

“SECRECY” IN THE ASCETICISM OF ST RADEGUND ACCORDING TO VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS’ *VITA*

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Sainthood has always been considered a major aspect of the complex cultural and spiritual values of the Early Middle Ages. The period chosen for this study (the second half of the 6th century CE) may be characterised by the dynamic nature of its culture during the transition from a pagan cultural paradigm to a Christian one.

Various aspects of the perception of “sainthood” in the Early Middle Ages made it appropriate to use different types of representative texts as source material. Analysis of early medieval texts contributes to the reconstruction of the spirituality, social parameters of religious life (in particular at the so-called grassroots level), and religious and cultural perceptions of society, as well as to understanding the general categories of early medieval culture. As a result, the semantic content of primary sources has come to play a leading role in this research. Investigation of various texts written in this period demonstrates the difference in descriptions of parallel events in the lives of saints, as well as the varying attention paid by different (or sometimes even the same) writers to those events. Therefore, the application of various techniques of linguistic analysis is likely to be appropriate for the historian.

It goes without saying that the phenomenon of holiness is an element of Christian religious culture. And one area in which religious views about sanctity (the ideal and mode of holiness) found expression in the Early Middle Ages was the sphere of hagiography. In our research we have focused our analysis on Merovingian¹ hagiographical sources, specifically

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¹ Merovingians - were a Frankish dynasty that ruled the Franks for nearly 300 years in a region known as Francia in Latin, beginning in the middle of the 5th century. Their territory largely corresponded to ancient Gaul.

the various versions of the Life of St Radegund,² which reflect the category of sainthood.

The Lives (*Vitae*) of early medieval male and female saints were intended to serve as inspirations as well as *exempla* for the faithful. They provided role models of proper behaviour which were to be admired and, in some cases, imitated. The intended purpose or expressed end of all saints' Lives was pastoral and didactic: to edify the faithful, to teach Christian virtues and to strengthen Christian resolve.

The Church hoped that through the use of models of sainthood the faithful might modify their behaviour or bring about "conversions" in their own spiritually deficient lives.

During the Merovingian period, those who received recognition of holiness were essentially local popular saints rather than candidates formally canonised by the papacy. In Frankish society the making of women saints was a rather loose and spontaneous procedure of designation by the *vox populi*. In this regard, the image of the holy person and his/her hagiography in this troubled period had not yet been strictly formalised.

The stereotypical imaginative and rhetorical language of hagiographic texts allows us to divide almost any Life into a number of separate quotations taken from already existing and respected Christian texts.³ However, the use of stereotype is only one aspect of the discursive structure of hagiographic texts. Another aspect lies in their predetermined function relating to the resolution of ideological problems. Often hagiographic works were used for the benefit of a certain social group: the authority of the saintly person was supposed to protect the interests of a particular community, and provide justification of their rights and claims.

In church circles the comprehension and articulation of the concept of "sainthood" was one of the central ideological and spiritual tasks. A "typical" *Vita* contains a catalogue of the saint's virtues, temptations or trials, miracles, visions, and prophecies. Every saint had the standard list of virtues, because the nature of sanctity lies in "Imitatio Christi."⁴ The hagiographer had to take into account the scheme of a hagiographic canon and the actual type of holiness. But the manifestation and ways of achieving sanctity were various, so hagiographers represented ascetic practices, and

² St Radegund - (also spelled *Rhadegund*, *Radegonde*, *Radigund*, *Radegunda*, *Radegundis*, *Saint Radegunda*) (ca. 518-587) was a 6th century Thuringian princess and Frankish queen, who founded the nunnery of the Holy Cross at Poitiers - the one of the biggest early medieval female cloisters. She was canonised and her memory is celebrated on 13 August.

³ See Delehay 1907, p. 12-39; Grous 1965, p. 61 sqq.

⁴ Heffernan 1988, p. 28-30.

thus sainthood itself, differently, especially in the Dark Ages. This is illustrated by two versions of the Life of St Radegund.

St Radegund was an ascetic Queen, the “spiritual mother of the Merovingians”⁵ and founder of one of the largest convents in the Frankish kingdom in the second half of the 6th century.⁶

The life of this queen-saint is one of the best documented in this early period, as we know about her life and sainthood from various texts. For example, Gregory of Tours,⁷ the comprehensive historian of the Merovingian period, documented her role in politics and church history in several texts, including the *History of the Franks*.⁸ For us, the most important texts are the two Lives of Radegund written by people who had known her personally. The first was written by Venantius Fortunatus,⁹ the most significant Latin poet of the 6th century, an intimate friend and spiritual adviser to St Radegund and later the bishop of Poitiers.¹⁰ His *Vita* of Radegund is one of the first biographies of a holy woman in the West, written probably around 595. About 15 years later, Baudonivia,¹¹ a nun in Radegund’s convent who had known her well, wrote another biography of the saint.¹²

⁵ Dumézil 2012, p. 231.

⁶ About Radegund: Aigrain 1918; Gäbe 1989, p. 1-30; McNamara 1992, p. 60-105; Bikeeva 2007, p. 7-17; Bikeeva 2011, p. 98-118.

⁷ Gregory of Tours (538-594) was a Gallo-Roman historian and Bishop of Tours, which made him a leading prelate of Gaul. He is the main contemporary source for Merovingian history. His most notable work was his *Decem Libri Historiarum* or *Ten Books of Histories*, better known as the *Historia Francorum* (“History of the Franks”), a title given to it by later chroniclers, but he is also known for his credulous accounts of the miracles of saints, especially four books of the miracles of St Martin of Tours. St Martin’s tomb was a major draw in the 6th century, and Gregory’s writings had the practical aspect of promoting this highly organised devotion.

⁸ Gregorii, X, 1951, III, 4-7; VI, 29; IX, 39, 42.

⁹ Venantius Fortunatus (c. 530-c. 600/609) was a Latin poet and hymnodist in the Merovingian Court, author of hagiographic texts and a Bishop of Poitiers. He was never canonised but was venerated as Saint Venantius Fortunatus during the Middle Ages. Fortunatus is best known for two poems that have become part of the liturgy of the Catholic Church.

¹⁰ Fortunatus, I, 1888, p. 364-376. For the translations I have made partial use of the translations of the two *vitae* in McNamara 1992, p. 70-105.

¹¹ Baudonivia was a Frankish nun and scholar at the convent of Poitiers who, between 600 and 610, was asked by the abbess to compose a memoir of their founder, Radegund. Relying on memory (Baudonivia knew Radegund as a child), an earlier biography written by the bishop and poet Venantius Fortunatus, and hagiographical sources, Baudonivia created a portrait of a deeply devout but politically shrewd woman who used her worldly power to sustain the monastery.

¹² Baudonivia 1888, p. 377-395.

In recent years, several historians have contrasted the Lives written by Fortunatus and Baudonivia, including Sabine Gäbe¹³ (1989), Jo Ann McNamara¹⁴ (1992), Susanne Wittern¹⁵ (1994), Giselle de Nie¹⁶ (1995), Simon Coates¹⁷ (1996), Linda Coon¹⁸ (1997), John Kitchen¹⁹ (1998), Dick Harrison²⁰ (1998), Gábor Klaniczay²¹ (2000), Ruth Wehlau²² (2002), Jason Glenn²³ (2012), etc. Most of them studied either the content of the hagiographical source itself with reference to its context or tried to identify the reasons the texts were written, in other words, to explain the politics of sainthood.

On the whole, each author comes to very similar conclusions after a systematic comparison of the two Lives. But these conclusions are based on a study of various aspects of Radegund's spiritual biographies. For example, Susanne Wittern shows especially well that Fortunatus stresses Radegund's admirable aspects while Baudonivia, writing for an audience of cloistered women, adds many imitable qualities.

Sabine Gäbe also notes that the two *Vitae* are tied to the specific historical context of their authors. Fortunatus' *Vita*, on the one hand, stresses the saintly virtues of Radegund, particularly her rigorous asceticism and humility. In his rather obvious omissions, Fortunatus defends the interests of the bishop of Poitiers and the Church as far as its management of the monastery was concerned. Baudonivia's "Klostervita," on the other hand, describes Radegund as a charismatic miracle-worker and royal founder of the convent, as well as an exemplary nun.

Simon Coates looks at what the two lives of Radegund reveal about the differing male and female perceptions of sanctity. A similar approach is used by John Kitchen, who studies the *Vitae* written by Fortunatus and Baudonivia, as well as Gregory of Tours' account of Radegund, in order to see how the saint was described by these two men and one woman.

Linda Coon points out that while both hagiographies - Fortunatus' and Baudonivia's - share a similar structure and the usual representations of

¹³ Gäbe 1989, p. 1-30.

¹⁴ McNamara 1992, p. 60-105.

¹⁵ Wittern 1994, p. 100-107.

¹⁶ Nie 1995, p. 101-105.

¹⁷ Coates 1998, p. 37-50.

¹⁸ Coon 1997, p. 120-141.

¹⁹ Kitchen 1998.

²⁰ Harrison 1998, p. 280-285.

²¹ Klaniczay 2002, p. 70-78.

²² Wehlau 2002, p. 75-89.

²³ Glenn 2011, p. 57-69.

female piety, differences occur when each author emphasises particular aspects of the *Vita* in order to create a different picture of the holy woman. In Coon’s opinion, the male author, although having the usual “radical gender inversions,” tempers them in order to present a more feminised, that is, domestic and cloistered, version; the female author, however, allows Radegund to have accomplishments within the pastoral and administrative spheres. Coon believes that Fortunatus depicts Radegund as a prophet and female Christ with some sacerdotal functions, but also emphasises that her charismatic asceticism is contained in a domestic and feminised environment; Baudonivia stresses her role as an astute politician and destroyer of pagan shrines, and highlights her administrative achievements. It is interesting that Linda Coon and Susanne Wittern (see above) have come to very similar conclusions after a systematic comparison of the two Lives.

According to Gábor Klaniczay, Fortunatus focuses on the queen’s activity as that of a Merovingian Martha, whereas Baudonivia recounts Radegund’s life within the context of the relic hunting, political arbitration and pastoral duty.

By comparing the differing aims of the two Lives of St Radegund, Jason Glenn offers a model of how to compare two these sources. His essay, *Two Lives of Saint Radegund*, provides a detailed comparison between these two *Vitae*. He concludes that Fortunatus emphasises how Radegund overcame the “inherent shortcomings of her sex,”²⁴ whilst Baudonivia offers the saint’s royal power and her abilities as an exemplar to her sisters.

For us in this case it is important that in contrast to the text by Baudonivia, Fortunatus emphasises, among other things, Radegund’s intention to hold her ascetic practices in secret.

As noted by Ruth Wehlau,²⁵ Fortunatus repeatedly depicts Radegund’s ascetic behaviour as hidden or private, using a variety of expressions: *subocculte*,²⁶ *occulte*,²⁷ *secretissime*,²⁸ *furtim*,²⁹ *in secreto*.³⁰ We can add the term *intima*³¹ to this list.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 59.

²⁵ Wehlau 2002, p. 79.

²⁶ Fortunatus, 4 (here and further indicated a chapter number of the text of the *Vita sanctae Radegundis*, written by Venantius Fortunatus).

²⁷ Ibid., 15, 33, 37.

²⁸ Ibid., 16.

²⁹ Ibid., 19.

³⁰ Ibid., 29.

³¹ Ibid., 26.

In Fortunatus' *Vita*, Rade Gund secretly feeds the poor and lepers, stealthily eats lean food during the feast, privately heals the sick, covertly mortifies her flesh and resurrects the dead. For instance, when Fortunatus describes the royal banquet, he notes that Rade Gund not eat festive foods but was satisfied with a simple meal. Importantly, she also did not demonstrate this to others people: "*In mensa vero subocculte, ne forte cogno sceretur ab aliquot, ante se posito cum legumine ferculo, inter epulas regum more trium puerorum fava vel lenticula delectabiliter vescebatur.*"³² The hagiographer points out that she hid her humble food under gourmet dishes: "*Quod in mensa sub fladone sigilatium panem absconsum vel ordeatium manducabat occulte, sic ut nemo perciperet.*"³³

During Lent, Rade Gund ground her own flour, but again hid this from other people: "*Tum more sancti Germani jubet sibi molam secretissime deferri, ad quamtotam quadragesimam, in quantum quatriddianna rafectio postulavit, oblations etiam suis minibus faciens.*"³⁴ Fortunatus also emphasises that Rade Gund conceals the fact that she feeds the poor: "*Qua sibi renuntiante, parata mensa... , intromittebatur furtim, quo se nemo perciperet.*"³⁵

However, according to Fortunatus, these actions of Rade Gund deserved great praise and honour, so he tells us about them: "*Illud quod gessit in secreto proferatur in populum.*"³⁶ And also: "*Sed, quod occulte gessit, celare diu non potuit.*"³⁷

Fortunatus describes cases where Rade Gund healed the sick and those possessed by the devil. Yet, according to Fortunatus, Rade Gund's humility was so great that she secretly reproached herself for slowness in such cases: "*Dixit plane, sed fecit sanctam mulierem occulte reficiende tempore paenitentem.*"³⁸

Even where we do not find words indicating the secrecy of her actions, in the text of Fortunatus' *Vita*, one can see from the context that Rade Gund acted covertly. For example, Fortunatus describes a case when

³² "Secretly, lest anyone notice, at royal banquets, she fed most deliciously on beans or lentils from the dish of legumes placed before her, in the manner of the three boys" (ibid., 4).

³³ "At table she secretly chewed rye or barley bread which she had hidden under a cake to escape notice" (ibid., 15).

³⁴ "Then, emulating Saint Germanus' custom, she secretly had a millstone brought to her. Throughout the whole of Quadragesima, she ground fresh flour with her own hands. She continuously distributed each offering to local religious communities, in the amount needed for the meal taken every four days" (ibid., 16).

³⁵ "Having learned that, she had a table laid with dishes, spoons, little knives, cups and goblets, and wine and she went in herself secretly that none might see her" (ibid., 19).

³⁶ "What she did secretly was to become known to all people" (ibid., 29).

³⁷ "But what she did secretly could not be concealed for long" (ibid., 37).

³⁸ "She said this publicly but it made the holy woman secretly sorry that she had been so slow to heal the afflicted" (ibid., 33).

lepers came to the monastery and Radegund, as usual, washed, treated and fed them. After this she gave them new clothes or gold without witnesses: “*Recedentibus praebebat auri vel vestimenti, vix una teste, munuscula.*”³⁹ Then, to emphasise Radegund’s desire to hide her actions, Fortunatus indicates that nevertheless a maid still knew about it, “*Ministra tamen praesumebat.*”⁴⁰

Another example from Fortunatus’ *Vita* of Radegund regards how she not only ate rye or barley bread, but hid it under cake (*flado*) so that no one noticed what she was eating: “*Panis vero deliciarum sigilatium fuit aut ordeatum, quem absconsum sub fladone sumebat, ne quis percipere.*”⁴¹

When Fortunatus describes Radegund’s self-mortification, he also emphasises her commitment to performing such activities in secret: “*Tacens tegit foramina, sed computrescens sanguis manifestabat, quod vox non prodebat in poena.*” Discussing this, Fortunatus uses the term *intima*: “... *et intima, quo attingit ardour, fit fossa.*”⁴²

As for the miracles of healing achieved by Radegund, Fortunatus says that she ordered those involved not to tell anyone: “*Quod tamen ipsa imperabat, ne quis proferret in fabula.*”⁴³

Indeed, even the nuns of her convent did not know how the holy woman carried out her healing work because, as her hagiographer writes, she ordered everyone to leave her cell, so that no one could see her healing the sick: “*Hinc iubet omnes removeri, remanente tantum sola simul aegrota cum medica fere per horas duas.*”⁴⁴

However, from Fortunatus’ text we see that, unlike others, the author himself was well aware of the saint’s healing processes. He wrote that Radegund touched the nun’s sore limbs one after the other. And everywhere that Radegund’s hands passed, the pain disappeared. Thus, according to this account, the sick woman, who had previously required two nuns to help her into the bath, was able to leave on her own, restored to perfect health.

Radegund also performed miracles of resurrection alone, without witnesses: “*Sancta tunc imperat, ut cadaver ipsius suam deferret in cellulam. Quo sibi*

³⁹ “To this there was scarcely a single witness ...” (ibid., 19).

⁴⁰ “... but the attendant presumed to chide her softly” (ibid., 19).

⁴¹ “Her bread was made from rye or barley which she concealed under the pudding lest anyone notice what she ate” (ibid., 21).

⁴² “Silently, she concealed the holes, but the putrefying blood betrayed the pain that her voice did not reveal” (ibid., 26).

⁴³ “And she ordered these things herself lest anyone tell tales” (ibid., 20).

⁴⁴ “Then she ordered everyone to leave, remaining alone with the sick woman as a doctor for two hours” (ibid., 29).

*deportato, excepit manu propria, reclausa post se mox janua, jubens longe discedere, ne quis sentiret, quid ageret.*⁴⁵

Generally, according to Fortunatus, Radegund always acted in such a way that no one saw what she was doing. For instance, there are accounts of numerous activities associated with cleaning convent that she performed at night, when all the other nuns were asleep: “*Adhuc monachabus omnibus soporantibus, calciamenta tergens et unguens, retransmittebat per singulas.*”⁴⁶

Why do we find so many secrets in the text by Fortunatus? And why does he often use different terms which imply secrecy?

First of all, it may have been necessary to demonstrate the saint’s humility. This virtue was especially important in the descriptions of the lives of holy women, allowing us to trace the influence of the gender stereotypes of this period. *Vitae* frequently provided cultural symbols of gendered images. For example, one of the most desirable behaviours for female saints was the intention not to manifest their virtue. Monastic rules vividly reveal differing expectations between the ways nuns and monks were to relate to the world beyond the monastery’s walls. Primarily it was the degree to which these rules expected holy persons to be separate from the world that created this difference; for the most part, they required nuns to stay inside the cloister while monks, after taking a few necessary precautions, could leave their communities.

The dichotomy between the sexes, illustrated in their respective monastic rules, was most fully depicted by Caesarius of Arles, who prescribed that a nun must never, up to the time of her death, leave the monastery:

“If a girl, leaving her parents, desires to renounce the world and enter the holy fold to escape the jaws of the spiritual wolves through the help of God, she must never, up to the time of her death, go outside of the monastery, nor beyond the door of the basilica.”⁴⁷

Monastic rules indicated that the nun’s power, her virginity, could be placed in danger through the weakness of her womanly, and therefore sensual, nature coming into contact with the outside world. Therefore, the Rule of Caesarius of Arles strongly discouraged any notion of women’s privacy. Such behaviour was required to ensure their reputations as virginal and chaste brides of Christ. Even earlier, Jerome noted that chastity cannot

⁴⁵ “There she took the corpse into her own hands, closing the door behind her and ordering the other to withdraw to a distance lest she sense what she was doing” (ibid., 37).

⁴⁶ “While all the nuns were deep in sleep, she would collect their shoes, restoring them cleaned and oiled to each” (ibid., 23).

⁴⁷ Caesarius Arelatensis 1933, II, 50.

be preserved otherwise. Caesarius’ advice continues the tradition of emphasising the individualistic nature of female spirituality. The enclosed nunnery became the ideal illustration of that.⁴⁸

That is not to say that female saints had to hide their actions from other nuns in their convent. However, in Fortunatus’ text Radegund conceals her actions even from her fellow nuns, for example, when she secretly heals the sick or mortifies her flesh. Probably Fortunatus deliberately inflated in his text the motive of “secrecy” in Radegund’s actions. Despite the fact that she carefully hides her pious deeds, they become known to other people, in particular thanks to the miracles. Her miracles - for example, the miracle of healing - made these secrets visible.⁴⁹ Therefore the secrets provide evidence of Radegund’s sanctity.

The ability to perform miracles was the most important quality that distinguished the saint, in the opinion of early medieval people.⁵⁰ Therefore, the phenomenon of the “miracle” as fundamental evidence of hero’s sainthood was reflected in practically every hagiographic work. Although holiness was thought to be a divine gift, predestined from the moment of a man or woman’s birth, from Christianity’s ethical viewpoint, holiness could be uncovered during a lifetime through the personal perfection of a man or woman.

Fortunatus’ own narrative echoes the miracles, making Radegund’s secrets known and allowing the reader to enter enclosed chambers and cells with the saint. At the same time, her miracles mean that what is done in private is also done publicly. Fortunatus’ text reveals the secrets of saintliness, and thus constructs not only Radegund’s holiness, but also the authority of the author, who possesses this secret knowledge. Unlike Fortunatus, Baudonivia in her *Life of Radegund* does not show that she knows what is hidden from others, although she was dwelling within the convent walls. For Baudonivia, Radegund’s sanctity is public, not secret.

Fortunatus notably writes nothing about the “public” events of Radegund’s cloistered life, such as the ceremony at which the Holy Cross

⁴⁸ Radegund, the foundress of convent at Poitiers, adopted Caesarius’ Rule for Nuns, in which Caesarius instituted a policy of strict protective enclosure. However, while the Rule was intended to limit the nuns’ contact with the outside world, the nuns actually had frequent interactions with outsiders. Daily life did not necessarily correspond to the Rule, and nuns could adapt their interpretation of the Rule to suit special circumstances or to serve their own personal motivations (see Gillette 1993, p. 381-387).

⁴⁹ Miracles of the saints were diverse, but the most numerous among them, and therefore the important to the public, were instances of healing from various diseases.

⁵⁰ Regarding the miracle as one of the most important attributes of the Holy and as the theme of hagiographic works, see Sigal 1985.

enters the convent or Radegund's funeral in 587, choosing not to include these in her *Vita*. Fortunatus's image of Radegund's seclusion, especially after her entrance into the cloister, would have jarred with the contrasting public nature of these events.

Moreover, Fortunatus probably believed that the divine sanction of her mission was not only symbolised by the strength and zeal with which Radegund overcame numerous physical obstacles to achieve a life of chastity and sanctity, but also by the hidden character of her ascetic actions.

The topos of secret ascetic activity in Fortunatus' *Vita* indicates a close relationship between him and Radegund, which would have been based on friendship. Indeed, Venantius Fortunatus, as Radegund's intimate friend and spiritual advisor, was in a position to know more than others about her life. Fortunatus really knew Radegund, having lived for about 30 years at her convent. In addition, Fortunatus sincerely grieved after her death, and almost immediately began to establish her cult.

Nonetheless, when he wrote Radegund's biography, he also had other motivations. Radegund's secrets allow the author to draw the readers' attention to himself. Probably, Fortunatus wanted to show that he could see what was hidden to others. He even, apparently, knew her thoughts: for instance, when he describes how a joke made by the abbess caused Radegund to be secretly sorry that she had not yet effected a cure for an afflicted woman. In this regard, the accumulation of secrets in Fortunatus' *Vita* of Radegund is more than a demonstration of the humility of the saint; it is also a way to attract the attention to the hagiographer's own "exceptional" knowledge, as he uncovers secrets which were unknown to anyone, even the nuns of Radegund's convent. The text of the Lives of Radegund, as written Fortunatus, shows its author as an omniscient narrator. He is able to go where others cannot, and tell of the deeds of the Saint when she does not speak for herself.

The motive of secrecy distinguishes the *Life of St Radegund* written by Fortunatus not only from the text Baudonivia, but also from accounts of other holy women of this period. It should be noted that in the Lives of other sainted women of the 6th century - such as Monegund, Eustadiola, Rusticula and Glodezind - we find no mention of any secretive actions.

Despite this distinctive feature of Fortunatus' *Vita* of Radegund, more generally his work became a literary model for subsequent hagiographies. The obvious influence of his story can be found in a few Lives with different inflections, such as the Lives of Sts. Balthild, Mathilda and Margaret of Scotland.⁵¹ Of course, the authors of the Lives of other

⁵¹ See Schulenburg 1998, p. 20.

holy women describe them, as in Radegund’s *Vita*, eating simple and rough food, wearing a hair shirt or performing the most humiliating and dirty chores in the nunnery. But the motive of secrecy is not repeated except, perhaps, in the Life of St Mathilda written in the 10th century.⁵²

As Jason Glenn puts it, “even if the Lives tell us less than we might like about Radegund herself, these vitae teach us something about their authors and about the larger world in which they wrote.”⁵³ Fortunatus wanted to emphasise that he was the bearer of secret knowledge and thus power. It is only thanks to him and the miracles (as a manifestation of divine blessing) that we learn of the deeds demonstrating Radegund’s sanctity.

Thus by concentrating on the *Vita sanctae Radegundis* written by Fortunatus, we can attempt to reconstruct medieval perspectives and consider sacred biography in relation to the community for which it was written, identify the genre’s rhetorical practices and purposes, and demonstrate the syncretistic way in which the life of the medieval saint was transformed from oral tale to sacred text. Thereby the process of research based on hagiographical texts not only achieves a more contextually accurate understanding of the medieval saints’ lives, but details a new critical method that has important implications for the practice of textual criticism.

**“Secrecy” in the Asceticism of St Radegund
According to Venantius Fortunatus’ *Vita***

(Abstract)

The figure of the saint, as well as the concept of holiness, is one of the central elements in the complex of human values of the Early Middle Ages. The aim of this paper is to identify ways of establishing elements of the Christian cultural model based on the analysis of the ideals of holiness in the texts representing this historical period. To achieve this, the study focuses on the identification of features indicating the perception and understanding of holiness in the Early Middle Ages.

The article dwells on the *Vita* (Life) of a famous Frankish Saint, Radegund, written by a well-known poet and bishop, Venantius Fortunatus, in the late 6th century. Although this author draws upon a standard list of basic monastic virtues of that time, in the rhetoric and imagery he uses to describe the saint’s devotion, Fortunatus’ text differs from other works of this genre in the Early Middle Ages in many ways.

The main aim of this report is to determine how the author’s personality, his inner intentions and self-interest affected the creation of this hagiographic image of the saint. It is in this regard that attention is paid to the topos of “secrecy” in Fortunatus’ descriptions of Radegund’s ascetic practices. Similar motives for secrecy are not found, either in other

⁵² The sacred biography of the queen-saint Margaret of Scotland (1046-1093) was written by her contemporary and confidant, Turgot, prior of Durham and bishop of St Andrews.

⁵³ Glenn 2011, p. 58.

Vitae by Fortunatus, or in the spiritual biographies of other holy women of the period compiled by different authors.

In our opinion this is largely explained by Fortunatus' personal motives in creating the *Vita* of St Radegund. The author wanted to show that he knew something that was hidden from others. Thus, the motive of "secret" asceticism is used not only to demonstrate the humility and piety of the saint, but as a way to attract attention to the *Vita's* author.

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- Keywords:** Sainthood, holiness, Early Middle Ages, hagiography, Radegund, Fortunatus, Baudonivia, asceticism.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	- Acta Archaeologica. Copenhagen.
AAL	- Asien Africa Lateinamerika. Zeitschrift des Zentralen Rates für Asien-, Afrika- und Lateinamerikawissenschaften in der DDR. Berlin.
AAMT	- Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory. Orlando.
AAnt	- American Antiquity. Society for American Archaeology. Washington.
ABM	- Alaska Business Monthly. Anchorage.
Acta Asiatica	- Acta Asiatica. Bulletin of the Institute of Eastern Culture. Tokyo.
AO	- Arkheologicheskiiye otkrytiya (1965-2013). Moscow.
AOASH	- Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae. Institute of Oriental Studies. Budapest.
AP	- Arkheologiya Podmoskov'ya. Materialy nauchnogo seminar. Institute of Archaeology Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
ArchOttoman	- Archivum Ottomanicum. Wiesbaden Ottoman Archives. Wiesbaden.
Ars Judaica	- Ars Judaica. Bar-Ilan University. Ramat Gan.
Art-menedzher	- Art-menedzher. Business magazine considering culture and art as a resource for the social and economic development of society and offering various technologies and methodologies of management of this process. Moscow.
Bibliosphera	- Bibliosphera. The Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Novosibirsk.
BKF	- Baltiiskii filologicheskii kurer. Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University. Kaliningrad.
BM	- Byulleten' Moskovskogo obshchestva ispytateley prirody. Otdel biologicheskoy. Moscow Society of Naturalists. Moscow.
BMMS	- Byulleten Muzeya Marka Shagala. Marc Chagall Museum. Vitebsk.
Byilyie godyi	- Byilyie godyi. Sochi State University. Sochi.
CAn	- Current Anthropology. Chicago.
CHR	- The Canadian Historical Review. University of Toronto Press. Toronto.

CIS	- Culturulogicheskie issledovania Sibiri. Omsk State University. Omsk.
Comparativ	- Comparativ. Leipziger Beiträge zur Universalgeschichte und vergleichenden Gesellschaftsforschung. Universität Leipzig, Global and European Studies Institute. Leipzig.
CRJ	- Classical Reception Journal. The Open University (UK). Oxford.
Den'gi	- Den'gi. Publishing House "Kommersant." Moscow.
EDV	- Ekonomicheskaya zhizn Dalnego Vostoka. Geographic Society. Khabarovsk, Amur.
EHQ	- European History Quarterly. University of London. London.
EJNH	- European Journal of Natural History. The Russian Academy of Natural History. Moscow.
Ethnos	- Ethnos. Journal of Anthropology. London.
Études/Inuit/Studies	- Études/Inuit/Studies. Association Inuksiutiit Katimajit Inc. Québec.
EZ	- Evolucijazni na Zemle. Tomsk State University. Tomsk.
Femida	- Femida. Media Corporation "ZAN." Almaty.
Florilegium	- Florilegium. The journal of the Canadian Society of Medievalists. Ottawa.
Forsait	- Forsait. Higher School of Economy. Moscow.
Francia	- Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte, hg. vom Deutschen Historischen Institut Paris (Institut Historique Allemand). Paris.
Fundamental Research	- Fundamental Research. Russian Academy of Natural History. Moscow.
Genetics	- Genetics. Genetics Society of America. Bethesda (USA).
Genetika	- Genetika. Russian Journal of Genetics. Moscow State University. Moscow.
Geologiya i geofizika	- Geologiya i geofizika. Institute of Geology and Geophysics of the Siberian Department of the Science Academy in the USSR, Novosibirsk. Published by the Siberian department of the Science Academy in the USSR. Novosibirsk.
Gyanovashchya	- Gyanovashchya. Dnepropetrovsk State University. Dnepropetrovsk.
HN	- Hraniteli naslediya. Altay State Pedagogical Academy. Barnaul.
HZ	- Historische Zeitschrift. Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main.
Karavan	- Karavan (newspaper). Almaty.
KAS	- Der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung - Auslandsinformationen. Berlin.

KPZ	- Kazanskij pedagogicheskij zhurnal. Institute of Pedagogy and Psychology. Kazan.
IAIAND	- Istoriko-arkheologicheskie issledovaniya v g. Azove i na Nizhnem Donu v 2006 g., Don.
Istoriografiya	- Istoriografiya i istochnikovedenie istorii stran Azii i Afriki. Leningrad State University. Leningrad.
Istoriya i sovremennost'	- Istoriya i sovremennost'. Moscow.
Izvestia Ugo	- Izvestija Ugo-Zapadnogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta. Kursk.
IzvSamarsk	- Izvestiya Samarskogo nauchnogo tsentra RAN. Samara.
JBAA	- Journal of the British Archaeological Association, British Archaeological Association. London.
Kulturnoe nasledie	- Kulturnoe nasledie. Altai State University, Altai Territory, Barnaul.
Lesnoi Zhurnal	- Lesnoi Zhurnal. Izvestiia Vysshikh Uchebnykh Zavedenii. Bulletin of Higher Educational Institution. Arkhangelsk.
LKK	- Literatura i kultura v Kitae. Moscow.
LSJ	- Life Science Journal. Acta Zhengzhou University Overseas. Zhengzhou University. New York.
JAMT	- Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory. New York.
JAR	- Journal of Archaeological Research. Journal of Archaeological Research. New York.
JISV	- Jekonomicheskie i istoricheskie issledovaniya na Severo-Vostoke SSSR. Economic and historical research in the North-East of the USSR. Magadan.
KT	- Kazakhskaya tsivilizatsiya. University Kaimar Almaty. Almaty.
Marketing	- Marketing. Centre for Marketing Research and Management. Moscow.
MBD	- Molodyye v bibliotechnom dele. Youth in Library Science. Moscow.
MEJSR	- Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research. International scientific journal published by the international digital organization for scientific information (IDOSI).
Memoirs SAA	- Memoirs of the Society for American Archaeology. Society for American Archaeology. Washington DC.
MENP	- Materialy po evolyucii nazemnykh pozvochnykh. Moscow.
MIA	- Materialy po istorii i archeologii SSSR. Moscow, Saint Petersburg.
MIFFK	- Materialy po istorii fauny i flory Kazahstana. Kazakhstan.

Mir bibliografii	- Mir bibliografii. Moscow.
Mir obrazovaniya	- Mir obrazovaniya - obrazovanie v mire. Scientific-Methodological Journal. Moscow Psychology and Sociology Institute. Moscow.
MNKO	- Mir Nauki, Kul'tury, Obrazovaniya. Gorno-Altaysk.
Molodezh' Tatarstana	- Molodezh' Tatarstana. Newspaper. Kazan.
MUSEUM	- MUSEUM. UNESCO.
Narodnaya shkola	- Narodnaya shkola. Saint Petersburg.
Nauchnoye obozreniye	- Nauchnoye obozreniye, series 2, Gumanitarniye nauki. Lomonosov Moscow State University. Moscow.
Nauch.-tekhn. Inform	- Nauchnaya i tekhnicheskaya informatsiya. Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
Naukovedeniye	- Naukovedeniye. Institute of History of Natural Sciences and Technics named after S. I. Vavilov of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
Neues Leben	- Neues Leben [newspaper]. Berlin.
NIV	- Novyy istoricheskiy vestnik. Obshchestvo s ogranichennoj otvetstvennost'yu "Izdatel'stvo Ippolitova." Moscow.
NKOGK	- Obshchestvo i gosudarstvo v Kitae: XXXIX nauchnaia konferentsiia. Moscow.
NNZ	- Novgorod i Novgorodskaya zemlya. Istoriya i arkhologiya. Veliki Novgorod.
Novosti	- Russian News Agency "Novosti." Moscow.
NT	- Nauchnyi Tatarstan. Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan. Kazan.
NTB	- Nauchnyye i tekhnicheskiye biblioteki. The State Public Scientific and Technical Library Russia. Moscow.
Odyssey	- Odyssey. Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Universal History. Moscow.
ONS	- Obshchestvennuyye nauki i sovremennost. Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
OT	- Otechestvennyye zapiski. Saint Petersburg.
Panorama iskusstv	- Panorama iskusstv. Sovetskii khudozhnik. Moscow.
Pervye amerikancy	- Pervye amerikancy. First Americans (Almanac). Russian Society of Indianists. Saint Petersburg.
PGI	- Problemi Gumanitarnih Issledovaniy. Russian State Institute for Regional Issues in Northern Caucasus. Pyatigorsk.
Polar Record	- Polar Record. A Journal of Arctic and Antarctic Research. Scott Polar Research Institute. Cambridge (UK).
Politische Wissenschaft	- Politische Wissenschaft. Deutsche Hochschule für Politik Berlin.

Polzunovskiy vestnik	- Polzunovskiy vestnik. Altay State Technical University. Barnaul.
Pozdneplejstocenovye	- Pozdneplejstocenovye i rannegolocenovye kul'turnye svyazi Azii i Ameriki. Institute of History, Philology and Philosophy. Novosibirsk.
Prizrenie	- Prizrenie i blagotvoritel'nost' v Rossii. Izdanie Vserossijskogo sojuza uchrezhdenij, obshhestv i dejatelej po obshhestvennomu i chastnomu prizreniju. Saint Petersburg.
Problemi filosofii	- Problemi filosofii. Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
Proceedings Volgograd	- Proceedings of the Volgograd State Pedagogical University. Volgograd.
PsZ	- Psikhologicheskij zhurnal. Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
PT	- Perspectives on Terrorism. The Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI) headquartered in Vienna, and the Center for Terrorism and Security Studies (CTSS) headquartered at the University of Massachusetts' Lowell campus. Massachusetts.
RA	- Rossiiskaia Arkheologiya. Moscow.
Reka vremen	- Reka vremen. Moscow.
Rivista di Bizantinistica	- Rivista di Bizantinistica. Bologna.
RossEconom	- Rossiski ekonomicheskij jurnal. International Academy of Business and Management. Moscow.
Rossiyskaya Gazeta	- Rossiyskaya Gazeta. Russian government daily newspaper. Moscow.
SA	- Sovetskaja Arkheologija. Institute of Archaeology, Russia, Moscow. Moscow.
SC	- Sviyazhskie chteniya. Sviyazhsk.
Scientometrics	- Scientometrics. Akadémiai Kiadó. Budapest.
Serdalo	- Obschenacionalnaya gaseta Respubliki Ingushetiya "Serdalo." Nazran.
SGV	- Saratovskie gubernskie vedomosti. Saratov.
Shagalovskii sbornik	- Shagalovskii sbornik. Marc Chagall Museum. Minsk.
SI	- Sociologicheskije issledovaniya. Science Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
Soziale Geschichte	- Soziale Geschichte. Zeitschrift für historische Analyse des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts. Bremen.
Spectrum	- Spectrum. The Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies. Astana.
SS	- Sibirskaya stolitsa. Tobolsk State Historical and Architectural Museum-Reserve. Tobolsk.

SSM	- Social Sciences and Modernity. The Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences "Science." Moscow.
SV	- Sovremennaya filologiya. Ufa.
SZ	- Sociologicheskiy zhurnal. Moscow.
Tarih Dergisi	- Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi. Istanbul.
TKA	- Tulski kraevedchesky almanah. Tula.
Tradizionnaya kultura	- Tradizionnaya kultura. An academic almanac representing the perspective direction in complex study of ethnoculture: national outlook, pedagogics, life, mythology, customs, ceremonies, poetry and music. Moscow.
Trudovaya pomoshch'	- Trudovaya pomoshch'. Izdanie Popechitel'stva o trudovoj pomoshhi. Saint Petersburg.
Vestnik AAJ	- Vestnik arheologii, antropologii i jetnografii. Institute of Problems of Development of the North, Russia. Tyumen.
Vestnik Chelyabinsk	- Vestnik Chelyabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, Istoriya. Publishing house of Chelyabinsk State University. Chelyabinsk.
Vestnik Chuvashskogo	- Vestnik Chuvashskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta im I. Ya. Yakovleva. I. Y. Yakovlev Chuvash State Pedagogical University. Cheboksary.
VestKrasno	- Vestnike Krasnoyarskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta imeni V. P. Astafeva. Krasnojarskiy gosudarstvennyj pedagogicheskij universitet im. V. P. Astafeva. Krasnojarsk.
Vestnik Kazak	- Vestnik Akademii nauk Kazakhskoy SSR. Academy of Science of the Kazakh SSR. Kazakhstan.
Vestnik RAN	- Vestnik Rossiyskoy Akademii Nauk. Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
Vestnik Samara	- Vestnik Samarskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Samara State University. Samara.
Vestn Tomsk Gos Univ.	- Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Kul'turologiya i iskusstvovedeniye. Bulletin of Tomsk State University. Tomsk.
Vestnik Semej	- Vestnik gosudarstvennogo universiteta imeni Shakarima goroda Semej. Shakarim State University of Semej.
Vestnik Ufa	- Vestnik Vostochnoy ekonomiko-yuridicheskoy gumanitarnoy akademii. East Economic-Legal Humanitarian Academy. Ufa.
Vestnik VyatGGU	- Vestnik Vyatskogo gosudarstvennogo gumanitarnogo universiteta: Vyatka State University of Humanities. Kirov.

Vizantiysky vremennik	- Vizantiysky vremennik. Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
Voprosy Istorii	- Voprosy Istorii. Russian academic journal for historical studies. The Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
Voprosi Literaturny	- Voprosi Literaturny. Writer's Union of the USSR. Moscow.
Voprosy filosofii	- Voprosy filosofii. Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
VTP	- Istoricheskiye, filosofskiy, politicheskiye i yuridicheskiye nauki, kul'turologiya i iskusstvovedeniye. Voprosy teorii i praktiki. Tambov.
WASJ	- World Applied Sciences Journal. International Digital Organization Scientific for Information "IDOSI Publications" UAE. Dubai.
Zapiski	- Zapiski Vostochnogo otdeleniya Russkogo arkhologicheskogo obshchestva. Archaeological Society. Saint Petersburg.
ZDMG	- Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft. Berlin Magazine of the German East Society. Berlin.