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Church of St. Elijah, ‘Baptized Ruses’ and the Date of the Second Ruso-Byzantine Treaty

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It is believed to be a firmly established fact, confirmed by its mention in every survey of early Rus’ history, that by the mid-tenth century, there existed a sizable Christian community in Kiev consisting of the polity’s Varangian elite and centred around the cathedral church of St. Elijah. The single source providing evidence for this view is the *Primary Chronicle’s* account of the events following the signing of the Ruso-Byzantine treaty of 944. We are told that, upon the return of the envoys from Constantinople with the charter of the treaty, the Ruses of Kiev endorsed it by taking an oath in two different manners: those heathen, together with Prince Igor, took the oath in a pagan fashion, while those Christian took their oath in the cathedral church of St. Elijah.¹

This account traditionally has been considered factual and reliable, and until recently its accuracy has not been doubted. Its credibility was endorsed by its close proximity to the text of the treaty of 944, whose authenticity is beyond suspicion. Since all three texts of the Ruso-Byzantine treaties (of 911, 944, and 971) were believed to have entered the chronicle at some very early stage (i.e. long before the *Primary Chronicle* took its final shape), the narrative accounts flanking these documents were also viewed as ancient and sound. However, recently a new consensus has emerged in the evaluation of these texts. It is now accepted that the texts of the Ruso-Byzantine treaties became available in Kiev only in the early twelfth century, and the *Primary Chronicle’s* author was the first who made use of them for historical writing. As Jana MALINGOUDI has convincingly showed, the treaties’ Slavonic texts are not original charters received by the Rus’ princes in the wake of the negotiations, but rather translations made from a later Greek cartulary containing copies of the Byzantium’s international treaties.²

¹ S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle* (= Harvard Studies and Notes in Philosophy and Literature 12), Cambridge, MA 1930, 163-164.

² J. MALINGOUDI, *Die russisch-byzantinischen Verträge des 10. Jhds. aus diplomatischer Sicht*, Thessaloniki 1994, 79-87; eadem, *Russko-vizantiiskie dogovory v 10 veke v svete diplomatiki II*, *Vizantiiskii vremennik* 57 (1997) 79-87. The author develops suggestions made already by A. Shakhmatov (see A. A. SHAKHMATOV, *Povest vremennykh let i ee istochniki*, *Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury* 4 (Leningrad 1940) 111-

It would thus appear that these newly obtained documents served as the chronicler's only sources on the Ruso-Byzantine diplomacy that took place, and indeed functioned as his major documentary evidence on the Kievan history of the tenth century. Whatever he knew about the negotiations and confirmation of the treaties, he had learned from the treaties themselves.

This paper intends to build on some ideas already suggested in the literature, namely, that the chronicle account of the ratification procedure of the treaty of 944 is fictitious and was put together based on the hints provided by the very text of the treaty, and that the church of St. Elijah mentioned in the authentic text of the treaty was located in Constantinople rather than in Kiev. I will argue that the conspicuous reference to this church in the treaty's text suggests some special circumstances that accompanied the treaty's signing. Understanding those circumstances will yield the precise dating for the treaty that otherwise lacks clear chronological markers.

The Church of St. Elijah: in Kiev or in Constantinople?

The *Primary Chronicle's* entry for the year of 945 consists of two distinct parts: the text of the treaty signed in Constantinople and the story of its endorsement in Kiev by the prince and his men. While the first one is documentary, the second one is overtly narrative. This is a typical arrangement for the author of the *Primary Chronicle*: he attaches a similar (in manner, though not in a content) story to the treaty of 911. This later one clearly reveals its early twelfth-century origin and most certainly was invented by the chronicler himself.³ The treaty of 971 is followed with an invented account of Prince Sviatoslav's death on his way back to Rus'. To furnish a document with a narrative sequel is a standard chronicler's device allowing him to exercise a smooth transition from one discursive mode to another so as to resume story telling.⁴ There seems to be no rea-

112). Less convincing is her other suggestion: that this presumed cartulary may have also contained historical notices that served for the author of the *Primary Chronicle* as a source of information about the treaties' ratification procedures (J. MALINGOUDI, *Die russisch-byzantinischen Verträge des 10. Jhds. aus diplomatischer Sicht*, 49, 82-83; eadem, *Russko-vizantiiskie dogovory II*, 83-84).

³ It lists a number of relics in the Grand Palace of Constantinople which were placed there after 1106 (J. WORTLEY - C. ZUCKERMAN, *The Relics of Our Lord's Passion in the Russian Primary Chronicle*, *Vizantiiskii vremennik* 63 (2004) 67-75), while the story itself is modeled after a similar episode found in the Continuator of Hamartolos (see A. P. TOLOCHKO, *Letopisnoe obramlenie rusko-vizantiiskogo dogovora 911 goda*, in: Dubitando. Studies in History and Culture in Honor of Donald Ostrowski, ed. B. J. Bock – R. E. Martin – D. Rowland, Bloomington, IN 2012, 61-66. Fictitious nature of this story, among other things, speaks against the Malingoudi's hypothesis of historical notices with the description of the actual ratification procedure supposedly appended to each treaty.

⁴ The chronicler can be even bolder than this. In his entry for the year 907, he artfully tempered with the texts of the two genuine treaties (of 911 and of 944) in

son to treat the story attached to the treaty of 944 as somehow different from the rest in the series. On the contrary, it has been shown that the chronicler possessed no independent information of the events and based his story on what he had read in the text of the treaty.⁵

According to J. MALINGOUDI's reconstruction of diplomatic procedure employed by the Byzantine court, successful negotiations would culminate in the creation of two charters of a treaty, one for each side, with respective obligations of the parties specified. In our case, the charter intended for the prince of Rus' would include an insert with the obligation of the Byzantine emperor, and, vice versa, the charter intended for the Byzantines would contain an analogous insert with the obligation of the Rus'. It is this latter one that came down to us in Slavonic translation. Its insert spells out the conditions of the treaty's enactment by demanding the following steps from the Rus' side: that the envoys of the Rus', upon receiving their charter, bring it to the prince; that the prince and his men, in the presence of the Byzantine envoys, bind themselves by an oath to accept the conditions of the treaty, thus ratifying it.⁶

This insert (with the scenario for the procedure to take place in Kiev) is immediately followed in the charter by the clause specifying the manner in which the Rus' envoys took their oath in Constantinople. MALINGOUDI calls similar clauses 'formulas of oath' and notes that, judging from the later treaties with Venice and Pisa, the envoys would take their oaths in one of the churches of Constantinople and then insert their transcripts into the charter.⁷

In our case, the formula for taking the oath runs as follows:

Those of us who are baptized have sworn in the Cathedral, by the Church of St. Elijah, upon the Holy Cross set before us, and upon this parchment, to abide by all that is written herein [...]

order to create both the text of the fictitious treaty (sometimes referred to as the 'treaty of 907') and the story of negotiations and ratification.

⁵ See A. A. SHAKHMATOV, *Povest vremennykh let i ee istochniki*, 112-113; M. A. VASILEV, *Stepen dostovernosti izvestii 'Povesti vremennykh let' o protsedure ratifikatsii russko-vizantiiskogo dogovora 944 g. v Kieve*, in: *Drevneishie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy*. 1988, Moscow 2000, 64-71.

⁶ J. MALINGOUDI, *Die russisch-byzantinischen Verträge des 10. Jhds. aus diplomatischer Sicht*, 42-45; eadem, *Russko-vizantiiskie dogovory v 10 veke v svete diplomatiki I*, *Vizantiiskii vremennik* 56 (1996) 90. Cf.: "Your representatives shall go forth with the envoys of our government and conduct them before Igor, Great Prince of Rus', and to his subjects. Upon receipt of this document, they shall then bind themselves by oath to observe the truth as agreed upon between us and inscribed upon this parchment, wherein our names are written" (S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 163); а ѿходаче со сло^м цртва нашеѣ · да попроводать к великому князю Игореву Рускому и к людемъ его · и ти приимающе харотью на роту идуть · хранит^и истину · тако же мы свѣщахо^м · и написахомъ на харотью сию (*Ipatievskaja letopis* in: *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei*, vol. 2, Saint Petersburg 1980, col. 41, hereafter PSRL 2).

⁷ J. MALINGOUDI, *Russko-vizantiiskie dogovory v 10 veke v svete diplomatiki I*, 79-80.

The unbaptized Russes shall lay down their shields, their naked swords, their armlets, and their other weapons, and shall swear to all that is inscribed upon this parchment, to be faithfully observed forever [...] ⁸

We will have a chance to examine these formulas closer in the following section. Here it is important to note that the ‘baptized’ Rus’ took their oath in Constantinople and had done so before the final draft of the charter was created (since their declarations were inserted into its text). Their ‘formula of oath’ therefore refers to the church of St. Elijah (or cathedral) in the Byzantine capital. The treaty’s testimony is clear and unambiguous. The question is, how did the early twelfth-century chronicler, working with this information, arrive at the idea that the identical procedure also took place later in Kiev?

Anyone reading the treaty of 944 (the chronicler included) may reasonably infer that the second oath in Kiev, required by the Byzantine protocol, did take place in reality. Yet for obvious reasons its description went unrecorded in the charter compiled several months earlier. The chronicler decided to make up for this deplorable gap by simply converting the clause with the ‘formulas of oath’ in Constantinople into a scene of the Rus’ taking oath in Kiev. ⁹

The result of his labors was the following account:

The Ruses laid down their weapons, their shields, and their gold ornaments, and Igor and his people took the oath (at least, such as were pagan), while the Christian Ruses took the oath in the Church of St Elias, which is by the stream, in the vicinity of the place Pasynetz and of the Khazars. This was, in fact, a cathedral church, since many of the Varangians were Christians. ¹⁰

The comparison of the two fragments quoted above leaves little doubt that the second one is but a loose rendering of the ‘formulas of

⁸ S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 163; мы же елико насъ крѣтилиса есмы · клахомса црквию · стго Ильи въ зборнѣи цркви · и прѣдълежаци чѣтныимъ крѣтомъ · и харотью сею · хранити же все еже есть написано на неи · и не преступати ѿ того ничто же [...]; а не крѣщени Русь · да полагають щиты своя и мечи свои нагы · и шбручи свои · и прочаа шружыа · и да клѣнуться ш все^M и таже суть написана на хароты сеи [...] (PSRL 2: 41).

⁹ For a more detailed discussion of relationships between the two texts see: M. A. VASILEV, *Stepen dostovernosti izvestii ‘Povesti vremennykh let’ o protsedure ratifikatsii russko-vizantiiskogo dogovora 944 g. v Kieve*, 67-74.

¹⁰ S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 163-164. Cf. the Slavonic text of the two principal witnesses: “[и] покладоша шружые свое и шить и золото · и ходи Игорь ротѣ и люди его · елико поганыхъ Русь · а хѣтаную Русь водиша ротѣ · в цркви стго Ильи · таже есть надъ ручаемъ · конецъ Пасынъчѣ бесѣды · и Козарѣ · се бо бѣ сборнаа цркви · мнози бо бѣша Варази хѣтани” (*Lavrentievskaja letopis*, in: *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei*, vol. 1, Leningrad 1926-1928, col. 54, hereafter PSRL 1); “и покладоша шружыа своя и щиты · и золото · и ходи Игорь ротѣ · и мужи его · и елико поганыа Руси · а хрѣтѣтаную Русь водиша въ цркви стго Ильи · таже есть надъ руцѣемъ · конѣцъ Пасынъчѣ бесѣды · и Козаре · се бо бѣ сборнаа цркви · мнози бо бѣша Варази хрѣтѣтани” (PSRL 2: 42).

oaths' of the treaty. The *Primary Chronicle* clearly proceeded from the conviction that the two ceremonies (in Constantinople and in Kiev) should mirror each other. Its author was probably right in the case of heathen Rus' (after all, their sacred objects, weapons and precious items, remained the same in Kiev, as in Constantinople). He erred greatly in the case of those baptized for the church of St. Elijah did not exist in Kiev in the 940s (and, as we shall see in the next section, neither did a Christian community).

The only St. Elijah whose existence is supported by the documentary evidence is the church in Constantinople. The chronicler, it seems, was careful enough to discriminate between this Byzantine church of an unspecified location and the church of St. Elijah in Kiev, his own creation, for which he provides an exact position: "by the Stream, in the vicinity of the place Pasynetz and of the Khazars."¹¹ Topographic notes like this, defining sites of ancient times by reference to some actual localities of the annalist's own days, are numerous in the *Primary Chronicle* and are considered telltale signs of its author's individual style.¹² Modern scholars proved less conscientious. As the tedious text of the treaty is read less often than its vivid narrative follow-up, it is almost uniformly believed that both the treaty and the chronicle speak of one and the same church of St. Elijah, the one in Kiev. Moreover, it is often erroneously believed that the chronicler's gloss ("by the Stream, in the vicinity of the place Pasynetz and of the Khazars") is the direct reading of the treaty's text.¹³ There exists a sizable literature trying to pinpoint the exact site of this phantom church in medieval Kiev,¹⁴ and even to establish the date of its construction.¹⁵ Oddly, the real church in Constantinople where the Rus'es took their oath in 944 has been almost universally neglected. In two hundred years of studies, only two attempts were made to identify it.

¹¹ S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 164.

¹² It is conceivable that in the twelfth-century Kiev there was a church of St. Elijah, which the chronicle identified as the one mentioned in the treaty of 944. However, St. Elijah is never referred to in other sources. The conversion of a Byzantine church into a Rus' one did not go all that smoothly. The 'formula of oath' calls St. Elijah "cathedral", which obviously presented the chronicler with a problem: how a single existing church could be considered cathedral. He awkwardly explained it away by suggestion that "this was, in fact, a cathedral church, since many of the Varangians were Christians". This is an unmistakable reference to the so-called *Life of the Varangian Martyrs* in the chronicle entry for 983 (PSRL 2: 69-70).

¹³ Cf. most recently: S. IVANOV, *Kogda v Kieve poiavilsia pervyi khristianskii khram?*, in: *Slavianskii mir mezhdru Rimom i Konstantinopolem* (= Slaviane i ikh sosedi, 11), Moscow 2004, 9.

¹⁴ See P. TOLOCHKO, *Drevnii Kiev*, Kiev 1983, 101-102, where the literature.

¹⁵ S. IVANOV, *Kogda v Kieve poiavilsia pervyi khristianskii khram?*, 9-18.

The idea that the treaty of 944 speaks of a St. Elijah church in Constantinople rather than in Kiev is gaining support recently.¹⁶ This, however, is but an unwitting rediscovery of a suggestion made as early as the turn of the nineteenth century by August SHLÖZER¹⁷ and happily forgotten in subsequent scholarship.

“Baptized Rus”

The widely accepted notion of a thriving Christian community in Kiev in the mid-tenth century rests on single source evidence: the reference to the church of St. Elijah in the *Primary Chronicle* entry for 945. It now appears that this reference is erroneous and has no value for historical reconstruction. There may or may not have been Christians among the Kiev population, but no written evidence supports either conclusion.

However, in the sanction clause at the beginning of the treaty of 944 and also in the oath formula at the end of the text, we discover two groups among the Rus’ defined by their relationship to Christianity. The treaty calls them ‘those who adopted baptism’ and ‘unbaptized Rus’ respectively.¹⁸ The presence of these two groups in such critical parts of the document seems to support the idea that by 944 the Christians emerged as not only numerous but also politically important group in the Rus’ community of Kiev. It is from the assumed presence of Christians among the envoys and the merchants sent to negotiate the treaty with Byzantium that scholars infer the existence of a Christian community at home, in Kiev.

This is quite puzzling, for the treaty of 944, as also the previous one of 911 and the next one of 971, generally treats the population of Rus’ as uniformly heathen. The contrast between ‘Christians’ and ‘the Rus’ is more pronounced in 911, but in 944, too, we find clear demarcations made between ‘Christians’ and ‘the Rus’ in several provisions (for example, if Christian captives are sold to Rus’, or if a Christian kills a Rus’, and vice versa; or the stipulation that in the case of a disputed court testimonies, “our Christians [i.e. Byzantines] shall take an oath according to their faith, and non-Christians [i.e. the Rus’] according to their law”).¹⁹ Had the Rus’ envoys been sent to Constantinople to represent both communities of Kiev, pagans as well as Christians, we would expect the

¹⁶ Cf. J. MALINGOUDI, *Russko-vizantiiskii sviazi v 10 veke s točki zreniia diplomati-ki I*, 90, note 95; M. A. VASILEV, *Stepen dostovernosti izvestiia Povesti vremennykh let o protsedure ratifikatsii russko-vizantiiskogo dogovora 944 g. v Kieve*, 66; J. SHEPARD, *Rus’*, in: *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy: Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus’ c. 900-1200*, ed. by N. Berend, Cambridge – New York 2007, 377.

¹⁷ A. SHLÖZER, *Nestor. Russkie letopisi na drevle-slavianskom iazyke*, part 3, Saint Petersburg 1819, 183-184. The scholar, however, allowed for the existence of two churches of the same name, one in Constantinople, another in Kiev.

¹⁸ S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 160, 163.

¹⁹ S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 161-162.

Byzantines to take notice of it. And yet, judging by the treaty of 944, they remained blissfully unaware of Christians among the Rus'.²⁰ Allusions to the 'baptized' Rus' thus stand in contrast to the otherwise adamant treatment of the people of Rus' as heathen in the treaty of 944.²¹

The treaty presents us with a number of puzzles inexplicable within the dominant view of the Ruses forming a homogeneous group set apart only by the relations to Christianity. A close reading of the relevant sections of the treaty reveals substantial differences, not yet appreciated, between the two groups. We may therefore explore another possibility: that the 'baptized Rus' refers to neither the envoys nor the merchants who came from Kiev, but to a third group of the Rus', resident in Constantinople.

It is noteworthy that the division of the Rus' into 'baptized' and 'unbaptized' factions only became visible when the time came to take their oaths. It is only then that 'those who accepted baptism' made their entrance. While the 'unbaptized' Rus' were expected to swear on their weapons and armour, the 'baptized' Rus', naturally, did it in the church and on the cross. Yet this is not the only disparity between the two groups.

It is important that the 'unbaptized' and 'baptized' Ruses enjoyed a significantly different volume of authority and seem to be acting as proxies for different communities. While the 'unbaptized' Rus', quite expectedly, took their oath on behalf "of Prince Igor, and all the boyars, and all the people, and all the Rus' land",²² the baptized Rus' seem to represent no one but themselves. In taking the oath, they simply state that they accept and will honour the conditions of the treaty ("to abide by all that is written herein, and not to violate any of its stipulations"²³). It may sug-

²⁰ The only place where the treaty seems to speak of the 'Christian Rus' (да на роту идуѣ наши крѣтыанаа Русь. а не крѣтыании по закону своему, PSPL 2: 38) is clearly corrupted. The *Laurentian* version preserved a correct reading: да на роту идуть наши хѣтани Руси · по вѣрѣ ихъ а не хѣтани по закону своему (PSRL 1: 49), which should be preferred for grammatical reasons. Unfortunately, Samuel Cross' translation follows the *Hypatian*, corrupt, variant (S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 161), as does Jana Malingoudi's (J. MALINGOUDI, *Die russisch-byzantinischen Verträge des 10. Jhds. aus rechtshistorischer Sicht*, *Byzantinoslavica* 58/2 (1997) 241).

²¹ The treaty speaks not of the rights and obligations of the Christians among the Ruses. It concerns itself only with those Ruses that come from Kiev, for purposes of trade or other designs, and are not allowed to dwell in the city but should stay in the vicinity of St. Mamas monastery outside Constantinople. They are not permitted to winter there and should return to Rus' after their commerce is over (S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 160-161). Christians are clearly not included into this group. They either do not come annually with the rest of the Ruses or else reside in Constantinople permanently.

²² S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 163; PSRL 2: 41: ѿ Игорѧ и ѿ всѣхъ боаръ · и ѿ всѣхъ людий · и ѿ страны Русьскыа.

²³ S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 163; PSRL 2: 41: хранити же все еже есть написано на неи · и не преступати ѿ того ничто же.

gest that the true signatories of the treaty were the ‘unbaptized’ Rus, while their Christian fellows acted almost as mere witnesses.

Moreover, the text of the treaty provides no unambiguous evidence that the ‘unbaptized’ Rus’ did take an oath in Constantinople. The prescribed ritual, where the weapons (shields and swords) figure so prominently, directly contradicted the stipulation of the very same treaty that strictly banned the Rus’ from entering the city with their weapons.²⁴ The procedure, furthermore, required the oath to be taken with naked swords, which would seem quite out of place in the tightly guarded Imperial Palace. In fact, a close reading of the treaty reveals that the only group who did take its oath in the Grand Palace were the ‘baptized Rus’’. This is clear from the treaty’s grammar: while the ‘baptized Rus’ is said to have sworn in the past tense (КЛАХОМСА, imperfect), the ‘unbaptized Rus’ was expected to swear at some point in future (да полагають... и да клѣнутьса; technically optative, but in this case denoting future tense). The treaty (i.e. the Byzantine side) thought it necessary only to fix the desired fashion in which this eventual oath should be performed (“The unbaptized Russes shall lay down their shields, their naked swords, their armlets, and their other weapons, and shall swear...”²⁵). And since the Byzantines required that the Prince Igor of Kiev ultimately seal the treaty by his and his men’s oath, we may assume that the signatories, i.e. the ‘unbaptized Rus’’, were expected to join their fellow countrymen in ceremony in Kiev.²⁶

²⁴ “[The Rus’] shall enter the city through one gate in groups of fifty without weapons” (S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 161). It is important to remember that the treaty’s provision was mandatory for merchants as well as envoys. There seems to be no reason to assume that the treatment of the envoys that negotiated the treaty of 944 somehow differed from the general rules set for the conduct of the Rus’ envoys in Constantinople. In any case, the delegation of ambassadors was indeed subject to the regulations imposed by the treaty: fifty one name was entered into the charter, that is, exactly the number that was allowed to enter the city. The very fact that we have this list of the names in the treaty of 944 is also the result of following the treaty’s provision: the imperial clerk was to note the names of the Rus’ before granting them entrance to the city (да послеть цѣртво ваше · да испишетъ имена ихъ, PSRL 2: 37).

²⁵ S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 163.

²⁶ It would be wrong to think that for an emperor or his officials to partake in heathen ceremonies, and on the grounds of the Great Palace at that, was a normal practice. Only two such cases are known, and both were considered utterly scandalous. In 815, emperor Leo V and khan Omortag of Bulgaria pledged allegiance by swearing in accordance to the rites of the other’s faith: Christian emperor in pagan fashion, while the heathen envoys touching the Gospel and invoking the name of Christian God. However, Leo V was an iconoclast, and the episode, if true, served in later iconodule propaganda as a glaring example of emperor’s blasphemous and ungodly ways (*Life of the Patriarch Nikephoros I of Constantinople*, intr. and transl. by E. A. Fisher, in: *Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saints’ Lives in English Translation*, ed. by A.-M. Talbot, Washington, D.C. 1998, 126; *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Caniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus*, ed. by

Of the two, only the declaration by the 'baptized Rus'es' can be considered a true 'formula of oath.' It is not descriptive and modal. It is set in the first person plural ("We, those who had accepted baptism, swear...") and informs of the act that has taken place ("have sworn in the Cathedral"). It appears to be a notation of the actual statement appended to the drafted text of the treaty.²⁷

Now we can grasp the role of the 'baptized' Rus'es in the whole arrangement. Since the pagan ambassadors were incapable of performing their barbaric ritual on the Palace premises, the Byzantines were risking seeing the Rus'es leave without having presented any formal proofs of their faithful observance of the treaty's conditions. There happened to be some other Rus'es at hand, however, who could take an oath, and in a Christian manner at that. They vouched for their fellow countrymen and witnessed the treaty on behalf of the Rus'es side. To act in this capacity, the 'baptized' Rus'es must have been known to the Byzantines and also trusted by them.

Thus the treaty of 944 would seem to indicate that at the moment of negotiations, there were two different groups of Rus'es present in Constantinople: those empowered by Prince Igor ('unbaptized') and another group, 'those who accepted baptism.' The impression is that the members of the latter simply happened to be in Constantinople when the envoys arrived, which meant that their loyalty should be reaffirmed but they were not part of the delegation.

The question then is who this group of 'baptized' Rus'es might be. It has been noted that the principal incentive for a Rus'es to be baptized was a desire to enter the service of the Emperor, and that Varangians were encouraged by imperial authorities to become Christian.²⁸ Among the

I. Bekker, Bonn 1838, 31). Another case happened almost exactly a hundred years later. In 914, just three years after the Ruso-Byzantine treaty of 911, a pact was concluded with certain 'barbarians' (most probably, the Petchenegs). Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos (from whose letters the incident is known) reports that negotiations were finalized with the exchange of oaths and a pagan ceremony involving sacrifices. The Patriarch considered participation of court officials' in such a rite the most disgraceful and shameful act, for which they deserved, and indeed suffered, the church penance (see C. ZUCKERMAN, *Byzantium's Pontic Policy in the Notitiae episcopatum*, in: idem (ed.) *La Crimée entre Byzance et le Khaganat khazar*, Paris 2006, 221-223).

It is not accidental therefore, that of the three Ruso-Byzantine treaties, none states explicitly that the pagan ceremony have been performed in Constantinople or in the presence of the emperor. Their texts merely set the manner in which the pagans must swear in order for the treaty to be valid. The only text which does say that the Rus'es took their oath in Constantinople is the so-called 'treaty of 907', a twelfth-century forgery by the author of the *Primary Chronicle*.

²⁷ PSRL 2: 41: мы же елико нась крѣтилиса есмы · кляхомса црквию · стго Ильи въ зборни цркви. It is probably not accidental that in his translation Samuel Cross marked this passage out by setting it out as a separate paragraph and providing it with a heading "The Rus'es this bound themselves" (S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 163).

²⁸ J. SHEPARD, *Rus'*, 377.

Rus' troops in Constantinople there was, indeed, a detachment, which Constantine Porphyrogenitus in the *Book of Ceremonies* referred to as the 'baptized Rhos'. On May 31, 946, just two years after the treaty of 944 had been concluded, a regiment of 'baptized Rhos' 'with banners, holding shields and wearing their swords' were standing as guards of honour outside of Chalke (in the imperial Palace) during the reception of the Tarsoite envoys.²⁹ It is these 'baptized Rhos' that have been identified recently as the group of 'baptized Rus'" of the treaty of 944.³⁰ 'Baptized Rhos' listed among other detachments of 'sailors' standing guard at the Palace that day, quite probably belonged to the regiment of Rhos that had taken part in the Lombard campaign of 935.³¹ It remains only to speculate whether they made up a separate squadron or were selected for the occasion from among a larger (and mixed) detachment of Rus' mercenaries serving in the navy. Since only Christian barbarians were eligible for employment in the Palace guard, the second possibility seems more likely.

The identification of the 'baptized Rus'" of the treaty (944) with the 'baptized Rhos' of *The Book of Ceremonies* (946) robs the idea of an organized Christian community in Kiev of its second and last source of evidence. It would appear that it was only in Constantinople that a sizable group of Christian Rus' existed at this time.

Dating of the treaty of 944

Of the three extant Ruso-Byzantine treaties, only that of 944, the largest and by far the most important one, lacks precise dating. Unlike the other two (of 911 and of 971), dated quite exactly by the day of the month, indiction and the year number,³² the treaty of 944 does not con-

²⁹ *De Cerem.*, 579.21–22; for the English translation of the passage, see J. M. FEATHERSTONE, *ΔΓ' ΕΝΔΕΙΞΙΝ: Display in Court Ceremonial (De Cerimoniis II, 15)*, *The Material and the Ideal. Essays in Medieval Art and Archaeology in Honour of Jean-Michel Spier*, ed. by A. Cutler – A. Papaconstantinou (= *The Medieval Mediterranean People. Economics and Culture, 400-1500*, vol. 70), Leiden – Boston 2007, 93; S. BLÖNDAL – B. S. BENEDIKZ, *The Varangians of Byzantium: an Aspect of Byzantine Military History*, Cambridge – New York 1978, 21.

³⁰ A. FILIPCHUK, *Sotsialnyie gruppy rusov v Konstantinopole v 10 v.: kontakty, torgovlia i formirovaniie politicheskoi elity*, in: *Vostochnaia Evropa v drevnosti i srednevekovie XIII*, Moscow 2011, 293-295; see also his unpublished dissertation: O. FILIPCHUK, *Rusy sered 'viisk narodiv' u Vizantii 9-11 st.: naimatsi ta soiuznyky*, Chernivtsi 2010, 123-130.

³¹ O. FILIPCHUK, *Rusy sered 'viisk narodiv' u Vizantii*, 125.

³² The treaty of 911 is dated to "September 2, 15 of indiction, in the year of Creation 6420" (September 2, 911). In both principal witnesses (the *Hypatian* and the *Laurentian*) the date got corrupted, however. Later scribes mistook the abbreviation for indiction ("инд") for 'week' "нед; недли"; in *Laurentian*, moreover, the number of indiction is wrong (8 instead of 15) (cf. мѣца · себѣабра · въ · ѿ · а в неѣ · ѿ · в лѣѣ · созданиа миру · р · с · ѿ · к̄ (PSRL 2: 28); мѣца сеѣ · ѿ · неѣли · ѿ · в лѣѣ

tain any date (most probably, lost while the treaty was being incorporated into the chronicle). Its only chronological marker now is the entry for 6453 where it was deposited by the *Primary Chronicle's* author.³³ But the year of 6453 would yield March 1, 945 - February 28, 946, an impossible date considering that two out of three emperors named in the treaty, Romanos and Stephen, were dethroned the previous year. There were attempts to explain away this contradiction by suggesting that the date (6453) marks not the moment of the treaty's signing but rather its endorsement by Prince Igor the next year.³⁴

More often, however, the treaty is dated to the autumn of 944 on the following grounds. It is assumed that the chronicle entry of 6453 is dated according to Byzantine 'September year' style (starting September 1, 944). The treaty, further, lists three emperors: Romanos I Lacapenos, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, and Stephen Lacapenos. All three were reigning emperors until December 16, 944, when Romanos Lacapenos was arrested by his sons, tonsured and exiled to the Prince's Islands. Soon after, his son Stephen was stripped of imperial rank and joined his father in exile. Thus the treaty is believed to have been signed between September 1 and December 16, 944.³⁵

создания мира · р̄ с̄ · ҃ · к̄ (PSRL 1: 37). Confused by these discrepancies, Samuel H. Cross simply dropped the indiction from his translation (cf. S. H. CROSS, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 154). The corruption was the source of various misguided attempts to date the treaty, on those see A. A. Vasilev, *The Second Russian Attack on Constantinople*, Dumbarton Oaks Papers 6 (1951) 221, note 145, and recently: S. TSYB, *Drevnerusskoe vremiaischislenie v 'Povesti vremennykh let'*, Saint Petersburg 2011, 113. The date of the 971 treaty is correct in both witnesses: м̄ ца июулиа · индикта · д̄и · ❖ В лѣт̄ · р̄ с̄ · ҃ · оѡ (PSRL 2: 60); м̄ ца июла · индикта въ · д̄и · ❖ В лѣт̄ · р̄ с̄ · ҃ · оѡ (PSRL 1: 72).

³³ The only source that provides the precise dating is 'Russian History' by the early eighteenth-century Russian historian Vasily Tatishchev: "лега 6453, индикта 4, апреля 20, в третю седмичу по пасхе" ('in the year 6453, 4 of the indiction, April 20, in the third week after the Lent') (V. TATISHCHEV, *Istoria rossiiskaia*, Moscow - Leningrad 1963, vol. 2, 43). Contrary to what some scholars believe, this date does not come from Tatishchev's sources but was a result of his own calculations. The scholar clearly proceeded from the so-called 'March year' (starting March 1) which was in use in Rus'. While he correctly calculated the day of the Lent (April 6), he made a mistake in indiction: the year 6453 is the third in indiction, not the fourth. In pointing to 'the week' (of the Lent, which is not typical for Byzantine treaties), Tatishchev imitated the corrupt dating of the treaty of 911 (cf. note 31). Tatishchev's date, whatever its origin, is impossible to accept, for in the spring of 945 neither Romanos, nor Stephen were emperors anymore. On Tatishchev and his value as a source for the Rus' history, see my *Istoriia Rossiiskaia' Vasilia Tatishcheva: istochniki i izvestia*, Moscow 2005.

³⁴ S. H. CROSS - H. V. MORGILEVSKI - K. J. CONANT, *The Earliest Mediaeval Churches of Kiev*, *Speculum* 11/4 (1936) 477, note 1.

³⁵ Cf. S. H. CROSS - H. V. MORGILEVSKI - K. J. CONANT, *The Earliest Mediaeval Churches of Kiev*, 477; I. SORLIN, *Les traités de Byzance avec la Russie au X^e siècle (II)*, *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 2/4 (1961) 454.

All this is true if the date of the chronicle entry (6453) was suggested by the one which stood in the original treaty. The question then is, why did the chronicler, careful enough to preserve the original dating of the other two treaties intact, in this particular case decide to drop it? And if he did, is it not because the treaty's date was somehow inconvenient for his own chronology?

From the content of the entry for 6453, it is quite clear that it covers the events from spring to autumn. It ends with the remark "And then the autumn came..." unmistakably indicating that the style used here is the standard for the *Primary Chronicle* 'March year' (on the contrary, within the Byzantine 'September year', autumn marks the beginning of the year). That means that the date of the entry could not have been borrowed from the treaty.³⁶ Rather, it was the chronicler's own guess. We also find additional signs of a chronological disturbance at this spot. The entry immediately following the one with the treaty is numbered not 6454, as we would expect, but by the same year of 6453. This, too, indicates that the treaty was artificially shifted to its current position from some earlier year.

We may thus assume that the treaty was dated by a different year, and the chronicler moved its text to the entry of 6453 in order to clear out space for some other accounts. A short digression would be appropriate at that stage.

In the chronicler's view, all the treaties with Byzantium came as the result of the Rus' attacking the Empire at some prior time. And the interval between an attack and a treaty is set at precisely four years. Prince Sviatoslav starts his Balkan campaign in 967 and signs the treaty in 971; Prince Oleg launches his (fictitious) attack in 907 and signs the treaty in 911. Similarly, Prince Igor attacks Constantinople in 941 and negotiates the treaty in 945. For the reasons yet to be discovered, the chronicler thought this gap of four years important for the overall design of his work.³⁷ In the case of Oleg and Sviatoslav, it is the dates of the treaties that were fixed, and the chronicler was free to come up with a suitable date for

³⁶ The ability to use 'Byzantine' style was one of the *Primary Chronicle's* author's hallmarks. He demonstrated his skill in converting Byzantine 'September' years into Slavonic 'March' ones on numerous occasions by introducing of the 'indiction' count (most probably, suggested to him by the texts of the treaties) in various parts of his work (see A. TOLOCHKO, *Perechityvaia pripisku Silvestra 1116 goda*, *Ruthenica VII* (Kiev 2008) 154-165). The 'indiction', starting September 1, would coincide with the 'September' year. Thus it would be impossible for the chronicler to take the date of the treaty, with the year number *and* indiction, for the 'March' year of the same number.

³⁷ That this is not accidental, and the chronicler did strive for chronological symmetry in his work, is confirmed by another series of identical nature. Each of the three princes is said to have died the next year after having concluded his treaty with Byzantium: Oleg in 912, Igor in 945, and Sviatoslav in 972. The 'round' year numbers of Oleg's and Sviatoslav's deaths (6520 and 6580 respectively) may explain why the chronicler was not eager to move their treaties to some other year.

the beginning of their campaigns (even if he had to invent one). In the case of Igor, however, it is the date of the attack on Constantinople (941) that was known from the Byzantine sources (Continuator of George Hamartolos³⁸) and could not be moved. The sought interval could be obtained only by shifting the treaty (whose date was presumably 944) to one year later. The resulting opening was filled with the fictitious account of Igor's second attack on Constantinople styled after the Hamartolos' report on the Hungarians' campaign of 943 against Byzantium.³⁹

If these observations are valid, the treaty originally must have been dated to Byzantine year of 6452, that is September 1, 943 - August 31, 944.

Which St. Elijah in Constantinople?

A number of scholars were mystified by the prominent role which the seemingly humble church of St. Elijah played in the Ruso-Byzantine negotiations. Of all the churches of the capital, why was this particular one chosen for the ceremony? It seems such an unlikely the venue that some scholars were even ready to dismiss the explicit reading of the text as somehow false or corrupted. The great student of the chronicles Aleksei SHAKHMATOV and, following him, Mikhail PRISELKOV and Viljo J. MANSIKKA thought that in fact the Ruses must have taken their oath in 'the cathedral church', meaning Hagia Sophia, which was certainly the most important of the Constantinopolitan churches,⁴⁰ while a noted legal historian Vasily SERGEEVICH believed the reference to St. Elijah to be a later interpolation into the original text of the treaty.⁴¹ In any case, there have been no convincing explanations so far for St. Elijah's prominent role. Indeed, the conspicuous place that St. Elijah had in the ceremony of the treaty's con-

³⁸ In fact, the date of the attack in Hamartolos is "June 18, fourteenth of indiction" (V. M. ISTRIN, *Khronika Georgiia Amartola v drevnem slaviano-russkom perevode. Tekst, issledovanie i slovar*, vol. 1. *Tekst*, Petrograd 1920, 567). But Silvester, the author of the *Primary Chronicle*, was quite at home in converting indictions into the years from Creation (see A. TOLOCHKO, *Perechityvaia pripisku Silvestra 1116 goda*, 154-165).

³⁹ V. M. ISTRIN, *Khronika Georgiia Amartola*, 566. It is from this account that the chronicler borrowed the idea of the second Igor's campaign ending with peace accord without a battle. The date of the Hungarian attack in Hamartolos is "the first of indiction, in the month of April", which gives April of 6452/943. Due to the difference between the Byzantine 'September' and the Rus' 'March' styles, that would be exactly April of 944 within the chronology of the *Primary Chronicle* (I. SORLIN, *Les traités de Byzance avec la Russie au X^e siècle (II)*, 453-454).

⁴⁰ A. A. SHAKHMATOV, *Povest vremennykh let i ee istochniki*, Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury 4 (Leningrad 1940) 113; M. D. PRISELKOV, *Ocherki po tserkovno-politicheskoi istorii Kievskoi Rusi*, Saint Petersburg 1913, 5, 8; V. J. MANSIKKA, *Religiia vostochnykh slavian*, Moscow 2005, 73. This suggestion, however, renders the invocation of the church of St. Elijah inexplicable.

⁴¹ V. I. SERGEEVICH, *Grecheskoe i russkoe pravo v dogovorakh s grekami 10 veka*, Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnoho prosveshchenia 219 (1882) 82-115.

clusion seems to be disproportionate to its status. Of the several St. Elijah churches in Constantinople none was big enough or significant enough to be deliberately chosen as the focal point for the ceremonies. The treaty of 944 is the only extant Byzantine international charter where the church is expressly referred to by name.⁴² For an unassuming church to so prominently figure in such ceremonies and for its name to be entered into the treaty, there must have been some special reasons.

Raymond JANIN lists no less than six churches of St. Elijah in Constantinople.⁴³ The unusually big number is explained by the special attention paid by the Macedonian dynasty to the cult of St. Elijah. All of them were either built or renovated by Basil I who believed St. Elijah his personal patron saint. There was a well-known story, perpetuated by imperial propaganda, that St. Elijah prophesized to Basil's mother that her son, then still a provincial boy of a humble station, would become an emperor one day.⁴⁴ Having seized the throne, Basil constructed three churches in Constantinople, among them the great foundation in Petron on the Golden Horn and the church at the imperial palace of Pege.⁴⁵ He also built two establishments in the Great Palace: the church (also called 'chapel') of St. Elijah close to the Mother of God of the Pharos and the oratory of St. Elijah in the magnificent Nea Ecclesia,⁴⁶ where an important relic, the Prophet's sheepskin, was being kept.⁴⁷ Basil's son Leo VI, too, had his own reasons to believe that the Prophet's protection was extended to him: he was rescued from prison on the feast of St. Elijah (July 20), and later even composed and delivered a homily commemorat-

⁴² On the formulas of oath in other treaties, with Venice, Genoa, and Pisa, see J. MALINGOUDI, *Russko-vizantiiskie dogovory v 10 veke v svete diplomatiki I*, 80.

⁴³ On churches of St. Elijah, see R. JANIN, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*. Première partie, *Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat œcuménique*, vol. 3, *Les églises et les monastères*, 2. éd., Paris 1969, 136-138.

⁴⁴ *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Caniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus*, ed. by I. Bekker, Bonn 1838, 222. Cf. Gy. MORAVCSIK, *Sagen und Legenden über Kaiser Basileos I*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 15 (1961) 90-91.

⁴⁵ On the propaganda of the cult of St. Elijah during Macedonian dynasty, see recently I. KALAVREZOU, *Helping Hands for the Empire: Imperial Ceremonies and the Cult of Relics at the Byzantine Court*, in: *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. by H. Maguire, Washington, DC 1997, 54-88; L. BRUBAKER, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Image and Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzas*, Cambridge 1999, 158-163, 303-306, 356-360; G. DAGRON, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, Cambridge 2003, 192-199, 207.

⁴⁶ R. JANIN, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*, 136-137.

⁴⁷ P. MAGDALINO, *Observations on the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I*, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 37 (1987) 57-60; H. A. KLEIN, *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople*, in: *BYZAS 5. Visualisierungen von Herrschaft. Frühmittelalterliche Residenzen Gestalt und Zeremoniell. Internationales Kolloquium, 3./4. Juni 2004 in Istanbul*, ed. by F. A. Bauer, Istanbul 2006, 92.

ing the Prophet's protection (34).⁴⁸ Judging from the special attention paid to Basil's establishments in his biography by Constantine Porphyrogenitus,⁴⁹ the cult was still quite important part of dynastic ideology in the mid-tenth century.

Two churches on JANIN's list have been proposed as candidates for the church of St. Elijah mentioned in the treaty. August Ludwig SCHLÖZER suggested that it was the great church in Petriion built by emperor Zeno and renovated by Basil I.⁵⁰ This identification cannot be accepted, however. The church was located too far from the Great Palace where the negotiations took place, and there seems to be no reason for the Ruses to venture that far in order to take their oath.

More plausible seems the candidate suggested by Jana MALINGOUDI: the church (oratory) of St. Elijah the Tishbite near the Mother of God of the Pharos.⁵¹ It was conveniently located on the Great Palace's premises, just off the Chrysotriklinos and within the comfortable distance from the supposed place of negotiations.⁵² The church is described by Constantine Porphyrogenitus in some detail, as a separate structure in the eastern part of the palace with the adjoining oratory of St. Clement.⁵³ It must have been a magnificent edifice once, but by the time Constantine wrote, the church was already in serious decay, as might be inferred from his remark, that "much of its beauty has since been destroyed by excessive rainfall as well as wintry snow and ice."⁵⁴ A crumbling building does not seem to be the most auspicious setting for the emperors, ever mindful of the impression they made on foreigners, to finalize the international treaty.

Yet the principal objection comes from the language of the treaty. The Christian Ruses declared that they have sworn by the name of the church of St. Elijah 'in the cathedral church' (КЛАХОМСА ЦРКВЬЮ . СЃГО ИЛЪИ ВЪ ЗБОРНѢИ ЦРКВИ). True, the wording is somewhat ambiguous suggesting a clumsy translation from Greek.⁵⁵ It is not quite clear, what the

⁴⁸ See Th. ANTONOPOULOU, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI*, Leiden – New York – Cologne 1997, 48, 66.

⁴⁹ As in the *Vita Basilii*, see C. MANGO, *The Art of Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents*, Toronto – Buffalo – London 1986, 192-201.

⁵⁰ A. SHLÖZER, *Nestor. Russkie letopisi na drevle-slavianskom iazyke*, part. 3, 182.

⁵¹ J. MALINGOUDI, *Die russisch-byzantinischen Verträge des 10. Jhds. aus diplomatischer Sicht*, 46, note 100; eadem, *Russko-vizantiiskie dogovory v 10 veke v svete diplomatiki I*, 90, note 95.

⁵² We do not know, however, where exactly the Ruses were received by the emperors in 944. In the tenth century, the Magnaura hall was a more regular venue for the reception of the foreign embassies. In that case, however, the distance to any palace church establishment would be roughly the same.

⁵³ For the text, see C. MANGO, *The Art of Byzantine Empire*, 196.

⁵⁴ C. MANGO, *The Art of Byzantine Empire*, 196.

⁵⁵ In contrast to Samuel H. Cross who tried to retain the idiosyncrasy of the

meaning of a ‘cathedral church’ (зборная цэрковь) in this context might be. In the twelfth century usage, съборная цэрковь most often means the city’s cathedral, the seat of a bishop. However, technically, a cathedral church is the one with its own chapter, where the daily liturgy is performed (in contrast to a parochial church). Clearly, the small palatine chapel of St. Elijah does not conform to these requirements.⁵⁶ Rather, we should look for a major ecclesiastical establishment that can be ranked among the cathedrals and where it would be possible to invoke the name of St. Elijah.

There was only one such church in the Great Palace, the New Church built by Basil I. Its primary dedication was to Prophet Elijah and Archangel (either Gabriel or Michael),⁵⁷ its most important relic was St. Elijah’s sheepskin cloak, and it housed a separate chapel dedicated to the Prophet. As Paul MAGDALINO points out, the impression that the Nea was a palace chapel of a restricted character is probably false. It was erected

original, Jana Malingoudi in her translation offers, essentially, an interpretation of its supposed meaning: “Diejenigen von uns, die getauft sind, haben in der Kapelle des Heiligen Elias in der Katherdralkirche bei dem vorliegenden heiligen Kreuz und dieser Urkunde geschworen [...]” (J. MALINGOUDI, *Ausführungen zu einigen Rechtsbestimmungen der russisch-byzantinischen Verträge des 10. Jhds.*, *Byzantinoslavica* 63 (2005) 100). Oddly, this correct interpretation runs counter to her identification of the venue (the oratory of St. Elijah the Tishbite) suggested in earlier works.

⁵⁶ Jana Malingoudi supported her identification by suggesting (with the reference to J. EBERSOLT, *Le Grand Palais de Constantinople et le Livre des Cérémonies* (Paris 1910), to me inaccessible) that the oratory of St. Elijah did not have a separate entrance but was entered through the Pharos church, hence the confusing wording of the treaty (J. MALINGOUDI, *Die russisch-byzantinischen Verträge des 10. Jhds. aus diplomatischer Sicht*, 46, note 100; eadem, *Russko-vizantijskie dogovory v 10 veke v svete diplomatiki I*, 90, note 95). However, the church of the Virgin of Pharos can hardly be conceived of as a ‘cathedral.’ It was the palatine chapel, and by the mid-tenth century developed into the emperor’s chapel par excellence (H. A. KLEIN, *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople*, 91). Moreover, the oratory’s description in *Vita Basilii* does not suggest that it was somehow attached to the Pharos church and had to be entered through the latter. Rather, it is described as a stand-alone structure with the chapel of St. Clement attached. The idea of its being entered through the Pharos church is inferred from the *De ceremoniis*’ description of the procession on the day of St. Elijah (*De cerem.*, I, 19): the emperors, by a gallery, reach the Pharos church and from there they go to the oratory of St. Elijah; after the prayer there, the emperors return to the Pharos church and from there they proceed to the New Church. In these movements, the Pharos church was *walked through*. Constantine, however, is quite clear: he refers to at least one door through which the patriarch and the emperors exit the St. Elijah chapel before entering the Pharos church. As Shaun Tougher points out, the church of Pharos was added to the prescription for the ceremony only by Leo VI (S. TOUGHER, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912): Politics and People*, Leiden – New York – Cologne 1997, 63), which means that before that, the oratory of St. Elijah had been entered through its own doors.

⁵⁷ P. MAGDALINO, *Observations on Nea Ekklesia*, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 37 (1987) 58. Later, it was known as dedicated the Christ, the Theotokos, St. Nikolas, St. Elijah, and Archangel Michael.

beyond the Palace proper, had an independent financial endowment, and its staff was separate from the palatine clergy. In the tenth century, the Nea was the venue for three major ceremonies in the religious life of Constantinople: the anniversary of its own dedication on 1 May and the feasts of its two main patrons, the Prophet Elijah (20 July), and the Archangel Michael (8 November).⁵⁸ An establishment of such status, indeed, can belong to the order of cathedrals. Its multiply dedications confused the observers,⁵⁹ and the church was more commonly known as the 'New Church' or the 'Great New Church.'⁶⁰ It is probably this Greek name, ἡ Νέα ἐκκλησία, that produced съборная црковь of the treaty.⁶¹

Thus, there are reasons to believe that the Christian Ruses took their oath in the chapel of St. Elijah in the Nea Church. One question remains to be answered: why this particular chapel in this particular church was chosen as the venue for the ceremony? And why the Byzantines thought it necessary to make note of this fact in the treaty's text?

As Paul MAGDALINO remarked, "among the major changes in Byzantine public and court ceremonial instituted by the Macedonian emperors, one of the most striking is the increased emphasis they placed on the feast of the prophet Elijah (20 July)."⁶² The ceremonies for the feast, most probably, come from the times of Leo VI⁶³ and are described, in minute details, by Constantine Porphyrogenitus in the special chapter 19 of *De ceremoniis*. The feast began on the evening of the previous day, July 19, by the liturgy in the Pharos church. The next morning of July 20, emperors met the patriarch at the Chrysotriklinos, then proceeded to the Pharos church and visited the nearby oratory of St. Elijah. After leaving the church of Pharos, the emperors descended by the stairs to the Boukoleon Palace and entered the New Church, by which members of the Senate await them. There, accompanied by the patriarch, they came to the church of St. Elijah where they kissed the altar of the Prophet and its relic. After the celebration of the liturgy, the emperors returned to the

⁵⁸ P. MAGDALINO, *Observations on Nea Ekklesia*, 61.

⁵⁹ In 1200, a pilgrim from Rus', Dobrynia Iadreikovich of Novgorod, called it St. Michael's church, while in the early fourteenth century, Stephen of Novgorod and Ignatius of Smolensk call it 'the church of Nine Ranks of Angels' (see G. P. MAJESKA, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (= *Dumbarton Oaks Studies*, 19), Washington, DC 1984, 247-248).

⁶⁰ P. MAGDALINO, *Observations on Nea Ekklesia*, 51.

⁶¹ The Church Slavonic съборъ is one of the most common equivalents of the Greek ἐκκλησία (see *Slovník jazyka staroslověnského – Lexicon linguae palaeoslovenicae*, part 36, Prague 1983, 219).

⁶² P. MAGDALINO, *Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah*, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 38 (1988) 194.

⁶³ P. MAGDALINO, *Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah*, 195-196; G. DAGRON, *Emperor and Priest*, 207, 211.

Chrysotriklinos for a banquet with the patriarch, the metropolitans, and selected secular dignitaries.⁶⁴

The Rus' specific invocation of St. Elijah in their oaths, as well as their presence in his chapel at the Nea, suggests that the oath took place on St. Elijah day, July 20. In 944, it fell on Sunday, a day generally considered especially auspicious for grand undertakings. It remains speculate, whether the Christian Rus' stood guard at the Palace that day and were summoned for witnessing the treaty to the New Church, or, relieved of duty, mingled among the dignitaries awaiting the emperors' arrival by the New Church's entrance.⁶⁵

If, in spite of everything, reference to the church of St. Elijah still seems incidental and without deeper meaning, let us consider another 'coincidence'. According to the treaty of 944, the Rus', while on business in Constantinople, had to reside in the quarter adjacent to St. Mamas' monastery.⁶⁶ This was a traditional practice inaugurated, most probably, with the previous treaty of 911.⁶⁷ The treaty of 911 does not refer to St. Mamas' directly, yet it invokes the monastery's patron's day in its dating: the treaty was concluded on September 2, when the memory of St. Mamas is celebrated.⁶⁸ It would appear that the Byzantines, while signing the treaties with the Rus', did attach a certain symbolic significance to dating, after all. By alluding to St. Elijah, they effectively provided the treaty of 944 with its date.

⁶⁴ *De cerem.*, ed. by J. J. Reiske, Bonn 1829, 114.10-118.15. I thank Aleksandr Filipchuk for consulting me on the subtleties of the Greek text.

⁶⁵ There is a striking parallel that should not be dismissed. The story involves the Rus' sailors in the Byzantine navy, negotiations with the foreign ambassador, and the feast of St. Elijah. As Liutprand of Cremona reports, emperor Nikephoros Phocas dispatched his navy, which included two 'Rus' ships', to Italy on Sunday, July 19. He then set the next day, Monday, July 20, for negotiations with Liutprand. From Liutprand's report we wouldn't learn whether the emperor had chosen the day with special idea in mind, yet the ambassador didn't fail to note that it was the day (the thirteenth before the calends of August, July 20) when 'the lighthearted Greeks celebrate the ascension of the prophet Elijah to the heavens with stage performances' (*Liutprandi Cremonensis Relatio de legatione Constantinopolitana*, ed. P. J. Migne, PL 136, 921-922; for the English translation see *The complete works of Liutprand of Cremona*, transl. by P. Squatriti, Washington, D.C. 2007, 257).

⁶⁶ On St. Mamas' monastery and its location, see J. PARGOIRE, *Les Saint-Mamas de Constantinople*, *Izvestiia russkogo arkheologicheskogo instituta v Konstantinopole* 1-2 (Sofia 1904) 261-316.

⁶⁷ G. LITAVRIN, *Usloviia prebyvaniia drevnikh rusov v Konstantinopole v 10 v. i ikh iuridicheskii status*, *Vizantiiskii vremennik* 54 (1993) 81-92.

⁶⁸ Sergii, *Polnyi mesiatsestov Vostoka* 2, Moscow 1876, 267-269.