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## A COMMONWEALTH OF INTEREST IN THE RUS'IAN-BYZANTINE TREATY (CA. 944)\*

**Abstract.** The preamble to the Rus'ian-Byzantine treaty, which was concluded around 944, contains dozens of anthroponyms – the names of members of the Kyivian elite, their envoys as well as merchants. Several of them can be identified as Slavonic. The author attempted to answer the question about the identity of these Slavs and their status within the “decision-making collective” of the early Rus'ian state. He has compared the information contained in the treaty with material consisting of other Rus'ian and Byzantine sources. Additionally the author compared the system of governance in the state of the first Rurikids with the model present among the Yotvingians and other medieval Baltic societies, which have also come under the influence of the Scandinavians.

**Keywords:** Rus'ian-Byzantine treaties, Rurik dynasty, medieval Rus', Rus'ian-Byzantine relations, *Primary Chronicle*, Igor, Yotvingians

Relations with the Byzantine Empire, including those of a commercial nature, played a special role in the formation of Rus'ian state in the 10<sup>th</sup> century<sup>1</sup>. A unique testimony to these early contacts and the process of gradual incorporation of Rus' into the Byzantine *oikumene* are the texts of treaties from the time of the first Rurikids, which have survived in the *Primary Chronicle* (*Tale of Bygone*

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<sup>1</sup> On trade between the Varangians and Byzantium cf.: А. НАЗАРЕНКО, *Древняя Русь на международных путях. Междисциплинарные очерки культурных, торговых, политических связей IX–XII вв.*, Москва 2001, p. 70–71, 213–2015 (further literature there); J. SHEPARD, *Some Problems of Russo-Byzantine Relations c. 860–c. 1050*, SEER 52, 1976, p. 27; T. NOONAN, *European Russia, c. 500–c. 1050*, [in:] NCMH, vol. III, ed. T. REUTER, Cambridge–New York 2000, p. 490, 507; S. JAKOBSSON, *The Varangians. In God's Holy Fire*, London 2020 [= NABHC], p. 28. On the Byzantine concept of *oikumene* cf.: D. BOLENSKY, *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe 500–1453*, London 1971, p. 52. From an archaeological perspective, the issue was discussed, e.g., by M. BOGUCKI, *Między wagą a mieczem. Kupcy wikińscy w świetle źródeł pisanych i archeologicznych*, Ru 5, 2010, p. 30–32.

Years) as a Slavonic translation<sup>2</sup>. The question of how these sources came to Rus' and, consequently, into the hands of the author of the *Chronicle*, remains a matter of dispute<sup>3</sup>. However, it is likely that they were for him one of the main sources of knowledge about Kyiv's-Constantinople relations at that time – a kind of base on which he has built his narrative<sup>4</sup>.

The most extensive, and also the most significant, is the text of the treaty, which the author of the *Chronicle* placed under the year 6453 (c. 945)<sup>5</sup>. The object of the agreement, which has been confirmed by a double (Christian and pagan) oath<sup>6</sup>,

<sup>2</sup> The role of these treaties in the context of Byzantine politics in the 10<sup>th</sup> century is described by, among others: М. Бибииков, *Тексты договоров Руси с греками в свете византийской дипломатической практики*, [in:] *Антидорон: к 75-летию академика РАН Геннадия Григорьевича Литаврина*, ed. С. Чичуров, Санкт-Петербург 2003, p. 47–54.

<sup>3</sup> The Byzantine origin of the texts of the treaty is indicated by the use of the September style – in the case of the majority of the *Primary Chronicle* it is the March style. Some scholars assumed that the documents arrived in Kyiv shortly after the conclusion of the treaties, and in this form, at the turn of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, monks from the Pechersky monastery gained access to them, cf.: М. Бибииков, *Тексты...*, p. 56; Р. СКРЫННИКОВ, *Исторический факт и летопись*, ТОДЛ 50, 1997, p. 316, 320–321. According to J. Malingoudis it took place around 1046 and was related to the conclusion of another Rus'ian-Byzantine peace treaty, cf.: Я. МАЛИНГУДИ, *Русско-византийские договоры в X в. в свете дипломатики*, ВВ 57, 1997, p. 69, 86 (the author used extensive comparative material consisting of later Byzantine bilateral treaties); J. MALINGOUDI, *Die russisch-byzantinischen Verträge des 10. Jhds. aus diplomatischer Sicht*, Thessaloniki 1994; Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Византия, Болгария, Древняя Русь (IX – начало XII в.)*, Санкт-Петербург 2000, p. 78sq. S. Kashtanov formulated the hypothesis that the author of the *Chronicle* used a compilation of copies of documents that had been made for one of the Kyiv metropolitans (perhaps Nikephoros I) before his departure to Rus'. This hypothesis, in the context of Vladimir Monomakh's foreign policy, has been expanded by O. Tolochko, cf.: С. КАШТАНОВ, *К вопросу о происхождении текста русско-византийских договоров X в. в составе Повести временных лет*, [in:] *Восточная Европа в древности и средневековье. Политическая структура Древнерусского государства. Чтения памяти В.Т. Пацуто*, ed. Е. Мельникова, Москва 1996, p. 39–42; А. ТОЛОЧКО, *Очерки начальной Руси*, Киев–Санкт-Петербург 2015, p. 51–59. The treaties were also discussed by, i.a.: I. SORLIN, *Les traités de Byzance avec la Russie au X<sup>e</sup> siècle (I–II)*, СМР 2.3–4, 1961, p. 313–360, 447–475; М. БИБИКОВ, *Русь в византийской дипломатии: договоры Руси с греками X в.*, ДРВМ 1, 2005, p. 5–15.

<sup>4</sup> He wrote about the essential role of treaties in the process of creating the *Primary Chronicle*, cf.: А. ТОЛОЧКО, *Очерки...*, p. 49–59sq (there, *inter alia*, the concept of “symmetrical chronology” of the medieval Rus'ian chronicles). However, this book should be treated with some reserve due to the controversy it has generated within the academic world (it is a transcript of delivered lectures and the back matter is rather scant), cf. e.g.: Y. МІКНАЙЛОВА, [rec.:] *Ocherki nachal' noi Rusi by Tolochko Aleksei...*, SRev 4, 2017, p. 1117–1118; В. ВОВИНА-ЛЕБЕДЕВА, *Угасший мир древнерусских летописей: взгляд сегодня*, РИ 4, 2019, p. 3–27; А. ЩАВЕЛЕВ, *Славянские «племена» Восточной Европы X – первой половины XI в.: аутентификация, локализация и хронология*, SSBP 2, 2015, p. 103–104.

<sup>5</sup> *Лаврентьевская летопись*, [in:] *Полное собрание русских летописей*, vol. I, Ленинград 1926–1927 (setera: *Лаврентьевская летопись*), col. 46.

<sup>6</sup> Evidence of an evolution of the rising Rus'ian state is also provided by the fact that for the first time some of its representatives took the Christian oath, cf. e.g.: А. ТОЛОЧКО, *Очерки...*, p. 288; Я. МАЛИНГУДИ, *Русско-византийские договоры...*, p. 90.

was to re-regulate the rules of the trade conducting by Rus'ian merchants with Byzantium, the provision of armed aid, the staying of Rus'ians in the territory of the Empire (with emphasis on the northern coast of the Black Sea), the prosecution of fugitives and several more minor questions<sup>7</sup>. Its concluding was a result of Igor's unsuccessful expedition against Constantinople. It is worth noting that, compared to an earlier agreement concluded by Oleg, the text of which is given by the author of the *Chronicle* under the year 6420 (с. 912), the terms of the treaty were slightly less favourable for Rus'<sup>8</sup>. When analysing a specific source such as this treaty, we have to look at it through a double prism: of the Byzantine clerks who perceived their Rus'ian partners in a certain way and referred them by a certain terms, and of the Rus'ian translator (perhaps the author of the *Chronicle* himself). The latter could have interfered with the text (as evidenced by the mention of Pereaslav among the Rus'ian towns, the foundation of which is mentioned in the pages of the *Chronicle* in the context of the reign of Vladimir the Great) and adapted it to the reality of his times<sup>9</sup>.

Looking at the text of the treaty, and especially at its preamble, we can notice that it has the form of a solemn declaration of the representatives of Rus' (the first person plural has been used) to the Byzantine emperors: Romanos I Lekapenos and his sons-coregents: Constantine and Stephen<sup>10</sup>. Let us pay attention to how the Rus'ian side is defined:

<sup>7</sup> The problem of the presence of the Rus'ians on the northern coast of the Black Sea was discussed, among others, by: Я. МАЛИНГУДИ, *Русско-византийские договоры...*, p. 88; J. SHEPARD, *Some Problems...*, p. 11; T. NOONAN, *European Russia...*, p. 490, 507 (this author wrote also about the expansion of the "Rhos" into the lands of the Slavs and creates the concept of a "tributary state").

<sup>8</sup> *Лаврентьевская летопись*, col. 32–33; D. OBOLENSKY, *The Byzantine Commonwealth...*, p. 511; В. ПАШУТО, *Внешняя политика Древней Руси*, Москва 1968, p. 62; S. JAKOBSSON, *The Varangians...*, p. 51; Я. МАЛИНГУДИ, *Русско-византийские договоры...*, p. 82, 85; А. НАЗАРЕНКО, *Князь и дружина в эпоху договоров Руси с Греками*, [in] *Русь в IX–XII веках. Общество, государство, культура*, ed. Н.А. МАКАРОВ, А.Е. ЛЕОНТЬЕВ, Москва–Вологда 2014, p. 15 (there a comparative analysis of the treaties); М. БИБИКОВ, *Тексты...*, p. 51–54; А. VASILIEV, *The Second Russian Attack on Constantinople*, ДОР 6, 1951, p. 170–171sq (there is a review of the literature on Oleg's expedition against Constantinople). The claim that the treaty was less favourable than previous ones has been criticised, among others, by Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Византия...*, p. 78–86 (further literature there).

<sup>9</sup> According to R. Skrynnikov, the Rus'ian translator has probably slavised some of the Scandinavian names mentioned in the text of the treaty, cf.: Р. СКРЫННИКОВ, *Исторический факт...*, p. 319–320. About Pereaslav cf.: S. JAKOBSSON, *The Varangians...*, p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> The fact that Roman I Lekapen's reign ended in 944 allows us to set a *terminus ad quem* for the concluding of the treaty. It is also puzzling that the text does not mention Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, who, despite the lack of real power, held at that time the nominal dignity of the fourth in the hierarchy of co-rulers. Perhaps the translator was surprised by the presence of two Constantines in the text and thought that it was a single person. J. Malingoudis believed that we are dealing with a written authorization (посредническая грамота), with which Igor equipped the Rus'ian envoys. This, according to the author, was an adopted practice in the Byzantine diplomacy. This version is also backed up by the mention in the treaty of written credentials with which the prince of Kyiv was to equip envoys and merchants (нѣмѣ же увѣдѣль естъ князь нашъ. послати грамоту ко црѣву нашему), cf.: Я. МАЛИНГУДИ, *Русско-византийские договоры...*, p. 84.

We are the envoys (and merchants) from the Rus'ian nation [...] sent by Igor, Great Prince of Rus' and from each prince and all the people of the land of Rus' [...] Our Great Prince Igor [and his princes] and his boyars and the whole people [of Rus'] [...] and the Great Prince of Rus' and his boyars [...] From Igor and all his boyars and all the people of the land of Rus' [...] Igor, Great Prince of Rus' and to his subjects<sup>11</sup>.

In of the treaty concluded by Oleg we have similar terms: *we of the Rus'ian nation, Sent by Oleg, Great Prince of Rus' and by all the serene and great princes and the great boyars under his sway*<sup>12</sup>. We can see that the Rus'ian side was presenting itself as a collective, headed by Igor, entitled "Great Prince of Rus'"<sup>13</sup>. He was responsible for implementing the provisions of the treaty: he issued written credentials for the envoys and merchants going to Constantinople, he was the trustee of peaceful relations, he was in charge of prosecuting fugitives, repurchasing captives, restoring damages and enforcing other norms of law which are mentioned in the treaty<sup>14</sup>. As a direct partner of the Empire, he also conducted diplomatic correspondence<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> *лгы ѿ рода Рҹскаго. съли и гостѣе [...] послании ѿ Игорѧ. великого князѧ Рҹскаго. и ѿ всѧкоя княжѧ и ѿ всѧхъ людии Рҹския земли [...] великии князь нашѧ Игорѧ. [и князи] и боладѧ его и людѧе вси [...] а великии князь Рҹскии и боладѧ его [...] ѿ И<sup>ра</sup> и ѿ всѧхъ боладѧ. и ѿ всѧхъ людии. ѿ странѧ Рҹския [...] къ великому князю Рҹскому Игореву. и к людемъ его, Лаврентьевская летопись, col. 46–48; *The Russian Primary Chronicle. Laurentian Text*, ed. S.H. CROSS, O.P. SHERWOWITZ-WETZOR, Cambridge, Mass. 1953 (cetera: *Primary Chronicle*), p. 73–74. Noteworthy is the use of the word "родъ", which is sometimes considered as a translation of the Old-Greek "γένος/γένεᾶ", cf.: А. НАЗАРЕНКО, *Князь...*, p. 18–19 (the author has also suggested other forms of Greek translations of the quoted fragments of the treaty). The word suggests a family/lineage or ethnic group, but it can also mean a community of people united under something in common ("tribe", "nation", "people"), cf.: *Slovník jazyka staroslovenskeho*, vol. III, ed. B. НАВРАНЕК, J. ПЕТР, Praha 1982, p. 644–645. From the perspective of linguistics, the treaty has been analysed, e.g., by: С. ОБНОРСКИЙ, *Язык договоров русских с греками*, ЯМ 6–7, 1936, p. 97–103.*

<sup>12</sup> *мы ѿ рода Рҹкаѧ, послании ѿ Улга великоѧ князѧ Рҹкаѧ. и ѿ всѧхъ и соу<sup>т</sup> поу роукою еѧ сѧвѧлыѧ и великии князь. и еѧ великии боярьѧ, Лаврентьевская летопись, col. 32–33; *Primary Chronicle*, p. 65–66.*

<sup>13</sup> O. Tolochko rightly stated that the then Rus' was not *exactly a state*, but rather *a group of people engaged in common affairs: collecting contributions from the Slavonic tribes and trading these goods at the markets in Constantinople*. According to G. Litvarin, the "serene/great princes" mentioned in Oleg's treaty were Slavonic leaders, cf.: А. ТОЛОЧКО, *Очерки...*, p. 280; Г. ЛИТВАРИН, *Византия...*, p. 103–104. The use of the title "grand (great) prince" may also be a kind of anachronism – in Rus', until the 12<sup>th</sup> century, it was a posthumous title, cf.: А. ПОРРЕ, *O tytule wielkosiązęcym na Rusi*, РН 73.3, 1984, p. 423–439; Я. МАЛИНГУДИ, *Русско-византийские договоры...*, p. 87; А. ФИЛЮШКИН, *Титулы русских государей*, Москва–Санкт-Петербург 2006, p. 12–49; P. BOROŃ, *Kniaziowie, królowie, carowie... Tytuły i nazwy władców słowiańskich we wczesnym średniowieczu*, Katowice 2010, p. 81–97.

<sup>14</sup> In Soviet historiography, mentions of the "Rus'ian law" have often been regarded as evidence of the high level of development of early Rus'ian state. In recent times, S. Jakobsson marked a similarity to some norms of Scandinavian law, cf.: S. JAKOBSSON, *The Varangians...*, p. 39.

<sup>15</sup> J. Shepard has rightly remarked that due to the contacts with Byzantium the level of administration of the rising Rus'ian state was taken to a higher level: a chancellery, where worked the people who knew the Old-Greek language, had to be established in Kyiv, cf.: J. SHEPARD, *Some Problems...*, p. 18–21; D. OBOLENSKY, *Byzantium and the Slavs*, London 1971, p. 54.

Within the collective we can separate three groups: “the Great Prince of Rus’” (ВЕЛИКИЙ КНЯЗЬ РУСКИИ), the widely understood elite, probably Igor’s entourage consisting of “his [the Great Prince’s] boyars” (БОЛАРЕ ЕГО, the term is used several times in the treaty) or “all the princes” (ѿ всакоя княжыя, the term appears only once) and “all the people of the land of Rus’ ” (ѿ всѣхъ люди РҮСКИЯ ЗЕМЛѦ). The document consists of 75 (76 in the Hypatian Codex) anthroponyms – names of witnesses categorised into the following groups: Igor and his envoy, 24 of his relatives, and other members of the elite and the “other envoys” (ѿѿѣчии сли) representing them, as well as 25 merchants<sup>16</sup>. These tradesmen, as is clear from the source, hold a distinctly lower status than the envoys and were probably the most important “direct” contributors of trade with Constantinople<sup>17</sup>. The most controversial question is the composition of the group sending the envoys<sup>18</sup>: according to some scholars, the Old-Greek original of the document did not mention “boyars and all the princes”, but only so-called αρχωντες<sup>19</sup>. On this ground Alexandr

<sup>16</sup> С. БЕЛЕЦКИЙ, *Кто такой Володислав договора 944 г.?*, [in:] *Норна у источника Судьбы. Сборник статей в честь Елены Александровны Мельниковой*, Москва 2001, p. 17. In Oleg’s treaty, only 15 witnesses appear, with no indication of their hierarchy. The hierarchical structure in both treaties has been analysed, *inter alia*, by А. НАЗАРЕНКО, *Некоторые соображения о договоре Руси с Греками 944 г. в связи с политической структурой Древнерусского государства*, [in:] *Восточная Европа в древности и средневековье. Политическая структура Древнерусского государства...*, p. 58–63.

<sup>17</sup> Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Русско-византийские связи в середине X века*, ВИ 6, 1986, p. 41–52; А. НАЗАРЕНКО, «Слы и гостие». *О структуре политической элиты Древней Руси в первой половине – середине X в.*, [in:] *Восточная Европа в древности и средневековье. Политические институты и верховная власть. XIX Чтения памяти В.Т. Пащито*, Москва, 16–18 апреля 2007 г. *Материалы конференции*, Москва 2007, p. 169–174; А. ТОЛОЧКО, *Очерки...*, p. 280–281; Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Византия...*, p. 119–120. G. Litavrin has referred to this group as “elite of the regional centres of commerce and craft”, and O. Tolochko has named them “commercial agents of the ‘serene princes’”.

<sup>18</sup> One of the theories regards this group as the “senior *druzhina*” – Igor’s immediate entourage, cf. e.g.: А. ПРЕСНЯКОВ, *Княжое право в Древней Руси. Очерки по X–XII векам*, Москва 1993, p. 28–29, 317–318; В. ГРЕКОВ, *Ruś Kijowska*, Warszawa 1955, p. 16, 130–131. Another version mentions elites of various Scandinavian and Slavonic groups, cf. e.g.: Б. РЫБАКОВ, *Киевская Русь и русские княжества XII–XIII веков*, Москва 1982, p. 328–329; Н. КОТЛЯР, *Древнерусская государственность*, Санкт-Петербург 1998, p. 197. М. Sverdlov considered that members of these elites could have been part of the *druzhina* of the ruler of Kyiv, М. СВЕРДЛОВ, *Домонгольская Русь. Князь и княжеская власть на Руси VI – первой трети XIII в.в.*, Санкт-Петербург 2003, p. 197.

<sup>19</sup> П. СТЕФАНОВИЧ, *Кого представляли послы «от рода рускаго» в договоре Руси с Греками 944 г.?*, ДРВМ 3, 2001, p. 109–110; ИДЕМ, *Правящая верхушка Руси по русско-византийским договорам X в.*, ТИРИ 11, 2013, p. 28–31. Nevertheless this term in Byzantine documents simply meant people of sufficiently high status, and cannot be taken exclusively as the equivalent of “prince/member of the ruling house”, cf.: Е.А. СОРНОЦЕС, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, Hildesheim–Zurich–New York 1992, p. 259–260; А. КАЗНДАН, *Archon*, [in:] *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. I, ed. ИДЕМ, Oxford–New York 1991, p. 160. According to М. Bibikov and V. Shusharin this title the Byzantines referred to *provincial rulers, military commanders, wealthy people, foreign rulers and tribal chiefs*, cf.: М. БИБИКОВ, В. ШУШАРИН, *Комментарии*, [in:] *Константин Багрянородный, Об управлении империей*, ed. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, Москва 1989, p. 291; Р. ВОРОЊ, *Kniazowie...*, p. 20–33.





was also named as a relative of Great Prince<sup>28</sup>. Some scholars have pointed out that this anthroponym is related to “authority” (due to the prefix “volodi-”, “to rule”)<sup>29</sup>. The “West-Slavonic” provenance of the name is also emphasized (Volodislav as a form of the name Vladislav)<sup>30</sup>. However, it is worth noting that later in the Rus’ian sources the name “Volodislav” appears primarily as a boyar name, rather than a princely (dynastic)<sup>31</sup>.

The identification of this “Slavonic” witness of the treaty is the subject of dispute. Some authors have considered him a member of the Rurik dynasty<sup>32</sup>. Others believed that we have to do with an unrelated member of Igor’s immediate entourage (“Slavonic boyar”)<sup>33</sup>. The “West-Slavonic” attributes of the name “Volodislav” have generated several “Polish-Lendian” hypotheses<sup>34</sup>. Along with Volodislav, another enigmatic female name “Predslava” is mentioned. The Princess Olga, also listed among the witnesses of the treaty, appears immediately after Igor and Sviatoslav: we may therefore assume that Predslava was the wife of Volodislav<sup>35</sup>. The fact that

<sup>28</sup> P. СКРЫННИКОВ, *Исторический факт...*, p. 317.

<sup>29</sup> С. ВЕСЕЛОВСКИЙ, *Ономастикон. Древнерусские имена, прозвища и фамилии*, Москва 1974; T. SKULINA, W. SWOBODA, *Wołodzislaw*, [in:] *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich. Encyklopedyczny zarys kultury Słowian od czasów najdawniejszych*, vol. VI, ed. G. LABUDA, Z. STIEBER, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk 1977, p. 573; T. SKULINA, *Staroruskie imiennictwo osobowe*, vol. II, Warszawa 1974, p. 16–21; А. ТОЛОЧКО, *Очерки...*, p. 277.

<sup>30</sup> H. ŁOWMIAŃSKI, *Początki Polski*, vol. V, Warszawa 1977, p. 496 (literature review there).

<sup>31</sup> Н. ТУПИКОВ, *Словарь древнерусских личных собственных имен*, Санкт-Петербург 1903, p. 92.

<sup>32</sup> M. Prisolkov wrote that Volodislav and Predslava were children of the “Igor the younger” mentioned directly before them, cf.: М. ПРИСЕЛКОВ, *Киевское государство второй половины X в. по византийским источникам*, УЗЛ 73, 1941, p. 241. J. Konovalov put forward a specific hypothesis that Volodislav was the second husband of Olga and the father of Sviatoslav. H. Łowmiański, A. Nazarenko, A. Gorskiy and E. Pchelov considered Volodislav as a member of the princely clan without pointing to a concrete form of kinship, cf.: X. ЛОВМЯНЬСКИЙ, *Русь и норманны*, Москва 1985, p. 221; А. НАЗАРЕНКО, *Некоторые соображения...*, p. 58–63; А. ГОРСКИЙ, *Русь от славянского Расселения до Московского царства*, Москва 2004, p. 66–67; E. ПЧЕЛОВ, *Рюриковичи. 1000 лет одного рода. История династии*, Москва 2001, p. 54.

<sup>33</sup> С. БЕЛЕЦКИЙ, *Кто такой Володислав...*, p. 22–23; Б. ГРЕКОВ, *Киевская Русь*, Москва 1957, p. 107, 275.

<sup>34</sup> S.M. Kuczyński described him simply as a “Polish duke”. V. Pashuto wrote that Volodislav ruled the lands “on the frontier with Poland” in the region of Cherven and Sandomierz. H. Łowmiański and R. Skrynnikow recognised him as the “duke of Lendians”. W. Swoboda wrote cautiously that Volodislav may have been the leader of the Ulichians, Krivichians, Trivets or other Slavs who participated in the expedition against Constantinople. S.M. KUCZYŃSKI, *Studia z dziejów Europy wschodniej X–XVII w.*, Warszawa 1965, p. 15, 233; В. ПАШУТО, *Внешняя политика...*, p. 32, 64; H. ŁOWMIAŃSKI, *Początki Polski...*, p. 496, 499; P. СКРЫННИКОВ, *Исторический факт...*, p. 317–318; T. SKULINA, W. SWOBODA, *Wołodzislaw...*, p. 573. However, it should be noted that, according to R. Skrynnikow, the “Lendians” were a great super-tribal body, which included, among others, the Dnieper Polans, the Radymichians, the Viaticians and other “tribes” mentioned in the *Primary Chronicle*. According to him, *the Normans could not conduct great wars without the support of the Slavonic elites and the Slavonic tribal forces. Volodislav and Predslava may have been members of a significant Lendians’ elite.*

<sup>35</sup> P. СКРЫННИКОВ, *Исторический факт...*, p. 317; А. ПОРРЕ, *Przeclawa*, [in:] *Słownik starożytności*

this woman was represented by her own envoy shows her high social status. In the context of possible links between the Rurikids and the Slavs, a question to which I shall return, it is important to note that that this name, unlike Volodislav, survived within the Rurik dynasty (it was borne among others by one of the daughters of Vladimir the Great). The names of two merchants, Sinko and Borich, are also sometimes considered to be Slavonic, however their identity will not be the focus of our study<sup>36</sup>.

It seems most probable that Volodislav and Predslava were members of the elite of a Slavonic group – probably linked to the Rurikids by ties of dependence or cooperation. We can read about this kind of Slavonic “princes” in the Rus'ian chronicles: the *Primary Chronicle* informs about a Drevlians' “chief” named Mal. In an 11<sup>th</sup> century context, the author mentioned Khodota – the leader of the Viatichians<sup>37</sup>. The descriptions of Oleg and Igor's expeditions against Byzantine Empire includes lists of reinforcements staged by various Slavonic “tribes”<sup>38</sup>. At this point the question arises: with which ethnos might Volodislav and Predslava have been related?

Let us turn our attention to the treatise *On the Governance of the Empire* (the Latin title *De administrando imperio*), which is a kind of “handbook” written under the auspices of Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos for his son, Emperor Romanos II (the Greek title of the source is: Πρὸς τὸν ἴδιον υἱὸν Ρωμανόν). It dates from the turn of the fifth and sixth decades of 10<sup>th</sup> century, so around the time when the treaty with Rus' had been concluded. Even if some of the information that Constantine (or rather a collective headed by a literate emperor) was in possession of, would have been from earlier times, we can suppose that the image of the “Rhosēs” (Ρωσ) more or less corresponds to the situation in the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century<sup>39</sup>.

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słowiańskich. *Encyklopedyczny zarys kultury Słowian od czasów najdawniejszych*, vol. IV, ed. G. LABUDA, Z. STIEBER, Warszawa 1970, p. 37 (A. Poppe believed that Predslava was the daughter of Igor and Olga).

<sup>36</sup> According to T. Skulina, the name “Sinko” may derive from the Slavonic “siny” (blue) or be a diminutive of the Christian name “Xenophon”. The Polish author associates the name of Borich with the “Borich crossing”, which was described by the author of the *Primary Chronicle* when he wrote about Drevlians' legation to Princess Olga, cf.: T. SKULINA, *Staroruskie imiennictwo...*, vol. II, p. 61; P. СКРЫННИКОВ, *Исторический факт...*, p. 318.

<sup>37</sup> *Лаврентьевская летопись*, col. 56, 248; T. NOONAN, *European Russia...*, p. 506.

<sup>38</sup> А. ШАВЕЛЕВ, «Племена» восточных славян этапы завоевания и степень зависимости от державы Рюриковичей в X в., [in:] *Русь эпохи Владимира Великого. Государство, церковь, культура*, ed. Н. МАКАРОВ, А. НАЗАРЕНКО, Москва–Вологда 2017, p. 46 (literature review there).

<sup>39</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De administrando imperio*, ed. G. MORAVCSIK, trans. R.J.H. JENKINS, Washington 1967 [= *CFHB*, 1] (cetera: CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS); А. ШАВЕЛЕВ, *Славянские «племена»...*, p. 106; ИДЕМ, «Племена»..., p. 39; В. ПАШУТО, *Летописная традиция о «племенных княжениях» и варяжский вопрос*, [in:] ИДЕМ, *Русь, Прибалтика, панство*, Москва 2011, p. 167–176. About the sources of the information which the author of *De administrando imperio* had at his disposal cf. e.g.: J.B. BURY, *The Treatise De administrando imperio*, BZ 15.2, 1906, p. 517–577; J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *The De administrando imperio: a Re-Examination of the Text and a Re-Evaluation of its Evidence about the Rus*, [in:] *Les centres proto-urbains russes entre*

The information contained in the ninth and thirty-seventh chapters of *De administrando imperio* is especially relevant from the point of view of our study. Constantine has repeatedly mentioned various “tributaries” of Rus’, whom he referred to as “paktiots” (πακτιῶται)<sup>40</sup>. He named the lands inhabited by them as “External Rus’”<sup>41</sup>. This list, which includes, among others, the Drevlians, the Dregoviches, the Krivichians, the Severians and “the rest of the Slavs”, largely corresponds to the information given by the *Primary Chronicle*. Constantine stressed that these groups had their own towns – therefore they had relative independence<sup>42</sup>. In chapter thirty-seven, we read about the Slavonic groups that bordered the various “themes” of the Pechenegs<sup>43</sup>. Constantine made a clear distinction between the “Rhosēs”, neighbouring the “theme” of *Charaboi*, and the ethnoses bordering the *Iabdiertim* – the Ulichians, the Drevlians, the mysterious λενζενίνοι and “the rest of the Slavs”<sup>44</sup>.

*Scandinavia, Byzance et Orient*, ed. M. KAZANSKI, Paris 2000 [= RByz, 7], p. 301–336; А. ТОЛОЧКО, *Очерки...*, p. 211–212; Е. МЕЛЬНИКОВА, *Росы и их пактиоты в трактате «Об управлении империей» Константина VII Багрянородного*, [in:] *«По любви, вь правду, безо всякие хитрости».* Друзья и коллеги к 80-летию В.А. Кучкина, Москва 2014, p. 75–88.

<sup>40</sup> This term comes from the word “пактá” (Latin *pactum* – agreement, pact) meaning either “tribute/tribute” or “arrangement” and “dependence/affiliation”. The author of *De administrando imperio* uses this term to describe the nations inhabiting the territories over which the Byzantine Empire claimed sovereignty. The word “πακτιῶται” can also be compared to the Roman term *foederati* (the status of *foederati* did not involve interference by a “superior” in internal matters of autonomy), cf.: А. ТОЛОЧКО, *Очерки...*, p. 202, 207, 216–217; Ю. КОБИЩАНОВ, *Полюдь. Явление отечественной и всемирной истории цивилизаций*, Москва 1995; С. ТЕМУШЕВ, *Налоги и дань в Древней Руси*, Минск 2015; D. SIMON, *Pacta*, [in:] *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. III..., p. 1550–1551.

<sup>41</sup> А. ТОЛОЧКО, *Очерки...*, p. 203–205, 208. The author believes that, by default, “internal Rus’” was the relatively small territory directly subordinate to the Rurikids: mainly Kyiv with its adjacencies and the “northern outpost” in Novgorod.

<sup>42</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, IX, 9–10, 16, p. 56–58. On the Slavonic “tribes” in the *Primary Chronicle* and its “ethnographic” aspect cf.: А. ТОЛОЧКО, *Очерки...*, p. 69sq (literature review there), 203, 214sq; А. ЩАВЕЛЕВ, *Славянские «племена»...*, p. 99–133; ИДЕМ, *«Племена»...*, p. 24–48 (the author discusses various forms of dependency of the Slavonic groups); А. КИБИНЬ, *От Ятвяги до Литвы. Русское пограничье с ятвягами и Литвой в X–XIII веках*, Москва 2014, p. 9–15 (there a critical view of the “cabinet” concept of the Slavonic “tribes”), 31–32.

<sup>43</sup> On the Pechenegs in the *De administrando imperio*, also in a Rus’ian context, cf.: А. VASILIEV, *The Second Russian Attack...*, p. 185–187; И. КОНОВАЛОВА, *Печенежское досье Константина Багрянородного*, [in:] *Восточная Европа в древности и средневековье. Проблемы эллинизма и образования Боспорского царства. Чтения памяти В.Т. Паушто*, ed. А. Подосинов, Москва 2009, p. 139–146; С. КОЗЛОВ, *Константин Багрянородный о печенежских «фемах» (DAI. cap. 37) и проблема его источников*, [in:] *Восточная Европа в древности и средневековье. Миграции, расселение, война как факторы политогенеза. Чтения памяти В.Т. Паушто*, ed. Т. ДЖАКСОН, Москва 2012, p. 113–120; А. ТОЛОЧКО, *Очерки...*, p. 196; А. PAROŃ, *Pieczyngowie. Koczownicy w krajobrazie politycznym i kulturowym średniowiecznej Europy*, Wrocław 2015; ИДЕМ, *The Pechenegs. Nomads in the Political and Cultural Landscape of Medieval Europe*, Boston–Leiden 2021 [= ECEEMA, 72]; ИДЕМ, *Pieczyngowie na kartach “De administrando imperio” Konstantyna VII Porfirogenety*, A UW.CW 27, 2007, p. 97–112; S. JAKOBSSON, *The Varangians...*, p. 36.

<sup>44</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, XXXVII, 40–45, p. 168.

The ninth chapter is a description of the annual cycle of the “Rhouses”, the central elements of which are: collecting of tribute from the “paktiots” and trading with Constantinople. In this context the emperor highlighted the names of two ethnoses – Κριβιτσηνοι and λενζανήνοι<sup>45</sup>. According to Constantine, these Slavs inhabit in the Dnieper basin and manufacture boats (μονόξυλον), which they then float to Kyiv and sell (rather than give as tribute) to the “Rhouses”<sup>46</sup>. The name Κριβιτσηνοι can be quite clearly linked to the Krivichians, known from the *Primary Chronicle* as a people inhabiting the basin of Daugava and upper Dnieper rivers<sup>47</sup>. The question of λενζανήνοι is less clear – this ethnonym does not appear in the Rus'ian sources<sup>48</sup>. In my opinion, the most likely hypothesis is that λενζενινοι was a large frontier ethnos (even a proto-state organism) – the same one mentioned by the *Bavarian Geographer* under the name *Lendizi*. This organism, referred by the author of the *Chronicle* as Ляхи, became the object of Vladimir the Great's expedition, mentioned under the year 6489 (с. 981)<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> Constantine also used the form λενζενινοι.

<sup>46</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, IX, 1–19, p. 57–58; А. Толочко, *Очерки...*, p. 201; P.M. STRÄSSLE, *To Monóξυλον in Konstantin VII. Prophyrogenetos' Werk «De Administrando Impero»*, EB 2, 1990, p. 93–106; L. HAVLIKOVA, *Slavic Ships in 5<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Centuries Byzantine Historiography*, BS 52, 1991, p. 89–104.

<sup>47</sup> Significantly, among the towns belonging to the “paktiots”, Constantine mentioned, *inter alia*, Miliniska – a toponym identified with Smolensk, probably the main centre of the Krivichians. About the Rus'ian towns in the *De administrando imperio* wrote, e.g.: S. JAKOBSSON, *The Varangians...*, p. 54; А. Толочко, *Очерки...*, p. 202–203, 210; А. ЩАВЕЛЕВ, *Славянские «племена»...*, p. 118–119; А. КИБИНЬ, *От Ятвязи...*, p. 35, 99–101.

<sup>48</sup> Some authors identified λενζενινοι with the Radimichians or the Dnieper Polans. This version does not correspond to the division between “External Rus” (ἡ ἔξω Ῥωσία) and the “heart” with the centre in Kyiv, i.e. in the land of the Dnieper Polans, cf.: М. ЖИХ, *Лендзяне Константина Багрянородного и радимичи «от рода Ляхов»*, <https://zapadrus.su/slavm/ispubsm/1969-lendzyane-konstantina-bagryanorodnogo-i-radimichi-ot-roda-lyakhov.html> [15 III 2021]; М. ПРИСЕЛКОВ, *Киевское государство...*, p. 235; Р. СКРЫННИКОВ, *Исторический факт...*, p. 313 (there the concept of the “Lendians” as a large supra-tribal organism in the Dnieper basin, which included, among others, the Polanians, and which collapsed under the influence of Scandinavian expansion); О. ТРУБАЧЕВ, *Этногенез и культура древнейших славян. Лингвистические исследования*, Москва 2002, p. 234, 286; А. ЩАВЕЛЕВ, «Племена»..., p. 39; ИДЕМ, *Еще раз об идентификации и локализации славянского «племени» Ленζανήνοι / Ленζενίνοι / \*lędzjane*, [in:] *Вспомогательные и специальные науки истории в XX – начале XXI в. Призвание, творчество, общественное служение историка. Материалы XXVI Международной научной конференции*, Москва 2014, p. 424–427; ИДЕМ, *Славянские «племена»...*, p. 111–113 (there the concept that “Polans” is a native name and “Lendians” – a given name).

<sup>49</sup> Т. ЛЕНР-СПЛАВИŃСКИ, *Łędzice – Łędzianie – Lachowie*, [in:] *Opuscula Casimiro Tytmieniecki septuagenario dedicata*, Poznań 1959, p. 195–197; H. ŁOWMIAŃСКИ, *Łędzianie*, SA 4, 1953, p. 97–116 (there a hypothesis of “Lendians-Volhynians”); ИДЕМ, *Początki Polski...*, p. 496–498. According to the author, Constantine mistakenly classified the “Ledyans” among the “paktiots” of Rus’ – in fact they were the commercial partners of Kyiv. Cf.: А. НАЗАРЕНКО, *Немецкие латиноязычные источники IX–XI веков. Тексты, перевод, комментарий*, Москва 1993 [= ДИВЕ], p. 31–34 (literature review there). According to *De administrando imperio*, the territories of these “paktiots” were located

Another worth-noting detail contained in *De administrando imperio* is that the description of the journey of the “Rhosos” to Constantinople includes information on numerous hydrographical points, including *porohs* on the Dnieper River. Very significant is the fact that two names of each of them – Scandinavian and Slavonic – are given<sup>50</sup>. It can be assumed that Constantine obtained some of his information from the Slavonic participants of the trade, which had a dual, Scandinavian and Slavonic, character<sup>51</sup>. In this context, therefore, it would not be surprising if at least certain members of the Slavonic “tribal” elite, who at the same time were part of the “commonwealth of interest” centred around the Rurikids, were involved in concluding agreements with Byzantine partners<sup>52</sup>.

When we discuss the relationship between the Rurik dynasty and the Slavs, the question of possible family ties comes up naturally: could Volodislav and Predslava have belonged to Igor’s family? In the case of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and the source material we have, it is impossible to draw any definite conclusions. However, if we consider some other source information we will obtain some indications that may be helpful in at least partially explaining this issue.

The *Primary Chronicle* contains mentions of the possibility of such links: after the death of Igor, the elders of the Drevlians offered Olga to marry their “prince” Mal<sup>53</sup>. This story may be a testimony of memory about the character of relations linking the first Rurikids with members of the elites of the Slavonic groups. Of a slightly different character is the information about Malusha, Sviatoslav’s concubine and Vladimir the Great’s mother. Her brother Dobrynia already during the reign of Sviatoslav entered not only the circle of family rulers of Kyiv, but first of all became an influential member of the elite of the Rus’ian state<sup>54</sup>. Significant for our study is a mention from the year 6496 (c. 988) about the names of the

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in the mountains (εἰς τὰ ὄρη). Some scholars have tried to consider this information with the Dnieper mountains, mentioned in the *Primary Chronicle*. In my opinion, in some of the critical editions of Constantine’s work, the word *opoc* has been mistranslated: it can mean not only mountains, but also a border, an estate or a district, cf.: E.A. ΣΟΡΗΟСLΕS, *Greek Lexicon*..., p. 819; A. ЩАВЕЛЕВ, *Славянские «племена»*..., p. 112, 118 (there more about the “geographical” location of the ethnoses mentioned in *De administrando imperio*).

<sup>50</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, IX, 25–65, p. 58–61.

<sup>51</sup> P. СКРЫННИКОВ, *Исторический факт*..., p. 311; H. ŁOWMIAŃSKI, *Początki Polski*..., p. 497 (according to H. Łowmiański, the information on Slavonic groups was provided to the author of *De administrando imperio* by the Pechenegs).

<sup>52</sup> A. ТОЛОЧКО, *Очерки*..., p. 213. According to the author, this information could have been provided by the Rus’ian envoys on the occasion of the conclusion of the treaty. Imperial clerks registering the Rus’ian merchants, who are mentioned in the text of the treaty, may also have been involved in obtaining information. As an additional indication of the “double” nature of trade with Constantinople, we can take these fragments of the *Primary Chronicle* concerning the participation of the Slavs in the expeditions of Oleg, Igor and Sviatoslav against Byzantium, cf.: *Лаврентьевская летопись*, col. 21, 33; A. ЩАВЕЛЕВ, «Племена»..., p. 28–29.

<sup>53</sup> *Лаврентьевская летопись*, col. 54–55.

<sup>54</sup> *Лаврентьевская летопись*, col. 69.

sons of Vladimir<sup>55</sup>. Four of them, mentioned as the last, also bore names with a West-Slavonic provenance: Stanislav, Pozvizd and Sudislav<sup>56</sup>. These sons were not mentioned in the note under the same date about Vladimir's division of the Rus'ian towns between his descendants. As the name of Volodislav, their names did not gain a dynastic status among the house of Rurik, but became popular among the Rus'ian boyars.

Thus, we are dealing with a set of non-standard ("West-Slavonic") anthroponyms, occurring at one time within the princely house and later becoming popular among the Rus'ian boyars<sup>57</sup>. It is possible that up to a certain moment (e.g. until the baptism of Vladimir), family ties between the Rurikids and members of the upper classes of the Slavonic and Varangian groups remaining in the Kyiv's sphere of influence have been something common. In this context we can mention the story of Vladimir's marriage to Rogneda of Polotsk, the daughter of a local Scandinavian leader. However, these ties were not important enough to make knowledge about them a part of the dynastic tradition: possibly the sons from such marriages did not achieve a high position, as can be seen by the very laconic references in the Rus'ian chronicles<sup>58</sup>. As the state became more consolidated and powerful, Rus'ian rulers wanted to establish family ties with other Christian dynasties: Vladimir's marriage to Anna Porphyrogenneta is the most prominent example of these policy (we also know of a number of marriages between the Rurikids and members of the Polish, Hungarian, French and German dynasties). In the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, family ties to local Slavonic (Volodislav?) and Scandinavian (Rogvolod) leaders may have been important, but fifty years later they may have lost relevance. Christianisation of the princely house prevented the ruler of Kyiv from having several spouses and forced him to conduct a more cautious dynastic policy directed at relations with more powerful allies.

The preamble of the treaty contains one more specific anthroponym which is difficult to clearly qualify as Slavic or Scandinavian. Among the Rus'ian envoys,

<sup>55</sup> Лаврентьевская летопись, col. 121.

<sup>56</sup> В. КОРОЛЮК, *Западные славяне и Киевская Русь в X–XI вв.*, Москва 1964, p. 98; J. KORPELA, *Beiträge...*, p. 200, 210, 212. A. Brückner wrote that Stanislav and Pozvizd were the children of Vladimir's "Polish consort" (this view was partly supported by T. Skulina). According to L. Voitovych Stanislav and Sudislav were sons of Adela – daughter of a "duke" of the Croats based in Przemyśl, cf.: A. BRÜCKNER, *Polska pogańska i słowiańska*, Kraków 1923, p. 14; T. SKULINA, *Staroruskie imiennictwo...*, vol. I, p. 112, vol. II, p. 17; Л. ВОЙТОВИЧ, *Княжа доба...*, p. 274, 277 (there a review of the information from the later Rus'ian codexes). Only in the case of Sudislav we have reliable information on his further fate – he lost the Pskov principality as a result of a conflict with his brother Yaroslav. He was then captured and freed by his nephews after two decades. He died as a monk and the last surviving son of Vladimir the Great. Stanislav and Pozvizd died probably while their father was still alive.

<sup>57</sup> This fact could also serve as an indication that the later Rus'ian boyar's class had their origins not only in the Great Prince's immediate surroundings, but also in the Slavonic elites.

<sup>58</sup> Then A. Rukavishnikov's hypothesis about "forgotten pagan lines of the house of Rurik" has some signs of rightness.

a person named “Yatvyag – the envoy of Gunar” was mentioned<sup>59</sup>. This name may be related to the Yotvingians, a Baltic ethnos mentioned in Rus’ian sources, with whom Vladimir the Great and his son Yaroslav have been fighting<sup>60</sup>. As the Yotvingians did not create any written sources, their identity and origin is a subject of debate among historians, archaeologists and philologists<sup>61</sup>. In recent times, a hypothesis by the Russian historian Alexei Kibin’ has gained popularity: he made a thorough analysis of the origin of the ethnonym, concluding that it does not necessarily have the Baltic origins<sup>62</sup>. According to Kibin’, the form “Yatviagi” (Явѣаги), appearing, for example, in the *Primary Chronicle*, is similar to such terms as “Variagi” (Варази) or “Kolbiagi” (Колбяги), which refers to members of various Scandinavian groups. A. Kibin’ also associates the name of Yatviag with the Scandinavian name “Eadwig” stating that Yotvingians could mean “the descendants or people of Yatviag”<sup>63</sup>.

In the basin of the Neman river, areas traditionally identified as the Yotvingian lands, we encounter some traces of the existence of Scandinavian culture in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>64</sup>. According to A. Kibin’, not only the “Rhosens” of Kyiv but also many other groups of Scandinavians operated in the Central-Eastern Europe at that time. In a certain way, this is confirmed by those fragments of the *Primary Chronicle* that mention Rogvolod of Polotsk, the mysterious Tury (legendary founder of Turov) and Princess Olga, who, according to the *Chronicle*, came from Pskov. According to the Moscow scholar, a not large but well-organised group

<sup>59</sup> Явѣагъ. Гунаровъ.

<sup>60</sup> *Лаврентьевская летопись*, col. 82, 153. J. POWIERSKI, *Najdawniejsze nazwy etniczne z terenu Prus i niektórych obszarów sąsiednich*, KMW 2, 1966, p. 161–183; IDEM, *Czynniki warunkujące rozwój polityczny ludów zachodniobałtyjskich*, ABS 19, 1990, p. 96; IDEM, *Bałtowie i ich relacje z Polska do końca XII wieku (na tle stosunków w strefie bałtyckiej)*, [in:] IDEM, *Prussica. Artykuły wybrane z lat 1965–1995*, vol. II, Malbork 2005, p. 622. According to some authors this man’s name was “Yatviag Gunarov”). J. Powierski believed that it was a Yotvingian envoy of Gunar – a Varangian governor of his native lands. The dispute over his identity was aptly summarised by B. Uspensky. Russian author stated that Yatviag could be *someone from the Yotvingian tribe, someone resembling a Yotvingian or having connections with the Yotvingians*, cf.: Ф. УСПЕНСКИЙ, *Скандинавы. Варяги. Русь. Историко-филологические очерки*, Москва 2002, p. 61. Also noteworthy is that the Yotvingians were not mentioned in the list of peoples and “tribes” included in the *Primary Chronicle*, cf.: M. ENGEL, *Jaćwieskie ośrodki gradowe*, Warszawa 2020, p. 278.

<sup>61</sup> H. ŁOWMIAŃSKI, *Prusy pogańskie*, Toruń 1938, p. 15; А. КИБИНЬ, *Ятвяги в X–XI вв.: «балтское племя» или «береговое братство»?*, SSBP 2.4, 2008, p. 117–132; IDEM, *От Ятвязи...*, p. 18sq, 44–46; M. ENGEL, *Jaćwieskie ośrodki...*, p. 274.

<sup>62</sup> А. КИБИНЬ, *От Ятвязи...*, p. 50–53; M. ENGEL, *Jaćwieskie ośrodki...*, p. 274.

<sup>63</sup> А. КИБИНЬ, *От Ятвязи...*, p. 54–56, 61, 70; M. ENGEL, *Jaćwieskie ośrodki...*, p. 280. A. Kibin’ emphasises that it is necessary to differentiate between the ethnonym “Jaćwings”, which the author of the *Primary Chronicle* used to describe events taking place in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the later “Yotvingia” (Sudovia), which in his view is a geographical name rather than an ethnonym.

<sup>64</sup> А. КИБИНЬ, *От Ятвязи...*, p. 62–63.

of Scandinavians, engaged in military and trading activities, could take control over part of the Baltics and introduce their social model, including the system of governance<sup>65</sup>.

The hypothesis of A. Kibin' was recently endorsed by Marcin Engel, who compared written sources with archaeological data. According to his observations, for the period from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century in the Neman basin we can see signs of major cultural transformations (including the development of strong settlement centres) and the Scandinavian element has played a decisive role in this process. At the end of that period many local centres collapsed, which may be connected with the military actions of the Rurikids against the Yotvingians, which the *Primary Chronicle* informs us about. According to M. Engel their result was *the elimination of the independent elite groups, which dominated in the Prussian area during the Viking period and the removal of the elite groups which determined the shape of culture*<sup>66</sup>.

Let us take a brief look at the sources mentioning "Yotvingians" and other Balts with particular emphasis on the internal structure<sup>67</sup>. The *Bavarian Geographer* while writing about the "Bruzi" people (Prussians?) stressed that they occupied a large territory, however the author did not provide any information about the number of their towns. Some scholars consider this to be evidence of the non-unified structure of this folk<sup>68</sup>. The account of Wulfstan's journey to Truso, included in the *Book of Alfred*, King of Wessex, contains data about the "Estes" – people, who inhabited the land called "Estland". The author of the source mentioned that they had many strongholds ruled by chiefs who competed with each other. The description of the funeral rites of the "Estes" gives us information on social stratification<sup>69</sup>. The *Life of Saint Adalbert of Prague* by Bruno of Querfurt (*Sancti Adalberti Pragensis episcopi et martyris vita altera*) includes information on the Prussians ("Pruze"): their lands were divided into districts headed by *primas*, with an assembly as the supreme governing body. Bruno also mentioned a man named Sico, whom he described as "primus dux et magister nefarie" – such a combination of chieftainship and religious role was present also in the 13<sup>th</sup> century Yotvingia<sup>70</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 60–61, 69; M. ENGEL, *Jaćwieskie ośrodki...*, p. 279–280, 283.

<sup>66</sup> А. КИВИНЬ, *От Ятвязи...*, p. 59–60; M. ENGEL, *Jaćwieskie ośrodki...*, p. 284.

<sup>67</sup> Cf.: H. ŁOWMIANŃSKI, *Stosunki polsko-pruskie za Piastów*, [in:] IDEM, *Prusy – Litwa – Krzyżacy*, Warszawa 1989, p. 97sq.

<sup>68</sup> *Opis grodów i terytoriów z północnej strony Dunaju czyli tzw. Geograf Bawarski*, ed. S. ZAKRZEWSKI, Lwów 1917, p. 4–5; А. КИВИНЬ, *От Ятвязи...*, p. 34; M. ENGEL, *Jaćwieskie ośrodki...*, p. 261.

<sup>69</sup> *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum*, vol. I, ed. T. HIRSCH, M. TOEPPEN, Leipzig 1861, p. 732–734; cf.: M. ENGEL, *Jaćwieskie ośrodki...*, p. 276 (further literature there).

<sup>70</sup> *Sancti Adalberti Pragensis, episcopi et martyris vita altera auctore*, ed. A. BIEŁOWSKI, Lwów 1964 [= MPH, 1], p. 180, 182, 220, 221; *Wojciecha biskupa i męczennika Żywot pierwszy*, ed. J. KARWASIŃSKA, Warszawa 1962 [= MPH.SN, 4.1], p. 46; *Adalberti Pragensis episcopi et martyris Vita altera auctore Brunone Querfurtensi*, ed. J. KARWASIŃSKA, Warszawa 1969 [= MPH.SN, 4.2], p. 39,

Adam of Bremen wrote that the Prussians did not recognize any lord or superior authority over them<sup>71</sup>.

Much of the information on 13<sup>th</sup> century “Yotvingia” and the local leaders comes from the *Galician-Volhynian Chronicle*. Its author, describing the way of conducting wars by the Yotvingian “princes”, stressed several times that they operated as a collective<sup>72</sup>. When negotiating peace with the Rus’ian princes, Yotvingian legations very often consisted of several leaders and were sent on behalf of “all Yotvingia”<sup>73</sup>. Very important is also the mention of the deputation of several Lithuanian *kunigai* to the widow of Roman Mstislavich and her sons: Daniel and Vasylko. The written document which was drawn up then included a list of their names with a classification into “older” and “younger” princes<sup>74</sup>.

We can conclude that this “collective” way of decision-making reminds us of the situation we faced in the case of the Rus’ian-Byzantine treaty. The 13<sup>th</sup> century “Yotvingia” appears as an archaic form of society organised in a manner similar to that of the early Kyiv state. The decision-making body was a community bringing to mind the model known from Scandinavian societies (*ting* – an assembly of all free men)<sup>75</sup>. If the theory of A. Kibin’ is correct, we can suppose that this model was implemented in the early Middle Ages in the lands of the Balts. Later, although the expansion of the Rurikids caused the collapse of other Scandinavian groups, this “collective system of government”, known from the time of Oleg and Igor, in the Neman basin could survive until the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>76</sup>.

Let us summarise the main conclusions. The Rus’ian-Byzantine treaty, which is placed in the *Primary Chronicle* under the year 6453 (c. 945) but was actually concluded in 944 at the latest, is an agreement between two sides: the Byzantine emperors and a *commonwealth of interest* consisting of several dozen individuals,

68; A. KAMIŃSKI, *Jaćwież. Terytorium, ludność, stosunki gospodarcze i społeczne*, Łódź 1953, p. 146; H. ŁOWMIAŃSKI, *Studia nad dziejami Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, Poznań 1983, p. 326, 327, after: M. ENGEL, *Jaćwieskie ośrodki...*, p. 277.

<sup>71</sup> ADAM VON BREMEN, *Hamburgische Kirchengeschichte (Magistri Adam Bremensis Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae Pontificum)*, ed. B. SCHMEIDLER, Hannoverae-Lipsiae 1917 [= MGH.SRG, 2], p. 245.

<sup>72</sup> *Chronica Galiciano-Voliniana. Chronica Romanoviciana*, ed. A. JUSUPOVIĆ, D. DAJBROWSKI, Kraków-Warszawa 2017 [= MPH.SN, 16] (cetera: *Chronica*), p. 123, 267–268, 300–310; A. КИБИНЬ, *От Ятвязи...*, p. 48–50.

<sup>73</sup> *Chronica*, p. 300–310, 362–276, 472–474, 494.

<sup>74</sup> *Chronica*, p. 71–74. Cf. also: A. JUSUPOVIĆ, *Kronika halicko-wołyńska (Kronika Romanowiczów) w latopisarskiej kolekcji historycznej*, Kraków-Warszawa 2019, p. 54.

<sup>75</sup> On the Slavonic *veche* and the Scandinavian *ting* cf.: *Древнейшие государства Восточной Европы. Материалы и исследования. 2004 год. Политические институты Древней Руси*, ed. Т. ГИМОН, Е. МЕЛЬНИКОВА, Москва 2006, p. 139. On the *veche* among the Balts cf.: H. ŁOWMIAŃSKI, *Prusy...*, p. 29–30.

<sup>76</sup> It is also worth highlighting that this area remained pagan for a very long period, which was also not favourable for the consolidation of the Balts, cf.: H. ŁOWMIAŃSKI, *Prusy pogańskie...*, p. 15sq; A. КИБИНЬ, *От Ятвязи...*, p. 104.

which was headed by the Kyivian ruler Igor – the executor of the terms of the treaty. This group was multi-ethnic and included various people involved in trade with Constantinople: members of the princely clan, other noble Scandinavians (called “boyars” by the Slavonic translator), representatives of merchants and leaders of Slavonic groups connected with Kyiv by ties of dependence or partnership. The latter include witnesses of the treaty who bore Slavonic names: Volodislav and Predslava (his wife or daughter) – people of high position within the Rus'ian commonwealth. They should be considered as members of the Slavonic elite. Two other Slavs, Sinko and Borich, were present among the merchants. When analysing the work of Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, we have highlighted two Slavonic ethnoses: Κριβιτσηνοι (Krivichians) and λενζανηνοι/λενζενινοι (“Lendians”). These Slavs were not simply “tributaries” of the “Rhouses”, but also their partners and participants of the international trade, which had a dual Scandinavian-Slavonic character. Volodislav and Predslava probably came from the elite of one of these groups, which would explain their high status. The “West-Slavonic” features of the anthroponym “Volodislav” indicate that this man might have belonged to the “Lendians” – of course, if we accept the hypothesis according to which they inhabited the area of the later Polish-Rus'ian borderland. It is possible that these people had family bonds with the house of Rurik, although it is difficult to formulate a definite thesis in this case. The leader (“prince”) of a large Slavonic group affiliated with Kyiv, and connected to Igor by family ties, could be treated as a rightful member of the “Rhouses” elite.

Considering the structure of the Balts as presented above, we can conclude that in the early medieval Central-Eastern Europe the Scandinavian model of governing became widely adopted. It involved a collective decision-making one, for example, agreements with foreign political organisms. The internally diversified community acted as one in such cases. The Rus'ian – Byzantine treaty shows that this model existed in the early Rus'ian state. Among the Balts it survived until the 13<sup>th</sup> century as a kind of political archaism.

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