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### Medieval Rus' and Byzantine Relations through the Lens of Slavic Texts

Nowhere harder is it to determine the historical perceptions of foreign polities than in a land of perturbingly poor preservative environment for parchment and other writing vessels. Yet nevertheless, Kievan Rus' offers a rich, if not limited, supply of Old East Slavic texts that tell a ripe story of the legends of its creation, and the fruition of its peoples, culture, and religion. What is interesting, however, is attempting to determine how exactly Rus' regarded its proselytizing, patriarchal parent to the south. Though historians may focus on documents, merchant accounts, and trade deals from the position of the far more well-scribed Eastern Roman Empire, it fails to address the viewpoints of the elite, educated, and clerical members of Kievan Rus'. How exactly did Kievan Rus' perceive the Byzantine Empire throughout its early development, through the Yoke of the Mongols, and finally to the fall of Constantinople and the texts preceding the end of the medieval Rus' period and the rise of the baroque Muscovite one? This analysis of Old East Slavic Texts will draw from the annals of Serge A Zenkovsky's *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, itself housing translations of the *Повесть временных лет* (more aptly known as the *Primary Chronicle*, from here on labeled as the *Tale of Bygone Years*), Metropolitan Hilarion's *Sermon on Law and Grace*, and a plethora of other works offering an oversight of medieval Rus' reflections on Constantinople.

One of the first works of Old East Slavic literature, and one which has drawn considerable analysis, is that of Metropolitan Hilarion's *Sermon on Law and Grace*. Written between 1037 and 1050 CE, the sermon and panegyric that comprise Hilarion's work are a fascinating display of early Kievan Rus' literature, laden with Byzantine styles and rhetoric. In

his analysis of the *Sermon*, Serge Zenkovsky argues that Hilarion saw Rus', now baptized and in full communion with the Christian world, as equal to all other Christian peoples and nations—including Byzantium. Taking note of Hilarion's assignment as the first non-Greek Metropolitan of Kiev in 1051, Zenkovsky stresses that Hilarion's views also pressed for more liberation of the Rus' Church from the sway of Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> Though A.B. Gorskii's publication of the *Sermon* fails to mention the imperial capital by name in either "The Sermon on the Law of Moses Given to Him by God, and on the Grace and Truth Brought to Earth by Jesus Christ" or the panegyric "The Eulogy to Our Kagan Vladimir," a literary analysis of the work could cause one to draw parallels between the examples of Law and Grace (that is to say, the Old Testament and the New Testament), and Constantinople and Rus'. However, in contrast to Zenkovsky's argument for Hilarion's push for autonomy, clear indications note that Hilarion pressed not for rivalry, but for a view of equality amongst its mother church. Ellen Hurwitz's analysis of the *Sermon* in her *Metropolitan Hilarion's "Sermon on Law and Grace": Historical Consciousness in Kievan Rus'* illustrates reverence, not rebellion, towards Constantinople by Hilarion. Rus' has gained salvation through Christ because of Byzantine ecclesiastical guidance; Vladimir, baptizer of Rus', is "the imitator (podobnik') of Constantine and the apostle of the Russian Land."<sup>2</sup> The parallels drawn—between Saint Vladimir and Saint Constantine, through the course of their actions, through the piety of their mothers, through their Christianization—demonstrate equivalence, not superiority. Hilarion maintains that "Vladimir is just as good as Constantine...not better."<sup>3</sup> In contrast to Zenkovsky, Hilarion insists that Kiev is "not the rival of

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<sup>1</sup> Zenkovsky, Serge Aleksandrovich. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. New York, NY: Meridian, 1974, p. 85-86.

<sup>2</sup> Hurwitz, Ellen. "Metropolitan Hilarion's "Sermon on Law and Grace": Historical Consciousness in Kievan Rus'." *Russian History* 7, no. 3, 1980, p. 324.

<sup>3</sup> Hurwitz, p. 330.

Byzantium...but an admiring imitator.”<sup>4</sup> In one of the earliest works of Old Slavic literature, Metropolitan Hilarion’s *Sermon* thus shows an initial example of reverence and respect for Constantinople as the foundation that nurtured a flourishing Christian Rus’ state.

The well-known stories from the *Повесть временных лет*, or the *Primary Chronicle* (from henceforth to be referred to as the *Tale of Bygone Years*), offer another insight to early Kievan Rus’ perceptions of Constantinople through the manner in which the city, its people, and its emperors are portrayed via legends and chronicled events. Though initial drafts were composed in the 1030s, it was not until about 1118 that its more complete, redacted form had been completed.<sup>5</sup> As such, it may be better to regard attitudes towards Constantinople as a product from the early 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The first reference of the Byzantine capital is not a direct description of its splendor. Rather, it is invoked in determining the status of Kii, a legendary founder of Kiev. In Samuel H. Cross’s translation of the Prolegomenon of the *Tale of Bygone Years*, the chroniclers chastise rumors that Kii, the Polonian whom in legend alongside his brothers established the foundations of the city, was a mere ferryman. They argue that were he that simple in position, “he would never have gone to Constantinople”.<sup>6</sup> Kii was, as the chroniclers write, “then the chief of his kin, and it is related what great honor he received from the emperor when he went to visit him”.<sup>7</sup> The chroniclers of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century thus indicate a surprising notion that the founder of a small village, Kii, would have drawn great respect from even the emperor of Constantinople.

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<sup>4</sup> Hurwitz, p. 330.

<sup>5</sup> Zenkovsky, Serge Aleksandrovich. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. New York, NY: Meridian, 1974, p. 43-44.

<sup>6</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 48.

<sup>7</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 48.

The attack of Askold and Dir in 866 and Prince Oleg's campaigns against Constantinople in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century note the increased interaction between the Rurik dynasty and the great empire to its south. The chroniclers voice the barbarity and fear the "Russians" of Askold and Dir struck into the people of the city, yet their prayers and reverence to the Holy Virgin "[confused] the boats of the godless Russians, [throwing] them upon the shore and [breaking] them up, so that few escaped such destruction."<sup>8</sup> Oleg's campaign against Byzantium is noted to have "accomplished much slaughter of the Greeks," causing the people to cry that the one who besieged them was not Oleg, "'but St. Demetrius, whom God has sent upon us'".<sup>9</sup> So stunning was Oleg's success that he forced the Eastern Roman emperors into signing the stipulations he wanted from them. Nevertheless, the chroniclers ensured that Oleg's paganism, and the paganism of the Rus' who besieged the city, was decried as "ignorant".<sup>10</sup>

The *Tale of Bygone Years* incorporates several similar themes in describing pre-Christian Kievan Rus'. The Rus' are noted to be fierce, strong warriors, capable of striking fear and defeat into even the capital of one of the strongest empires of the time. The Greeks, pious as they are, are often represented in these early Slavic texts as kowtowing to the power of the Rus'. Take the writings of Prince Sviatoslav. His campaign against the Eastern Roman Empire is vaunted, for the lesser number of Rus' troops caused the "multitude" of Greeks to flee.<sup>11</sup> The Byzantine boyars claim that the prince must be fierce, for he pays "'no heed to riches, but accepts arms.'"<sup>12</sup> Interestingly though, the chroniclers invoke new characteristics of the Greeks. Greece acts as a temptation that draws the prince from beloved Kiev; his announcement to leave

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<sup>8</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 50-51.

<sup>9</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 51-52.

<sup>10</sup> Zenkovsky, Serge Aleksandrovich. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. New York, NY: Meridian, 1974, p. 53.

<sup>11</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 63.

<sup>12</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 64.

for the southern riches draws tears from Saint Olga, his mother, and soon after his departure from the lands of Kiev does she die.<sup>13</sup> The Greeks, though cowering as they are, are also noted to be deceitful to the Rus', and "crafty even to the present day".<sup>14</sup> Yet it is the underlying tone of the strength of Rus' might to their mother church that colors much of early, pre-Christian Kievan Rus' writing.

The story of Vladimir's conversion to Christianity, alongside his baptism of Rus', illustrate an interesting mix of the chroniclers' depictions of Constantinople from before the baptism, and during and after the baptism. Vladimir's siege of Kherson in 988 depicts elements of Oleg's and Sviatoslav's campaigns. Vladimir's capture of the city brings strife to the mighty Emperors Basil and Constantine, who relinquish their sister into marriage with Vladimir. Yet it is this one last "evil [that] the Russians have...brought upon the Greeks" that brings Rus's transformation from the godless, "ignorant" pagans to the beautiful salvation of Christianity.<sup>15</sup> The weakness of the Greeks to the might of the Rus' is no longer emphasized; in its place, the chroniclers emphasize the beauty that Constantinople has brought Rus'. It is the Greek counsel to the court of Vladimir a year earlier whose "words were artful, and it was wonderful to listen and pleasant to hear them."<sup>16</sup> It was in Constantinople where Vladimir's emissaries were greeted to the utmost respect by the patriarch, who walked alongside the emperor of the great city through its churches, who "were astonished, and in their wonder praised the Greek ceremonial."<sup>17</sup> It was in Constantinople, as the chroniclers write, that the emissaries "knew not whether [they] were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and [they were] at a

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<sup>13</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 61.

<sup>14</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 63.

<sup>15</sup> Zenkovsky, Serge Aleksandrovich. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. New York, NY: Meridian, 1974, p. 68-69.

<sup>16</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 66.

<sup>17</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 67.

loss how to describe it”.<sup>18</sup> It is this beauty and reverence, found too in Hilarion’s *Sermon*, that comes to describe Constantinople in the era of Christian Rus’.

Reverence in Old Slavic literary texts to Constantinople, or more broadly, the Eastern Roman Empire, can be attributed to the significance the Patriarch of Constantinople had in Rus’ Orthodox dogma and policies. The stories of the Kievan Crypt Monastery in the *Tale of Bygone Years* demonstrate the impact of monastic life, cultivated in the sketes of Mount Athos under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch, had on Rus’ Orthodoxy. A layman from Liubech, whose heart “God inspired the desire to go on pilgrimage,” made his way to the Holy Mount.<sup>19</sup> After requesting and receiving the monastic habit from one of the Athonite monks, the layman, now monk Antonius, would return to Kiev, and through his monastic life inspire others to join and build the crypts that would become the Kievan Crypt Monastery.<sup>20</sup> Saint Theodosius, whose *vita* was written by the monk Nestor, demonstrated the need for Constantinople’s guidance. In Dmitry Chizhevsky’s re-edited version of the *Sbornik moskovskago uspenskago sobora*, the abbot Theodosius “dispatched one of his monks to Ephraim the Eunuch in Constantinople, requesting that the Rules of the Monastery of Studion should be copied there and brought back to Kiev.”<sup>21</sup>

Yet it was not solely praise of Byzantium’s guidance of which the stories of Old Slavic texts make note; the demand to emphasize Rus’ as equal to Constantinople in beauty too seems to have influenced the works of early medieval Rus’ writers. The narratives of Bishop Simon of Vladimir and Suzdal from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century in the *Kievan Crypt Paterikon* paint

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<sup>18</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 67.

<sup>19</sup> Zenkovsky, Serge Aleksandrovich. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. New York, NY: Meridian, 1974, p. 106-107.

<sup>20</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 107-108.

<sup>21</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 130.

how awed even Greek iconographers were at their Rus' counterparts. Translated from the published works of D. Abramovich in *Kievo-Pecherskii paterik*, Bishop Simon writes of Abbot Nikon's conference with the grievances of Greek and Abkhaz iconographers. Much like how Vladimir's emissaries were awestruck by the religious beauty of Constantinople, the Greek iconographers are awestruck by the words of the abbot, wise and humble.<sup>22</sup> Upon seeing the icons of Sts. Antonius and Theodosius, the Greeks prostrate before them and know of their holiness immediately, and swiftly confess their sins to Abbot Nikon.<sup>23</sup> It is these descriptions by early Rus' writers that press for Kievan Rus' to join the Christian fold of its neighbors, to join Constantinople as its equal in beauty and in Christ.

An interesting change begins to occur when reading seminal texts of the mid-13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. More often than not is Constantinople not mentioned in the tales of epic heroes and battles; the politics of Rus' and their chroniclers, in those affairs, seem more interested (understandably so) in the actors directly involved in the battles and wars being fought. Though a work thought to have been published in the 12<sup>th</sup> century—with valid discourse on its authenticity—the *Lay of Igor's Campaign* is distinctly void of any mention of Eastern Rome. It concentrates on the battles of Novgorod-Seversk against the Kumans, and the intra-Rus' squabbling plaguing the lands, over the cultural and ecclesiastical significance of the Greeks. The *Tale of the Destruction of Riazan* of the 1230s depicts the grueling struggle against the barbaric Tatars; only does the existence of the wife of Prince Fedor, who “belonged to the Byzantine imperial family and [who] had a most beautiful body,” make any note of the Byzantine Empire at all.<sup>24</sup> The *Tale of the Life and Courage of the Pious and Great Prince*

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<sup>22</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 139.

<sup>23</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 139.

<sup>24</sup> Zenkovsky, Serge Aleksandrovich. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. New York, NY: Meridian, 1974, p. 199-200.

*Alexander [Nevsky]* of the later 13<sup>th</sup> century specifies the naming and characterizing (though more often vilifying) of states around them, much like the *Lay of Igor*. Though it may have been patterned on a Byzantine knightly epic, as Zenkovsky argues, the *Life of Great Prince Alexander* shows another example at the lack of importance Constantinople played in epic-oriented tales.<sup>25</sup> The mention of Constantine and the Church Councils in Alexander Nevsky's response and rebuttal of the Pope's envoy again limits Constantinople-related matters to that of culture and religion.<sup>26</sup>

The epic tales and poems in which Constantinople is present, however, tend to illustrate Constantinople's admiration for Rus', or Rus' historic might in the face of the Byzantine Empire. The *Orison on the Downfall of Russia* from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, in the translation on the Russian text of Yu. K. Begunov's *Pamiatnik russkoi literatury XIII veka*, mentions the glories of Vladimir; how "even the Emperor of Byzantium, Manuel, fearing lest Vladimir the Great take Constantinople, was sending rich presents to him".<sup>27</sup> Its mention after a long list of polities conquered by Rus' portrays how even the mighty Eastern Roman Empire bent their knee to the name of the great Rus' state under Vladimir. The prestige of such an event paints Constantinople as both a strong, political center worthy of reverence, and how incredible a feat it is to garner the imperial city's respect. Sofony of Riazan's *Zadonshchina*, exclaiming the valiant struggle of Rus' troops against the Tatars, mentions Constantinople as one of the cities where the call of Rus' glory from the battle was heard.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 225.

<sup>26</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 234.

<sup>27</sup> Zenkovsky, Serge Aleksandrovich. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. New York, NY: Meridian, 1974, p. 196-197.

<sup>28</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 217-218.



The dichotomy between an Old Slavic epic's (non)inclusion of Constantinople or any relationship with the Eastern Roman Empire, and the respect of the religious sphere held towards the city, is clear in the readings of the Rus' Fathers of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Epiphanius the Wise's *The Life, Acts, and Miracles of Our Blessed and Holy Father Sergius of Radonezh* dedicates a section to the story of "The Patriarchal Charter". The Patriarch of Constantinople, Philotheus, sends Saint Sergius his blessing through an envoy of Greeks. In his wisdom and humility, the saint replies: "Are you sure you have not been sent to someone else? How can I, a sinner, be worthy of such gifts from the most illustrious patriarch?"<sup>29</sup> The patriarch, in his note, blesses and praises the godly life of St. Sergius, but also asks that Sergius establish a community.<sup>30</sup> The note from Patriarch Philotheus to St. Sergius helped establish "life on the basis of community...in each monastery".<sup>31</sup> Even under the Tatar Yoke of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, express reverence had continued in ecclesiastical means and through ecclesiastical texts, with a continued, if not strengthened, emphasis of Greek awe and respect to Orthodoxy in the lands of Rus'. In "The Last Miracles and Passing Away of St. Sergius," Epiphanius the Wise makes mention of a Greek bishop hailing from Constantinople doubting the saintliness of Sergius. The bishop, in Rus', proclaims "How can such a light have appeared in this savage land, more especially in these latter days?"<sup>32</sup> Fear entering his soul, the bishop is blinded; through tear-stricken confession to St. Sergius in this "savage land" does the Greek bishop regain his sight.

One of the final works, before the baroque period of Rus', now Muscovite, literature, that includes mention of Rus' history and relations with Constantinople is Ivan IV's

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<sup>29</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 280

<sup>30</sup> Zenkovsky, Serge Aleksandrovich. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. New York, NY: Meridian, 1974, p. 280-281.

<sup>31</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 281.

<sup>32</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 287.

*Epistle of the Tsar and Sovereign to All His Russian Tsardom Against Those Who Have Broken the Pledge of Allegiance, Against Prince Andrew Kurbsky and His Comrades, Concerning Their Treacheries.* In chiding the argumentative Prince Kurbsky, Tsar Ivan IV invokes Constantinople's significance to Rus' history and the validity of his autocracy, that "by God's will, had its origin in the Holy Baptism, and the great Tsar Vladimir Monomakh, who had received memorable honors from the Greeks, and the valiant great Tsar Alexander Nevsky."<sup>33</sup> The legend of the Monomakh's cap, as elaborated in Maria Nenarokova's *Vladimir Monomakh's Instruction: An Old Russian Pedagogic Treatise*, declared that the "ancient regalia of the Russian Crown were sent to Vladimir Monomakh from Byzantium because he was a grandson of the Byzantine emperor Konstantine IX Monomakhos, from whom he took his nickname 'Monomakh' ('one who fights alone'). These regalia were the jewelled and fur-trimmed crown known as 'Shapka (Hat) Monornakhova', and a kind of broad collar, made of gold and decorated with precious scones on a gold chain known as 'Barmi'. It was in 1498 that the crown was first called 'Monomakh's Hat'."<sup>34</sup> Monomakh's significance as a venerated Russian ruler, with validation and acknowledgement from a historically significant center like Constantinople, is thus transferred to Ivan IV both in the cap he wears, and his defined lineage to Vladimir Monomakh. Aside from Ivan IV's response to Prince Kurbsky, other works, included the more secular Afanasy Nikitin's *Journey Across Three Seas*, fails to mention Constantinople due to its non-ecclesiastical nature, and its journey far from the city on the Bosphorus.

Perhaps one of the most significant works detailing later medieval Rus' relations with Constantinople is the *Tale of the White Cowl*, written purportedly at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 372.

<sup>34</sup> Ruys, Juanita Feros, and Maria Nenarokova. "Vladimir Monomakh's Instruction: An Old Russian Pedagogic Treatise." Essay. In *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2008, p. 119.

century by Archbishop Genady in Novgorod. The *Tale* begins with a story of Emperor Constantine and his illness, cured by the help of Pope Sylvester. Moved, the emperor grants Christians freedom, converts, and gives Sylvester a white cowl to symbolize the Resurrection, and the primacy of the spiritual power over the secular.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the pope moved to Rome, the home of the spiritual, while the emperor stayed in Constantinople, the secular. Yet during the time of growing schism in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Pope Formosus attempted to have the White Cowl destroyed. Having no luck, he sent it to Constantinople.<sup>36</sup> Patriarch Philotheos of Constantinople ponders on how to keep the Cowl but is awoken by two spirits of light who turn out to be Pope Sylvester in bishop's vestments, and Emperor Constantine in military garb, telling him he must give it away.<sup>37</sup> They warn Philotheos of the need to give it to the land of another faithful, for the "imperial city of Constantinople will be taken by the sons of Hagar because of its sins, and all holy shrines will be defiled and destroyed."<sup>38</sup> The spirits speak on the flaws of the cities before: "The ancient city of Rome has broken away from the glory and faith of Christ because of its pride and ambition. In the new Rome, which has been the city of Constantinople, the Christian faith will also perish through the violence of the sons of Hagar. In the third Rome, which will be the land of Russia, the Grace of the Holy Spirit will be revealed."<sup>39</sup> The significance of the lands of Russia is made known to the great Ecumenical Patriarch, for "since ancient times and by the will of Constantine, Emperor of the Earth, the imperial crown of the imperial city is predestined to be given to the Russian tsar. But the White Cowl, by the will of the King of

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<sup>35</sup> Zenkovsky, Serge Aleksandrovich. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. New York, NY: Meridian, 1974, p. 325.

<sup>36</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 325.

<sup>37</sup> Zenkovsky, Serge Aleksandrovich. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. New York, NY: Meridian, 1974, p. 327-329.

<sup>38</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 328.

<sup>39</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 328.

Heaven, Jesus Christ, will be given to the Archbishop of Novgorod the Great.”<sup>40</sup> Constantinople had helped nurture the soil for which Rus’ would flourish; and now, that the tree of the imperial city was to be cut, its apple, having grown aside its parent, would carry the mantle of Orthodoxy. Philotheos knew he had to give the White Cowl to the Rus’, for “the power of the patriarch of [the] imperial ruling city [would] pass to the Russian land in the predestined hour.”<sup>41</sup> The entrance of Archbishop Vasily of Novgorod into the Cathedral of Holy Sophia with the White Cowl would now signify Rus’ itself as one who, without question, was as equal to Constantinople before her.<sup>42</sup>

The *Tale of the White Cowl* brings with it a rather intense debate on the question of how Rus’ viewed itself in relationship to Constantinople in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> to mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. Modern scholarship has drawn from it the overarching theme of “Moscow, the Third Rome” as a result of not only the tale of the White Cowl, but the Council of Florence and the fall of Constantinople. In the preface to the tale’s inclusion, Sergey Zenkovsky argues that the *Tale of the White Cowl* “developed an ideological work that glorified the prestige of Russian Orthodox Christianity”.<sup>43</sup> Constantinople had played a fundamental role in setting the groundwork for a Russian emergence as the center of Orthodox Christianity. And from Moscow’s rise in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, alongside the tale, developed “the theory of Moscow being the Third Rome.”<sup>44</sup> To Sergey Zenkovsky, the *Tale of the White Cowl* acts as a way to mend together the theory of the Three Kingdoms of God (“the Kingdom of the Father who gave the Law...the Kingdom of the Son who brought Grace, and the final Kingdom of the Holy Spirit”), the proclamation of a final

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<sup>40</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 329.

<sup>41</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 329.

<sup>42</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 331.

<sup>43</sup> Zenkovsky, Serge Aleksandrovich. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. New York, NY: Meridian, 1974, p. 323.

<sup>44</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 323.

kingdom from the Book of Daniel (7:27), and, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the theory of a Third Rome to replace the fallen two before it.<sup>45</sup>

This theory, however, has been criticized as an inaccurate viewing of medieval Rus' relations with Constantinople as a product of modern interpretation. In his article "‘Moscow the Third Rome’ as Historical Ghost," Donald Ostrowski criticizes the concept of Third Rome and *translatio imperii*. In his analysis, Ostrowski argues that the notion of Moscow rejecting the standing of the Ecumenical Patriarch over it, due to having sought union with the schismatic Rome, is misconstrued. Save for one instance, "neither the Russian government nor the Russia church ever adopted the Third Rome formulation. Nor was Moscow specifically as Third Rome ever utilized in any of their respective decisions. Moreover, the popular understanding and use of the phrase are ill-informed. Although other early sources claim that Constantinople lapsed into heresy as the result of its fall, no official Russian church statement or policy reflects a rejection of the Byzantine church or the general authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople. On the contrary, Byzantine church authority remained paramount even when the Rus' church was determining its own policies and practices. Evidence of this dominance can be found most early in the Rus' prelates' reversal of their council decisions whenever they found them in conflict with Byzantine canon and in Ivan IV's seeking the approval of the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1557 for his adoption of the title tsar."<sup>46</sup> Ostrowski parallels remarks by Metropolitan Zosima of Moscow in his 1492 commentary, as also being misconstrued as evidence that backs the Third Rome position. Metropolitan Zosima's commentary, he argues, puts an emphasis on Ivan III

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<sup>45</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 323-324.

<sup>46</sup> Brooks, Sarah T., and Donald Ostrowski. "‘Moscow the Third Rome’ as Historical Ghost." Essay. In *Byzantium, Faith, and Power (1261-1557): Perspectives on Late Byzantine Art and Culture*, 170–79. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006, p. 170.

leading Rus' as a new "Jerusalem", and not Rome.<sup>47</sup> Most iterations of translation tend to favor the term "Jerusalem" over "Rome", thus lauding Moscow as a "Third Jerusalem".

The *Tale of the White Cowl* is another piece Ostrowski vehemently argues against in its analyses as a focal point for the term "Third Rome". Donald Ostrowski details the Short Redaction revision of the *Tale* was most likely written after the Church Council of 1564 which determined which members of the church would wear the White Cowl, affirming Zenkovsky's notes on the *Tale* being a story of multiple redactions.<sup>48, 49</sup> The Long Redaction, which "predicts" the establishment of the Patriarchate, was most likely thus compiled after 1589 after Moscow was granted its Patriarchal seat by Constantinople.<sup>50</sup> Ostrowski points out that the term "Third Rome" does not appear in the Short Redaction of the *Tale*, but the Long Redaction.<sup>51</sup> Moscow the *city* was never denoted as holding the title of "Third Rome"; as a Novgorodian tale, the honor was given to the Archbishop of Novgorod, and to a broader extent, All Rus'.<sup>52</sup> In fact, where Zenkovsky argues the *Tale* to further autonomize the Russian Church as independent from Constantinople, Ostrowski notes one can read the tale in another light; the equivalence of Rome and Constantinople, the spiritual and the temporal, relates quite well with the power struggle of Novgorod and Moscow (respectively) in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century Rus'.<sup>53</sup> The *Tale* serves not to promote Novgorodian independence from Constantinople as its usurper, but to keep its independence from an ever-encroaching Moscow.

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<sup>47</sup> Ostrowski, p. 171.

<sup>48</sup> Ostrowski, p. 173.

<sup>49</sup> Zenkovsky, p. 323.

<sup>50</sup> Brooks, Sarah T., and Donald Ostrowski. "Moscow the Third Rome' as Historical Ghost." Essay. In *Byzantium, Faith, and Power (1261-1557): Perspectives on Late Byzantine Art and Culture*, 170–79. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006, p. 173.

<sup>51</sup> Ostrowski, p. 173.

<sup>52</sup> Ostrowski, p. 173.

<sup>53</sup> Ostrowski, p. 173-174.

The most seminal point in dissuading from arguing Moscow's, and to an extent, Rus's insistence on a "Third Rome" as related to the *Tale of the White Cowl* was the condemnation of the tale at the Great Moscow Synod of 1666-7, the same council that decried the *Stoglav* of 1551 as heretical due to promotion of Russian practices over the established ones of the Ecumenical Patriarch and others.<sup>54, 55</sup> The term "Third Rome" thus was most likely, as noted by Ostrowski, argued in modern political terms to determine Russia's place in a post-19<sup>th</sup> century world, far from the dealings of late medieval Rus' Slavonic texts and their perspectives of Constantinople.<sup>56</sup> Too does Jelena Bogdanović in her "The Relational Spiritual Geopolitics of Constantinople, the Capital of the Byzantine Empire" remark on the need to heed caution; for even though "Ivan III's marriage to Sophia Palaeologina (1455–1503), a niece of the last Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI Dragaš (d. 1453) and thus the legitimate descendant of the Byzantine imperial dynasty, resulted both in definite Russian adherence to Byzantine Orthodoxy and Moscow's geopolitical claim of Constantinopolitan identity as the capital of the Christian empire," perceptions and ambiguities related to such terms used interchangeably by Metropolitans of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century do not equate to the charged discourse of modern interpretation of "Moscow, the Third Rome."<sup>57</sup>

Through more than half a millennia's worth of Old East Slavic literature in Kievan Rus', and finally through the early shades of Muscovite hegemony, Rus' literature provided a fascinating, if not somewhat predictable manner in which it regarded Constantinople and the larger Byzantine Empire. The Eastern Roman Empire, being the home of their mother

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<sup>54</sup> Ostrowski, p. 174.

<sup>55</sup> *Cambridge History of Christianity: Volume 5, Eastern Christianity*. Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 320.

<sup>56</sup> Ostrowski, 176.

<sup>57</sup> Bogdanović, Jelena. "The Relational Spiritual Geopolitics of Constantinople, the Capital of the Byzantine Empire." In *Political Landscapes of Capital Cities*, edited by Bogdanović Jelena, Christie Jessica Joyce, and Guzmán Eulogio. Boulder, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 2016, p. 125-126.

church, was to remain revered, respected, and given reverence in the texts of clergy and in dealing with liturgical emphasis. Yet, Kievan Rus' literature attempted to display its equality to the great imperial city in any manner it could. It depicted the Greeks as falling and cowering in the face of early Rus' warriors and leaders, only to be rectified with the gift of Christianity to Rus'. It continuously conveyed the status of Rus' on a European scale as equal to its Christian counterparts—as equal to Constantinople herself. It espoused in its *vitae* the awe drawn from Greek pilgrims at the sights of Rus' holy men and holy works. And, sometimes, it altogether wrote naught on the city of Constantine or its people, keeping to the developments of her Slavic own.



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