the saint's memory, and in this case, as a rule, those pieces did not retell his life in full, but highlighted separate edifying episodes demonstrating the hero's virtues and the miracles worked by God; gradually they were divided into chapters for convenience at once. Moreover, the particulars of the canon differed widely from region to region, and from period to period, although many features became standard [2; 5; 9; 12; 14; 16; 18–20].

This variability was the result of the fact that western Christendom did not manage to construct a universal canon of sanctity. C. G. Loomis points out, that the cult of the saint-wonderworker was formed before the 6th century, and the cult of the ascetic even earlier (though not earlier than the Edict of Milan of 313), but the development of the literary tradition took more time [38, p. 405] and occurred during the heyday of the Anglo-Saxon monasteries of Lindisfarne and Wearmouth-Jarrow. Early English hagiography reveals an image of the ascetic and an image of the wonderworker, but the former was closer to the practice and spiritual needs of the people: monasticism[3], asceticism, and hermitage were the main religious practices of pursuing a life devoted to God and salvation for the Celtic Church. Unlike the Roman Church, it seamlessly blended native Celtic culture, the magic of Druids, folklore, and the new faith (there were no martyrs in Ireland for it became a Christian country bloodlessly). One consequence of the process was the fusion of the cults of an ascetic, a hermit and a wonder worker in the image of the saint. At that time Saint Bede the Venerable (673–735) composed *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*[4], who lived from 634 to 687, was a hermit, a wonderworker, and a bishop of Lindisfarne but not a martyr.

Structurally, the vita corresponds to the continental patterns that were intentionally followed by an English monk of extraordinary scholarship. Saint Bede the Venerable grew up within the reach of the unique library of the monasteries of Wearmouth-Jarrow. He was not only familiar with the early hagiographies but translated some hagiographies himself and wrote a hagiographic poem. He admired Saint Gregory the Great who was the initiator of the Christian Church of England and the author of the *Dialogues* (593–594), the most famous and authoritative collection of hagiographies in Western Europe, and «the chief source for the formation of Latin theology's system of views on the afterlife, heaven, and hell» at the time [39, p. 190].

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[3]The debate about the prevailing form of church organisation in Ireland is not the object of this study, which is based upon a certain text.

[4]*The life and miracles of Saint Cuthbert, bishop of Lindesfarne* as it was translated by J. A. Giles, or *The life of Saint Cuthbert* as it was translated by B. Colgrave.

Among the most significant influences on Saint Bede the Venerable hagiography, researchers also mention *On the Life of Saint Martin* (*Vita Sancti Martini*) by Sulficius Severus, who began to describe saints' miracles in the early 4th century, and hagiography and *Liber de miraculis*, *De gloria martyrum*, and *The History of the Franks* (*Historia Francorum*) by Gregory of Tours, who established the cult of the miraculous in Western Europe, while the *Dialogues* by Saint Gregory the Great authorised the cult [38, p. 404]. This observation points out that the medieval hagiographic tradition does not draw directly from the Gospels, for between the 1st–2nd and the 6th–8th centuries the idea of the miraculous was not perceived as a purely Christian value.

Saint Bede the Venerable was not the first to write a life of a saint in Britain. There had already been *The Life of Columba* (*Vita Columbae*, 697 and 700) by Adamnan (Adomnán), who relied upon a Latin collection entitled *De uirtutibus sancti Columbae*, composed c. 640 AD by one of the abbots of Iona Abbey; *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great* (c. 700) by an anonymous monk of Whitby; *The Life of Saint Witfrid* (*Vita Sancti Wilfrithi*, 709–720) by Stephen of Ripon (Eddius Stephanus) and certainly the anonymous *Life of Cuthbert* (*Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, c. 700) [19]. Saint Bede the Venerable is supposed to have read Irish legends about Saint Patrick, Saint Brigid, etc.

The latter has survived in seven folios, testifying to the importance of Saint Cuthbert and the spread of his cult. The discovery of the saint's imperishable relics undoubtedly gave new strength to it. Drawing on an anonymous work and supplementing it with the account of Herefrith, a former bishop of Lindisfarne, and other witnesses, Saint Bede the Venerable composed the hagiography of Saint Cuthbert known to us today, first in verse, and in 721 in prose, in 47 chapters.

In no small measure, the local origin of the saint contributed to the canonicity of Saint Bede the Venerable work. It also affected its poetics. As M. R. Nenarokova points out, «…the closest parallel in the hagiography of a saint in Irish tradition is a tale about a hero. A hero's story is a kind of scheme. It is built on certain and unchangeable moments in the narrative: the hero's miraculous birth; his upbringing, foreshadowing his glorious future; his life full of exploits; and his unusual death. One can find correlating key moments in a saint's story: a foretelling of the saint's glorious future before his birth, accompanied by miracles and heavenly signs; a religious upbringing and education from an early age revealing his holiness; a life full of spiritual feats, the saint is a miracle worker and spiritual leader for those around him; the saint's death, like his birth, is extraordinary»[5] [18, p. 67–68]. *Enchiridion militis christiani* (*Handbook of the Christian Soldier*, 1501) by Erasmus of Rotterdam confirms that this mechanism still worked seven centuries later, at least for Northern Europe. It backs up historical poetics and contradicts the theory of archetypes because the latter always separates warrior and wizard[6].

Still, the long continental hagiographic tradition introduces the schematism of the image of a saint. All scholars agree upon schematism though their opinions vary from the existence of a few rows of significant features [41, p. 40] and «quite reliable basics of the typical plot, though structural variants are common, as well» [42, p. 318] to more categorical statement that hagiography is extremely formulaic and follows a certain set of rules strictly[7] [43; 44].

Like all lives, this one starts with a preamble, or introduction, where the author distances himself from the hero, explains his intentions expressing hope for divine help and using formulas of humility and biblical citation, refers to the witnesses of Saint Cuthbert's life who add the layer of personal memories to the vita. Then Saint Bede the Venerable recounts Saint Cuthbert's childhood, adolescence, adult life, dying, and the events that followed his death. Such a structure seems purely formal and hackneyed, but it cannot be innovative because metaphorically it must represent a clearly outlined plan of salvation.

A life being an exemplar of salvation literature never speaks about an individuality. «People fulfil the purpose of holiness not only alone, but as if forming a golden chain», as Saint Simeon said (cited by [45, p. 142]). «The saints who, from generation to generation, in accordance with God's direction, follow in the footsteps of those saints who have gone before… form as if a golden chain, where each one is linked to the preceding ones in faith, labour and love, as if they were a single line to the One God, which cannot be easily broken» (cited by [45, p. 142]). Saint Cuthbert is a historical figure with his own destiny and life story and at the same time he is any medieval saint and the trick is done through the usage of formulas, repetition, imitation, quotations, and structuring. Nevertheless, there are deviations from the continental canon from the very beginning.

Saint Bede the Venerable does not say anything about Saint Cuthbert's parents. He could be an orphan for the anonymous life mentions some woman who brought him up. Perhaps lack of biological parents did not mention much in the circumstances of the archaic Celtic united family where orphans were raised by the kin.

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[5]Pay attention to K. Tiernan's the Cuthbert's novels, where she positions Saint Cuthbert as a young Anglo-Saxon warrior who at the age of 17 enters a monastery [40].

[6]The genesis of the image of Merlin also proves the closeness of these ideas and opposes archetypes.

[7]*Polonsky V. V.* Hagiography [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.krugosvet.ru/enc/kultura_i_obrazovanie/religiya/AGIO-GRAFIYA.html (date of access: 10.07.2023) (in Russ.).

There were a few traditions of describing a saint-to-be: the saint is famously virtuous from his birth; there is a change in his behaviour, a kind of initiation; the youth of a future saint is described as a sinful one, like in Saint Augustine's *Confession* or the lives of Saint Francis. Saint Bede the Venerable does not join any of them in full scale. He gives little detail but uses some ready-made formulas such as a prophecy of Saint Cuthbert's future prospect. Saint Bede the Venerable mentions Saint Cuthbert's being a winner in all games and a mighty child proud of his ability and then changing his ways for contemplation but in comparison with Saint Augustine's pears stealing Saint Bede the Venerable sins are absolutely miscellaneous. Saint Cuthbert as a child resembles Celtic heroes more than the protagonists of continental hagiographies. Canonical hagiography begins with the episode of Saint Cuthbert's swelling in a knee and his healing by a riding angel: *From this time the lad becoming devoted to the Lord… **his benevolent piety**[8] sent forth prayers to God, and he was heard by Him who **listens to the cry of the poor**, and the men were rescued out of all their tribulations* [46, p. 175]. Thus, he is praised firstly for piety and helping people.

Then Saint Cuthbert is led through his green years to the virtue of asceticism he was glorified for. Still Saint Bede the Venerable accentuates Saint Cuthbert's martyrdom: *It is good for a man, when he hath **borne the yoke from his youth**; he shall sit alone, and shall be silent, because he shall raise himself above himself. <…> For, inspired by the sweetness of this good, Cuthbert, the man of God, from his early youth **bent his neck beneath the yoke** of the monastic institution* [46, p. 167]. Though it is clear from previous lines that Saint Cuthbert's anchoritism was volunteered eagerly, Saint Bede the Venerable considers it appropriate to insert the motive of martyrdom: *But whilst he **duly discharged the mysteries of our Lord's passion**, he would, in himself, illustrate that in which he was officiating; **in contrition of heart he would sacrifice himself to the Lord**; and whilst he exhorted the standers-by to lift up their hearts and to give thanks unto the Lord, his own heart was lifted up rather than his voice, and it was **the spirit which groaned within him** rather than the note of singing* [46, p. 213].

Saint Bede the Venerable declares that Saint Cuthbert was affable and pleasant in his character [46, p. 193] and lauds him for calmness, amiability, patience, moderation, helpfulness, benevolence, compassion, goodwill, and diligence. His character conventionally reflects in his appearance, especially in his face and eyes (the imitation of angels). The only thing that alludes to Celtic heroic traditions is Saint Cuthbert's broad frame, height, and physical strength, but Saint Bede the Venerable does not return to these characteristics further. The author singles his hero out not for his physical strength, but for his spiritual power.

The essence of Saint Cuthbert's sanctity remains his zeal in asceticism and hermitage, already admired by the anonymous author of the first vita. All the same, Saint Bede the Venerable devotes the majority of chapters to Saint Cuthbert's miracles as well as different routine wonders such as praying in the sea, conversations with angels, animals serving to him, etc. According to C. G. Loomis, there are 38 miracles [38, p. 410]. Saint Cuthbert changes the winds by a prayer to save the boatmen, stops wildfires both real and imaginary, casts out the Devil out of a good wife, draws water from the dry ground, cures people and raises the dead. All these patterns of behaviour are borrowed from the Desert Fathers' lives (and of course the Gospels) well known on the isles from the beginning of Christianity. Imitation of the early saints serves to praise Saint Cuthbert. Saint Bede the Venerable intention is also to show that all miracles are conducted by God, but angels and saints are His instruments [18, p. 66–84].

Many other motives contribute to the idea of sanctity. The motive of chosenness is especially conspicuous. In his young adult years Saint Cuthbert is given a few signs by God: an angel gives him a loaf of heavenly bread, the saint has a vision of the soul of the late bishop Aidan being carried away to Heaven, in his travels he is repeatedly supplied with food by God. Even the first Saint Cuthbert's miracles are of a prophetic nature and simultaneously reveal the man God's will to stimulate Saint Cuthbert's zeal in good deeds and piety.

As a great part of Saint Cuthbert's miracles are prophecies, they play an important role in the structure of his image alongside asceticism and wonderworking. These motives are strengthening during the narration to reflect Saint Cuthbert's raising sanctity, which is impressive by itself but also prompts that one can never rest in their piety, even a saint. Our earthly life is a way to salvation. If you stop working upon yourself, you return to sins. The hero is never satisfied with himself and never ceases pursuing God's mercy: he *assured the brethren who came to visit him, that if he had a humble residence on a rock, where the waves of the ocean shut him out from all the world, he should not even then consider himself safe from its snares, but **should be afraid** that on some occasion or other **he might fall victim to the love of riches*** [46, p. 220].

In the passage quoted, a significant element of the dichotomy between virtue and vice attracts attention, namely the struggle against avarice, one of the seven deadly sins. Saint Bede the Venerable stresses that Saint Cuthbert was not subject to it, but as a truly righteous man he did not consider himself free of it either. The motive of ungodliness is linked to the motive of the instability of things, i. e. only those who are aware of the transience of the temporal can resist worldly temptations. It is one of the means for Saint Bede the Venerable to emphasise

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[8]Hereinafter bold italic is ours. – *N. Z.*

the soul and body dichotomy, which is even better observed in the ascetic practices (standing in cold water praying, fasting, walking long distances to visit villages in the mountains and preach there, etc.). The severity of Saint Cuthbert's asceticism is often mentioned but little described. Probably, on the one hand, asceticism was taken for granted, and, on the other hand, certain practices were not flaunted to avoid the sin of pride. In its extreme manifestations, asceticism as a taming of both soul and body was associated with martyrdom under the influence of the Coptic example of a saint (the Desert Fathers). In *The Communal Rule*, Saint Columba expressed the essence of monasticism as bloodless, or white martyrdom[9] [18, p. 110]. The main part of Celtic monasticism was severe fasting. Saint Bede the Venerable focuses on Saint Cuthbert's seclusive life on his island, which makes the hero close to the saint of Celtic Church.

However, anchoritic lifestyle contradicts Saint Cuthbert's destiny of bishopric. Saint Bede the Venerable emphasises Saint Cuthbert's unwillingness to hold a high office, to perform administrative duties, and to be engaged in the noise of everyday life. Saint Bede the Venerable describes a real life of a real bishop but feels adequate to pause at the awkwardness of his hero in accepting the post to show the discrepancy between two systems of value: *Although much resisting, he was overcome by the unanimous wish of all, and compelled to submit to undertake the duties of the bishopric* [46, p. 185]. Evidently, the idea of bishopric is shown as having been imposed on Saint Cuthbert from outside by the king and brethren (and actually by Rome). Even this reason is not enough for Saint Cuthbert (and Saint Bede the Venerable) to remove the contradiction between the two hypostases of the saint, so Saint Bede the Venerable adds the motive of double prophecy: the prophecy of his future bishopric Saint Cuthbert is combined with the prophecy of the king's death within a year, which makes refusal completely impossible, contrary to the king's last will.

The syncretism described is new for the idea of sanctity of the Celtic Church but quite ordinary for the Roman tradition as Saint Bede the Venerable could deduce from Saint Martin's life. As a bishop, Saint Martin was distinguished by humility, selflessness, and modesty, and in time became a hermit, along with some 80 brothers who followed him. Saint Cuthbert goes a little further, his hermitage is solitary, but he has many visitors from the brethren and the laity, and he himself often goes preaching to the world. As a bishop, Saint Cuthbert is known for his defence of the weak and guidance of law and justice. Having done his duty, Saint Cuthbert returned to the remote solitudes, which he had long desired [46, p. 215].

To show Saint Cuthbert's holiness, Saint Bede the Venerable accumulates manifestations of God's grace and love, underlines the saint's kindness, helpfulness, and dignity, transmits a general atmosphere of benevolence in the monastery. Saint Bede the Venerable reinforces the motive when he describes the plague and other epidemics, giving the impression that kindness and help itself overcome the disease. Saint Cuthbert's learning is paid much less attention than his kindness and piety. The vita fixates on faith acting by love. This is the main Saint Bede the Venerable's intention and the essence of Saint Cuthbert's sanctity. The motive of divine love is heightened a hundredfold by the mystical pantheism[10] that pervades the hagiographic discourse. Mutual aid, kindness to animals, the service of animals and inanimate nature to Saint Cuthbert create an atmosphere of unity and love. Pantheistic circle includes even things: the grace of God dissolved in the world through a linen belt and heals a sick man after the saint's death. The obedience of things, animals, and people reflects the unconditional faith in God that is a part of Saint Cuthbert's teaching.

The last years should be present in every detail in a hagiography as they are glorified by the greatest sanctity before the saint crosses the line of the earthly life and faces God [41, p. 43]. Saint Bede the Venerable describes the prophecy of the saint's death, his fatal illness, preparation for death, dying, burial, and miracles on the grave. Dying was a mostly significant process both for Christians and heathens, hence, *ars moriendi* was perhaps one of the least conflicting ideas of the age. Holly people certainly were supposed to predict their own death, be calm and anticipate meeting the God. Plato's death, for example, can also be perceived in the Middle Ages as a holly one. Notwithstanding the significance of the dignified conduct and full awareness of death, there is the motive of martyrdom, which embodies the striking difference between let's say Socrates and Saint Cuthbert. Saint Cuthbert's disease should be excruciating and agonising to fill in the missing (weak) element of sanctity: «That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus» (*Phil 3:10*).

The author is skilful at representing a torturing disease heroically, at showing Saint Cuthbert suffering but rejoiced, and at the thorough calculation of timing of Saint Cuthbert's dying: *At the point of death, that so there might be a standing proof how strong the holy man was in spirit, though his body was at the lowest degree of weakness* [46, p. 103]. Saint Bede the Venerable represents the saint's death as a parable of the fight between angels and devils for the human soul, the demonstration of the strength of Saint Cuthbert's faith and the victory of spirit over death.

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[9]*Korolev A. A.* [Ultan and origins of Irish hagiography] : thesis of diss. … PhD (culturology) : 24.00.01. M., 2009. P. 13 (in Russ.).
[10]God's immanence to nature and transcendence to the world, without the idea of the identity between God and nature.

Conclusions

All Saint Cuthbert's patterns of behaviour (his wonder working, ascetic life, prophecies, hermitage on an island, selfless bishopric, and suffering during dying) represent him as a holy person. The new vita substantiated Saint Cuthbert's holiness and established the model for English medieval hagiographers [19, p. 4].

The author's syncretism is definitely conscious. Firstly, he wished to follow newly introduced Roman practices. Secondly, syncretism arose from the fact that none form of Christ's behaviour could lose its ideality in Christendom. Thirdly, Saint Bede the Venerable claimed Saint Cuthbert's holiness to be recognised universally and as such should be repeated. The problem of canonisation partly was the question of mixed practices. Thus, magicians also worked wonders, and the history knows a great amount of cases when the papal committee having come to venerate a local wonderworker on investigation called them a heretic or even a witch. Prophecies did not belong to purely Christian phenomena too but associated with Druids. The bishopric seemed to be too close to transient glory, especially with the fresh case of bishop Wilfrid. «It is well known that in the Latin church the process of canonisation was not centralised in papal hands until the late twelfth century, and even then could remain open to local pressures, develop from local ecclesiastical or communal initiatives, or reflect local religious cultures» [5, p. VIII]. For Saint Bede the Venerable and his hero, the bishopric was the most difficult element to install in the structure of the image of the saint, despite the fact that Saint Cuthbert really was a bishop. The reason for it is the novelty of the Roman organisation of the church and absence of this motive in Gospels. Celts felt it alien to their monasticism, but had to submit. And vice versa, martyrdom in its original form was not present in Celtic saints' reality, but the author inserts and emphasises imitative (imitating Christ's passions), or white martyrdom in his work because martyrdom both physical and spiritual felt congruent to Irish monasticism.

In such multicultural and diverse challenges, Saint Bede the Venerable had to use all means available to argue that Saint Cuthbert combines every conceivable virtue. He involves the structure of the image, the composition, the motives, and the rhetoric formulas in his strategy (various aspects of hagiographic poetics). As syncretism of the image can be explained by sacred and common practices, we can assume, that «the literary direction is based primarily on the social functions of this phenomenon, the set ideological and aesthetic tasks» [1, p. 5], i. e. poetics of medieval genres was tightly connected with social, religious, and cultural contexts.

In one important sense, sanctity is thus a social construct, and as such the ideals and practice of sanctity changed, often greatly, over the course of time and place in Christianity. Nevertheless, the structure of the image remained almost untouched to stay recognisable, credible, ideal, potent of all its intentions (axiological, didactic, aesthetic, and sacred). These observations show that syncretism is a successful strategy for an idea to survive through centuries, and that it can be partially a deliberate process. The pursuit of formal syncretism led to figurative syncretism. The syncretic nature of the image became the key to its sustainability and resilience.

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