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The Mission of Kyivan Princess Ol'ga to the King Otto I in the Context of Rus' and Germany Foreign Policies

Dmytro GORDIYENKO (Kyiv)

Foreign policy takes a significant place in the historiography of Rus'. However, its studies are concerned with particular difficulties, namely with lack of sufficient sources, especially for the early history of Rus'. This concerns mainly its foreign policy. Foreign policy of early medieval states is also complicated by the "saturation": here are deeply intertwined the political, cultural, church, and religious matters, which were mainly present in their complex. But not all the constituents were covered in the historiography to the same extent; primarily this concerns the political issue of Rus'-German relations. In the history of the 10th century of both Ancient Rus' and German states it used to be one of the most important matters. Just during that period both states strengthened themselves on the international scene and manifested themselves as significant elements of international politics of that time.

The studies of foreign affairs of Kyiv state in western direction at the time of Ol'ga are carried out using of three blocks of sources available. First of all here belong sources of Ancient Rus' – Chronicles and Hagiographies of Ol'ga, where Rus' – Byzantium relations, Ol'ga's travel to Constantinople are presented. However, the Chronicle mentions neither reasons, nor the goal of the mission.¹ It follows from the context of Ol'ga's Christianity adoption in Constantinople that it could be connected with the religious purpose.² Regarding the west oriented policy of Ol'ga's time; there is no direct information in sources of the Rus'. It could be represented only by the utterance of Prince Volodymyr in response to the Germans that concerned the Latin mission in the process of "faith choosing" and said "fathers did not adopt it..."³ and by further reference exactly to the time of Princess Ol'ga.

Secondly, there are Byzantium sources, namely treatises by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus *De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae libri duo*, where the Emperor's receptions of Rus' Princess are described. Yet again

¹ *Povist' vremiannyh lit: Litopis' (Za Ipats'kym shyskom)*, tran., ed. and kommen. V. V. YAREMENKA, Kyiv 1990 (further *PVL*), 92-93.

² About the baptism of the Princess see to: D. GORDIYENKO, *Hreschenia kniagyni Ol'gy v konteksti obriadovoji praktyky Vizantijs'koi Cerkvy*, Ruthenica 5 (2006) 12-18.

³ *PVL*, 92-93.

the reasons of Princess's personal visit to the Empire are not mentioned.⁴ There is also his treatise *De administrando imperio* in which Constantine gives the foreign policy principles of Byzantium, including those concerning Rus'.⁵

The third group of the sources are the German sources, first of all "Continuation of the Chronicle of the Abbot Regino of Prüm" (Prüm is a monastery in the Upper Lorraine near Trier). The author of it is considered to be the Latin missionary to Rus' himself – bishop Adalbert.⁶ The Chronicle covers the period from 907 to 959, where under 959 it is recorded: "The King again set out against the Slavs... The envoys of Helena, the Queen of Rugs (*Legati Helenae reginae Rugorum*)... came to the King and pretending, as it turned out later, asked to appoint a bishop and priests for their people...". Under 960 the following is written: "in Frankfurt... Libutius of St. Albana monastery is ordained into the bishop of Rug people..." Further it is narrated about the new campaign of King Otto I against Slavs and about arrival of the legates of Pope Ioann XII (955-963) with the request to release Italy from tyranny of King Berengar II. Under the year 961 it is told again about the bishop for the "Rugs": "Libutius... died on February 15th this year. He was replaced by Adalbert of St. Maximini monastery...". Afterwards it is narrated about the campaign of the King to Italy and his coronation there with the Emperor crown and further it is written: "Adalbert, appointed as a bishop of the Rugs, comes back without succeeding in anything he had been sent for...".⁷

The information about the mission of "Rugs" and the assignment of Adalbert could be found also in some annals of the XI century, which in the part before the year 973 attain to the lost annals of Hersfeld Monastery – *Annales Hersfeldenses*, *Annales Althenses*, and *Annales Quedlinburgenses* – almost the same text but in a shortened version is produced in *Annales Ottenburani*.⁸ That is why even if to accept the origin of the annals of Hersfeld tradition as separate from the "Continuator of Regino" about the mission of Ol'ga to King Otto I,⁹ they don't give any new direct information anyway, but just confirm the act of arrival of the mission, and can be the evidence of specific "information spread" about this event in Germany and, consequently, of the importance which was attached to it.

⁴ *Constantini Porphyrogeneti imperatoris. De ceremoniis aulae byzantinae libri duo*, e rec. I. I. Reiskii, Bonnæ 1829, Bd. 1.

⁵ *Konstantyn Bagrianorodnyj, Ob upravlennii imperijey*, Moscow 1991, 496 p.

⁶ A. V. NAZARENKO, *Drevniaa Rus' na mezhdunarodnykh putiah. Mezhdyscyplinarnye ocherki kul'turnykh, torgovykh, politicheskikh svyazey IX-XII vekov*, Moscow 2001, 266.

⁷ *Hronika Reginona Priümskovo s trirskim prodolzheniem*, in: A. V. Nazarenko, *Nemeckie latinojazychnye istochniki IX-XI vekov*, Moscow 1993, 106-108.

⁸ A. V. NAZARENKO, *Drevniaa Rus' na mezhdunarodnykh putiah*, 264-265.

⁹ *Ibid*, 289.

Unfortunately, the sources don't portray the ceremony of the audience the King gave to the Russian mission. Instead attention is drawn to the context of stating the information on Russian mission – “the interweaving of the events” in the work of “Continuator of Regino”, where the coming of ambassadors from Princess Ol'ga is connected with the Slavic campaigns of the King Otto I and the revival of the Empire in the West, which seem to constitute a single story.

The Eastern politics of Otto the Great is rather widely described in *Res Gestae Saxonicarum* by Widukind of Korvei,¹⁰ who was not a follower of the Italian policy of Otto I, but supported the King in his Eastern (anti-Slavonic) policy, which is widely represented in his work. However, there is no information about German-Rus' interactions there.

In the historiography, both Soviet and to some extent Ukrainian, those interactions were often viewed in the context of “Drang nach Osten”,¹¹ which reflected the reality of the 20th century transferred into the 10th century. However, due to the absence of direct borders between Rus' and Germany of Ottos, there are no reasons to speak about German “pressure” upon Rus'. Undoubtedly, it is a reasonable point of view that according to the conditions of international policy at that time those interactions took place accordingly to the relations with Byzantium, which during the realm of Macedonian dynasty reached its highest point in development and became a kind of super-state of that world, the evidence of which can also be observed in the case of Rus' foreign policy in Ol'ga's time.

In the historical science the activities of Princess Ol'ga including the foreign relations are broadly represented.¹² Most of the historians connect Ol'ga's mission to Otto I with her policy of introducing Christianity in Rus',¹³ which is directly mentioned in German sources. However, on the one hand, it may be assumed that Adalbert could have received not complete information about the aim of the Rus' mission, but could be aware of only that part of it where Ol'ga asked for the bishop appointment for Rus'. It is also worth mentioning that Adalbert was getting ready to be episcopized already after the death of Libutius, who had been first appointed to depart to Rus', consequently, since the arrival of the Rus' mission until Adalbert's departure for Rus' some time had passed; and on the other hand, Adalbert as a missionary bishop mentioned in the Chronicle the defeat of his bishop mission and could as a writer have

¹⁰ Widukind Korvejskij, *Dejanja saxov*, Moscow 1975, 272 p.

¹¹ G. LABUDA, *Istoriographicheskij analiz tak nazyvaemogo “natiska na Vostok”*, in: *Germanskaja eksplansia v central'noj i vostochnoj Evrope*, Moscow 1965, 26-70; Y. Y. SVIDERSKIJ, *Borot'ba Privodno-Zachidnoi Rusi proty katolyč'koji eksplansii v X-XIII st.*, Kyiv 1983, 128 p.

¹² Historiography of the subject see to: A. V. NAZARENKO, *Drevniaa Rus' na mezhdunarodnyh putiah*, 291-293.

¹³ Historiography of the church politics see to: A. V. NAZARENKO, *Drevniaa Rus' na mezhdunarodnyh putiah*, 293-297.

represented a peculiar to the medieval authors position of identifying themselves with a certain social group as a religious figure¹⁴ (the sense of “we”),¹⁵ that does not confront with the other German sources, even if to except their origin as independent of the “Chronicle of Continuator of Regino”, where the authors also belonged to the church circle and, therefore, were kindred with Adalbert in this sense of the same certain class membership.

Undoubtedly, the religious matter in the aim of the mission of Princess Ol’ga could really have been present and played an extraordinary role. Concerning the political goal, in the absence of the direct information in the sources the study should be carried out relying mainly on the analysis of the foreign political situation of that time and the foreign-policy moves of both the Ancient Rus’ state and the German state of Saxon dynasty by searching for the common points.

In this perspective there was presented the conception that the political issue had been basically determined by Rus’-Byzantium and German-Byzantium relations, where one side could have used the “German” factor and the other one – the “Russian” factor in putting the pressure on Byzantium in order to reach their goals. This is also confirmed by the discontent of Ol’ga’s government about the result of the Princess’s mission in Constantinople, which is represented in the Chronicle by Ol’ga’s refusal to keep her promises towards Constantinople about providing additional military forces,¹⁶ which was a traditional duty of a neophyte towards the Empire; and on the other hand, it is verified by the quotation “If you wait here at Pochaina [the port in Kyiv] as long as I was kept waiting at the Horn, then I will give it all to you”.¹⁷ In spite of the literary adaptation of this passage it is possible to make a conclusion about the real fact of the hold-up of the Byzantium mission, which arrived to Kyiv, it is also possible to assume, according to the time of sending of the Rus’ mission to the West, to Otto I, in the result of which depended the further position of Rus’ towards Byzantium, that Ol’ga waiting for her ambassadors to return from the German King detained the Byzantium envoys.

Foreign political activities of the early Slavonic political formations happened concurrently and on the grounds of integration of numerous tribes into a single state union,¹⁸ which developed into the “outer”

¹⁴ I mean membership of a certain community (corporation). There is nothing common with Marxism.

¹⁵ See to: W. EGGERT, *Identyfikacja i “chuvstvo – my” u frankskih i nemeckih srednovekovyh hronistov (do perioda bor’by za investituru)*, *Srednie veka* 45 (1982) 110.

¹⁶ Historiography of the consequences of the visit of Princess Ol’ga to Constantinople see to: A. V. NAZARENKO, *Drevniaa Rus’ na mezhdunarodnykh putiah*, 300-303.

¹⁷ *PVL*, 98-99.

¹⁸ O. B. HOLOVKO, *Rus’ u mizhnarodnomu zhytti Evropy IX–X st.*, Kiev 1994, 5; W. A. SERCZYK, *Polska – Ukraina: dziesięć wieków niezrozumienia*, in: *Pol’sko-ukrains’ki studii. Ukraina – Pol’sza: istorychna spadshyna i suspil’na svdomist’*, Kyiv 1993, 8.

expansion to these territories from the uniting centre. Therefore Rus' was interested in relations with Germany and in this "inner" uniting policy, firstly in the comprising of West Russian areas into the Ancient Rus' state. As B. GREKOV has already mentioned, the existence of separate independent formations as, for instance, Derevlianians, Drehovichians, Radimichians etc. had been impossible under conditions of growing European medieval states. They naturally became victims of stronger political organizations. The destiny of the land of Drehovichian was to be decided by the neighbors – Poland, Czech, Hungary, and Kyiv state.¹⁹

Just at that time the core of the Ancient Rus' state with its center in Gniezno was formed. The first known for certain sovereign of this state was Prince Mieszko I, who is mentioned under the year 960. At that time he was ruling the Great Poland, Mazovia, the land of Liubusz, the Eastern Pomeranian.²⁰ For the Polish state to gain such a size certain time was needed, therefore it is rather possible that the Polish state was formed earlier.²¹ Moreover, according to the archaeological materials, the remains of the feudal towns-fortresses, it is possible to assume that the class of the feudal lords was finally formed in the 11th century at the latest and that by that time the Princess dynasties had already existed.²² The oldest Polish chronicle, compiled by Gallus Anonymus in the 12th century, contains the legend about the three forerunners of Mieszko I – Siemovit, Lieszko, Zamomysl, and about the legendary progenitor of Piast dynasty – the Piast, and also about the previous dynasty of Popelids.²³

Correspondingly, during that very period of time the Rus'-Polish border was determined, "... in the East upon Mieszko Rus' borders ...", wrote in the year 966 Ibrahim-ibn-Yakub.²⁴ V. D. KOROLYUK and after him V. T. PASHUTO presumed that by the beginning of the 6th decade of the 10th century the Ancient Rus' state comprised the Drehovichians land and Berestia land, and Poland included the territory of the Mazovia tribes union;²⁵ Y. D. ISAYEVYCH surmised that the influence of Rus' was spread on Volyn' as well.²⁶

On the grounds of the message by the Arab traveler O. B. HOLOVKO presumed that Prussia belonged to the circle of interests of the Polish

¹⁹ B. D. GREKOV, *Bor'ba Rusi za sozdanie svoego gosudarstva*, Moscow 1942, 48.

²⁰ L. ZASHKIL'NIAK – M. KRYKUN, *Istoria Pol'szi: Vid najdavnishykh chasiv do nashykh dniv*, Lviv 2002, 19.

²¹ Ibid.

²² W. GENZEL, *Arheologicheskie issledovania i problema vznikhovnenia pol'skogo gosudarstva*, Sovetskaja arheologia 2 (1959) 90.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *Materialy źródlowe do historii Polski*, Warszawa 1954, t. 1, 183.

²⁵ V. D. KOROLYUK, *Zapadnye slaviane i Kievskaja Rus' v X-XI vv.*, Moscow 1964, 76; V. T. PASHUTO, *Vneshnaja politika Drevnej Rusi*, Moscow 1966, 31.

²⁶ Y. ISAYEVYCH, *Do pyttannia pro zahidnyj kordon Kyivs'koji Rusi*, in: Y. Isayevych, *Ukraina davnja i nova: narod, religia, kul'tura*, Lviv 1996, 82.

state,²⁷ after all the document *Dagome iudex* (992), which outlines the state borders of Mieszko I, directly indicates Prussia the immediate neighbor of Poland.²⁸ At that very time the government of Gniezno makes the first steps in the way of the spreading its influence upon the Baltic in the trend of putting under control the coast-dwellers.²⁹

To the middle of the 10th century also belong the first tries of Rus' to spread its influence upon the Baltic region, which is possible to assume from the presence of the "Jatvjag" as the member of the mission of Prince Igor according to the Rus'-Byzantium agreement of 944.³⁰ It is very likely that the Jatvjag tribes were the allies of Kyiv. Therefore, the Baltic region became the area of confrontation of Polish and Rus' interests.

However, the most arguable in the relations of these two early Slavonic states is the ownership of the "Cherven towns" and, respectively, of the bordering territories. According to the archaeological materials, most of which correspond to those originating from the Rus' territory,³¹ it is possible to presume rather confidently that the population of this territory consisted of Eastern Slavs similar to the rest of Rus'. Hence, the Western border of these lands was at the same time the Western border of the whole territory inhabited by the Eastern Slavs.³² That is why the government was supposed to view these lands as the "native" zone of the influence and considered these territories to be potentially of its own.

However, by the middle of the 10th century in this region the third power has been acting vividly – the Czech State, which in 60-80s of the 10th century comprised the Krakow region. The Czech influence was spread to the remote areas of Eastern Slavs, the Croats and the Dulibians, in the outskirts of Peremyshl, Bels, Cherven'.³³ Correspondingly, the Eastern Slavonic population of these lands had certain political interactions with people of Vistula and Lendz ("liahy") as well, who were to a great extent submitted to Czechs.³⁴ Perhaps the local princes established some political relations with Kyiv.³⁵ So, it is possible to assume that by

²⁷ O. B. HOLOVKO, *Baltijs'ki plemena v politychnyh vzajemvidnosynah Davn'orus'koi i Pol's'koi derzhav (X – persha tretyna XIII st.)*, in: *Ukraina i Pol'sha v period feodalizmu*, Kyiv 1991, 24.

²⁸ B. KÜRBISÓWNA, *Dagome iudex: studium krytyczne*, in: *Początki państwa polskiego*, Poznań 1962, t. 1, 394-396.

²⁹ L. LECIEVICH, *Letopisnye pomoriane*, in: *Drevnosti slavian i Rusi*, Moscow 1988, 135.

³⁰ *PVL*, 68-69.

³¹ K. JAZDZEWSKI, *Ogólne wiadomości o Cuerninie-Czerwieniu*, *Archeologia Polski* 4, 1 (1959) 83.

³² Y. ISAYEVYCH, *Do pyttannia pro zahidnyj kordon Kyivs'koji Rusi*, 89-90.

³³ K. BUCZEK, *Polska południowa w IX i X wieku*, *Małopolskie studia historyczne* 1 (1959) 40.

³⁴ G. RHODE, *Ostgrenze Polens*, Köln 1955, Bd. 1, 54.

³⁵ Y. ISAYEVYCH, *Do pyttannia pro zahidnyj kordon Kyivs'koji Rusi*, 91.

the middle of the 10th century in the course of the struggle for the influence in this region a peculiar foreign policy triangle comprising Czech – Poland – Rus' was formed.

According to the chronicle, the active Western politics of Rus' started only since 981 when Volodymyr waged the campaign against the "Cherven towns".³⁶ However, as V. D. KOROLYUK already mentioned, until the Kyiv government succeed to submit the land of Derevlians, it was impossible to plan any campaign beyond Peremyshl against Poland.³⁷ During the very realm of Ol'ga in the second half of 940s the principedom of Derevlians was incorporated, which made the further advance in western direction actual.

Yet by the middle of the 10th century unlike the Western direction of the uniting policy which was just being formed, Kyiv government had a certain tradition of interaction in the Eastern direction. Here Rus' was in contradiction with the Khazar Kaganate. The active policy in the East that consisted in the uniting of Eastern Slavonic tribes into one state formation originated from Prince Oleg the Prophetic who released Severians and Radimichians from the tribute to the Khazars and forced them pay it to Kyiv,³⁸ which in fact meant the inclusion of these lands into the Ancient Russian state.

By the middle of the 10th century the only Eastern Slavonic tribe formation which remained under control of the Khazar Kaganate were Viaticians. But the formation of the Khazar Kaganate, as was mentioned in the historiography, created beneficial conditions for the Slavs settling in the East,³⁹ where, at the end, Slavonic settlements in the region of the middle and upper Don and in the Azov area appeared.

The region of the lower Don was important for Khazar and for this reason a number of Khazar fortresses appeared in this area, the most famous of them was Sarkel (*Běla vezha*, "White Tower"), erected by the Byzantines in the 30s of the 9th century.⁴⁰ The first Slavonic settlements emerge in the Don region already with the first wave of Slavonic civilization to the East of the Dnieper at the beginning of the A.D.⁴¹ Though the settlements of the ancient Russian type appeared in this area not earlier than in the 9th century and some of them – at the end of 9th century and even, possibly, in the 10th century. Those settlements emerged mostly at the result of the Viaticians tribes migration from the Upper

³⁶ PVL, 136/137.

³⁷ V. D. KOROLYUK, *Zapadnye slaviane i Kievskaja Rus' v X-XI vv.*, 78.

³⁸ PVL, 34-35, 36-37.

³⁹ M. S. HRUSHEVSKYJ, *Istoria Ukrainy – Rusy*: v 11 t., 12 kn., edit. P. S. Sohan' (holova) ta in. T. 1, Kyiv 1994, 227; M. K. LYUBAVSKIJ, *Lekcyi po drevnej russkoj istorii*, Moscow 1916, 43-44.

⁴⁰ A. P. NOVOSEL'CEV, *Hazarское государство и его роль в истории Восточной Европы и Кавказа*, Moscow 1990, 109.

⁴¹ A. P. SMIRNOV, *K voprosu ob istokah priazovskoj Rusi*, Sovetskaja arheologia 2 (1958) 278.

Oka region and partly by the migration of the some Severians.⁴² About the level of this colonization it is possible to judge from the message of al-Mas'udi (947) who because of the Slavic settlements in the Don region named the Sea of Azov "The Sea of Rus".⁴³

Considering the fact that the economy of the Khazar Kaganate was based on the international transit trade, the region of the Don River and the Sea of Azov turned out to be of special importance. Over this very region such precious for the Eastern market goods as honey, beewax, various skins and furs passed, which made a great profit for the Khazars.⁴⁴ The fortresses constructed on the Don shores enabled the Khazars to control also the trade path leading from Volga (by pulling the ships) to Don, the Sea of Azov, Crimea, and, above all, to Byzantium.⁴⁵

The overlapping in time of the Don fortresses construction and the appearance of Ancient Russian type settlements in this region can witness the mutual benefits of those processes. The Khazars were interested in the Slavs settling both in the fortresses and in the neighboring territories in order to create in such a way the shield defending the Khazar state from the nomads of the Northern Black Sea Littoral. Instead the Slavs were attracted above all by the fertile arable lands in the lower Don region.⁴⁶

Though by the beginning of the 10th century the might of the Khazar state was decreasing and by the 50s of the 10th century it became a secondary state. Therefore Kyiv faced the matter of including of Slavic lands, which were submitted to the Khazar state, into the Ancient Rus' state,⁴⁷ that is verified by the attempt of Sviatoslav to put under his control the conquered areas between the rivers Volga and Don after the victory over the Khazars and to make the weakened Khazar Kaganate feudatory to Rus'.⁴⁸

But in the conditions of preparing for the expansion over the lands colonized by the Eastern Slavs in the South-East, firstly in the Azov region, which was interlaced with the struggle against Byzantium, it was impossible to carry out the active policy in the West, and that is why Rus' was interested in the neutralization of its direct neighbors, above all, the State of Mieszko, which could be refrained from the active Eastern policy concerning Rus' only by the exhausting military confrontation with

⁴² A. N. MOSKALENKO, *O vozniknovenii drevnerusskikh poselenij na Donu*, Voprosy istorii slavjan 2 (1966) 132 and 144.

⁴³ B. A. RYBAKOV, *Predposylki obrazovaniia drevnerusskogo gosudarstva*, in: Ocherki istorii SSSR, III-IX vv., Moscow 1958, 874.

⁴⁴ A. P. NOVOSEL'CEV, *Hazaraskoe gosudarstvo i ego rol' v istorii Vostochnoj Evropy i Kavkaza*, 116.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 109.

⁴⁶ A. N. MOSKALENKO, *O vozniknovenii drevnerusskikh poselenij na Donu*, 144.

⁴⁷ P. P. TOLOCHKO, *Kochevye narody stepej i Kijevskaja Rus'*, Kiev 1999, 50-51.

⁴⁸ A. N. SAHAROV, *Diplomatia Sviatoslava*, Moscow 1982, 99.

the German state of Otto the Great in the West, which took place at that very time, and it is possible to presume that the Russian mission visited Otto straight away after his return from the Slavonic campaign and, therefore, the government of Kyiv was interested in the continuation of the military conflict.

After the Empire of the Charlemagne decay, the West starts to “regenerate” only under the realm of the new Saxon dynasty founded by Heinrich I (919-936). His son, Otto I, initiated the Italian empire policy of the German kings. As the place of his coronation Otto I chose Aachen, the capital of Charlemagne, which demonstrated the revival of the Roman Empire idea.⁴⁹ Following this idea the Caroling King Chapel was resumed, this comprised bringing the clergy into the royal service, renewing the system of the frontier marks, missionary activity among Danes and Slavs.⁵⁰ At that time in France the Caroling dynasty in the person of Ludovik IV the Foreign (936-954) came back to the throne, which forced Otto so obviously to highlight the adoption of the policy of Charlemagne.⁵¹

By the middle of the 10th century the idea of imperial power was already not connected with Rome,⁵² but Otto I pretended to the glory of Constantine the Great as a defender of Christianity. Therefore, it is possible to see the emerging issues of renaissance of exactly the Roman Empire and its power consecration by the Pope authority.⁵³

But the Italian policy of Otto I was connected not only with the imperial idea, but also determined by the needs of internal state consolidation. Since long, dukes of Schwabien and Bayern have conducted independent Italian policy,⁵⁴ which was a reflection of state crisis in the times of Konrad I and was completely incompatible with the idea of central power and, moreover, with Carolingian imperial tradition.⁵⁵

Simultaneously, Otto I ran exhausting war against Slavic pagans in the East, mainly by Saxonian forces. So, Saxonians weren't in favor of Italian policy by the King, but to force them into the war was much simpler than to force Bavarians or Schwabs into Eastern campaign.⁵⁶ But the renaissance of empire furthered predatory policy of Otto I in the East, and, at the same time, transformed itself into missionary action

⁴⁹ H. K. SCHULZE, *Hegemonials Kaisertum: Ottoen und Salier*, Berlin 1991, 177.

⁵⁰ V. D. BALAKIN, *Ital'janskaja politika imperii Ottonov*, Moscow 2000, 25.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² H. BEUMANN, *Das imperiale Königtum im 10. Jahrhundert*, *Die Welt als Geschichte* 10 (1950) 117.

⁵³ H. WOLFRAM, *Constantin als Vorbild für den Herrscher des hochmittelalterlichen Reiches*, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 68 (1960) 226.

⁵⁴ See to: A. KRAUS, *Geschichte Bayerns: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, München 1983, 57.

⁵⁵ V. D. BALAKIN, *Ital'janskaja politika imperii Ottonov*, 32.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 33.

within Slavic tribes. A. BRACKMANN defined this as “Rome policy for Eastern policy” (Rompolitik für die Ostpolitik).⁵⁷

First Italian campaign, which was directed against king Berengar, ran in the frames of “romantic journey” for the bride. Twenty-year old widow of Lotar – Adelgeida became the wife of Otto I. As a dowry she brought the crown of Italian kings and got considerable estates in Alsace, Franconia, Thüringen, Saxonia, and territories of Polabian Slavs instead, and became the wealthiest woman in the Western Europe.⁵⁸ Since that time Otto I started to name himself as “the king of Franks and Langobardis”, and with the time – “the king of Franks and Italians”.⁵⁹

Byzantium emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus kept quite friendly and loyal relations with Otto I. Romanus II, who followed the throne after the death of his father – Constantine VII (9th November 959), at once sent friendly messages to the peoples of West and East. Possibly, such a message also got Otto I.⁶⁰

At that time in Italy, after the death of Otto’s son Liudolph, Berengar became the full-scale ruler again. In 959 he attacked the dukedom Spoleto and started to threaten directly the Pope Ioann XII. Byzantium activated its policy in the Italian South, striving to keep its strong positions in Salerno and Benevent. The Pope Ioann XII, who met serious difficulties, asked Otto I for help – his envoys came to King with an appeal “to protect Italy and Roman state against Berengar tyranny”.

Otto I gathered his princes in Worms in the May 961, and the nobles undeniably confirmed King’s decision about Rome campaign. Another important issue, which was decided on this reichstag, was the election of Otto’s son as a king, which should have ensured heredity of the throne in case of different surprises.⁶¹

According to the assumption made by A. V. NAZARENKO, the mission of Byzantium emperor Roman II came to Germany approximately on the Easter 959 or after. Probably, it met Rus’ mission, sent by Princess Ol’ga, and get known about the ordination of Rus’ bishop.⁶² Taking into account the manner of German king to prepare thoroughly his political actions, it is possible to assume that the issue of Rome campaign was already decided in 959 and, therefore, the power shift in Constantinople and the arrival of Rus’ mission were exactly in good time.⁶³

⁵⁷ H. F. KOLĚSNICKIJ, “*Sviaszennaja Rimskaja imperia*”: *pritiiazania i dejstvitel’nost’*, Moscow 1977, 7.

⁵⁸ V. D. BALAKIN, *Ital’janskaja politika imperii Ottonov*, 35.

⁵⁹ H. WEISERT, *War Otto der Große wirklich rex Langobardorum?*, Archiv für Diplomatik 28 (1982) 23.

⁶⁰ A. V. NAZARENKO, *Drevniaa Rus’ na mezhdunarodnyh putiah*, 305.

⁶¹ H. F. KOLĚSNICKIJ, “*Sviaszennaja Rimskaja imperia*”, 33; V. D. BALAKIN, *Ital’janskaja politika imperii Ottonov*, 45-46.

⁶² A. V. NAZARENKO, *Drevniaa Rus’ na mezhdunarodnyh putiah*, 305.

⁶³ Ibid, 306.

The greatest obstacle on the way of emperor's title recognition first by Franc and then by German kings was resistance of Constantinople, which treated Byzantium as the only legal empire (βασιλεία Ῥωμαίων).⁶⁴ Considering this, Kyiv dissatisfaction with Constantinople policy towards Rus' was advantageous for Otto I. Because already at that time Rus' proclaimed itself as a considerable factor of international politics in the East of Europe, which could be a real factor of setting pressure on Byzantium. That is why the King demonstrated rapprochement with Rus', first and foremost in church-political sphere, which directly belonged to Byzantium interests. Rus' was considered as a part of its "traditional" sphere of influence.

As mentioned, Rus' which was interested in proactive Eastern policy, which also belonged to Byzantium interests, needed peace in the West. In this aspect, the arrival of Rus' mission to Otto I exactly after the return of the King from his Slavic campaign against Polabian Slavs (957-960) was specific.⁶⁵ Ol'ga's government was interested in continuation of this conflict. But Otto I was preparing for his campaign against Italy, so he needed peace in the East and couldn't run active policy towards Slavs. The attention should be focused on chronology of the events, which were connected with Rus' mission, in the "Continuator of Regino": after Libutius' ordination Otto I conducted new Eastern campaign against Slavs, and only after this it is told about Italian policy of the King. It should be emphasized, that short time after this events we couldn't see any activity of Polish state on this foreign policy directions, even without large-scale actions of Otto I in the East and with absence of large-scale actions of Rus' in the West. It could be caused by an external factor. Therefore, it could be assumed, that "anti-Western Slavic" (directly "anti-Polish") union could be concluded and it could be a peculiar factor of restricting Polish expansion both in the West and in the East. As a result, Rus' could activate its expansion in the East, and Germany could run its active policy in Italy.

Thus, first campaign to the West was written down in the *Povest' vremennyx let* only in 981 during the rule of Volodymyr the Great, who had to conquer "Cherven' towns". It follows, that these towns already became victims of Eastern policy of neighboring states – in this case it doesn't matter, whether Czech or Poland. So it is possible to outline peculiar foreign policy triangle Rus'-Poland (Czech) – Germany, which was created in consequence of Rus'-German rapprochement. It is proven by further practice of Rus'-German unions directed against Poland. Considering the issue, whether Otto I as the representative of Christian ideology could enter the union with pagan Rus' or not, there are examples from the activities of Otto I himself and his great predecessor Charlemagne, who repeatedly entered the unions with one Slavs-pagans against the others.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 257.

But, in our case, specific is that Ol'ga (*Helena*) was called in the Chronicle as Christian and queen (*regina Rugorum*). So, she was accepted as a fully legitimate ruler and equal in her status to German king, and therefore, it could be assumed, that the union was conducted within the fully equal relations, which were not possible with Byzantium. However, the Western direction of foreign policy couldn't be an alternative to the Southern (Byzantium) direction, but could only complement and correct it.

Exhausting struggle with the Arabs complicated the condition of Byzantium both in the East and in the West. That is why the Empire urgently needed peace maintenance at least in the North. Thus, the Rus' expansion to the East and establishing its positions in direct proximity to the Empire was not preferred by Tsargorod (Constantinople). It was only strengthened with separatist trends in Chersones at that time, as it mentioned Constantine Porphyrogenitus.⁶⁶ It is possible to talk about Byzantium being aware of this danger, because Constantine VII gave advice to live peacefully with Pechenegs for resisting the Rus', which couldn't attack the Romaic Empire⁶⁷ under such conditions. Because it is known that the famous campaign of 860 was conducted after Rus' established its positions in the Black Sea region.⁶⁸

Thus, the rapprochement between Rus' and Germany during the rule of Ol'ga and Otto I occurred on mutual beneficial conditions of two most powerful states of Europe at that time, and not only in the context of setting mutual beneficial pressure on Byzantium, it is possible to speak about the creation of peculiar international triangle: Byzantium – Rus' – Germany. What should be also considered, is the process of state formation – both German in pushing eastwards on Slavic territories and inclusion of Northern Italy to Otto's state as a result of several successful wars in the 960's; and Rus' state territory, which, being secured on the West, conducted several wide-scale campaigns by Sviatoslav in the East, on the territories of Eastern Slavs colonization, and made an attempt to keep its positions on the Danube, where it already entered into conflict with the Empire, and further inclusion of Western Rus' territories to the Kyiv state in the times of Prince Volodymyr.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 298.

⁶⁶ *Konstantyn Bagrianorodnyj, Ob upravlenii imperijey*, 274-275.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 38-39.

⁶⁸ B. A. RYBAKOV, *Predposylki obrazovania drevnerusskogo gosudarstva*, 874-875.