Onfim was a boy who lived in Novgorod (now part of modern-day Russia) during the 13th century. His world was one of medieval Rus', a period of time characterized by the dominance of the Novgorod Republic, a medieval state that existed from the 12th to 15th centuries. Onfim's name became known centuries later through the discovery of his 'homework'—a series of birch bark writings that were unearthed in Novgorod during archaeological excavations beginning in the 1950s. These writings have provided invaluable insights into the culture, language, and daily life of his time. The birch bark documents that Onfim left behind are a collection of drawings and writings which include alphabets, syllables, and short texts. These artifacts are significant because they show that even at a young age, children in medieval Novgorod were taught to read and write. Onfim's texts are mostly written in Old Novgorodian, a dialect of Old East Slavic, and they exhibit a child's attempt at learning and practicing the Cyrillic alphabet. The playful nature of his work, including doodles alongside the writing, provides a rare glimpse into the life of a child from that era. One of the most interesting aspects of Onfim's birch bark writings is the presence of drawings that accompany his texts. These drawings include depictions of knights, horses, and even fantastical creatures. In one notable example, Onfim drew himself as a warrior riding a horse, with the inscription 'I am a wild beast' (translated). This suggests that, in addition to literacy, children's education at the time may have included stories of chivalry and warfare, which Onfim internalized and expressed through his art. The discovery of Onfim's writings was a significant archaeological find because it expanded the understanding of literacy rates in medieval Novgorod. Prior to these findings, it was commonly believed that literacy was confined to the clergy and the nobility. However, the fact that a young boy like Onfim was practicing writing suggests that literacy could have been more widespread, possibly extending to the merchant class and other segments of society. Onfim's writings are not only valuable for what they tell us about childhood education, but also for the light they shed on the Old Novgorodian dialect. His texts are some of the few written examples of this dialect, which was spoken in the Novgorod Republic. They provide linguists with material to study the phonetic and morphological characteristics of the language, as well as its vocabulary, which includes words that are not found in other Slavic languages. The birch bark on which Onfim wrote was a common writing material in medieval Novgorod due to the abundance of birch trees in the region. The durability of birch bark is one of the reasons why these documents have survived for over seven centuries. The bark was cut into thin sheets and then written on with a stylus. This method of writing was practical and sustainable, as birch bark is naturally resistant to decay when buried in the soil, which is how Onfim's writings were preserved. Onfim's writings were found among over a thousand other birch bark documents, but his stand out due to their unique and personal nature. The majority of birch bark texts from Novgorod are of a more practical nature, including commercial records, legal documents, and personal letters. Onfim's texts, however, are educational exercises and drawings that reflect his own learning process and imagination, offering a distinct perspective on medieval childhood. The exact age of Onfim when he created his writings is not known, but scholars estimate that he was between six and seven years old based on the level of writing skill demonstrated in the texts. This estimation is supported by the playful and sometimes incorrect way in which he formed his letters, as well as the simplistic nature of his drawings. His work provides an example of how children of his age were beginning to grasp the basics of literacy and art. Onfim's legacy extends beyond the historical and linguistic significance of his writings. He has become somewhat of a cultural icon, representing the universal experience of childhood learning and creativity. His drawings and texts have been featured in museum exhibitions and have inspired modern artists and writers. The boy from the 13th century has, in a way, achieved a form of immortality, as his thoughts and imaginings continue to be studied and appreciated in the present day. The study of Onfim's writings continues to be an area of interest for historians and archaeologists. As more birch bark documents are discovered and analyzed, there is potential for new insights into the life and education of children in medieval Rus'. Onfim's work serves as a benchmark for understanding the development of literacy and education during this period, and future finds may help to further contextualize and understand the environment in which he lived and learned.