



## **The Byzantine-Bulgarian Confrontation in the first Half of the 10th Century and Kyivan Rus'**

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Source:

Byzantinoslavica - Revue internationale des Etudes Byzantines (Byzantinoslavica - Revue internationale des Etudes Byzantines), issue: 1-2 / 2012, pages: 156-166, on [www.cceol.com](http://www.cceol.com).

# The Byzantine-Bulgarian Confrontation in the first Half of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century and Kyivan Rus'

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The first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century is of great importance in the history of Southeastern Europe. At that time Bulgaria claimed itself as a powerful competitor of Byzantium in the Balkans region, while in the north coast of the Black Sea Kyivan Rus' declared itself to be an important factor in the foreign policy in the North. However, if Byzantine-Bulgarian and Byzantine-Rus' relations of that period are sufficiently covered in historiography,<sup>1</sup> the interlacing of all three factors of international politics (Byzantium, Bulgaria, Rus') and the Rus'-Bulgarian relations in first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century have not found their proper coverage in historiography<sup>2</sup> yet. That can be explained, first of all, by a lack of sufficient sources. In fact, the sources give only fragmentary and indirect information about the Rus'-Bulgarian relations of the period mentioned. Therefore, "the role of Bulgaria in the formation of ancient Rus' ... is undervalued in the historiography"<sup>3</sup> and at the same time, as G. LITAVRIN notes, Bulgarian relations to Constantinople were an example for the Rus' ruling elite concerning Rus'-Byzantine system of economy, as well as political and cultural relations in the 9<sup>th</sup> – the beginning of 11<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example: Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Византия, Болгария, Древняя Русь (IX-начало XII в.)*, Санкт-Петербург 2000, 398.

<sup>2</sup> Typically, the scientists in their exploration restrict themselves to study cultural mutual influence between the two nations [See, for example: Е. ГЕОРГИЕВ, *Начало болгарско-русских культурных и литературных связей*, in: Руско-български връзки през вековете, София 1986, 12-22; Г. ЦАНКОВА-ПЕТКОВА, *Културни и политически връзки и отношения между България, Киевска Русия и Византия през ранното средновековие*, in: Руско-български връзки през вековете, София 1986, 71-81; Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Културният преворот в България и Древняя Русь*, in: Кирило-Методиевски студии. Хиляда и сто години от смъртта на Методий, Кн. 4, София 1987, 393-403]. The political component is partly examined only in the works of G. Litavrin [Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Древняя Русь, Болгария и Византия в IX-X вв.*, in: История, культура, этнография и фольклор славянских народов. IX Международный съезд славистов, Москва 1983, 62-76], although scientists also focused on cultural and economic components.

<sup>3</sup> Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Византия, Болгария, Древняя Русь (IX-начало XII в.)*, Санкт-Петербург 2000, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Thus, by assumption of G. Litavrin, in the conclusion of the Rus'-Byzantine agreement in 911 Rus' took into account the Bulgarian experience concerning

The fact of close territorial contact between Bulgarians and Rus' people in the basin of Transnistria and the Danube mouth<sup>5</sup> favored the relations between them in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. At the end of 9<sup>th</sup> – beginning of 10<sup>th</sup> centuries Bulgarian government established a stable authority in the north of the Danube mouth.<sup>6</sup>

It is known that along the upper part of the stream of the Dniester River and near upper Vistula lived such a group of Slavic tribes, as the White Croats were.<sup>7</sup> And thus, some East Slavic tribes settled gradually in the South-Danube region<sup>8</sup> which means that Bulgarians and the Rus' had contacts in the Dniester and Danube area. In addition, in the conditions of political centralization of East Slavic tribes around Kyiv this area must have been in the sphere of interests of Grand Prince Authority,<sup>9</sup> whose interests directly coincided with aspirations of the Bulgarian government.<sup>10</sup>

At that time Kyiv tried to conquer the tribes Tiwerci and Ulichs. According to the Primary Chronicle, during the reign of Oleg Tiwerci moved to the west bank of Dniester,<sup>11</sup> and during the reign of his successor Igor Ulichs moved to the area between Dniester and Southern Buh.<sup>12</sup>

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the treaty with Byzantium in 716, according to which Bulgarian Empire guaranteed peace in exchange of the contribution payment and establishing intergovernmental trade [Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Византия, Болгария, Древняя Русь*, 135; idem, *Культурный переворот в Болгарии и Древняя Русь*, 395, 401].

<sup>5</sup> Е. МИХАЙЛОВ, *Киевская Русия и България през X в.*, in: Руско-български връзки през вековете, София 1986, 62; Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Культурный переворот в Болгарии и Древняя Русь*, 401.

<sup>6</sup> Е. МИХАЙЛОВ, *За руско-българската етническа граница до края на X век*, Годишник на Софийския университет 3 (1973) 195-198.

<sup>7</sup> Л. НИДЕРЛЕ, *Славянские древности*, Москва 1956, 155.

<sup>8</sup> А. Н. НАСОНОВ, *“Русская земля” и образование территории древнерусского государства*, Москва 1951, 130.

<sup>9</sup> Remarkably, the first mention of the name “Rus” in medieval German sources was used to indicate ethnonim or residents of a territory (in Latin form *Ruzarii*) associated with the area of the Bavarian Danube [А. В. НАЗАРЕНКО, *Древняя Русь на международных путях: Междисциплинарные очерки культурных, торговых, политических связей IX-XII вв.*, Москва 2001, 18]. Also in the charter of Emperor Otto II of 979, the mountain which is located in the south of the Danube between the rivers Ibs and Grosso Erlauf, is called Rûznic, which also comes from ethnonim “Rus” [ibidem, 20]. Thus, in the first half of 9<sup>th</sup> century ethnonym “Rus” is present on the territory of Bavarian Danube [ibidem, 25-26].

<sup>10</sup> So, V. Nikolaev assumed that the famous Nikolaos I Mystikos's threat Symeon (as below) was caused by the fact that at that time it was going to be the conflict between Rus' and Bulgaria in Transnistria and because of the domination over Tiwerci and Ulichs, who were not conquered by Kyiv [В. Д. НИКОЛАЕВ, *К истории болгаро-русских отношений в начале 40-х гг. X в.*, Советское славяноведение 6 (1982) 49-55].

<sup>11</sup> *Полное собрание русских летописей. Т. 2: Ипатьевская летопись*, Москва 1962, Ст. 9.

<sup>12</sup> *Новгородская первая летопись старшего и младшего изводов*, Москва – Ленинград 1950, 109.

Kyiv's actions in reference to these tribes restrained the movement of nomadic tribes to the west in the North Black Sea region (Hungarians, Pechenegs, Ouzoi, etc.). However, the "steppe factor" weakened the influence of the Bulgarian government in that region.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the question of conquering the tribes was left open for Rus' and for Bulgaria as well.

In the history of Byzantium, the beginning of the Macedonian dynasty's reign was marked by the entry of the Empire into a new era in its history – the period of the highest cultural and later a political development, too. On the international stage the character of relations between Byzantium and neighboring countries (not only the East or West, but the North as well) is largely determined by the peculiarities of its geopolitical location.<sup>14</sup> At that time no state in the world had a direct contact, peaceful or hostile, with so many countries and peoples, as Byzantium had. The situation was complicated by the fact that the Empire never had reliable natural boundaries; safety was not secured from any side.

Strengthening of Byzantium in the East was very important for the policy of the Empire in the Balkans and in the Northern Black Sea region. In addition, each of the Slavic states – Rus', Moravia, and South Slavs caused certain problems to Byzantium.<sup>15</sup> The Rus' attacks on Constantinople in 860 were remembered for two centuries in Byzantium, and its rescue was explained by the patronage of the Virgin. It is remarkable that the chronicler marked the origin of Rus' from this campaign.<sup>16</sup> Exactly this Rus' attack forced Byzantium to restore the alliance with Khazaria to maintain a balance of forces in the northern region.<sup>17</sup>

In *"De administrando imperio"* Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus put the Empire to the center of the world. The emperor described the neighboring nations purely in succession according to clockwise. Constantine started this description from the north. Despite some semantic meaning of this principle<sup>18</sup> we can assume the particular importance of the northern region for the Empire at that time, too. So the emperor singled out

<sup>13</sup> Е. МИХАЙЛОВ, *Киевска Русия и България през Х в.*, 64.

<sup>14</sup> Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Геополитическое положение Византии в средневековом мире в VII-XII вв.*, in: *Византия между Западом и Востоком. Опыт исторической характеристики*. Сб. статей, Санкт-Петербург 1999, 11.

<sup>15</sup> Г. ОСТРОГОРСЬКИЙ, *Історія Візантії*, пер. з нім. Анатолія Онишка, Львів 2002, 213.

<sup>16</sup> ПСРЛ., Т. 2, Ст. 12; К. Е. ЛИ, *Происхождение Руси: историко-лингвистический анализ*, in: *Могилянські читання 2003 року: 36. наук. пр.: Пам'ятки Давньої Русі в студіях сучасних вчених: історія, дослідження, збереження*, ed. В. М. Колпакова та інші, Київ 2004, 238.

<sup>17</sup> Г. ОСТРОГОРСЬКИЙ, *ibidem*, 213.

<sup>18</sup> See: В. В. ПЕНСКОЙ, *Справедливые и несправедливые войны в византийской традиции (на примере болгаро-византийских войн)*, in: *Мир Византии / Материалы науч. семинара, отв. ред.-сост. Н. Н. Болгов, Белгород 2007, 93.*

the chapters about Pechenegs (1–8), Hungarians (3, 4), Rhoses (2), Bulgarians (5), that is, the peoples who lived near the northern borders of the Empire. Similarly, the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter was devoted to “the peoples of the North”<sup>19</sup> pointing out the great importance of the region for the Empire. In the struggle against barbarians Byzantine diplomacy skillfully used a system of “alliances”. Thus, Constantine called Serbs and Croats his allies in the Balkans, whereas in the Northern Black Sea region in the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century the Empire counted on an alliance with Pechenegs. They had to oppose Rus’ as well as the Hungarian horde and Bulgarians. Pechenegs played an important role as trade mediators between Kherson and Rus’, Khazaria and other northern people. Therefore, as A. VASILIEV marked, Pechenegs were very important for Byzantium both in political and economic sense in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup>

In mid-10<sup>th</sup> century Byzantium survived three major Rhos attacks (860, 907 and 941).<sup>21</sup> Two of them occurred in the period of Macedonian dynasty. All these campaigns were held as sea expeditions, and therefore the way of the Rus’ fleet inevitably passed along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. On that account it was quite problematic for Rus’ to attack Constantinople without silence consent of the Bulgarian government. According to chronicle, Oleg with a great army came to Constantinople and forced Byzantine emperors to negotiate with him and to conclude a favorable trade agreement for Rus’. In Romanos I Lekapenos time the Capital was in danger. Although Igor’s first campaign was unsuccessful in 941, during the second campaign of the Ruthenian prince the Byzantines decided not to risk and at great distance Romanos decided to come into terms with Rus’, giving the prince and boyars generous gifts.<sup>22</sup>

The growing Rus’ state power caused an anxiety in the Byzantine ruling circles. However, the relations with Bulgaria were of paramount importance for the Byzantine Empire in the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike Basil I, Leo VI had no defined foreign policy and during his rule one of the largest Balkan conflicts in the Byzantine history broke out – a war with Symeon I the Bulgarian. Byzantium was forced to ask Hungary’s help that in response to the call of Byzantium firstly intervened in the conflict among European states. At that time Hungary occupied the territory between the rivers Dnieper and Danube along the north-western Black Sea coast. This attack of Hungary was totally unexpected for Symeon, for north-eastern border of Bulgaria was not fortified and the Byzantine fleet

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<sup>19</sup> See: *Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio*, ed. B. G. Niebuhrii, CSHB III, Bonnae 1840.

<sup>20</sup> А. А. ВАСИЛЬЕВ, *История Византийской империи. Время до Крестовых походов (до 1081 г.)*, Санкт-Петербург 1998, 428.

<sup>21</sup> At least as far as we know it from sources.

<sup>22</sup> *ПСРЛ*, Т. 2, 34–35.

conveyed the Hungarian army across the Danube.<sup>23</sup> For his part, Symeon asked Pechenegs for help. They defeated the Hungarians and forced them to retreat to the Middle Danubian plain, while Byzantium was defeated by the Bulgarians (896) and had to pay annual tribute to Symeon.

The Balkan war paralyzed the acts of the Byzantines against Arabs in the East and the West. However, right after weakening the Balkan threat the Empire began to build its fleet. After a great victory over the Arab fleet in October 908, Byzantium suffered a crushing defeat in spring 912 in the campaign against Crete. In this expedition there were seven hundred of Rus' sailors mercenaries as a part of the Byzantine army.<sup>24</sup> This indicates a new stage in the Byzantine-Rus' relations. The Rus' people's participation in the expedition was probably a result of the Rus'-Byzantine agreement of 911.<sup>25</sup>

With the death of Leo VI the power passed to his brother Alexander. The new emperor tried to break with all that could be related to his predecessor. The change of the rulers on the Byzantine throne had also a noticeable impact on the foreign policy of the Empire. Thus, Alexander refused to pay annual tribute to the Bulgarians. In response of it Symeon began military operations against the Empire<sup>26</sup> but soon after it the Emperor Alexander died (6 June 913). At that time Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus remained the only representative of the Macedonian dynasty. The regency for the seven-year emperor was headed by the patriarch Nikolaos I Mystikos.

The rule of Symeon I the Great (893-927) is "a new era"<sup>27</sup> in the history of Bulgaria. He had received good education in Constantinople and became a leader of a new type in the history of Bulgaria. After Symeon had learned the ancient and Byzantine political doctrine, the main task of his activities was to defeat Byzantium and become an emperor in Constantinople,<sup>28</sup> which, as noted by G. OSTROGORSKY, gives to the Symeon's wars a special character and caused extreme danger to the Empire.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, in the Middle Ages the title of "the Empire" was com-

<sup>23</sup> А. П. КАЖДАН – Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Очерки истории Византии и Южных славян*, Санкт-Петербург 1998, 168-169.

<sup>24</sup> *Constantini Porphyrogeniti De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae libri duo*, CSHB, ed. J. J. Reiske, Bonnae 1829, Vol. I, 651.

<sup>25</sup> Г. ОСТРОГОРСКИЙ, *ibidem*, 233; Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Византия, Болгария, Древняя Русь (IX-начало XII в.)*, 66.

<sup>26</sup> А. П. КАЖДАН, *К вопросу о начале второй болгаро-византийской войны при Симеоне*, in: *Славянский архив*, Москва 1959, 23.

<sup>27</sup> Ф. И. УСПЕНСКИЙ, *История Византийской империи. Т. 3. Период Македонской династии (867-1057)*, Москва 2002, 329.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>29</sup> Г. ОСТРОГОРСКИЙ, *ibidem*, 236.

bined with the right of a hegemony in the world, in which only one Christian Empire could be.

In August 913 Symeon was again under the walls of Constantinople. Nikolaos I Mystikos sent pastoral letters to Symeon, which of course had no impact on the Bulgarian ruler.<sup>30</sup> Then the Patriarch threatened him with a union of Byzantium and Rus', Pechenegs, Alans and western Turks (Hungary)<sup>31</sup> that was for nothing too, because among those people Bulgarian emissaries acted successfully.<sup>32</sup> The Patriarch's threat with Rus', probably, was conditioned by a Rus'-Byzantine union, which was concluded in the agreement of 911. Nevertheless, the fact that the agreement was then concluded, except for mentioning participation of Rus' people in the campaign of the Empire against the Arabs in Crete, could be confirmed by the form, in which in the charter of emperors Constantine and Romanos to Rus' archon 2 gold solidus<sup>33</sup> signet was sent, testifying the high status of the Rus' ruler in the Byzantine hierarchy of nations. Similarly, in order to fulfill articles in the agreement of 911, G. LITAVRIN has supposed that at the time interval 920-922 years (during the war against Symeon) emperors Romanos I Lekapenos and Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus sent a charter to Prince Igor with a request to help in the war against Bulgaria.<sup>34</sup> Thus the threat of the Patriarch was not entirely groundless. In addition, in his epistle Nikolaos I Mystikos meant real "possible campaign (as a specific campaign) against Bulgaria, where Rus' forces were exactly from Rus'" but not as part of the Byzantine army, where Rus' people probably were.<sup>35</sup> While this request did not reach its goal, the Rus'-Byzantine agreement of 911, according to G. LITAVRIN, remained in force until 941.<sup>36</sup>

Although Symeon overestimated his forces (he was simply unable to take by storm the most powerful fortress in the medieval world of that time), the government capitulated and Nikolaos I Mystikos went to considerable concession for Bulgarians. According to the agreement, one of the Symeon's daughters might have become the wife of Constantine VII,

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<sup>30</sup> Д. АНГЕЛОВ, *Методы византийской дипломатии в отношениях с Болгарией по данным писем константинопольского патриарха Николая Мистика*, Вопросы истории славян 1 (1963) 60-68. However, the researcher restricted himself to considering the "religious" and "historical" arguments of Patriarch. The threats of allied Ruses, Pechenegs, Alans and Hungarians liabilities were not considered.

<sup>31</sup> Nicolai, *Constantinopolitani archiepiscopi, Epistolae*, ed. J.-P. Migne, PG 111, 1863, 153.

<sup>32</sup> Ф. И. УСПЕНСКИЙ, *ibidem*, 338.

<sup>33</sup> *Constantini Porphyrogeniti De cerim.*, 690.21-691.1.

<sup>34</sup> Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Византия, Болгария, Древняя Русь (IX-начало XII в.)*, 68.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, 95

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, 68.

and Symeon received the title of an emperor, though only Bulgarian.<sup>37</sup> The brilliant Symeon's victory won over the Byzantine army in August 20, 917 near river Achelous eliminated a large part of the Byzantine army. At the same time Symeon took a part of Macedonia and proclaimed himself unauthorized "tsar and autocrat of the Bulgarians and Romeis", while the Bulgarian church – independent of Constantinople.<sup>38</sup>

However, owing to a palace upheaval in Constantinople the mother empress Zoe returned again to power. The new government declared the marriage agreement with Bulgaria invalid and the coronation of Symeon ineligible.<sup>39</sup> The war between Bulgaria and Byzantium in 919 broke out with renewed force. Byzantium was forced to dare a vigorous counteroffensive.

Romanos Lekapenos, the Armenian peasant's son, led the navy of Byzantium. However, this campaign was defeated by Symeon. Despite the defeat Romanos succeeded his position within the Empire. He dismissed the Empress Zoe from power, and in May 919 proposed marriage of the juvenile basileos Constantine VII and his daughter Helen. Thus Romanos received the title basileopater, and in December 17 the same year he was proclaimed a co-emperor.<sup>40</sup> These Romanos's steps ruined completely the plans of Symeon.

The Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict was of a great importance for the entire Balkan peninsula. Interests of the two warring countries came into collision particularly in Serbia. Bulgarian ruler was involved in Serbo-Croatian cases where he suffered considerable defeats. After these failures, he planned a new campaign against Byzantium, but soon he died in May 27, 927. With the death of Symeon the great era of Bulgarian wars against Byzantium for dominance in the Balkans<sup>41</sup> came to the end. The Symeon's successor Peter I immediately concluded a peace treaty with Byzantium and in return for it he was recognized as a king of Bulgaria and married Princess Maria Lekapene, a granddaughter of the emperor Romanos I and a daughter of his eldest son Christopher.<sup>42</sup> Thus the Bulgarian conflict was resolved and during some time relations with Bulgaria remained peaceful.<sup>43</sup> The position of Byzantium was strength-

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<sup>37</sup> А. П. КАЖДАН – Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Очерки истории Византии и Южных славян*, 171.

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem, 171-172.

<sup>39</sup> Г. ОСТРОГОРСЬКИЙ, ibidem, 236.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, 237.

<sup>41</sup> А. П. КАЖДАН – Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Очерки истории Византии и Южных славян*, 173.

<sup>42</sup> Г. ОСТРОГОРСЬКИЙ, ibidem, 238-239.

<sup>43</sup> Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Внутренняя и внешняя политика Византии во второй половине X-первой четверти XI в.*, in: *История Византии. В 3-х томах*, отв. ред. С. Д. Сказкин, Москва 1967, II, 214.



ened in other Slavic countries. So Serbia recognized the supremacy of the Empire and Bulgaria fell within the scope of the Byzantine culture. From the beginning of Christianization this process had been growing fast and in the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century it reached its zenith.

In mid-tenth century Byzantium was forced to join the struggle against the Egyptian Arabs. Therefore the Empire needed peace in the West and especially in the North, from which threat arose repeatedly for Byzantium in the first half of the tenth century. As mentioned, the main enemies in the North were Bulgaria and Rus'. However, in contrast to Bulgaria, which was a neighbor and the Empire could control it (it was difficult to make unexpected attacks), and attacks could have been made in response, what Tzimiskes and Basil II did successfully, Rus' was far and was isolated by both natural and political conditions – there was the land of Khazar and Pechenegs between Byzantium and Rus'. Therefore Constantinople was interested in using the political factor for its personal benefit, especially using Pechenegs to prevent attacks from Rus' on the Capital of the Empire, that was also illustrated in the treatise of Constantine.

In Kyiv, the political situation in Byzantium and the Balkans was carefully observed as well. A bright example of this was the campaign in 907, which was completely unexpected for the Empire. The chronicles of Rus' presented the campaign as a grand operation of Oleg against Constantinople. However, the attack of Oleg was not mentioned in Byzantine sources. Probably at that time some significant military skirmishes did not take place. As G. LITAVRIN assumes, Byzantines preferred the peaceful actions concerning Rus'<sup>44</sup> as opposed to armed resistance. According to the chronicle, at that time Constantinople paid an indemnity and agreed to pay an annual tribute to Rus'.<sup>45</sup>

Since the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine economy rose, that was reflected in foreign trade activities of the Empire. However, Constantinople considered foreign trade as an important but not a major component of foreign relations, and it submitted to policy. So, as A. DOMANOVSKY notes, there were export restrictions to those goods, "free trade of which could raise the priority of diplomacy over commerce".<sup>46</sup> But, besides, direct "economic exchange" was important for the economy at that time and so-called "non-economic exchange" was carried out primarily to preserve a certain status, not profit.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Византия и Русь в IX-X вв.*, in: История Византии. В 3-х томах, отв. ред. С. Д. Сказкин, Москва 1967, II, 230.

<sup>45</sup> ПСРЛ, Т. 2, 21-22.

<sup>46</sup> А. М. ДОМАНОВСЬКИЙ, *Державний контроль та регулювання торгівлі у Візантії IV-IX ст.*, Харків 2007, 15.

<sup>47</sup> See: *The Economic History of Byzantium. From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. A. E. Laiou, Washington 2002, Vol. 1-3, 675.

The importance of the Black Sea market for the Byzantine Empire is well known. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century Rus' had very active trading relations to Byzantines. This trade, as M. LEVCHEUKO noted, was beneficial not only for Rus' but also for Byzantium.<sup>48</sup> The initiative in the development of Byzantine-Rus' relationships was taken from Kyiv, which gradually confirmed its rights in international relations by force.

The practice of political and trade relations of Rus' and Empire were told in the Byzantine agreements with Rus' 907 and 911. At that time politics and commerce were closely interrelated in Rus'. Only the central government was able to provide their own merchants favorable trading conditions with other states and to ensure the safety of the merchant caravans. Accordingly, the Rus'-Byzantine trade was carried out exactly by the great prince's power. The lack of princely letters or stamps deprived buyers of their privileges in the markets of the Empire.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, as G. LITAVRIN noted, merchants of the states, that had no diplomatic agreements with Byzantium, had no right to trade both in the Capital and in other cities of the Empire.<sup>50</sup>

According to A. DOMANOVSKY, the important aspect of foreign economic activity of the Empire was to provide transcontinental trade routes from India and China without middlemen. These attempts through the North Caucasus and Northern Black Sea region were successful.<sup>51</sup>

So, the Byzantine dealings with the northern regions were important part of the Empire's economic life. Byzantium attentively guarded the Black Sea from any penetration into its basin. The realization of the monopoly right to use the navigation on the Black Sea was provided easily from the south – it was difficult to pass the landing stage and maritime defense of Constantinople without being noticed. However, the situation was more complex in the North Pontic region, where Rus' very strongly expressed itself as a maritime state. Consequently, Kherson was very important for Constantinople.

Thus in the second Symeon's war the agreement between the Empire and Rus' was very advantageous for Kyiv, and it was very important for the government of Rus'. There are no grounds in the sources for concluding that the termination or restriction of the Rus'-Byzantine trade took place in that period.<sup>52</sup> The non-interference of Rus' in the conflict between

<sup>48</sup> М. В. ЛЕВЧЕНКО, *Очерки по истории русско-византийских отношений*, Москва 1956, 18.

<sup>49</sup> Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Византия и Русь в IX-X вв.*, 230.

<sup>50</sup> Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Византия, Болгария, Древняя Русь (IX-начало XII в.)*, 23.

<sup>51</sup> А. М. ДОМАНОВСКИЙ, *Державний контроль та регулювання торгівлі у Візантії*, 10.

<sup>52</sup> G. Litavrin assumed that in the time of the Symeon's war against Byzantium the route "from the Varangians to the Greeks" stopped its existence. [Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Культурный переворот в Болгарии и Древняя Русь*, 396].

Bulgaria and Byzantium on anybody's side can be explained by this fact. Support of Bulgaria could have cancelled Rus'-Byzantine agreement, while the an action against Bulgaria on Nikolaos I Mystikos's appeal could have also paralyzed, on the one hand, economic ties with Bulgaria<sup>53</sup> which Rus'<sup>54</sup> was interested in; on the other hand ties with Byzantium, because the part of trade route known as "from the Varangians to the Greeks" led along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, along which, according to Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Rus' had to make 5-6 stops.<sup>55</sup> Thus, by G. LITAVRIN's assumption, agreements of Rus' with Greeks were mediated by simultaneous agreements of Kyiv with Preslav court.<sup>56</sup> Symeon also could not harm the Rus' trading caravans passing to Constantinople; otherwise he could be attacked by the ally of Byzantium – Rus', which Bulgaria would not have stood then.

However, the situation changed during the reign of the Bulgarian king Peter I who signed a peace treaty with Byzantium. Therefore, during the first Igor's raid on Byzantium, Bulgarians reported it to Romanos I Lekapenos. Afterwards it is not surprising, that in the other campaign in Constantinople Igor ordered Pechenegs to attack and rob Bulgaria in order to neutralize its force.<sup>57</sup>

It is remarkable that the ambassadors of the emperor met Igor's army on Danube – the Bulgarian border, where a peace treaty was concluded in 944,<sup>58</sup> according to which the fruitful stage in relations of pagan Rus' with Empire began.<sup>59</sup> Thus since 927 the Byzantium was at peace with Bulgaria, the Rus'-Byzantine agreement of 944 contributed both the Rus'-

<sup>53</sup> At that time they were quite active in the region of the Lower Danube – from the Danube's orifice to Dniester. [See, for example: Е. МИХАЙЛОВ, *Киевская Русия и България през Х в.*, 65; В. Б. ПЕРХАВКО, *Древнерусские купцы в Подунавье (по археологическим данным)*, in: *Восточная Европа в исторической ретроспективе (К 80-летию В. Т. Пашуто)*, Москва 1999, 209]. The name of the local Eastern Bavarian unit of money and weight *scoti*, which comes from the Rus' merchants vocabulary, also points out the active trade affairs of Rus' in the Danube region. [А. В. НАЗАРЕНКО, *ibidem*, 34].

<sup>54</sup> According to archeological data, activities of merchants from the region of Lower Danube are not fixed in Kyiv, but traces of Rus' merchants can be easily traced in that region [В. Б. ПЕРХАВКО, *Древнерусские купцы в Подунавье (по археологическим данным)*, 219].

<sup>55</sup> *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravcsik, Budapest 1949, 62, 97-104; see too: Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Древняя Русь. Болгария и Византия в IX-X вв.*, 72.

<sup>56</sup> Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Культурный переворот в Болгарии и Древняя Русь*, 395, 396; Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Древняя Русь. Болгария и Византия в IX-X вв.*, 71-74.

<sup>57</sup> See: В. Д. НИКОЛАЕВ, *ibidem*, 50-55; Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Византия, Болгария, Древняя Русь (IX-начало XII в.)*, 77.

<sup>58</sup> *ПСРЛ*, Т. 2, 35.

<sup>59</sup> Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Византия, Болгария, Древняя Русь (IX-начало XII в.)*, 98.

Bulgarian economic and political ties.<sup>60</sup> We can assume that exactly from that time a penetration of Christianity in Slavic rite Rus' began by Bulgarian missionaries.<sup>61</sup>

So, the main factor in the interaction of Rus' and Bulgaria in the mentioned period was the Byzantine politics of both governments. However, seeking to strengthen its position in the region of the Northern Black Sea region Rus' offended the interests of Bulgaria. Therefore the preservation of Byzantine positions in the Balkans was important for Kyiv. Rus' was forced to maintain friendly relations with Bulgaria, because without "consent" of Bulgarians, whose territory had been gone, Rus' could not make an unexpected attack on Constantinople. That is why Igor did not go alone with punitive action against Bulgaria, and leveled Pechenegs. The unstable situation inside the country after the agreement signed in 927, which the part of the Bulgarian nobility did not recognize, forced Bulgarians to regulate relations with Rus'. Especially after rebellions in Bulgaria in 928 and 930<sup>62</sup> Peter was forced to consider the opposition party. Moreover, these rebellions were secretly supported by Byzantium.

After the rebellion of Peter's younger brother Ivan, the latter was officially condemned and Byzantines first brought him to Constantinople, then to the thema Armeniakoi, where he got married with a noble Byzantine girl.<sup>63</sup> That is why Hungary by force received the right of unimpeded passage through the territory of Bulgaria in a campaign to Byzantium, which was a direct violation of the peace treaty of 927. Bulgaria was not able to resist Rus', making the Bulgarian government conduct more flexible policy in the east.

Instead, for Empire Rus', it quickly consolidated and accumulated its force and could become a guarantor of political stability in the north, as opposed to an unstable alliance with the nomads Pechenegs. The spread of Christianity among the Rus' population gave the Empire hope for spreading their political and ideological (religious) influence on the young state. In Bulgaria with the signing of a peace treaty in 927 process of infiltration and assimilation of Byzantine cultural values went faster, and at that time, by mediation of the Bulgarian, probably, the Byzantine influence began to penetrate quickly to the territory of Kyiv Rus'.

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<sup>60</sup> G. Litavrin assumed that Kyiv concluded an agreement with Peter without the existence of which was unthinkable the Ol'ga trip to Constantinople [Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Древняя Русь. Болгария и Византия в IX-X вв.*, 72-74].

<sup>61</sup> See: А. Б. ГОЛОВКО, *Христианизация восточнославянского общества и внешняя политика Древней Руси в IX первой трети XIII века*, Вопросы истории 9 (1988) 59-71.

<sup>62</sup> О. В. ИВАНОВА, *Восстание 930 г. в Болгарии и Болгаро-Византийские отношения*, in: *Славяне и их соседи. Международные отношения в эпоху феодализма*, Вып. 1, Москва 1989, 34.

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem, 38.