

*The Historiographical and Archaeological Evidence of Autonomy and Rebellion in
Chersōn: a Defense of the Revisionist Analysis of Vladimir's Baptism (987-989)*

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Author's Abstract

The conversion of Vladimir, grand prince of Kiev, to Eastern Christianity was a watershed in world history, although the exact reasons for his conversion and the precise nature of the relationship he had with the Byzantine Empire at the time have been misrepresented by generations of historians, eager to present the episode in a manner which essentially glorifies Vladimir the Russian as the master of his own political and religious agendas and denigrates the Byzantine role for its supposed duplicity. Nevertheless, this study, which scrutinizes the works of these earlier historians, discards their methodologies, which frequently and deliberately manipulate the sources, and instead the present study seeks to deposit greater reliance on the archaeological evidence of this episode by concentrating on the role of the city of Chersōn in the southern Crimea in this legend, which has been overlooked and deliberately misinterpreted in furtherance of previous historians' personal, religio-political agendas. To better understand the truth behind Vladimir's choice of Byzantine Christianity over Latin Christianity, this study will therefore seek to identify the major cultural, linguistic, economic and political influences on early Kievan Rus' at the time, using both text-based evidence and a significant share of archaeological evidence. In a few words, due to a civil war in Byzantium between 987-989, the rebellious forces of which the citizens of the city of Chersōn had doubtlessly united with against their rightful emperor, Basil II Porphyrogennētos, the early Russian polity, then seated in Kiev and led by Vladimir, embarked on an expedition to capture this city in the southern Crimean peninsula. But most historians have hitherto suggested that this event was because Basil II had promised Vladimir the hand of his coveted sister in marriage and had then reneged on the offer. The question is, were the Russians acting on behalf of the emperor or in spite of him?

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Note on transcriptions and terminology

When transcribing Greek and Russian names, ethnonyms, posts and titles into English, I have opted to adhere to what are, in my opinion, the most accurate representational characters available in the Latin alphabet. Therefore, I have listed below the most common letters, in first the Greek and then the Cyrillic alphabets on the left and the corresponding Latin letters on the right, whose transcriptions are not directly self-evident and the equivalent transcriptions of which I will use frequently in this research.

ω	ō
η	ē
υ	y
β	v
χ	ch
ц	c
ш	š
щ	šč
х	kh, except at the beginning of a word or name, as in for example, Халаев=Halaev
ы	ÿ
й	j
ж	ž
я	ja
ч	č
ь	'
ю	ju

Regarding the Russian letters э, ё and е, I have made no distinction between them and have largely treated them with the Latin letter e. As for the Cyrillic letter ъ, since it appears little to never in this research, I will decline from referring to it further in this note.

Byzantine titles and posts such as *prōtevōn* or *stratēgos*, I have rendered in italics to prevent them from being confused with both proper place names and personal names, which I have left in a normal font.

για τους παππούδες μου

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I 1.1 Introduction

If you go to war pray once; if you go on a sea journey pray twice; but pray three times if you are going to be married.¹

The coasts of the Black Sea become the stage of drama in three acts played by two protagonists who, over a thousand years, change only costumes: the Empire, whether called Roman, Late Roman, or Byzantine, and the nomads, known by a multitude of names.²

Запутанный вопрос о крещении Руси еще не разрешен во всех подробностях историками. Запутанность этого вопроса объясняется прежде всего тем интересом, который он возбуждал уже у современников. Чем больше интересовались данным кругом фактов, тем больше осложнялась трактовка вопроса.³

The conversion of Vladimir I, grand prince of Kiev to Eastern Christianity was a momentous watershed in European and Slavic history. The details of his conversion are shrouded in such legend that the modern historian has difficulty digging through such scanty evidence. The precious little verification that has survived, beyond being incomplete, is deliberately misleading and so apparently biased as to invite reinvention, if not refictionalization of legend as opposed to the decipherment of myth from fact. Often overlooked, deliberately misinterpreted and frequently over-generalized, the role of the city of Chersōn in the southern Crimea in this legend is where modern historical debate has centered on his alleged conversion.

The story that has been generally accepted by historians essentially glorifies Vladimir I as the master of his own political and religious agenda and denigrates the Byzantine role for its “usual two-faced games.”⁴ The condemnation of Byzantium in this context fits in with a generalized historical mistrust of all things Byzantine, thus making it easier for modern historians to digest a medieval ruler’s choice of Byzantine Christianity over Western Christianity. Essentially, this disparagement of Byzantine civilization, whether in a political, cultural, economic or religious context, fits in with a generalized Gibbonian treatment of Byzantium which has been handed down by historians for centuries and would have been discontinued, one would have hoped, by

¹ Russian Proverb.

² C. Zuckerman, 2006, “Byzantium’s Pontic Policy in the *Notitiae Episcopatum*,” 201.

³ “This tangled skein has not yet been unraveled. Its complicated nature is due primarily to the interest it aroused even among its contemporaries. The more interest there was in the facts, the more complicated became the analysis of the problem.” B. D. Grekov, *Kiev Rus*, trans. Y. Sdobnikov, ed. D. Ogden, 1959, 636.

⁴ Obolensky, 1989, “Cherson and the Conversion of Rus’: an Anti-Revisionist View,” 253.

now. For example, Volkoff also writes about Greek and Byzantine, "...their greed, their guile, had been known since antiquity."⁵ It is truly unfortunate that modern scholarship has yet to shed this vestige of her former adherence to these ridiculous negative stereotypes against Greek-speakers and Byzantines.

To better understand the truth behind Vladimir's choice of Byzantine Christianity over Latin Christianity, this paper will seek to identify the major cultural, linguistic, economic and political influences on early Kievan Rus' at the time, using both historical evidence and a significant share of archaeological evidence. To begin with, I will relate a simplified retelling of the generally accepted conversion story, which I will usually refer to as the "Korsun' Legend" for the present purposes. The reason for doing so is to inform the reader of the basic tenets of the conversion story as most modern historians accept the conversion, which is in turn based principally on two primary sources, one in Greek, that of Leōn Diakonos, and one in Russian, that of the *Povest' Vremennykh Let*, which I will deconstruct and analyze in the following chapter.⁶ The generally accepted narrative is fundamentally divided into four separate stories,⁷ beginning in 986 with visitations by and Vladimir's examination of representatives of the four major Abrahamic faiths, in which Christianity has been divided between that of the Byzantines and the Latins. As most historians and theologians familiar with the topic may know, the story develops as follows:

1.2 The Generally Accepted Conversion Story

The first story begins at an unspecified time during 986, when Vladimir I was visited by a number of envoys from various countries and kingdoms representing the four main monotheistic religions, all of them seeking to convert him and his kingdom. The first envoy to visit Kiev was from the Muslim Volga Bulgars, who enticed Vladimir with promises of carnal satisfaction in the afterlife. However, when they mentioned the abstention from wine, a widely popular Kievan import from Byzantium, Vladimir famously replied, "Drinking is the joy of the Russes. We cannot exist without that

⁵ V. Volkoff, 1984, *Vladimir the Russian Viking*, 191.

⁶ For a deconstruction analysis of the "Korsun' Legend," see sections 2.3-2.5. For an English translation of the entirety of the document involving the so-called "Korsun' Legend," see appendix III.

⁷ Ostrowski, 2006, "The Account of Volodimer's Conversion in the 'Povest' vremennykh let': a Chiasmus of Stories" 568.

pleasure.”⁸ Immediately followed German clerical envoys on behalf of papal interests; although they too were dismissed for unclear reasons, most likely concerning the religious precedent of fasting. A Jewish Khazar mission then arrived to instruct Vladimir on the truth of Judaism. However when he questioned them on their native lands, they mentioned god’s anger for their sins and that they had been scattered while Jerusalem had been given to Christians, after which Vladimir dismissed them as well, critical of their hypocrisy. Finally, a Byzantine scholar was sent to Vladimir who proceeded to lambaste first Islam, and then pick apart the incorrect faiths of Judaism and Western Christianity. Having whetted Vladimir’s interest, the scholar recounts a lengthy explanation of Christianity, handed down from Judaism, but even though the scholar succeeds in greatly impressing the Rus’ prince, Vladimir I decides to wait a little longer before converting to investigate more about Islam and Christianity.

The second story begins in the following year, 987, when Vladimir I sent emissaries out to discover the religions of his neighbors in their own ecclesiastical environs. First, they visited the Volga Bulgars, to report only “sorrow and a dreadful stench.”⁹ Next in Germany, they reported, “we went among the Germans, and saw them performing many ceremonies in their temples; but we beheld no glory there.”¹⁰ Finally, upon visiting Constantinople, most likely attending a service in the Hagia Sophia, they famously reported,

...the Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their god, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty. Every man, after tasting something sweet, is afterward unwilling to accept that which is bitter, and therefore we cannot dwell longer here.¹¹

Vladimir, however, once again decides to hold off from converting.

Simultaneously, in the late summer of 987, after subduing the revolt of the previous would-be usurper, Bardas Sklēros, the Byzantine general and pretender, Bardas Phōkas took control of all Anatolia, including the commercial port cities of the Marmoran

⁸ S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 97.

⁹ *Ibid*, 111.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

¹¹ *Ibid*.

and Pontic coastlines, declaring himself emperor of the Romans on 25 August 987,¹² marching westward on Constantinople with his Anatolian Greek, Pontic and Armenian crack troops. Basil II, the concurrent emperor, preoccupied with a failed Bulgarian campaign against Tsar Samuil and bereft of his own loyal troops after his disastrous defeat at Trajan's Gate on 17 of the previous August of 986, sent a desperate embassy to the Rus' prince Vladimir I of Kiev. The Roman ambassador arriving during the winter, asked for military assistance in return for a proposed marriage to the emperor's sister, Anna Porphyrogennētē, an overwhelmingly rare and prestigious opportunity for Vladimir and the Rus' principate on the condition of his immediate conversion to Christianity and renunciation of paganism. A monumental accord, the reconstruction of the details of which will be discussed later, was reached at this time in Kiev in the winter of 987; in consequence, 6000 Varangian mercenaries were sent by Vladimir I down the Dniepr in the spring and arrived in Constantinople sometime in the summer of 988. This force subsequently defeated the rebels at two major battles in the following year, the first at Chrysopolis against the rebel Kalokyriēs Delfinas, the exact date of which is unclear,¹³ and then his superior, Bardas Phōkas at Abydos, definitively on 13 April, 989.

At this point, we reach the so-called "Korsun' Legend." Vladimir I had besieged the city of Chersōn in the Crimea in response to Byzantine treachery and duplicity for not conveying to him his reward, Anna Porphyrogennētē, the promised imperial bride in return for his military assistance. Chersōn, besieged for roughly between six and nine months,¹⁴ fell to Vladimir I in the late summer or autumn of 989, either after the sighting of the Halley's Comet or an earthquake definitively dated to the night of 25 October on the feast of St. Dēmētrios, the precise chronology of which makes a major difference in his exact reasons for besieging Chersōn.¹⁵ Regardless, while the events during the siege

¹² For a further discussion of the peculiarities of the comparative reliabilities of Skylitzēs and Yahyā of Antioch, see n99 below. Skylitzēs gives the date of Bardas Phōkas' proclamation of his imperial claim as 15 August, 987 (XVI:14) while Yahyā of Antioch gives the date as 14 September, 987 (*Patrologia Orientalis*, 213-215/421-423). Forsyth, 1977, *The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938-1034) of Yahā b, Saīd al-Anṭākī*, vol. 2, 430, claims Skylitzēs gives two entirely different dates for this event.

¹³ Although J. H. Forsyth has proposed that the battle of Chrysopolis and the subsequent capture and execution of Kalokyriēs Delfinas occurred before March 2, 989. See J. H. Forsyth, 1977, *The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938-1034) of Yahā b, Saīd al-Anṭākī*, vol. 2, 440.

¹⁴ A. L. Berthier-Delagarde, "Как Владимир Осаждал Корсунь," 1909, 252-57. For a map, in English, of the 988-989 supposed siege of Chersōn, based on Berthier-Delagarde's speculations, see figure i.

¹⁵ The precise chronology will be discussed in detail in section 2.2.

remain unclear, it can generally be agreed that the city was finally defeated when a Chersōnite named Anastasios shot an arrow into the Rus' camp suggesting the best way to ensure his domination of the city: by cutting off the water pipes southwest of the city walls. According to legend, Vladimir "raised his eyes to heaven and vowed that if this hope was realized, he would be baptized." Indeed the city soon surrendered, overcome by thirst.

Upon the fall of city and the entrance of Vladimir and his entourage, he sent to Constantinople the now-famous threat, "Behold, I have captured your glorious city. I have also heard that you have an unwedded sister. Unless you give her to me to wife, I shall deal with your own city as I have with Chersōn." Thus, Basil II indeed sent his sister Anna Porphyrogennētē to Chersōn on the condition Vladimir I be baptized immediately, yet upon her arrival he still remained a pagan and his final decision to convert was due only to a sudden blindness by divine agency, and upon baptism, at the suggestion of the princess, he was miraculously cured, after which his entourage followed suit. He was baptized in the Church of St. Basil in Chersōn. Thus, he immediately married the princess and formally gave the city of Chersōn back to Byzantium as a wedding gift to the princess. Afterwards, which he departed Chersōn, sailed back to Kiev taking with him the same Chersōnite Anastasios, the clergymen, as well as the relics of St. Clement and St. Phoebus along with various vessels and icons for his own Kievan services. Upon his arrival, he ordered the punishment of his pagan idols for their deceit and the baptism of all the Kievan people together in the Dniepr by his clerical retinue, made up of both Chersōnite and Constantinopolitan clergy. He ordered the building of the Church of the Tithes in Kiev and the Christian education of the sons of the boyars, probably taking the Christian name Basil in honor of his new brother-in-law.¹⁶

1.3 Analysis

Such is the conventional narrative history of the Christianization of Kievan Russia in 989, the lion's share of which is derived from the account contained in the *Povest' Vremennykh Let*, hereafter referred to as the *PVL*, which will be critically analyzed in the following chapters.¹⁷ The significance of the Korsun' Legend is difficult to overestimate

¹⁶ S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, n94, 248.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 96-119.

as Russian scholars have for centuries debated the theological and cultural inheritance of the country from Byzantium.¹⁸ The subordination of the Rus' church to the Greek Patriarch in the earliest years of Russian Christianity is of paramount concern to those wishing to better understand the autonomous nature of Russia's Byzantine heritage, to borrow the now-famous term of the celebrated Byzantinist Dimitri Obolensky.¹⁹ The differing modern interpretations of this legend certainly affect the way in which the modern Russian, Belorussian and Ukrainian peoples see and understand their particular place and role in the Christian, and Eastern European worlds, respectively. A well-researched interpretation of the Korsun' Legend, it is arguable, is tantamount to a well-researched interpretation of the Slavic-Varangian ethnic character of the early Rus' state. Still more importantly, this study should serve to slightly revise how Russia reconciles her place in the western world with regard to her Byzantine heritage, especially after decades of rigorous atheism and more recently, an age of post-Soviet liberation, yet a firm medieval foundation endowed from Byzantium. Undoubtedly, while Russia has shed countless vestiges of her medieval Byzantine heritage, Obolensky has shown it is still difficult to prove a sizeable portion of her heritage descends from any other cultural parent or period. In effect, renegotiating Russia's Byzantine heritage is the basic reason I have chosen this research. It is the reason that for centuries Russian scholars, thinkers, theologians and philosophers have debated the precise role of Vladimir I, Basil II and the exact chronology and geography of the events involving Kiev, Constantinople and Chersōn from 987 to 989 with both excited passion and subdued sobriety. Finally, I have chosen this topic because my own family history is based in a Russian context.

The conventional reasoning for the conquest of Chersōn was to spite Basil II instead of on his behalf. Vladimir's show of strength after the conquest of Chersōn and his threat to follow up his success with another assault, this time on Constantinople, was meant to put enough diplomatic pressure on the treacherous Byzantines to ensure him the delivery of his promised bride, Anna Porphyrogennētē. The reasons given for his conversion depict him as a powerful, independent-minded ruler willing to accept new ecclesiastical doctrine yet certainly unwilling to submit to the political suzerainty of a

¹⁸ D. Obolensky, 1994, 75-107.

¹⁹ Ibid, 193-204.

neighboring empire though undoubtedly rich, powerful and prestigious. The story is told to depict Vladimir I, and therefore Kievan Russia as an equal to Byzantium, instead of as a vassal state. However, the aforementioned tale is also difficult for a scholar to digest as entirely factual. This research will not be concerned with the ecclesiastical submission of Kievan Rus' to Constantinople so much as the precise circumstances of the fall of Chersōn. I will attempt to prove that Chersōn was in fact actively participating in the rebellion of Bardas Phōkas during the interval of time between the late summer of 987 until its fall to Vladimir at roughly the same time in 989. What this means is that Vladimir I captured Chersōn, most likely after he was already baptized, and most likely baptized in Kiev by the initial embassy of Basil II seeking Varangian mercenaries in the winter of 987 and that he captured Chersōn on behalf of Basil II, as a Christian, instead of despite him, as a pagan.

This hypothesis makes sense for a number of reasons for a number of reasons which both the literary and the archaeological evidence provides. Ecclesiastically, it does indeed make clear sense: many scholars agree that the Russian Orthodox Church remained subordinate to the Byzantine Patriarchate in the early centuries before the Mongolian invasions, essentially up until the widely condemned union at the council of Ferrara-Florence in 1439.²⁰ If Vladimir were baptized in Kiev before his conquest of Chersōn, it would heavily suggest that not only was he acting on behalf of Basil II, but also that his status as a Christian monarch presiding over a Christian populace within the Byzantine *oikoumenē* was subordinate to the Byzantine patriarchate, which in the early centuries it undoubtedly was.²¹ Economically, the hypothesis makes sense as recent archaeology has brought to light numerous sherds of Constantinopolitan and Chersōnite amphorae found throughout the Dniepr river basin and around Kiev, clearly suggesting a

²⁰ D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 346.

²¹ It must be noted though that the ecclesiastical influences of the early Rus' Church have been widely debated, mostly during the nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars. For a more detailed explanation, see S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, n171, 259-260 & M. Heppell, 1987, 254. See also V. Vodoff, 1992, 108. The precise role of the autocephalous archbishop of Tmutarakan' is inherited from the Photian mission of 867. G. Vernadsky, for all his speculations and blatant conjectures, holds that Tmutarakan' indeed held considerable ecclesiastical influence over Kiev during the period immediately following Vladimir's conversion, as cited in G. Vernadsky, 1973, 64-69. D. Ostrowski regards these views in relation to the Soviet historiographical treatment of the conversion of Rus' to Christianity in "The Christianization of Rus' in Soviet Historiography: Attitudes and Interpretations (1920-1960)," 1987. For another perspective on the role of Tmutarakan' Christian influence and the conversion of Vladimir, see also V. Volkoff, *Vladimir the Russian Viking*, n23, 339.

Russian preference for Byzantine goods, most notably, wine.²² Culturally and linguistically, this interpretation makes sense as the Slavonic script, descendent from the earlier glagolitic of Cyril and Methodius over a century before,²³ was brought to Kiev, largely from Bulgaria, at this time in an ample supply. The book-learning that Vladimir espoused to the sons of his boyar nobility reflected the need to create a legitimate Christian intelligentsia,²⁴ familiar at the very least with a Slavonic biblical translation, and perhaps the original Greek, readily available in Chersōn, where archaeological surveys have revealed a long tradition of missionary activity.²⁵ Finally, politically and geographically this hypothesis makes sense as well, as Chersōn, long a place of exile for unwanted political opponents, kept a local tradition of autonomy very much alive. Remote as it was from the center of Byzantine political power, it exercised and cherished its distance from Constantinople, especially being one of a very few, if not the only provincial urban center at times, to mint her own coinage. Indeed, several times between the ninth and eleventh centuries the city had either rebelled flat out or had supported the rebellious elements from Anatolia as well as fielding her own share of usurpers and pretenders. While the city was certainly the center of Greek influence in the Crimea, like many other historical Greek port cities throughout the Mediterranean world, it was primarily a Greek enclave perched on the edge of a different cultural and linguistic interior.²⁶ To review, the logic of Vladimir's capture of Chersōn in the formerly

²² T. S. Noonan & R. K. Kovalev, 2007, "Prayer, Illumination, and Good Times: the Export of Byzantine Wine and Oil to the North of Russia in Pre-Mongol Times," 161, [73]. Though I would also point out that ceramic evidence is by no means the only archaeological evidence that would presuppose this hypothesis, only a single example. See section 3.3 below for a further archaeological investigation of Kiev's taste for Crimean wine.

²³ K. Ericsson, 1966, "Das Anfangsdatum der Laurentiuschronik A.M. 6360," 114-117. See also *ibidem*, 1966, "The Earliest Conversion of the Rus' to Christianity," 113. The Glagolitic script was not entirely the precursor of Cyrillic, however Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor are certain that Constantine, before being renamed Cyril, had invented Glagolitic nevertheless. See S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 26.

²⁴ D. Obolensky, 1994, 229. He asserts, "...there is every reason to believe that by 'book-learning' (учен книжное) the chronicler meant literary instruction in Slavonic." (*PVL*, 117.) See also H. G. Lunt, 1988, 259. However, a number of scholars dispute the knowledge of Greek in Kiev after Vladimir's conversion, most notably Thomson who insists that there is no evidence for the specific creation of a learned class of scribes knowledgeable in Greek after conversion in Kiev. See F. J. Thomson, 1999, "The Bulgarian Contribution," 242.

²⁵ R. Sharp, 2011, *The Outside Image*, 275-277.

²⁶ S. Franklin & J. Shepard, 1996, *The Emergence of Rus': 750-1200*, 12-13. That Chersōn had always remained independent from its neighbors in the interior of the Crimean Peninsula is demonstrated in

summarized legend is undermined by what is quintessentially a fanciful conversion tale, though doubtlessly incorporating elements of truth, should not be taken for granted. Though the Christianity that Vladimir I would adopt would be indirectly Constantinopolitan, it would be derived directly from native Chersōnite clergy.²⁷ The fiercely independent nature of the Chersōn city-state had traditions dating back to the pre-Christian era. It would be a mistake for the historian to assume Chersōn was anything more than a Greek-speaking trading colony with relatively loose ties to Constantinople by the late tenth century.²⁸

Chersōn, originally a Greek trading colony was settled as far back as archaic times, ever remaining an isolated outpost of Hellenism in the northern Black Sea during Hellenistic and Roman times, briefly becoming a client state of Rome under the Antonines. Due to its natural isolation from the Greek and Christian worlds, Chersōn always retained and cherished a degree of the classical *πόλις* autonomy²⁹ throughout its long association with Byzantium, frequently at war with its eastern neighboring city-state, Bosphoros, during the high Roman imperial period, as well as openly rebelling frequently against the centralized authority in Constantinople.³⁰ The city functioned for centuries on facilitating trade between the Greek world of the south and the barbarian steppe and woodland world of the north. It was a place for traders, fishermen, missionaries, political outcasts and exiles. Constantinople's grip on the Crimea always remained tentative and the region, known as the *Klimata* and later in the thematic system, the *thema* of Chersōn after Theophilos' recovery of the city from the Khazars in the mid-ninth century, had always maintained strong trading connections with the Greek cities of the Pontic coastline. Chersōn was essentially situated in the center of the far-flung Black

abundance by A. A. Vasiliev, 1936, 23, as an example. For a precise map of the "interior" upon which Chersōn was situated, see figure ii.

²⁷ D. Obolensky, 1994, 62. See also V. Laurent, 1939, "Aux Origines de l'Eglise Russe," 295.

²⁸ S. Franklin & J. Shepard, 1996, 13.

²⁹ J. R. Smedley, 1985, 173. For a further explanation of the economy of the Black Sea and the remoteness of political and economic autonomy enjoyed by Chersōn, see appendix I. For a map of the Byzantine Black Sea trade routes, see figure iii.

³⁰ *DAI*, 53:148-158. The native Chersōnite levy up to the time of the writing of the *DAI*, Jenkins translates as "brigade," ἀριθμός. Before thematization, this brigade would have only numbered about a hundred native defenders; after thematization, importantly, it included a number of previously rebellious Khurramite Persians within a newly created garrison of 2000 soldiers. See W. Treadgold, 1988, 17. See also F. Dvornik, et. al., *DAI: a Commentary*, 1962, 207. The authors of the commentary refer to it instead as an artillery regiment.

Sea trading network, selling wine, oil, silk and other luxury goods up the river systems, most notably the Danube, Dniepr, and into Azov, called Lake Maeotis at the time, and selling, furs, honey, wax and other raw materials from the woodland and steppe surrounding the Northern interior of the Black Sea littoral as well as barbarian slaves and salt fish to the imperial capital and the Pontic cities. The Kievan Rus' maintained strong trading connections with Chersōn and the other southern Crimean cities such as Sougdaia and Bosphoros. While Chersōn had always maintained its Greek roots, there is no doubt its population was a mixture of Greeks, native Scythians³¹ and Crimean Goths from the Crimean interior, and Armenians from northeastern Anatolia, and that its culture was heavily influenced by these three groups.³² The history of the city and its role in the influence and facilitation of the spread of Byzantine Christianity to early Russia has been debated by modern historians and has been both oversimplified and misunderstood.³³ The autonomous nature of the city and its political and religious role in the conversion of Vladimir I still remain firmly in the realm of myth while the literary sources pertaining to this role seldom alleviate the modern misconstructions of the urban character of Chersōn in the late tenth century.³⁴

This study will seek to illuminate the precise role of the city of Chersōn in the conversion of Vladimir I between 987 and 989, using a mixture of both historiographical and archaeological evidence. The usage of archaeological substantiation, specifically in relation to the extant numismatic, epigraphic, ceramic and especially sigillographic evidence, it would be important to note, is something that many previous historians attempting to recreate the events surrounding the conversion have either misinterpreted or overlooked altogether. The city of Chersōn was, like many other Black Sea episcopal *kastra* involved in the commercial network, a mosaic of varying ethnicities, frequently at odds with both each other, the other trading cities, and Constantinople

³¹ On the use of the word “Scythians” by Greek historians such as Psellos, Skylitzēs and Leōn Diakonos, see P. Stephenson, 2000, 6.

³² A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 664.

³³ On the various historians and institutions who have since used the alleged Chersōnite baptism story to justify a myriad of agendas, speculations, conclusions and other such conjectures regarding the nature of Byzantine relations with early Rus' and the bases of the foundational institutions of the Rus' state and culture, see below sections 2.3-2.5 & 4.2.

³⁴ I will refer back to this point specifically regarding Chersōn's ethnic, economic, political and ecclesiastical makeup as well as example of modern mischaracterizations of the city in sections 3.1-3.4. For historical reconstructions of medieval Chersōn, see the maps of Romančuk and Carter: figures iv & v.

herself. The betrayal of Chersōn by Anastasios to Vladimir I was not just a treasonous act but also a reflection of the dubious allegiances of the varying ethnicities of the citizens of the city in the late tenth century. We must remember this when we examine the ethnic, social and religious composition of Chersōn and its consequent tendency for rebellion throughout the tenth century in later chapters. For this was partly the reason the city had sided with the aristocratic uprising of Bardas Phōkas in 986: it was an opportunity to declare independence from Constantinople and avoidance of the taxation that meant centralized authority, through the *kommerkiarioi* and *stratēgoi* appointed by Constantinople. As such, Vladimir moved to capture Chersōn on behalf of Basil II instead of despise him.

1.4 Historiography

As modern historians have understood the conversion story, what has been termed a chiasmus of stories, which is briefly a sophisticated blending of myth and fact, the only two sources are in Russian. Both sources disagree and of neither authorship can the historian be sure.³⁵ The *Povest' Vremennykh Let*, or *the Tale of Bygone Years*, is the main source for early Russian history, and its authorship remains unverified, although much of Vladimir's conversion story has been attributed to a certain monk, Sil'vestr by name.³⁶ But another monk, Jacob, wrote an earlier version of the story, entitled *Память и Похвала Иакова Мниха и Житие Князя Владимира по Древнейшему Списку*, or *the Memory and Panegyric of Vladimir I*, which offers a significantly earlier account of the conversion, rendering a widely divergent story from that of the traditional *PVL*.³⁷ While I will not seek to give an extensive discourse on the authorship of the document itself, I have relied on a number of earlier authors, mostly in Russian, who have supplied most of the relevant scholarship regarding the *PVL*, most notably, the great A. A. Šakhmatov, A. A. Zimin, B. A. Uspenskij, and A. Vasil'evskij, V. R. Rozen, and B. D. Grekov to name a few. D. Ostrowski has also provided valuable scholarship in English regarding the Laurentian Text of the *PVL*, as well as the priceless edition, translation and introduction

³⁵ D. Ostrowski, 2006, "Chiasmus," 567-580.

³⁶ Ibid. 567. It was widely believed for centuries that the *PVL* was largely written, if not entirely compiled by the monk Nestor, and was even known as Nestor's Chronicle. Ostrowski, a modern authority on the authorship of the *PVL*, particularly on the segment regarding the conversion, makes this attribution to Sil'vestr.

³⁷ A. A. Zimin, 1963, "Память и Похвала Иакова Мниха и Житие Князя Владимира по Древнейшему Списку," 66-75.

given by S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, which has certainly proved invaluable in my research regarding this topic. As for the account given by the monk Iakov, I have relied both on the 1963 edition published by Zimin in volume 37 of the *Краткие Сообщения Института Славяноведения*, and also the English translation by Hollingsworth in his *The Hagiography of Kievan Rus'*. These are the two main Russian primary sources I have relied on for the reconstruction of the conversion of Vladimir I.

The only Byzantine source which mentions the fall of Chersōn in 989 is a short interlude into the reign of Basil II by Leōn Diakonos; for the translation of which, I have depended on both Talbot and Sullivan as well as my own. Along with Leōn Diakonos, I have relied on the chronology of astronomical occurrences given by Yaḥyā of Antioch, translated into English with commentary by Forsyth as well as into French by Kratchkovsky and Vasiliev, and specifically utilized by Rozen in his comparison of Leōn Diakonos and Yaḥyā of Antioch. In addition to Leōn Diakonos as a Byzantine source, I have depended on Thurn's 1973 edition of Iōannēs Skylitzēs' *Synopsis Historiarum* as well as the *Chronografia* of Michaēl Psellos. I have also used Gelzer and Burckhardt's 1907 translation and edition of Stephanos of Taron's *Armenische Geschichte* as well as the invaluable *De Administrando Imperio*, (hereafter referred to as *DAI*), of Constantine VII Porphyrogennētos translated and edited by Gy. Moravcsik and R. J. H. Jenkins.

As for secondary literature, the three principle sources I have relied on and which will be discussed extensively throughout this study are in chronological order, Rozen's *Император Василий Болгаробойца: Извлечения из Летописи Яхя Антиоийска*, Poppe's groundbreaking 1976 study, "The Political Background to the Baptism of Rus': Byzantine-Russian Relations between 986-89," and Obolensky's decisive refutation, "Cherson and the Conversion of Rus': an Anti-Revisionist View." I am also indebted to Prof. Abraham Terian of St. Nersess Seminary of New York for his correspondence regarding the Armenian presence in the Black Sea trade network of the tenth century as well as the continuing monophysite/miaphysite and dyophysite divergence between Armenians and Greeks during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Other highly esteemed studies conducted by Shepard, Obolensky, Seibt, Ševčenko, Vasiliev, Delagarde, Ostrowski, Pritsak and certainly the fundamental work of Minns have all contributed

heavily to the crucial secondary literature of the topic of both textual and archaeological sources regarding Chersōn and tenth century Rus' at the time of the conversion.

1.5 Methodology

A large part of the present study will be reframing the contextualization of the primary sources. As historians have for decades, centuries even, sifted these available foundations in search of legitimate historical bedrock on which to build equally plausible hypotheses, the courtship of primary sources has become detached from their original function and perspective. The construction of a dependable chronology for the events transpiring between Constantinople, Chersōn and Kiev between 987 and 989 will be among the first issues I will seek to address. Nevertheless, we must remind ourselves that although these works were meant to set the metaphorical record straight, they are valid works of literature in their own right, meant not just to give testimony, but to function, inadvertently perhaps, as reflections of the places and times in which they were written.³⁸ This antecedent of a fundamental suspicion toward the primary source is not meant to conjure enduring distrust of traditional historiography, but it merely serves to remind us that the stable, straightforward narrative history we seek to erect is not always easily built without the mortar, occasionally, of implication and insinuation.³⁹ However, this is not to say that the more-or-less trustworthy primary sources we rely on all function in our study with similar levels of credibility. In the case of the conversion of Vladimir I and the capture of Chersōn, the works of Yaḥyā of Antioch, Iōannēs Skylitzēs, Michaēl

³⁸ See I. Nilsson, 2006, 47-57. The historical utility of the works of Michaēl Psellos, Leōn Diakonos, Iōannēs Skylitzēs and Yaḥyā of Antioch each fall in a distinct place along what is arguably a metaphorical spectrum encompassing the similarities and differences between the Byzantine chronicle and history. By understanding the essential purpose for which these works were originally written, we as modern scholars must not forget that whether we seek to understand historical occurrences and typologies or forms of conception, the inherent nature of the medieval historiographical literature serves most specifically to express “the highly ambivalent ‘Byzantine mentality’.” Hans-Georg Beck, 1965, 10.

³⁹ This brings to mind a favorite quote from Gibbon: “The confusion of the times, and the scarcity of authentic materials, oppose equal difficulties to the historian, who attempts to preserve a clear and unbroken thread of narration. Surrounded with imperfect fragments, always concise, often obscure, and sometimes contradictory, he is reduced to collect, to compare, and to conjecture: and though he ought never to place his conjectures in the rank of facts, the knowledge of human nature and the sure operation of its fierce and unrestrained passions, might, on some occasions, supplant the want of historical materials.” E. Gibbon, vol. I, chap. X, 1846, 250.

Psellos and Leōn Diakonos all operate at similar levels of credibility as opposed to the *PVL*⁴⁰ and the *Pamjat'*.⁴¹

The overall message of the *PVL* is one of identity building, which, it must be understood, applies to allegiances of the otherwise divided Slavic tribes then subject to Kievan domination as opposed to loyal Russian subjects. That being said, the account of Vladimir's conversion given in the *PVL* must be thought of as intertwining the Russian identity it was creating with a pre-existing Christian world history, directed through both the Old and New Testaments. Thus, the concept of Kievan Rus' being in alliance with and a daughter state of Byzantium eventually begot the now famous idea of Russia as the "Third Rome," as well as the "Tale of the White Cowl,"⁴² thereby requisitioning the antique Israelite and Greco-Roman legacy, preserved and enhanced by Byzantium, for herself. Christianity unified the disparate East Slavic tribes into the Russian people,⁴³ both allied with yet distinct from, Byzantium. This is what enabled the survival of Russian identity throughout the years of domination by the Golden Horde. However, the account of Christianization given by the chronicle that cemented Russian identity and the idea of Holy Russia⁴⁴ should not necessarily be read as literally as many scholars would

⁴⁰ See for example A. Kaldellis, 2013, 35-52. He argues that both Skylitzēs and Leōn Diakonos relied, independently, on a common source for Tzimiskēs' Bulgarian campaign of 971 against the Rus'. Regarding the *PVL* source for the events of the campaign he remarks, "We are at the mercy of this single text when it comes to the events of 970-971 AD. Nevertheless, it was not as unreliable as the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, with its embarrassing apologetic contortions and insistence that the war was a victory for the Rus'."

⁴¹ As V. Terras, 1965, "Leo Diaconus and the Ethnology of the Kievan Rus'," 396, has worded this notion, "However, it is the Byzantine rather than the Russian source that gives us truly concrete facts."

⁴² S. A. Zenkovsky, 1963, 325-332. See also J. Martin, 1993, 260-266. The tale of the White Cowl, endemic to the conflicting Russian inter-city political struggles of the early sixteenth century, symbolized, along with Moscow's domination of Novgorod, Moscow's reception and safekeeping of the Christianity received at first from Pope Sylvester I and then Patriarch Philotheos of Constantinople and then to Archbishop Veliki Kalika of Novgorod. Regarding the tale, it has also been argued, and in this I would agree, that the white cowl in the story was symbolic of the entirety of the Greco-Roman heritage, bequeathed from Rome, then to Constantinople, and finally to Russia.

⁴³ Marxist historians, most notably Bukhrushin, have insisted that Christianity enabled the Varangian Rus' princes to consolidate their suzerainty over the local Slavic tribes as either a distinctly political and/or economic instrument. See S. V. Bakhrušin, 1937, "К вопросу о Крещении Киевской Руси," 58. See also D. Ostrowski, 1987, 456-460. Increasingly, non-Russian historians have taken this view as well. See for example W. K. Hanak, 1973, 18.

⁴⁴ See D. Obolensky, 1994, ch. III, "Russia's Byzantine Heritage," 75-107, specifically p. 79, concerning the "ideal of 'Holy Russia' in the sixteenth century," during which period this concept originated, importantly manifested in Muscovy specifically, as opposed to other Russian cities, such as Novgorod for example. For a further discussion on these early-modern-era conflicts between Russian cities and their efforts to undermine each other using chronicles and relics, often forged, see appendix II.

otherwise prefer to interpret it.⁴⁵ That is not to say that the Greek and Arabic sources of the period are not without their own historiographical tribulations.

The political inclinations of the Greek and Arabic historians covering the periods of the late tenth and into the early eleventh century are a major part of their given testimonies of the events during the era. While Leōn Diakonos portrays the misfortunes befalling the empire under young Basil II in comparison with the prosperous times of Nikēphoros II Phōkas,⁴⁶ both Psellos and Skylitzēs seek to portray the era of Basil II highly differently in comparison with their contemporary misfortunes of the later eleventh century. The political sympathies of Yaḥyā of Antioch are also finitely reliable as a contemporary inhabitant of Antioch, whose known rebellious propensity was demonstrated even after the downfall of Bardas Phōkas after the battle of Abydos in

⁴⁵ V. R. Rozen, 219. He claims that the account of Vladimir's conversion given in the *PVL* is largely reliable and historically accurate:

Я вообще должен сознаться, что я отдаю предпочтение именно летописному сказанию пред всеми другими русскими источниками. Мне кажется, что летопись, в изложении общагу хода дела и во многих частностях весьма близка к истине и изобилует чрезвычайно меткими штрихами. нужно только читать между строк, т.е. во первых отбросить чисто легендарныя черты, как напр. чудесное исцеление Владимира, и затем постоянно иметь в виду тенденциозную подкладку рассказа. Последнею объясняется напр. превращение политического греческого посольства в миссионерское и русского союзного отряда в посольство 10 добрых и смышленных мужей для испытания веры. Я даже склонен итти еще дальше и в рассказе о прибытии болгарских послов веры магометовой видеть смешение камских болгар с дунайскими, а самое прибытие болгарских послов считать весьма вероятным: Самуил мог искать союза с Владимиром против Византии именно около 987 года, и результатом этого болгарского посольства могли быть враждебныя отношения русов к Василию, которыя отмечает Яхя. Короче, прибытие двух иностранных посольств, одного за другим, послужило первым поводом к образованию всего сказания о предложении и выборе веры.

I have translated this as:

I do have to admit that I give preference to the legend of the Chronicle before all other Russian sources. It seems to me that the record, as presented by the common progress of the case, and in many particulars, is quite close to the truth and full of extremely well-aimed strokes. One need only to read between the lines, i.e., firstly, discard the purely legendary material, as for example, the miraculous healing of Vladimir, and then always bear in mind a tendentious story lining. The latter explains much, for example: the political transformation of the policy of the Greek Embassy as a mission and the Russian Union's sending of a unit of ten good and clever men to test the faith.

Indeed Zernov regards the *PVL* account as essentially a believable, if biased, testimony of the events of 986-989. See also Zernov, 1949, 126-127. In much the same regard, W. Van den Bercken, 1996, expresses the same erroneous estimation of the *PVL*'s historical accuracy when it comes to the conversion, see p. 264-265.

⁴⁶ A. Poppe, 1976, 212-217. Leōn Diakonos had always favored Nikēphoros II Phōkas compared to Basil II and indeed he was not the only historian of the time to do so, as poems left by Skylitzēs and Kedrēnos attest to similar bleak outlooks on the times, as Poppe asserts, due to their perceptions of the failed foreign and domestic policies of Basil II's early reign.

989.⁴⁷ The political implications of a rebellion in the tenth and eleventh centuries of the magnitude of those conceived by both Bardas Sklēros in the later 970s and that of Bardas Phōkas in the later 980s would have touched upon every facet of the Byzantine world. And while not every rebellious element in the Byzantine world would have specifically sided politically with either usurper, the more rebellious tendencies of particular cities, such as Chersōn, would have had ample opportunity to assert some form of independence. The courts and court historians of Constantinopolitan emperors would have been focused on the usurping armies rather than smaller rebellions of cities such as Chersōn. Therefore, we must not forget that the historians who would portray these struggles were those of the imperial courts as opposed to provincial historians such as Yaḥyā of Antioch. Moreover, their lack of inclusion of the conversion of Vladimir along with the capture of Chersōn was intentional.⁴⁸ However, the intentionality or non-intentionality of including the marriage, conversion and capture of Chersōn in their histories reflects both a possible ignorance due to the removal of these otherwise secluded court historians, from both the time and place of the events they purport, and their implications that the Christianization of Rus' had already taken place during the time of Phōtios in the 860s.⁴⁹ That being said, this is not to say that these textual sources are necessarily ashamed of the marriage either, though some historians have argued this.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, it must also be noted that these historians, being upstanding

⁴⁷ Specifically, Antioch had sided with Phōkas during the civil war from 986-989, and his son Leo Phōkas remained encamped in Antioch until 3 November, 989, supported by Muslims and Armenians, at which time he surrendered to imperial forces. See J. H. Forsyth, 1977, 464 in an English summary as well as a more literal translation into French: I. Kratchkovsky & A. Vasiliev, 1932, 417-431. See also V. R. Rozen, 1883, 23-41. For a further interpretation of this episode and for the usefulness of the history of Yaḥyā of Antioch, written about the end of the first quarter of the XI cent., see A. Poppe, 2007 "How the Conversion of Rus' was Understood in the Eleventh Century," article III, 291.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 287. Although it should also be noted that basing arguments, especially those such as W. Van den Bercken's "Unique Missiological Story," 1996, (p. 281-284) and N. Zernov's arguments for the autocephaly of the early Kievan Church on supposed "deliberate omissions" within the primary sources do not by any means constitute convincing theories. A theory based primarily on silence is never a convincing one. See S. H. Cross & O. P. Shebowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, n171 p. 260. Obolensky contends, regarding the otherwise "mysterious silence" of the sources, that more often than not, "can...be explained more satisfactorily if we suppose that [the chronicler] was ignorant of the facts, rather than that he took part in a conspiracy to suppress them." D. Obolensky, 1994, 223. Here I would cautiously agree with Obolensky.

⁴⁹ K. Ericsson, 1966, "The Earliest Conversion of the Rus' to Christianity," 98. See also G. P. Majeska, "Patriarch Photios and the Conversion of the Rus'," 2005, 413-418. For a further extrapolation on earlier, late ninth and tenth century Byzantine attempts, successful and otherwise, at converting the Rus' see below section 2.4.

⁵⁰ Notably W. Van den Bercken, 1996, 281.

Christian Constantinopolitans, still continued to feel threatened by the Kievan Rus' at the time of conversion, thus reflective of the historical memories of the original 860 invasion, continuing throughout the internecine tenth century wars, up to the contemporary time of Basil II and even, in the cases of Psellos and Skylitzēs after this time even through the Byzantine-Rus' war of 1043.⁵¹ In effect, the Kievan Rus' had always exerted a menacing image among the Byzantine court circles of the ninth through the eleventh centuries, but the dealings of the emperors were not necessarily in line with the perceptions of their court historians.⁵²

The archaeological material used in this research is a combination of sigillographic, epigraphic, numismatic and ceramic evidence, drawn from a number of sources, mostly based on the continuing excavations of Chersōn, begun by Russian authorities in 1827, throughout the late Russian imperial era, and into the Soviet and Ukrainian national eras. In the past roughly two decades, excavations have also been carried out by J. C. Carter and A. Rabinowitz, both from the USA. Most notably this

⁵¹ V. R. Rozen, 1883, 215.

Взя-же Корсуня получало особенную важность потому, что совершенно по видимому неожиданно показало врага, и при том врага далеко не маловажного, там где только недавно был союзник. Возобновление военных действий со стороны русскаго князя должно было вызвать опасение, что скоро опять появятся русския суда пред Константинополем, что русский князь соединиться с болгарями, и наконец могло вызвать и волнение среди русскаго вспомогательнаго корпуса.

I have translated this as:

The capture of Chersōn also received special importance because apparently quite suddenly it revealed another enemy and that this enemy was far from unimportant, which had only recently been ally. The resumption of hostilities on the part of the Russian Prince would have raised fears that the Russian fleet would soon appear again before Constantinople and that the Russian Prince would unite with the Bulgarians and finally this could trigger unrest along the Russian among the Russian auxiliary corps.

⁵² For example, the case of Psellos' mention of the Byzantine-Rus' war of 1043: Sathas, 1899, 129-146 (XC-CXXIV). “Το βάρβαρον τουγαροῦν τοῦτο φύλον ἐπὶ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν τὸν πάντα χρόνον λυττᾷ τε καὶ μέμνηε, καὶ ἐφ' ἑκάστῳ τῶν καιρῶν τοῦτο ἢ ἐκεῖνο εἰς αἰτίαν πλαττόμενοι, πρόφασιν καθ' ἡμῶν πολέμου πεποίηται.” (XCI lines 12-15). Translated by Sewter as: “This barbarian nation had consistently cherished an insane hatred for the Roman Empire, and on every possible occasion, first on one imaginary pretext, then on another, they waged war against us.” For another example of Constantinopolitan fears of the city's eventual fall to the Rus' still in the late tenth century, see J. Shepard, 2008, 504.

In the *PVL*, Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, likewise, note other Byzantine sources as well as Psellos, who they specifically describe as attributing “it to a longstanding Russian resentment against the Byzantines which was checked by a wholesome respect for Basil II as long as he was alive, but was translated into military preparations as soon as the decline in Imperial prestige after his death became evident, especially during the reigns of Michael IV and Michael V (1034-1042).” They mention M. D. Prisēlkov, 1913, 92, and his theory that the aforementioned Byzantine-Rus' war of 1043 was based on then newborn Kievan Church resenting Greek “pretensions” within the Kievan metropolitanate in 1037. See S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 261, n175. See also A. Poppe, 2007, article III, 288.

material includes the seminal catalog of Yashaeva, Denisova et al: *The Legacy of Byzantine Cherson* as well as Carter's own introductory work on both the history and archaeology of the site from the Classical period up to the later middle ages. In addition to these seminal works, I have also depended heavily on R. Sharp's 2011 doctoral dissertation, *The Outside Image* as well as J. R. Smedley's 1985 dissertation *Byzantium, the Crimea and the Steppe, 550-750*, especially concerning Soviet archaeological approaches to the Black Sea littoral primarily during the iconoclast periods.⁵³

Additionally, I have included sections specifically concerning sigillographic material particularly with respect to bureaucratic positions within the imperial thematic hierarchy in Chersōn during the middle Byzantine period. In this regard, I have relied on the lead seals published by Oikonomides, Alekséenko, Sokolova and Iordanov, who have also made crucial contributions to the present study. Conversely, the Russian literature regarding the excavations is nearly limitless. I have relied generally on that which concerns the period of the late tenth century. The most notable authors I have utilized in Russian on the archaeology of Chersōn, both on land and underwater include Antonova, Babinov, Nazarov, Pletneva, Sedikova, Anokhin and Ioannisyan.

These archaeological works will mostly serve to inform my research into the land-based archaeologies of Chersōn, with the exception of Nazarov's hydro-archaeological survey of the waters off Chersōn. In addition to Nazarov, I have also included the underwater archaeological reports of Robert Ballard's team, specifically prof. Dan Davis of Luther College and his colleague Dr. Andrei Opait who have been generous in their correspondence with me. Dr. Davis, who also worked with A. Rabinowitz at the Chersōn excavations was present at the preliminary excavation of a middle-Byzantine shipwreck off the southwestern Crimean coastline in 2007, importantly salvaging two single-

⁵³ Archaeology, particularly the contrast between the material goods characterizing ruling classes as opposed to non-ruling classes, when infused with Marxist thought lends itself especially well to the analysis of excavated material culture. This concept, according to J. Smedley, has characterized much of Soviet-era archaeological literature and excavation. The older Soviet archaeological approach, while the discussion of Marxist archaeology in comparison with what A. M. Snodgrass has termed "the New Archaeology" has remained largely unevaluated, does correspond remarkably easily to the structural basis of the New Archaeology due to both interpretative schools' de-emphasis on conventional, narrative history. Nevertheless, these two distinct schools of archaeology share only this single feature. J. R. Smedley, 1985, 15-25. See also A. M. Snodgrass, 1985, 31-37 & ibidem, 1991, 57-72. For a discourse on the historiography of the Soviet era, specifically concerning Christianization, see D. Ostrowski, "The Christianization of Rus' in Soviet Historiography: Attitudes and Interpretations (1920-1960)," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, vol. 11, 1987.

handled jugs, thus providing critical information on the nature of Chersōnite Black Sea trade in the middle Byzantine period. By combining a modest collection of archaeological literature in Russian with that of English, the present research seeks to assemble a logical picture based on the available material culture both within and without Chersōn and both in a Crimean and a larger Black Sea commercial context. In this way, we will secure a clearer understanding of the wider circumstances, culturally and commercially, for Vladimir's conversion.

1.6 Format

I have divided my entire presentation into two broad parts, the first of which will primarily discuss the relevant textual evidence for my thesis while the second will be principally concerned with non-textual and archaeological evidence. Within this broad framework, the first chapter will detail at first a rather brief survey of Chersōn from the turn of the eighth century, (roughly from Justinian II) to the late tenth century. The next section will highlight the two most important and most recent works concerning the revision of the aforementioned "Korsun' Legend;" they are the respective studies from 1976 and 1989 by Andrzej Poppe and Dimitri Obolensky. So far, no current scholar has defended Poppe's reconsideration of the baptism of Vladimir I of Kiev from Obolensky's refutation thirteen years later, but I will attempt a further refutation of Obolensky's hypothesis. The third section will introduce and survey the linguistic and cultural devices used to promote a specific agenda contained in the *PVL* excerpt regarding the "Korsun' Legend." The fourth section will supply a close examination of this passage, with particular regard for the latest scholarship on the topic, which is provided by D. Ostrowski. Finally, the last section in part one will discuss the influences which the author of the "Korsun' Legend" within the *PVL* was swayed by, predominantly in regards to Bulgarian translations and original literature from earlier in the tenth and also late ninth centuries up to 989. This section will also be heavily involved in drawing parallels between contemporary Byzantine hagiographic traditions as well as with Old Testament precedents, roughly considered as encompassing the concurrent "*Paleya*" by modern scholars. The completion of this division should provide the reader with a sufficient grasp of the relevant, primary and most recent secondary literatures regarding this topic

to understand the implications of the relevant and contemporaneous archaeological evidence.

The archaeological support will in turn be separated into smaller sections based on their relevance to economic and non-economic inquiries. Some of the economic significance will be illustrated by ceramic findings both within Chersōn and also Kiev, such as the presence and meaning of white clay cups, wine consumption and relevant imported amphorae, both from mainland Anatolia and Constantinople to Chersōn and from Chersōn to Kiev. There will also be a lengthy discussion of the pertinent monetary finds, most notably within a specifically Chersōnite context and in a wider Byzantine context, once again clearly overlapping with Kievan Rus', unquestionably by the late tenth century and surely long before. Furthermore, I will confer applicable details of the background of the Chersōnite economy by the late tenth and her relations with Kiev and certainly with her sister cities on the Pontic coastline such as Amastris, Sinopē, Herakleia, Amisos and most importantly Trebizond, as well as the monumental importance of trading between Chersōn and Tmutarakan', particularly in chapter III, but also in appendix I. This will largely involve the 2007 excavation of the shipwreck "Chersonesos A," discovered by Robert Ballard and his team, leading to a partial excavation, just off the southern Crimean coastline, not far from Chersōn. In addition, I will provide an analysis of the literature regarding Chersōnite sigillography of the late tenth century. Finally, there will be a section devoted to specifically ecclesiastical findings such as Jewish epigraphy and other evidence of the internal divisions, both class-based and religiously-based within Chersōnite society of the late tenth century. In this section, I will discuss a very relevant and recent amount of archaeological literature pertaining to the actual site of Chersōn in an economic and non-economic way. This should serve to reveal the circumstances of Chersōn within her own walls and also the place of Chersōn both within a Byzantine context, a Black Sea commercial context, and a Kievan Rus' context in the late tenth century.

By relying on archaeological evidence to construct a model of the city in the middle-Byzantine period, this research will attempt to use such a model to reconstruct the social and economic factors both within and outside Chersōn during the Phōkas rebellion and Vladimir's capture of the city in 989. This model will enable us to rethink the

positions and arguments of preceding historians concerning the legendary nature surrounding Vladimir's capture of Chersōn in 989.

II 2.1 *The Historical background of Chersōn from the turn of the 8th c.*

In order to appreciate Chersōn's persistent detachment from imperial authority in the middle Byzantine period specifically, ultimately culminating in her siding in the Phōkas rebellion and Vladimir's capture of the city in 989, it is necessary to understand how this isolation came about during and after the reign of Justinian II. Chersōn had always harbored rebellious sympathies, most notably since the time of Justinian II. The chronicle of Theophanēs explicitly states how Chersōn not only turned away from Constantinople to look after her own defenses upon Justinian II's brutal revenge on the citizens of the city, but nominated her own usurper, the Armenian Bardanēs Philippikos,⁵⁴ to ensure the death of Justinian II and the allowance of the city to drift under Khazar suzerainty throughout the eighth and early ninth centuries.⁵⁵ I will not address the issue of iconodule monks fleeing imperial forces for the Crimea⁵⁶ and greatly adding to the rebellious element therein, however the response of Chersōn toward the twenty years of anarchy followed by the iconoclasms is proof enough of the city's autonomous nature essentially from 711 until the reinstatement of imperial control over

⁵⁴ Philippikos, though an Armenian and both sent from and appointed by Chersōn to usurp the throne from Justinian II and to assassinate him in Chersōn's vengeance of the horrors he committed against the city, was in fact originally from Pergamon.

⁵⁵ While the "Toudoun," whom Theophanes records as being the Khazar Khagan's representative as well as governor of the city, appears in the early eighth century at the time of Justinian II's revenge on the city, it remains unclear how detached the city remained during this time from the Khazars as well. *Theophanes*, ed. de Boor, 377-379 & C. Mango & R. Scott, *Theophanes*, 1997, 527-531. See also J. C. Carter, 2003, 33-35 & R. Sharp, n754, p. 211. See G. Dagron, 2002, 406 for an economic analysis of the episode. It was at this time in the early eighth century when the Khazar Khaganate reached an early territorial extent both into the Crimea and the Pontic area as well as to the Dniepr steppe. For textual evidence of the Khazars' ninth-century dominance over the Dniepr steppe, see S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 60. For the reciprocal archaeological evidence, see A. Aibabin, 2006, 60 & A. Aibabin, 2005, 421. It is important to note here that it was due to Chersōn's distance and maintenance of autonomy from both Khazaria and Byzantium during the later eighth and early ninth centuries which marked the city as one of "preserving a 'fossilized' form of late antique local government:" J. R. Smedley, 1985, 173. Although it is certainly a fallacy to assume that Chersōn was always totally separated from Khazar control during the late seventh and early eighth century: see A. Aibabin, 2005, 421. On Chersōn's maintenance of autonomy and self-government, see D. Obolensky, 1971, 50. For a further analysis of the account given by Theophanēs, see A. Vasiliev, 1936, 81-87.

⁵⁶ A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 661. This is in particular regarding iconodule and iconoclast hagiographical propaganda. See the literary analysis of the *vita* of Stephen the Younger by M. F. Auzépy, 1999, and the discussion of the hagiography's historical reliability in L. Brubaker & J. Haldon, 2011, 300-302, as well as L. Brubaker & J. Haldon, 2001, 226-227. Although the notion of Iconodules fleeing to Chersōn to escape imperial persecution in the eighth century has remained to some extent in modern scholarship. See for example A. P. Kazdan, 1991, vol. 1, 418-419.

the city following Petrōnas Kamatēros' installation as *stratēgos* in 841 by Theophilos.⁵⁷ During the iconoclasms, Chersōn, along with the entire Crimean peninsula, remained somewhat loosely within the Khazar political orbit, still maintaining a degree of autonomy.⁵⁸ The political autonomy that Chersōn had enjoyed from the eighth to the mid-ninth century was largely exercised by a *prōtevōn*, or primate,⁵⁹ along with the city's local notable families, who, after 841, continued to exert a powerful influence over the city's affairs alongside the imperially appointed *stratēgos*, undoubtedly creating a frictional relationship within the city between locally appointed *prōteventes*, themselves the products of local elite Chersōnite families, and the imperial *stratēgoi*.⁶⁰ However, upon the reinstatement of imperial authority by means of the *stratēgos*, Kamatēros, from

⁵⁷ As the precise dating of the creation of the *thema tōn Klimatōn* is still disputed, I would cautiously agree with C. Zuckerman in his argument against W. Treadgold regarding the dating of Kamatēros' return from his expedition to Khazaria and building of the fortress at Sarkel in 841 instead of 839. Treadgold does not take into account the distance and length of time it would have taken to travel from Amastris to Chersōn and Khazaria and back. See C. Zuckerman, 1997, 210-222. Treadgold believes that the Rus' were already a threat on the Black Sea at this time in the mid-ninth century, which he regards as the reason Kamatēros recommended to Theophilos the elevation of Chersōn and the *Klimata* to thematic status from an archontate, as well as the Khazars' asking for Byzantine assistance in provided the necessary architecture and construction. It must also be noted that the reason for the construction of Sarkel is under dispute as well. Schorkowitz believes that it was built by Petrōnas on behalf of the Khazars to defend against Magyars. See D. Schorkowitz, 85. Many other scholars believe it was meant for Khazarian defense against the Rus'. See also W. Treadgold, 314-315 & A. Aibabin, 2005, 423 for his reasoning for Theophilos' decision to create the *thema tōn Klimatōn*. However it should also be noted that, according to R. Sharp, 2011, 114, the *thema tōn Klimatōn* was restructured and renamed in 849 to specifically that of Chersōn. Remarkably, V. A. Anokhin, 1980, 102, believes that Petrōnas Kamatēros, the *spatharokandidatos* was none other than the Petrōnas the *patrikios* mentioned by Theophanēs, brother of the empress Theodōra and executioner of Theophobos, the unwilling leader of the Khurramite rebellion of 838. (See A. P. Kazdan, 1991, vol. 3, 1644-1645.) While I have come across no other scholar who holds the view that they are in fact the same person, this supposition seems reasonable, yet a conjecture nonetheless, although as yet, as far as I know, it still unproven definitively either way. For the differences of the empire, including Chersōn from the eighth to the ninth century, see figures vi & vii.

⁵⁸ C. Zuckerman, 1997, 215-222. According to S. Runciman, 1929, 119, even in the first half of tenth century, it was still "only treated as a vassal state and [was] sent a *κέλευσις*." He goes on to remark about about the city's political nature in the first half of the tenth century under Rōmanos I Lakapēnos, "Chersōn, enjoying as it did the traditions of an old Greek municipality unspoiled by Rome, was restive under imperial control, and was fitfully rebellious."

⁵⁹ Significantly, Wortley, in translating Skylitzēs, had translated the word as *the prince of Cherson*. See n71, p. 265.

⁶⁰ Though the distinction between the imperial nomenclature of the *thema* as either *tu Chersōnos* or *tōn Klimatōn* is noteworthy, it makes little difference in the nature of the relationships between local and imperial governing structures in the later ninth and tenth centuries. This is not to suggest that the *stratēgos* of Chersōn (after 849) or the *Klimata* (between 841 and 849) were always or usually pitted against one another. We know from the sigillographic evidence that quite frequently they were also the same person. See E. Stepanova & A. Farbej, 303-306, who have published two seals of *archontes* of Chersōn: *spatharokandidatos* and *stratēgos tōn Klimatōn Chersōnos* from the IX c. See also J-C. Cheynet & C. Sode, *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography 10*, 2010, 147 as well as a further explanation of this topic in section 3.3 below.

Paphlagonia, Chersōn was again brought closer to the empire; the significance of Paphlagonia, specifically Amastris, is her exertion of a considerable influence on especially the Chersōnite *stratēgoi* throughout the later ninth and tenth centuries.⁶¹

Indeed it is difficult to overestimate the Chersōnite cultural and commercial ties to the cities of the Pontus, most notably Amastris, Amisos, Sinopē, Herakleia and Trebizond. The commercial volume of the middle Byzantine Black Sea trade network grew considerably in the early ninth century with Theophilos' creation of three specifically Black Sea oriented *themata*, each with a respective *stratēgos* and additional detachment of 2000 Khurramite soldiers.⁶² We know from the *DAI* that Chersōn

⁶¹ Indeed Paphlagonian commercial, naval and cultural influence over Chersōn is reflected all the way into the eleventh century: Kalokyrēs, the name of the *prōtevontes* family from which the man by that name emerges in the narrative of Leōn Diakonos, (IV:6 & V:1 see also Wortley, *Skylitzes*, 265, who translates the Chersōnite title *πρωτεύων* as *prince of Cherson*, n57 above) has been proven to be descendant from Paphlagonia originally. See S. Vryonis, 1971, n132, p. 25. We will discuss more about the family of Kalokyrēs in section 3.5 below as it relates to the Russian invasion of Bulgaria under Sviatoslav in 971 and the commander of the Phōkas rebellion of the same name mentioned by Leōn Diakonos (X:9). Nevertheless, for the present purposes, we recognize the continuous nature of close commercial and cultural contacts between Amastris and Chersōn throughout the Christian era. See L. Brubaker & J. Haldon, 2011, 504, 520. See also J. Crow & S. Hill, 261 as well as L. Zavagno, 137. Zavagno insists that regarding the narrative of Kamatēros in the *DAI* (42: 25-54), “The episode suggests once again the close and mutual relationship intercurring between Crimea and Paphlagonia, a relationship which seemed to have political and military overtones, aside from its commercial significance.” By the mid-tenth century, Paphlagonia's continuing intimacy with Chersōn had taken on the features of the imperial grip that sought to maintain Constantinopolitan authority over Amastris itself. The *DAI* makes clear that all *stratēgoi* of Chersōn from the first creation of the *thema*, “...ἐξ οὗ καὶ μέχρι τὴν σήμερον ἐπεκράτησεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐντεῦθεν εἰς Χερσῶνα προβάλλεσθαι στρατηγούς.” (*DAI*, 42:51-54). Therefore, while Amastris was much closer to the imperial capital, tensions between the ruling class of Chersōn and the imperially appointed *stratēgoi* from Amastris would have reinforced a greater desire of the Chersōnites in the later tenth century to assert their independence from imperially appointed Amastrian officials. For a further explanation of the economy and politics of Amastris in relation to Chersōn, see appendix I. The significance of Paphlagonia to Chersōn and Crimean trading contacts with Pontic cities is further reinforced by the evidence, found in an undated seal, referring to Chersōnite landownership somewhere near Sinopē: clearly, the commercial and cultural links between Chersōn and the mainland Pontic cities was as intimate as it was interdependent. See A. Bryer and D. Winfield, 1985, 74-75 & below sections 3.2-3.3.

⁶² See appendix I. Before the imperial reorganization of the *Klimata* in 841, an archontate such as Chersōn would have been defended by no more than 100 soldiers, usually from local levies. See W. Treadgold, 17. Although after thematization in 841, it is also important to note that the rebellious Khurramite “Persian Company” under Theophobos was dispersed across a range of the newly created thematic capitals including Chersōn and Trebizond and Paphlagonia, either in Amastris or Gangra, by Theophilos in 842. See p. 353 and n434 on p. 448. This would undoubtedly have contributed to persistently rebellious elements in the respective militaries of these *themata*, all of which were located in Anatolia with the exception of the older, mother *themata* of Thrace and Macedonia. Even more significantly, according to Treadgold on the same page and on 352, these 2000 rebellious Khurramite soldiers, newly transferred to Chersōn were the only soldiers then serving as an imperial garrison in the city, as the first significant imperial military presence in Chersōn since before Justinian II. However, Treadgold qualifies his research with speculation that Theophilos would have been unlikely to risk dispatching “an undiluted force of Persians to such remote spots where rebellion would be easy.” (p. 317) Judging from the frequency of

functioned largely as a middle point between the Khazars, the Rus' and the Pontic cities,⁶³ exporting low value coinage,⁶⁴ silks,⁶⁵ oil, wine,⁶⁶ fine ceramics⁶⁷ and other quality goods, mostly to the Rus' and Khazars, as well as a prosperous salt fish enterprise,⁶⁸ which was largely exported to the Pontic cities. In turn, Chersōn imported

Chersōnite supported or generated revolts in the following two centuries after thematization, either this "dilution" was inconsequential or it did not take place in the case of Chersōn. For Treadgold's envisioning of the dilution of the Khurramite company throughout the provinces of Byzantium and the approximate post-thematization size of the military forces which he speculates would have been stationed in Chersōn, see figure viii. It was also at this time that the mint of Chersōn was reopened and began to recast coinage. See J. C. Carter, 178 and 35. Significantly, the renewed production of coinage featuring the initials ΠΧ for Πρωτεύων τοῦ Χερσῶνος not only lends itself to a distinctly local allegiance but would continue throughout the tenth century until Basil II ordered it to be discontinued after the city's sack by Vladimir I in 989. See M. Hendy, "On the Administrative Basis of the Byzantine Coinage c. 400-900 & the Reforms of Heraclius," article VIII, in *The Economy, Fiscal Administration, & Coinage of Byzantium*, 1989, 146. For the precise meaning of "Π-X," see V. A. Anokhin, 1980, 117. For a further discussion of the contemporary Chersōnite coinage, see below section 3.3.

⁶³ Indeed Chersōn was effectively the centerpiece of the middle-Byzantine Black Sea commercial network, functioning as both as an instrument of Byzantine northern policy as a center naval, fishing, trading and evangelism as well as frequent obstacle for Byzantine relations with Khazars, Pechenegs and Rus' throughout the late ninth and tenth centuries; (for a further explanation of the economy of the Black Sea and the remoteness of political and economic autonomy enjoyed by Chersōn, see appendix I). The respective churchmen of Chersōn as well as many Byzantine port cities' merchant classes' depended on their respective clergies for the patronization of commerce. The link between the economy and church of the middle Byzantine episcopal *kastron* is an important element as it ties together these otherwise disparate aspects of the urbanity of the city, differentiating it from a non-episcopal *kastron*, a mere *emporion*. Even monastic ships sailing to the capital were assumed to have been engaged in trade during the middle Byzantine era, and so were subject to imperial tolls like any other ship, foreign or domestic. See M. McCormick, 205, 406. For the role of Byzantine Black Sea trade and monetization during the period in question as it relates to both Constantinopolitan and pan-Eastern Mediterranean long distance trade, see N. Oikonomides, 2004, articles VIII, XII, XIII & XVII.

⁶⁴ T. S. Noonan, 1987, 397-399. Although according to Noonan, Byzantine and Chersōnite coins found in Kiev and other Rus' towns were brought and hoarded more as souvenirs than evidence of actual trading, Noonan is confident that most Byzantine-Rus' trading taking place during the ninth and tenth centuries between Chersōn and Kiev was done more often by barter rather than by monetized exchange.

⁶⁵ *DAI* (53:523-535)

⁶⁶ We know from archaeological sources that the *Chora* of Chersōn, encompassing most of the Heraclian peninsula, was specialized in viticulture production since pre-Christian times. See A. Aibabin, 2005, 415-424. For the importation of wine into Kiev from Chersōn and other Byzantine Black Sea trading cities, see also T. S. Noonan & R. K. Kovalev, 2007, 78. For excavated material relating to wine presses as well as grain silos and mills, see I. A. Baranov, 1986, 237.

⁶⁷ V. Zalesskaya, 1986, 215-224.

⁶⁸ The economic importance of fishing for Chersōn and the exportation of salt fish is so significant, the city's salt fishing industries are preserved in archaeological records. See A. I. Romančuk, 1977, 24. See also A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 2002, 659-665 & figure ix. Fishing was a monumentally important occupation for many townspeople as an export but also as a fundamental means of nourishment, as archaeological analysis of human remains has revealed. (A. Rabinowitz, et. al., 2011, 469.) Indeed salt fish was itself only half of the export, as Chersōn also exported salt purely as a raw material, principally to Trebizond, (see A. Bryer & D. Winfield, 1985, 5, n22) but also to other Pontic cities. Indeed not only was salt itself a highly demanded commodity in the empire at the time, but a system for exchange had been arranged between Chersōn and the Pechenegs in the late tenth century by which the empire could stabilize to some extent the political conditions of the steppes through economic exchange. (P. Stephenson, 2000,

large amounts of grain,⁶⁹ textiles from the Pontus as well as slaves, wax, honey, usually from the Rus'.⁷⁰ By the second half of the tenth century, there were communities of foreign merchants living in Chersōn, most notably in the wealthier sectors of the city, specifically Armenians, Jews, Rus' as well as others.⁷¹ The class differences in Chersōn have been noted to be starker than other middle Byzantine episcopal *kastra* as various ethnic identities and social classes lived separately in the medieval city.⁷² As the Khazar domination of the Pontic-Caspian steppe faded in the third quarter of the tenth century⁷³ however, it has been argued that the advice given in the *DAI* reflected the changing political realities of the northern Pontic littoral in regard to Chersōn as successive emperors sought both to maintain authority over the city⁷⁴ and also to ensure her loyalty, a balance not easily preserved.

In the remaining decades of the tenth century up to 989, Chersōn increasingly played the role less of loyal Byzantine vassal⁷⁵ than that of rebel, its elites and imperial

45 & 47.) We also know from the *PVL* that the Byzantine emperors of the tenth century repeatedly protected the industry for Chersōn from depredations by the Rus'. (S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 76.)

⁶⁹ The chronic grain shortages of Chersōn throughout antiquity and the early and middle Byzantine periods are well known to most Byzantinists as pope Martin I's letters from his exile in Chersōn complain of just this issue. (See O. R. Borodin, 1991, 173-190.) In fact, archaeological excavations have brought to light commercial laws, which had been in place since the pre-Christian era to protect the grain supply of Chersōn including bans on grain exports. See A. Gavrilenko, 2010, 120.

⁷⁰ *DAI*. Also to note is the continued importance of the city to imperial access to Tmutarakan's naphtha wells, vital for the supply and imperial monopoly over Greek Fire. See F. Dvornik, 1962, 208. More will be discussed about the significance of Tmutarakan' later. See also S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 83.

⁷¹ A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 659, 664.

⁷² C. Bouras, 2002, 523. He also cites A. Bortoli and M. Kazanski, whose work I have already referenced frequently.

⁷³ In reality, it had been "waning" since the time of Michael III. See F. E. Wozniak, 1979, 120.

⁷⁴ And especially the easily imported naphtha from Tmutarakan' that control over Chersōn would have ensured. *DAI*, 53:493-494. Indeed many passages in the *DAI* confirm an imperial reluctance to trust Chersōnite citizens and their local leaders. Most notably, see 53:482-484 & 42:41-44. For a further dimension on Rus' and Byzantine relations in the Straits of Kerch regarding the naphtha, see J. Shepard, 2006, 26-27.

⁷⁵ For the another use of the term "vassal" to refer to the imperial relationship with Chersōn, see S. Runciman, 1929, 119. Runciman reaches his conclusion that Chersōn was more a "vassal state" of Byzantium than a provincial city in his discussion regarding the Chersōnites' reporting on the movements of the Rus' as they had in 944 before Igor's fictional second attack on Constantinople. S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 72 & n50. However, it can be easily inferred here that when Chersōn did act on behalf of the empire, it was due to the loyalty of the city's Paphlagonian officials instead of the local elites, i.e. meaning a difference in the city's policy between that of the *prōtevōn* and the *stratēgos*. Although, as has already been noted, the families of the local Chersōnite elites (*πατέρες τῆς πόλεως*; see R. Sharp, 2011, 246.), the *πρωτεύοντες* and the imperial officials appointed to govern the city's affairs were, by the second half of the tenth century, frequently intermarried and mixed. However, this did not stop

officials frequently displaying amplified autonomous behavior in the late tenth century, in what may be interpreted as the city's recalling and pursuit of her independence during the era between 711 and 841. Indeed in the 49 years between 967⁷⁶ and 1016,⁷⁷ no less than two acts of definitive rebellion against imperial authority are recorded on the part of Chersōnite elites and/or imperial officials aside from the major rebellions the *Sklēroi* and the *Phōkai* from the end of Tzimiskēs' reign, through the regency of Basil Lakapēnos and the beginnings of the reign of Basil II and Constantine VIII.

2.2 “Как Владимир Осаждал Корсунь”⁷⁸ or, *How Vladimir Besieged Chersōn*

In this section, I will seek to compare the two latest pieces of literature regarding the chronology of Vladimir's conversion, the fall of Chersōn to Vladimir, and his marriage to Anna Porphyrogenētē. I will defend, in part, Andrzej Poppe's 1976 thesis on the culpability of Chersōn as a city involved in the Anatolian rebellion during the second uprising of Bardas Phōkas the younger against the 1989 refutation of his thesis by Dimitri Obolensky. Obolensky and those who agree with his refutation of Poppe, have remained cordially yet staunchly opposed to Chersōn's either sympathy with or full-on participation in the rebellion and attempted usurpation by Bardas Phōkas between 986-

newer generations of imperial officials from displaying traditional Chersōnite tendencies for autonomy and separation from Constantinople. For an example, see the following note.

⁷⁶ According to Leōn Diakonos, in 967, 22 years before the fall of Chersōn to Vladimir I, a certain Kalokyrēs, son of the Chersōnite *prōtevōn* was raised to the rank of *patrikios* by Nikēphoros II and dispatched to bribe Sviatoslav to invade Bulgaria. See book IV:6, book V:1 & book VIII:5. For his Chersōnite identity, see Skylitzēs, 14:20, p. 265 in Wortley, (trans.). It would also be appropriate here to note that S. Runciman incorrectly attributes this event as Nikēphoros II Phōkas' "...wishing to divert the Russians from Chersōn, [he] induced them to join him in a war against Bulgaria." (S. Runciman, 1929, 98.) In fact, even though Runciman cites him, nowhere in the text of Leōn Diakonos does he state Chersōn's protection from the Russians as a cause of Phōkas' raising of Kalokyrēs to the rank of Patrikios and persuasion of the Rus' to attack the Bulgarians. It was this Kalokyrēs who attempted to rebel against Phōkas and, with Sviatoslav's assistance, to proclaim himself emperor. As Stephenson writes, "His defection would have been all the more worrying in that it threw into question the loyalty of the Chersonites, upon whom much of the empire's northern policy depended. Calocyras may even have assisted Svyatoslav in constructing a grand alliance of northern peoples." P. Stephenson, 2000, 48-49. For a lengthier discussion of the character and his possible relation to the Chersōnite rebellion in 987-989, see section 3.4 below.

⁷⁷ In 1016, the *Tzouloi* uprising involved Chersōn and many of the other Crimean *Klimata* (notably the Goths) which was crushed by a combined Byzantine-Rus' naval action, less than 30 years after Chersōn had been captured and burnt by Vladimir I. See J. C. Carter, 181 & A. A. Vasiliev, 1936, 134. For the change in the coinage of Chersōn in 1016, see V. A. Anokhin, 1980, 120. Importantly, D. Obolensky acknowledges this fact: 1989, n37, 255. For a further discussion on the matter of the Tzoulas rebellion in 1016 as it relates to the events of 987-989 in the Crimea, see below section 3.3.

⁷⁸ A. L. Berthier-Delagarde, 1909, “Как Владимир осаждал Корсунь,” in V. V. Halaev, 2011, 217-259. For an English summation of Delagarde's model of the siege of Chersōn, see V. Volkoff, *Vladimir the Russian Viking*, 1984, 202-226.

989, usually so as to emphasize Vladimir's—and therefore early Russia's—initiative and autonomy of Byzantine imperial power in this regard.⁷⁹ Little on the topic of Chersōn's precise role in Vladimir's conversion has been written thus far in the past quarter century between the studies and symposium proceedings of the millennium commemorations of the Christianization of Rus' in the late 1980s and today.⁸⁰ Importantly, the question of the reliability of the *PVL* narrative for Vladimir's capture of Chersōn still lingers. Obolensky, as the last scholar to offer an explanation of the topic, has preserved the *PVL* narrative, even while the website for the continuing excavations itself⁸¹ has agreed with Poppe. Notably the scholars who have agreed with the revisionist interpretation of the *PVL* narrative by Poppe are indeed much fewer⁸² than those supporting the anti-revisionist, “standard”⁸³ interpretation promoted by Obolensky.

⁷⁹ S. Franklin & J. Shepard, 1996, 14. This is not to imply that Franklin and Shepard are in complete agreement with Obolensky's “anti-revisionist view,” however they specifically defend the baptism as Vladimir's own initiative instead of that of Basil II. This claim, however, is also open to scrutiny. Indeed D. Ostrowski, 2006, 572, holds that the *PVL* account itself “does not ascribe to Volodimer the initiative for his own conversion.”

⁸⁰ With the exception of F. J. Thomson's compilation of articles: *The Reception of Byzantine Culture in Medieval Russia*, 1999, & A. Poppe's own compilation of articles: *Christian Russia in the Making*, 2007. Significantly, in none of these articles does Poppe defend his own 1976 thesis on the topic against Obolensky's 1989 refutation.

⁸¹ Importantly however, while Carter does implicitly support the anti-revisionist view, the website for the National Preserve itself, http://www.Chersonesos.org/?p=history_medi&l=eng, provided by the *Ministry of Culture of Ukraine*, also in league with his own *Institute of Classical Archaeology of the University of Texas at Austin* does agree with the revisionist view of Poppe. Significantly, J. C. Carter has this to say on the topic,

Basil, however, reneged on his promise, because Anna had been ‘born to the purple’ and could not marry a foreigner. Volodymyr seized Chersonesos and offered it as a gift for Anna's hand. Whether Volodymyr was baptized there or in Kyiv is a matter of intense local interest, though, in the wider scope of historical developments, the issue remains largely unimportant.

Surely such an oversimplified explanation, inherited from an equally dubious account in the *PVL* should not suffice our interpretation of either literary or archaeological evidence for the event, especially when Carter's own opinion on the matter differs significantly with that of the website for the site and excavations themselves, which he himself supervises. See J. C. Carter, 2003, 37.

⁸² D. Obolensky, 1989, lists them specifically, although not in total on p. 248: G. Podskalsky, 1982, 18, L. Müller, 1987, 109-111, V. Vodoff, 1988, 80 & M. Heppell, 1987, 252-253. E. H. Minns, who even in 1913, cautiously suggested what Poppe supposed and myself along with an increasing number of scholars now insist upon, that Chersōn had been siding with the Phōkas uprising in 987, thus inviting her destruction by Vladimir I on behalf of Basil II. See p. 537. See also M. S. J. Arranz, 1992, 75-93, who cautiously supports Poppe's interpretation from a methodological approach and H. R. E. Davidson, 1976, 152, who also cautiously supports Minns' suggestion. A more recent and specifically vigorous support for the revision of this episode is also provided by O. Pritsak, 1989, 11-19.

⁸³ D. Obolensky, 1989, 245. For those scholars supporting the interpretation based on a relatively reliable interpretation of the traditional *PVL* narration, writing after Obolensky's 1989 refutation of Poppe, see W. Seibt, 1992, 289-303, C. Raffensperger, 2012, 160-163, J. C. Carter, 2003, 37, W. Van den Bercken, 1996, 261-284 & I. Karayannopoulos, 1992, 67-69. For those supporting this interpretation writing before 1989,

To summarize both sets of arguments, in 1976, Poppe argued for a revision of the generally accepted scenario of Vladimir's baptism in 989 basing his revision on three arguments for Chersōn's involvement in the Phōkas rebellion and therefore the true reason for Vladimir's capture of the city instead of the conventional story of Byzantine duplicity. One case is based on revising the chronology of Vladimir's campaign against Chersōn, another on the economic ties of Chersōn to other Pontic cities such as Amastris, Sinopē and Trebizond, which were then involved in the rebellion, intentionally or not, and finally, Poppe's other principal case rests on disputing the precise nature of the Rus'-Byzantine treaty of 944. Obolensky, in 1989, attempted to refute these arguments piecemeal, presenting a cohesive scholarly work. As no researcher has yet done so, I will therefore defend Poppe's work and dispute Obolensky's arguments for an "anti-revisionist view."

Obolensky is correct to critically divide modern historians by their allegiances to either the "*Память и Похвала Иакова Мниха и Житие Князя Владимира по Древнейшему Списку*,"⁸⁴ which records that Vladimir I had already been baptized and converted three years before capturing Chersōn, or the traditional *PVL* narrative, which records that his capture of the city was his culminating achievement in the process of

see W. K. Hanak, 1973, 63-83, G. Ostrogorsky, 304, V. R. Rozen, 1883, 214-221, Florja & Litavrin, 1988, 185-199, V. Volkoff, 1984, 190-213, A. L. Berthier-Delagarde, 1909, 217-259 and N. Zernov, 1949, 123-138 & 1950, 425-438. Importantly, Franklin & Shepard, 1996, 159-162, decline to give an opinion on the matter between A. Poppe and D. Obolensky. See also C. Holmes, 2005, 510-515. In much the same regard, A. A. Vasiliev, 1936, 133-134, also declines to comment on the reliability of the *PVL* narrative and the precise purpose of Vladimir's campaign against Chersōn.

⁸⁴ This is the other major Russian source, dated to an earlier decade of the eleventh century, containing an entirely independent chronology from the *PVL*: see Poppe, 1976, 210 & ibidem, 2007, article III, 299-300, I would insert here that Ostrowski's version the Laurentian redaction of the *PVL*, stating: "Се же не съвѣвуще право, глаголють, яко кръстиль ся есть въ Киевѣ, инии же рѣша: въ Василевѣ, Друзии же инако съказаютъ. Кръщену же Володимиру, предаша ему вѣру хръстияньскую," (D. Ostrowski (comp. & ed.) & D. J. Birnbaum, *Повість временних Лѣт: Міжрядкове Співставлення і Парадосис*, том X, ч. 2, 2003, [111,24-111,27] 860-861), (translated by S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 113, as: "Those who do not know the truth say he was baptized in Kiev, while others assert this event took place in Vasil'ev, while others still mention other places."), certainly refers to, and attempts to refute, the more factual tradition preserved by the monk Iakov, long before the writing and compilation of the conventional *PVL* narrative and therefore much closer to the actual time of the events it conveys than the *PVL*. See D. Obolensky, 1989, 244-245, who by the way refers to the author in question as "James" instead of Iakov. For the source itself, see A. A. Zimin, "Память и похвала Яков мниха и Житие князя Владимира по древнейшему списку," 1963, 66-72. For an English translation, see P. Hollingsworth, 1992, 165-181.

Christianization.⁸⁵ Indeed, one might ask, how could a newly Christianized prince, recently initiated into the holy *οἰκουμένη*, if he is as zealously pious as the *PVL* would have us believe, make his first deed upon his baptism the conquest and destruction of a Christian city, that is, if Vladimir I was not already acting on behalf of Basil II instead of despite him?

As the basis of his argument against Poppe's chronology, he combines, as many other scholars already have,⁸⁶ the textual evidence given by Leōn Diakonos and Yahyā of Antioch. His argument rests on proving that because the city fell much later in 990 instead of 989 (as even the *PVL* insists), essentially, the later the deadline for the fall of Chersōn, the more likely this was due to the duplicity on the part of Basil II and the understandable displeasure of Vladimir I, having heard of the news of the death of Bardas Phōkas shortly after 13 April without the consequent news of the dispatch of Anna Porphyrogennētē. This is because if we, as do both scholars in question, as well as most other modern scholars, rely on the either six or nine-month-long siege proposed by Berthier-Delagarde,⁸⁷ knowing that the battle of Abydos and the corresponding death of Bardas Phōkas took place on 13 April 989,⁸⁸ then this would suggest that if the city fell earlier in 989, then Vladimir I had not known of the defeat and death of Phōkas on 13 April and therefore he had begun the siege before knowing the troops he had sent to fight against Phōkas had been victorious. This, in turn, would mean that the earlier Chersōn falls in 989, the more likely it is to have occurred because of the city's part in the Phōkas rebellion and due to Vladimir's acting on behalf of Basil II instead of despite him.

If we take Leōn Diakonos at his words in X:10:1,⁸⁹ which Talbot and Sullivan have translated as,

⁸⁵ Importantly, Vladimir's capture of Chersōn sufficiently demonstrates his own aggressive initiative and autonomy from Constantinople instead of being subject to conversion administered by Chersōnite clerics, which undoubtedly constitutes one foremost sticking points of the entire debate.

⁸⁶ V. R. Rozen, 1883, 215-217, for example.

⁸⁷ For a brief discussion of Delagarde's proposed six-to-nine-month siege, see n103 below.

⁸⁸ J. H. Forsyth, 1977, vol. 2, 440.

⁸⁹ Καὶ ἄλλα δὲ παγχάλεπα ἢ τοῦ φανέντος ἀστέρος παρεδήλου ἐπιτολή, καὶ οἱ παραδειχθέντες αὐθις πρὸς τὸ βόρειον μέρος ἄωρι τῶν νυκτῶν πύρινοι στύλοι, καὶ τοὺς ὀρῶντας ἐκδειματούμενοι. καὶ γὰρ καὶ οὗτοι τὴν τε συμβᾶσαν πρὸς τῶν Ταυροσκυθῶν τῆς Χερσῶνος ἄλωσιν παρεδήλουν, καὶ τὴν τῆς Βερρόιας κατάσχεσιν παρὰ τῶν Μυσῶν. ἔτι δὲ ὁ πρὸς δύσιν ἐπὶ καταφορὰν τοῦ φωσφόρου ἀνίσχων ἀστήρ, ὃς ἐσπερίουσ ποιούμενος τὰς ἐπιτολάς, οὐδένα στηριγμὸν ἐφ' ἐνὸς διεφύλαττε κέντρον, λαμπρὰς δὲ καὶ τηλαυγεῖς τὰς ἀκτῖνας ἐπαφιεῖς, μεταβάσεις ἐποιεῖτο συχνὰς, πῆ μὲν βορειότερος

Still other calamities were portended by the rising of the star that appeared and again by the fiery pillars that were manifested in the north in the middle of the night and terrified those who saw them; for these portended the capture of Cherson by the Tauroscythians and the occupation of Berrhoia by the Mysians. Then there was the star that rose in the west at sunset, which, as it made its evening appearances, did not remain fixed on one point, but emitted bright and far-reaching beams and frequently changed position, now visible in the north, now in the south; and sometimes during a single appearance it would change its place in the sky and make a clear and rapid shift in position, so that people who saw it were amazed and astonished and suspected that the peculiar movement of the comet did not bode well; and indeed this came to pass in accordance with the suspicions of many.⁹⁰

we are led to believe that the respective falls of both Verrhoia and Chersōn to the Bulgarians and Rus' respectively corresponded with the sighting of Halley's comet,⁹¹ which, as has been discussed by myriad scholars in the past century, both Russian and otherwise, is confirmed and dated by Yahyā of Antioch.⁹² Due to the definitive nature of the comet's sighting, which is also portrayed on the Bayeux Tapestry, depicting the Norman conquest of Anglo-Saxon Britain in 1066, it can be calculated to exactly 77 years prior, in 989, judging by Leōn Diakonos' recording of its peculiar behavior, which is also corroborated by modern astronomers. As for the pillars of fire and their dating, we cannot be sure whether this was an aurora borealis or something entirely different⁹³ but it

ὀρώμενος, πῆ δὲ νοτιώτερος, εἶτο συχνὰς, πῆ μὲν βορειώτερος ὀρώμενος, πῆ δὲ νοτιώτερος, ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν μίαν ἐπιτολὴν καὶ μεταμείβων τὸν αἰθέριον τόπον, καὶ ποιούμενος ἐναργῆ καὶ σύντομον τὴν μετάβασιν· ὡς θαυμάζειν τοὺς ὀρώντας καὶ καταπλήττεσθαι, καὶ οὐκ εἰς καλὸν τελευτήσῃν οἴεσθαι τὴν τοῦ κομήτου ἀλλόκοτον κίνησιν. ὃ δὲ καὶ συνέβαινε κατὰ τὴν τῶν πολλῶν ὑπόνοιαν. C. B. Hase, (ed.), 1828, *Leonis Diaconi Caloënsis Historiae Libri Decem*, 175, (chap. X:10:1).

⁹⁰ A-M. Talbot & D. F. Sullivan, 2005, 217.

⁹¹ Talbot & Sullivan, in their footnote on the same page (n94), specifically declare this as Halley's Comet, which most, if not all modern historians, both Russian and Western, can agree on. They cite V. Grumel, 1958, *la Chronologie*, 472 and D. J. Schove & A. Fletcher, 1987, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets AD 1-1000*, 297.

⁹² Kratchkovsky, I. & A. Vasiliev, 1932, "Yahyā of Antioch..." *Patrologia Orientalis*, 433.

⁹³ A. Poppe, 1976, 211-212, claims the "πύρινοι στόλοι" mentioned by Leōn Diakonos (n89 above) were in fact the same event as another phenomenon which Yahyā of Antioch describes (1932, 432-433), occurring between 7 April and 12 April, 989. If this hypothesis is true then that would mean Chersōn fell to Vladimir I even before the death of Bardas Phōkas. However, Obolensky cites a Soviet scholar, O. M. Rapov, who attempts to disprove Poppe's theory: according to Obolensky, "Yahyā's account bears no resemblance to a picture of *aurora borealis*: rather does it resemble the results of a volcanic eruption; a group of volcanoes extends over a part of Syria and Western Arabia; their eruption would have affected the inhabitants of Cairo, but could hardly have been visible in Byzantium." His conjecture, (1989, 250-251), by citing a Soviet scholar, (O. M. Rapov, 1984, 37), is hardly convincing for a number of reasons considering, firstly, there is at present absolutely no evidence in ice cores or in archaeological ash layers dating to the period in

makes little difference regardless. Though we do not know exactly when Verrhoia fell to the Bulgarians in the summer of 989, we are certain that the earliest possible dating for the fall of Chersōn would be sometime in late July or August of 989. However, the next passage of Leōn Diakonos gives⁹⁴ an explanation of an earthquake that occurred much later, definitively on the evening of 25 October, 989 and specifically relates, referring to the appearance of the comet, the earthquake, a subsequent flood and other disasters that, “all came to pass after the appearance of the star.”⁹⁵ Obolensky holds that the historian is able to interpret this passage to mean that Chersōn undeniably fell to Vladimir I after the earthquake of 25 October, although he declines to justify why this theory is undeniable; he seems to just deposit this as the case with his only intention to prolong the deadline for the fall of Chersōn.⁹⁶ What this speculation seeks to accomplish is to attempt to prove that Vladimir I began the siege after learning of Basil II’s duplicity, thus reinforcing the *PVL* narrative. This aforementioned passage of Leōn Diakonos is quite ambiguous and can be taken in two distinct ways: as Thomson has added, paraphrasing Bogdanova, “...the passage in Leo does not mean that the phenomena foretold subsequent events, but

question that would signify volcanic eruptions in either Syria or Arabia. In addition, according to his 1981 edition-source (he cites p. 40 in his edition) on the eruptive histories of world volcanoes (I use an updated edition: L. Siebert, T. Simkin & P. Kimberly, *Volcanoes of the World*, 2010, 64), there is absolutely no evidence for the eruption of any volcanoes in either Syria or Western Arabia at the time in question. Secondly, while I would agree with him regarding the aurora borealis not resembling a volcanic eruption, which would be manifest in the south rather than in the north (which he does not actually point out himself), his agreement with Rapov serves only to allow his dismissal of Poppe’s evidence for no other reason than to prolong the deadline for the fall of Chersōn. Finally, his pure speculation is highly doubtful given that Leōn Diakonos’ “fiery pillars” hardly resemble themselves the aurora borealis that he, Rapov, the translators, (A-M. Talbot & D. F. Sullivan, 2005, n91, 217) and many other scholars (IE, V. R. Rozen, 214, and even Poppe, [himself], 1976, 202) have imagined his words to represent. The fact of the matter is that we do not know what exactly these “fiery pillars” refer to, we cannot date them and by using them as evidence, we only serve to delegitimize our research with wild speculations.

⁹⁴ This is given in a suspiciously separate paragraph:

καὶ γὰρ ἐσπέρας ἐνισταμένης, ἐν ἣ μνήμην τοῦ μεγάλου Δημητρίου καὶ Μάρτυρος τελεῖν παρέλαβεν ἡ συνήθεια, φρικώδης ἐπενεχθεὶς σεισμός, καὶ οἷος οὐκ ἄλλος κατὰ ταύτας δὴ συνέβη τὰς γενεάς, τὰ τε πυργώματα τοῦ Βυζαντίου πρὸς γῆν κατερίπωσε, καὶ τὰς πλείους ἐστίας ἀνέτρεψε, τάφον αὐτὰς τοῖς οἰκοῦσιν ἀπεργασάμενος, τὰ τε προσέγγια τοῦ Βυζαντίου χωρία μέχρις ἐδάφους κατέβαλε, καὶ πολλὴν τῶν ἀγροίκων φθόρον ἐποίησεν· [...] καὶ ἡ ἀφορία δὲ τῆς γῆς, καὶ τὰ ἐπισκῆψαντα χαλεπὰ μετὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀστέρου ἐπιτολὴν, ἅπαντα ἐξεγένοντο. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν κατὰ μέρος εἰς τοὺς ἑαυτῶν καιροὺς ἡ ἱστορία παραδηλώσει. C. B. Hase, (ed.), 1828, 175-176, (chap. X:10:1).

⁹⁵ Talbot, A-M. & D. F. Sullivan (ed. and trans.), *Leo the Deacon*, 2005, 218.

⁹⁶ D. Obolensky, 1989, 252. He writes, “...the fall of Cherson, foretold in Leo’s text both by the rise of the comet and by the *aurora borealis*, is more likely to have followed the latter phenomena after a certain interval. The balance of probabilities thus favours the view that Chersōn was captured by Vladimir *after* 25 October, 989.”

indicated prior events. Indeed the aorist participle [παρεδήλουν] can mean either contemporaneous or antecedent action depending on the meaning of the finite verb and that, “παραδηλώω” is ambiguous.⁹⁷ Now that we know the word “παρεδήλουν,” contains an ambiguous aspect, which can nevertheless connote a completed action, we are left to dismiss Obolensky’s guesswork as just that. How could Leōn Diakonos have known Chersōn had fallen to the Rus’⁹⁸ by the time of his writing unless they had already fallen?⁹⁹ Obolensky’s attempt to tie the fall of Chersōn in 989 to that year’s 25 October earthquake is commendable but misguided and we are ill-advised to take his word in this matter.¹⁰⁰ When he writes, “Most probably, therefore the siege of Cherson lasted from the summer of 989 to the late winter or early spring of 990,”¹⁰¹ he entirely ignores the grammatical implications of the text of Leōn Diakonos in this regard, as his entire argument seeks only to prolong the deadline for the fall of Chersōn and thereby confirm only Byzantine diplomatic duplicity despite much more reliable evidence to the contrary as we will later discuss.

Thus, regardless of the “fiery pillars,” we can be certain the city did indeed fall in the late summer, based on the dating of Yaḥyā of Antioch, to between July 27 and August 15, 989. If we then, based on Berthier-Delagarde’s either six or nine-month siege,¹⁰² count back those months, whether six or nine, we nevertheless arrive at either late September and early October, 988 or late January and early February, 989. In either case, the siege began long before the death of Phōkas in mid-April, after which Vladimir I was

⁹⁷ F. J. Thomson, 1999, article IV, “The Bulgarian Contribution to the Reception of Byzantine Culture in Kievan Rus’: the Myths and the Enigma,” 227-228, esp. n80. See also Bogdanova, *Времени*, 45-46.

⁹⁸ Leōn Diakonos specifically points out that those he refers to as τῶν Ταυροσκυθῶν are what most call “Pῶς.” See IV:6 & in Talbot & Sullivan, 2005, n45, p. 111: they refer to the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 3:1857-1858.

⁹⁹ For this detailed inquiry, I would like to acknowledge one of my esteemed professors, Ruth Macrides, for her highly significant and precise bit of grammatical and logical reasoning concerning an analysis of this portion of Leōn Diakonos.

¹⁰⁰ Indeed the dating for the earthquake itself is in dispute, as Yaḥyā of Antioch gives the date of 25, October 989 while Skylitzēs gives the same exact date, but in the year 986. Obolensky also fails to comment on this regard as well. The dating for the earthquake is likewise also given by Leōn Diakonos, except that Wortley claims that Yaḥyā of Antioch’s dating for the earthquake is less reliable than that of Skylitzēs. See Wortley, *Skylitzes*, 2010, 314, n85. This makes little difference to the dating of the fall of Chersōn, however it leaves Obolensky’s argument for dating the fall of the city to 990 as based on an even less reliable assumption.

¹⁰¹ D. Obolensky, 1989, 252

¹⁰² For another confirmation of the length of the siege, this time from the work of the monk Iakov, who claims the siege in fact lasted for six months, see P. Hollingsworth, 1992, 177.

arranged to receive Anna and therefore had already begun his siege of Chersōn.¹⁰³ Knowing that he began the siege of the city at this time, long before Bardas Phōkas, the adversary of his ally and future brother-in-law Basil II, was both dead and that news conveyed to him, we are left to ask why he was besieging Chersōn to extract Anna Porphyrogennētē if the terms of the contract he had agreed to with Basil II in the winter of 987 had not even been realized yet. The Phōkas rebellion in September-October of 988 was still as unresolved and furious as ever and his decision to besiege Chersōn thus can be understood by the only other variable left: a faction ruling within Chersōn had supported the cause of Phōkas rebellion. Obolensky seems to believe that when the authorities in Constantinople learned of Phōkas' rebellion in the late summer of 987, and the consequent siding of Chersōn alongside, then "We would have to imagine an extraordinarily rapid movement of military intelligence, and split-second decisions in the Byzantine capital. Possible, perhaps; but in my view highly unlikely."¹⁰⁴ In my view, any other supposition would indeed be highly unlikely: how are we to imagine a young Basil II, inexperienced in military and administrative concerns, along with his staff, no longer including Basil Lakapēnos,¹⁰⁵ *not* making Obolensky's so-called "split-second decisions" in such a situation? His attempt to disprove Poppe's chronology¹⁰⁶ of the

¹⁰³ In fact, Berthier-Delagarde's proposed six-to-nine-month siege (see n14 & n87 above) is neither entirely provable nor precise. He tentatively gives the siege roughly six to nine months, and few scholars disagree with his model, including both Poppe and Obolensky. Although he mostly supports the *PVL* account of Vladimir's campaign against Chersōn as due to Byzantine duplicity, in my opinion at least, his chronology for the length of the siege is convincing even if his argument for the *PVL* testimony is not. Regardless, whether the siege was six months long or nine months long is of little concern as when counted back from August 989, it still leaves the historian at a time sufficiently before the definitive death of Phōkas on 13 April, 989. Still, a six-month siege is indeed corroborated by P. Hollingsworth's separate translation of the work of the monk Iakov. See the previous citation, n102.

¹⁰⁴ D. Obolensky, 1989, 254.

¹⁰⁵ For more on the internal affairs within the palace before 985, especially in regard to Basil Lakapēnos and Basil II, see V. N. Vlysidou, 2005, 111-129.

¹⁰⁶ A further refutation of Obolensky's traditionalist version of the story involves the length of time required for Vladimir's catechumenate, which would undoubtedly not been as brief as giving an oath and reciting a creed in such a place as the Uvarov Basilica (see J. C. Carter, 2003, 103.) or the Church of St. Jacob (see A. A. Zimin, "Память и похвала Яков мниха и Житие князя Владимира по древнейшему списку," 1963, 73 [line 25] & 178) in a largely burnt-down city such as Chersōn was after the siege, (see A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 2002, 663.) which is essentially what is conveyed by the *PVL*. For an image of the Uvarov Basilica and the supposed site of Vladimir's baptism, upon which a kiosk has been erected by the Russian Orthodox Church, see figure x. M. Arranz satisfactorily demonstrates the lengthy and methodologically arduous task Vladimir would have been subject to as a catechumen in the late tenth century. This would not have all been possible between the late summer and autumn of 989 in Chersōn before bringing the siege forces, relics, clerics and other matter of loot back to Kiev before the onset of winter. See M. Arranz, 1992, 75-93.

event and move the deadline later into 990 not only lacks logical sense, it completely refutes the sources; his argument is completely groundless and moreover, based on his own fabrication.

The next aspect of Obolensky's argument, his insistence on emphasizing the lack of textual links between Phōkas and Chersōn, does bear certainty. However in no remote corner of his argument does he acknowledge the inherent rebellious nature of the citizens of Chersōn from the second half of the ninth and throughout the tenth and early eleventh centuries—ever since the thematization of the city within the *Klimata*. The fact remains that Monophysite and Dyophysite differences remained strongly embedded and unresolved, even by the tenth century and indeed continued to be the primary cause of most conflicts between Greeks and Armenians.¹⁰⁷ The sources, both primary and secondary, are replete with emphasis on the intrinsic Armenian support of the conflict,¹⁰⁸ from the legions of Phōkas' rebellious followers, soldiers and supporters to those who simply saw themselves as oppressed minorities of Constantinople's staunch dyophysite Christianity. We know Chersōn was filled with both monophysites and dyophysites,¹⁰⁹ Armenians and otherwise,¹¹⁰ some of whom doubtlessly would have supported the Phōkas cause, while other citizens differed. This intra-Chersōn confliction between supporters of both the rebellion and loyalists would have been demonstrated precisely by a defection to the forces of Vladimir's siege, which is exactly what happened in the case

¹⁰⁷ A. Terian, personal communication, 12 March, 2013, According to Dr. Terian concerning Armenian-Greek religious differences, "As for the miaphysite / diaphysite tensions [...], they were still a big issue in [the late tenth cent.], indeed the primary cause for nearly all conflicts between Byz. and Arm."

¹⁰⁸ See for example Skylitzēs, XVI:2, although this reference deals specifically with the previous uprising of Sklēros instead of Phōkas, the Armenian support for both conflicts remained staunch.

¹⁰⁹ J. C. Carter, 2003, 31. Though he mentions no specific archaeological evidence, as the leading living authority writing in English on the archaeology of Chersōn, Carter's testimony itself should serve to prove that a Monophysite community did exist in Chersōn. For a further discussion of Monophysites and Armenians in Chersōn, see below sections 3.2 & 3.3.

¹¹⁰ A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 2002, 664. According to Bortoli & Kazanski, there is archaeological evidence of "the presence of Italian, Russian, Armenian, Arab, Tatar and Alan nationals who were certainly involved in trade." Although surely the presence of these groups within Chersōn was not all precisely contemporaneous, let alone specifically in the late tenth century: we know Italians arrived much later, while Russians had probably indeed cohabited the city with Byzantines in the late tenth century. We can be sure, however, that a Monophysite presence, as Carter has noted, (J. C. Carter, 2003, 31 & 40.) dated back to pre-iconoclastic times. These Monophysites would have undoubtedly been Armenians. For a further study of the Armenian element within Byzantium, especially during the ninth-tenth centuries, see P. Charanis, 1963, 28-57. In his closing remarks, he asserts, "There is no doubt at all that Greeks and Armenians disliked each other and that at times this dislike turned into bitter hostility..." (p. 56). Chersōn, isolated from Constantinopolitan authority as it was, was consequently the perfect place for Armenian communities as "...isolation was an important part of Armenian identity." See A. E. Redgate, 2008, 284.

of Anastasios given in the *PVL*.¹¹¹ Phōkas drew in supporters from everywhere who desired greater separation from Constantinople, ecclesiastically, economically, politically, and socially and Chersōn, essentially from 711 onwards, in particular fits this mould.

Finally, Obolensky's last major grounding for his refutation of Poppe's arguments for Chersōn's rebellion between 987-989 is his allegation that Chersōn was in fact a loyal Byzantine thematic capital throughout the tenth century. However, most other historians would vehemently disagree with him on the point of Chersōnite loyalty in the tenth century.¹¹² Once again though, his conjecture rests on little real evidence, save for his correct assertion of Chersōn's loyalty to Constantinople in warning Constantine VII of the approach of Igor's fleet in 944. The main problem with his suggestion is that this instance is in fact the only example of Chersōnite loyal behavior toward Constantinople for the entirety of the ninth and tenth centuries. Needless to say,

¹¹¹ S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 112. It should be recalled that Anastasios was the treacherous Chersōnite resident who, in the "Korsun' Legend" in the *PVL*, shot the arrow into the Rus' camp with the message informing Vladimir of the existence of water pipes outside the walls which by cutting, he could bring the town to submission. See the summarization above, section 1.2 & a further discussion of intra-Chersōn allegiances and conflicting factions at this time below in sections 3.2 & 3.3.

¹¹² Notably, Franklin & Shepard make this point quite succinctly and prominently: "This Crimean port was in one sense a provincial backwater while the towns and settlements strung along the southern Crimean coastline were even more secluded, and only loosely under the authority of the emperor." See S. Franklin & J. Shepard, 1996, 13. If, for example, Chersōn was indeed a loyal city throughout the course of the tenth century, it bears asking the profound question, why would Constantine VII Porphyrogennētos go to such trouble to emphasize her tendency for rebellion, not once but quite a few times within the *DAI*? See Gy. Moravcsik & R. J. H. Jenkins, 1967, *DAI*, 42:41-44, 53:483-484, 53:512-529. The first and last of these passages are much more well known in terms of Petrōnas Kamatēros' recommendation to Theophilos against trusting Chersōnites, «...καὶ μὴ τοῖς ἐκείνων καταπιστεύσης πρωτεύουσί τε καὶ ἄρχουσι.» (42:41-44) and Constantine VII's lengthy extrapolation on the condition of a Chersōnite revolt, which, it seems, the city was quite prone to doing at this point roughly in the mid-tenth century (53:512-529). Significantly, we do know that a Chersōnite revolt occurred in 896, roughly a half-century before the writing of the *DAI*, as a result of the Byzantine route at Voulgarophygon conceivably leading to the restructuring of the *thema* (C. de Boor, 1963, 360/14-16). It bears mention that the Chersōnite revolt after the battle of Voulgarophygon, in 896 is conspicuously similar to their revolt under Kalokyres in 971: both battles resulted from Byzantine emperors inciting northern peoples (Magyars in 894; Rus' in 967) to invade Bulgaria (P. Stephenson, 2000, 39). The restructuring of the *thema* of the Klimata into Chersōn is mentioned in the *De Thematibus* of Constantine VII. However, I would certainly agree with the authors of the *DAI* commentary (F. Dvornik, et. al., 1962, 205), that the lengthy and seemingly irrelevant chapter of Chersōnite history dating back to the times of the tetrarchy came from an earlier Chersōnite chronicle, sent to Constantinople by the contemporary *stratēgos*. As Minns has proposed, and with which I would tentatively agree, this passage was directly representative of the tenth-century Chersōnites' understanding of their own past. (See E. H. Minns, 1913, 526, n5.) I would also submit that another one of the purposes of Constantine VII's long recounting of this arcane passage was to further his ultimate point regarding the untrustworthiness of the citizens of Chersōn, the story ending as it does, with «Οὕτως ἀληθεύετε περὶ πάντων; Ἄβαλε λοιπὸν τῷ πιστεύοντι Χερσωνίτη πολίτη.» (53:483-484). See A. Pertusi, 1952, 183.

Obolensky conveniently completely disregards the examples given not only by Leōn Diakonos regarding the 971 attempted usurpation by Kalokyrēs, son of the *prōtevōn* of Chersōn,¹¹³ but by Skylitzēs as well,¹¹⁴ not to mention the *DAP*'s repeated insistence on warning of the dubious loyalty of the Chersōnites.¹¹⁵ This also says nothing of Chersōn's rebellion in 896¹¹⁶ and yet another uprising by the Chersōnites only a generation after 989 in 1016, coincidentally roughly the same period of time from the time of Kalokyrēs' usurpation attempt in 971. To assert, as Obolensky has, that

...the Byzantine government, which attached the highest importance to its Crimean possessions, and had struggled for centuries to prevent neighbouring peoples from interfering in the affairs of Cherson, should have conceded by treaty this right of interferences to the ruler of a people [Kievan Rus'] that had shown itself four times in the past seventy-five years a determined enemy of the Empire, and had threatened the whole Byzantine defensive system on the northern coast of the Black Sea.¹¹⁷

is relatively nonsensical considering the specific language used in the myriad treaties signed between Byzantine emperors and Kievan princes throughout the tenth century, and preserved, with relatively less dubious reliabilities than the "Korsun' Legend," all within the *PVL*.¹¹⁸ As Poppe has considered, and which Obolensky does indeed mention¹¹⁹ but

¹¹³ C. B. Hase, 1828, V:1. See also n76 above.

¹¹⁴ J. Thurn, 1973, XIV:20.

¹¹⁵ See n112 above.

¹¹⁶ See n112 above.

¹¹⁷ D. Obolensky, 1989, 255. In his own citation for the above-reproduced sentence he states, "...even if 'Khazaria' does...mean the Crimea...the most that can be conceded to Poppe is that a combined Russo-Byzantine operation against a rebellious Chersōn was launched in 1016. This, however, is no argument in favor of his thesis that a generation earlier and in quite different circumstances the Byzantine government encouraged the ruler of Rus' to attack Chersōn single-handed." Apart from the minor misspelling, the major problem, we should garner, from Obolensky's reasoning here, is his interpretation of the 1016 Chersōnite uprising, which is widely known at this point, in a decontextualized manner, not only by denying any and all of Phōkas' influence on the Black Sea trade network in 987-989, but also by ignoring the treachery of Chersōnite notables, as represented by Kalokyrēs in 966-971 discussed earlier. By separating Chersōnite allegiances in 1016 from 989 and completely ignoring those of 971, Obolensky effectively follows his own agenda in postulating Chersōn as a loyal Byzantine possession in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries when in fact the city had revolted no less than three times inside of a 45-year period.

¹¹⁸ See for example the earlier tenth-century treaties of 907/911, 944/945, 971 in S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 64-69, 73-78 & 89-90, respectively. The first treaty, of 911, which does not mention Chersōn, gives a high level of detail concerning Oleg's securing of rather advantageous commercial privileges for trading with the Byzantines in Constantinople. The second treaty, after Igor's planned war of 944 does indeed mention Chersōn, which is discussed below and in detail, came after the former's decision to turn back to Kiev at the Danube delta, and therefore the following year's renewed treaty saw a greater balancing of privileges between Rus' and Byzantium. It is in this treaty that stipulations regarding Rus' preservation of Byzantine authority are extrapolated by Šakhmatov's revisions,

is otherwise unable to disprove, a previous treaty signed between Rus' and Byzantium in 944, which stipulated that Chersōn was to submit herself to Constantinople; and that should she not, Igor was entreated to see to this end.¹²⁰ The actual Slavonic text which Šakhmatov, in 1916, proved to be a mistranslation,¹²¹ originally read in the Laurentian text as, “а та страна не покаряеть ся вамъ.”¹²² Thus, it would appear that this excerpt, supposedly from the Byzantine party, in fact greatly expected Chersōnite revolt, which, as we have already discussed,¹²³ is corroborated in the *DAI*, itself also written quite shortly after this treaty, also expounds the idea of Chersōnite rebelliousness several times. Indeed this instance was not the only influence that the 944 treaty evidently exerted on Rus'-Byzantine relations in 987-989. The 944 treaty, which specifically stipulated against the Rus', whom the Byzantine authorities at the time had been informed, most likely by information procured from Chersōnite fishermen, specified that they should not “[install] themselves on what appeared to be a potentially permanent basis on the islands of Belobey and St. Eleutherius in the estuary of the Dnieper River.”¹²⁴ While many scholars have since agreed that the islands were most likely used for refitting shallow river boats for sea-borne navigation, it was this hindrance of Rus' usage of these islands which served to protect Byzantine shipping and fishing in the north Black Sea for the remainder of the century.¹²⁵ Only after 988, and the conversion of Vladimir, it would be significant to note that the Rus', being baptized Byzantine allies, were again allowed to

(see n121-122 below). Finally, the treaty of 971, concluded after Sviatoslav's defeat at the siege of Silistra, granted the Byzantines greater commercial and political privilege in relation to the Rus'. The specific mention of Chersōn relates an oath on Sviatoslav's part to defend Byzantine authority in the area, seemingly against real or imagined foes and usurpers, which would indeed play into a continued Byzantine policy of employing Rus' princes to maintain Byzantine control over Chersōn in the second half of the tenth century.

¹¹⁹ D. Obolensky, 1989, 247.

¹²⁰ A. Poppe, 1976, n144, 239. Concerning the frequency of mistranslation from Slavonic to Greek, Poppe agrees with A. A. Šakhmatov. For the precise placement of this aspect in Šakhmatov's work, see the following n121 below.

¹²¹ A. A. Šakhmatov, 1916, n5 57, 319 & 379 n5.

¹²² D. Ostrowski (comp. & ed.) & D. J. Birnbaum, *Повість временних Літ: Міжрядкове Співставлення і Парадосис*, том X, ч. 1, 2003, [51, 1-51,2] 301). For the English translation, see S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 76: “[In the matter of the country of Kherson and all the cities in that region, the Prince of Rus' shall not have the right to harass these localities], nor shall that district be subject to (you).” The “вамъ,” “(you),” as Šakhmatov has pointed out in this instance, is an example of a frequent occurrence of pronoun-mistranslation in early Rus'-Byzantine treaties.

¹²³ See n112 above.

¹²⁴ F. E. Wozniak, 1979, 117.

¹²⁵ The main exception, of course, being Vladimir's 988-989 maritime campaign against Chersōn.

utilize these islands.¹²⁶ Clearly, this issue of the islands of the Dniepr estuary had not been “superseded” by the 971 treaty, as Obolensky would have imagined it to have been by the time of Vladimir’s baptism.¹²⁷ As the treaty of 944 was the only treaty of the tenth century, prior to 987, to seek to protect Chersōn from Rus’ depredations, the actual text was revised and judged by Šakhmatov to entreat the Rus’ to intervene in Chersōn in the case of rebellion. It would seem that Byzantine policy was not just to contain Rus’ and restrict Rus’ actions in the Crimea, but to employ Kievan activities in the Crimea to preserve Byzantine authority.¹²⁸

As for Obolensky’s arguments in favor of the traditional *PVL* narrative, his first involves using Leōn Diakonos’ view of the falls of Chersōn and Verroia¹²⁹ as “comparable misfortunes.”¹³⁰ This argument, in his opinion, justifies his claim that Chersōn had not partaken in the Phōkas rebellion between 987 and 989 based on Diakonos’ lack of sympathy for the rebel cause yet his simultaneous regarding of the respective falls of these two cities as [παγγάλεπα¹³¹] for the imperial cause. I would point out that Poppe, on pages 212-213, has foreseen Obolensky’s above-mentioned argument in this regard and has already considered it. His counterargument, outlined over a decade before Obolensky’s writing, summarily invalidates Leōn Diakonos’ otherwise comparatively reliable and objective recording of this incident within Byzantine annals.¹³² While his account is, generally speaking, undoubtedly a more trustworthy one than that of the *PVL*,¹³³ it is certainly not without its own idiosyncrasies. The fact

¹²⁶ J. Shepard, 2008, 509.

¹²⁷ D. Obolensky, 1989, 254.

¹²⁸ See n118 above.

¹²⁹ C. B. Hase, 1828, X:10.

¹³⁰ D. Obolensky, 1989, 256.

¹³¹ C.B. Hase, 1828, 175. See also A-M. Talbot & D. F. Sullivan, 2005, 217, who translate “παγγάλεπα” as “calamities.” (p. 34-35 above).

¹³² For example, A. Poppe, 1976, 213, writes,

...an appeal to the former enemy [Rus’] for help at the time of the civil war, an internal Byzantine affair, was shocking to Leo. He was especially outraged that Cherson, a Crimean province that was, in his opinion, a Greek city and a part of the Byzantine state, should fall prey to the barbarians whose atrocities were etched in his memory. The capture of Cherson contributed to Leo’s pessimistic vision of the Empire.

¹³³ Obolensky, in highlighting Leōn Diakonos’ reliability, correctly points out that Leōn Diakonos (C. B. Hase, 1828, 172-173) himself had been present with Basil II even at Trajan’s gates on 17 August, 986. See D. Obolensky, 1989, 255-256. While we would certainly not dispute this point in relation to the *PVL*, even our relatively more reliable author, Leōn Diakonos, as a court historian comfortably situated in Constantinople, far from the events in Chersōn, would have been privy neither to the profoundly intricate

remains that Leōn Diakonos was an Atticizing court historian and a product of his times. As I have already stipulated, his reasoning for regarding these events, specifically the fall of Chersōn in 989 to Vladimir as being not so much due to a particularly biased account on his part as his own removal, being a court historian, from Chersōn at this time. In short, he would not have been privy to the profoundly intricate system of alliances not only of local notables and allegiances within Chersōn, but also between Chersōn, the Goths, the Khazars, the Pechenegs and the Rus’.

Obolensky’s next argument, perhaps his strongest, in favor of the traditionalist interpretation, reinforcing the argument for Basil II’s duplicity in 989 and Vladimir’s consequent capture of Chersōn despite Basil II, centers on the former’s alleged unfaithfulness to the agreement he made with Vladimir I in the winter of 987-988 in fulfilling his side by sending his sister Anna as soon as Bardas Phōkas had been vanquished.¹³⁴ To this end, I would point out that in no *primary* source does the mention for the reason of his unwillingness to send Anna materialize; not even the *PVL* explicitly states this as the reason for Vladimir’s campaign against the city, merely that Anna herself was hesitant to go, but not Basil II or Constantine VIII to dispatch her.¹³⁵ In addition, as Obolensky has neglected to mention, though they were indeed rare, this was not the first marriage between a member of the imperial circle in the tenth century and a foreign dignitary, especially a Northerner: consider the well-known cases of Theophanō Sklēraina, married by Iōannēs I Tzimiskēs to Otto II in 972 and Eirēnē Lakapēnē, granddaughter of Rōmanos I Lakapēnos, married to Peter of Bulgaria in 927. Although it is true Eirēnē Lakapēnē was not in fact a Porphyrogennētē, we must acknowledge that it was indeed Constantine VII who created the distinction, and his injunction to succeeding emperors not to marry Porphyrogennētai to foreigners under any circumstance was

web of steppe alliances within and around the Crimea nor would he have been familiar with the precise nature of intra-Chersōnite society and politics in the by the late tenth century.

¹³⁴ Ibidem, 256. According to Obolensky, “[The matrimonial customs of the ruling house of Byzantium] forbade marriages between members of the imperial family, more especially princesses ‘born in the purple’, and barbarian rulers. Anna, Vladimir’s bride, was such a princess. Basil II must have been in desperate straits, and Vladimir of Kiev able to exert the strongest pressure, for the royal family of Kiev to be accorded this signal honour, which twenty years earlier had been refused to the German emperor, who stood far above him in status and power. As Poppe himself admits, Vladimir’s capture of Chersōn could have provided such pressure.”

¹³⁵ S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 112. See also D. Ostrowski & D. J. Birnbaum, 2003, 844-853.

certainly due to his aversion to this event supervised by Rōmanos I Lakapēnos in 927;¹³⁶ needless to say, the disdain Constantine VII harbored for his father in law is also well-known. The betrothal of Anna to Vladimir, as agreed to in early 988 as Poppe has demonstrated,¹³⁷ and which Obolensky has refrained from contesting, was carried out by Theophylaktos, a staunchly anti-Armenian and anti-Monophysite metropolitan of Sevastē. This was a man who could administer just such an arrangement and the resulting benediction required to cement an inter-dynastic marriage. Betrothals, in Byzantine law, were unable to be dissolved and both parties, under god, were to be held to their honor;¹³⁸ in short, duplicity was not an option.

Finally, none of this counterargument mentions Poppe's own defense of Basil II's honoring of the marriage agreement. According to Poppe, Anna was a legitimate political force in her own right, in whom her brothers trusted on behalf of Byzantine northern policy in regards to the rebellion: "...with his sister in Kiev, he would be sure of his brother-in-law's effective support and could rely on the assistance of the Rus' troops in putting down the rebellion."¹³⁹ His reasoning is lucid and fresh while Obolensky's reasoning is stereotypical for why Basil II would send his sister. Basil II would most

¹³⁶ R. Macrides, 1992, 273. As Prof. Macrides has written,

...when the stakes were highest, when the need to make peace was the function of a marriage, those princesses closest to the emperor were offered, for both Maria, daughter of Christopher, a co-emperor, and Anna, a born-in-the-purple sister of the emperors Basil II and Constantine VIII, were the highest in status of all Byzantine princesses given in marriage until the twelfth century. Indeed, it appears that making peace with a warring nation was only rarely a reason for contracting foreign marriages.

If we are to agree with Macrides' suggestion, which I imagine would be advisable, then for the Macedonian emperors after Constantine VII, peace was not as valuable a commodity to secure for the price of a Porphyrogennētē marriage as other reasons for marriage, as for example the preservation of one's throne. Clearly, in the case of the Bardas Phōkas rebellion and the need of Basil II to secure not only his throne but his life, the price was not too steep in 987-989. See also A. P. Každan, 1992, 17. For the primary source, see Gy. Moravcsik & R. J. H. Jenkins, 1967, *DAI*, 13:104-194. As the authors of the *DAI Commentary* submit regarding this section of the *DAI*,

The objection to marriages with ἔθνικοί, which again arose from the Byzantine imperial *mystique*, had again to be explained in terms of a hard and fast religious sanction, and this could not properly and consistently be done. There was indeed a canon of the Trullan Synod which forbade marriages with heretics [...]; and this might justify the condemnation of Constantine V's marriage with the Chazar Irene, though she became a Christian before marriage [...]. But [Constantine] is on very weak ground in condemning the marriage of Maria Lecapena with a Bulgarian [...]; and it is to be feared that [Constantine]'s motive here was not so much love of the 'Christian order' or jealousy for the imperial dignity as hatred of his father-in-law. (F. Dvornik, et. al., 1962, 64).

¹³⁷ A. Poppe, 1976, 227-228.

¹³⁸ P. D. Viscuso, 2008, 29-33.

¹³⁹ A. Poppe, 1976, 218-220 & 231.

certainly need to send Anna to Vladimir I to ensure his policies and Christianizing efforts, and as quickly as possible. Why else, as Yahyā of Antioch has accurately recorded¹⁴⁰ and Shepard pointed out, would Basil II have dispatched an enormous baptizing, church-building, glass-crafting and mosaic-making mission to Kiev in 989?¹⁴¹ Surely, this massive cultural delegation was not gathered so quickly and prepared in mere desperation in the face of the *PVL*'s recording of Vladimir's threat to Constantinople late in 989 just upon the fall of Chersōn, but was surely in concert with the agreement between Basil II and Vladimir I in early 988.

To conclude this section, Obolensky's only remaining argument favoring his "anti-revisionist view" and its consequent reliance on the loyalty of Chersōn to Constantinople is based on the capital's continued endeavor to preserve Chersōn within imperial jurisdiction throughout the tenth century.¹⁴² To this end, I would refer the reader back to my discussion of Obolensky's argument concerning this topic on p.34-39 above.¹⁴³

Clearly, Obolensky's arguments against Poppe,¹⁴⁴ while superficially convincing, nevertheless fall short of convincing the reader of the imprecision of Poppe's revisionism of the 987-989 episode between Constantinople, Kiev and Chersōn. But the fact remains that while vagaries in the primary sources continue to plague the historian, Poppe does not address, in his 1976 thesis, the problems of the original *PVL* narrative that have

¹⁴⁰ Yahyā's account mentions Basil's dispatch of a huge Christianizing enterprise. See I. Kratchkovsky & A. Vasiliev, 1932, 423-425. This massive Christianizing mission, undoubtedly including scores of clerics, artisans, masons, architects, and merchants. This sort of mission could not have been guaranteed without a great deal of time and preparation first of all, and clear knowledge of their impending arrival at a specific time when Vladimir's retinue would be able to receive them. See also J. Shepard, 1992, "Byzantine Diplomacy, 800-1204: Means and Ends," 69.

¹⁴¹ J. Shepard, 1992, 68-69.

¹⁴² D. Obolensky, 1989, 256. He writes,

My third and final argument rests on the crucial position occupied by Cherson in the Empire's security and balance of power in the North. During much of the tenth century, as we have seen, the Byzantine government strove by every means to protect the city from the political ambitions of the rulers of Kiev. We may well ask ourselves whether Basil II would deliberately have started a chain of events which, as he must have at least suspected, would head to the capture, sacking and partial destruction of the gem of all Byzantine possessions on the northern coast of the Black Sea. I find that hard to believe.

¹⁴³ For a further extrapolation on differing allegiances within Chersōnite during this period, particularly with regard to archaeological evidence, see below sections 3.2-3.3.

¹⁴⁴ While I would certainly not refute here any of Obolensky's other theories on the growth of the "Byzantine Commonwealth" of later medieval Eastern Europe, I would suggest that his critique of Poppe's thesis may be rooted in defending his masterwork, (*The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 1971) from a revision to a highly important component of it.

bequeathed this mythology to centuries of Russian clerical history. For this reason, I will next discuss the reasons for which the *PVL* narrative for this episode in Chersōn can not be trusted as a precise reflection of the historiographic realities between Constantinople, Kiev and Chersōn during the Phōkas rebellion. The *PVL*'s recording of the episode of Vladimir's conversion in Chersōn, the "Korsun' Legend," on which Obolensky largely bases the primary sourcing of his anti-revisionist interpretation of the event, is, in short, a deliberate invention using a variety of hagiographical materials to fabricate the tale over a century after the fact.

2.3 *The historiographical problems of the "Korsun' Legend" in the PVL*¹⁴⁵

This episode, 109.1-111.27 in the original Laurentian redaction,¹⁴⁶ was composed after Hilarion's *Sermon on Law and Grace*, whose date is given what Franklin refers to as a bold estimate, at 1048-1049.¹⁴⁷ This would then mean that the *PVL*'s narration of the event in question was composed, let alone edited or perhaps compiled¹⁴⁸ at the very least about 60 years afterwards, although most historians would agree that this passage in the *PVL* is actually datable to an even later time.¹⁴⁹ We know that an earlier account of Vladimir's life,¹⁵⁰ that of the monk Iakov, as I have already stated,¹⁵¹ mentions a different

¹⁴⁵ For the classic analysis of the Laurentian redaction of the *PVL*, especially in comparison with the later redactions, such as the Radzivilvsky, Pereyaslavl & Hypatian versions, see A. A. Šakhmatov, *Обозрение Русских Летописных Сводов XIV-XVI в.в.*, Москва, 1938. For the extended English *PVL* translation of the "Korsun' Legend," (S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 96-119), see appendix III below.

¹⁴⁶ D. Ostrowski & D. J. Birnbaum, 2003, 836-861. For the issues inherent in editing, collating and compiling all major available redactions of the *PVL* and the dangers of mistranslations due to the inconsistencies of reliable medieval and modern Russian textology, see D. Ostrowski, "Striving for Perfection," 2006, 437-451. See also R. N. Krivko, 2005, 243-278.

¹⁴⁷ S. Franklin, 1991, xxi.

¹⁴⁸ For a detailed discussion, see S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 13-23. More specifically, see A. A. Šakhmatov, *Разыскания*, 1908.

¹⁴⁹ D. Ostrowski, 2006, 567. Arguably one of the paramount living authorities on the *PVL*, Ostrowski dates the passage to the early twelfth century, over a century after the baptism and the events in Chersōn. Significantly, D. Obolensky, 1989, 245, agrees with this dating of the source he defends. This fact alone should serve as sufficient grounds for more than a healthy skepticism regarding events and political subtleties surrounding Vladimir's capture of Chersōn in 989.

¹⁵⁰ Though I would certainly not neglect to mention that the writing of the monk Iakov's "Память и похвала Яков мниха и Житие князя Владимира по древнейшему списку" has been arguably dated anywhere from the later eleventh century to as late as the early thirteenth century. See S. Franklin, 1991, n55, xxxvi. However, S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, 28, (introduction) claim: "This variation from the *Povest'* account would seem to rest upon an earlier tradition, while the later narrative of Vladimir's baptism in Kherson appears to have evolved naturally from the information available regarding his attack on the city, his negotiations with the Eastern emperors for the hand of their sister, and the arrival of the Princess Anna with a numerous suite, including a goodly array of ecclesiastics." Indeed W. E. Hanak, 1973, 69, has argued exactly this in his study concerning the

chronology for Vladimir's campaign against Chersōn.¹⁵² However, the only information this serves to reveal to the modern historian is the historical-chronological unaccountability of most, if not all Kievan Rus' literature.¹⁵³ Regardless, at this point in our discussion it is understood that many historians have in the past,¹⁵⁴ and others still continue to refuse to acknowledge this point despite historiographical evidence to the contrary, as Obolensky has amply demonstrated. In this section, I will follow Ostrowski's analysis of the *PVL* narration for Vladimir's alleged baptism and marriage to Anna Porphyrogennētē in Chersōn in 989¹⁵⁵ to demonstrate the unreliability of this specific passage within the document.

Regarding the *PVL* narrative, most historians, even those who take the work as plausible, generally regard it as less than absolute. While we would certainly not deny the literary and cultural significance of the story, to defend its historical merit against revision, as Obolensky has¹⁵⁶ in disputing Poppe's argument, is hardly effectual.

Heppell's words come to mind regarding the tale:

No students of early Russian history take this passage absolutely literally; it bears all the signs of being the work of an enthusiastic monastic scholar writing after the event, and doing his literary best to justify what had happened and present it in the most attractive light.¹⁵⁷

differences between the monk Iakov and the account of this episode in the *PVL*. According to Hanak, "...the Kievan monk Jacob, more contemporary with the events of Vladimir's reign than the *Povest'*, disputed this annal on the year of his conversion and recalls that the grand prince took Kherson in the third year of his Christianization, fixing the date of his baptism to 987."

¹⁵¹ See n84 above.

¹⁵² S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 28-29, (introduction).

¹⁵³ As for the entire corpus of Kievan old church Slavonic text, as S. Franklin has made clear, "virtually any reading of any word in a Kievan text is hypothetical." See S. Franklin, 1991, xv. For Franklin, creating historical interpretive accuracy from Kievan literature is essentially futile and inherently imprecise. He writes, "...there is an implicit 'perhaps' in every statement." He goes on to summarize that the literature does not provide answers, which are not as important as the questions. In this light, I would propose this example as one more historian disregarding the historical reliability of not specifically, although certainly inclusive of the "Korsun' Legend" in the *PVL* for the reason Vladimir I besieged Chersōn in 988.

¹⁵⁴ For all examples I have mentioned thus far, see above n82.

¹⁵⁵ D. Ostrowski, 2006, 567-580.

¹⁵⁶ D. Obolensky, 1989, 245. As Obolensky himself has written after giving a historical summary of the *PVL* narrative in question, "This then is what might be called the standard version of Vladimir's conversion."

¹⁵⁷ M. Heppell, 1987, 525. Indeed many scholars, even if they support the traditional *PVL* account of the baptism of Vladimir, nevertheless still take this passage "with circumspection." See for example W. K. Hanak, 1973, 20. Even Rozen himself, a great defender of the *PVL*'s historicity admits that the Kievan Rus' sources for this episode are not in agreement. However, he still seeks to believe in the "main facts" of the story. See V. R. Rozen, 1883, 218.

Poppe has described the attitude of the chronicler as one describing an event “...as shrouded in the mists of time.”¹⁵⁸ Even scholars who take the account as relatively believable express their doubts.¹⁵⁹ Likewise, many of the historians and linguists, above all the esteemed authority on the *PVL*, Šakhmatov, has deemed the use of the passage in question to lead only to speculation and conjecture,¹⁶⁰ even though he has considered both the account of the monk Iakov and the *PVL* to be based on an earlier eleventh-century testimony. This supposition, while casting doubt on the historical credibility of the passage, nevertheless serves to create its own puzzles,¹⁶¹ which many other subsequent Russian historians have argued against in favor of the original *PVL* account. I would argue that the already extant confusion which the *PVL* account of this episode itself readily supplies, notably in the lines 111,24-111,26: “Се же не съвѣвуще право, глаголють, яко кръстиль ся есть въ Кыевѣ, инии же рѣша: въ Василевѣ, Друзии же инако съказующе. Кръщену же Володимиру, предаша ему вѣру хръстияньскую,” which Cross and Sherbowizt-Wetzor have translated as, “Those who do not know the truth say he was baptized in Kiev while others assert this event took place in Vasil’ev, while still others mention other places,” should serve to prove to the diligent historian

¹⁵⁸ A. Poppe, 1976, 208.

¹⁵⁹ W. K. Hanak, 1973, who follows the essence of the “Korsun’ Legend” in the *PVL* (p. 67-70) even still asserts, “These detailed passages explaining the Christianization of Kievan Russia should be treated with circumspection. Much information is of a traditional nature and replete with exaggerations.” (p. 20.)

¹⁶⁰ A. A. Šakhmatov, “Корсунская Легенда о Крещении Владимира,” 1908, 109. Specifically, his motivation is using the “Korsun’ Legend” within the *PVL* as a partial tool to reconstruct the event rather than relying on the reconstructed text as a major source:

Приступая к восстановлению первоначального текста повести о крещении Владимира, **я руководствуюсь тем соображением, что такая работа, если и заведет нас в область предположений и догадок**, тем не менее лучше всякого частичного исследования выяснить отношения родственных памятников, ведущих к одному общему источнику, и осветить характер как этого источника, так и производившейся над ним в разное время редакционной работы.

I have translated this as,

Getting at how to reconstruct the original text of the *PVL* regarding Vladimir's baptism, **I am guided by the consideration that such a work, may lead us into speculation and conjecture**, though better than any partial studies to investigate the relationship of related enclitics, leading to a common source, and to illuminate its essence as this source as well as its layering over it at different times of the editorial work.

¹⁶¹ S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowizt-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 28 & n36, (introduction). Cross and Sherbowizt-Wetzor here argue that Šakhmatov’s theories have indeed caused a significant amount of confusion and have “yet [to] be viewed as satisfactorily determined.” Still, the reasons that many subsequent Russian scholars have discredited many of Šakhmatov’s ideas about the historical validity of the *PVL*, specifically in regard to the language, were, I would suggest, based on a wider desire to silence any suggestion of Russia’s Byzantine heritage and her consequent reliance on Byzantium for ecclesiastical and therefore political legitimacy at many times.

that already at the time of compilation of the *PVL* in the early twelfth century, there was sufficient doubt as to the true place of Vladimir's baptism¹⁶² and therefore the true political nature of the events surrounding his capture of Chersōn. Effectively, this single sentence, along with the disparity between the *PVL* and the account of the monk Iakov concerning Vladimir's capture of Chersōn after his baptism, throws into doubt the entire historical credibility of the "Korsun' Legend" of the *PVL*.

2.4 The Chiastic Passage¹⁶³

Concerning the entirety of the passage, Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor¹⁶⁴ have themselves acknowledged the presence of two distinct storylines being intermingled by the editor, who, if we are to believe the end of the chronicle itself¹⁶⁵ as Ostrowski does,¹⁶⁶ is Sil'vestr, the Prior of St. Michaels in the year 6624 (1116). In addition, Ostrowski has sought to divide the so-called "Korsun' Legend" a second time into four separate stories, whose basis on the biblical technique of "chiasmus" he has convincingly demonstrated.¹⁶⁷ In the first story, the arrivals of the missionaries in Kiev representing in order, the Volga Bulgarian Muslims, the German Latin Christians, the Jewish Khazars and finally a Byzantine Greek missionary-emissary are received, seemingly in a single year, 986, appearing in this surprising way and in this dubious time and order ostensibly

¹⁶² See n84 above. This supposition is corroborated by Ja. S. Lur'e, 1972, "К Изучению Летописного Жанра," 76. See also M. N. Tikhomirov, 1946, 107, who has written, "Условность рассказа о крещении Владимира в Корсуне давно уже установлена А. А. Шахматовым. Поэтому упоминание о Васильеве, как месте крещения Владимира, может иметь некоторые основания." This has been translated by Sdobnikov as, "Shakhmatov has long since proved that the story of Vladimir's baptism in Khersones was a legend, so that the mention of Vasiliev as the place where Vladimir was baptized may have some basis in fact." See M. Tikhomirov, *The Towns of Ancient Rus*, trans. Y. Sdobnikov, ed. D. Skvirsky, Moscow, 1959, 320.

¹⁶³ See appendix III for the English translation of the "Korsun' Legend" in the *PVL* given by S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, 96-119.

¹⁶⁴ They refer to the storylines as "elements." See S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, n93 (p. 245). According to Cross & Sherbowitz-Wetzor, "The combination of the two stories is further indicated by the express remark that there was a diversity of opinion as to precisely where Vladimir was baptized."

¹⁶⁵ S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 205.

¹⁶⁶ D. Ostrowski, 2006, 567-568.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* Chiasmus is a relatively obscure literary technique heavily utilized in the Tanakh and has been termed "Hebrew Parallelism" as a plotline's passages criss-cross each other creating an effect similar to JFK's famous sound bite, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." For a further explanation on chiastic use in the Tanakh, see N. W. Lund, 1930, 104-126. Like the passage in the *PVL*, Lund, in his conclusion (p. 126) also regards any sort of reconstruction of Tanakh textology as inherently prone to speculation and conjecture.

like a children's fable, with the Greek scholar receiving the longest treatment.¹⁶⁸ In this way, while the reader is made to expect Vladimir's conversion at this point and when this is not conveyed, the reader is left knowing the ultimate fate of his actions toward Christianity yet not knowing when this "punch-line"¹⁶⁹ will be delivered. The second story, Vladimir's dispatch of emissaries to Germany, Volga Bulgaria and Constantinople in the following year also bears the same aspect suggesting historical unlikelihood but in the opposite direction, emanating out from Kiev instead of into Kiev: this event, like the one preceding, still resonates improbably, again, as if based on a fairy tale instead of reality. Next, Ostrowski regards Vladimir's capture of Chersōn, the "Korsun' Legend," as the third story. In this section, the foremost part of this passage in dispute, Ostrowski convincingly demonstrates the fundamental disparity of the story, which is Vladimir's vow to be baptized upon his capture of the city, yet this event takes place during the siege instead of before it. This is created by the compiler's insistence on Vladimir's paganism before the siege so as to amplify the splendor of his baptism upon Anna's arrival. This brings us to the fourth and final story, which is Anna's arrival, Vladimir's sudden blindness, and his subsequent healing upon the Bishop's baptism.¹⁷⁰ This theme is a popular Christian anecdotal fall-back for transmitting particularly apocryphal and exceedingly holy aspects of a storyline. This then is the ultimate "punch-line" and the

¹⁶⁸ This has been argued, with the changing of a single year (the *PVL* gives the year as 6494/986), Rozen has unconvincingly claimed that this can be interpreted as the 987 envoy of Basil II, which Poppe argued was in fact the metropolitan Theophylaktos of Sevastē. V. R. Rozen, 1883, 219: "Если бы допустить ошибку в один год в хронологических отметках летописи, то получится почти полное согласие: прибытие греческого посла в (конце) 987, отправление русских послов в 988, взятие Корсуни и крещение в 989 г." I have translated this as, "If there is a mistake of one year made within the chronological mark-record, we get a nearly complete agreement: the arrival of the Greek diplomat in late 987, the departure of the Russian diplomats in 988, and the capture of Chersōn and baptism in 989." Rozen has insisted that the *PVL* episode bears plenty of historical accuracy, if one would only peel away the mythical embellishments. Conversely, K. Ericsson, 1966, 118, has argued that this missionary-philosopher was some kind of literary reflection of none other than Constantine (Cyril) himself, and indeed D. Angelov, 1992, 33, without necessarily agreeing, echoes this hypothesis as well. I find both of these speculations hardly convincing.

¹⁶⁹ D. Ostrowski, 2006, 574.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 569. Importantly, Ostrowski supposes that Anastasios, the man from within Chersōn, presumptively a member of the Chersōnite clergy, who shot the message-arrow detailing the method by which Vladimir could force the surrender of the city, could have probably been the very Bishop who baptized Vladimir. This supposition then lends a further degree of implausibility to the story when we wonder why Sil'vestr chose not to include this bit. From this point, we might wonder: how many different versions of this story were in circulation in 1116 when he supposedly compiled this work? Furthermore, the anecdotal incidence of blindness and healing upon baptism is a familiar element in hagiographical literature in many periods, thus suggesting a further degree of implausibility.

“loose-ends”¹⁷¹ of the third and fourth stories are tied together by Vladimir’s baptism, in this account, given specifically after the fall of Chersōn and before his marriage to Anna, so as to further elevate the event and Vladimir’s own role and mitigate the function of the Byzantine initiative.

Though there is indeed a kernel of legitimacy to the account, we must nevertheless concede a lack of verisimilitude. As Ostrowski writes, “One must conclude, however, that the combination by Sil’vestr of the various traditions for Volodimer’s baptism has little historical value for determining how, why, and where Volodimer was baptized.”¹⁷² The *PVL* narrative of Vladimir’s baptism may certainly be considered as a high literary and pious accomplishment, but it is not the recording of an event with a priority on historical accuracy so much as it is a recording of an event with a priority on conveying holy veneration. We would assert that it is more a bona fide myth carrying a vestige of historical truth rather than an authentic appraisal enrobed in hallowed embellishments.

The purpose of Sil’vestr’s conveyance of the *PVL* narrative story in this chiasmic formula is to demonstrate the suddenness of the change and the strength of Vladimir’s conversion of the baptism of Kievan Rus’ in 989, as a prince independent of Constantinopolitan political authority yet comparatively more dependent on Byzantine ecclesiastical authority.¹⁷³ This is the reason why the Christian community in Kiev before Vladimir is given so little attention in the *PVL*, so as to dramatize his ultimate decision to convert.¹⁷⁴ In reality, we know this to be pure myth as well. Christianity had been a major element within Kiev dating back to the time of Phōtios.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 574.

¹⁷² Ibid., 576.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 578. We would perhaps agree with Ostrowski when he writes, “...it [tells] us something about how Sil’vestr viewed the relationship of the Rus’ Church to the Byzantine Church—that is, as its progeny and, ultimately, its dependent.” Although he never says so explicitly, in my own view, Ostroski implies that this narrative concerning the events of 986-989 was not about historical accuracy so much as it was about renegotiating the ecclesiastical and political relationship between Constantinople and Kiev in 1116.

¹⁷⁴ K. Ericsson, 1966, 98 & 108. According to Ericsson, “...Russian chroniclers erased all straightforward evidence recording this conversion, in order not to diminish the glorification of Volodimer as the first ruler of Rus’ to accept baptism, so that only indirect traces were left, pointing unmistakably towards Christianisation in the 9th century... That Byzantine annals ignore Volodimer’s conversion is natural, for his was not the initial conversion of the Rhos.” Similarly, Soviet historians, among them, B. D. Grekov, have pointed out this problem within the *PVL*. According to Grekov, “Христианство стало проникать к нам задолго до X века.” (B. D. Grekov, 1953, 476.) I would translate this as, “Christianity first penetrated into our country long before the X century.” (*Y. Sdobnikov has translated this sentence without*

The Rus' raid on Constantinople in 860, over a century before even the beginning of Vladimir's reign initiated all respective perceptions of and interactions between the empire and Kievan Rus'. It was immediately after this attack that patriarch Phōtios concentrated on the rapid conversion of much of the barbarian population, dispatching Constantine (Cyril) and Methodios to first Chersōn and thence to Khazaria and after their journey to Rome, their disciples had voyaged to Bulgaria by 885. While their efforts were rather fruitless in Khazaria, we know from the epistles of Phōtios that they achieved more success in both Bulgaria and Kievan Rus'.¹⁷⁵ The slow and steady adoption of Christianity by much of the Kievan population would undoubtedly have caused significant pressure on subsequent Kievan rulers to convert over the course of this 122 year¹⁷⁶ period. By avoiding mention of an earlier Christian presence in Rus', the entire

acknowledging Grekov's original remark "к нам;" instead, Sdobnikov translates his words as "this country." This translation is slightly untrue to the original. Grekov's original use of the words "к нам," meaning "our [country]," connoting a heavily vested interest in the writing. Sdobnikov's translation misses an important point, that Grekov's historical scholarship maintained a significant agenda in interpreting the events of 987-989. On this point, see appendix II below). On the following page (477) he acknowledges that a certain segment of the Kievan Rus' population had accepted baptism as early as the ninth century, which is in contrast to the dramatization of the PVL account of the "Korsun' Legend." This is also the same reason that Vladimir's early reign before 988 is treated by the chronicler as despicable, in his countless wives and concubines, his murder of his brother Iaropolk and subsequent "...intercourse with his brother's wife..." clearly the chronicler meant to contrast Vladimir's horrible pagan nature before baptism with his character after baptism. See for example, "From a sinful root evil fruit is produced, inasmuch as his mother had been a nun, and besides Vladimir had intercourse with her without having married her. Svyatopolk was therefore born in adultery, and for this reason his father did not love him; for he had two fathers, Yaropolk and Vladimir." (S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, PVL, 93.) This rhetoric contrasts heavily with the chronicler's praise of Vladimir's charitable nature after his baptism:

With the thought that the weak and the sick could not easily reach his palace, he arranged that wagons should be brought in, and after having them loaded with bread, meat, fish, various fruits, mead in casks, and kvass, he ordered them driven out through the city.

The drivers were under instructions to call out, 'Where is there a poor man or a beggar who cannot walk?' To such they distributed according to their necessities. (p. 121-122.)

Significantly, J. L. Evans points out this literary device in his survey of the events of 988 in regards to the chronicler's agenda of dramatizing the ultimate baptism. See J. L. Evans, 1981, 45.

¹⁷⁵ For the letters of Phōtios and her commentaries on them, see D. S. White, 1981, 26-31 & 88-97.

Importantly it was at this point in 866 that Boris I of Bulgaria accepted Byzantine Christianity (The PVL gives the dating as 6377/869, see S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, PVL, 60.), which commenced over a century's worth of Bulgarian translations of Byzantine chronicles, hagiographies and other hagiographical, apocryphal and chronological works by Bulgarian monks thus making significant contributions to medieval Slavonic literature. It was the literature that would eventually have an enormous impact on the baptism of Vladimir and the PVL's account of it between the late ninth century and the early twelfth. For a significant discourse on precisely this phenomenon, see F. J. Thomson, 1999, "The Bulgarian Contribution to the Reception of Byzantine Culture in Kievan Rus': the Myths and the Enigma," article IV, 214-261.

¹⁷⁶ This dating is based on counting from 866 to 988, based on Vladimir's baptism in 988 before his capture of Chersōn in 989.

purpose of the *PVL* was to “glorify” Kievan princes regardless of truth.¹⁷⁷ It would also be imperative to digress from the precise extract of the “Korsun’ Legend” in the *PVL* onto its basis in Bulgarian chronicle traditions dating from the time of Boris’ conversion. This being said, we would be well advised to investigate not so much what the passage in question seeks to confirm so much as its historiographical reception as truth by centuries of Russian historians eager to revise the very basis of Russia’s medieval relationship with Byzantium.¹⁷⁸

The apocryphal nature of the passage is itself heavily based on earlier apocryphal writings from both Bulgaria and Byzantium.¹⁷⁹ As Thomson has specifically demonstrated, the recording of the baptism of Vladimir is as much based on Bulgarian antecedents as it is on Byzantine hagiography itself, notably by authors such as Hamartolos, Malalas, Synkellos and Chrysostom,¹⁸⁰ not to mention Old Testament literary precedents.¹⁸¹ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor have explicitly drawn attention to the Old Testament *Paleya*¹⁸² as a heavy influence on the legendary functions of Kievan

¹⁷⁷ G. P. Majeska, 2005, 418. Specifically, he writes, “It should be remembered that although the Primary Chronicle is the basic source for the history of early Rus’, it is a dynastic chronicle written to glorify the Rurikid princes of the Kievan state, particularly Yaroslav the Wise, whose descendants commissioned it.” As V. Terras, 1965, has written, the *PVL* was “...based largely on oral tradition, [and] that both are guilty of the usual sins of medieval historiography, and that, moreover, a strong national...bias caused the Russian no less than the Greek chronicler to manipulate the facts *ad maiorem gloriam* of his own hero.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁸ D. Obolensky, 1994, 193-204.

¹⁷⁹ S. Zenkovsky, 1963, 8.

¹⁸⁰ For an extended exposition on the sources that tenth-century Slavonic literature was based on, see F. J. Thomson, 1999, “The Nature of the Reception of Christian Byzantine Culture in Russia in the Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries and its Implications for Russian Culture,” article I, 109-110 & 113-115. See also H. G. Lunt, 1988, 260. He (Lunt) writes,

The translations of the historical works (Hamartolos and Flavius as well as Malalas) betray their Bulgarian origin despite more or less severe editing at the hands of generations of East Slavic copyists and redactors, and are to be ascribed to the tenth century. Even the apocryphal works which are known only from later fragmentary evidence embedded in the *Paleja* attest rather to the varied taste of the first Christian Slavs in the Bulgarian Empire in the 9th-10th centuries than to East Slavic translators of the 11th-12th centuries.

¹⁸¹ F. J. Thomson, 1999, is not alone when he asserts: “The dependence of the Primary Chronicle upon the Slavonic translation of George Hamartolos’ *Chronicon breve* is a long established fact.” See article III, “The Implications of the Absence of Quotations of Untranslated Greek Works in Original Early Russian Literature, Together with a Critique of a Distorted Picture of Early Bulgarian Culture,” 64-66. See also J. Meyendorff, 1981, 17-23. For a further analysis of Hamartolos’ work and the nature of its influence on the Slavonic literatures of both Bulgarian and Rus’ monasticism, see G. Vzdornov, “Иллюстрации к Хронике Георгия Амартола,” 1969, 205-225.

¹⁸² The *Paleya*, according to Cross & Sherbowitz-Wetzor was a formulation of polemic literature, usually against Jews and Muslims, largely based on Bulgarian-Slavonic translation(s) of Hamartolos, which is easily demonstrated in the aforementioned *PVL* passage: “...in Old-Russian literature, [the *Paleya*] is

literature. That the *PVL* selection in question is largely based on Old Testament literature is largely undisputed, and is something which Ostrowski has capably demonstrated, bearing the literary form of chiasmus, well known to Old Testament scholars, it should fully serve to demonstrate that if we regard the *PVL* passage as a legitimate historiographical source, we might as well regard the Old Testament tracts it is based on, the *Paleyā*, as legitimate history as well. The fact is that no secular historian would base a serious historiographical argument on those passages from the *PVL* passage that Ostrowski has demonstrated are derived from Genesis.¹⁸³ The only sufficient conclusion we can make regarding the historiographical legitimacy of this *PVL* excerpt is that it is heavily based on Bulgarian translations and Old Testament precedents. It is fundamentally a hagiographical extraction, written by monks who were more concerned with consecrated wisdom rather than historical accuracy.

2.5 Hagiographical influences on the PVL's "Chersōn Legend:" Byzantium, Bulgaria, Rus & the Old Testament

“The conversion of Kievan Rus’ did not lead to the introduction of Byzantine Greek culture, but to the transfer *en masse* of the results of over a century of Bulgarian efforts to receive and adapt that culture to Bulgaria’s own needs.”¹⁸⁴ One could easily argue that these words perfectly summarize the cultural transfer between Byzantium and Kiev after 988. It was a cultural transfer of Orthodox values: literature, architecture, iconography and theology, to mention a few of these cultural elements. None of these aspects were or are “necessarily sinister or heretical.” Nevertheless, they leave, as is the exact case of the *PVL*’s illustration of Vladimir’s capture of Chersōn in 989, “the modern student of [this] text to attempt the anachronistic task of disentangling the sources.”¹⁸⁵

understood [as] a synopsis of Old Testament history supplemented by material from apocryphal books and various interpretative accretions.” See S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, *PVL*, 1953, 24-25 & n25, 222 (introduction). Šakhmatov asserts that that the Old-Russian *Paleyā* was based on an earlier Bulgarian tract from the late ninth century. A further detailed study on the basis of the *PVL* sources in Bulgarian literature from the late ninth and early tenth centuries can be found in A. A. Šakhmatov, 1904, 199-272.

¹⁸³ D. Ostrowski, 2006, 570-571.

¹⁸⁴ F. J. Thomson, 1999, article IV, “The Bulgarian Contribution to the Reception of Byzantine Culture in Kievan Rus’: the Myths and the Enigma,” 214. See also Archpriest N. Shivarov, 1992, 18.

¹⁸⁵ S. Franklin, 2002, “Some Apocryphal Sources of Kievan Russian Historiography,” article III, 2. This is in turn due, as F. J. Thomson, 1999, has argued, to the exclusive absorption of Byzantine theological thought and literature by Kievan Rus’, specifically without grasping classical philosophy which generations of Byzantine monks thought was not worth rendering into Slavonic. See “The Intellectual Silence of Early Russia,” 14, (introduction).

As we have already discussed, the threads from this *PVL* passage were woven together intentionally and anachronistically over a century after the fact in a deliberate attempt to forge a self-identifying cultural mythology for the medieval Kievan Rus' people. To the point, the *PVL* and related literature of Kievan Rus', not to mention earlier Bulgarian tracts and translations as well as the hagiographical and other monkish literatures of the contemporary Byzantine realm, were not the Atticizing works produced by figures such as Michaēl Psellos and Leōn Diakonos, being more valuable in a historiographical context, rather they were valuable for understanding other aspects of the societies from whence they came, but not for understanding specific chronological and causal accuracy. The sources the *PVL* passage is based on, the "Korsun' Legend," "were popular monkish works rather than serious histories."¹⁸⁶

Monastic literature had long been concerned with the revelation of divine wisdom, usually, but not always, at the expense of earthly wisdom, namely historical accuracy. The monks, whether Byzantine, Bulgarian or Rus', recorded polemics which served their own interests instead of objective ends. This is not to say, however, that all Byzantine monastic literature usually fit this paradigm; indeed this supposition has been reformulated recently, but nevertheless in the specific case of Kievan Rus' monastic literature, it makes little sense to argue for a decidedly "secular" undercurrent of thought.¹⁸⁷ In the *PVL*, we find this phenomenon, for example, when Vladimir recited

¹⁸⁶ F. J. Thomson, 1999, "The Nature of the Reception of Christian Byzantine Culture in Russia in the Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries and its Implications for Russian Culture," article I, 109-110 & 113-120. Regarding the extent of the available literature, Byzantine, Bulgarian and otherwise, available to Kievan monks in the eleventh century, to draw from in the creation of the "Korsun' Legend," I believe it is significant to quote Thomson here, from this particular article:

It is hardly surprising [...] that the bulk of the corpus is made up of works of a practical, didactic, moral and ascetic nature. Even the works of a more secular nature on history or geography (John Malalas, George Hamartolus, Cosmas Indicopleustes) reflect not the intellectual world of Byzantine culture but the obscurantist world of Byzantine monasticism, which was largely hostile to secular learning. True knowledge for the monk was not the despised trivium and quadrivium but the Bible and the Fathers.

¹⁸⁷ This point would appear to merit separate consideration as an example of Sil'vestr's agenda in portraying Vladimir's reign in a legendary fashion. See for example n202 below: P. Stephenson, 2000, 11, explicitly maintains, "Panegyrists were concerned primarily with presenting those being praised in a certain manner..." Hagiographies and chronicles are what Magdalino and Nelson have termed "low-brow" literature, as opposed to the Atticizing historical literature. See P. Magdalino & R. Nelson, 2010, "Introduction, μωσέα τὸν μέγαν οὐ λάβεν εἰς τύπον ἄρκιον οὐδεῖς," 9. I would also point out that this notion of Kievan literature, particularly the *PVL*, constructing certain narratives in chronicles, was done so "...for certain political, ideological, economic, or other purposes." See R. R. Garagozov, 2002, 60. Nevertheless, for the challenge to this distinction between high-brow Atticizing literature and low-brow

the creed after baptism, including an anti-Latin polemic: “Do not accept the teachings of the Latins, whose instruction is vicious.”¹⁸⁸ Other such excerpts are to be found for example in the Sermon of Law and Grace of Hilarion in his discussion of Jews and Christians.¹⁸⁹ To put it succinctly, the medieval mentality¹⁹⁰ of ninth-eleventh century Orthodox monks was distinctly at odds with more secular Atticizing historians; the attitude toward learning, bequeathed from Byzantium to Russia, was not secular in nature and the only translation of any serious history, that of Zonaras’ *Epitome Historiarum* into Russian Slavonic occurred only by the XIV century.¹⁹¹ Otherwise, as its authors were uniquely aware of their late arrival into the Christian world, the literature of Kievan Rus’ relied on biblical precedents for validation.

The *PVL* abounds in Old Testament references,¹⁹² particularly in the “Korsun’ Legend,” which by itself should serve to demonstrate the dubious historical reliability of this section. At the time of writing, Old Testament references would serve to legitimate

monastic literature, see above n38 for the articles by Beck and Nilsson, who dispute this more antiquated dichotomy in Byzantine literature. Regardless, as I would argue, this dichotomy still serves its purpose in terms of early Kievan Rus’ literature, which was essentially all monastic.

¹⁸⁸ This would additionally serve to confirm the writing of the passage as much later than 989. This excerpt clearly refers to the schism of 1054, well after Vladimir’s baptism, and comfortably positioned as an intentional devise for securing a precise ecclesiastical perception of the Western church, again, on behalf the Byzantine church. See S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, *PVL*, 1953, 115. Similar polemics can be found, as previously discussed, in Vladimir’s investigation of the faiths, as well as his post-baptismal response to Perun and the other pagan gods. Comparable polemics can be also be found in the work of the monk Iakov. See P. Hollingsworth, 1992, 167.

¹⁸⁹ S. Franklin, 1991, 3-17.

¹⁹⁰ Only with hesitation do I include the word mentality due to its inherent unreliability and tendency to over-generalize, perhaps to the amusement of prof. Macrides, who shares this caution when using the word. However, other scholars, esteemed and otherwise, do use it, particularly in regards to precisely this topic of the usage of hagiography, in this case the lives of Boris and Glëb, (see for example B. A. Uspenskij, 2000) to cement the newly Christianized “medieval Rus’ *mentalité*” by the early twelfth century. See P. Hollingsworth, 1992, 1 (p. 50 of the introduction). Due to the extensive literature on the lives of Boris and Glëb, however, I will not undertake a sophisticated analysis of all its relevant secondary literature, only to demonstrate its comparative relevance to hagiographical tendencies within the “Korsun’ Legend” of the *PVL*.

¹⁹¹ F. J. Thomson, 1999, “The Nature of the Reception of Christian Byzantine Culture in Russia in the Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries and its Implications for Russian Culture,” article I, 118-119.

¹⁹² We need not reference every single example of Old Testament referencing in the *PVL* from the beginning up to 989, but for a few instances, see S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, *PVL*, 1953, 58; K. Ericsson, 1966, 106; W. K. Hanak, 1973, 22-23. Hanak, for example writes, “The *Povest*’ copiests and other early Russian writers drew extensively upon the Old Testament texts now introduced into Kievan Russia and formulated a historiographical tradition and a modified concept of rulership based upon their readings.”

these versions of historical accuracy.¹⁹³ But the perception of historical accuracy has undoubtedly changed in the past millennium. Few modern historians would regard the Old Testament, most particularly the first five books of the Old Testament as a credible historical source, which would appear not to lend more credibility to this narrative in the *PVL*, especially in light of Ostrowski's estimation of it as based on various episodes in Genesis. What this narrative does achieve however is a likening of Rus' with ancient Israel, thereby creating a "New Israel" in Russia, with the purpose of building Russian identity,¹⁹⁴ just as Constantine refounded Byzantium as Nova Roma, building the basis of Byzantine identity. This was the entire purpose for the "Korsun' Legend," as Šakhmatov himself had remarked on it, "Сии есть новии Константинъ великаго Рима, иже крѣстися самъ и люди своя крѣсти."¹⁹⁵ This in turn was based on Byzantine imperial habits of encouraging identification with the biblical chosen people during the later ninth and tenth centuries.¹⁹⁶ It was Bulgarian translations which enabled this Byzantine literature to be read and interpreted by Kievan monks after 989. Much of this literature was involved with summarizing the Old Testament into the *Paleya*, which in turn informed the writing of the "Korsun' Legend." In short, the "Korsun' Legend" is most

¹⁹³ S. Franklin, 2002, "The Empire of the *Rhomaioi* as Viewed from Kievan Russia: Aspects of Byzantino-Russian Cultural Relations," article II, 530-531. Kievan Russia's place in the Byzantine world was neither totally vassal nor client state, although one could argue Kiev became an ecclesiastical vassal of sorts to Constantinople. For a further study on newly converted peoples' use and reliance on Old Testament precedents, see P. Magdalino & R. Nelson, 2010 "Introduction, Μωσῆα τὸν μέγαν οὐ λάβεν εἰς τύπον ἄρκιον οὐδέϊς," 1-37. To quote an excerpt with regards to the baptism of Vladimir and the rest of the Kievan population in 989,

The transition from one source of identity to another is most easily understood in the cases of newly converted ethnic groups, whose members on the one hand wanted to resist political and cultural absorption into a larger imperial polity [and identity] and on the other hand found that the historical experience of the Jews—their tribal system, nomadic past, and state of constant warfare, not to mention their royal priestly elites—spoke to their own situation. (p. 13.)

In any case, by following Old Testament precedents as the "Korsun' Legend" of the *PVL* seeks to, the Russian identity is created by both emulating Byzantium but also ancient Israel, namely by becoming the new Israel, much as Bulgaria and Byzantium had sought to previously. For self-perceived identities as the "new Israel," especially for the purposes of building group identity in the middle ages, see p. 9-13.

¹⁹⁴ See the previous n193 above and P. Magdalino & R. Nelson, 2010 "Introduction, Μωσῆα τὸν μέγαν οὐ λάβεν εἰς τύπον ἄρκιον οὐδέϊς," 13. See also I. Biliarsky, 2010, "Old Testament Models and the State in Early Medieval Bulgaria," 272. See also W. K. Hanak, 1973, 62.

¹⁹⁵ A. A. Šakhmatov, "Корсунская Легенда о Крещении Владимира," 1908, 119. I have translated this as "They now had a new Great Constantine of Rome as he and his people were baptized."

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 18. Magdalino and Nelson argue this was due to Byzantine offensives in the Levant throughout this period.

essentially a hagiographical work,¹⁹⁷ only very loosely pertaining to real historical events. In this way, the closest Byzantine hagiographical precedents to this Rus' hagiography, aside from earlier Rus' authors such as the monk Iakov and the metropolitan Hilarion, are arguably works such as the Slavonic Life of Stephen of Surozh¹⁹⁸ which is itself debatably loosely based on the Life of St. George of Amastris.¹⁹⁹ Indeed it is common for scholars to discredit the historicity of the Slavonic

¹⁹⁷ Whoever authored, edited or compiled the "Korsun' Legend" within the *PVL*, whether he was Sil'vestr, Nestor, or another monk, clearly sanctifies Vladimir in a hagiographical fashion. My point is not concerned with the authorship of the "Korsun' Legend," so much as that the "Korsun' Legend" in the *PVL* is a fundamental work of Kievan Rus' hagiography, just as the "Память и похвала Яков мниха и Житие князя Владимира по древнейшему списку," though most likely written far earlier than the *PVL*, is nevertheless a hagiography as well. Needless to say, both sources must be dealt with by scholars with much more skepticism than has hitherto been the common practice.

¹⁹⁸ S. A. Ivanov, 2006, 109-167. See sections 31-32 especially, a Rus' prince named Bravlin (Бравлинъ) and his alleged decent from Novgorod to capture both Chersōn and Sougdaia. Bravlin seizes the treasures laid on the coffin of the deceased saint Stephen and this causes his face to be turned backward. His eventual conversion to Christianity comes as a result of his returning of the saint's treasure and the curing of his backward face. Significantly, there is also the mention of a Byzantine empress named Anna who is also healed from an unnamed disease. As Ivanov claims (p. 111) that this empress Anna is none other than Anna Porphyrogennētē, it can thus be asserted that this *vita* was surely written much later than that of George of Amastris, and also significantly, that memories of the iconoclast period still lingered into the late tenth century in the Crimea, long after they had receded on the mainland; clearly this is a iconodule hagiography, while it has indeed been argued that the Life of George of Amastris was an iconoclast hagiography. See R. Sharp, 2011, 57. For an extensive comparison of the two hagiographies, see A. A. Šakhmatov, 1908, "Корсунская Легенда о Крещении Владимира" 120-125. For a longer, if relatively biased, extrapolation of comparisons between these two hagiographical references in correlation with the events of 988-989, see A. N. Sakharov, 1980, 22-36. Sakharov, it seems, is overly interested in tying Vladimir to Bravlin in a generically patriotic attempt at glorifying the medieval Kievan state at the expense of Byzantium. He writes on p. 27,

В довоенные годы бельгийский историк А. Грегуар и его ученица Ж. да Коста Луйе выступили с отрицанием достоверности сведений «Жития св. Стефана Сурожского» и возродили старую версию об идентичности походов Бравлина и Владимира Святославич, чторы доказать невозможность существования в IX в. славянского государства, способного угрожать византийским границам.

I have translated this excerpt as,

Before the war the Belgian historian A. Gregoire and his student J. da Costa Louille made a denial of the authenticity of information of 'The Life of St. Stephen of Surož' and revived the old version of the identity of campaigns Bravlin and Vladimir Sviatoslavich that show the impossibility of the existence in the ninth century of the Slavic state, capable of threatening the Byzantine frontier. See H. Gregoire, 1940, 231-248.

¹⁹⁹ V. Vasil'evskij, 1893, 1-73, trans. D. Jenkins et al., 2001. Significantly, this hagiography was also replete with Old Testament references, (see p. 13) which is neither unusual for iconoclast and post-iconoclast hagiography nor by itself signatory of having influence on Kievan Rus' literature, let alone the *PVL* itself. Yet it does underline the closeness between the Byzantine Crimea and Paphlagonia, especially in regards to Rus' raids on Amastris (p. 18-20) even though it was written well before 842 (W. Treadgold, 1988, 421 n306) ca. 820 (R. Sharp, 2011, 57). However, like most hagiographies, a precise chronology was neither particularly important to the author nor any other matter that pertained less to his narrative than the punishment visited on the raiding party of Rus' upon breaking into the church to plunder the relics of George, which is strikingly similar to Bravlin's backward-turned face upon his attempt to seize and deface the relics of St. Stephen of Surož.

Life of Stephen of Surozh,²⁰⁰ and furthermore, as Efthymiadis has asserted concerning ninth-tenth century Byzantine hagiographies, “old hagiographical accounts were distilled into new bottles and flasks.”²⁰¹ This characteristic would reflect the *PVL*’s relation of Vladimir’s healing of his eyesight as basically inherited right from older hagiographies such as the healings and conversions of Rus’ invaders in these two aforementioned. As Hollingsworth has stated in reference to Rus’ hagiographies, “In constructing a *vita* an author would freely dip into the potpourri of customary genres and commonplaces, because only by associating his holy man with past paradigms of saintly charisma and conduct could he tap fully into the reservoir of his audience’s expectations.”²⁰²

While we need not fully engage in countless debates over when, where, why and precisely by whom a hagiography was written during this period and every single influence it may have had on this passage within the *PVL*, I would suggest that we can, as of this point, set aside the “Korsun’ Legend” within the *PVL* as largely hagiographic material, unsuitable for basing significant authentic historical reconstruction on. With the “Korsun’ Legend” eliminated as a reliable source on the event of Vladimir’s baptism, and the limited value of Leōn Diakonos’ troublingly short description of it, we are left to pore over the archaeological records in search of the true status of Chersōn as either a city

²⁰⁰ S. A. Ivanov, 2006, 109. The historicity of the Life of George of Amastris is hardly credible as well, and most scholars, with the exception of R. Sharp, 2011, 58, seriously doubt a possible Russian raid on the Paphlagonian coast in the early 9th century, let alone in the 8th, and indeed not long after Arab raids from the South, which also seem highly unlikely reaching the Pontic coastline as far north as Amastris. If most modern scholars would dismiss the historicity of a work middle-Byzantine hagiographical literature, why should they regard the work of a Kievan Rus’ hagiography as any more historically accurate?

²⁰¹ S. Efthymiadis, 2011, 76.

²⁰² P. Hollingsworth, 1992, xix (introduction). Hollingsworth goes to argue that the “melding” of Rus’ hagiographical works between Rus’, Bulgarian and Byzantine material does not compromise their historiographical function, however he does acknowledge that “...one must be careful about which sorts of questions one asks of the texts and cautious about asserting where, in a given text or passage, Byzantium leaves off and Rus’ begins.” (p. xxi). Along with Hollingsworth’s quote, I would also point out another quote, this regarding the *PVL* specifically from L. I. Novikova & I. N. Sizemskaja, “Повесть временных лет имеет компилятивный характер, т.е. она написана несколькими авторами-летописцами, каждый из которых свободно пользовался чужими текстами, дополняя их своими сведениями, а порой давая и свое истолкование уже обозначенных событий.” 13. I have translated this as, “The *PVL* has a compilative nature, i.e. it was written by several author-chroniclers, each of which freely using another’s text, supplementing them with their own considerations, and at times giving his own interpretation of events already designated.” Essentially, the work has been layered over for centuries by generations of authors and compilers, as Novikova & Sizemskaja claim, and in however many cases, these layerings have freely adapted the texts of their predecessors, supplemented their own texts and the resulting agendas and give their own interpretations, even as the text itself is changed and rewritten. As P. Stephenson, 2000, 11, has asserted, “Panegyrists were concerned primarily with presenting those being praised in a certain manner, and saw mere historical events as opportunities to allude to familiar models and draw from a corpus of imagery and motifs that are only now being deciphered.”

loyal to Constantinople which Vladimir captured in 989 either despite or on behalf of Basil II.

As we have already discussed, Chersōn had always been in a position for pursuing autonomy; the city had always had a firm rooting in self government and the antique πόλις status dating back to the pre-Christian period and certainly from even before the time of Justinian II and the subsequent Khazar domination of the Crimea through the middle and late Byzantine periods.²⁰³ As far as the period of the Phōkas rebellion is concerned, he drew supporters from all over the empire as Armenians, ever eager to throw off the Byzantine suzerain, not only overwhelmingly sided with his forces, but also comprised them. Many other groups, disaffected by what they perceived as imperial indifference to their troubles supported what they thought would cause their liberation. As we have already learned of the farthest flung territories of the empire, such as Antioch,²⁰⁴ Trebizond²⁰⁵ and Italy,²⁰⁶ the farther an area from Constantinople, the more

²⁰³ After the Tzouloi rebellion in 1016, Chersōn rose in rebellion once again in the late 1060s and 1070s, corresponding with another period of Bulgarian unrest. (See V. A. Anokhin, 1980, 121 and P. Stephenson, 2000, 135-138), which corresponds precisely with the growing power and autonomy of the Gabrades in Trebizond during the 1060s (see A. Bryer, A. W. Dunn & J. W. Nesbitt, “Theodore Gabras, Duke of Chaldia (†1098) and the Gabrades: Portraits, Sites and Seals,” 2003, 51-70.) In addition, it would be important to note that after the pivotal moment of April 1204, Chersōn chose to recognize the Grand Komnēnoi during the late Byzantine period instead of the Constantinopolitan Palaiologoi, although no archaeological evidence has as yet been uncovered confirming economic connections with Trebizond specifically. (See A. Rabinowitz, et. al., 2011, 450.)

However, S. Vryonis Jr., has argued that even immediately after Manzikert, Byzantine authority was still recognized in Trebizond, although according to Anna Komnēnē it was captured briefly by the Selcuks and then retaken by the Trapezuntines before 1075. (See A. Bryer & D. Winfield, 1985, 182.) It would also be important to note here that the fall of Constantinople to the forces of the Fourth Crusade in April 1204 was not the precise cause of the breakaway of Trebizond from the capital in 1204; Alexios and his brother David of Trebizond seized both the city and the *thema* of Chaldia early in April of 1204 while Mourtzoufflos was occupied with the Latins. Clearly, Trapezuntines were interested in autonomy even before the city fell. See C. Mango, ed., *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, 2002, 250. Apparently, so were the Chersōnites. For a further discussion of this topic, see appendix I; in addition, for cross-Black Sea cultural connections, particularly in relation to the similarities of ecclesiastical architecture between Chersōn and Trebizond, see figure xxxiv.

²⁰⁴ See n47 above.

²⁰⁵ See n203 above. In addition, Armenians had made up a prominent portion of the population of Trebizond since the Arab raids into central Anatolia during the eighth century as 12,000 Armenian soldiers and their families migrated to Trebizond and the adjacent Black Sea coastline, becoming those who are today known by a variety of identities rooted in the word *Hemshin*. See I. Kuznetsov, 2009, 403.

²⁰⁶ As we will discuss later in section 3.4, Italy too, as an outlying province, noncontiguous to mainland Hellas or Anatolia as were the most other provinces with the exception of Chersōn, functioned quite similarly in that as a *katepanikion*, a *katepanō* would have had relatively free reign in his exercising of authority due to his remoteness from the emperor in Constantinople and his adjacency to the Latin church in Rome, the “Holy Roman” Empire and the Muslims of neighboring Sicily. As we already know concerning Kalokyriēs Delfinas, his tenure as *katepanō* of Italy lasted from 982-983 and was terminated for an as yet unknown reason.

In the same vein, political and economic differences of agenda in fact existed in other far-flung cities as well, between imperially appointed *doukes* (which, during the Komnēnoi period, largely replaced the titles of *stratēgos* and *katepanō*) and local elites, i.e., *archontes*. Middle-Byzantine Dyrrachium would

likely the locality would support Phōkas, who we know from seals, was himself the *doux* of Chaldia, Kolōneia and Mesopotamia,²⁰⁷ all heavily populated by Armenians. These territories, beholden to their respective imperial *stratēgoi* and *kommerkiarioi*, through taxes, whether in kind or in currency,²⁰⁸ and levies, not only had varying measures of de facto political independence before the thematic restructurings of the ninth century, but continued to effectively enjoy varying levels of economic autonomy.²⁰⁹ Fitting in with all of these categorizations, not to mention her own distinct politically autonomous tendencies since 711 and the continued political and economic authority of her native *prōtevontes* and *archontes*,²¹⁰ Chersōn must have supported the rebellion of Bardas Phōkas between 987 and 989.

illustrate another case study of local autonomy in this period. See for example P. Stephenson, 2000, 183-186.

²⁰⁷ B. Krsmanović, 2008, 123-126. The Phōkai also had extensive landholdings in the Kappadokian *thema*, especially later in the eleventh century. S. Vryonis, 1971, 25 n132. The Armenian population of the *thema* of Kappadokia was also quite significant as Armenians and Syrian Christian settlers repopulated the *thema* after the Byzantine recapture of Melitēnē in 934. See A. P. Každan, 1991, vol. 1, 378-379.

²⁰⁸ A. Dunn, 1993, 10, argues that during and shortly after the Iconoclast periods and before the remonetization of the ninth century (granting differences between provincial remonetizations), *kommerkiarioi* now received taxes in kind “stemming from economic decline and the retreat from monetized exchange.” After remonetization, in the case of Chersōn beginning with Michael III (V. A. Anokhin, 1980, 119), the *kommerkiarios*, because his post was in a *thema* at the fringes of the empire, and especially because Chersōn minted her own coinage, would have taken his *kommerkion* in coin rather than in kind sooner than older, more established *themata* such as Thrake, Thrakesion, Makedonia, Opsikion, Optimaton & Voukellarion. Indeed, Chersōn’s increased trade and remonetization is corroborated by A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 2002, 662, who write, “During the second half of the ninth century, Kherson’s mint struck an increased quantity of coins, which suggests that trade was flourishing.” This was due, as Dunn argues, to the fact that these *themata* at the fringes of the empire, precisely those that did and would have supported Phōkas, were in “theatres of war (*i.e.*, areas prone to compulsory purchase) or to sites of policed exchange with foreigners (particularly Bulgars, Russians, Arabs)...” They were, at least in the cases of Italy and Antioch, relatively autonomous *katepanikia*. See p. 12-14.

²⁰⁹ For example, as A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 2002, 662, have pointed out, archaeological material including ceramic evidence of amphorae, glazed glass and metal wares from the eighth to the tenth centuries illustrates Chersōn’s place in balancing her commercial relations relatively equally between the Byzantine and Khazar spheres.

²¹⁰ Certainly in the ninth century, in terms of Chersōnite *archontes*, we know that their authority was equal to the early thematic *stratēgoi*. See A. Bryer & D. Winfield, 1985, 317, n23. Here, Bryer & Winfield refer to Uspenskij’s *Taktikon*, in which “*Archontes* existed side by side with *stratēgoi*, especially in outlying districts, such as Chersōn and Crete. Chaldia [also] falls into this category...” In addition, according to J. Shepard, Chersōnite seals of the period indicate that the Greek word ἄρχων was also frequently used synonymously with πρωτεύων. See J. Shepard, 2006, 44. On the contrary, according to R. Sharp, 2011, 245-246, Chersōnite *archontes* referred specifically to the city’s ruling class as a whole instead of specific individuals, along with a council, a *boule* perhaps, of town elders, termed πάτερεις τῆς πόλεως. He points out that the title στεφανηφοροῦντος was additionally used in particular as interchange with the title “πρωτεύωντος,” as his spelling for some reason is different than that used in the *DAI*, which he cites nevertheless. He cites Ahrweiler in her argument that Chersōnite *archons* were different from imperial naval commanders. (Ahrweiler, 1966, 72.) In addition, the seals of those who held the title of *archon* of Chersōn were also very often imperial *spatharioi* and *spatharokandidatoi*. See figures xi, xii & xiii. It

While we would absolutely and vehemently seek to avoid exploiting archaeological material as a “handmaiden of the historical narrative,” it is undeniable that such existing evidence, when compiled, can be used to reconstruct aspects of a plausible model of Chersōn in the middle Byzantine period. Whereas many different types of disparate archaeological material exist, independently representing highly precise aspects of the economic life of the city during the period in question, for example, explicitly epigraphic, ceramic, numismatic, sigillographic or monumental data, when assembled, these archaeological studies and pursuits can be amalgamated to propose a partially reconstructed model of the economy of Chersōn in the late tenth century. They, as I will attempt to demonstrate in the following subsections, illustrate a quasi-Byzantine fishing, trading and proselytizing colony anchored to her role as a channel between the steppe and the empire. Having unquestionably fielded her own, actively participated in, and supported, numerous rebellions and usurpations, attempts and successes, during the middle-Byzantine period, Chersōn, based on the scrutiny of archaeological evidences such as those listed above, would have been precisely the sort of Byzantine *thema* to embrace the pan-Anatolian Phōkas rebellion between 987-989. This was the real reason she was captured, burnt, and handed back to Basil II in 989 by Vladimir I of Kiev.

3.2 Socio-political evidence

The first item of non-economic evidence points to Chersōn’s role as a possible haven for diversity and its resultant elements of separatism during the period in question. Chersōn’s sustained urban diversity was a further reflection of diverse allegiances within the town, which is revealed by the discovery of liturgical-ware²¹¹ dating to the ninth-tenth centuries.²¹² Zalesskaya has provided a fascinating inquiry into these white clay cups

would appear that the title *archon*, in the context of the *thema* of Chersōn, has yet to be truly untangled, although I suppose it is with confidence we can conclude that even after thematization, in the late ninth and throughout the tenth century, the elite families of Chersōn preserved her traditions of autonomy and self-government. Those elite local families, still as yet unhappy with their statuses being supplanted by Amastrians and other imperially appointed mainlanders in Chersōn, would have both looked back to the times before imperial intervention most likely as a sort-of “golden age” and simultaneously would most likely have made choices that reflected their contempt of Constantinopolitan authority.

²¹¹ T. Yashaeva, E. Denisova, et. al., 2011, 628 [412-413].

²¹² A. L. Jakobson, 1959, 358. According to the catalog of Chersōnite finds, however, they date to the late 10th century and the turn of the 11th. See previous n211 above.

excavated in Chersōn in 1949,²¹³ which she has interpreted as liturgical bowls for wine consumption with a peculiarly iconoclast cross at the base,²¹⁴ which Shepard has interpreted as evidence of Chersōn's active proselytizing influence on the northern Black Sea littoral.²¹⁵ We know that Crimean wine, no doubt a large quantity of which would have filled these mugs, was quite popular in Kiev in the second half of the tenth century, both before and certainly after 988.²¹⁶ If Zalesskaya's interpretation is correct, the presence of "iconoclast" liturgical ware would suggest three things: first, that Chersōn was fundamentally a "devolved missionary station"²¹⁷ supplying liturgical wine to adjacent points around the northern Black Sea region and second, that the Rus' had developed a taste for wine predating the late tenth century, which the Chersōnites exported to Kiev in or along with these cups,²¹⁸ providing a decidedly economic dimension to Vladimir's reasons for converting, as even the *PVL* acknowledges that the

²¹³ V. Zalesskaya, 1986, 219. These peculiar liturgical mugs were unearthed in the northern section of the town, precisely where the urban elite resided. See A. Bortoli & M Kazanski, 2002, 659. For color images of these mugs, see T. Yashaeva, E. Denisova, et. al., 2011, 344 & 628 [412-413]; 348 & 613 [418].

²¹⁴ Ibid, 220. She writes, "The vegetable-geometric decoration indicates adherence to the iconoclastic tradition." In the special case of Chersōn for the purposes of converting peoples beyond the northern borders of Byzantium, a few pages later she writes, "This outpost of Byzantine power in the territory to the north of the Black Sea served during the activities of the Slav preachers as a 'cultural bridge' between Byzantium and the pagans of the north. Such activities in Chersōn were largely a consequence of the emigration there of orthodox clergy caused by Iconoclasm." (p. 224.) Clearly, the effects of the previous century's iconoclasm were still heavily felt in Chersōn, even at the time of Vladimir's conversion. This in turn points to a large, heavily Iconodule tradition in Chersōn and its resulting theological conflicts during the ninth century. After the restoration of Orthodoxy, it is suggestive that these effects were still manifested as separatist tendencies within Chersōn, even as late as 988. See figure xiv for an image of these cups excavated in Chersōn.

²¹⁵ Zalesskaya's work regarding these liturgical bowls has been further-validated by Shepard who writes, "[The cups] have been interpreted as 'liturgical bowls' from which newly converted adults would drink milk and honey symbolizing the fact that they had been born again and now had access to paradise." See J. Shepard, 1996, "Spreading the Word: Byzantine Missions," 13.

²¹⁶ T. S. Noonan & R. K. Kovalev, 170, [82]. See also n22 above. As Noonan and Kovalev write, "...many members of the [Rus'] urban elite had developed a taste for wine...there is no doubt much of it came from the Byzantine Crimea. In addition to the secular market, the conversion of Vladimir and the spread of Christianity throughout the Rus' lands meant that Byzantine and Rus' merchants had a growing market for communion wine... While the historicity of many entries of the *Primary Chronicle* has often been questioned, it seems unlikely that the authors deliberately fabricated three separate instances pointing to the consumption of wine in the Rus' lands prior to Vladimir's conversion. By the time Vladimir decided to accept Orthodoxy, the Rus' elite had already become consumers of Byzantine wine." Noonan and Kovalev also make a point to note the popularity of Crimean wine for the Russians (see p. 166 [78].) This was undoubtedly a huge reason for his conversion: access to an easier, cheaper and enlarged Byzantine trade and its resulting importation prospects, not limited to wine specifically, although the liturgical cups make the point satisfactorily.

²¹⁷ J. Shepard, "Spreading the Word: Byzantine Missions," in *Emergent Elites and Byzantium in the Balkans and East-Central Europe*, 2011, 13.

²¹⁸ See above n211.

Rus' had a particular appetite for drinking. Finally, evidence of "Iconoclast traditions" in these mugs point to divisions within Chersōnite society, certainly in the ninth century, but also extending into the tenth,²¹⁹ suggesting conflicting allegiances which would have undoubtedly surfaced during one of the quantity of rebellions Chersōn participated in between the ninth and eleventh centuries.

Indications of differing allegiances within Chersōn are also corroborated by epigraphic evidence, in the form of a limestone slab depicting a menorah, of a healthy Jewish community in the town dating since at least the pre-iconoclast period,²²⁰ which undeniably with the help of Khazar influence, survived the forced conversions and banishment of the tenth century under Rōmanos I Lakapēnos.²²¹ For example, it is well-known that Cyril and Methodios took Hebrew lessons in Chersōn before venturing to Khazaria to preach. This, in turn would point to a somewhat continued Khazar influence in Chersōn, even in the late tenth century. The presence of Jews in Chersōn also corresponds with other minorities such as Armenian monophysites,²²² punitively constituting a significant Armenian community in the Crimean peninsula,²²³ notably in

²¹⁹ V. Zaleskaya, 1986, 224. It would also be important to note connections between Iconoclasm and Armenian Monophysitism. See for example G. Ostrogorsky, 2009, 172.

²²⁰ T. Yashaeva, E. Denisova, et. al., 2011, 152 & 435 [24]. The authors note that this roughly rectangular limestone slab dates to the turn of the 4th/5th century and was found in the 1935 Basilica, south of where many other ἑθνηκοί resided. At 29x23.5x18 cm, the limestone carving of this size would indicate members of a community who would have possessed at least moderate amount of wealth for this period. See also J. C. Carter, 2003, 107-108. For an image of this limestone slab, see figure xv.

²²¹ S. Runciman, 1929, 231. Significantly, Rōmanos I Lakapēnos' banishments of Jews also coincided with banishments of Armenians who refused to convert to Orthodox (Constantinopolitan) Dyophysitism. Knowing what we know about imperial habits of exiling undesirables to a particular place, not to mention her proximity to Jewish Khazaria, at the risk of coming to a hasty conclusion, I would imagine it would not be far-fetched to assume many of these disenfranchised Jews and Armenians were exiled to Chersōn earlier in the tenth century, still protected, albeit to a lesser degree, by the Jewish Khazars. We do know that many Jews themselves took refuge in Khazaria proper, which was still a steppe power in the first half of the tenth century. See S. Runciman, 1929, 115. This would appear to be corroborated by the so-called "Schechter letter," which itself explicitly names Rōmanos as "the evil one." See N. Golb & O. Pritsak, 1982, 85 & 115. However, it remains unproven that this mentioning clearly references either Rōmanos I Lakapēnos, or Rōmanos II Porphyrogennētos. Nevertheless, this hypothesis is also supported by R. Sharp, 2011, 221-222.

²²² J. C. Carter, 2003, 31. The Armenians were defined broadly, though not only by their Monophysitism, as opposed to Byzantine Orthodox Dyophysitism. See P. Charanis, 1963, 52. In addition, some Armenian populations were neither Orthodox Dyophysites nor Monophysites but Paulicians, being regarded as especially dangerous to the empire. Regarding the absorption of Armenians into the mainstream of imperial Byzantine and therefore Chersōnite society, P. Charanis (p. 28) has asserted, "...it may be asked whether their hellenization was not unaffected by their original background, whether in being absorbed they did not modify the culture which absorbed them." In the case of Chersōn specifically, I would propose that Charanis' statement carries more than a little legitimacy.

²²³ V. A. Mikaeljan, 1985, 18-19. In addition, the scope and influence of Armenian missionaries into Rus' and Scandinavian lands are attested not long after the late tenth century. Scandinavian sources indicate a

Souгдаia,²²⁴ and certainly in Chersōn.²²⁵ Evidence of Armenian involvement in the Black Sea commercial network, arguably emanating from Trebizond,²²⁶ is also apparent in ceramic evidence as “carrot” amphorae, excavated from the Cape of Plaka shipwreck, just off the southern Crimean coastline by S. Zelenko,²²⁷ revealed these amphorae as having been produced in Cilicia, heavily populated by Armenians, as well as throughout the Pontic coastline up to Sinopē, dated as early as the Heraclian era.²²⁸ Furthermore, Armenian stone fortification techniques have been recognized throughout the Northern Black Sea littoral, specifically in Tmutarakan’, which are dated to the pre-iconoclast period as well,²²⁹ which itself seems to hint that the well-known expedition of Petrōnas Kamatēros to build the fortress of Sarkel may not have been an isolated occurrence. We also know that Alans, Rus’, even Arabs,²³⁰ as well as Khazar representatives and the descendants of the Khurramites²³¹ lived and traded in Chersōn in the late tenth century.

group of bishops (*ermiskur*) who allegedly travelled to Iceland preaching Manichaean ideas in the 1030s. While the interpretation of this source remains disputed, opponents of this supposition still acknowledge the increased role of Byzantine missionaries, Byzantine Orthodox or Armenian and otherwise, in Rus’ and Scandinavian lands after 989. See H. R. E. Davidson, 1976, 228 & 313.

²²⁴ S. A. Ivanov, 2002, 112.

²²⁵ J. C. Carter, 2003, 40.

²²⁶ A. Terian, 2009, 100. See also appendix I. Although, nowhere in I. V. Sokolova’s 1983, *Монеты и Печати Византийского Херсона*, does she mention sigillographic material that refers to Armenians as an entire ethnic grouping in Chersōn, although there are isolated seals which bear non-Greek names, most likely either Khurramite, or Armenian names. See for example figures xix & xx for a seal bearing the name <’Αρσα>βιρ, a tenth century *stratēgos* of Chersōn, and most definitely not a normal Greek name for the office.

²²⁷ S. Zelenko, director of the Centre for Underwater Archaeology of the University of Kiev in 1993, has written two papers on the wreck. See S. Zelenko, 1997, “К Вопросу о Локализациии Древнего Лампада,” 62-63 & “Подводно—Археологические Исследования Побережья Между г. Кассель и г. Аю-Даг,” 117-118. However, it should be mentioned that Zelenko does not specifically remark as to whether these amphorae were produced in Cilicia in the early Byzantine or middle Byzantine period. See also Y. Morozova, 2006, 160-166.

²²⁸ Y. Morozova, 2009, 166.

²²⁹ V. Gjuzelev, 1988, 47. In addition to Armenian involvement in the Black Sea commercial network dating to the first half of the seventh century, Gjuzelev also points out a Proto-Bulgarian presence in the Black Sea commercial network since the Heraclian era as well, specifically in Chersōn and Tmutarakan’. He himself cites S. A. Pletneva, *От Кочевий к Городам. Салтово-Маяцкая Культура*, 1967, 129, when he writes, “I materiali venuti alla luce con gli scavi archeologici effettuati dagli archeologi sovietici S. V. Pletniova, N. P. Jakobson e altri, indicano chiaramente l’esistenza di rapporti economici tra gli insediamenti protobulgari di Fanagorija, Tamatarha e altri con il Chersōneso bizantino.” In English, “Materials have been unearthed by archaeological excavations carried out by the Soviet archaeologists S. A. Pletneva, N. P. Iakobson and others, which clearly indicate the existence of an economic rapport between Proto-Bulgarian settlements of Phanagoria, Tmutarakan’ and others such as Byzantine Chersōn.”

²³⁰ A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 2002, 664. See also J. C. Carter, 2003, 40.

²³¹ See n30 & n57 above. The transfer of 2000 rebellious Khurramite soldiers to Chersōn shortly after 841 would have significantly altered the ethnic composition of the area. As P. Charanis, 1963, 19, writes, “The troops constituting these provincial or thematic corps were often drawn from different ethnic groups and as

All of these groups lived in very close contact with each other, sharing the same confined spaces, particularly in the northern part of town, no doubt speaking various tongues and harboring diverse faiths, not to mention the fact that Chersōn housed an unusually stratified society for a Byzantine provincial city in the late tenth century.²³² This would likely have contributed, as we have already discussed, to internal conflicts within Chersōnite society between loyalists, separatists, and so on during the Phōkas rebellion, which would have been reflected, as we have already discussed above on p. 38-39, by Anastasios' role in the "Korsun' Legend."

The municipal self-government exercised by Chersōn before and during the iconoclasms extended deep into the tenth century, even despite thematization in 841. As Sharp has observed in regards to the case of Chersōn, "Even after the change to direct rule the power and influence, let alone the wealth, of the local elite would not have evaporated."²³³ Regarding the local elite, Stephenson argues for Byzantine authority, especially in the tenth century, as being exercised through existing local power structures.²³⁴ For the case of Chersōn, this would make sense, as we know from the sigillographic evidence, that imperially appointed *stratēgoi* were often the same men as local *prōtevontes* by the second half of the tenth century. Alekséenko has demonstrated that the titles *πρωτεύων* and *ἄρχων* were used on seals alongside *στρατηγός* well into the middle and later tenth century, indicating that the local *prōtevontes* and *archontes*, along with the imperially appointed *prōtospatharioi*, *spatharoi*, *spatharokandidatoi* and of course the *stratēgoi* were quite often the same men,²³⁵ and that try as imperial authorities might, Chersōnite *stratēgoi* could not always be procured from Amastris and when they

a consequence their permanent assignment to any one province contributed in altering the ethnic composition of that province." This further contributed to the rebelliousness already existing in the city, which arguably lingered for generations afterward.

²³² C. Bouras, 2002, 523. As A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 2002, 664, have noted, most of the wealthier residents lived in the northern sectors of the town. A. Rabinowitz et. al., 2011, 464-471, has noted that some of the southern blocks of the town housed the poorer residents, in relation to the northern sectors of Chersōn.

²³³ R. Sharp, 2011, 246.

²³⁴ P. Stephenson, 2000, 6.

²³⁵ N. Alekséenko, 2002, 79-86. By the tenth century in this case, if, as Alekséenko's sigillographic evidence suggests, Chersōn's elite local families were often occupying local positions of authority such as *kommerkiarioi*, *stratēgoi*, *prōtospatharioi*, and *spatharokandidatoi* as we have already discussed above in n210, their contempt for imperial authority would have most likely been manifested by their supporting of rebellions such as that of Bardas Phōkas. For Alekséenko's sigillographic evidence, relating directly to both the first and second halves of the tenth century, see figures xxi-xxiv.

were, the rest of the thematic official staff was more often than not native Chersōnite.²³⁶ This was usually manifested in seals as entitled both an imperial *prōtopatharios* & *prōtevōn* being equivalent in rank to that of *stratēgos*, in that locally appointed *prōteventes* and other elites were equal in rank to imperially appointed postings.²³⁷ As Carter has made clear, the *stratēgos* resided in the citadel, in the southeast corner of the town, likely the central headquarters of imperial bureaucracy within the town, which he reports as curiously containing “small, probably hastily built rooms, but the greater part of the citadel remained free of structures.”²³⁸ This would suggest if not a complete lack of significant imperial investment, then a rather insufficient one, even after thematization in 841, as the edifices in this section of town are conspicuously dwarfed by larger houses,

²³⁶ Such was the case of the aforementioned George Tzoulas in 1016, who as we have already discussed, led a pan-Crimean “uprising” against Basil II, and which was eventually crushed by the Rus’ on behalf of Byzantium. I. V. Sokolova, 1971, 70, notes that a seal refers explicitly to this Tzoulas as both a *prōtopatharios* and *stratēgos* of Chersōn. This is corroborated by N. Alekséenko, 2000. While a number of seals bear the name Tzoulas and some scholars doubt they all belong to the same man, it seems to me hard to believe that in the space of half a century, no less than two persons could have occupied the same exact two ranks with the same exact two forenames and surnames. See for example V. P. Stepanenko, 2008, 29, who claims Sokolova’s reasoning is in effect oversimplified, “Как следствие, И. В. Соколова пыталась примирить обе версии, полагая, что мятеж начался в Херсоне, но завершился на Боспоре.” I have translated this as, “As a result, I. V. Sokolova attempted to reconcile both versions of the story, believing that the rebellion began in Chersōn, but ended in Bosphoros.” Každan, remarking on Sokolova’s work regarding the sigillographic evidence of the Tzoulas rebellion, writes,

Publikationen folgender siegel: 1. von protospatharios Georgios Tzoulas τοῦ Βοσπόρου; 2. von Tzoulas...φύλαξ; 3. Michael, Spatharios ἐπὶ τῶν οἰκειακῶν und proteuon von Cherson. S. nimmt aufgrund dieser Siegel an, daß es am Anfang des XI. Jahrhunderts zu einer Änderung der Verfassung von Cherson kam, wobei die Macht in der Stadt in die Hände ihrer Bewohner gekommen wäre. Die Nachricht, Skylitzes Mongos wäre nach Chazarien gegen den dortigen Archont Georgios Tzoulas gezogen, wird dadurch erklärt, daß Tzoulas, der früher Strateg von Cherson gewesen, später nach dem Kimmerischen Bospor gegangen wäre. Die Identifizierung der auf den Siegeln genannten Personen ist immer schwierig. In unserem Falle ergeben sich noch andere Schwierigkeiten. Auf dem ersten Siegel wird das Patronym Tzoulas vom Herausgeber konjunkturiert, es sind da aber nur die Buchstaben Τζ...α sichtbar. Auf dem anderen Siegel liest man...φύλαξ τοῦ Τζούλα. Diese Worte dürften kaum als "dem Phylax Tzoulas" interpretiert werden. Dat. von φύλαξ ist φύλακι, darüber hinaus stimmt ein τοῦ nicht dem Dativ überein. Vielleicht soll man die Inschrift wie folgt rekonstruieren: (Θεο)φυλάκ(τ)ο(τ)οῦ τοῦ Τζούλα; d. h. ‘dem Tzoulas' Sohne Theophylaktos’. (A. P. Každan, 1972, 298.)

Essentially, although Každan harbors some doubts as to the true owner of the seal, his own reasoning, by virtue of his doubts about Sokolova’s work as basically conjecture is nullified when he supplies his own reconstruction of the inscription as “(Θεο)φυλάκ(τ)ο(τ)οῦ τοῦ Τζούλα,” or “Theophylaktos, son of the Tzoulas,” which is just as speculative, and rather more farfetched than her original interpretation of the seal. Therefore, I believe it would be safe to claim that the Tzoulas seals do not necessitate a revision of Sokolova’s hypothesis.

²³⁷ R. Sharp, 2011, 246. Incidentally, the scholarly consensus is that a given Chersōnite *prōtevōn* would have had de facto military and civil authorities in his city. See again for sigillographic examples, figures xvi-xx.

²³⁸ J. C. Carter, 2003, 71.

likely belonging to wealthier residents, perhaps more locally influential, in the northern part of town.²³⁹ Another prominent feature of Chersōnite autonomy after thematization is the peculiar Chersōnite construction of a “Basilica within the Basilica,” a late-ninth century church supposedly built in the ruins of a formerly grander basilica, the architecture of which Sharp has claimed harkens “back to an earlier glory period.”²⁴⁰ I would tentatively assert that this “glory” period was most likely the period of Iconoclasm between the eighth and early ninth century when the city was not subject to imperial involvement and exercised municipal government freely, trading with both Khazaria and Byzantium without being completely subject to either state’s taxation apparatus.

Finally, my most important point is the archaeological evidence of a significant layer of ash corresponding to the late tenth century in Chersōn. This, as many archaeologists have already noticed,²⁴¹ would suggest that Chersōn, due to the siege, suffered a considerable burning.²⁴² Therefore, I would posit that the “Korsun’ Legend” is completely illogical when we ask ourselves how an imperial marriage and a princely baptism took place, complete with dozens of servants, clerics, soldiers and other aides in a burnt down city such as Chersōn must have been immediately after the arrival of Anna Porphyrogennētē in the late summer of 989.²⁴³

3.3 Economic evidence

Next, in examining the economic evidence of Chersōn’s special status within the empire, we are made aware of a prevalence of ties, as has been previously mentioned

²³⁹ A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 2002, 659. However this supposition applies only to structures inhabited by the imperial bureaucratic entourage within the citadel. J. C. Carter, 2003, 64, makes clear that important additions were made to the seawalls of the citadel adjacent to the harbor relatively soon after thematization in the ninth-tenth centuries. Whether this addition was imperially-funded or locally-funded remains to be proven however.

²⁴⁰ R. Sharp, 2011, 245.

²⁴¹ A. L. Jakobson, 1959, 65.

²⁴² A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 2002, 663. However, Bortoli & Kazanski, mention Romančuk’s dispute with this point of view. They cite A. I. Romančuk, “Слои Разрушения X в. в Херсонесе,” *Византийский Временник*, vol. 50, 1989, 182-188. Conversely, V. A. Anokhin, 1980, 120, maintains that this ash layer is directly in accordance with the 989 siege of Chersōn by Vladimir I of Kiev, disregarding those who would otherwise disagree.

²⁴³ A. Poppe, “How the Conversion of Rus’ was understood in the Eleventh Century,” in *Christian Russia in the Making*, 2007, 301. Importantly however, in no part of his seminal work of 1976 does Poppe mention this point.

between Chersōn and the Pontic cities, specifically Amastris,²⁴⁴ but also of Sinopē,²⁴⁵ thereby establishing the basis of the Black Sea commercial network, along with Amisos, Tmutarakan' and Trebizond. During the Phōkas rebellion, as we already know, all of Anatolia was supportive of Phōkas in 988; if these cities and their respective *themata*, most notably Trebizond in Chaldia,²⁴⁶ Sinopē in the Armeniakon, along with Amastris of Paphlagonia were not only largely populated by Armenians but also occupied by supporters of Phōkas before his death on 13 April, 989, then it would follow that Chersōn, with its diverse and stratified population, had also taken the Asian side against Constantinople in the rebellion, considering Vladimir began his siege of Chersōn before the death of Phōkas. This would make a great deal of sense as Chersōn enjoyed a much

²⁴⁴ As N. Aleksenko, 2002, 80, points out, “La Paphlagonie notamment était au nombre des pourvoyeurs de Cherson.” We have already discussed Chersōn’s ties to Amastris in Paphlagonia, which enjoyed considerable imperial favor, both in ecclesiastical and military senses, as previous archaeologists have speculated that its fortifications were hastily built and locally funded. (W. Brandes, 1989, 69.) we know that the defenses of Amastris were nothing short of monumental in nature and coincided with the imperial granting of Paphlagonia its own thematic status as well as Amastris’ reception of an autocephalous bishopric apart from the thematic capital at Gangra, which coincided with the city’s refashioning into an imperial naval base by imperial authorities in the the middle-to-third-quarter of the eighth century. (R. Sharp, 2011, 81-82.) Essentially, Amastris was highly dependent, economically, politically, and ecclesiastically, on Constantinople and functioned as a vehicle for successive ninth and tenth century emperors to keep Chersōn in line. In relating the well-known story of Petrōnas Kamatēros’ recommendation to Theophilos against trusting Chersōnites, (see n110 above) the *DAI* explicitly makes clear that, «...καὶ εἰς Χερσῶνα ἐξἀπέστειλεν, ὀρίσας τὸν τότε πρωτεύοντα καὶ πάντας ὑπέικειν αὐτῷ, ἐξ οὗ καὶ μέχρι τὴν σήμερον ἐπεκράτησεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐντεῦθεν εἰς Χερσῶνα προβάλλεσθαι στρατηγούς.» (42: 51-54), meaning that Chersōn, according to Constantine VII, was supposedly accustomed to *stratēgoi* from Amastris for nearly a century and a half in order to keep the city aligned with the political sympathies of a much more docile thematic city such as Amastris. For detailed studies of the fortifications of the medieval episcopal *kastron* of Amastris, see the works of J. Crow & S. Hill, “The Byzantine Fortifications of Amastris in Paphlagonia,” *Anatolian Studies*, vol. 45, 1995, 251-265. See also the study of the city’s medieval architecture in: R. Sharp, *The Outside Image: a comparative study of external architectural display on Middle Byzantine structures on the Black Sea Littoral*, Birmingham, 2011, 53-117. Finally, see the comparative study of the city’s history and archaeology in: L. Zavagno, *Cities in Transition: Urbanism in Byzantium between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, (500-900)*, BAR International Series 2030, Oxford, 2009, 129-151.

²⁴⁵ In regards to the relevant epigraphy, A. Bryer and D. Winfield, 1985, 75, in their investigation of an undated epitaph found in a section of the fortifications of Sinopē (which was not technically a Paphlagonian city, but right on the border) remark that “Chersōn had property on the Southern side of the Euxine and that Anastasios was its agent for it. The see of Chersōn was the closest to that of Sinopē on the Crimean shore; the legend of St. Andrew links the two.” The inscription includes a relatively obscure title, μ(ε)ιζοτ||έρον, as the authors have interpreted it, whose holder (in this case Anastasios, [which seems an auspiciously popular name for Chersōnite clergy at this point.]) functioned as a lay official “concerned with the civil affairs of a church or monastery.” From this logic, Bryer and Winfield claim that this official, Anastasios by name, acting on behalf of this Chersōnite monastery or church, buried his wife in Sinopē.

²⁴⁶ P. Charanis, 1963, 20. According to Charanis, this was true both in the civilian population and in the military of Chaldia. This is true certainly by the last quarter of the tenth century, particularly in the urban environment of Trebizond proper at that time. See A. Terian, 2009, 100. For a further explanation of the economy and politics of Trebizond as they relate to Chersōn, see appendix I.

closer economic relationship with these cities than she maintained with Constantinople. In addition, an anthology of Trapezuntine writings on St. Eugenios records that Basil II shut down Pontic ports during the Phōkas rebellion, commandeering wheat that would otherwise have been shipped to Chersōn.²⁴⁷ Here we must remember Constantine VII's requirement of future emperors to do just this in the case of Chersōnite rebellion.²⁴⁸

In terms of numismatic finds in Kiev and Novgorod²⁴⁹ dated between the ninth and eleventh centuries, Noonan has provided a reliable study of Kievan Rus' numismatic material relating to Latin, Byzantine, Khazar and Muslim exchange during the period.²⁵⁰ In the first half of the tenth century, Rus' merchants were doing much more trade with Muslim lands, as the coins found in both Kiev and especially in Novgorod dating to the period are much more often Central Asian Sāmānid dirhams²⁵¹ than coins of either Western European or Byzantine origin. However, this trade began to decline after ca. 950 and Rus' traders began seeking greater trading opportunities with Byzantium, especially after the first *monoxyla* journeys returned successfully from Constantinople after either 907 or 911.²⁵² However, trade with Muslims seems to have remained steady throughout the first half of the tenth century nevertheless. According to an Islamic

²⁴⁷ A. Laiou, 2002, "Exchange and Trade, Seventh-Twelfth Centuries," 721. She cites a 14th century collection of writings known as the *Fontes Historiae Imperii Trapezuntini*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 1897, 97. Significantly, this is an auspicious segment of evidence neither Obolensky nor Poppe are aware of in their analyses of the "Korsun' Legend." It begins recording that, "Ὁ Φωκάς-οἰόμενος, πλὴν σφαλέρῳς, ὡς, εἰ τύχοι κατ' αὐτοῦ βασιλέως ἐπιδραμῶν βάλοι καιρίαν, τῆς βασιλείας εὐθέως ἐγκρατῆς ἔσται. Τοῦτο παραλογισάμενος-κατ' αὐτοῦ βασιλέως ἐξώρμησε etc." Working with Athanasia Stavrou, we have translated this as, "Phōkas supposed –albeit mistakenly–that if, by making an assault against the emperor, he succeeded in striking a severe blow [against him], that he would immediately be the master over the empire/dominion. [Being] misled in this, he set out to war against the emperor."

²⁴⁸ *DAI*, 53:512-529. See above n112.

²⁴⁹ See also n64 above.

²⁵⁰ T. S. Noonan, 1987, 384-461. P. Stephenson, 2000, 32, claiming to quote Noonan, asserts that Rus' trade with the realm was significant in the first half of the 9th century and slowed considerably after ca. 870, "Numismatic evidence suggests that this trade was peculiarly lucrative for the first part of the ninth century, but that after c. 870 it slowed considerably. By this time the Abbāsid Caliphate was in decline, and while mint output continued at similar levels, Arab coins (dirhams) no longer reached Russia." However, Noonan himself never mentions this, in fact he explicitly states on p. 396, "Kiev's connection with the Islamic trade began only ca. 905, when the route by which dirhams reached Eastern Europe shifted from the Caspian/ Caucasus routes to a Central Asian route transversing the Volga-Bulgar lands."

²⁵¹ *Ibid*, 392-397.

²⁵² P. Stephenson, 2000, 32. For a map of the well-known annual journey on these *monoxyla* down the Dniepr and the rapids, which were known to the Byzantines by Hellenized names (*DAI*, chap. 9), see figure xxix.

source, Vladimir had in fact originally converted to Islam,²⁵³ no doubt, as Noonan's reasoning would suggest, because of the importance of Central Asian Islamic trade to Kiev and especially to Novgorod,²⁵⁴ Vladimir's initial capital earlier in the tenth century. If his conversion to Islam, which is by no means mentioned in the *PVL*,²⁵⁵ was due to the significance of Islamic trade, then this would in turn suggest his latter decision to convert to Byzantine Christianity was heavily based on a recent and intense reliance of his on Byzantine trade and its benefits, which in itself, interestingly, was not manifest largely by monetized exchange.²⁵⁶ This would also appear to correspond with riverine economic developments in Kiev to increase her use of the Dniepr as a vehicle toward Chersōn and Constantinople.²⁵⁷ In turn, throughout the tenth century before the conversion of Vladimir, it was Rus' traders venturing to Constantinople, most likely the *monoxyla* mentioned in the *DAI*,²⁵⁸ stopping in Byzantine ports such as Mesembria,²⁵⁹ which reinforced Rus' acquaintance with Byzantine and Bulgarian Christianity. Indeed, we know that Bulgarians functioned as interpreters between the Byzantines and the Rus' during many of the treaties, notably the treaty of 912 in which Christian instruction was given to the Rus' by the Byzantines.²⁶⁰ Converting to Christianity would have made a great deal of political and economic sense for Vladimir, as the basis of Kiev's wealth

²⁵³ V. Minorsky, *Sharaf al-Zamān Ṭāhir Marvazī*, 1942, 36. See also P. Kawerau, *Arabische Quellen zur Christianisierung Rußlands*, 1967, 24-26.

²⁵⁴ T. S. Noonan, 1987, 393. However, on p. 396, he writes, "Kiev may thus have reaped the **profits** of the Islamic trade without having had a major role in it." For this reason, whether Vladimir did or did not actually convert to Islam, this would appear to illustrate why it was an implausible interest of his to either convert or remain a Muslim.

²⁵⁵ While I would prefer not to construct an argument from the silence of the sources, this point once again demonstrates the personal agenda, in this case in the form of an anti-Muslim Christian polemic, which the authors and compilers of the *PVL* must have consciously chosen to address in ignoring Vladimir's previous flirtations with Islam; whether they can be substantiated or not is a different matter however.

²⁵⁶ T. S. Noonan, 1987, 398.

²⁵⁷ P. Stephenson, 2000, 32. This settlement was known as Podol, situated at the foot of Kiev's major *Starokievskaya Hill*, it was specifically built as Kiev's center for trade and craft production. See O. M. Ioannisyān, 1990, 287-288. According to Ioannisyān, p. 294, it seems, the center of the city on the summit of *Starokievskaya Hill* was relatively without industrial activity and craft production while centers of production took place on the outskirts of the city and in Podol. See the map of Vladimir's Kiev, including the Podol district, in figure xxx.

²⁵⁸ *DAI*, 9:57-63. See also F. Dvornik, et. al., 1962, 16-59.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Mesembria, as far as the authors of the commentary are concerned meant safe, thoroughly Byzantine waters to the Russians, according to the continued validity of the treaty of 911. (F. Dvornik, et. al., 1962, 58.) See also R. Sharp, 2011, 127-131, esp. n. 484 & n485 regarding the *DAI* 9:101-104.

²⁶⁰ Archpriest N. Shivarov, 1992, 19. See also S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 65-69.

came from trade,²⁶¹ and his dominion over Kievan Rus' was by the late tenth century, almost entirely based on trade relations with Chersōn and Constantinople.²⁶² Indeed Byzantine influence is substantial even in Kievan Rus' coinage as coins (*sribnĭkĭ*)²⁶³ dating to the era of Vladimir show either him or his son Iaroslav enrobed in the traditional Byzantine *lōros* and *chlamys*,²⁶⁴ revealing a Kievan deference to Byzantine cultural bequeathment after 988. Indeed, there is a similar vein of coinage minted by prince Mstislav of Tmutarakan' until 1024 imitating miliarēsia of Basil II which, judging by the floriated cross-arms, is also influenced by Chersonite coinage of the corresponding period.²⁶⁵ Clearly, Byzantium was not merely a passive actor in the events of 987-989; she still exerted a considerable control over Kievan imports and exports, and Chersōn was the critical link in them.²⁶⁶

²⁶¹ T. S. Noonan, 1987, 387.

²⁶² In fact, there is evidence of the significant increase of Byzantine coin loss in northern lands, especially after the mid-tenth century as at the very least, 616 Byzantine coins have been found as far north as Sweden, dating from 945-1071. See B. Arrhenius, "Connections between Scandinavia and the East Roman Empire in the Migration Period," 1990, 135. In addition, it seems there was a greater and prolonged conflict between Vladimir and the Pechenegs as excavations have revealed widespread earthworks known as "Snake Ramparts" defending the city from enemies to the south and west. (P. Stephenson, 2000, 63; J. Shepard, 1979, 218-237). Risking speculation, this was most likely accomplished with the technical assistance and perhaps supervision of Byzantine masons and construction workers brought to Kiev who, as we have already discussed, were part of a movement of people from within the empire to Rus' spreading Orthodoxy and many other aspects of Byzantine civilization, perhaps knowingly sent by Constantinople, or simply workers and perhaps exiles who voluntarily travelled to Vladimir's aid.

²⁶³ T. S. Noonan, 1987, 402. These *sribnĭkĭ* were only minted after 988, revealing the significance of the conversion, and the consequent Rus' deference to the models of Byzantine coinage, however, according to Noonan, they were also a "visible demonstration of their independence as rulers." It seems the coinage was used by Vladimir I after 988 not so much as money in its own right, so much as a political instrument. However, the positioning of Vladimir on the coin is quite reminiscent of Byzantine coins, which would again seem to refute Noonan's supposition that "Byzantine coins played no appreciable role in the economic or political history of Kiev." T. S. Noonan, 1987, 398. See figure xxxi for an image of an example of the coin.

²⁶⁴ W. K. Hanak, 1973, 99.

²⁶⁵ V. A. Anokhin, 1980, 113, in addressing methodological problems with Sokolova's 1968 analysis (based on absence of coinage in certain areas, p. 90-98) of the coins of specific rulers in justifying their respective jurisdiction, or lack thereof, of those areas, has pointed out the occurrence of Chersōnite and other types of Byzantine coins regularly encountered in Tmutarakan' finds. Risking speculation once again, this would also appear to justify a cautious assessment that a given usurper, such as Phōkas in 987, may indeed have secured the influence to have coins minted in his name, which would subsequently have been confiscated and recast by respective authorities after his downfall. Lastly, this archaeological evidence of the imitation of Byzantine miliarēsia by Rus' would clearly appear to refute Noonan's point when he writes, "Byzantine coins were a negligible factor anywhere in Rus': the copper coins had very little value, whereas the gold coins were both too few and too valuable to be of use in commerce. The few miliarēsia to reach Rus' made no real difference." T. S. Noonan, 1987, 400-401. For the single coin found in Tmutarakan' excavations, see figure xxxii.

²⁶⁶ Chersōn also imported not just raw materials but tools and handicrafts from Rus'. See M. Tikhomirov, *The Towns of Ancient Rus*, trans. Y. Sdobnikov, ed. D. Skvirsky, Moscow, 1959, 65. This is

Continuing with numismatic material, albeit now in the context of Chersōn, as Anokhin, an authority on Chersōnite coinage, has illustrated,²⁶⁷ having its own mint as we know, the city underwent considerable changes in her coinage between the reigns of Nikēphoros II and Ioannēs I and the Tzouloi uprising of 1016.²⁶⁸ In fact, as he observed, Chersōnite coinage changed significantly both before and after 989.²⁶⁹ While no definitive coin exists depicting Bardas Phōkas, let alone in Chersōn specifically, the fact that the coinage of Chersōn underwent such a change in the space of so little time nevertheless suggests a disparity between conflicting interests within the city. It is well known, for example, that the letters Π-X and Π-A appear on middle Byzantine Chersōnite coinage. Due to the logical authority by which these particular coins were issued instead of their obvious location, Anokhin has appropriately assigned the meaning of the Π-X as “*prōtevōn* of Chersōn” instead of its earlier interpretation as “*polis* of Chersōn,” although it seems he incorrectly attributes this coin type to the pre-thematic period, e.g. before 841, “when the *prōteusoi* [sic] were the sole authority in the town that was entitled to issue coins.”²⁷⁰ The problem with this explanation is that we already

corroborated by Kievan archaeological evidence of houses dating to the ninth & tenth centuries revealing instruments used in such industries as tanning, iron-working and bronze smelting. See O. M. Ioannisyan, 1990, 288. If this trade was not monetized, it seems unlikely that Kievan coins would be so reminiscent of Byzantine coins.

²⁶⁷ V. A. Anokhin, 1980, 102-122. See figures xxxiii & xxxiv for Anokhin’s numbered examples of ninth and tenth century Chersōnite coinage.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 120.

²⁶⁹ Ibid. He writes, “After the events of A. D. 988-989 Cherson issued coins in the names of the two emperors Basil II and Constantine VIII; but it is difficult to say whether these were issued before 1016, or after that year.” However, this is disputed by D. R. Sear, 1987, 346-349, who maintains that only one Chersōnite-minted coin-type is attributable to Basil II, although I find it highly unlikely that the city produced the same coins from 976-1025, completely disregarding the Phōkas rebellion, the Tzoulas rebellion and the Kievan Rus’ interventions in both cases.

See examples of the changing issuings of Chersōnite coinage in figure xxxiv. According to Anokhin, coins 435-437 are attributable to Nikēphoros II Phōkas. Coins 438-440 are attributable to Ioannēs I Tzimiskēs. Finally, coins 441-448 are attributable to the reign of Basil II, yet conspicuously different from the two previous emperors, there are two distinct types of his Chersōnite coinage, the first, 441-444, Anokhin claims, is attributable to before 989, and the second type is attributable to either after 989 or after 1016 and the subduing of the Tzoulas uprising.

²⁷⁰ V. A. Anokhin, 1980, 112 & 117. Anokhin’s reasoning is essentially that because the familiar Π-X appears on coins of the middle ninth century, he argues, it is much more likely that the Π-X should stand for *πρωτεύων τοῦ Χερσῶνος*. See for example coins 333-336, 345 & 348 in figure xxxiii; also note the floriated cross arms in coin 334 and its resemblance to the silver imitation miliarēsion of Mstislav found in Tmutarakan’ in figure xxxii.

Similarly, he has interpreted the presence of the letter α on the obverse side of the coin from the letter X as in reference to the title “*ἄρχων τοῦ Χερσῶνος*,” as he claims there have been no such finds of coins attributable to Alexander in Cherson thus far and that the *archon* of the town was another office

know the Chersōnite mint was not reopened until thematization, so how could these coins be dated to the pre-thematic period? The most likely reason is that if Π-X truly does signify the coins issuance as by the “*prōtevōn* of Chersōn,” then the office of the *prōtevōn* continued, undiminished in its authority or otherwise, into the later ninth century.²⁷¹ As we know from the sigillography, the office and authority of the *prōtevōn* continued into the tenth century, so it would make sense that this phenomenon be exhibited in the coinage as well. We also know from Anokhin’s study that Chersōn was ripe with counterfeiting in the middle Byzantine period, most likely in the artisanal, merchant and upper classes, due to the fact that the majority of post-iconoclasm Chersōnite issues were cast, instead of struck, thereby making counterfeiting easier.²⁷² Pertaining to the political sensitivity of the mint, Carter maintains that the mint of Chersōn, unusually sensitive, by provincial standards, to changes in the ruling house of Constantinople, was continually responsive to coups, overthrowings and usurpations,²⁷³ whereas Anokhin claims just the opposite, that Constantinopolitans mints functioned at

which must have been at least partially responsible for issuing coinage. See for example coins 337 & 349 in figure xxxiii.

²⁷¹ Ibid, 125. Here, it appears that Anokhin contradicts himself a few pages later and corroborates our point when he writes, “Finally, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the fact that coins were put out by representatives of the municipal government and by the local eparchy in the first decades of the existence of the theme. Let it suffice to say that no other city of the Byzantine Empire ever possessed such rights.”

²⁷² Ibid, 104. While this issue does not itself specifically signal any sort of rebellious tendency within the town, it does mean that an issuing authority, whether that be a local Chersōnite official or an imperial official, perhaps a *kommerkiarios*, would have been accountable for the basic dimensions of these coins for the purpose of reducing counterfeiting. This in turn suggests that there was economic friction between the local artisans who partook in counterfeiting and the monetary officials, imperial *kommerkiarioi* or local officials, who endeavored to put an end to these practices. As an addendum to economic matters within Chersōn, this conclusion should serve to signify the magnitude of economic affairs to the citizens of the city during the middle Byzantine period. For a further discussion on this topic, see appendix I.

In addition to causing friction between counterfeiters and minting authorities, the practice of counterfeiting in middle-Byzantine Chersōn would appear to suggest that with such enthusiastic local interest in monetized exchange, coinage was freely circulated, at least in the case of Chersōn during the period in question, for private as well as public exchange, which would then run contrary to Hendy’s 1985 assertion that “coinage was essentially a fiscal phenomenon: produced and distributed, that is, in order to provide the state with a standard medium in which to collect public revenue and distribute public expenditure. It would be absurd to suggest that it did not circulate freely and perform the function of mediating private exchange; but this was not its primary function, only its secondary.” (M. Hendy, 1985, 10.) Clearly, Anokhin’s evidence of counterfeiting refutes Hendy’s assertion, which I dare say seems slightly overgeneralized. Even if the counterfeited coinage was used by Chersōnite authorities to maintain stability by using monetary exchange with the nearby Pechenegs, (see P. Stephenson, 2000, 47) it betrays a profound interest, on the part of the local Chersōnite population, in conducting private exchange and free circulation in consequence, as a primary, instead of a secondary function for coinage. This in turn would run contrary to Stephenson’s careful avoidance of contradicting Hendy’s aforementioned claim. (See P. Stephenson, 2000, 88).

²⁷³ J. C. Carter, 2003, 179.

an entirely different politically obligatory level and that Chersōnite mints of the middle Byzantine period were entirely subject to their own commitments.²⁷⁴ In addition, coin hoards found, possibly in the citadel of Chersōn,²⁷⁵ which was inhabited by either the *stratēgos*, *prōtevōn* or both if fact they were the same man,²⁷⁶ date to the destruction layer of the tenth century,²⁷⁷ which suggest that, therefore, contrary to the wishes of hoarder(s), the city was indeed under siege at this time, as conventional archaeological wisdom associates the discovery of coin hoards most often with rebellions, sieges and other such upheavals within a city.²⁷⁸ Therefore, if Anokhin's interpretation is correct, while the ash layer evidence mentioned above is corroborated by evidence of coin hoarding, the fact that this hoard is located where the city's governing took place means that while there may very well have been internal strife and conflicting interests within the city walls during Vladimir's siege, the fall of the city to Vladimir was clearly not in the interests of her contemporary governors. However, it was clearly in the interests of other elements in the city, which during a major rebellion such as Phōkas', would imply

²⁷⁴ Specifically, V. A. Anokhin, 1980, 110 writes,

In our opinion, a considerable difference existed between the situations of the mints of the capital and Cherson. The former would have to react sensitively to every change in the composition of the royal house, inasmuch as one of the principle meanings a coin had was that of a political nature and this was a meaning no one could afford to spurn under the stormy circumstances of life in the capital. The situation of the Cherson mint was different. Every change on the throne might bring in its train an alternation in the policy of the new ruler toward Cherson, and on that account in each such instance they apparently awaited some sort of special directives concerned with the activity of the mint, which certainly will not have operated without supervision. That which was obligatory for Constantinople might not always have been extended to Cherson.

I would also posit that in the case of rebellion, certainly one as powerful and extensive as that of Phōkas in 987, while many imperial officials at that time would also have been natively trained and hired from local Chersōnite society, it is hardly implausible to regard the Chersōnite mint as imperially supervised at that time. Though engaging in speculation here, I would suppose that the reason no coins of Bardas Phōkas have appeared in Chersōn is that the Chersōnites, knowing that minting a coin of his would be tantamount to a confirmation of separatism in the eyes of the capital, were as yet waiting to see the outcome of the civil war.

²⁷⁵ J. C. Carter, 2003, 71, mentions the excavation of only a single coin hoard, while in the citadel, due to his writing, it is unclear when exactly the hoard dates to, although importantly, Carter makes no mention of a destruction layer dating to the tenth century, only to the thirteenth. He also makes no mention of multiple coin hoards as does Anokhin, with the exception of this single hoard found in the citadel, which he dates, perhaps, to the turn of the twelfth century.

²⁷⁶ See n235 above.

²⁷⁷ V. A. Anokhin, 1980, 112 & 120.

²⁷⁸ P. Stephenson, 2000, 16. Although this is not the only behavioral aspect that coin hoarding indicates. T. S. Noonan, 1987, 408, in remarking on hoarding, posits that coin hoarding can indicate both wealth storage in lieu of a banking infrastructure in the middle ages and also of course as a consequence of "disturbed" conditions.

loyalists and separatists, again reflected by the character of Anastasios in the “Korsun’ Legend.”

Finally, a modest shipwreck²⁷⁹ excavated²⁸⁰ in 2006-2007 off the southern Crimean coast, termed “Chersonesos A,” revealed numerous jugs, flat-bottomed and single-handled, which have been termed “Antonova-type jugs” after their seminal extrapolation by Antonova et. al. in 1971.²⁸¹ They have been found all over the Crimea, including Bosporos, Tyritakē, even in the waters off Cape Plaka, Sougdaia and Tepsen,²⁸² as well as in Chersōn and have been identified by excavators as having been produced in Tmutarakan’.²⁸³ The jugs found in the wreck correspond to those Antonova-type jugs produced in Tmutarakan’ and have been tentatively dated to the turn of the tenth century.²⁸⁴ However it has also been claimed that, corresponding to the claims of

²⁷⁹ The prevalence of shipwrecks has, according to F. van Doorninck Jr., 2002, 902, increased substantially “in tenth and eleventh-century maritime commerce [which] is indicated by a sharp rise in frequency of known Byzantine wrecks belonging to this period. These wrecks occur along sea-lanes between Constantinople and southern Russia [and] Trebizond...” For a proposed map of these sea-lanes, see again figure iii.

²⁸⁰ The hydroarchaeological excavation was a cooperation between Robert Ballard, the Black Sea Expedition of the Institute for Archaeological Oceanography at the University of Rhode Island and the Institute for Exploration. See figures xxxv & xxxvi for a map and schematic view of the shipwreck site.

²⁸¹ I. A. Antonova, V. N. Danilenko, L. P. Ivašuta, V. I. Kadeev & A. I. Romančuk, 1971, “Средневековые -Амфоры Херсонеса,” in *Ученые записки УрГУ, Серия историческая, вып. 22*, 81-101. See figure xxxvii for the photomosaic of the shipwreck site depicting the Antonova-type jugs found there.

²⁸² For Antonova-type jugs found in Bosporos, see A. V. Sazanov, 1996, 191-200, 2 & 4. For their discoveries in Tyritakē, see V. F. Gajdukevich, 1952, 51 (fig. 57.) For records of their discoveries off Cape Plaka & Tepsen, see V. V. Nazarov, 2003, 88 (fig. 25), 92 (fig. 26), & 97 (fig. 28.) For a map of the settlements & districts (in Greek: *Klimata*) of the southern Crimea during the middle Byzantine period, see figure xxxviii. For illustrations of the jugs, which have been found in all these places

²⁸³ T. Yashaeva, E. Denisova, et. al., 2011, 319 & 612 [379]. According to their original excavator in Chersōn, the aforementioned V. I. Kadeev, (B. И. Кадеев, *Отчет о Раскопках в Херсонесе на участке “Центр Квартала” в 1968 г.* [НА НЗХТ, д. 1614/1], 1968.), these jugs are not listed specifically as “Antonova-type jugs” in the excavation catalog, (Yashaeva, T., E. Denisova, et. al., *The Legacy of Byzantine Cherson*, Sevastopol and Austin, 2011.), even though he [V. I. Kadeev] clearly co-authored the above-listed paper on the jugs. Regardless, according to Kadeev, these jugs were produced in Tmutarakan’, and the find in question corresponds to an eleventh-century layer in a cistern in the port area. Thus, the jugs had been used in trade, most probably wine, from the ninth to the eleventh century, which also appear to corroborate the prevalence of trading of Crimean wine, which as we have already discussed, the Rus’ were quite interested in. This wine, as we discussed above in section 3.2, was shipped in these small, flat-bottomed, single-handled “Antonova-type” jugs, which as Davis described were table-ready, “Contents ready to serve!” (D. Davis, personal communication, 24.4.2013). They would have been a veritable boon to Rus’ merchants, eager to bring the popular Crimean wine back to Kiev.

²⁸⁴ Dan Davis, personal communication, 13.3.2013. According to Davis and contrary to the claims of Kadeev however, no kilns for the production of these jugs have as yet been uncovered in the ongoing excavations of Tmutarakan’. The precise origin of the jugs found in the “Chersonesos A” shipwreck have therefore yet to be proven definitively. See also D. Davis, 2007, “Preliminary Hull Analysis and Wood Catalogue of the Chersonesos Shipwreck, 2007,” (Internal Report Submitted to the University of Rhode Island, Institute of Archaeological Oceanography), Austin, 2, & ibidem, 2008, “Exploration and Excavation

Kadeev,²⁸⁵ they date to anywhere between the late ninth to eleventh centuries.²⁸⁶ The small size of the wreck would tentatively suggest a relatively local trade and the prevalence of these jugs throughout the Crimea would indicate this local trade was seemingly carried on throughout the entirety of the middle Byzantine period,²⁸⁷ contained largely to a pan-Crimean trade network during the period in question, including of course Tmutarakan' in the Taman peninsula.²⁸⁸

Chersōn, as we have already discussed, carried on a significant trade with Tmutarakan',²⁸⁹ a city which for all her mystery and misplaced speculations,²⁹⁰ became a significant Rus' principality immediately upon Vladimir's death in 1015, although it is as yet impossible to determine precisely when, why or how it became a Rus' possession. Without speculating, we do know for sure that Tmutarakan' was a fortified town, her fortress built by the Khazars during the mid-ninth century,²⁹¹ and during which time she was governed by a Khazar *toudoun*, as Chersōn had partially been before thematization.²⁹² Archaeological evidence has suggested that Tmutarakan' had been

of Two Deepwater Wrecks in the Black Sea," *The Study of Ancient Territories, Chersonesos & South Italy: 2006-2007 Annual Report*, ICA UTexas, Austin, 77. According to Davis, the jars had been at first cautiously dated to anywhere between the ninth and eleventh century and then it had been concluded by Andrei Opaït, in agreement with Pletneva's typology, (S. A. Pletneva, 1959, "Керамика Саркела-Белой Вези," *Материалы и Исследования по Археологии СССР*, vol. 75, 212-272), that they were attributable more precisely to between the late ninth to the turn of the tenth century. (A. Opaït, personal communication, 5.4.2013.) Nevertheless, without refuting either Davis or Opaït, the jugs and their discoveries all over the southern Crimea and Taman peninsulas indicate a rather cohesive economic and political collection of settlements around the Crimea, including Tmutarakan', from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. For a juxtaposition of images of the flat bottomed, single-handled Antonova-type jar, both excavated from the wreck and from the port area of Chersōn by Kadeev in 1968 and dated to the eleventh century, see figures xxxix & xxxx.

²⁸⁵ See above n283 & n284.

²⁸⁶ V. V. Nazarov, 2003, 93 & 97.

²⁸⁷ According to I. A. Antonova, some of these jugs could be used for up to 300-400 years, suggesting a continuity and stability of trade and other economic relations throughout the Crimea. She writes, "...большинство типов амфорной тары выпускалось и тем более находилось в обращении как массовый материал несравненно более длительное время—до 300—400 лет." I have translated this as, "...most types of amphorae were produced and even more are in circulation as a weight material much longer—up to 300—400 years." These intra-Crimean relations would have been politically continuous as well as economic.

²⁸⁸ For the present purpose, Taman is essentially synonymous with Tmutarakan'. See J. Shepard, 2006, 15.

²⁸⁹ And this shipwreck would appear to corroborate this conclusion of the significance of the Chersōn-Tmutarakan' trade. See also n229 above.

²⁹⁰ See for example the modern historiographical-archaeological discussions of the site's relationship to Kiev between the 10th-11th centuries in S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, n147, 255-256.

²⁹¹ S. A. Pletneva, 2003, 72.

²⁹² See above section 2.1.

devastated in the mid-960s²⁹³ and lacked a permanent allegiance to any single lord, represented by either the Rus', the Byzantines, the Khazars or otherwise, until their siding with George Tzoulas of Chersōn in his uprising against Basil II in 1016²⁹⁴ in what appears to have been a pan-Crimean uprising of sorts. In responding, Shepard has pointed out that Basil II's expedition to the Crimea in that year was as much rooted in upholding his previous 987 agreement with the now-deceased Vladimir with his victorious successor, whether Iaroslav, Sviatopolk or Mstislav²⁹⁵ as it was in protecting Crimean holdings, notably Chersōn, and subduing the Tzouloi.²⁹⁶ We know from Anokhin's study of Chersōnite coinage that the events of 987-989 and 1016 were related, but Shepard's assertion is a critical one if the joint Byzantine-Rus' naval expedition to subdue a Chersōnite rebel activates the treaty between the two polities dating back twenty-eight years previously. Admittedly speculating, I would suppose that this was due in part to Basil's desire to resecure the treaty made with Vladimir I in 988 with his heir, whoever that may have been.

3.4 Rebellion in context: the cases for Chersōn and south Italy during 987-989

I have already mentioned two prosopographic instances of the same name, which has surfaced in the relevant primary sources, Kalokyrēs, the *patrikios* and son of the *prōtevōn* of Chersōn, who made a usurpation attempt against Nikēphoros II Phōkas in 971 and subsequently escaped to an as yet unidentified location nearby Dristra on the lower Danube; and Kalokyrēs Delfinas, who was Bardas Phōkas' commander and was killed by Basil II himself at the battle of Chrysopolis, well before the battle of Abydos,²⁹⁷ when Bardas Phōkas himself was killed. Hitherto, Poppe has asserted that it is in fact

²⁹³ S. A. Pletneva, 2003, 72. It is also, I would suggest, highly probable that this devastation of the mid-960s corresponds with Sviatoslav's campaigns against the Khazars, who may have possibly gained control of Tmutarakan' at that time. For the literary reference, see the *PVL* entry for the year 965: S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 84. Alternatively, while I fully endorse neither scenario, it is also possible that the city was acquired by Vladimir either in exchange for Chersōn in 989 by Basil II or some other time before 1015. For a greater extrapolation on this topic, see J. Shepard, 2006, "Close Encounters with the Byzantine World: the Rus at the Straits of Kerch," 15-78.

²⁹⁴ J. Shepard, 2006, 33. This instance alone should serve to suggest a great deal in terms of Chersōn's autonomy, independence and rebellious tendencies in the late tenth and into the early eleventh century.

²⁹⁵ At the time, it was unclear that Iaroslav would eventually defeat his brothers and gain total control of Kiev and all of Kievan Rus' in three years hence. See J. Martin, 1995, 21-26.

²⁹⁶ J. Shepard, 2006, 31.

²⁹⁷ See again J. Forsyth, 1977, 440. According to Forsyth, "...the battle of Chrysopolis preceded March 2, 989."

still too risky to identify these two mentions of men as having been the same person,²⁹⁸ though the name Kalokyrēs is quite an unusual one, rarely found in sigillography, let alone primary sources. Perhaps this is still the case, although in researching the seals left by these two men, I have found evidence of what I believe to have been the seal of the first Kalokyrēs, son of the *prōtevōn* of Chersōn, and would-be usurper in 971, in a seal discovered and published by Jordanov & Žekova.²⁹⁹

According to Jordanov & Žekova, the seal was found in the small village of Malak Preslavets, about twenty miles west of Dristra, modern Silistra, nearby the Danube. The seal, very poorly preserved, they have interpreted as belonging to a certain Kalokyrēs, a *kommerkiarios* and have dated the seal to the very late tenth century or turn of the eleventh. In addition, they have interpreted a certain “-TP-” on the fourth line of the reverse side, which they have declined to assign a particular meaning. While I recognize the -P-, I do not recognize the -T-, though due to the placement of this last line, on the same side as |...[KOM].M.[EPKI].API.[Ω]...| which they have understood as *kommerkiarios*, it most likely refers to his placement of this Kalokyrēs’ posting. So though this is pure speculation, it is possible, that this -P- could have once filled in for |...[XE].P.[CΩNΩ]...|. Nevertheless, regardless of the original function of the -P- in the last line, I would propose that this seal may belong to none other than the first Kalokyrēs, *patrikios* and son of the *prōtevōn* of Chersōn who, according to Leōn Diakonos,

²⁹⁸ A. Poppe, 1976, 222-223.

²⁹⁹ I. Jordanov & Ž. Žekova, *Catalogue of Medieval Seals at the Regional Historical Museum of Shumen*, 2007, 131 & 287. It should be noted here however that nowhere on the seal, perhaps due to its lack of preservation, is the town of Chersōn mentioned. However due to the rarity of the name Kalokyrēs, the parallelism (P. Stephenson, 2000, 86) and proximity of Chersōn and her commercial interests to economic activities on the lower Danube at the time, and the local economic and political power a *kommerkiarios* would have wielded in contemporary Chersōn, all suggest that, in addition to its having been found at the exact same time and in the same place that Leōn Diakonos records (see the following two notes below, n300 & n301), this seal very probably belonged to this Kalokyrēs, *patrikios* and son of the *prōtevōn* of Chersōn, who made his usurpation attempt at the head of a Rus’ army under Sviatoslav, was defeated and escaped to “somewhere near Dorystolon” in 971. For a further discussion of commonness of Byzantine names, N. Oikonomides, 1986, “Theophylact Excubitus and his crowned ‘Portrait’: an Italian Rebel of the Late Xth Century?,” 200, has considered the name *Theophylakt* an uncommon name. If we should interpret this as correct, a name we have already encountered several times so far, shared by a few unquestionably different men, I believe it is fairly safe to judge the name Kalokyrēs, a name almost never encountered, save for twice in reading Leōn Diakonos, to be an even rarer name still. While I would not use this point to base my argument for regarding these two names as belonging to the same man, I believe it does add weight, if only slightly, to a hypothetical future argument to this end, that would depend on the rarity of a given name in question. For their image of and description of the seal, see figures xxxxi & xxxxii.

disappeared “somewhere near”³⁰⁰ Dristra (Δορύστολον).³⁰¹ Due to the failure of imperial forces to locate and capture him in 971, a known would-be usurper from the local Chersōnite elite, it remains entirely possible that he evaded capture, disappearing from the metaphorical radar for some years. Due to the highly unusual nature of the name, even by tenth century Byzantine standards, it leaves the possibility that Kalokyrēs Delfinas could be the same man, Phōkas’ lieutenant, roughly eighteen years later. Fortunately, there is more secondary discussion of Kalokyrēs Delfinas to analyze than compared to this first Kalokyrēs.

Regarding the second Kalokyrēs, surnamed Delfinas, Vlysidou, in her article on Basil Lakapēnos’ policies in Italy before his exile, has proven that if Rōmanos, successor of Kalokyrēs Delfinas as *katepanō* of Italy, arrived to replace him in the spring or summer of 985, then Kalokyrēs Delfinas must have remained somewhere in southern Italy, conceivably or not, as the official *katepanō*. Then, when Basil II removed Basil Lakapēnos, the *parakoimōmenos* from office in 985,³⁰² this is presumably when

³⁰⁰ A-M. Talbot & D. F. Sullivan, 2005, 180-181.

³⁰¹ C. B. Hase, 1828, VIII:5, 134.

³⁰² V. N. Vlysidou, 2005, 126-127, n82. For Vlysidou, the real reason behind Kalokyrēs Delfinas’ removal from his posting as *katepanō* of Italy after 985 was due to Basil II’s later removal of his benefactor, Basil Lakapēnos. This is quite similar in many regards to Bardas Phōkas’ benefactor, his uncle, Nikēphoros II Phōkas being killed and usurped by Iōannēs I Tzimiskēs, whose favored general was of course Bardas Sklēros, archrival of Bardas Phōkas. It seems during the period between the reigns of Nikēphoros II Phōkas and the early part of Basil II’s, generals, dukes, *stratēgoi* and other military men functioned at the benefit of those generating policy. In the case Kalokyrēs Delfinas and Basil Lakapēnos, this phenomenon seems to be no exception. She writes,

...ότι το καλοκαίρι του 984 ο Καλοκυρός Δέλφινας βρισκόταν ακόμη στη Ν. Ιταλία. Επίσης, στην περίπτωση που η παραμονή του Δέλφινια στην περιοχή διήρκεσε μέχρι την άνοιξη ή το καλοκαίρι του 985, τότε η ανάκληση του έγινε λίγο πριν από την απομάκρυνση του Βασιλείου Λακαπηνού από το παλάτι και μπορεί να εντασσόταν στα πλαίσια μίας μάλλον καθυστερημένης επανεξέτασης των πολιτικών επιδιώξεων του προέδρου από τον Βασίλειο Β'.

I have translated this as,

...in the summer of 984, Kalokyrēs was still in southern Italy. Also, in the event that his stay in the area lasted until the spring or summer of 985, the withdrawal was made just before the removal of Basil Lakapēnos from the palace and maybe within a rather belated review of the political purposes of the *parakoimōmenos* interpreted by Basil II.

In essence, Kalokyrēs Delfinas joined the rebellion when he lost favor in court. Additionally, Vlysidou’s argument for prolonging Kalokyrēs Delfinas’ maintenance of the office of *katepanō* of Italy until 985 and the deposition of Basil Lakapēnos would appear to be corroborated by V. von Falkenhausen, 1978, *La Dominazione Bizantina nell’Italia Meridionale dal IX all’XI Secolo*, 183-185. While this summation may be oversimplified, I would even go so far as to suggest that Basil II’s removal of Basil Lakapēnos was part of a grander policy of removing persons and vestiges of the politico-military regime which had accumulated since the times of Rōmanos I Lakapēnos and certainly since Nikēphoros II Phōkas, Kalokyrēs Delfinas and Basil Lakapēnos included. And although this is purely speculation, it may be that Basil II was

Kalokyrēs Delfinas, frustrated with his demotion and what he perceived as a lack of sufficient regard for his military experience on the part of the headstrong young ruler,³⁰³ must have decided to join the forces of Bardas Phōkas who was by that time consolidating his power in eastern Anatolia.³⁰⁴

In an effort to prove these two names belonged to the same man, which Poppe declared, “too risky,”³⁰⁵ I have as yet been unable to find a definitive example of a seal which could be argued to have belonged to Kalokyrēs Delfinas and thereby compare it with the above mentioned seal found in Malak Preslavets. Regarding the addition of the surname Delfinas, it seems to me that though the possibility of the name Delfinas to reflect a distinctly different point of origin than Chersōn specifically, that is as a patronymic family name, which would undermine my hypothesis, is as yet unable to be definitely proven without a careful comparison of two seals which can be argued to have belonged to each man. Therefore, it is impossible to conclude whether the name Delfinas was just an unmentioned nickname in 976-971, or if they were truly the same man, though Delfinas had gained an alias, feasibly to escape imperial detection in the eighteen

afraid of being poisoned or plotted against by Basil Lakapēnos, who had demonstrated these tendencies many times before, although this supposition makes no difference regarding Chersōn, Kiev and Constantinople between 987-989.

³⁰³ As Bardas Phōkas certainly was quite insulted by Basil II in August 986 after the latter’s decisive loss of the battle of Trajan’s Gates when Basil II neglected to tell him his plans for invading Bulgaria. See J. B. Thurn, *Syklitzes*, XVI:14, and Wortley, *Syklitzes*, 313-314.

³⁰⁴ R. Guiland, *Recherches Sur les Institutions Byzantines*, 1967, 72. Guiland writes, En 983, Kalokyros Delphinas, envoyé en Italie par Basile II pour organiser la résistance à l’invasion allemande avec Othon II, adresse a l’éveque de Trani Rhodostamos un document le confirmant dans son siège et signe ce document (le seul que nous ayons de lui) de ses titres d’anthypatos-patrice et de catepano d’Italie. Il est vraisemblable que Kalokyros Delphinas se rallia, en 987 a Bardas Phokas, qui venait de se proclamer empereur. Ce dernier lui confia le commandement d’un corps de troupes important. Fait prisonnier, Kalokyros Delphinas fut mis en croix sur une colline de Chrysopolis, en face de Constantinople.

I have translated this as,

In 983, Kalokyros Delfinas, sent to Italy by Basil II to organize resistance to the German invasion under Otto II, addressed the bishop of Trani-Rhodostamos in document confirming his seat and signed (the only one we have of it) in his titles, *anthypatos-patrikios*, his qualifications and *katepanō* of Italy. It is likely that Kalokyrēs Delfinas rallied in 987 behind Bardas Phōkas, who had just been proclaimed emperor. This gave him the command of a large body of troops. Taken prisoner, Kalokyrēs Delfinas was crucified on a hill on Chrysopolis opposite Constantinople.

³⁰⁵ A. Poppe, 1976, 222.

years between 971 and 989.³⁰⁶ Nevertheless, there are further aspects of the Phōkas rebellion which closely support a hypothesis that Chersōn was involved along with Byzantine southern Italy.

Indeed, the fortified city of Bari, during the rebellion, experienced a level of civil strife between loyalists and rebels within the city which appears to have been strikingly similar to our previous discussion of Chersōn, which should not be surprising due to both cities' separation from the Byzantine mainland and proximity to potentially dangerous neighbors and their roles as respective cruxes of political and economic policies. In fact, Oikonomides has discovered three peculiar seals of a certain Theophylakt, on which he himself³⁰⁷ is represented as wearing a crown and elaborate dress.³⁰⁸ Oikonomides has interpreted this find as directly relating to Kalokyrēs Delfinas since Oikonomides has asserted that Theophylakt was, due to his depiction in the seals, himself a would-be usurper working directly under Kalokyrēs Delfinas as the *exkouvitos*³⁰⁹ of Longovardia precisely during the time in question and “thus a person second in importance only to the katepano of Italy.”³¹⁰ For Oikonomides, there was a distinct difference in the importance of the *exkouvitos* of Longovardia before and after 990.³¹¹ In a strikingly similar vein to contemporary Chersōn, as Oikonomides claims, Constantinopolitan control of Bari was in the 980s, “...for a moment at least, shaky, if not utterly non-existent.”³¹² Having been declared in open rebellion by clearly supporting the Phōkas cause, southern Italy, being

³⁰⁶ Ibidem, n89, 223. His supposition that “the notion that all Kalokyroi originated in Cherson remains doubtful” may in fact relate to the documentation of S. Vryonis Jr., 1971, 25, n132, of powerful *δυνατοί* families of Anatolia, in which he lists the “Calocyres” family as one of the most prominent of Paphlagonia. As we have already discussed the political and economic intimacy of Paphlagonia and the Crimea during the period in question, this should not serve to surprise us. Nevertheless, Poppe, in the same note, is still correct to point out that conversely, the patronymic “Delfinas” points to a separate *δυνατοί* family, only this time from Thessaly instead.

³⁰⁷ N. Oikonomides, 1986, “Theophylact Excubitus and his crowned ‘Portrait’: an Italian Rebel of the Late Xth Century?,” 199.

³⁰⁸ Ibid. According to Oikonomides, this Theophylakt presenting himself on his seal wearing “elaborate dress...reminiscent of the imperial *loros* (without being one): this change of dress was obviously related to (and imposed by) the change of rank that was symbolized by the coronation.”

³⁰⁹ Regarding the spelling of the official post, ibidem, n3, 198, N. Oikonomides prefers *ἐκσουβίτος* to *ἐκσκούβιτος*, while A. P. Každan, 1991, *ODB*, vol. I, 646-647, prefers instead to refer to the office as *δομέστικος τῶν Ἐξκουβίτων*, describing the posting as a specifically militaristic office, denoting a commander of a given *tagma*.

³¹⁰ N. Oikonomides, 1986, 198. Here he directly cites V. von Falkenhausen, 1978, 133-134.

³¹¹ Ibid, n5. He writes, “...from 990 onwards the excubitoi are mentioned regularly in south Italian documents, while they disappear from the Balkans.” Clearly, the Phōkas rebellion was as important to the local politics of Byzantine southern Italy as it was to the local politics of the Crimea. See p. 200.

³¹² Ibid, 200.

geographically remote from Constantinople was another area populated by loyalists and separatists with its own measures of local autonomous institutions, especially due to the region's proximity to Papal politics. Indeed similarly to Chersōn and Vladimir's capture of her, Basil II inflicted "retribution" on the citizens of Bari in 988-989 for rising up against a certain prōtospatharios, Sergios as a "Byzantine collaborator" in 987.³¹³ Furthermore, it has been proven that Kalokyrēs Delfinas was also Armenian, as there were Armenian communities in both cities.

We have already discussed at length the overwhelming support the Phōkas rebellion solicited from the Armenian population within the Byzantine state. The Armenians had been resettled in many areas throughout the late ninth and tenth centuries, notably Paulician Armenians in Macedonia under Basil II himself ca. 988, in Crete after 961 and Calabria in the late ninth century under Nikēphoros Phōkas the elder.³¹⁴ These Armenians in Italy were most likely ancestors of Kalokyrēs Delfinas,³¹⁵ who was himself, according to Každan, an Armenian.³¹⁶

Nevertheless, it remains to be definitively proven, most likely through sigillographic evidence, whether Kalokyrēs, the *patrikios* in 971 and son of the *prōtevōn* of Chersōn was in fact the same man as Kalokyrēs Delfinas, *katēpanō* of Italy, lieutenant of Bardas Phōkas, and executed by Basil II at Chrysopolis in early 989.

Regardless of the Kalokyrēs/ Kalokyrēs Delfinas issue however, the evidence of intra-Chersōnite tensions between differing factions, whether on socio-economic, ethnic, religious, or geographical lines would doubtless have come to head at this time in the late tenth century, as these differences would have, as they always do during times of crises and rebellion, manifested themselves as separatism and loyalism. We know this from the

³¹³ Ibid. Although N. Oikonomides declines to provide a specific description and citation for this so-called "retribution."

³¹⁴ P. Charanis, 1963, 16.

³¹⁵ V. von Falkenhausen, 1967, 84.

³¹⁶ A. P. Každan, 1975, 110. As I am unfamiliar with the Armenian language, I have relied on help from an Armenian associate for some portions of Každan's writing: "Калокир Делфин (*ՏԼՊԻՆՍԻ*), анфипат, патрикий, и катеран италии в 982/83 (Falkenhausen-*Untersuchungen*, 84.) Согласно Асохику, магистр (Ասոճիկ, III, *հհ*. стр. 248, Асохик, стр. 178 и сл) участвовал в мятеже Варды Фоки и был казнен. (Diac. 1828, 173)." I have translated this as, "Kalokyrēs Delfinas (*Delfinas*) was *anthypatos*, *patrikios* and *katēpanō* of Italy in 982 & 983 (Falkenhausen-*Untersuchungen*, 84.) According to Asožik, the magister (*Asožik*, vol. III, 248 [ref. in Armenian]; Asožik, 178 [ref. in Russian],) participated in the rebellion of Bardas Phōkas and was executed. (C. B. Hase, 1828, 173)." Indeed according to Charanis, Bardas Phōkas himself was partly Armenian. See P. Charanis, 1963, 38-39.

relevant epigraphy, sigillography, ceramic and numismatic evidence at our disposal. Locally elite *prōtevontes* and *archontes* were either at odds with or the same as imperially appointed men. Chersōn was economically very close with areas which were either traditional enemies of the emperor (Bulgaria) or at that time supportive of Phōkas (the Pontic cities), and during the rebellion, Basil II shut off the cross-Black Sea grain supply from those cities to Chersōn, diverting them instead to the capital, exactly what the *DAI* urged future emperors to do in case of Chersōn's rebellion. Imperially appointed Chersōnite *kommerkiarioi* were at odds with local artisans and merchants, who partook in counterfeiting, and finally, Chersōn contained many religio-ethnic groups, most notably Jews and Armenians who would have possessed strong inclinations to supporting a usurper who would have represented a potential religio-political emancipation from the conventional Chalcedonian Christian faith purported by the Macedonian emperors.

IV 4.1 Chersōn, between Kiev and Constantinople, a reassemblage of the revisionist hypothesis, 987-989

Before the chain of events began in 987 leading to the fall of Chersōn in 989, two events occurred separately in 986 that have major bearings on the eventual conversion story. The first event, in which the *PVL* states that Vladimir I began to be interested in Byzantine Christianity, supposedly transpired in 986, which was probably the beginning of his catechumenate. The second, was Basil II's summer campaign against Tsar Samuil of the Bulgarian Komētoupouloi, in which he neglected to inform Bardas Phōkas of his invasion plans and was subsequently devastated by Samuil on 17 August at the Gates of Trajan. We know that from Byzantine sources, Bardas Phōkas, frustrated by the young new emperor's disregard for him as *domestikos tōn scholōn*, claimed the imperial throne as his own in the following August of 987, thereby initiating the civil war by which the entirety of the Anatolian *themata* would support his cause, including Chersōn.³¹⁷ As soon as Basil II learned of Phōkas' usurpation designs, most likely in June of 987,³¹⁸ he sent an emissary, to Kiev to conclude a treaty by which Vladimir I would receive Anna in marriage while he in turn would dispatch a force of Varangian mercenaries on the condition that he be baptized immediately, which he most likely was upon conclusion of the treaty by the cleric-emissary, which would have been in the winter, well after his arrival, either in December, 987 or January 988.

As I am convinced by Poppe's reasoning regarding Basil's transmission of Theophylaktos of Sevestē, a well-known anti-Armenian cleric, to negotiate the treaty and baptize Vladimir, most likely in Kiev or perhaps Vasil'ev, I will echo this aspect of his argument here. At this point, Vladimir would have begun collecting men and materiel for dispatching to Constantinople, and then of course to Chersōn as well. In the beginning of

³¹⁷ Although it should be noted here that Sklēros had again declared himself in rebellion in December of 986 after residing in captivity in Baghdad since 980 after his defeat at the famous 979 battle of Pankalia, while Phōkas was still imprisoned since the regency of Basil Lakapēnos. In April 987, upon learning of the return of Sklēros, Basil II restored Phōkas to his previous posting as *domestikos tōn scholōn*, dispatching him to finish off his longtime rival, Bardas Sklēros once and for all. Shortly after meeting Sklēros however, the two men agreed to combine their rebellion and plan to divide the empire in half. It was at this time or soon after in June of 987 that Basil II learned of Phōkas' usurpation and virtual control of all of Anatolia, which is also when he must have sent Theophylaktos to Kiev to negotiate an alliance with Vladimir I. Nevertheless, it was not until August 15 that Phōkas imprisoned Sklēros and declared himself the reigning emperor, and proceeded toward Abydos intending to besiege the town.

³¹⁸ See section 2.2 & the previous n317 above.

988, Vladimir's baptism must have taken place and his conversion been completed, and the betrothal of Anna arranged. As Phōkas besieged Abydos, Kalokyrēs Delfinas did the same at Chrysopolis, right across the Bosphoros from Constantinople. By the late spring or early summer of 988, those six thousand Varangian mercenaries must have arrived in Constantinople and, counting back either six or nine months from the sighting of Halley's Comet in late July or early August of 989, Vladimir I must have arrived in the Crimea and began his siege of Chersōn by either the turn of the new year or a few months earlier in either September or October of 988. Regardless, he must have begun the siege before the death of Phōkas. Early in 988, either at the very end of the Winter or in the early Spring, Basil II must have defeated Kalokyrēs Delfinas in Chrysopolis, executing him probably by impalement, and proceeding on Abydos, defeated Phōkas finally on April 13. Halley's Comet is sighted in mid-Summer "portending" the falls of both Cherson and Verrhoia.³¹⁹ Why else would Vladimir I have returned Chersōn back to Basil II so quickly after capturing her, if he had not besieged the town on behalf of Basil II?³²⁰ Chersōn was undoubtedly a valuable seaport, and would have been exponentially economically beneficial to Vladimir if he preserved his dominion over the city as opposed to handing her back to Constantinople. No, he handed Chersōn back to Constantinople because that must have been the last stipulation of the negotiations he had worked out with Theophylaktos back in 987 after he had been baptized and wedded to Anna.

4.2 Vladimir I, defender of Basil II; Kievan Rus', daughter of Byzantium

Regardless of the period and region, Byzantium's alliances with her neighbors had always been forged according to the same omnipresent "cocktail of political

³¹⁹ For the extrapolation of this claim, see section 2.2 above. At this point, I would pose the question: "How can the historian (Leōn Diakonos) *know* that Halley's Comet signified the respective conquests of these two cities unless it had already happened by this time in the mid-Summer of 989?" I would like to acknowledge Ruth Macrides for pointing out the poignancy of this question, which neither Poppe nor Obolensky ask. Because there is no answer, precisely because Chersōn had already fallen by the sighting of the comet, not, as Obolensky claims, by the earthquake later on 25 October, 989. Therefore the chronology of the comet sighting and the capture of Chersōn were fundamentally contemporaneous, as well as because Leōn Diakonos' use of the word "παρεδήλου," as the aorist participle [παρεδήλουσας], can mean either a contemporaneous or antecedent action, lending to an ambiguous aspect, indicating either or both a completed or continuous event.

³²⁰ See S. H. Cross & O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, *PVL*, 116, "As a wedding present for the Princess, he gave Kherson over to the Greeks again, and then departed for Kiev."

expediency and economic advantages,”³²¹ and the crisis of the Phōkas rebellion was no different. That being said, lest the mistake be remade, it remains impossible that Vladimir I, a newly converted Christian, would have attacked Chersōn to spite Basil II, his Christian namesake, rather than on his behalf. Secondly, it is even more impossible that Vladimir’s Varangian mercenaries would be fighting for Basil II in Abydos while at the same time fighting against him in Chersōn. Our knowledge of the extensiveness of the Phōkas rebellion, and the seemingly inexhaustible tendency for Chersōn to rebel against Constantinople during this period, prevents us from believing the “Korsun’ Legend” in the *PVL* and Obolensky’s accusation that Vladimir sacked Chersōn due to typical Byzantine duplicity and their “usual two-faced games.”³²²

It may very well have been the case that in his decision to besiege Chersōn in the first half of 989, Vladimir I was accomplishing two tasks in one, that is, both defeating the rebels in Chersōn and pressuring Basil II to send his sister quicker. This scenario cannot be ruled out. Indeed, we must remember that not all events are absolute in the minds of those who perceive and respond to them. His campaign against Chersōn may very well have rested on accomplishing two tasks in one, and the modern historian will never know what was the true logic in his mind as he awaited word from Constantinople in the spring and summer months of 989, but I believe we can be certain that the *archontes* of Chersōn, true to their sense of independence, were partaking in the Phōkas rebellion, and this was Vladimir’s primary reason for besieging the city. Nevertheless, in the story of the baptism of Rus’ in 988-989, Chersōn was not some monolithic pawn amidst a trans-Black Sea medieval religio-political chess game. Chersōn was a complex microcosm of the entire empire at the time of the rebellion, with loyalists, separatists and many other factions vying for control over their respective fates. Ultimately, Vladimir I, in dispatching six thousand Varangians to Basil II became the new executor of Byzantine policies toward the steppe as the Khazars had been in the previous two centuries. The role of Anna Porphyrogennētē, while undeniably important, need not be mischaracterized to pursue modern nationalistic, gender, ecclesiastic and other agendas.³²³

³²¹ P. Stephenson, 2000, 313.

³²² See above n4.

³²³ For a further discussion on modern usages of this episode to pursue specific agendas, see below, appendix II.

Concerning the unfortunate tendency for scholarship to be used toward a given agenda, it is disappointing to learn that the field of Byzantinology, regardless of its theatre, whether Western European, post-Soviet or anywhere else, has progressed quite little since Gibbon³²⁴ in assuming that all things “Byzantine” are equated with guile, deceit, ridiculous accusations of caesaropapism³²⁵ and certainly duplicity, which is easily assumed by taking the “Korsun’ Legend” at face-value. For this reason, as no other scholar had yet consulted the myriad archaeological evidence and other non-narrative sourcing to explore the truth of the chronology of the baptism, I have attempted to underscore the notion that conventional medieval historiography, when employed by modern historians to reconstruct the events it describes, often finds itself entangled in vastly limited primary sources of dubious clarity and reliability. Instead, this thesis should prove that archaeological and other non-narrative material has continually provided fresh perspectives to historical debates once caught in the ubiquitous mire that is the polemicism and hagiographical embellishment which comprises most, if not all, of Rus’-Byzantine medieval primary sources.

At the risk of over-generalizing, the *PVL*’s “Korsun’ Legend” adopted a theological-providential manner of explanation in order to cement the Christian with the Russian identity in its interpretation of historical events.³²⁶ Such a relation of historical events, while not entirely refuted by outside sources, ought not to serve as a primary basis for understanding the baptism of Vladimir in 988. The “Korsun’ Legend” was produced

³²⁴ Infamously summarizing the entirety of Byzantine history and civilization, Gibbon comments, At every step, as we sink deeper in the decline and fall of the Eastern empire, the annals of each succeeding reign would impose a more ungrateful and melancholy task. These annals must continue to repeat a tedious and uniform tale of weakness and misery; the natural connection of causes and events would be broken by frequent and hasty transitions, and a minute accumulation of circumstances must destroy the light and effect of those general pictures which compose the use and ornament of a remote history. E. Gibbon, vol. V, chap. XLVIII, 1846, 82-83.

³²⁵ For the ridiculous accusation of Byzantine civilization for indulging in “Caesaropapism,” especially in regards to Russia’s supposed Byzantine inheritance of the practice, see for example A. J. Toynbee, 1948, 164-183 & *ibidem*, 1939, vol. IV, 320-408 & 592-623, whose treatment of Byzantine Civilization is nearly as ethnocentric as his analysis of the alleged “fault” of the Jewish people for not accepting Christ as their savior (*ibid*, 262-263.), which is itself almost as absurd and racist as it is ironic considering his equally superficial summarization of the faults of Byzantine and Russian theological institutions.

³²⁶ L. I. Novikova & I. N. Sizemskaja, 1997, 15. Whether that ultimate author or compiler is Sil’vestr or Nestor, however, is not what I seek to debate here. Nevertheless, Novikova & Sizemskaja seem to hold, like the Russian academics of the nineteenth century, that he is in fact Nestor, while Ostrowski still believes it is in fact Sil’vestr. Either way makes little difference in renegotiating the events between 987-989.

by the medieval monastic mind for either a medieval monastic audience or a medieval lay audience, or both, but should by no means be taken seriously by modern scholarship, especially as it has served to justify a Gibbonian analysis of Byzantine culture, ideology, religion and civilization in regarding Vladimir's reason for capturing Chersōn as a response to "typical" Byzantine "duplicity." No, the Byzantines were not up to their "usual, two-faced games" and no, Byzantines should not be attributed a preposterous negative stereotype such as "greedy and guileful."³²⁷ The "Korsun' Legend" must be interpreted as just that, legend, and for far too long have historians, both Western and Russian, tended to presuppose their accusations against Byzantium and conjectures about her role in the matter, as facts rather than what they truly are, speculations. As long as historians are blinded by their own agendas, which have typically been to denigrate, after the example of Gibbon,³²⁸ all things Byzantine, their conclusions will usually be what Thomson has described as "Boltinian,"³²⁹ and their works shallow and superfluous in consequence.

But ultimately, when we return to the grand scheme of the legacy of this episode of the Rus'-Byzantine interaction between 987-989, I would posit that the Kievan Rus' state did not become a successor state of Byzantium in the typical sense of the term, at least in the fluid and undisputed way that Byzantium was a successor state of the old high Roman empire. Rus', both before and after the Mongol conquest, was her own state, in her own right, with her own interpretations of Byzantium and Byzantine Christianity. Hers was a fundamentally different language, unconquered as she was by the armies of Byzantium, but by her legacy. It was the Cyrillic script and the Orthodox faith which reconquered the steppe, all the way to the Pacific, in the sixteenth and seventeenth

³²⁷ See n5 above.

³²⁸ It would be important to note here that Gibbon, in relating the conversion of Vladimir I, has also taken his history from the *PVL* as well: "But the conversion Wolodomir was determined, or hastened, by his desire of a Roman bride. At the same time, and in the city of Cherson, the rites of baptism and marriage were celebrated by the Christian pontiff: the city he restored to the emperor Basil, the brother of his spouse." See E. Gibbon, vol. V, chap. LV, 1846, 598.

³²⁹ F. J. Thomson, 1999, "The Bulgarian Contribution to the Reception of Byzantine Culture in Kievan Rus': the Myths and the Enigma," article IV, 227, n76 & 244. Referring to scholars who use evidence only when it supports their ideas, specifically in his case regarding Boltin's use of the Chronicle of Joachim of Chersōn, a far later redaction of the conversion story, in order to invalidate the *PVL*. He writes, "...historians only have recourse to [evidence] when it suits their theories...Perhaps a better term would be *Boltinian*." He cites I. Boltin, *Ответ Генерал-Майора Болтина на Письмо Князя Щербатова, Сочинения Российский Истории*, 1789, 14.

centuries. It was not that Byzantium adopted Kievan Rus' or even vice versa, but that they both adopted each other; likewise, it was Byzantine Christianity that brought Russia into Europe, not barred it outside Europe. For this reason, it seems to me, it is pointless to debate about whether or not Kievan Rus' was a "vassal state" of Byzantium.

Byzantium, even in the tenth century and certainly later, exported herself beyond her borders more frequently by her missionaries than by her armies. Therefore, speculation about terms such as "vassalage" and "suzerainty" is a meager Western ethnocentric one-size-fits-all conception of medieval feudalism, which we would be arrogant to apply to Byzantium and Kievan Rus'. Finally, in acting as the executor of Byzantine policy in the steppe and in the Crimea, Kievan Rus', in conquering Chersōn, became the protégé of Byzantium, her dependent, and ultimately, after 1439 and 1453, her independent.

Nevertheless, perhaps in the way that the Roman Republic itself had previously become a cultural successor state of Hellenistic civilization, in the same sense, Russia, albeit in a different tongue and geopolitical theatre, accepted and adopted the cultural legacy of Byzantium, which for all intents and purposes, and in this I would absolutely agree with Obolensky, continues to the present day.

Appendix I

The Black Sea Commercial Network and the Urban Autonomy of the Middle Byzantine Episcopal *Kastron*: Three Case Studies of Thematic Ports, Their Fortifications, Churches, Sigillographies & Economies

The early-to-middle ninth century military and administrative changes that occurred across the Byzantine landscape corresponded with the end of the decentralizing tendency of the second iconoclasm and the gradual stabilization of the imperial thematic system and successful resistance to the Arab advance in Anatolia. This thematic restructuring of the empire would endure in various regions until the Fourth Crusade, exhibiting itself as an extensive reform at first with broadly defined *themata* and becoming more specific to individual regions in the subsequent centuries. As the sustained disparity between urban center and countryside infused the character of each *thema*, the idiosyncratic differences between the provincial city and countryside became more pronounced in varying regions during the tenth and eleventh centuries and on into the twelfth. While the *themata* themselves were nominally under imperial authority, the capital cities of each *thema* continued to exhibit varying degrees of autonomy within their urban development. In the eleventh century, and especially after Manzikert, this disparity became more apparent, certainly in Anatolia as the countryside was overrun by Turkic-speaking invaders, some provincial urban centers seeking protection provided for their own defenses while others received imperially funded refortifications. The same walls that protected the urban centers from Islamization, whether the Arab raids of the seventh and eighth centuries or the Turkic settlement of the eleventh and twelfth, in the middle Byzantine period also provided for variable degrees of autonomy and independence from imperial authority. This in turn was mirrored by the autocephalous character of local church hierarchies, some completely independent of the imperial patriarchate, while others merely sought independence, in vain or otherwise.³³⁰ That many of these provincial urban centers were more highly connected to each other than to the capital is manifested by the archaeological evidence of trade, thus facilitating an exchange of all manner of culture, both material and immaterial.³³¹

³³⁰ J. Crow & S. Hill, 1995, 259.

³³¹ The intertwining of ecclesiastic, commercial and military aspects of the middle-Byzantine episcopal *kastron* manifested itself differently in different places. On the surface, it may seem that each aspect of the city was independent of the other, but a more detailed study reveals that occasionally, though certainly not

To demonstrate the particularities of the Byzantine Black Sea trade which Chersōn was tied to economically and politically, in this appendix, I will compare her status to two other cities, Amastris³³² and Trebizond, in the middle Byzantine period. They will serve to illustrate the commercial, clerical, architectural and the resulting cultural connections that Black Sea trade provided for in the period in question.³³³ It is especially important to note that each of these regions and their main port/capital had become independent *themata* during the reign of Theophilos.³³⁴

The importance of the Black Sea to the Byzantine economy is difficult to underestimate. While it is impossible to hypothesize on the gross mercantile volume of both internal and external Byzantine trade plying medieval Black Sea trade routes in any given century let alone a specific imperial reign, the cultural contact that Black Sea trade facilitated during these centuries can be easily speculated, using both qualitative and quantitative archaeological as well as historiographical evidence. The Black Sea network served to both segregate the Eastern Mediterranean World and the Byzantine Empire that represented it from the mercurial population movements of the Pontic steppe and also to integrate these two disparate worlds in what was to become the ethno-religious context for the evolution of what Dimitri Obolensky has termed “the Byzantine Commonwealth.”³³⁵ That the Black Sea contributed to the spread of Byzantine Christianity in various periods is indisputable; that these conversions of neighboring peoples, such as the Rus’, were fundamentally facilitated by pre-existing trade routes is

absolutely, the means of a city’s church, defense and commerce, were interwoven, which depending on its geographic situation, lent a degree of independence of the city from the imperial capital as the urban character of the city evolved in the middle Byzantine period. It can also be argued that this in turn contributed to the rebellious nature of varying *themata* attested to in the varying literary sources of corresponding periods. The causes of rebellion should and remain by no means distilled down to a certain set of urban traits, which a particular Byzantine city may or may not have possessed, in part or in whole. However, the purpose of this paper will be to expose these three specific aspects of the urbanity of the middle Byzantine episcopal *kastron* as they relate to the independence of the city from Constantinople in an effort to further understand the causes of rebellion in provincial urban districts during the middle Byzantine period.

³³² To resolve any confusion, Amastris was not the actual capital city of Paphlagonia, that being Gangra, although as the research will investigate, Amastris did in fact exercise considerable ecclesiastic, military and financial independence of Gangra, effectively functioning as her own capital, more of the Paphlagonian coastline than anywhere else.

³³³ See for example figure xxxiv for similarities in church architecture indicating cross-Black Sea commercial and cultural connections.

³³⁴ W. Treadgold, 1988, 339. Notably, these three *themata* all received their elevated statuses between 824 and 841.

³³⁵ D. Obolensky, 1971, 13-16.

apparent. Finally, the medieval Byzantine cities at the peripheries of the Black Sea cherished varying degrees of urbanity and independence, thus contributing to varying degrees of adherence to local independence exhibited in the respective urban ecclesiastical architecture of these three cities.

So nevertheless, I will begin with a short discussion of first Amastris, and then Trebizond, before I analyze Chersōn utilizing the same considerations.

“The Eye of Paphlagonia”³³⁶

With these words, Nikētas the Paphlagonian described the city of Amastris in the tenth century.³³⁷ The city itself juts out into the Black Sea as a small peninsula: there are two natural harbors on either side, the modern harbor now on the eastern side of the peninsula whereas the medieval harbor was naturally on the western side, which was enclosed by a small island, Boz Tepe, rising substantially taller in height³³⁸ than the city walls themselves and fastened to the *kastron* by a fortified bridge. It was an easily defended site with a perfect natural harbor and the inland mountains to the south provided a natural isolation from would-be invaders.³³⁹ It was for this reason the city was always heavily attached to the sea, so it is reasonable for Paphlagonia to be granted its own thematic independence from the Armeniakon *thema* along with Chaldia and the Klimata as Black Sea focused *themata* in the mid-ninth century under Theophilos. While literary sources attest to both Arab and Rus’ raids, scholars have agreed that while it would have been quite possible for the city to have been assaulted by the Rus’, Arab invasions reaching the Paphlagonian coastline would have been highly unlikely.³⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the fortifications provide useful insight into the medieval life of the city.

³³⁶ For detailed studies of the fortifications of the medieval episcopal *kastron* of Amastris, see the works of J. Crow & S. Hill, “The Byzantine Fortifications of Amastris in Paphlagonia,” *Anatolian Studies*, vol. 45, 1995, 251-265. See also the study of the city’s medieval architecture in: R. Sharp, *The Outside Image: a comparative study of external architectural display on Middle Byzantine structures on the Black Sea Littoral*, 2011, 53-117. Finally, see the comparative study of the city’s history and archaeology in: L. Zavagno, *Cities in Transition: Urbanism in Byzantium between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, (500-900)*, BAR International Series 2030, 2009, 129-151.

³³⁷ *Nicetae Paphlagonia Oratio XIX in Laudem S. Hyacinthi Amastreni*, *Patrologia Graeca*, 105, 417-440.

³³⁸ The precise height is 70m above sea level; see R. Sharp, 69.

³³⁹ See figure xxxv for a map of Amastris in the middle-Byzantine period.

³⁴⁰ L. Zavagno, 2009, 136. This supposition is disputed however. While Crow & Hill agree with the presumption that Arab raids “...rarely penetrated as far as the Black Sea coast which was in general insulated from the full impact of the Arab attacks.” (See J. Crow & S. Hill, 261. They cite W. Brandes, 1989, *Die Städte Kleinasiens im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert*, 69.) R. Sharp conversely proposes that there is no clear evidence that eighth century Arab attacks did not penetrate as far into Anatolia as the Paphlagonian

The fortifications of Amastris have been tentatively dated to the middle-to-third-quarter of the eighth century,³⁴¹ given a relatively more definitive date of the Boz Tepe barbican bridge to an earlier date in the eighth century.³⁴² The monumental walls of the citadel and the fortifications are generally agreed to have been built before the Rus' raids of the tenth century³⁴³ although the exact cause is yet uncertain. While dated scholarship has proposed that the defenses of Amastris were locally funded and haphazardly erected, recent scholarship has demonstrated that in fact the case was precisely opposite: the middle Byzantine fortifications of Amastris were not only of a monumental nature and imperially funded, but coincided with the granting of Paphlagonia its own thematic status as well as Amastris' reception of an autocephalous bishopric.³⁴⁴ That the walls were imperially funded pointed to the city's use by imperial authorities as a naval fortress and a significant anchorage for the imperial Black Sea fleet. The renovations of Amastris were meant to fashion the city as an imperial naval base. Indeed the *katepanō* of Paphlagonia had his seat in the city, and his autonomy from the *stratēgos* at the Paphlagonian capital, Gangra, coincides with the city's granting of an autocephalous church and the independence of the sea-focused *katepanō* in Amastris from the landlocked *stratēgos* in Gangra.³⁴⁵ The existence of an outer wall in the fortifications of

coastline. See also R. Sharp, 2011, 79-85. Instead, Treadgold argues that Rus' raids had reached the Paphlagonian coast "long before 842." Although on the following page, he seems to contradict himself: "In 842, therefore, Paphlagonia, Chaldia, and the Climata would have shown no very conspicuous signs of devastation, and the Black Sea remained safely under Byzantine control." See p. 339-340.

³⁴¹ This, in turn, is due to Sharp's assertion that Amastris was indeed subject to Arab raids during these years. R. Sharp, 2011, 81-82. Sharp, differing with Zavagno and Crow & Hill, maintains that there is archaeological evidence that Arab raids did reach the Paphlagonian coastline, if this is so, then it is likely to have occurred in the mid-eighth century, see page 79. However, he seems to be outnumbered in this theory as Avramea argues that Amastris was one of the Pontic cities which remained unharmed by Arab assaults at this time as local road networks "continued to operate." See A. Avramea, "Land and Sea Communications, Fourth-Fifteenth Centuries," 2002, 74.

³⁴² J. Crow & S. Hill, 1995, 258. See also Zavagno, 2009, 142.

³⁴³ Specifically Oleg's raid in 941 of the Bithynian and Paphlagonian coastlines.

³⁴⁴ R. Sharp, 2011, 67-69.

³⁴⁵ From literary sources, we know that indeed Amastris frequently benefitted from imperial benevolence due to personal friendships within the capital and frequently at the expense of Gangra. See *The Life of St. George of Amastris*, ed. V. Vasil'evskij, *Russko-vizantijskie issledovanija*, vol. 2, 1893, 1-73, trans. D. Jenkins et al., 2001, 1. This hagiography is the earliest narrative literary source of the Christian period regarding Amastris, written in the mid-ninth century, corresponding to the creation of an independent *thema* and autocephalous episcopal see of Paphlagonia as well as the fortifications of Amastris. As J. Crow and S. Hill have described these simultaneous mid-ninth century events, "Changes in military organization were often matched in the Byzantine empire by modifications to the ecclesiastical structure." They claim these phenomena resulted in an autonomous character of the Pontic coastline in the early ninth century. See J. Crow & S. Hill, 260. These fortifications were built with imperial funds as a response to either Arab

Amastris recalls not only the land walls of Constantinople, but it has even been suggested to have been constructed “in order to legitimize an imperial claim.”³⁴⁶

The church architecture reflects a distinctive correlation with similar features displayed in the fortifications. The two churches, both built within the city walls and now called by their Turkish names, *Fatih Camii* and *Kilise Mescidi*, occupy two locations on opposing ends of the *kastron*, with *FC* to the west and *KM* to the east. There is not only a generous use of spolia in both architectures, but the liberal use of mortar, the extensive use of brickwork and the compactness of the blocks suggest contemporaneity with the fortifications with the building of the churches.³⁴⁷ Arguably, this would grant further proof that this middle-Byzantine construction period ostensibly coincided with the separation of the church of Amastris from the archbishopric seat at Gangra and refashioning of the city into an imperial naval base.

The post-iconoclast growing importance of Amastris to Constantinople was indeed well attested not only by the imperially funded construction of both fortifications and churches, but the growing importance of the city’s commerce is demonstrated by an increase of sigillographic evidence. That Black Sea trade was a major aspect of Amastris’ economic life is attested not only by its closeness to Constantinople, but by the autocephalousness of its church hierarchy, which in turn was a major part of the economic life of not only Amastris but many port cities with vibrant merchant communities. Many of the city’s ships, while they may or may not have been sailed by

raids in the eighth and early ninth centuries or to Rus’ raids in the ninth and tenth centuries, although as W. Treadgold argues, the elevation of all three of these districts to *themata* in the early ninth century is mainly due to Rus’ raids; such were the founding situations of the *themata* of the Klimata, Paphlagonia and Chaldia. See Treadgold, 1988, 339-340. Indeed, in the *Life*, the tomb of the Saint George of Amastris rescues the inhabitants of that city from a Rus’ raid, which may have reflected a real Rus’ threat to Paphlagonia depending on varying dates for this story. Interestingly enough, a hagiography of a Crimean saint of Sugdaia, (see *The Slavonic Life of Stephen of Surozh*, trans. S. A. Ivanov, 2006, 109-167) involved many of the same events, which further ties together the perceived fates of Amastris and coastal Paphlagonia to the Crimean Klimata, especially with regard to the depredations of Rus’ assaults, whether early in the ninth century or the tenth. By the tenth and eleventh centuries, with the exception of another Rus’ assault in 941, Amastris enjoyed a somewhat more peaceable status with the expulsion of Arab threats in Anatolia and the Christianization of the Rus’ after 987. It is highly probable that the city remained under Byzantine authority even by the time of the accession of Alexios I Komnēnos according to a passage from Anna Komnēnē in which she references notable Black Sea cities (including Trebizond) still containing imperial officials.

³⁴⁶ J. Crow & S. Hill, 1995, 262.

³⁴⁷ Zavagno, 2009, 144.

churchmen, certainly enjoyed ecclesiastical investment.³⁴⁸ That being said, a thriving maritime economy would certainly suggest an active clergy within the city and indeed the prosopographic evidence points to just that: there are more seals of metropolitans of Amastris during and after the tenth century than any other titled faction, which not only attests to the autocephalousness of the city's church hierarchy, but the evolving urban character of the city itself.³⁴⁹ The lucrative grain trade that the *DAI* refers to in conjunction to Chersōn and her reception of grain from the cities of the southern coast of the Black Sea would undoubtedly suggest imperial granaries in these cities. This is attested by the evidence of the seals of *horreiarioroi* dated by Cheynet to the tenth and eleventh centuries; Amastris would have been one such city with an imperial granary that the capital would have taken an active interest in supervising.³⁵⁰ It has been postulated that the *bedesten* itself, a high Roman edifice situated just inland of the medieval city was one such imperial granary, dated to an earlier time than the churches and fortifications.³⁵¹ Because no enduring excavations have as yet been conducted in Amastris as they have in other Anatolian cities, we are not able to track the monetization of the city and so understand the extent of the vibrancy of the local economy and extent of urbanity. However we must undoubtedly conclude, from all available sources based on both archaeological and literary evidence, that Amastris was undeniably a center of commerce and naval affairs, taking orders directly from the capital, whether in a martial or an

³⁴⁸ M. McCormick, *The Origins of the European Economy: ca. 300-900 CE*, 2005, 406. The link between the economy and church of the middle Byzantine episcopal *kastron* is an important element as it ties together these otherwise disparate aspects of the urbanity of the city, differentiating it from a non-episcopal *kastron*, a mere *emporion*. Indeed even monastic ships sailing to the capital were assumed to have been engaged in trade during the middle Byzantine era, and so were subject to imperial tolls like any other ship, foreign or domestic. See N. Oikonomides, "The Economic Region of Constantinople: From Directed Economy to Free Economy, and the Role of the Italians," in *Social and Economic Life of Byzantium*, ed. E. Zachariadou, Burlington, 2004, article XIII, 226-228.

³⁴⁹ Laurent, Corpus V.1 no. 810; McGeer - Nesbitt - Oikonomides IV no. 12. 4, (Dumbarton Oaks 55.1. 4812 & Dumbarton Oaks 55.1. 4813); Ebersolt, Sceaux byzantins no. 431 & Laurent, Corpus V.1 no. 809, (Istanbul 57); Laurent, Corpus V.3 no. 1784; McGeer - Nesbitt - Oikonomides IV no. 12. 5, (Dumbarton Oaks 55.1. 4824 Dumbarton Oaks 55.1. 4825); Aleksenko - Romančuk - Sokolova no. 14, this seal of a thirteenth century Amastrian metropolitan importantly is found in Chersōn, attesting to the continuity of trading and other cultural contacts the two cities enjoyed.

³⁵⁰ J. Lefort, "The Rural Economy, Seventh-Twelfth Centuries," 2002, 251. See also A. Laiou, "Exchange and Trade, Seventh-Twelfth Centuries," 2002, 727. However, Nikētas the Paphlagonian incorrectly describes Amastris as an *emporion* in the tenth century.

³⁵¹ L. Zavagno, 1995, 138.

ecclesiastical context, and functioning as a second capital city (without actually being the capital city) of Paphlagonia in the middle Byzantine period.

Trebizond: From Ducate to Thematic Capital

As has already been mentioned, the *thema* of Chaldia was created within a generation of the *thema* of Paphlagonia, with Trebizond as its capital,³⁵² specifically oriented toward the Black Sea, suggesting both *themata* and their principal port cities had strategic purposes.³⁵³ Trebizond had always been a center of Greek commerce dating before Roman times³⁵⁴ and it was certainly the most substantial foothold of the empire on the eastern Pontic coastline,³⁵⁵ which according to Treadgold, even during the shrinkage of the second Iconoclast era contained at least 10,000 inhabitants circa 787.³⁵⁶ Trebizond was not only a center of commerce; it was also a center of learning,³⁵⁷ which would indicate a substantial urbanity Trebizond enjoyed, even before the revival of long distance trade in the ninth century, as the largest city on the Pontic coastline. This is certain at the time of the creation of the Black Sea focused *themata* and later, through the tenth century and eleventh centuries, with a brief occupation by the Selcuks between 1071 and 1075³⁵⁸ and then becoming the seat of the Grand Komnēnoi after 1204.³⁵⁹

³⁵² A. Bryer & D. Winfield, 1985, 182. Chaldia was separated from the Armeniakon *thema* in 824, less than a generation before Paphlagonia and certainly the Klimata, with Trebizond as its capital city. Early on, the citadel of the city was the seat of the thematic *stratēgos*, however when Trebizond was still a part of the Armeniakon *thema*, it had been a local ducate, suggesting the city's focus on the sea, as the *doux* and especially the *katepanō*, as we have already seen was the case in Amastris for Paphlagonia; this official would have had specifically maritime commercial and naval responsibilities to the emperor, at least in theory. For the difference in titular responsibilities between *stratēgoi* and *doukes*, see W. Treadgold, 223.

³⁵³ W. Treadgold, 1988, 223. See figure xxxvi for a map of antique and medieval Trebizond.

³⁵⁴ Originally founded specifically as an *emporion* by Milēsiān merchants in 756 BCE, the city was continuously inhabited up to high Roman times until it was sacked by the Goths in 257 CE.

³⁵⁵ This would appear to be true for the entirety of the Byzantine period from Constantine I to 1204. See S. Vryonis Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*, 1971, 15-16.

³⁵⁶ W. Treadgold, 1988, 40-41.

³⁵⁷ S. Vryonis Jr., 1971, 36-37. Both St. Athanasios (the founder of the monastic community of Mt. Athos under Iōannēs I Tzimiskēs) and Patriarch Xiphilinos (the friend and confidant of Michaēl Psellos) were born and educated (partially in the case of Athanasios) in Trebizond.

³⁵⁸ A. Bryer & D. Winfield, 1985, 182. S. Vryonis Jr., however, has argued that even immediately after Manzikert, Byzantine authority was still recognized in Trebizond, although according to Anna Komnēnē it was captured briefly and then retaken by Trebizontines before 1075. See p. 110 and 112. The recognition of Constantinopolitan authority, however, was dubious due the semi-independent status of the *doukes* of Chaldia both before and after Manzikert. See A. Bryer, A. Dunn & J. W. Nesbitt, 2003, "Theodore Gabras, Duke of Chaldia (†1098) and the Gabrades: Portraits, Sites and Seals," 51-70.

³⁵⁹ It is important to note here, that the fall of Constantinople to the forces of the Fourth Crusade in April 1204 was not the precise cause of the breakaway of Trebizond from the capital in 1204; Alexios and his brother David of Trebizond seized both the city and the *thema* of Chaldia early in April of 1204 while

It would be important to note that the title of *γενικός κομμερκιάριος* had disappeared across the empire by the early ninth century, with the sole exception of the newly created *thema* of Chaldia, whose seat would have undoubtedly been in Trebizond,³⁶⁰ indicating the enduring commercial importance of the city to the empire. Populations of Jews, Christianized Persians, Arabs, Georgians and Rus' are alleged to have resided in Trebizond after the creation of the *thema* of Chaldia in 824, including a significant Armenian population transferred into Chaldia and consequently Trebizond in 1021 by Basil II at the annexation of the Armenian kingdom of Vaspurakan.³⁶¹ Clearly, the largest and most important city of northeastern Anatolia, Trebizond would have benefitted from imperial interest in its loyal role as an international commercial center, episcopal seat and a *kastron* guarding the easternmost reach of Constantinopolitan authority in Anatolia.

While a full scale study of the monuments and churches of Trebizond will not be attempted here, a few points will be made concerning their architecture as it relates to the present research. The monuments of the medieval city were essentially in continuity from the later high Roman building phase after the Gothic sack in 257.³⁶² This was the last principal phase of construction until 1223 after the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond. Accordingly, the architectural aspect of the Trebizond citadel of the early Byzantine, iconoclastic, and middle Byzantine periods up to the Grand Komnenoi era was effectively the same: this is referred to as *η Κόρπη*.³⁶³ The classical walls

Mourtzouflos was occupied with the Latins. Clearly, Trebizontines were interested in autonomy even before the city fell. See C. Mango, ed., *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, 2002, 250. It would also be important to note that Cherson recognized the Grand Komnenoi during the late Byzantine period instead of the Constantinopolitan Palaiologoi.

³⁶⁰ N. Oikonomides, "Silk Trade and Production in Byzantium from the Sixth to the Ninth Century: the Seals of the Kommerkiarioi," in *Social and Economic Life of Byzantium*, ed. E. Zachariadou, 2004, article VIII, 41.

³⁶¹ S. Vryonis Jr., 1971, 54. The numbers of soldiers also increased markedly during the tenth century in the *thema* of Chaldia. See p. 37. It is also important to note that the Armenian population was especially prone to rebellion—certainly due to their Monophysitic christological differences with Constantinople, which was just as serious in the late tenth century as it had been in any previous century. A. Terian, in an e-mail message sent to me, 12 March, 2013. See also A. Terian, 2009, 100. For the preponderance of the Armenian ethnicity in Chaldia during the middle Byzantine period, especially in the thematic army, see P. Charanis, 1963, 18-21.

³⁶² Interestingly, Trebizond also contains a *bedesten*, like Amastris, although Bryer & Winfield argue that it was not built before 1461, let alone 1204, while we can be fairly certain the *bedesten* of Amastris was either a high Roman or very early Byzantine construction. See A. Bryer & D. Winfield, 1988, 196.

³⁶³ Ibid, 191-195. Specifically by Bessarion.

encompassed what became later the middle city and citadel while the lower remained unwallled throughout the entirety of the early and middle Byzantine periods. The middle Byzantine period appears not to have witnessed major building programs with the exception of a few places on the existing classical walls,³⁶⁴ suggesting these few repairs were locally funded at these times and almost certainly built right on to top of preexisting high Roman imperial foundations. It is significant that of the ninety-six churches discussed by Bryer & Winfield, only twenty-two of them date to before 1204, and fewer still presumably built during the middle Byzantine period antedating 1071.³⁶⁵ The earliest surviving church, St. Anne, dates to 884-885. Many of the churches exhibited distinctive architectural features such as the pentagonal main apse, found nowhere else in the Byzantine world, although it seems this feature became more popular in the city after 1204,³⁶⁶ suggesting an exclusively Trapezontine architectural style.

The economy of middle Byzantine Trebizond was vibrant one. After the separation of Chaldia from the Armeniakon thema in 824,³⁶⁷ the profit from Trebizond's position as the terminal for Eastern caravan commerce stayed in the city instead of being transferred to the capital of the Armeniakon *thema* at Amaseia. Furthermore, the city's long-established annual trade fair, the panēgyris of St. Eugenios,³⁶⁸ the city's patron

³⁶⁴ Ibid, 186-187. On p. 91, the topographers suggest that repairs may have been made to the classical walls surrounding the middle city in the ninth century. It appears to me, however, that there is no visible evidence of defensive architectural features in the walls of the middle city and very few in the citadel that reflect trends in Amastris and other Black Sea cities during the middle Byzantine period, e. g., indicating evidence of imperial funding as opposed to funding by local elites and clergy.

³⁶⁵ Ibid, 204-250.

³⁶⁶ This unique category of specifically Trapezontine church architecture was arguably initiated by the cathedral of the Chrysokephalos, the episcopal palace and the single-most important ecclesiastical building in the city before and after 1204. The metropolitan seat was restored to an original church on the site dating to between 913 and 914, with a completely new basilica having been built between the tenth and eleventh centuries, in its present and surviving form, regardless of the 1970s plaster coating. Originally, it may have been modeled on St. Anne and it reflects an intentionally localized architectural style that endured into the period of the Empire of Trebizond, instead of a Constantinopolitan architectural style. See A. Bryer & D. Winfield, 1988, 246-247.

³⁶⁷ See n352 above.

³⁶⁸ The Panēgyris of St. Eugenios was one of many commercial fairs held annually by cities on the Pontic coastline dedicated to local saints; Sinope held the Panēgyris of St. Phokas, its own local saint. See G. Dagron, "The Urban Economy, Seventh-Twelfth Centuries," 2002, 404. The devotion to George of Amastris may have functioned as a cultivation of renown for another local saint; it is possible that Amastris had its own trade fair, although if so, it certainly would have been less well attended than that of Trebizond. Due to the proximity of the city to Arab and Asian trade routes, Trebizond was widely known for its lively spice trade throughout the middle Byzantine era. See A. Laiou, 2002, 725 and also A. Laiou, 2002, 730. Laiou claims that Paphlagonia did indeed have its own trade fair, although Amastris is not specifically

saint, attracted commerce from as far away as India³⁶⁹ and the resultant tax revenues. Therefore, by the time of the early tenth century, while the *stratēgoi* of other *themata* received greater imperial salaries due to their higher-ranking positions or lower dependence on commerce, the *stratēgos* of Chaldia at Trebizond received a much smaller salary because of his *kommerkion*,³⁷⁰ the annual *kommerkion* was supposed by an Arab account to amount to 1000 *litrai*.³⁷¹ Trebizond indeed benefitted from perhaps the greatest amount of trade in the entire Black Sea due to the caravan routes and the trade fair.

Unfortunately, the study of the monetization of the province of Chaldia and Trebizond has been impossible without excavations. Dunn has supposed that the post-iconoclast remonetization of the empire spread outward from Constantinople, even while the *kommerkiarioi* of commercial and maritime cities like Trebizond would have regulated and taxed the exchange of goods in kind rather than in currency³⁷² to provide for the needs of the local imperial administration. Though there is no evidence of a city mint, the enormity of the scale of trade in Trebizond and the established nature of the St. Eugenios fair would suggest, however, that trade could hardly have been completely regulated and conducted exclusively by barter, even in the iconoclast period, let alone into the ninth century and later, though the degree and dating of remonetization remains in debate. The sigillographic evidence points to some degree of local autonomy ca. 1067-1140,³⁷³ however, it confirms the existence of an imperial bureaucracy from the mid-

mentioned; however, I would seriously doubt that it took place in Gangra instead due to the proximity of Amastris to the rich Black Sea trade.

³⁶⁹ S. Vryonis Jr., 1971, 40.

³⁷⁰ The *stratēgoi* of only two *themata* during the late ninth century received deflated salaries based on the commercial vibrancy of their respective *thema*: Chaldia and Mesopotamia. However, the *kommerkion* was not just a monetary tax. The *kommerkion* would be a tax raised in kind as well, as the *kommerkiarios* of Trebizond, as well as other *kommerkiarioi* of other, specifically, but not limited to, maritime trading cities, would have not been just a simple tax collector, but would have managed the finances of each respective province, successors of the late high Roman provincial civil administration. See A. Dunn, “The *Kommerkiarios*, the *Apotheke*, the *Dromos*, and the *West*,” 1993, 3-8.

³⁷¹ Although this is undoubtedly an exaggeration. See N. Oikonomides, “The Economic Region of Constantinople: From Directed Economy to Free Economy, and the Role of the Italians,” in *Social and Economic Life of Byzantium*, ed. E. Zachariadou, 2004, article XIII, 230-231 and n27. See also article XVII: “Title and Income at the Byzantine Court,” of the same volume, 204. The actual *kommerkion* was under 10 *kentenaria* annually. See A. Laiou, 2002, 727-728.

³⁷² A. Dunn, 1993, 13-14. The sheer number of *kommerkiarioi* of Chaldia after the creation of the *thema* is significant. See B. Krsmanović, 2008, 126 n247.

³⁷³ For a detailed sigillographic study of the autonomy of the semi-independent Gabras family of Chaldia in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, see A. Bryer, A. Dunn & J. W. Nesbitt, 2003, 51-70.

ninth century onwards into the eleventh, established at the same time as Amastris, and as we will later see, Chersōn.

Chersōn

As we have already discussed, Chersōn's remoteness from Constantinople, geographical, legal and cultural, began even before the first iconoclast period with Justinian II's revenge on the city at the turn of the eighth century, the account being given by Theophanēs.³⁷⁴ Throughout the eighth and into the early ninth centuries, Chersōn remained in the Khazar cultural orbit; although the city still maintained commercial links with the Pontic cities like Amastris, Amisos, Sinopē, Herakleia and Trebizond. Though there was indeed a city mint, established by Justinian I, the rate of coin loss fell sharply after the middle of the eighth century when mint "ceased to exist altogether"³⁷⁵ and the city largely slipped from Constantinopolitan authority during the iconoclasms³⁷⁶ until being elevated from a semi-autonomous archontate to a *thema* in 841.³⁷⁷ Imperial reorganization would mean a remonetization of exchange and indeed the city began recasting copper coins in the mid-ninth century and accordingly, coins referencing Macedonian emperors resurface in these layers.³⁷⁸ Through this period, Chersōn was a trading city acting as a middle point between Byzantine Anatolia and points north and east, relying on grain and cloth imported from Pontic cities and exporting back furs,

³⁷⁴ See *The Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284-813*, C. Mango & R. Scott, trans., 1997, 527-528. In the passage, due to the revenge Justinian II took on the inhabitants of the city in 711 for supporting a usurper, Philippikos Bardanēs (711-713), the citizens looked to themselves for their own defense. Bardanēs was, interestingly enough, a rebel of Armenian ethnicity supported by Chersōn, a situation suspiciously similar to that of Bardas Phōkas' Armenian-supported rebellion against Constantinople, 278 years later, which may or may not have also been supported by Chersōn as well. For the ethnic identity of Bardanēs, see P. Charanis, "Ethnic Changes in the Byzantine Empire in the Seventh Century," 1959, 23-44. For that of Bardas Phōkas and the lineage of the Phōkai in general, see also, P. Charanis, *Studies on the Demography of the Byzantine Empire: Collected Studies*, 1972, 222-225. We also learn from this passage that Chersōn already possessed its own walls and fortifications, that Justinian II's expedition required all manner of siege machinery to destroy them.

³⁷⁵ J. C. Carter, 2003, 178.

³⁷⁶ Chersōn had always been a convenient place for exiling undesirables, usually for ecclesiastical and political reasons. I will refrain from listing all the notable exiles Chersōn had sheltered ever since the high Roman period, but with such a history of undesirables, it bears mention of the fact that after Justinian II's policies toward Chersōn during his second reign, regardless of the debate about the exile of iconophilic clerics to Chersōn, there is little doubt that this tendency for rebellion stemmed from the city's identity as a harbor for the political and religious opponents of Constantinopolitan authority. In addition to the rebellious nature of the city due to religio-political exiles, there is a relevant account from the deposed Roman pope Martin I, exiled to Chersōn in 655 which relates the economic problems the city, experienced during this time, as well as a chronic food shortage. See A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 2002, 661.

³⁷⁷ See above n57.

³⁷⁸ J. C. Carter, 2003, 178 and 35.

waxes, honey, salt fish and slaves in addition to shipping wines, silks and other luxury goods to the Rus', Pechenegs and Khazars.³⁷⁹

The *stratēgoi*, beginning with Petrōnas Kamatēros in 841, were imperial appointments, whom, as the *DAI* contends, it was important to garner from the imperial mainland, usually Amastris, instead of local notables who tended toward autonomy, which in Chersōn, well-into the tenth century, comprised the body from which the *prōtevōn* was drawn. The sigillographic record reveals a preponderance of imperial officials in the late ninth century and up through the eleventh while saying little to nothing of *kommerkiarioi*, *prōtospatharioi* and *stratēgoi* before the mid-ninth and after the twelfth centuries.³⁸⁰

The monumental archaeology of Chersōn reflects its archiepiscopal status within the imperial fold as well as its fortifications suggesting that of a provincial outpost perched on the edge of a vast and foreign hinterland. The principal churches of middle Byzantine Chersōn were built in the ninth and tenth centuries and their localized “forms persisted notwithstanding [the imperial authoritative] change.”³⁸¹ The walls of the city

³⁷⁹ It bears mentioning of the fact that trade, especially in salt fish, which was highly sought after in the capital, was so important for Chersōn, it is mentioned at length in the *DAI*. The imperial reorganization of Chersōn's status did little to regulate the Black Sea trade between the north and the south of the coasts. See N. Oikonomides, “Le Marchand Byzantin,” 653. The relative stability of the Black Sea littoral after the Byzantine reorganization led to the economic development of the city, however as Khazar power weakened in the Crimea, imperial authorities were anxious to safeguard the city against the depredations of the Rus'. Accordingly, there are many mentions in the *PVL* of tenth century treaties with Byzantium regarding the abstention from harassing Chersōnite fishermen near the Dniepr river mouth. It is also worth mentioning that another major reason the capital had an interest in not only preserving Chersōn's economic capacity for the importation of raw materials from the steppe, but political capacity was due to the existence of large deposits of naphtha found in the Taman peninsula near Tmutarakan'. As Sharp has noted, “It is surely no coincidence that such information is contained in that part of Constantine's imperial advice dealing with Chersōn and just prior to the section concerning the tactics for dealing with any rebellion on the part of the city. Chersōn was particularly well placed to safeguard the wells and the removal of the material.” See R. Sharp, 2011, 216.

³⁸⁰ This would indicate that before and until 866/867, the governing of Chersōn, even after its establishment as an imperial thematic capital, it was likely administered by local notable *prōtevoites* as well as imperial *stratēgoi*. See R. Sharp, 2011, 246. Undoubtedly this led to problems arising, such as that of the rebellion of the Chersōnites led by the Tzouloi in 1016 which was crushed by a combined Byzantine-Rus' naval action, less than 30 years after the city had been captured by Vladimir I. See J. C. Carter, 2003, 181.

³⁸¹ R. Sharp, 2011, 246. This would suggest that the local nobility of Chersōn always sought greater autonomy, even after thematization, never having forgotten its independence in the days of the archontate. Furthermore, Sharp argues that the elements of middle Byzantine Chersōnite church architecture were shared with other regions, notably around the Black Sea littoral and Kievan Rus', but not the capital. See p. 256. Unfortunately, we are still unsure of the precise location of the Chersōnite episcopal seat, however Carter believes it is possibly located in the northern sector of the city near the upper classes residences. See J. C. Carter, 101. For the medieval class differences in Cherson, see C. Bouras, “Aspects of the Byzantine

had existed since its first founding and had been extensively reinforced in the early late-Roman/early-Byzantine period but had not been repaired throughout the iconoclast period until additions were made dating to the ninth and tenth centuries. It was at this time that an administrative complex was built in the citadel area to support the imperial administration, likely the *stratēgos*, *kommerkiarios*, *horrearios* and other thematic officials.³⁸² By the end of the eleventh century and into the twelfth, Chersōn still profited from the intense exchange of Black Sea trade, not subjected as Anatolia was, to Turkic immigration. However, by 1204, it is also important to note that the city recognized Trebizond as its suzerain before any other power in the Black Sea littoral.³⁸³

Discussion

As such, we are to understand that the Black Sea commercial network of episcopal *kastra* was one of both varying and similar urban circumstances. These Black Sea cities were both *emporion* and *kastra*, thematic capital cities and otherwise, the seats of both *episkopoi* and military commanders, *stratēgoi*, *katapanōs* and *doukes*. Furthermore, these cities had their own merchant classes, frequently funded by their clergies, competing with those of other cities. By the late tenth and into the eleventh century, the amount of seaborne commerce is evident in the greater amount of shipwrecks attested to those centuries, in comparison to those of the seventh to ninth.³⁸⁴ We know that their *kommerkiarioi* regulated trade and levied taxes on trade both in currency and in kind, perhaps Amastris becoming remonetized earlier than either Trebizond or Chersōn. The imperial bureaucracies present in each city were funded by the capital, with the partial exception of Trebizond, whose *stratēgos* exacted a portion of the *kommerkion* through the tenth and eleventh centuries. In time however, the urban *stratēgos* of Anatolia became little more than a *kastrophylax* and it would be important to note that

City, Eighth to Fifteenth Centuries,” 2002, 523. For the locations of varying classes, occupations and ethnicities in the city, see A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 2002, 664. See also figure iv.

³⁸² J. C. Carter, 64-71. This may suggest imperial involvement in the reinforcement of Chersōn’s defensive walls. However, as Sharp points out, the ecclesiastical constructions of the middle Byzantine period, notwithstanding the defensive walls, were probably funded by local notables instead of by imperial involvement. See R. Sharp, 2011, 246. Around the turn of the eleventh century, there is a coin hoard uncovered in the citadel suggesting a siege, perhaps that of Vladimir’s. J. C. Carter, 2003, 71.

³⁸³ Ibid, 38-39. This suggests still, the extent of Chersōnite independence from Constantinople extended through the middle Byzantine era into the late medieval period.

³⁸⁴ F. Doorninck Jr., “Byzantine Shipwrecks,” 2002, 902-904.

the first mention of this title appears just seven years after Manzikert.³⁸⁵ The citadels of each of these middle-Byzantine cities reflected the *acropoleis* of Classical and Hellenistic cities, importantly dating from the periods in which they were founded, as *emporía* and therefore reproduced the semi-autonomous status they possessed during the iconoclasms, cut off from Constantinople due to the threat of early either Rus' or Arab raids. One could even argue that because they were not subject to the same population upheavals of central Hellas, Epiros, the Peloponnesos, Western Macedonia and the Balkans,³⁸⁶ these urban centers had a continuity that stretched back to their original foundings as both *emporía* and *poleis*.³⁸⁷ The specifically commercial-based economies of these cities attracted diverse populations of Jews, Armenians, Khurramites and original Greek-speakers as well as more specifically Rus's and Khazars in Chersōn and Syrian Muslims, Abkhazians and Alans in Trebizond. Their diversities reflected their roles as centers of trade, industry and production and contributed not a little to local as well as external allegiances in the middle Byzantine period as their commercially-based economies contrasted significantly to the conventional, agriculturally-based economies of the older, established inland *themata*.

This is not to say that these three cities should be viewed as inherently categorical, as typical centers of the Black Sea trade network; rather, Black Sea trade was a regional phenomenon, both separate and inextricably linked to the wider eastern Mediterranean commerce through Constantinople but also, to a certain extent, separate from the capital. The cities that engaged in the Black Sea network may have been geographically attached to Anatolia or the Crimean peninsula, but they were truly attached to the network itself. However, urban, autonomous and thematic distinctions continued to exist as part of the continuousness of urban habitation. Trebizond, situated a long way from the capital enjoyed its own regional prestige and certainly as a center of commerce, learning, industry, evangelism and diplomacy, very similar to Chersōn, which

³⁸⁵ B. Krsmanović, 2008, 77.

³⁸⁶ The seventh-ninth century transition from civic-status *polis* to *kastron* was manifested vastly differently between the urban centers of Anatolia compared to Greece and the Balkans. See A. Dunn, "Stages in the Transition from the Late Antique to the Middle Byzantine Urban Centre in S. Macedonia and S. Thrace," in *Αφιέρωμα στον Ν. Γ. Λ. Hammond*, 1997, 137-150.

³⁸⁷ Arguably due to the uninterrupted existence of their provincial elites. For a greater study of the continuity of provincial elites throughout the seventh-ninth centuries, see M. Whittow, "Early Medieval Byzantium and the End of the Ancient World," 2009, 134-153.

is a major reason the two cities remained closely linked after 1204. The rebuilding of Amastris' walls by the emperors of the mid-ninth century ensured that city's continuing intimacy with Constantinople, perhaps based on its separation from Gangra as much as its own geographical proximity to the capital. Chersōn's walls were rebuilt later in the ninth or in the early tenth century, though it remains unclear if this was done with local or imperial funds. As for Trebizond, it seems, no major defensive reparation phase took place between 257 and 1223, suggesting the city's defenses were maintained more by a local initiative than an imperial one, at least during the middle Byzantine era, although much may be obscured by the works of the grand Komnēnoi. The contemporaneous defensive and ecclesiastical building phase of the ninth century in Amastris is not matched in either Trebizond or Chersōn, while successive emperors throughout the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries were constantly aware of Chersōn's tendency for rebellion.

Appendix II

A short expansion on the infamous Toparch Fragments and other matters of Russian historiographical interpretation of Vladimir's conversion

As we have discussed above in sections 2.3-2.5, the whole purpose of the themes and message in the “Korsun’ Legend” was to imbue a sense of “nationhood” to Kievan Russia and her people; it simultaneously served to give pride and piousness to a new Christian people while at the same time congregating them together into a single identity. Although we would by no means charge the document with worthlessness, as it functions to furnish modern scholarship with no less than the basis of its comprehension of Kievan Rus’ clerical culture, it was nevertheless “based largely on oral tradition, [and] that both are guilty of the usual sins of medieval historiography, and that, moreover, a strong national...bias caused the Russian no less than the Greek chronicler to manipulate the facts *ad maiorem gloriam* of his own hero.”³⁸⁸ And indeed, the particularities of the development of shared identity is nothing new for Russian historiography. For centuries, Russian historians have debated about the quintessential and institutional manifestations of the medieval Kievan Rus’ state, notably her culture, economics, politics and religion. These debates undoubtedly continue in the present day, and very often they have included forged documents and falsified information. In this regard, since Hase exposed them along with his 1828 edition of the *History* of Leōn Diakonos, historians have quarreled senselessly over the context of the Toparch Fragments, usually depending on one’s agenda, to depict the medieval Kievan Rus’ state in a positive or negative way.

As for the Toparch Fragments, I would tentatively agree with Obolensky when he asserted that their validity was overturned by Ševčenko,³⁸⁹ who demonstrated that the fragments were an inauthentic creation by none other than Hase himself, and at the behest of Count Rumjancev, a Russian aristocrat with a guided interest in medieval Rus’ affairs and of another Russian, the so-called “academician” by the name of Philip Krug, eager to present early Russian history in a positive light in their clearly subjective efforts to rewrite Russian history and its beginnings to suit their own specifically Slavophile

³⁸⁸ V. Terras, 1965, 396.

³⁸⁹ D. Obolensky, 1982, 130. He writes, “The notorious document known as the «Fragments of the Gothic Toparch», used in the past with varying degrees of confidence by historians, has recently been eliminated as a valid source on tenth-century Crimea by Professor Ševčenko’s masterly demonstration that it is in fact a nineteenth-century forgery.”

agendas,³⁹⁰ which reinforced the notion of Vladimir's Kievan Rus's standing in the eyes of the Byzantine court as Hanak claims that it recorded that Vladimir, in marrying Anna, was perhaps granted the title of Βασιλεῦς.³⁹¹ Needless to say, for his "services to the Russian cause," Hase was awarded seventeen thousand rubles and a St. Vladimir medal for his edition of Leōn Diakonos³⁹² and the Toparch Fragments, which he wanted to be regarded as dating to the time of Vladimir in 988.³⁹³ Thanks to Ševčenko, by now, many historians, after Obolensky's weighty alignment with him, subscribe to Ševčenko's convincing demonstration of the invalidity of the Toparch Fragments as complete fabrications on the part of Hase himself and his benefactors, Count Rumjancev and the academician Philip Krug.

Likewise, the well-known scholar Likhačev, like Rozen before him, is another historian eager to point out the historiographical validity of the primary Russian sources, which in this case is the *PVL*, and while I would not necessarily disagree with him on principal concerning other passages within it, the "Korsun' Legend" unfortunately is too great a historical fabrication for the modern historian to digest easily, if at all.³⁹⁴ Russian clerics have for centuries disputed the validity of relics and chronicles as they may align or not align with their respective agendas, i.e., the fifteenth-sixteenth century conflicts between Novgorod and Moscow. In this manner, many subsequent aspects of medieval and late medieval Russian culture such as relics, stories and miracles sought to legitimize themselves by tying themselves somehow to Chersōn and thus to the "Korsun' Legend."³⁹⁵ Conversely, Russian reactions to and interpretations of her shared history

³⁹⁰ I. Ševčenko, 1991, 427-428. Ševčenko, in my opinion, satisfactorily illustrates that while generations of Russian scholars and otherwise have used not only the Toparch Fragments, but also Leōn Diakonos' *Istoria* and certainly the *PVL* to reconstruct Russian medieval history to suit their own ends, the Toparch Fragments, at least, were a complete forgery by none other than C. B. Hase himself and so causing much misplaced theorizing and speculation over them. See for example A. A. Vasiliev, 1936, 119-121; W. K. Hanak, 1973, 96; G. Vernadsky, 1948, 43 & V. G. Vasil'evskij, 1908, 136.

³⁹¹ W. K. Hanak, 1973, 97.

³⁹² I. Ševčenko, 1991, 428.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 374.

³⁹⁴ D. S. Likhačev, 1987, 5-25. Remarking on the nature of the Russian relationship with history, particularly when applied to the Russian medieval literary context, R. R. Gargarov, 2002, 59, has asserted, "...a tradition of rewriting history, introducing the 'necessary' changes, additions, and 'corrections,' existed in Russia long before Stalin's epoch."

³⁹⁵ Many later miracles, such as the "so-called Chersonian antiquities" (see A. Poppe, 2007, "On the So-called Chersonian Antiquities," article XII, 71-105), the Joachim Chronicle (see F. J. Thomson, 1999, "The Bulgarian Contribution to the Reception of Byzantine Culture in Kievan Rus': the Myths and the Enigma," article IV, 219-227) and the Miracles of Damian and Kosma are attributed in later centuries to Chersōn

with Byzantium had fundamentally changed during the Westernizing period following Peter I.³⁹⁶ While I will certainly not attempt a broad analysis of Russian historical scholarship here, specifically throughout the imperial period, I will pass them over to more recent interpretations of the episode.

Post-WWII Soviet literature on Kievan Rus' and the conversion, of which Grekov's testament is an excellent example,³⁹⁷ with the appropriate reference to Marx,³⁹⁸ seeks to provide a Marxist analysis of Vladimir's conversion³⁹⁹ while simultaneously portraying the *PVL* chronicle as essentially believable.⁴⁰⁰ In hindsight, while we know that this modern casting of the medieval scenario in Marxist terms may contain more than a few kernels of truth, it nevertheless serves to distill the episode down to causalities and reactions which did not exist in the medieval *mentalité*, yet are superimposed on the historiography, and always to suit specific agendas.⁴⁰¹ Regarding the case of the conversion of Vladimir I in 988, those agendas have often proven to contain a particularly biased Rus'-initiated, anti-Byzantine perspective.

While I cannot and will not examine every single instance of this occurrence in Soviet scholarship, I will point out a few pertinent examples which I have chanced upon in my research.⁴⁰² In the specific context of portraying Vladimir as an equal to Byzantine emperors and Kievan Rus' as an entirely separate and independent state at the time, Zimin has written, in the typically venerative fashion, “Но и Владимир сумел добиться существенных уступок от Царьграда, взяв в Крыму греческую крепость Корсунь.”⁴⁰³ I have translated this as, “But also Vladimir was able to achieve significant concessions

when really their attributions were only later attempts to tie them to the conversion of Vladimir I and the Korsun' legend of 988. See M. Tikhomirov, *The Towns of Ancient Rus*, trans. Y. Sdobnikov, ed. D. Skvirsky, Moscow, 1959, 111.

³⁹⁶ R. R. Gargarov, 2002, 85.

³⁹⁷ B. D. Grekov, 1953, 475-480.

³⁹⁸ Ibid, see 476, n1.

³⁹⁹ Ibid, 478, for example, Grekov fits on a Marxist reasoning for Vladimir's conversion: “...the church organization created by the Greeks (Byzantines) played a very definite role in the history of Kiev society and became another potent means of influencing the masses with a view to further their subjugation.” See B. D. Grekov, *Kiev Rus*, trans. Y. Sdobnikov, ed. D. Ogden, Moscow, 1959, 639.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid, 476, he writes, “Our chronicler gives a dramatized description of Vladimir's explanation of various faiths. This account is quite plausible.” See B. D. Grekov, *Kiev Rus*, trans. Y. Sdobnikov, ed. D. Ogden, Moscow, 1959, 637.

⁴⁰¹ R. R. Gargarov, 2002, 60.

⁴⁰² Although for a greater extrapolation on this topic, albeit more than noticeably biased from an American perspective, see A. G. Mazour, 1971, *The Writing of History in the Soviet Union*.

⁴⁰³ A. A. Zimin, 1973, *Холоры на Руси: с Древнейших Времен до Конца XV в.*, 51.

from Constantinople, capturing the Greek fortress of Chersōn in the Crimea.” In portraying the event in a manner by which Vladimir is overestimated and the Byzantine role is undervalued, the modern historian, such as the abovementioned Zimin enters into an agreement with the *PVL* in order to present Vladimir in the episode as distinctively independent and outside of Byzantine institutions of supremacy. In this way, as Hanak illustrates it, “...the image of the Kievan grand prince [Vladimir I] demonstrates an early Russian textual reluctance to admit dependency upon Byzantine imperial theory and practice.”⁴⁰⁴ Another example comes as some Soviet historians use language which reveals a heavily vested interest. For example, when Grekov writes, “Христианство стало проникать к нам задолго до X века,”⁴⁰⁵ which I have translated as “Christianity first penetrated into *our* country long before the 10th century,” it discloses a distinctly personal interest in portraying his history in a manner which can undermine, not always, but rather often, his treatment of the history of Kievan Rus’. Indeed, Sdobnikov must have noticed this concern and the issue at stake when he rendered the sentence into English as, “Christianity first penetrated into *this* country long before the 10th century.”⁴⁰⁶ These examples serve only to justify a case in which historians are keen on presenting their versions of history to suit their personal purposes. Concerning the course of Soviet scholarship specifically in regards to the “Korsun’ Legend,” Ostrowski has written a concise article detailing his interpretations of Soviet historians’ discourse on the subject, notably analyzing the scholarship of five Soviet scholars, three of which I have included in my research: S. V. Bakhrushin, I. U. Budovnic, B. D. Grekov, M. N. Pokrovskij, and M. N. Tikhomirov.⁴⁰⁷ He concludes that Soviet historiography has gone through a set of changes where, granting a phase in which a “critical attitude toward the reliability of indigenous Rus’ sources” was adopted, nevertheless, the changes in the

⁴⁰⁴ W. K. Hanak, 1973, 63.

⁴⁰⁵ B. D. Grekov, 1953, *Киевская Русь*, 476.

⁴⁰⁶ B. D. Grekov, 1959, *Kiev Rus*, trans. Y. Sdobnikov, ed. D. Ogden, 637.

⁴⁰⁷ In order, Ostrowski cites: S. V. Bakhrushin, 1937, “К вопросу о Крещении Киевской Руси,” 40-77; I. U. Budovnic, 1956, “К вопросу о Крещении Руси,” & *ibidem*, 1960, *Общественно-Политическая Мысль Древней Руси XI-XIV вв.*, 75-102; B. D. Grekov, 1939, *Киевская Русь*; M. N. Pokrovskij, 1920, *Русская История в Самом Сжатом Очерке: от Древнейших Времен до второй половины 19-го столетия*; and M. N. Tikhomirov, 1959, “The Origins of Christianity in Russia,” 199-211. D. Ostrowski, 1987, “The Christianization of Rus’ in Soviet Historiography: Attitudes and Interpretations (1920-1960),” 445. It should be noted here though that Ostrowski uses the 1939 edition of Grekov’s work while I have hitherto used the 1953 edition instead. See Ostrowski’s discussion of the differences between Grekov’s editions on note 3 of the same page.

manifestation of Soviet scholarship regarding Vladimir's baptism were still tied to economic and political changes in the contemporary Soviet society itself.⁴⁰⁸ Therefore, we also must acknowledge and bring to attention the overwhelming prevalence of modern agendas in the analyses of the conversion. Whether these interpretations are imperial Russian, Soviet, post-Soviet, or Western interpretations of any period,⁴⁰⁹ they will always overlay the medieval event. As the historian and archaeologist have come to understand about pursuing medieval historical accuracy, it is truly a holy grail, irony unintentional.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, 460.

⁴⁰⁹ Importantly, for a comparatively unbiased juxtaposition of Western and Soviet historians and an analysis and critique of the differences between their perspectives of Byzantium and their respective shared histories with Byzantium, see I. Ševčenko, 1991, 339-351.

Appendix III

English translation of the *Povest' Vremennykh Let*,
 Cross & Sherbowitz-Wetzor, 1953, 96-119
 (omitting pages 98-109 for the purpose of preserving space as they
 contain a summarization of the Bible).

6494 (986). Vladimir was visited by Bulgars of Mohammedan faith, who said, "Though you are a wise and prudent prince, you have no religion. Adopt our faith, and revere Mahomet." Vladimir inquired what was the nature of their religion. They replied that they believed in God, and that Mahomet instructed them to practice circumcision, to eat no pork, to drink no wine, and, after death, promised them complete fulfillment of their carnal desires. "Mahomet," they asserted, "will give each man seventy fair women. He may choose one fair one, and upon that woman will Mahomet confer the charms of them all, and she shall be his wife. Mahomet promises that one may then satisfy every desire, but whoever is poor in this world will be no different in the next." They also spoke other false things which out of modesty may not be written down. Vladimir listened to them, for he was fond of women and indulgence, regarding which he heard with pleasure. But circumcision and abstinence from pork and wine were disagreeable to him. "Drinking," said he, "is the joy of the Russes. We cannot exist without that pleasure."

Then came the Germans, asserting that they were come as emissaries of the Pope. They added, "Thus says the Pope: 'Your country is like our country, but your faith is not as ours. For our faith is the light. We worship God, who has made heaven and earth, the stars, the moon, and every creature, while your gods are only wood.'" Vladimir inquired what their teaching was. They replied, "Fasting according to one's strength. But whatever one eats or drinks is all to the glory of God, as our teacher Paul has said." Then Vladimir answered, "Depart hence; our fathers accepted no such principle."

The Jewish Khazars heard of these missions, and came themselves saying, "We have learned that Bulgars and Christians came hither to instruct you in their faiths. The Christians believe in him whom we crucified, but we believe in the one God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Then Vladimir inquired what their religion was. They replied that its tenets included circumcision, not eating pork or hare, and observing the Sabbath. The Prince then asked where their native land was, and they replied that it was in Jerusalem. When Vladimir inquired where that was, they made answer, "God was angry at our forefathers, and scattered us among the gentiles on account of our sins. Our land was then given to the Christians." The Prince then demanded, "How can you hope to teach others while you yourselves are cast out and scattered abroad by the hand of God? If God loved you and your faith, you would not be thus dispersed in foreign lands. Do you expect us to accept that fate also?"

Then the Greeks sent to Vladimir a scholar, who spoke thus: "We have heard that the Bulgarians came and urged you to adopt their faith, which pollutes heaven and earth. They are accursed above all men, like Sodom and Gomorrah, upon which the Lord let fall burning stones, and which he buried and submerged. The day of destruction likewise awaits these men, on which the Lord will come to judge the earth, and to destroy all those who do evil and abomination. For they moisten their excrement, and pour the water into their mouths, and anoint their beards with it, remembering Mahomet. The women also

perform this same abomination, and even worse ones.” Vladimir, upon hearing their statements, spat upon the earth, saying, “This *is* a vile thing.”

Then the scholar said, “We have likewise heard how men came from Rome to convert you to their faith. It differs but little from ours, for they commune with wafers, called *oplatki*, which God did not give them, for he ordained that we should commune with bread. For when he had taken bread, the Lord gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘This is my body broken for you.’ Likewise he took the cup, and said, ‘This *is* my blood of the New Testament.’ They do not so act, for they have modified the faith.” Then Vladimir remarked that the Jews had come into his presence and had stated that the Germans and the Greeks believed in him whom they crucified. To this the scholar replied, “Of a truth we believe in him. For some of the prophets foretold that God should be incarnate, and others that he should be crucified and buried, but arise on the third day and ascend into heaven. “For the Jews killed the prophets, and still others they persecuted. When their prophecy was fulfilled, our Lord came down to earth, was crucified, arose again, and ascended into heaven. He awaited their repentance for forty-six years, but they did not repent, so that the Lord let loose the Romans upon them. Their cities were destroyed, and they were scattered among the gentiles, under whom they are now in servitude.”

Vladimir then inquired why God should have descended to earth and should have endured such pain. The scholar then answered and said, “If you are desirous of hearing the story, I shall tell you from the beginning why God descended to earth.” Vladimir replied, “Gladly would I hear it.” Whereupon the scholar thus began his narrative:

(What follows in these pages [98-109] is first a translated summarization of the Old Testament from Genesis to Psalms, ostensibly taken from the abovementioned *Paley*, and then a summarization of the New Testament.)

“Now that the Apostles have taught men throughout the world to believe in God, we Greeks have inherited their teaching, and the world believes therein. God hath appointed a day, in which he shall come from heaven to judge both the quick and the dead, and to render to each according to his deeds; to the righteous, the kingdom of heaven and ineffable beauty, bliss without end, and eternal life; but to sinners, the torments of hell and a worm that sleeps not, and of their torments there shall be no end. Such shall be the penalties for those who do not believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. The unbaptized shall be tormented with fire.”

As he spoke thus, he exhibited to Vladimir a canvas on which was depicted the Judgment Day of the Lord, and showed him, on the right, the righteous going to their bliss in Paradise, and on the left, the sinners on their way to torment. Then Vladimir sighed and said, “Happy are they upon the right, but woe to those upon the left!” The scholar replied, “If you desire to take your place upon the right with the just, then accept baptism! Vladimir took this counsel to heart, saying, “I shall wait yet a little longer,” for he wished to inquire about all the faiths. Vladimir then gave the scholar many gifts, and dismissed him with great honor.

6495 (987). Vladimir summoned together his boyars and the city-elders, and said to them, “Behold, the Bulgars came before me urging me to accept their religion. Then came the Germans and praised their own faith; and after them came the Jews. Finally the Greeks appeared, criticizing all other faiths but commending their own, and they spoke at

length, telling the history of the whole world from its beginning. Their words were artful, and it was wondrous to listen and pleasant to hear them. They preach the existence of another world. 'Whoever adopts our religion and then dies shall arise and live forever. But whosoever embraces another faith, shall be consumed with fire in the next world.' What is your opinion on this subject, and what do you answer?" The boyars and the elders replied, "You know, oh Prince, that no man condemns his own possessions, but praises them instead. If you desire to make certain, you have servants at your disposal. Send them to inquire about the ritual of each and how he worships God."

Their counsel pleased the prince and all the people, so that they chose good and wise men to the number of ten, and directed them to go first among the Bulgars and inspect their faith. The emissaries went their way, and when they arrived at their destination they beheld the disgraceful actions of the Bulgars and their worship in the mosque; then they returned to their country. Vladimir then instructed them to go likewise among the Germans, and examine their faith, and finally to visit the Greeks. They thus went into Germany, and after viewing the German ceremonial, they proceeded to Tsargrad, where they appeared before the Emperor. He inquired on what mission they had come, and they reported to him all that had occurred. When the Emperor heard their words, he rejoiced, and did them great honor on that very day.

On the morrow, the Emperor sent a message to the Patriarch to inform him that a Rus' delegation had arrived to examine the Greek faith, and directed him to prepare the church and the clergy, and to array himself in his sacerdotal robes, so that the Rus' might behold the glory of the God of the Greeks. When the Patriarch received these commands, he bade the clergy assemble, and they performed the customary rites. They burned incense, and the choirs sang hymns. The Emperor accompanied the Rus' to the church, and placed them in a wide space, calling their attention to the beauty of the edifice, the chanting, and the pontifical services and the ministry of the deacons, while he explained to them the worship of his God. The Rus' were astonished, and in their wonder praised the Greek ceremonial. Then the Emperors Basil and Constantine invited the envoys to their presence, and said, "Go hence to your native country," and dismissed them with valuable presents and great honor.

Thus they returned to their own country, and the Prince called together his boyars and the elders. Vladimir then announced the return of the envoys who had been sent out, and suggested that their report be heard. He thus commanded them to speak out before his retinue. The envoys reported, "When we journeyed among the Bulgars, we beheld how they worship in their temple, called a mosque, while they stand ungirt. The Bulgar bows, sits down, looks hither and thither like one possessed, and there is no happiness among them, but instead only sorrow and a dreadful stench. Their religion is not good. Then we went among the Germans, and saw them performing many ceremonies in their temples; but we beheld no glory there. Then we went to Greece, and the Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty. Every man, after tasting something sweet, is afterward unwilling to accept that which is bitter, and therefore we cannot dwell longer here." Then the boyars spoke and said, "If the Greek faith were evil, it would not have been adopted by your grandmother Olga who was wiser

than all other men.” Vladimir then inquired where they should all accept baptism, and they replied that the decision rested with him.

After a year had passed, in 6496 (988), Vladimir proceeded with an armed force against Kherson, a Greek city, and the people of Kherson barricaded themselves therein. Vladimir halted at the farther side of the city beside the harbor, a bowshot from the town, and the inhabitants resisted energetically while Vladimir besieged the town. Eventually, however, they became exhausted, and Vladimir warned them that if they did not surrender, he would remain on the spot for three years. When they failed to heed this threat, Vladimir marshalled his troops and ordered the construction of an earthwork in the direction of the city. While this work was under construction, the inhabitants dug a tunnel under the city-wall, stole the heaped-up earth, and carried it into the city, where they piled it up in the center of the town. But the soldiers kept on building, and Vladimir persisted. Then a man of Kherson, Anastasius by name, shot into the Rus' camp an arrow on which he had written, “There are springs behind you to the east, from which water flows in pipes. Dig down and cut them oil.” When Vladimir received this information, he raised his eyes to heaven and vowed that if this hope was realized, he would be baptized. He gave orders straightway to dig down above the pipes, and the water-supply was thus cut off. The inhabitants were accordingly overcome by thirst, and surrendered.

Vladimir and his retinue entered the city, and he sent messages to the Emperors Basil and Constantine, saying, “Behold, I have captured your glorious city. I have also heard that you have an unwedded sister. Unless you give her to me to wife, I shall deal with your own city as I have with Kherson.” When the Emperors heard this message they were troubled, and replied, “It is not meet for Christians to give in marriage to pagans. If you are baptized, you shall have her to wife, inherit the kingdom of God, and be our companion in the faith. Unless you do so, however, we cannot give you our sister in marriage.” When Vladimir learned their response, he directed the envoys of the Emperors to report to the latter that he was willing to accept baptism, having already given some study to their religion, and that the Greek faith and ritual, as described by the emissaries sent to examine it, had pleased him well. When the Emperors heard this report, they rejoiced, and persuaded their sister Anna to consent to the match. They then requested Vladimir to submit to baptism before they should send their sister to him, but Vladimir desired that the Princess should herself bring priests to baptize him. The Emperors complied with his request, and sent forth their sister, accompanied by some dignitaries and priests. Anna, however, departed with reluctance. “It is as if I were setting out into captivity,” she lamented; “better were it for me to die at home.” But her brothers protested, “Through your agency God turns the land of Rus' to repentance, and you will relieve Greece from the danger of grievous war. Do you not see how much harm the Rus' have already brought upon the Greeks? If you do not set out, they may bring on us the same misfortunes.” It was thus that they overcame her hesitation only with great difficulty. The Princess embarked upon a ship, and after tearfully embracing her kinfolk, she set forth across the sea and arrived at Kherson. The natives came forth to greet her, and conducted her into the city, where they settled her in the palace.

By divine agency, Vladimir was suffering at that moment from a disease of the eyes, and could see nothing, being in great distress. The Princess declared to him that if he desired to be relieved of this disease, he should be baptized with all speed, otherwise it could not be cured. When Vladimir heard her message, he said, “If this proves true, then

of a surety is the God of the Christians great,” and gave order that he should be baptized. The Bishop of Kherson, together with the Princess’s priests, after announcing the tidings, baptized Vladimir, and as the Bishop laid his hand upon him, he straightway received his sight. Upon experiencing this miraculous cure, Vladimir glorified God, saying, “I have now perceived the one true God.” When his followers beheld this miracle, many of them were also baptized.

Vladimir was baptized in the Church of St. Basil, which stands at Kherson upon a square in the center of the city, where the Khersonians trade. The palace of Vladimir stands beside this church to this day, and the palace of the Princess is behind the altar. After his baptism, Vladimir took the Princess in marriage. Those who do not know the truth say he was baptized in Kyiv, while others assert this event took place in Vasilev, while still others mention other places.

After Vladimir was baptized, the priests explained to him the tenets of the Christian faith, urging him to avoid the deceit of heretics by adhering to the following creeds:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth; and also: I believe in one God the Father, who is unborn, and in the only Son, who is born, and in one Holy Ghost emanating therefrom: three complete and thinking Persons, divisible in number and personality, but not in divinity; for they are separated without distinction and united without confusion. God the Father Everlasting, abides in Fatherhood, unbegotten, without beginning, himself the beginning and the cause of all things. Because he is unbegotten, he is older than the Son and the Spirit. From him the Son was born before all worlds, and from him the Holy Ghost emanates intemporally and incorporeally. He is simultaneously Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

The Son, being like the Father, is distinguished from the Father and the Spirit in that he was born. The Spirit is Holy; like to the Father and the Son, and is everlasting. The Father possesses Fatherhood, and Son Sonship, and the Holy Ghost Emanation. For the Father is not transformed into the Son or the Spirit, nor the Son to the Father and the Spirit, nor the Spirit to the Son and the Father, since their attributes are invariable. Not three Gods, but one God, since there is one divinity in three Persons.

In consequence of the desire of the Father and the Spirit to save his creation, he went out of the bosom of the Father, yet without leaving it, to the pure womb of a Virgin, as the seed of God. Entering into her, he took on animated, vocal, and thinking flesh which had not previously existed, came forth God incarnate, and was ineffably born, while his Mother preserved her virginity immaculate. Suffering neither combination, nor confusion, nor alteration, he remained as he was, became what he was not, and assumed the aspect of a slave in truth, not in semblance, being similar to us in every respect except in sin.

Voluntarily he was born, voluntarily he suffered want, voluntarily he thirsted, voluntarily he endured, voluntarily he feared, voluntarily he died in truth and not in semblance. All these were genuine and unimpeachable human sufferings. He gave himself up to be crucified. Though immortal, he tasted death. He arose in the flesh without knowing corruption; he ascended into Heaven, and sat upon the right hand of the Father. And as he ascended in glory and in the flesh so shall he descend once more.

Moreover, I acknowledge one Baptism of water and the Spirit, I approach the Holy Mysteries, I believe in the True Body and Blood, I accept the traditions of the

Church, and I venerate the sacred images. I revere the Holy Tree and every Cross, the sacred relics, and the sacred vessels.

Believe, also, they said, in the seven councils of the Church: the first at Nicaea, comprising three hundred and eighteen Fathers, who cursed Arius and proclaimed the immaculate and orthodox faith; the second at Constantinople, attended by one hundred and fifty Fathers, who anathematized Macedonius (who denied the Holy Spirit), and proclaimed the oneness of the Trinity; the third at Ephesus, comprising two hundred Fathers, against Nestorius, whom they cursed, while they also proclaimed the dignity of the Mother of God; the fourth council of six hundred and thirty Fathers held at Chalcedon, to condemn Eutyches and Dioscorus, whom the Holy Fathers cursed after they had proclaimed the Perfect God and the Perfect Man, our Lord Jesus Christ; the fifth council of one hundred and sixty-five Fathers, held at Constantinople, which was directed against the teachings of Origen and Evagrius, whom the Fathers anathematized; the sixth council of one hundred and seventy Holy Fathers, likewise held.

Do not accept the teachings of the Latins, whose instruction is vicious. For when they enter the church, they do not kneel before the images, but they stand upright before kneeling, and when they have knelt, they trace a cross upon the ground and then kiss it, but they stand upon it when they arise. Thus while prostrate they kiss it, and yet upon arising they trample it underfoot. Such is not the tradition of the Apostles. For the Apostles prescribed the kissing of an upright cross, and also prescribed the use of images. For the Evangelist Luke painted the first image and sent it to Rome. As Basil has said, the honor rendered to the image redounds to its original. Furthermore, they call the earth their mother. If the earth is their mother, then heaven is their father, for in the beginning God made heaven and earth. Yet they say, "Our Father which art in Heaven." If, according to their understanding, the earth is their mother, why do they spit upon their mother, and pollute her whom they caress?

In earlier times, the Romans did not so act, but took part in all the councils, gathering together from Rome and all other Sees. At the first Council in Nicaea, directed against Arius, Silvester sent bishops and priests from Rome, as did Athanasius from Alexandria; and Metrophanes also dispatched his bishops from Constantinople. Thus they corrected the faith. At the second council took part Damasus of Rome, Timotheus of Alexandria, Meletius of Antioch, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Gregory the Theologian. In the third council participated Coelestinus of Rome, Cyril of Alexandria, Juvenal of Jerusalem. At the fourth council participated Leo of Rome, Anatolius of Constantinople, and Juvenal of Jerusalem; and at the fifth, Vigilius of Rome, Eutychius of Constantinople, Apollinaris of Alexandria, and Domnus of Antioch. At the sixth council took part Agathon of Rome, Georgius of Constantinople, Theophanes of Antioch, and Peter the Monk of Alexandria; at the seventh, Adrian of Rome, Tarasius of Constantinople, Politian of Alexandria, Theodoret of Antioch, and Elias of Jerusalem. These Fathers with the assistance of the bishops, corrected the faith.

After the seventh council, Peter the Stammerer came with the others to Rome and corrupted the faith, seizing the Holy See. He seceded from the Sees of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Antioch. His partisans disturbed all Italy, disseminating their teaching in various terms. For some of these priests who conduct services are married to one wife, and others are married to seven. Avoid their doctrine; for they

absolve sins against money payments, which is the worst abuse of all. God guard you from this evil, oh Prince!

Hereupon Vladimir took the Princess and Anastasius and the priests of Kherson, together with the relics of St. Clement and of Phoebus his disciple, and selected also sacred vessels and images for the service." In Kherson he thus founded a church on the mound which had been heaped up in the midst of the city with the earth removed from his embankment; this church is standing at the present day. Vladimir also found and appropriated two bronze statues and four bronze horses, which now stand behind the Church of the Holy Virgin, and which the ignorant think are made of marble. As a wedding present for the Princess, he gave Kherson over to the Greeks again, and then departed for Kyiv.

When the Prince arrived at his capital, he directed that the idols should be overthrown, and that some should be cut to pieces and others burned with fire. He thus ordered that Perun should be bound to a horse's tail and dragged down Borichev to the stream. He appointed twelve men to beat the idol with sticks, not because he thought the wood was sensitive, but to affront the demon who had deceived man in this guise, that he might receive chastisement at the hands of men. Great art thou, oh Lord, and marvelous are thy works! Yesterday he was honored of men, but today held in derision. While the idol was being dragged along the stream to the Dnipro, the unbelievers wept over it, for they had not yet received holy baptism. After they had thus dragged the idol along, they cast it into the Dnipro. But Vladimir had given this injunction "If it halts anywhere, then push it out from the bank, until it goes over the falls. Then let it loose." His command was duly obeyed. When the men let the idol go, and it passed through the rapids, the wind cast it out on the bank, which since that time has been called Perun's sandbank, a name that it bears to this very day.

Thereafter Vladimir sent heralds throughout the whole city to proclaim that if any inhabitants, rich or poor, did not betake himself to the river, he would risk the Prince's displeasure. When the people heard these words, they wept for joy, and exclaimed in their enthusiasm, "If this were not good, the Prince and his boyars would not have accepted it." On the morrow, the Prince went forth to the Dnipro with the priests of the Princess and those from Kherson, and a countless multitude assembled. They all went into the water: some stood up to their necks, others to their breasts, and the younger near the bank, some of them holding children in their arms, while the adults waded farther out. The priests stood by and offered prayers. There was joy in heaven and upon earth to behold so many souls saved. But the devil groaned, lamenting, "Woe is me! how am I driven out hence! For I thought to have my dwelling-place here, since the apostolic teachings do not abide in this land. Nor did this people know God, but I rejoiced in the service they rendered unto me. But now I am vanquished by the ignorant, not by apostles and martyrs, and my reign in these regions is at an end."

When the people were baptized, they returned each to his own abode. Vladimir, rejoicing that he and his subjects now knew God himself, looked up to heaven and said, "Oh God, who has created heaven and earth, look down, I beseech thee, on this thy new people, and grant them, oh Lord, to know thee as the true God, even as the other Christian nations have known thee. Confirm in them the true and inalterable faith, and aid me, oh Lord, against the hostile adversary, so that, hoping in thee and in thy might, I may overcome his malice." Having spoken thus, he ordained that wooden churches should be

built and established where pagan idols had previously stood. He thus founded the Church of St. Basil on the hill where the idol of Perun and the other images had been set, and where the Prince and the people had offered their sacrifices. He began to found churches and to assign priests throughout the cities, and to invite the people to accept baptism in all the cities and towns.

He took the children of the best families, and sent them for instruction in book-learning. The mothers of these children wept bitterly over them, for they were not yet strong in faith, but mourned as for the dead. When these children were assigned for study, there was fulfilled in the land of Rus' the prophecy which says, "In those days, the deaf shall hear words of Scripture, and the voice of the stammerers shall be made plain" (Is., xxix, 18). For these persons had not ere this heard words of Scripture, and now heard them only by the act of God, for in his mercy the Lord took pity upon them, even as the Prophet said, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious" (Ex., xxxiii, 19).

He had mercy upon us in the baptism of life and the renewal of the spirit, following the will of God and not according to our deeds. Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved his new people, the land of Rus', and illumined them with holy baptism. Thus we bend the knee before him saying, "Lord Jesus Christ, what reward shall we return thee for all that thou hast given us, sinners that we are? We can not requite thy gifts, for great art thou, and marvelous are thy works. Of thy majesty there is no end. Generation after generation shall praise thy acts" (Ps., cxlv, 4–5).

Thus I say with David, "Come, let us rejoice in the Lord, let us call upon God and our Savior. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, praising him because he is good, for his mercy endureth forever, since he hath saved us from our enemies, even from vain idols" (Ps., xcvi, 1–2, cxxxvi, 1, 24). And let us once more say with David, "Sing unto the Lord a new song, sing unto the Lord, all the earth! Sing unto the Lord, praise his name: tell his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all nations (Ps., xcvi, 1–4). For the Lord is great and greatly praised, and of his majesty there is no end" (Ps., civ, 3). What joy! Not one or two only are saved. For the Lord said, "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth" (Math., xv, 10). Here not merely one or two, but innumerable multitudes came to.

God, illumined by holy baptism. As the Prophet said, "I will sprinkle water upon you, and ye shall be purified of your idols and your sins" (Ezek, xxxvi, 25). Another Prophet said likewise, "Who like to God taketh away sins and remitteth transgressions? For he is willingly merciful; he turneth his gaze upon us and sinketh our sins in the abyss" (Mic, vii, 18–19). For Paul says, "Brethren, as many of us as were baptized in Jesus Christ were baptized in his death, and with him, through baptism, we were planted in death, in order that as Christ rose from the dead in the glory of the Father, we also might likewise walk in newness of life" (Rom., vi, 3). And again, "The old things have passed away, and new are made (Cor., v, 7); now hath approached our salvation, the night hath passed, the day is at hand" (Rom., xiii, 12); "Thus we obtained access through faith into this grace of which we are proud and through which we exist" (Rom., v, 2). "Now, being freed from sin, and having become servants of the Lord, ye have your fruit in holiness" (Rom., vi, 20).

We are therefore bound to serve the Lord, rejoicing in him, for David said, "Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice in him with trembling" (Ps., ii, 11). We call upon the Lord our God, saying "Blessed be the Lord, who gave us not as prey to their teeth. The net was

broken, and we were freed from the crafts of the devil. His glory has perished noisily, but the Lord endures forever, glorified by the sons of Rus', and praised in the Trinity." But the demons are accursed of pious men and righteous women, who have received baptism and repentance for the remission of sins, and thus form a new Christian people, the elect of God.

Vladimir was enlightened, and his sons and his country with him. For he had twelve sons: Vysheslav, Izyaslav, Yaroslav, Svyatopolk, Vsevolod, Svyatoslav, Mstislav, Boris, Gleb, Stanislav, Pozvzd, and Sudislav. He set Vysheslav in Novgorod, Izyaslav in Polotsk, Svyatopolk in Turov, and Yaroslav in Rostov. When Vysheslav, the oldest, died in Novgorod, he set Yaroslav over Novgorod, Boris over Rostov, Gleb over Murom, Svyatoslav over Dereva, Vsevolod over Vladimir, and Mstislav over Tmutorakan'. Then Vladimir reflected that it was not good that there were so few towns round about Kyiv, so he founded forts on the Desna, the Oster', the Trubezh, the Sula, and the Stugna. He gathered together the best men of the Slavs, and Krivichians, the Chuds, and the Vyaticians, and peopled these forts with them. For he was at war with the Pechenegs, and when he fought with them, he often overcame them.

6497 (989). After these events, Vladimir lived in the Christian faith. With the intention of building a church dedicated to the Holy Virgin, he sent and imported artisans from Greece. After he had begun to build, and the structure was completed, he adorned it with images, and entrusted it to Anastasius of Kherson. He appointed Khersonian priests to serve in it, and bestowed upon this church all the images, vessels, and crosses which he had taken in that city.

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Figure I: A reconstruction of the siege of Chersōn in 988-989, after the speculations of A. L. Berthier-Delagarde and entirely based on the *PVL*'s "Korsun' Legend." Note #4, which Volkoff claims is the "weakest defense." This "weak defense" happens to be the citadel, where the city's barracks, governing offices, thickest walls and tallest towers were located. Clearly, Volkoff's claim mounts a "weak defense" in and of itself. From V. Volkoff, 1984, 205.



**Figure II: A preliminary map of Byzantium, the Crimea and the Eurasian steppe lands ca. 1000 CE.
From D. Obolensky, 1971, 219.**



Figure III: Hypotheses of Byzantine Black Sea trade routes involving the Crimean peninsula, Constantinople and the Bulgarian and Pontic coastlines, respectively. I would like to point out however, that the route I have listed as #3 would most likely have been the least desirable for ancient and medieval mariners, who would not have been prone to risking an open sea voyage in such a stormy sea as the Black Sea. From Y. Morozova, 2009, 160.



Figure 1V: Antique, medieval & modern Chersōn, including the most well-known monuments, fortifications and neighborhoods. The port area is jught north of the citadel, and a modern dock can be seen jutting out from just south of the Kruse Basilica. From J.C. Carter, 2003, 58.



Figure V: Late-Byzantine Chersōn, with neighborhoods specifically delineated. The wealthier residents would have been situated in the northeast section, while the poorer residents farther to the southwest. From A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 2002, #1.



Figures VI & VII: The difference of the empire from the eighth to the ninth century (exact dates listed on each map respectively), showing Chersōn's development from a relatively independent *archontate* to a *thema*. From W. Treadgold, 1988, 12 & 336.





Figure VIII: Treadgold's assumptions concerning the dissolution of the Khurramite "Persian Company," and his conjecture of the troop strength of Chersōn (Climata/Crimea) from before to after thematization. From W. Treadgold, 1988, 353.



Figure IX: Archaeological evidence of the importance and preponderance of the fish salting industry in medieval Chersōn. From A. Bortoli & M. Kazanski, 2002, #3.



Figure X: The Uvarov Basilica and Baptistery, upon which the modern Russian Orthodox has erected a kiosk in reference to the usual conjecture of Vladimir's exact place of Baptism, based on the *PVL*. From Ajbabin, 2011, 403.



Figures XI-XIII: Middle Byzantine seals illustrating the concept that the titles of both the locally elite *archontes* and the imperially appointed *spatharioi* and *spatharokandidatoi* of Chersōn could frequently be held by the same men. From V. Šandrovskaĵa, 1993, 96-97.

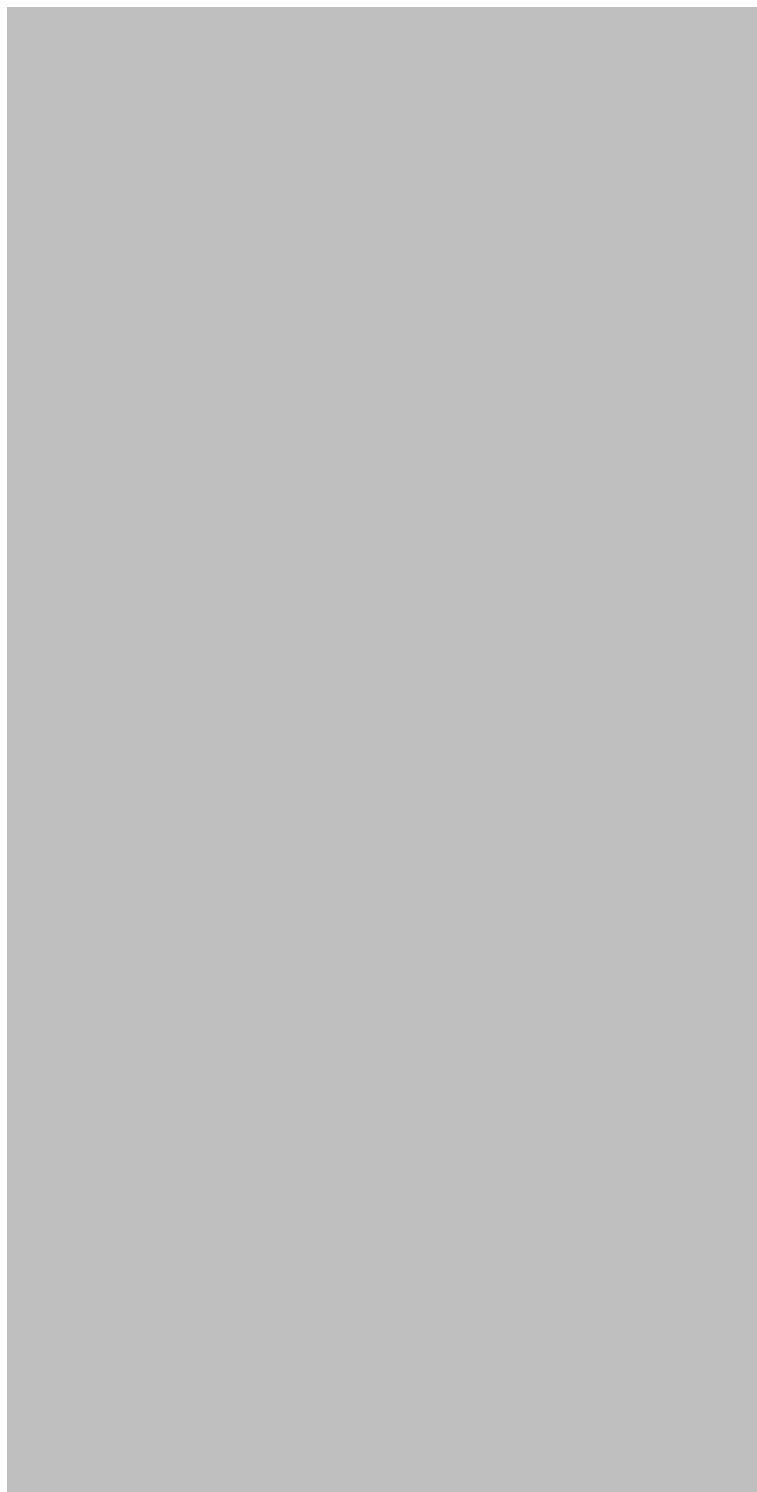


Figure XIV: Cataloged display of Zaleskaya's liturgical cups, with geometric cruciform designs, recalling "iconoclast" imagery, according to her. From T. Yashaeva, E. Denisova, et. al., 2011, 628 [412-413].



**Figure XV: Epigraphic evidence of a Jewish community in Chersōn. This limestone slab with an engraving of a menorah has been dated to between the fourth and fifth centuries.
From T. Yashaeva, E. Denisova, et. al., 2011, 24 [152].**





Figures XVI-XX: Examples of middle Byzantine Chersōnite seals revealing the pervasiveness of the city's *stratēgoi*, *prōtopatharioi* and imperial *spatharokandidatioi*, and the frequency with which they too were also the same men. Also note the presence of the name <Ἀρσα>βῆρ, as tenth century *stratēgos* of Chersōn in figures XIX & XX above, which indicates the presence of non-native Greeks governing the city during the period in question.

From N. Aleksēenko, A. Romančuk & I. Sokolova, 1995, 139-151.



Figures XXI-XXIV: Seals specifically mentioning the *prōtevontes* of Chersōn, as Alekséenکو demonstrates here, also corresponded with imperially appointed titles such as imperial *prōtopatharioi* and *prōtopatharioi epi tou Chrysotriklinou* throughout the tenth century, which would appear to correspond with locally appointed Chersōnite *prōtopatharioi* demonstrated in the previous seals shown in figures xvi-xx. From N. Alekséenکو, 2002, 79-86.



Figures XXV-XXVIII: Varying examples of middle Byzantine Chersōnite seals, including typical imperial appointments such as *stratēgoi*, *kommerkiarioi*, imperial *spatharioi* and other titles. Also notice how local *archontes* are mixed in as well, whose holders clearly exercised enough local authority to merit it being recorded in a seal. From I. Sokolova, 1993, 99-111.



Figure XXIX: A map of the lower Dniepr, including the rapids, related in both their Slavic and Hellenized forms, down which the tenth century Rus' made their well-known monoxyla journeys to Constantinople. From F. Dvornik, R. J. H. Jenkins, et al, 1962, 9/24.



Figure XXX: A reconstruction of Kiev in the time of Vladimir I; notice the Podol district adjacent to the Dniepr and the Kiev Monastery of the Caves, where most modern scholars agree the *PVL* was either largely written or compiled during and after the early twelfth century.

From O. M. Ioannisyán, 1990, 289.



Figure XXXI: A single sample of the gold sribnŷkŷ, which Vladimir I minted in his image, based on Byzantine models of coinage. From <http://cyberland.ws/59-kievskaya-rus-monety.html>.



**Figure XXXII: Single silver coin found in excavations of Tmutarakan' from the period ca. 1024 under Mstislav, imitating Byzantine miliarésia of Basil II.
From <http://esty.ancients.info/Cherson/BasilII.html>.**



^ Figure XXXIII



Figures XXXIII & XXXIV: Some examples of Chersōnite-issued coinage from the late ninth-tenth century, most of which, with the exceptions of numbers 331, 332, 337, 345-350, were cast instead of struck. The continued vacillation between cast and struck issuings, particularly in the ninth century coinage, predominantly in figure xxxiii above, should demonstrate the continual efforts made by the minting authorities to diminish counterfeiting practices among the local population of contemporary Chersōn. From V. A. Anokhin, 1980, pl.# xxiii, xxiv & xxix.




Figures XXXV & XXXVI: A map and schematic side-view of of the shipwrecks “Chersonesos A” and “Sinop D” in the Black Sea. The suboxic and anoxic stratifications of the deeper waters of the Black Sea reduce or entirely prevent the growth of marine organisms which eat away at wrecks, thereby preserving some quite well. From D. Davis, 2008, 76.



Figure XXXVII: The photomosaic of the shipwreck “Chersonesos A,” compiled by Ballard’s team in 2007. From D. Davis, 2007, 3.



Figure XXXVIII: A map displaying all the known settlements, or districts (*Klimata*) of the southern Crimea in the middle Byzantine period. From A. Aibabin, 2005, 416.



Figures XXXIX & XXXX: A juxtaposition of these peculiar single-handled, flat-bottomed, Antonova-type jugs, perhaps produced in Tmutarakan', found in wreck of "Chersonesos A," off Chersōn, although the dating is disputed. The above reproduction is from the excavations of I. V. Kadeev, found in the port area of Chersōn in an eleventh century layer. From T. Yashaeva, E. Denisova, et. al., 2011, 319 & 612 [379]. The below reproduction is on of the jars extracted right from the shipwreck. From D. Davis, 2008, 78.



Figure XXXXI: This image should serve to illustrate further detail on the excavated Antonova-type jars found in the wreck and in the port-area of Chersōn, dated to the eleventh century. The illustration by S. M. Zelenko above is based on finds of the same type of jar dated anywhere from the ninth to the eleventh centuries found off the waters of many settlements of the southern Crimea, indicating a highly localized Crimean trade network. From V. V. Nazarov, 2003, 92.



Figures XXXXII & XXXXIII: Reproduction of the seal of the Kalokyrēs seal published by Jordanov & Žekova. From I. Jordanov & Ž. Žekova, 2007, 131 & 287.



Figure XXXXIV: Illustration of the similarities of middle-Byzantine trans-Black Sea church planning, especially between Trebizond and Chersōn. From R. Sharp, 2011, 263-264, #82.



Figure XXXXV: A map of medieval Amastris after thematization in the late-ninth to the mid-eleventh centuries. From L. Zavagno, 2009, 130.



**Figure XXXXVI: A map of antique and medieval Trebizond.
From A. Bryer & D. Winfield, vol. 2, 1985.**