

ІСТОРІЯ ТА ІСТОРІОГРАФІЯ ІСТОРІЇ УКРАЇНИ

УДК 930:272.2–523.4(477–25)

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**ST. SOPHIA OF KYIV CATHEDRAL'S MILLENNIUM
IN CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY
(A CRITICAL SURVEY)**

Стаття містить огляд сучасної української історіографії щодо датування заснування собору Св. Софії у Києві: 1011–1018 (теорія Нікітенко–Корнієнка), 1017 і 1037 рр. Джерела не дають жодних незаперечних підстав для датування закладення собору ні 1011, ні 1017, ні 1037 рр. Історіографічний і джерелознавчий критичний аналіз існуючих на сьогодні концепцій датування спорудження Софії Київської дозволяє висловити припущення, що будівництво собору припало на другу половину / кінець 1020-х рр. – початок / першу половину 1030-рр.

Ключові слова: Св. Софія Київська, тисячоліття, датування, огляд, історіографія.

Статья посвящена обзору современной украинской историографии о датировке сооружения собора Св. Софии в Киеве: 1011–1018 (теория Никитенко–Корниенко), 1017 и 1037 гг. Источники не дают никаких неопровержимых оснований для датировки основания собора ни 1011, ни 1017, ни 1037 гг. Историографический и источниковедческий анализ существующих на сегодняшний день концепций датировки сооружения Софии Киевской позволяет высказать предположение, что строительство собора пришлось на вторую половину / конец 1020-х гг. – начало / первую половину 1030-х гг.

Ключевые слова: Св. София Киевская, тысячелетие, датировка, обзор, историография.

The paper is a critical survey of contemporary Ukrainian historiography about the dating for the founding of the St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv: 1011–1018 (Nikitenko–Kornienko theory), 1017 and 1037. The sources do not give any conclusive reasons for dating the cathedral by either 1011, or 1017, or 1037. Historiographical analysis and the critical consideration of the sources of the existing theories about the dating of the cathedral allows us to suppose that the construction of the Sophia of Kyiv took place in the second half or the end of the 1020s and the beginning or first half of the 1030s.

Keywords: St. Sophia of Kyiv, millennium, dating, survey, historiography

The St. Sophia Cathedral is one of the most important national monuments in Ukraine, embodying the spirit of the millennial history of the Ukrainian people since the era of the Kyivan Rus to the present day. An unmatched showcase of art and architecture, it has been the object of not only spiritual generation and artistic admiration, but also in-depth research by domestic and foreign scholars for more than two centuries.

On June 11, 2010 President of Ukraine V. Yanukovych signed the Decree 682/2010 about the celebration of the millennium of the St. Sophia Cathedral's founding [147; 148]. The celebrations were held in Kyiv at the end of September of 2011. The reason for celebration was a new theory, presented both to the Ukrainian authorities and the UNESCO, «The Dating of the Sophia of Kyiv in Light of New Data», authored by N. M. Nikitenko and V. V. Kornienko, staff members at the «Sophia of Kyiv» National Preserve. In their paper, they stated that «it is possible to date the laying of its (Sophia's – A. D.) foundation (dedication) by Sunday November 4, 1011, and the completion (consecration-inauguration) by Sunday May 11, 1018. These days were Sundays (the Lord's days), precisely the days when the Sophia Cathedral (the Lord's house) could have been consecrated. That is, the cathedral was founded and almost finished by Prince Volodymyr, the baptizer of Rus, in 1011–1018, and completed by his son Yaroslav in 1018» [24, с. 13; 25].

The paper was the result of years of research by Nikitenko and Kornienko, but their numerous publications found no support in Ukrainian or foreign scholarly circles, and their proposed dates for the founding of the cathedral are only quoted as curiosities in general works on the history of art and architecture of ancient Rus [114, c. 39; 46, c. 147; 42, c. 470, 578]. Other well-known researchers of the history, archeology, art and architecture of Kyivan Rus' have been very skeptical of their ideas, especially when it came to preparing the official celebrations at the state level. The Nikitenko-Kornienko hypothesis was consistently criticized at several conferences in Kyiv, St. Petersburg, and Novgorod the Great during 2009–2010. The most important of these meetings was the roundtable on «The Founding of the St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv: New Dating Problems», which took place in Kyiv on April 7, 2010.

The polemical struggle in the media between the supporters and opponents of the new dating ideas on the St. Sophia Cathedral was quite high-pitched [9]. However, even a cursory review of newspaper articles and TV materials shows that journalists almost unanimously favored a new dating for the Cathedral, actively promoting such ideas and creating a favorable information background for them. Authorities also shared this position and backed it up with state power, prompted by the need to carry out the already mentioned Presidential Decree.

On the other side, scholars almost unanimously objected to the new dates. Note the numerous contributions published in the proceedings of the roundtable «The Founding of the Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv: New Dating Issues», that point to the weak evidence behind the Nikitenko-Kornienko theory and thus the lack justification for celebrating the millennium of the cathedral in 2011 [26; 123; 149]. All this contributed to strengthening the public interest in the problem of dating the St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv, made the issue topical both in the scholarly and social sense.

In the end, both sides descended into hackneyed mutual accusations of doing «typical PR actions» instead of discussing the issue professionally. One side spoke of the «speeches of biased officials and scholars» [18, c. 5], the other of the «pogrom roundtable» featuring not an equal tolerant discussion, but rather a trite witch-hunt trial resembling those practiced in the totalitarian times [61, c. 7]. Those outside observers interested less in personal vendettas between academics and more in scholarly truth, in this situation can only try to sort out on their own both the new theory of Nikitenko-Kornienko and the traditional dating of St. Sophia – 1017 or 1037.

Since it would be scientifically unsound to restrict our consideration to just the Nikitenko-Kornienko theory, we will also consider the two traditional points of view about the founding of St. Sophia in 1017 or in 1037, each of which has a long tradition of historiography and already well-established range of sources to be confirmed or refuted. The earlier date was defended by Metropolitan Eugene (Bolkhovitinov), D. Aynalov, M. Brunov, M. Voronin, M. Ilyin, P. Tolochko, S. Vysotsky, G. Logvin and others. The later one – by M. Maksimovich, P. Lebedintsev, M. Karger, Y. Aseev, and A. Poppe.

The Nikitenko-Kornienko viewpoint, according to which the cathedral was founded on November 4, 1011 and its construction was completed and the building consecrated on May 11, 1018, has no direct confirmation in the chronicles. None mention 1011 as the year of the founding or 1018 as the year of the consecration of St. Sophia. But the authors present their theory as such that is thoroughly backed up by many various sources: iconographic, written, architectural and archeological, graffiti. We need to consider in detail the key moments of their argumentation using all four types of sources.

The iconographic sources of the theory

For the first time the idea of a third alternative to the traditional dates of 1017 and 1037 was expressed by N. M. Nikitenko in the second half of the 1980s, and then 1007 and 1017 were proposed as the dates of the founding and consecration of the cathedral, rather than 1011 and 1018. The possibility of dating the founding of the church to the times of Volodymyr was due to a new interpretation–reconstruction of the princely group portrait in the central nave of the cathedral, offered by Nikitenko. This reconstruction, in the opinion of the scholar, was a sufficient reason to review the dating of the cathedral [73, c. 35-36; 74, c. 237-244; 77, c. 36-88.].

The princely portrait is known to us via the drawing by the Dutch artist A. van Westerfeld, copied in the XVIII century and later published by I. Ya. Smirnov. Researchers are critical of this source, since it is unlikely that this 1651 sketch reflects the real state of the frescoes in the ancient Rus times, especially

since the fresco on it is depicted after a partial destruction and renovation of the seventeenth century [4, c. 121]. However, it is starting from this source, or, more precisely from its reconstruction, that Nikitenko carried out a review of the written sources on the subject of the dating of St. Sophia. The main one of these sources was the *Sermon on Law and Grace* by Metropolitan Hilarion.

However, before looking at these sources, it is worthwhile to dwell in more detail on this new understanding of the princely portrait, because it was not only the starting point of a new dating proposed by Nikitenko, but also its core.

According to the scholar, on the Western wall of the Cathedral was shown the real ceremony of the consecration of the St. Sophia Church, which symbolized the victory of Christianity in Rus, and, since Rus was baptized by Volodymyr and not Yaroslav, the depiction must be that of Volodymyr's family, not Yaroslav's. In particular, the lack of similarity in the image of the temple in the hands of the Prince with the actual forms of the St. Sophia is thought to point to Volodymyr. Alternatively, Nikitenko sees in the shape of the temple a similarity with the Tithe (Desiatynna) Church and proposes to treat the object in the hands of the Prince as a «gift-carrying vessel of Jerusalem», symbolizing the baptized Rus as the «New Jerusalem». Unfortunately, it is impossible to verify this assumption of the researcher in any way, since we have no reliable data about the appearance of the Tithe Church, and the more than ten existing versions of its reconstruction are all debatable [31, c. 56-60; 33, c. 74]. Moreover, usually the models of temples in the hands of donators were purely symbolic, and their forms do not fully correspond even to the main architectural types of church buildings, least of all to existing churches [4, c. 122].

The next key figure in the fresco according to Nikitenko is the wife of the Prince placed opposite of him. This figure the researcher believes to be the portrait of Volodymyr's wife Anna. This attribution is quite arbitrary, since no ancient images of the Princess exist, and the comparison with the fresco in the North tower (from a sketch dating from as late as the middle of the 19th century, that Nikitenko herself treats as an image of the coronation appearance of Princess Anne at the time of concluding a dynastic union (betrothal) with Prince Volodymyr) cannot be considered persuasive.

However, even if one accepts that the fresco does depict Anna, only adds new problems to N. M. Nikitenko's construction. Because the Princess died in 1011, the researcher concludes that the Cathedral had to already exist by the time of her death. First, Nikitenko believed that the Cathedral was founded in the year 1007, and was consecrated during Anna's life on November 4, 1011. For some time the cathedral remained undecorated, because the builders were waiting for the walls to finally settle in and dry up, but Volodymyr was forced to hurry with the consecration because of the illness of his wife [74, c. 241; 78, c. 49, 50]. Later, however, Nikitenko revised her dating, and, according to her present conception, 4 November 1011 is the date of the founding of the cathedral rather than the consecration of the undecorated building. Accordingly, the fresco should depict the founding rather than the consecration of Sophia [79, c. 70, 71], and in this case interpreting it as the image of «the solemn ceremonial entry of the Kyivan Prince's family into the cathedral» [79, c. 63] makes no sense, because the cathedral did exist yet! Thus, the thesis, often repeated by Nikitenko, that the fresco portrays the real event of the consecration of the Church loses all ground in light of her own new dating: in 1018, when, according to the Nikitenko-Kornienko theory, the cathedral was consecrated, Anna (and Volodymyr himself!) were already long dead.

Thus rejecting her initial interpretation of fresco as depicting the solemn ceremony of the consecration of the cathedral, N. M. Nikitenko did not abandon the original idea to treat it as an illustration of a real event, but that of the founding rather than consecration of St. Sophia. With this goal in mind, she turned to the background in Westerfeldt's sketch, which, in her view, represented a «field outside the city»: «In Westerfeldt's drawing the characters of the fresco march across a hilly landscape with meadow vegetation, and the figure of Volodymyr casts its shadow in the north-west direction; therefore the portrayed ceremony takes place on a summer morning «in the field beyond the city»» [84, c. 469.]. However, in the view of her opponents, this explanation does not withstand the simplest criticism, since such drawings and outlines of landscapes and natural scenery were a general *topos* in Byzantine art, serving as a background that was supposed to invoke the image of the gardens of Paradise. Such landscapes are the habitual lower part of many compositions [46, c. 147].

Finally, important is Nikitenko's interpretation of the central part of the fresco. Denying the donational

nature of the fresco, according to which the Prince would have had to present a model of the Cathedral to Jesus Christ (as it is done in the reconstructions by N. Lazarev, S. O. Vysotsky and A. Poppe), the scholar argues that the image of the Savior could not be placed behind the believers, who stood facing the altar and under the feet of the Prince, who was in the choir. First she supposed that in the center was placed the figure of the Metropolitan accompanied by priests [74, c. 238, 239.], but later – a marble panel with the symbol of the throne [78, c. 45, 46; 72, c. 143; 79, c. 63-69]. Thus, N. B. Kozak notes, «the Prince presents the model of the church not to Christ, but onto a «marble panel» and towards the Princess, and if we accept the explanation of the author (N. M. Nikitenko – *A. D.*) that the «connecting link» was the princely couple, which during the service stood in the balcony just above the central part of the composition, then the Prince offered the model to himself, and then, after his death, to his descendants. No analogies to such a compositional structure have survived in the artifacts of Byzantine iconography» [44, c. 40-41]. Furthermore, this idea completely ignores, for some reason, the testimonies of Rus pilgrims of the XII–XIV centuries, according to which over the Western doors of St. Sophia they saw an icon of the Saviour [5, c. 27-32].

Generally we can agree with N. B. Kozak who sums up: «No statement of Nikitenko's regarding the 'attribution' or interpretation of the Prince's portrait can be considered evidence or argumentation in the debate around the dating of St. Sophia in Kyiv» [44, c. 40-42]. However, may there not be more convincing evidence in favor of the Nikitenko-Kornienko theory in other kinds of sources?

Written sources of the theory

The chronicle articles dating the founding of Sophia to 1017 or 1037 are rejected by Nikitenko for ideological reasons: in her opinion, the chronicle was forged by a court chronicler in order to glorify Yaroslav, to whom the achievement of his father were attributed [78, c. 247, 248]. However, more important is her attention to the *Sermon on Law and Grace* by Metropolitan Hilarion, which states that Yaroslav rather finished Volodymyr's undertakings, similarly to the Biblical Solomon completing the affairs of David in the construction of the Temple of Jerusalem: «who finishes that which you have left unfinished even as Solomon finished the works begun by David; who has built a great and holy temple to God's omniscience that it may hallow your city» («Иже недоконьчаная твоя законьча, акы Соломонъ Давыдова, иже дом божиі великыи святыи его прѣмудрости създа на святость и освященіе граду твоему») [2, c. 148; 67, c. 97].

On the basis of Hilarion's statement quoted above, D. V. Aynalov came to the conclusion that the idea to build the St. Sophia belonged originally to Prince Volodymyr the Great, but he did not implement it due to his death. His son Yaroslav the Wise, as if fulfilling the will of his father, brought this cause to its logical conclusion: «Comparing Volodymyr to David and Yaroslav to Solomon, of which the latter fulfills the former's covenant for the construction of the Jerusalem Temple, leaves to Yaroslav only the implementation of Volodymyr's plans for the establishment of the Church of St. Sophia, rather than the independent conception of this plan» [1, c. 35]. This is precisely the thesis that Nikitenko develops, understanding Hilarion's text not as a rhetorical allegory addressed to Volodymyr, but in a purely literal sense, and claiming that Yaroslav only finished the building begun by his father.

Given the fact that Hilarion's *Discourse* in this case had to be enounced at the same time as or as close as possible to the completion of Saint Sophia, N. M. Nikitenko dated it by the time of the complete coincidence of Easter and the Annunciation (the so-called Kirio) in 1022 [71, c. 51-57]. This extremely early dating was not supported by any scholar; many drew attention to the fact that the *Discourse* mentioned «the grandchildren and great-grandchildren» of Volodymyr, that is, the sons and grandsons of Yaroslav. Since the first of Yaroslav's grandsons was born no earlier than the turn of the 1030s and 1040s., and the second one before the end of the 1040s, the *Discourse* can in no way be localized in 1022, but rather in the 1040s at the earliest. In 1022 the great-grandsons of Volodymyr were not born yet, and the only already living grandson was Volodymyr Yaroslavych, who had recently turned two (born in 1020) [143, c. 140-147; 137, c. 10-16; 4, c. 125].

Nikitenko's attempts to answer these critical remarks prompted her to develop a complex and therefore unlikely construction, according to which the main, primary part of the *Discourse* was enounced in 1022, and various «inconvenient» realities found their way into it during subsequent performances at different

times and in different places: in the Tithe Church on the memorial day for Volodymyr, in the Annunciation Church above the Golden Gate on the occasion of the completion of the «city of Yaroslav», or during the inauguration of Hilarion as Metropolitan in 1051 in the St. Sophia Cathedral [96, c. 6-10; 93, c. 134-139].

In any case, even the literal understanding of Hilarion's allegory about Yaroslav as the one who continued Volodymyr's affairs and their comparison, respectively, with Solomon (Yaroslav) and David (Volodymyr), on which Nikitenko insists, can lead to a completely different understanding of the situation, very disadvantageous to her hypotheses. According to the Bible, the Lord forbade David (in our case, Volodymyr) to build his temple, because he had shed too much blood (1 Par. 22:8; 1 Par. 28:3), saying: «Solomon thy son, he shall build My house and My courts» (1 Par. 28:6) [4, c. 125].

Finally, in Hilarion's testimony one in any case will not find 1011 as the date of the founding of Sophia. Moreover, this date is not mentioned in any Old Rus source. Whence does Nikitenko derive it? As it turns out, from a much later source, namely the inscription made in honor of the restoration of the St. Sophia Cathedral by the Metropolitan of Kyiv Petro Mohyla. And this inscription the scholar emphasizes as a critical piece of evidence: «The most significant fact is that in the St. Sophia itself there is an indication of the exact time of its founding – the year 1011!» [100, c. 25]. Let us try to find out how weighty is testimony made by this inscription.

First of all, significant is the late origin of the testimony that Nikitenko positions as one of the cornerstones of her conception that contains the only (!) mention of 1011. This inscription was made in honor of the restoration of the St. Sophia Cathedral by the Kyivan Metropolitan Petro Mogyla only in 1634 and it is unknown from where the authors of the inscription borrowed the date. Nikitenko conjectures that Petro Mohyla may have had access to some ancient and authentic sources that have been lost since. E. Bolkhovitinov was the first to publish the inscription in 1825, and he does not mention the date of 1011: «By God's will, the building of this God's cathedral began in the summer of 1037 by the pious Prince and Autocrat of All Russia Yaroslav-Georgiy Volodymyrovich. It will be finished by the summer of 1038 and it will be blessed by the Theopemptos, the Metropolitan of Kyiv of the holy church» [12, c. 34]. The inscription was reproduced identically by M. Zakrevsky [36, c. 784]. However, Nikitenko gives a different text in her monograph, which she considers to be the primary version of the inscription: «The building of this church or the temple of Saint Sophia by the God's will began in the summer of 1011 by that blessed and pious great Prince and Autocrat of All Russia Yaroslav Volodymyrovich, named in the holy baptism Georgiy and it was finished in the summer of 1037 and in the summer of 1038 on November the Fourth the same holy church was consecrated by the pontific Theopemptos the Metropolitan of Kyiv» [78, c. 54; 77, c. 72]. To give more certainty and clarity, the researcher several times published the pre-WWII photograph of the inscription, on which the date 1011 can be clearly read.

However, as was demonstrated by O. Tolochko, who devoted an article to the question of the authenticity of the inscription [138, c. 4-25], the original version was the one printed by E. Bolkhovitinov, and the date 1011 appeared as the result of the «Solntsev restoration» in 1843–1853, during which the «restorers», using their knowledge of the history of the Kyivan Rus, «corrected» Petro Mohyla. For them the source of the date of 1011 were the notes on the St. Sophia's history were based on the two most famous, authoritative, and widely available in the 18th century works on ancient Russian times: the Kyivan *Synopsis* (1674) and *The Polish Chronicle* by Matsey Strykovsky (1582). Both of these texts, having borrowed their chronology from *The Annals* by Yan Dlugosh, «shifted» the beginning of Yaroslav's rule in Kyiv 10 years earlier – from 1019 to 1009.

«Of course», O. P. Tolochko sums up, «all these observations have no bearing at all on the problem of St. Sophia's foundation (1017, 1037, any other year between these dates or any of the years after 1037). In such debates late testimonies have only the right of the 'deliberative vote'. What they (these observation) positively establish is the uncertainty of the date of 1011. It should be excluded from all further discussions» [138, c. 19].

Thus the available written sources do not give reasons to assign the foundation of the cathedral to 1011. This date is contrived and based on a mistake that first appeared back in the 19th century.

Archeological and architectural sources of the theory

Nikitenko's archeological and historical-architectural arguments assume special significance considering the precariousness of the dates based on the iconographic and written sources. The initial impetus for her historical-architectural observations was, as in the case with the testimony of Hilarion's *Sermon on Law and Grace*, the idea of D. V. Aynalov that the Sophia of Kyiv was built and decorated by the same craftsmen whom Volodymyr employed for the construction of the Tithe Church and that is why the chronicle does not mention the employment of new craftsmen by Yaroslav, since he «fulfilled the task with the help of the old craftsmen of his father's» [1, c. 36].

A number of architectural correspondences in both churches seems to testify in favor of this statement: the particularities of the technological methods used; the assortment and production technology of the *plinthoi* bricks; the similarity of the cement, fresco plaster, and the enameled floor tiles; the stylistic similarity of the decoration of the Sophia Cathedral with the frescoes of the Tithe Church and the Byzantine structures of the late 10th and early 11th century; the carvings on the slate ramparts of the choirs in the cathedral and on the sepulcher in the Tithe Church, done by the same masters; the use of marble details brought by Volodymyr as trophies from the Chersonesus campaign in the decoration of the cathedral, and so on [77, c. 315-341; 109, c. 39-126].

In their most concentrated form these arguments are presented in the scholarly paper on the «Dating of the Sophia of Kyiv in Light of New Data» the dating of the St. Sophia by 1011–1018 is confirmed by the results of the laboratory analyzes of the ingredients in the fresco plaster and in the glazed floor tiles in the Tithe Church and the Sophia of Kyiv. It is proven that in their technological characteristics the fresco plaster and the glazed floor tiles of both churches are totally identical. Similarly, the style of the murals in these churches shows close similarities. This objectively demonstrates the chronological closeness of both churches built by the 'Greek masters' that were summoned by Volodymyr at the end of the 10th century for the construction of the Tithe Church [25; 24, c. 17].

These observations seem convincing enough, but other scholars, archeologists and historians, refute them [37]. First of all, historians of the Byzantine art conclusively and unanimously confirm that the Sophia of Kyiv is immersed into the context of the Byzantine art of the second quarter to the middle of the 11th century, but not of the late 10th and the first decades of the 11th century. The frescoes of the Sophia Cathedral in Okhryda (1030s–1050s), the mosaics of the monastery cathedral of Nea Moni in Khios (1040s–1050s), and the inside decoration of the Monastery of Osios Lukas (first half of the 11th century) are the closest parallels to the style of the Sophia of Kyiv [46, c. 147, прим. 129; 117, c. 297-305, 311; 127, c. 99-122]. There is no reason to relate all these to the Tithe Church, the construction of which was finished in 996.

Secondly, the same masters who had built and decorated the Sophia of Kyiv later took part in the construction and decoration of the Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Savior in Chernigov (except at the initial stage of the construction) [152, c. 22; 151, c. 9; 117, c. 193-194]. The participation of the same craftsmen in the construction of the cathedrals in Kyiv and Chernigov allows us to consider these two to be relatively of the same age. It is known from the chronicle that by 1036 (the year of the death of Mstyslav Volodymyrovych of Chernigov) approximately a third of the Saint Savior Cathedral, which he started, had been completed: «Mstyslav went hunting and fell ill and died. And he was laid in the Church of the Saint Savior which he constructed by himself, it was erected to such height that it was within a hand's reach if standing on a horse» [56, c. 87]. Correspondingly, St. Sophia must have been built during the period close to the middle of the 1030s.

Thirdly, some architectural historians prove that the range and production technology of the *plinthoi* bricks of the Tithe Church and the St. Sophia Cathedral are different, not identical as Nikitenko argued. The tenth-century *plinthoi* in the Tithe Church were manufactured in the beveled whole frame and they differ from those of Sophia in the composition of the ceramic paste [150, c. 80; 6, c. 141]. Such technology is known in Kyiv only in one ancient building – the Tithe Church and some neighboring secular structures [32, c. 205, 206; 31, c. 56-60].

Fourthly, the latest analyzes of the fragments of the fresco plaster have shown that the plaster compound of the late 10th-century frescoes in the Tithe Church has no analogs in the main body of the

fresco plaster in the Saint Sophia, their micro-structures are radically different, and so the churches were painted by the different masters [130, c. 53-56; 45, c. 51-53].

Finally, a special significance is acquired by Yu. Strilenko's conclusion about the construction materials and consecutive order of the painting of the frescoes in the cathedral: «While changes are noticeable in the mortar throughout the construction period of the were noticed during the construction period, the composition of the frescoes is the same throughout the cathedral – from the center and to the outside galleries. Therefore the cathedral was built over a certain rather long period of time, but it was painted after the entire building was finished, in one go» [130, c. 55]. It does not support Nikitenko's idea about the beginning of construction in the presence of Volodymyr and its finishing in the presence of Yaroslav and as a result the two-stage painting of the church.

Thus on the basis of the analysis of the construction materials, details of the construction techniques and decoration of the Sophia of Kyiv and the Tithe Church, the Cathedral of the Savior in Chernigov and Byzantine architecture we can conclude that the architectural and archeological aspects of the Nikitenko-Kornienko theory cannot warrant the dating of the founding and construction of the cathedral by the second decade of the 11th century. All these materials testify rather in favor of the second quarter to the middle of the 11th century. This is the time of the rule of Yaroslav the Wise and in accordance with these sources the fame of the constructor of the St. Sophia Cathedral and Kyiv as a whole is due to him.

Graffiti as evidence for the theory

The last group of sources which are used in the argumentation of the Nikitenko-Kornienko theory is the graffiti on the walls of the St. Sophia Cathedral. Scholars widely accept that these inscriptions contain the dates that indubitably support the dating of the Sophia of Kyiv's foundation by the second decade of the 11th century. The reasoning is given most concisely in the Nikitenko-Kornienko paper: «Sophia contains the most reliable authentic data about the time of its foundation. The most significant from this point of view are the dated graffiti inscriptions on its walls. The graffiti found on the frescoes in different parts of the building from the years 1018–1020, 1019, 1022, 1028, 1033 (three inscriptions) and 1036 refute 1037 as the time of the beginning or end of the St. Sophia's construction. They also eliminate 1017 because they provide strong evidence that by 1018–1021 the cathedral had already been standing and decorated. It means that Sophia came into existence in the second decade of the 11th century» [25; 24, c. 17; 105, c. 244-260; 106, c. 365-399; 80, c. 205-240; 81, c. 5-13; 104, c. 417-443; 82, c. 484-507; 48, c. 444-445].

Unfortunately, just as with the interpretation of the archeological and architectural sources, the experts in ancient Rus epigraphy find methodological shortcomings in the work on the St. Sophia graffiti done by Nikitenko and Kornienko and doubt the interpretation of the specific inscriptions [64, c. 17-22; 30, c. 23-25; 62, c. 25-26; 125, c. 26-27; 10, c. 27-35].

It is problematic that the published inscriptions do not have unambiguous dates: each time the «early date» results from explanation and interpretation and does not exist without them. The quality of the interpretations varies: in one case, part of an inscription in Greek is taken to be a date; in another – the date appears as a result of a successive reading of lines of two adjacent graffiti as one inscription; in yet another case, the date is assumed from the meaning of the graffiti reconstructed by the researches [4, c. 128].

In general, we should agree with A. O. Medintseva's conclusion: «Even the supporters of the hypotheses about an earlier dating for the construction of St. Sophia cannot deny that all the dates of St. Sophia earlier than 1052, published to this day, are found in poorly preserved inscriptions without context and, no doubt, cannot be the paleographical base for such decisive conclusions about revising the date of the construction of St. Sophia» [62, c. 26].

As we can see, the theory of the early dating of the Saint Sophia Cathedral developed and actively promoted by N. M. Nikitenko and V. V. Kornienko does not withstand criticism. We have to admit that the researches failed in getting the academic community to accept a new and the exact time of the foundation (November 4, 1011) and consecration (May 11, 1018) of the cathedral. Contrary to all their theories, the sources point to the second quarter and the middle of the 11th century, which prompts us to turn to the long-known in historiography and sanctified by an annalist tradition dates of the foundation of the Cathedral, 1017 and 1037.

The year 6545 (1037) as the date of the foundation of the Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv

The year 1037 became the standard date of the cathedral's construction, fixed in all educational literature and is sanctified in students' minds because of its unquestioned authority. It comes from *The Primary Chronicle*, where the building of the Cathedral is mentioned under the year 6545 (1037) in the context of the construction of a new city by Yaroslav the Wise: «6545 (1037). Yaroslav built the great citadel at Kyiv, near which stands the Golden Gate. He founded also the metropolitan Church of St. Sophia, the Church of the Annunciation over the Golden Gate, and also the Monastery of St. George and the convent of St. Irene» («Заложи Ірославъ . городъ великый Кыєвъ . оу негоже града врата суть златаа заложи же и цркъвь . стѣна Софѣа . премудрость Бѣю митрополѣю . и по семь . церкѣвъ на Златыхъ вратѣхъ камену стѣна Бѣа Благовѣщение . сии же премудрыи князь Ірославъ . то того дѣла створи Блг^овщниє на вратѣхъ . дать всегда радость градоу тому стмь блгвщениємь . Г^онимь . и млтвою стѣна Бѣа . и архаангла . Гаврила . по семь стго Геургиа манастырѣ . и стѣна Урины») [56, с. 89].

Then, under the same year, the chronicler reports the growth and development of the Christian Church and monasteries and Yaroslav's care about the «book culture», and variously exalts the Grand Prince: «Thus Yaroslav, as we have said, was a lover of books, and as he wrote many, he deposited them in the Church of St. Sophia which he himself had founded. He adorned it with gold and silver and churchly vessels, and in it the usual hymns are raised to God at the customary seasons. He founded other churches in the cities and districts, appointing priests and paying them out of his personal fortune. He bade them teach the people, since that is the duty which God has prescribed them, and to go often into the churches» [56, с. 91-92; 112, с. 102-103].

Such scholars as M. Zakrevsky, P. G. Lebedintsev, M. O. Maksimovich, V. N. Lazarev, M. K. Karger, A. Poppe, Y. S. Aseyev, P. A. Rappoport, A. I. Komech all have supported 1037 as the date of the foundation of the Cathedral [36, с. 121; 55, с. 55-56; 60, с. 132-140; 53, с. 55; 43, с. 100-101; 119, с. 100-101; 118, с. 93-97; 8, с. 3-12; 6, с. 128-141; 122, с. 187-188; 121, с. 33-38; 47, с. 178-181].

It is worth noting that only two researches from this list – A. Poppe and Y. S. Aseyev – turned specifically to the problem of dating the building of the St. Sophia Cathedral and devoted special research to this question. For others this subject came up in the context of studying the architecture of Old Rus in general, the history and architecture of Kyiv, and at best the art and decoration in St. Sophia. At the same time Aseyev supported and developed the theory elaborated by Poppe. An English-language article by this Polish researcher, published in 1981, became the comprehensive work that summarized and finally gathered all the arguments in favor of the 1037 date [160].

Since 1981 the chronicle date of 1037 has been repeatedly used in general works on the history of Kyivan Rus and the architecture of Old Rus and firmly entrenched in educational literature, but there has been during this time two special works on the dating of St. Sophia, in which 1037 would be defended. Let us consider the main arguments that have been put forward by the supporters of this date.

First of all, the chronicle article from 6545 (1037), cited earlier, is a summary of all of Yaroslavs' merits during his reign, which fact has been mentioned in historiography many times [155, с. 544; 38, с. 117-125; 43, с. 233; 22, с. 242; 51, с. 203; 140, с. 75-76; 58, с. 132; 99, с. 9; 77, с. 284]. Thus it would seem, that we cannot unequivocally tie neither the foundation nor completion of the the cathedral with 1037. But the chronicle contains another mention of St. Sophia, this time under 6544 (1036), according to the Laurentian Codex. It contains a description of Yaroslav's battle with the Pechenegs, that came to Kyiv when the Grand Prince was out of the city: «While Yaroslav was still at Novgorod, news came to him that the Pechenegs were besieging Kyiv. He then collected a large army of Varangians and Slavs, returned to Kyiv, and entered his city. The Pechenegs were innumerable. Yaroslav made a sally from the city and marshalled his forces, placing the Varangians in the centre, the men of Kyiv on the right flank, and the men of Novgorod on the left. When they had taken position before the city, the Pechenegs advanced, and they met on the spot where the metropolitan church of St. Sophia now stands; at that time, fact, there was field outside the city. The combat was fierce, but toward the evening Yaroslav with difficulty won the upper hand» («и Ірославу же суцоу в Новѣгородѣ . и приде ему вѣсть . како Печенѣзѣ . шбѣемь стоають . Кыєвъ . Ірослав же собравъ . воа многы Варагы и Словены . и прииде Кыєву . и вниде въ градъ свои . и бѣ

же Печенѣгъ . бещисла . Ярославъ же . выступи из града . исполчи . дружину . и постави Варагы посредѣ ³ на правѣи ^И странѣ . Кыяны . а на лѣвемь . крилѣ Новгородцѣ . и сташа предѣ городомь . а Печенѣзѣ приступати начаша . и сосупишася на мѣстѣ . идѣже естъ нынѣ . стаа Софѣя митропольа Роуская . бѣ бо тогда поле внѣ града . и бѣ сѣча зла») [56, с. 88-89].

Scholars supporting 1037 as the date of the construction of the cathedral note the fact that in 1036 the place where St. Sophia was built later was a «field outside the city» («бѣ бо тогда поле внѣ града»), that is why the 1037 date completely matches historical realities, because the year before there was a suburban field where the cathedral would be. Besides, they stress the fact that Yaroslav could develop an extensive building program in Kyiv only as the sovereign lord of Kyivan Rus («the sole ruler in the land of Rus»), which he became only after his brother and the main rival Mstyslav of Chernigov's death in 1036.

The arguments of the supporters of 1037 are in fact limited to those above, and the rest of their extensive argumentation does not prove their point of view but rather objects against the earlier dates for the cathedral. Thus, A. Poppe wrote a special essay criticizing an article [118, с. 93-97] by S. O. Visotskiy, who found graffiti in the cathedral that, in his opinion, contain the dates of 1030 and 1032 [16, с. 103-106; also: 17, с. 171-181]. Later in his summary article the Polish scholar also spends a lot of time criticizing the evidence base of the supporters of earlier dating. He thus employs a contrarian approach, building his theory on the denial the arguments of other researchers. By dismantling other dating theories rather than proving his own, he tries to assert the correctness of his date. This is a debatable approach.

First, archeological data offer convincing evidence that «the city of Yaroslav» was not a «field outside the city» in 1036, but already an inhabited and fortified neighborhood [13, с. 93-94; 142, с. 18-20]. On the other hand, at the end of the 10th century this territory was not part of «the city of Volodymyr». Among the objects uncovered here during the archaeological excavations, we see country estates and workshops (involving flammable manufacture and thus located outside the city), scattered among the numerous ravines and gorges with permanent water sources necessary for the production process [141]. Remains of workshops that produced construction materials necessary for building the cathedral were excavated at the top of an open old ravine to the northeast of St. Sophia [41, с. 138-150.]. Country estates were defended by local fortifications that were planned after the fortifications of «the city of Yaroslav» were built in the 11th century and necessary from the point of view of the further development of the city [66, с. 105–115]. Archeological research does not prove that «the city of Yaroslav» was surrounded by ramparts already during the reign of Volodymyr. «Wide-space excavations near the Lyadsky Gate show that this micro-district was developed very quickly and closer to the middle of the 11th century» [40, с. 75]. Thus the development of the neighborhoods around St. Sophia took place within the second quarter of the 11th century.

Second, the construction of this grandiose cathedral in just one year is naturally surprising: if in 1036 the cathedral did not exist, but under the year of 1037, the chronicler glorifies Yaroslav for its construction, then the building had to be started and finished in the one year, which is practically impossible.

Third, placing the battle with the Pechenegs in 1036 provokes strong objections. In the reasonable opinion of L. E. Makhnovets, this part of the text relates the events that passed long before 1036 – the period when Yaroslav had just become the Grand Prince of Kyiv. This is emphasized in the beginning of the fragment by the sentence: «Yaroslav... came to Kyiv, and entered his city» («и прииде Къѣву . и вниде въ градъ свои») [56, с. 88]. Makhnovets considers the phrase «entered his city» very appropriate for 1017, when Yaroslav had just become the Grand Prince of Kyiv, but almost pointless for 1036, when Yaroslav had reigned in Kyiv for many years [56, с. 88, прим. 2]. On this basis, the chronicler's statement that «on the spot where the metropolitan church of St. Sophia now stands; at that time, fact, there was field outside the city» [56, с. 88-89; 112, с. 102] should be interpreted as saying that in the past (probably in 1017 as Makhnovets assumes), the battle with the Pechenegs started on the spot where «now» – that is, in 1036! – the St. Sophia Cathedral stands.

We have additional reasons to move the intelligence about the battle with the Pechenegs from 1036 to 1017, because the Novgorod Fourth Chronicle and the Sophia First Chronicle, which A. A. Shakhmatov assigns to so-called Chronicle (Codex) of 1448 [154, с. 151-160; 59, с. 67-121], contain information not only about the founding of St. Sophia, but also about the Pecheneg attack that is

described in the Primary Chronicle under 1036 [68, с. 473-474].

In the Sophia First Chronicle and the Novgorod Fourth Chronicle there is a lot of information lacking in the Primary Chronicle the authenticity of which is beyond question for the researchers [155, с. 212–231]. Considering the fact, that both the Sophia First and the Novgorod Fourth chronicles contain some details of the events taking place in 1017–1018 that remained unknown to the Primary Chronicle, and the authenticity of which was confirmed by the data of Thietmar of Merseburg, we can with enough certainty use them as reliable sources for this period. This makes it possible to come to the convincing conclusion that Yaroslav's battle with the Pechenegs took place not in 1036, but in 1017.

Fourth, as has been stated before, the chronicle article under 6545 clearly has an encomiastic, panegyric character, summing up all the previous achievements of the Prince. D. S. Likhachov fairly compares the panegyric to Yaroslav under 1037 to the praise for Volodymyr under 996–997 [113, с. 375], whereas Makhnovets points out that the article under 1037 is a jubilee essay, written for the sixtieth birthday anniversary of Yaroslav the Wise [56, с. 89, прим. 1].

According to Shakhmatov this article completed the Old Chronicle Codex, which ended in 1039 [155, с. 414–416], that is to say it was written down no later than 1039. By that time the Sophia Cathedral had definitely been constructed, for it would have been strange to praise Yaroslav for the churches not built yet, but only planned and started [22, с. 243; 140, с. 76]. Thus the 1037 article observes the completed (by 1037) construction of the cathedral, and not the active stage of construction, as the chronicler composes in this article a panegyric to Yaroslav for the building of «Saint Sophia, God's wisdom, the metropolitan», meaning the finished, accomplished fact.

G. N. Logvin believed that the panegyrics to Volodymyr and Yaroslav were composed in the heyday of the state-building activities of both princes – by the 20th anniversary of their rule. The praise for Volodymyr was timed to the completion of the Tithe Church and fortress towns across Rus, whereas that for Yaroslav – to the end of the construction of St. Sophia as well as the patron churches of Saint George and Saint Irene [58, с. 132]. But for all that it does not mean that the construction was completed exactly in 1037 – it might have happened long before.

Finally, we should recall the graffiti. On the southern wall of the southern staircase tower of Sophia at the height of about 159 centimeters above the floor there is a five-line graffiti in Greek on the fresco known as «The Tarpon Hunt», which contains the date of 1038/1039. That means that by the August of 1039 the cathedral had been completed and at least partly painted [29, с. 493-494, 516, ил. 51; 63, с. 54; 64, с. 22]. As far as we know from the archaeological research, the construction of the cathedral took a long time, but it was decorated quite fast, so we have to reject the idea of it being founded in 1037: it is very unlikely that a building of such scale could be constructed in 1,5 or 2 years.

Even more important is the graffiti found and published by Vysotsky. It can be placed within the period from September 1, 1032 to February 28, 1034 [21, с. 16 № 2, табл. I, 2, II, 2; 22, с. 197-201]. According to S. M. Mikheyev [63, с. 56], it testifies that the cathedral was founded no later than in 1034, and it is even possible that it had already been built by that time.

Thus, 1037 as the year of Saint Sophia's foundation does not withstand criticism. The one thing it undoubtedly confirms is that the cathedral had been finished by 1037, but it might have happened either in 1037 or earlier, the latter being much more likely. Meanwhile the preceding chronicle article confirms, in our opinion, that the cathedral had been built no later than 1036. And it is certain that the 6545 article cannot tell us anything about the beginning of construction or the date of the cathedral's founding.

6525 (1017) as the date of the foundation of the Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv

The year 1017 as the cathedral's foundation date comes from the Novgorod First Chronicle that mentions the building of Saint Sophia twice: under 6545 (1037), the same as in the Primary Chronicle, and under 6525 (1017). In the latter article it says: «Yaroslav comes to Berestiy and Saint Sophia in Kyiv is to be founded» («Ярославъ иде къ Берестію; и заложена бысть святаыя Софѣя в Киевѣ») [110, с. 15, 180]. The year 1017 as the date of Saint Sophia's foundation has been supported by Y. Bolkhovitinov, V. Z. Zavitnevich, D. V. Aynalov, K. V. Sherotsky, F. I. Schmitt, M. Voronin, M. Brunov, P. P. Tolochko, S. O. Vysotsky, G. N. Logvin, M. Y. Braychevsky and others [12, с. 13-14; 35, с. 403-409; 1, с. 21-39; 156, с. 29; 157, с. 37-38; 19, с. 17; 15, с. 155; 141, с. 97; 16, с. 171-181;

22, c. 240-257; 58, c. 129-136; 14, c. 169-170].

As a rule, the doubling of the dates results from some mistake, a textual error during the rewriting or editing. Shakhmatov, supported by Likhachov believes that in this chronicle there were no dates at all for the 11th century. The dates were introduced later with a lot of mistakes [155, c. 228-229; 113, c. 363]. From this point of view it would seem that there are no reasons to take into consideration the evidence of the Novgorod First Chronicle about St. Sophia's founding in 1017. But scholars have long ago noted another important source that mentions the Saint Sophia Cathedral's existence in the same year. It is «The Chronicle» by Thietmar of Merseburg, which is a very important source of information about the history of Kyivan Rus whose data are highly praised by historians for their reliability [145].

Relating the conquest of Kyiv by Boleslav and Svyatopolk on September 14, Thietmar of Merseburg writes: «In the Saint Sophia Cathedral, which had been burned by unhappy accident in the previous year (that is, 1017 – *A. D.*) the archbishop of this town met the people who came with honors, with relics of the saints, and all other imaginable grandeur» («Arciepiscopus civitatis illius cum reliquiis sanctorum et ceteris ornatibus diversis hos advenientes honoravit in sancte monasterio Sofhiae, quod in priori anno miserabiliter casu accidente combustum est») [159, VIII.32, S. 530; 133, c. 177; 132, c. 80-81; 28, c. 328]. It is important to stress that while working on his text, Thietmar of Merseburg used the testimony of the Saxons who had taken part in the conquest of Kyiv. He recorded their intelligence right after their return home following the events described, and he died soon in the same year 1018 without even having a chance to edit the last chapters of his work. As for the possible insertion of information from other sources into his relation of the conquest of Kyiv by Boleslav and Svyatopolk by later copyists, it is excluded by the fact that the author's original of the chronicle survived up until the Dresden fire of 1945 [128, c. 105; 120, c. 57-67].

Thus if we take both sources literally and accept that they tell us about the same Saint Sophia Church, it turns out that the church that was, according to the Novgorod Chronicle, founded in 1017, was burned in the same year according to Thietmar of Merseburg, but was rebuilt within a year, as the metropolitan of Kyiv hardly would have been receiving Boleslav and Svyatopolk amidst charred ruins. According to some supporters of the idea that Sophia was founded in 1017, such as Ainalov and Vysotsky, both sources indeed mention the same stone building, which suffered from fire at an early stage of construction [1, c. 37; 17, c. 171-181]. All of this seems very unlikely, for it would be impossible either to build such a pile or to renovate it after a fire within one year, especially since the foundation of Sophia and its conflagration fall on the same year – 1017. Finally, Thietmar writes about the cathedral as the metropolitan's current residence, and just as the latter could not have received the conquerors amidst burned-out remains, we also cannot imagine a solemn reception in an unfinished building.

Thus those researchers are most likely right who think that it was another church that burned in 1017, a wooden Sophia, which had been built in the times of Volodymyr [119, c. 100; 160, p. 18-24] or even Olga [60, c. 102-103; 55, c. 53-55; 111, c. 108-109; 57, c. 144]. This wooden church could really have been erected in one year, and it and was probably in this new building that the metropolitan of Kyiv received Boleslav and Svyatopolk.

But what does the Novgorod First Chronicle mean when it mentions the foundation of Saint Sophia in Kyiv under 1017? This question worried even the early chronicle copyists, and already in the first third of the 15th century an attempt was made to reconcile both dates from the chronicle testimonies, 1017 and 1037, and to offer a compromise version: the foundation of Sophia and the city of Kyiv was assigned to 1017, and the end of construction – to 1037 [155, c. 228-229; 113, c. 363]. In the same way, P. P. Tolochko tried to connect both dates mentioned in the chronicles by supposing that the foundation of the cathedral might have taken place in 1017, and 1037 was the year when this drawn-out project was finally finished [139, c. 186]. We have already demonstrated that establishing 1037 as the end-of-construction date is groundless, but are there any reasons to connect the foundation of Saint Sophia with 1017, except for the evidence from the chronicle of Thietmar of Merseburg, which, as it turns out, have nothing to do with the stone Sophia?

The supporters of 1017 as the year of founding turn to the two graffiti found by Vysotsky, which contain, in his opinion, the dates of 1030 and 1032 [20, c. 147-182; 16, c. 103-106; 17, c. 171-181].

Vysotsky's interpretation of these inscriptions was seriously criticized by Poppe [118, c. 93-97], but even if we accept these dates as correct, they do not in any way confirm the founding of Sophia in 1017. They only testify to the cathedral's existence in 1030 and 1032, and can rather be used as additional evidence against dating Sophia's construction by 1037.

Thus we have no other evidence of the founding of the Saint Sophia Cathedral in 1017 but an unclear mention in the Novgorod First Chronicle, and we can only suppose that Yaroslav could hardly have even attempted to start such a large-scale project in the situation of an unfinished and intense power struggle. Moreover, according to the apt suggestion by O. V. Nazarenko, the 6525 (1017) article from the Novgorod First Chronicle («Yaroslav comes to Berestiy and Saint Sophia in Kyiv is to be founded» («Ярославъ иде къ Берестию; и заложена бысть святыя Софѣя в Киевѣ»)) should be connected with the vague statement in the Primary Chronicle under 1017 about a fire in Kyiv. The Laurentian Chronicle says: «Yaroslav goes and the churches burn» («Ярославъ иде [в Киевѣ] и погорѣ цркви») [115, стб. 142]. In the Ipatiev Chronicle the phrase was edited thus: «Yaroslav entered Kyiv and the churches burned» («Ярославъ . ввоиде в Кыевѣ . и погорѣша цркви») [116, стб. 130; 56, c. 82].

This statement likely concerns the fire in which the wooden Sophia burned according to Thietmar of Merseburg. And since both chronicle versions come from the same source, which was garbled during rewriting, the original reading of this statement can be reconstructed thus: «Yaroslav comes to Berestiy, and the Church of Saint Sophia burns» [see: 69, c. 132; 68, c. 471-474].

As Nazarenko observes, it is logical to connect the information about the fire in 1017 with the Pecheneg attack, especially as these events were mentioned as simultaneous by Thietmar of Merseburg [68, c. 472]: «The city of Kyiv, extremely well fortified, the hostile Pechenegs often attacked, incited by Boleslav, and it also suffered from a strong fire» («Urbs autem Kitava nimis valida ab hostibus Pedeneis ortatu Bolizlavi crebra inpugnacione concutitur et incendio gravi minoratur») [159, VIII.32, S. 530; 133, c. 177; 132, c. 79-81;]. If we also compare this with the already mentioned chronicle statement under 1036 about the battle with the Pechenegs, which should be dated by 1017, then the picture we have is this: Yaroslav goes to Berestya, but at this time Kyiv is attacked by the Pechenegs with Boleslav's prompting; churches burn in the city, and Yaroslav is forced to return speedily to the capital [38, c. 121-122; 68, c. 473]. After that the battle with the Pechenegs takes place, during which the enemies meet at the spot where Saint Sophia, the Rus metropolitan cathedral, will be later, while at the moment it is still a field outside the city [56, c. 88-89; 112, c. 102].

In the previous section we pointed out that the Fourth Chronicle of Novgorod and the First Chronicle of Sophia place under 1017 both the mention of Sophia's founding and the Pecheneg attack that *The Tale of the Times Past* discusses under 1036. Since these sources include facts that are unknown to *The Tale of the Times Past* but are confirmed by other texts (for example, that Yaroslav's sister Predslava became the concubine (according to Thietmar – wife) of the Polish Prince Boleslaw), we can agree with Shakhmatov that the Novgorod Codex of 1167 already contained an article similar to the 1017 article in the Fourth Chronicle of Novgorod and the First Chronicle of Sophia that describes both Yaroslav's battle with the Pechenegs and the founding of the Church of Saint Sophia after the battle: «In the summer of 6525 the Pechenegs came to Kyiv and fought near Kyiv and Yaroslav defeated the Pechenegs in the evening and they ran away in shame. And Yaroslav laid the foundation to the great city of Kyiv and erected the Golden Gate and aid out the Church of St. Sophia» [see: 155, c. 212-231; 68, c. 473-474].

So we can very likely assume that the fire in Kyiv, during which the wooden St. Sophia (among others) burned down, and the Pecheneg assault on the city, described both in the annalist tradition and in the Chronicle of Thietmar of Merseburg, occurred in the summer and autumn of 1017, when Yaroslav was fighting under Berestya. We must avoid the temptation to assume that, if the fourth Chronicle of Novgorod and the first Chronicle of Sophia mention the development of the new city, the founding of the Golden Gate and the Church of Saint Sophia right after relating the battle, than these events had occurred consecutively in the same year. Yaroslav, who was embroiled at the time in a complicated dynastic struggle for power, hardly had the time and opportunity to build the great city of Kyiv, the Golden Gate, and the Church of Saint Sophia [4, c. 127].

As to where the reference to the founding of the Saint Sophia in the 1017 came from, Tolochko's

explanation seems convincing. The scholar supposed that the appearance of 1017 as the date of Sophia's founding in the first Chronicle of Novgorod may be due to the chronicler's deliberate search for the most appropriate date for the cathedral's founding, the time of which he did not know. Knowing from the Novgorod tradition the date of the cathedral's consecration – Sunday, May 11 – the chronicler could find during the reign of Yaroslav the Wise only two days when May 11 fell on a Sunday: in 1046 and 1018.

Since the construction of the Cathedral took time, the chronicler shifted the date of the founding by one year back from the date of the consecration, to 1017. He probably did not move earlier because he wanted to connect the founding dates of the Sophia in Kyiv and the Sophia in Novgorod. In 1045, when the Sophia of Novgorod was founded, the same days of the month fell on Sundays as in 1017, because the same dates fall on the identical two weeks in the 28-year cycle (the so-called solar cycle or «circle of the Sun») [134, c. 208-213].

Thus, in any case, 1017 as the time of St. Sophia's founding also does not hold water. The only thing evident is that the cathedral had not yet been built at that time because in its future location, then a field outside the city, in the spring of 1017 there was a battle between Yaroslav and the Pechenegs. The cathedral or even its foundation did not exist then, and the mention of 1017 in the Novgorod First Chronicle as the year when the foundation of the St. Sophia of Kyiv was a mistake or a deliberate invention of a copyist during the composition of the text.

To sum up, according to the critical analysis of the sources on which both existing theories are built, neither 1037 nor 1017 may be regarded as the dates of the founding of St. Sophia in Kyiv. However, the sources allow us to establish the following: 1) in 1017 the Sophia had not yet been built or even laid out, because at that time its future location was a field outside the city where was the battle of Yaroslav with the Pechenegs took place; 2) by 1037 Sophia had been finally completed and most likely completely decorated.

Thus if we look through the chronicles and related source we will see that the construction of the Sophia falls somewhere into the 20-year period between 1017 and 1037. To figure out the exact dates of laying the foundation or completing the cathedral we need to employ other sources.

* * *

As we can see from the consideration of the three theories about the time of the construction of the cathedral existing today, none of them merit scholarly confidence. The sources do not give any conclusive reasons for dating the cathedral by either 1011, or 1017, or 1037. Furthermore each of the dates they deny to further scientific use even as a hypothesis.

More obvious is the Nikitenko-Kornienko theory, which is based on a false interpretation of the princely group portrait as the image of Volodymyr's family rather than that of Yaroslav; on a literal interpretation of the evidence given by *Sermon on Law and Grace* by Metropolitan Hilarion and his artificial unjustified dating; on the superficial knowledge and interpretation of the historical-architectural and archeological sources; and in the end on a wrong reading of the graffiti, none of which gives the full date. The only thing that you can reliably find out from the sources is that the cathedral was built before the second half of the 1020s and the beginning of the 1030s because it is the earliest dates that can be reconciled with the historical-architectural and archeological sources as well as the artistic parallels with the Byzantine iconographic artifacts that date to the period from the end of the 1020s until the middle of the 11th century.

We also have to cast aside as unfounded the year 1017, because the only thing that you can reliably find out through the textual criticism of the Chronicle reports is the fact that in the year 1017 the location of the future cathedral was still a field outside the city because it was in this year that the battle between Yaroslav and the Pechenegs took place. Could Yaroslav shortly after the battle have built a new grand cathedral? Hardly so, and for this there are weighty general historical considerations.

First of all we need to note that a large-scale construction of a cathedral in the capital of Rus could not have occurred in an unprotected location (a battle with nomads had taken place there just before!), under threat of new Pecheneg raids or attacks by rivals in the struggle for power. So Sophia could only have been founded after the construction of the fortifications of Yaroslav's City.

The period of 1015-1019 is filled with battles and campaigns, Yaroslav participates in a bloody dynastic

struggle for power with Sviatopolk; he captures Kyiv, then loses the city, then regains the capital and protects it, fighting not only Sviatopolk and his ally King Boleslav, but also the Pechenegs. Particularly interesting in the context of determining the likelihood of the 1017 date is the period of 1017–1018. When exactly during 1017 Yaroslav seizes Kyiv, heads to Berestya, returns because of the threat of the Pechenegs, hinders their assault in a field outside of town where he will soon restore the St. Sophia Cathedral is not known. But even if you assume that all these events took place during the spring or early summer of 1017, the Prince had only a year left to erect the defensive structures of Yaroslav's City and the Golden Gate and to begin the construction of Saint Sophia – in August of 1018 Kyiv was captured by Sviatopolk and Boleslaw.

Finally well justified seems Tolochko's suppositions about the artificial origin of the date of 1017 for the founding of the Sophia of Kyiv in the Novgorod First Chronicle as a result of the chronicler's exercises in calculating the date unknown to him by using the 28-year solar cycle. So most likely in 1017 cathedral was not founded. But already important is the knowledge, derived from the sources, that the cathedral had not existed before, because it convincingly refutes the Niktitenko–Kornienko hypothesis and gives us a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the cathedral – 1017.

The *terminus ante quem* can be derived from the chronicle article under 1037 and its interpretation. Because it is a panegyric to the Prince for his achievements to the culmination of his rule and his sixtieth birthday, it has to relate those causes and undertakings that had been completed up to that time. The more so because, in Shakhmatov's authoritative opinion, the 1037 article completed the Old Chronicle Codex which ended in 1039.

Is it possible to further search for the foundation and completion dates of St. Sophia within the twenty-year period from 1017 until 1038? Certainly so, even on the basis of the sources already known to scholars – the written sources, archeological data, art and graffiti.

First of all, it is worth keeping in mind that the Sophia of Kyiv and the Savior of Chernihiv (except for the initial stage of construction) were built by the same masters. By 1036, when Mstislav of Chernihiv died, only a third of the latter cathedral had been completed, and after that Yaroslav finished the construction of the Savior Cathedral. The construction of the Chernihiv cathedral by the same masters who had built the Sophia seems to support the supposition that prior to 1036 the Sophia had already been completed. One of the graffiti discovered by Vysotsky could be dated by 1032 or 1034 and thus also confirms that by that time the construction of the Sophia had already been underway or even completed. For the date when the construction began we should search in the mid-1020s, since the entire first half of the 1020s was taken up by Yaroslav's confrontation with Mstislav, during which the Kyivan Prince clearly was not up to the construction of a grand cathedral.

Thus historiographical analysis and the critical consideration of the sources of the existing theories about the dating of the cathedral allows us to suppose that the construction of the Sophia of Kyiv took place in the second half or the end of the 1020s and the beginning or first half of the 1030s. The detailed analysis justified casting aside the very early dating, then allowed us to narrow down our search to 1017–1037 and finally to settle on the proposed dates.

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