

Why Did Lord Novgorod the Great Fall? The Novgorod Republic and Its Neighbors in 1470–1471

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Abstract—This article is devoted to the last decades of the existence of the independent Novgorod Republic and its fall. The events of 1470–1471, namely, the attempts to call into service a prince from Lithuania, to conclude an alliance with Lithuania and with the Teutonic Order in Livonia, and the campaign of Ivan III and the military defeat of Lord Novgorod the Great, have been considered on a wide background of social and political development of Novgorod the Great throughout the fifteenth century, in the context of the history of its foreign relations and the position of its neighbors, the organization of its armed forces, with a comprehensive account of a variety of sources (not only chronicles but also charters, epistolary and literary sources, etc.) and a rich research literature. In contrast to the approaches widespread in historiography, emphasis has been placed on contemporary reliable sources rather than on later ideological interpretations. Analysis of the chronicles also involves textual criticism. The authors have come to the conclusion that the defeat of the Novgorod Republic was caused not only by social, particularly religious, conflicts that were emphasized by the Moscow side but rather by the complex international situation, which the military and political organization of Novgorod was no longer consistent with, and the inability of the opposing pro-Moscow and pro-Lithuanian parties to offer a convincing ideological line and, consequently, strategy of action in these circumstances.

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The history of the Novgorod Republic at the final stage of its existence may seem quite well studied. Indeed, the events of the 1470s were always part of all “grand narratives” of Russian history, and often became the subject of research. Despite the undoubted achievements (the sequence of events has been altogether correctly established, most sources have been published and studied to varying extents, important conclusions regarding the textual criticism of the Russian chronicles describing these events have been made, the evolution of the system of Novgorodian high authorities and the tendency of the Novgorodian elite towards oligarchy has been traced), quite a lot of things remain either uncertain or debatable.¹ To start with, the nature of the social and political systems of Novgorod the Great developed by the late 1470s has been insufficiently interpreted in a pan-

European context.² Historians often based their narratives on data from the Moscow or, alternatively, non-Moscow (“independent”) chronicles, disregarding other, more reliable sources: charters or correspondence. Finally, the foreign policy context of events was often underestimated: researchers either did not refer to sources from Lithuania and the Teutonic Order or used them superficially. Textual history and political tendencies of the chronicles were also not always taken into account. All this raises the problem of creating a new overview of the problem, not in any way claiming to “drop the subject” or to create any new binding “directions” but allowing, as it seems to us, to assess on which aspects of the problem a research consensus has now been achieved and which of them are still disputable and insufficiently studied.

The events of 1470–1471, which led to the fall of the Novgorod Republic, can be adequately understood taking fully into account account the main

¹ See Lurie Ya.S., *Dve istorii Rusi 15 veka* (Two Histories of Rus in the 15th Century), St. Petersburg, 1994, pp. 123–126; Yanin V.L., *Novgorodskie posadniki* (Novgorodian Posadniks), 2nd ed., Moscow, 2003, pp. 251–489; Lukin P.V., *Novgorod: Trade, Politics and Mentalities in the Time of Independence*, W. Blockmans, M. Krom, and J. Wubs-Mrozewicz, Eds.; *The Routledge Handbook of Maritime Trade Around Europe 1300–1600*. London; New York, 2017, pp. 292–312.

² For more details, see Lukin P.V., *Novgorod i Venetsiya: sravnitel'no-istoricheskie ocherki stanovleniya respublikanskogo stroya* (Novgorod and Venice. Two Republican Models: Essays in Comparative History), St. Petersburg, 2022 (Res Publica, Issue 15).

trends in the development of Novgorod the Great in the fifteenth century. They include evolution and complication of republican system; institutionalization of the political system and increase (however, not fully consistent) of oligarchic tendencies in the government; diversification of social structure, i.e., emergence of new social categories and terms denoting them; development of political ideology and rhetoric, i.e., appearance of new forms of their representation and updating of previous ones; building the relationships with the Hanseatic League, which were crucial for Novgorod economy; and attempts to find its place in the complex political landscape of Eastern Europe of that time, which was dominated by a few great Powers: the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Grand Principality of Moscow, as well as the Horde (Great Horde) and the Crimean Khanate. The present study is focused on the internal social and political development of Novgorod the Great in the 1470s and its relationships with its closest neighbors, mainly with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Livonia. This aspect is usually overshadowed in the scholarly literature by the role of the Grand Principality of Moscow. In so doing, we rely on the most trustworthy documentary sources; as regards the chronicles and literary works, which surely cannot be omitted, we always take into account the time of their writing, their textual history, and ideology.³

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEM OF NOVGOROD THE GREAT IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

At the center of the political system of Novgorod, there was still “All Novgorod the Great,” the Novgorod political community, which was believed to govern the Novgorod land. In fact, decisions were made on its behalf by the assembly of this political community, the *veche*, and officials elected by the latter: the *posadnik*, the *tysyatskii*, the archbishop, and the archimandrite of Novgorod (with a residence in the Yuriev Monastery; he may have headed all the monasteries in the Novgorod land). As a rule, the *veche* considered and solved the main issues, while the officials were responsible for day-to-day administration and justice. However, like in all medieval republics, there was no separation of powers in Novgorod; in theory (and often in practice), the *veche* could both consider any problem that concerned the interests of

Novgorodians and delegate any issue to the elected magistrates if it was not controversial. In either case, it was considered that decisions were made by “all Novgorod the Great,” i.e., by the political community as a whole, whether directly, “at the *veche*,” or through the elected magistrates. The authority of “Novgorod the Great” extended over the entire gigantic Novgorod land.

The functions of the archbishop and the archimandrite were broad and far from being merely ecclesiastical, in both domestic and foreign policy. The specific function of the archbishop, which was particularly important in Novgorod, was to be a kind of a mediator between various clan and territorial communities or even between the Novgorodians and Hanseatic merchants. The judicial and administrative apparatus of the archbishop of Novgorod played an important role both in the center and at the periphery.⁴

The evolution of the political structure and political ideology of Novgorod the Great was reflected in new designations of the political community of Novgorod: “(all) Lord Novgorod the Great” (known from the sources beginning from 1392) and later “all Sovereign Lord Novgorod the Great” (known since 1468).⁵ They emphasized the power and independence of the political community of Novgorod and of the Novgorod Republic. The self-designation “Lord” put Novgorod on par with the Grand Princes, who were also called by the Novgorodians “lords,” while the name of “sovereign” used for the political group was a direct indication of a claim to have what one would later call the sovereignty.⁶

This scheme was reproduced to some extent at the local level, where the territorial and clan communities being parts of “the Lord of Novgorod the Great” were active: e.g., the documents of the Slavenskii *konets* (borough, literally, “end”) mention the *posadniks* of the *konets* and the (implied) *veche* of the *konets* acting on its behalf.⁷ A lower level territorial unit in Novgorod

⁴ Yanin V.L. *Aktovye pečati Drevnei Rusi* (Official Seals of the Ancient Russia). Moscow, 1970. Vol. II. P. 86–87; Malygin P.D. *O regionalnykh (oblastnykh) vladychnykh namestnikakh Novgorodskoi zemli* (On Regional (Provincial) Vicars in the Novgorodian Land). In *Velikii Novgorod v istorii srednevekovoi Evropy: K 70-letiyu V.L. Yanina* (Novgorod the Great in the History of Medieval Europe: To V.L. Yanin on His Seventieth Birthday). Moscow, 1999. P. 218–224.

⁵ The word “*gosudar*” (ruler), which is present even in the published sources, is erroneous; the form “*gosudar*” appears not earlier than the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century (by the end of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century) (Bachinskii A.A., Erusalimskii K.Yu., Kochevskaya N.A., Moiseev M.V. *Diplomaticheskaya perepiska Ivana Groznogo: problemy avtorstva, khraneniya i bytovaniya* (Diplomatic correspondence of Ivan the Terrible: Problems of authorship, storage and usage). *Rossiiskaya istoriya*. 2018. No. 2. P. 111–112).

⁶ Uspenskii B.A. “*Gospodar’ Velikii Novgorod*”: *proiskhozhdenie nazvaniya* (“*Gospodar’ Novgorod the Great*”: Origin of the title). *Drevnyaya Rus: Voprosy medievistiki*. 2021. No. 3 (85). P. 24–44, especially: 29–31.

⁷ *Gramoty Velikogo Novgoroda i Pskova* (Charters of Novgorod the Great and Pskov) (hereafter: GVNP). No. 91. P. 148; No. 112. P. 172.

³ The Novgorod interpretation of the events is presented in the continuation of the Novgorod IV Chronicle in the Stroyev and Synodal copies; the earliest Moscow version is presented in the Grand Princely Chronicles of the 1470s which is non-extant but preserved in a number of narratives (first of all, in the Moscow Chronicle Compilation of the late fifteenth century) and the work “*Slovesa izbranna*” compiled in the Metropolitan of all Rus’ milieu and included in some chronicles; finally, where possible, Pskov chronicles are used as they are relatively independent of both Moscow and Novgorod (though here one should take into account that Pskov was an ally of Moscow in the war of 1471).

was an “*ulitsa*” (“street”), which was also a self-governed community headed by the *ulitsa* elders.⁸

The administrative and territorial structure of the Novgorodian land was complex, heterogenous, and very far from being uniform. Its territory can conventionally be divided into two parts: the core, which later became part of *pyatinas* (the five administrative–territorial units probably formed when Novgorod was already under the power of Moscow), and the periphery, i.e., the territories relatively distant from Novgorod and colonized later. The central regions of the Novgorodian land were administered through *pagosts*, the tax and judicial centers, around which *volostki* settlements were united; in the peripheral areas extending to the Northern Urals (“Novgorodian *volosts*”), with a mostly non-Slavic (Finno-Ugric) population, the tribute was periodically collected by Novgorodian troops.⁹ The main impetus for the colonial activity of Novgorod in these vast northern regions was tribute, primarily as furs; the latter was the most important export commodity of medieval Novgorod largely ensuring its prosperity, as it was sold (along with wax) in European markets through the agency of the Hanseatic League. The treaties between Novgorod and princes show that the right to administer *volosts* associated with collection of tribute was of paramount importance for Novgorod “men” (boyars).

Some *volosts* on the eastern border of the Novgorodian land, namely, Torzhok (Novy Torg), Volokolamsk (Voloĭ Lamskii), Bezhetsky Verkh, Vologda, at different times were jointly owned by Novgorod and the Grand Principality of Moscow.¹⁰

⁸ See: *Hanserecesse*. Abt. 2. Bd. I. Leipzig, 1876. No. 217. P. 146–147; Bd. II. Leipzig, 1878. No. 325. P. 247–249; Kleinenberg I.E., Sevastyanova A.A. *Ulichane na strazhe svoeĭ territorii (po materialam ganzeĭskoi perepiski XV veka)*. (Ulichane (street people) on guard of the territory (based on Hanseatic correspondence of the XV century). In *Novgorodskii istoricheskii sbornik* (Novgorod Historical Collection). Leningrad, 1984. No. 2 (12). P. 160–162; Lukin P.V. *Novgorodskoe veche* (Novgorodian Veche). 2nd revised Edition. Moscow, 2018. P. S. 293, 308–310.

⁹ Yanin V.L. *U istokov novgorodskoi gosudarstvennosti*. (At the Origin of Novgorodian Statehood.), Velikii Novgorod, 2001. P. 71–72; Yanin V.L. *Ocherki istorii srednevekovogo Novgoroda* (Essays of the History of Medieval Novgorod). Moscow, 2008. P. 331–342; Frolov A.A. *Administrativnaya sistema tsentral'nykh rajonov Novgorodskoi zemli v X – nachale XVI veka v kontekste istorii territorial'nykh iurisdikttsii* (Administrative system of the central regions of the Novgorodian land in the X – early XVII centuries in the context of the history of territorial jurisdictions). In: *Istoricheskaya geografiya* (Historical Geography). Vol. 1. I.G. Konovalova, Ed. Moscow, 2012.

¹⁰ Kuchkin V.A. *Formirovanie gosudarstvennoi territorii Severo-Vostochnoi Rusi v X–XIV vv* (Formation of the State Territory in Northeastern Rus in the X–XIV centuries). Moscow, 1984. P. 152–155; Chernov S.Z. *Voloĭ Lamskii v XIV – pervoi polovine XVI v. Struktury zemlevladieniya i formirovanie voenno-sluzhiloi korporatsii* (Voloĭ Lamskii in the XIV–first half of the XVI century. Structures of Land Ownership and Formation of the Strata of Military Men in Service). Moscow, 1998. P. 39–58; *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* (hereafter: PSRL) (Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles). Vol. III. P. 418.

The system of Novgorodian–Lithuanian co-ownership of the border *volosts*, which previously were administered from Toropets and, in addition, included Rzhveva (after 1435, Rzhveva Pustaya) and Luki (Velikiye Luki), the so-called “*chernokunstvo*,” was a special mode of income distribution in the borderline Novgorodian *volosts* (from “*chernaya kuna*,” the duty paid to the Great Duchy of Lithuania). It was maintained since the fourteenth century.¹¹

While the Grand Prince was virtually permanently absent from Novgorod, very important and significant Novgorod “suburbs” (smaller towns in the Novgorod land) with the adjoining territories could be given for “feeding” as a kind of grant to serving (military) princes who came with their armed detachments from Lithuania or from the lands that were under the power or control of Moscow to strengthen the military potential of Novgorod. Relatively detailed information about the “feed-serving” princes has been available since 1333, when the Lithuanian prince Narimantas Gediminaitis (Narimont Gedimovich, baptized as Gleb) was summoned to a number of Novgorod “suburbs” (Ladoga, Oreshek, Korela with the Korelian land, and half of Koporie). After receiving the “feeding”, the serving princes acquired judicial, administrative, and fiscal power over the population of certain territories. At the same time, serving princes had to fulfill the conditions set before them by Novgorod (in the first place, to participate in its military campaigns), otherwise they were deprived of their “feeding”.¹²

There is no doubt about the existence of local political communities of suburban areas, which could independently solve local problems.¹³ At the same time, the autonomy of suburban areas was very limited: all of the most important decisions were made in Novgorod, and even the most significant suburbs such as Rusa or Ladoga could be given for “feeding” to serving princes without any consent of their inhabitants.

When speaking of “all Novgorod the Great” or of the Novgorodian political community, one should be aware of the conventionality of such designations. Actually, “all Novgorod the Great,” the members of which had the right to take part, although by no means equal, in the political life of the Novgorod Republic, did not include the entire population of the Novgorodian land, nor even its majority. The composition of the Novgorodian political community is best described in some Novgorod charters of the second

¹¹ Yanin V.L. *Novgorod i Litva. Pogranichnye situatsii XIII–XV vekov* (Novgorod and Lithuania. Borderline Cases of the XIII–XV centuries). Moscow, 1998.

¹² Yanin V.L. *Novgorod i Litva* (Novgorod and Lithuania). P. 90–101. Krupa K. *Książęta litewscy w Nowogrodzie Wielkim do 1430 roku*. In *Kwartalnik Historyczny*. 1993. No. 1. P. 30–46.

¹³ PSRL. Vol. III. P. 417–418. See also: Bernadskii V.N. *Novgorod i Novgorodskaya zemlya v XV veke* (Novgorod and Novgorodian Land in the XV Century). Moscow, Leningrad, 1961. P. 133–144.

half of the fifteenth century, where it includes senior magistrates, both current and former ones but retaining their special privileged status, and representatives of four categories of the population: the boyars, the *zhityi lyudi* (the social category between the nobles and the merchants), the merchants, and the “black people” (ordinary people).¹⁴

The supremacy of the boyars in the social and political structure of Novgorod increased in the fifteenth century. The establishment of collective *posadnichestvo*, which could only be accessed by the boyars, with a frequent change of *stepennyi posadniks*,¹⁵ opened up the career prospects for representatives of all boyar clans, on the one hand, but more obviously opposed the boyars to all other population strata, on the other hand. Beginning from the 1330s–1340s, it can be confidently asserted that the boyars monopolized the position of *tysyatskii* (later, *stepennyi* (from *stepen* – rostrum) *tysyatskii*). The boyars were becoming large landowners, including lands far from Novgorod. The political power of the boyars has an economic foundation. By the second half of the fifteenth century, more than 90% of “core” Novgorodian lands, which became the territory of *pyatinas* after annexation by Moscow, were in the possession of boyars or of *zhityi lyudi* and the church. Using their resources, boyars acquired clients from among ordinary people and manipulated them to influence the decisions made at the *veche* assemblies.¹⁶

The next important category was the “*zhityi lyudi*” mentioned since the 1370s–1380s.¹⁷ The comparison of data from different sources suggests that these were the people who owned land and were also actively involved in trade, coming from merchants.¹⁸ They were closer to boyars in their social and economic status, but senior magistrate positions were closed to them. Nevertheless, they took active part in political life; in particular, their representatives participated, together with the representatives of boyars, in sessions

of the joint court of the *posadnik* and the prince, and they regularly served as ambassadors.¹⁹

As for the merchants, in relation to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries one should distinguish between merchants as a socio-economic category and as a legal concept. The Novgorodian merchants united around the the Church of St John the Baptist-on-Opoki continued to play the most important role in the economic life of the Republic and even took part in judicial and administrative activities. Apparently, the top of the merchant class becoming landowners was drawn closer to the “*zhityi lyudi*,” while ordinary merchants merged with craftsmen.²⁰

At the bottom of the pyramid formed by the Novgorodian political community, there was an ordinary but personally free population: “black people.” Their political rights were limited mainly to the possibility of participating in the *veche*, but in some cases, in the second half of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, they could serve as ambassadors.²¹ It is usually considered that the “black people” were mostly artisans and petty traders, which seems to be true in general, but we should not forget about an obviously large and significant category of population of importance for Novgorod such as people involved in trade: boatmen, carriers, porters, loaders, etc.²² Unfortunately, there is no particular data on the communal structures of the artisan population in Novgorod: perhaps their formation was hindered by the *konets–ulitsa* (end–street) structure of the settlement and by the dependence of some artisans on the boyars.²³

All categories of the Novgorodian political community belonged to “*konets*” (end) and “*ulitsa*”

¹⁴GVNP. No. 96. P. 152; Andreev V.F. *Severnyi strazh Rusi* (The Northern Guard of Rus). Leningrad, 1983. P. 50–51; Lukin P.V. *Novgorod i Venetsia...* (Novgorod and Venice...). P. 72–79. This list did not include the black and white clergy, except for the Archbishop; however, it undoubtedly had a considerable effect on the social and political life of the Republic (Musin A.E. *Zagadki Doma Syatoy Sofii: Tserkov Velikogo Novgoroda v X–XVI vv.* (Mysteries of Hagia Sophia House: Church of Novgorod the Great in the X–XVI centuries). St. Petersburg, 2016. P. 103–104).

¹⁵See above. On the “*stepen*” (rostrum) the major *posadnik* was staying during the assembly.

¹⁶See, e.g., the report of the Moscow Chronicle Compilation of the end of the fifteenth century on the activity of the pro-Lithuanian party in Novgorod not long before it was annexed by Moscow: PSRL. Vol. XXV. P. 285–286.

¹⁷Bassalygo L.A. *Novgorodskie tysyatskii* (Novgorodian *tysyatskie*). Part I. *Novgorodskii istoricheskii sbornik*. 2008. Issue 11 (21). P. 43–44.

¹⁸*Pamyatniki russkogo prava* (Russian Legal Documents) (hereafter: PRP). Issue II. Moscow, 1953. P. 215.

¹⁹Goehrke C. *Unter dem Schirm der göttlichen Weisheit. Geschichte und Lebenswelten des Stadtstaates Groß-Novgorod*. Zürich, 2020. S. 290.

²⁰Lukin P.V. *Kategorii naseleniya Novgoroda v opasnoi gramote 1472 g.* (Categories of the population of Novgorod in *opasnaya gramota* of 1472). *Slověne. International Journal of Slavic Studies*. 2015. Vol. IV. No. 1. P. 253–265.

²¹Lukin P.V. *Novgorodskoye veche* (Novgorodian *Veche*). P. 336–341.

²²Alekseev Yu.G. “*Chernye liydi*” *Novgoroda i Pskova* (*k voprosu o sotsial’noi evolyutsii drevnerusskoi gorodskoi obshchiny*) (“Common people” of Novgorod and Pskov (on the problem of social evolution of ancient Russian urban community), *Istoricheskie zapiski*. Moscow, 1979. Vol. 103. P. 242–274; Goetz L.K. *Deutsch-Russische Handelsgeschichte des Mittelalters*. Lübeck, 1922 (Hansische Geschichtsquellen. Neue Folge. Bd. V). S. 244; Goehrke C. *Unter dem Schirm...* S. 291–292.

²³The well-known assumption that there were actually no free craftsmen in Novgorod has not been confirmed. See: Petrov M.I., Sorokin A.N. *O razmerakh usadeb drevnego Novgoroda*. In: *Novgorod i Novgorodskaya zemlya. Istoriya i arkheologiya* (*Materialy nauchnoi konferentsii, Novgorod, January 28–30, 1997*) (On the sizes of estates in ancient Novgorod. *Novgorod i Novgorodskaya zemlya. Istoriya i arkheologiya* (Novgorod and Novgorodian Land. History and Archaeology) (Proc. Scient. Conf., Novgorod, January 28–30, 1997). Novgorod, 1997. Issue 11. P. 54–63; Yanin V.L. *Vozmozhnosti arkheologii v izuchenii srednevekovogo Novgoroda* (Possibilities of Archeology in the Study of Medieval Novgorod). Yanin V.L. *Srednevekovyi Novgorod* (Medieval Novgorod). Moscow, 2004. P. 26).

(street) organizations²⁴. This was precisely the criterion (naturally, along with personal freedom) of a Novgorodian's membership in the political community and of the basic right conferred by this membership: participation in the *veche*. All other categories of the population, who did not belong to "all five ends" and had no personal freedom, were not members of the political community of "all Novgorod the Great" and were barred from participating in decision-making at the all-Novgorod level but not at the local level. This concerns the population of the Novgorod "suburbs," whose involvement in the all-Novgorod political life was sporadic even earlier and became absolutely inappreciable in the XIV–XV; this means the rural population, both dominated by "all Novgorod the Great" administered from the *pogosts*, as well as the peasants living in landowners' manors, finally there were the *kholopy* (serfs) who did not enjoy rights of the free people.

All the above does not imply that there were no contradictions between different groups within the political community in Novgorod. Despite the theoretical unity of "all Novgorod the Great," the contradictions between its different strata still persisted. Moreover, the socio-economic changes of that time made the social dimension of intra-Novgorod conflicts more pronounced. This seemed to be caused primarily by the increase in private land ownership and the decrease of the territory jointly dominated by the political community as a whole. The revenues from such land were no longer distributed within the political community but went to the owners, which caused severe discontent among the common people.²⁵ The most striking of such internal conflicts was the surprising of certain Stepanko in 1418, when the traditional clan and territorial confrontation was intertwined with social confrontation (pillaging of boyars' yards with grain warehouses).²⁶ The bloody confrontation in Novgorod in 1421 had a similar pattern.²⁷

Social contradictions manifested themselves not only in clashes and disturbances but also in public sentiments. For example, the increase in the price of bread

in 1445, according to a Novgorodian chronicler, caused discontent of the volost population with the political community of Novgorod as a whole ("*grad*"), which was headed by Novgorodian authorities ("elders").²⁸

The population of the "suburbs", the future Novgorodian *pyatinas* and peripheral volosts was not monolithic either. This can be seen by the example of the Dvina land. The local political community of "all Dvinians" that had formed there by the end of the fourteenth century consisted of local boyars and common "Dvinyans" (black people), who decided in 1397, contrary to the will of "all Novgorod the Great," to come under the power of the Grand Prince of Moscow.²⁹ Later on, like in Novgorod, social differentiation was aggravated, and the charter of 1450 reports on the *zhityi lyudi* and merchants in the Dvina land.³⁰

The evolution of the political system of Novgorod the Great, its institutionalization, and the development of ideology are manifested in the emergence of republican symbols. At the end of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth century, the special *veche* bell became the symbol of Novgorod liberties.³¹ The seal "of all Novgorod" appeared in the second half of the thirteenth century, followed by the "Seal of Novgorod and *posadnik*" (the fourteenth century), the "Seal of Novgorod the Great," and the "Novgorodian Seal" (the fifteenth century). There is evidence of using them to seal charters at the *veche*.³² The same tendencies were also reflected in standardization of monetary circulation in Novgorod (transition from the coinless system to European coins in 1410 and the start of minting its own coins in 1420), as well as in codification of the law. In the fifteenth century, the Novgorod Judicial Charter (in the existing version of 1471) was adopted, regulating the organization of the court and legal proceedings. It represented both the theoretical unity and the social differentiation

²⁴Cf. data on the composition of the political community of Novgorod: PRP. Issue II. P. 217.

²⁵Florya B.N. *Lektsii po russkoi istorii* (Lectures in Russian History). Moscow, 2021. P. 292–301.

²⁶PSRL. Vol. III. Moscow, 2000. P. 409–410. See also: Petrov A.V. *Ot yazychestva k Svyatoi Rusi. Novgorodskie usobitsy. K izucheniyu drevnerusskogo vechevogo uklada* (From Heathenism to Holy Rus. Internal Conflicts of Novgorod. On the Study of Old Rus Veche System). St. Petersburg, 2003. P. 271–291.

²⁷PSRL. Vol. IV. Part 1. Moscow, 2000. P. 431; Liv-, *Est- und Curländisches Urkundenbuch* (hereafter: LECUB). Bd. V. Ed. F.G. von Bunge. Reval, 1867. No. 2545. Sp. 764; Kleinenberg I.E. *Livonskoe izvestie o novgorodskom vosstanii 1421 g.* (Livonian account of Novgorodian uprising of 1421). In *Feodalnaya Rossiya vo vsemirno-istoricheskom protsesse* (Feudal Russia in the World Historical Process). Collection of articles dedicated to L.V. Cherep-nin. Moscow, 1972. P. 104–107.

²⁸PSRL. Vol. IV. Part 1. P. 440–441. Accounts of literary and hagiographical texts often presented as confirming the internal crisis in Novgorod of the fifteenth century, were written after the annexation of Novgorod by Moscow in 1478 (see, e.g.: *Povesti o zhityi Mikhaila Klopskogo* (Stories of Life of Mikhail Klopsky). Ed. by L.A. Dmitriyev. Moscow, Leningrad, 1958. P. 47) or have no exact date. Therefore, the authenticity and unbiased nature of these narratives can be questioned, in contrast to the evidence of the Novgorodian chroniclers, who were evidently not interested in denigration of Novgorod the Great.

²⁹PSRL. Vol. III. P. 391; GVNP. No. 88. P. 144.

³⁰GVNP. No. 95. P. 151.

³¹Lukin P.V. *K istorii vechevykh kolokolov* (On the history of *veche* bells). *Novgorodskii istoricheskii sbornik*. Velikii Novgorod, 2014. Issue 14 (24). P. 153–167.

³²In the historiography, such seals are often erroneously referred to as the seals of the "Council of lords"; in reality, these were the seals of the political community of Novgorod (of "all of Novgorod the Great") (Lukin P.V. *Pechati novgorodskie: problemy atributsii* ("Seals of Novgorod": Problems of Attribution). In: *Rus, Rossiya: Srednevekove i Novoe vremya*. Issue 4: IV Readings in the Memory of Acad. L.V. Milov. Proc. Int. Sci. Conf. Moscow, October 26–November 1, 2015. Moscow, 2015. P. 138–143).

of the political community. It is noteworthy that the Charter does not mention the prince's lieutenant (*namestnik*), which may reflect the tendency of Novgorod toward usurpation of the prince's traditional authority in the joint court.³³

The cult of St. Sophia, the patron saint of the Novgorodians, for whom local scribes urged them to fight and give their lives as early as in the thirteenth century, is further developed. In the fifteenth century, it acquired the image of a fiery angel.³⁴ In the new recensions of the *Znamenskaya* (Icon of Our Lady of the Sign) Legend (the cycle of works devoted to the victory of the Novgorodians over the coalition formed by Prince Andrei Bogolyubskii in 1170), the political concept is polemically sharpened against Moscow's claims of domination over Novgorod and its colonies.

However, it seems that the supreme manifestation of ideological tendencies toward what can be conventionally called sovereignty in Novgorod was the spread from the beginning of the fifteenth century of the formula "God and Novgorod the Great" ("the will of God and Novgorod the Great"), where the political community and its decisions are juxtaposed with God and His will, by analogy with the monarchical formulas: "God and the Grand Prince," and "God and the Tsar." It demonstrated the formation of political community of Novgorod perceptions of itself as a collective sovereign of the Novgorodian land.³⁵

The supreme republican magistracies also underwent considerable evolution in this period, which is still not completely clear. In any case, there is no doubt that the number of *posadniks* and *tysyatskiis* had increased in several stages by the third quarter of the fifteenth century.³⁶ From among them, the major (*stepenny*) *posadnik* and *tysyatskii* were chosen, i.e., those who held the *stepen'* at that time. The terms "old *posadnik*" and "old *tysyatskii*," which appeared in the fifteenth century and are also mentioned in official documents,³⁷ indicate that those who came into power did not "drop out" of it later. It is an indisputable fact that *posadniks* and *tysyatskiis* (ordinary, without a *stepen'*) were transformed from positions into a kind of an

oligarchic group, and the status of *posadnik* tended to become inherited.³⁸

The increasing complexity and institutionalization of the political system of Novgorod the Great was manifested in the functioning of an oligarchic body with a narrow membership. As an informal council of the higher authorities, *gospoda* (*de heren* in Hanseatic sources) probably appeared as early as in the first half of the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth century, it was gradually expanded; there was a trend of the *gospoda* becoming a political institution, where draft decisions were prepared before being presented at the *veche*, or where such decisions were made if they did not provoke a protest by Novgorodians; at the same time, the actions of the *gospoda* could be manipulative in relation to the *veche*.³⁹ The increasing significance of the "gospoda" can therefore be regarded as a step towards further development and strengthening of republican institutions, on the one hand, and as manifestation of the historically logical strengthening of oligarchic tendencies, on the other hand. Nevertheless, this process was still far from being completed. Most of the townspeople enjoying full rights were not debarred from participation in political life, primarily in the *veche*, until the fall of independence independence, and the *veche* (to be more precise, the political community of Novgorod) remained the main authority of Novgorod the Great, both formally and actually, and the "gospoda" could not directly oppose it or ignore the decisions it made. The Novgorodians still cherished their status as "free men," and this freedom was recognized by the neighbors and partners of Novgorod.⁴⁰

NOVGOROD IN THE SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Novgorod the Great turned out to be between the two great powers of Eastern Europe of that time: the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Grand Principality of Moscow. The confrontation between them ultimately determined the fate of Novgorod. The relationship with the Teutonic Order also played a significant role for Novgorod.

Though the Novgorodians traditionally used to recognize the supreme authority of the Grand Prince

³³See: PRP. Issue 2. P. 238 (commentary by A.A. Zimin).

³⁴Lukin P.V. *Novgorod i Venetsiya...* (Novgorod and Venice...). P. 229–241.

³⁵Lukin P.V. "Bog i Veliky Novgorod": funktsionirovanie i znachenie formuly ("The Lord and Novgorod the Great": Functioning and meaning of formula). In: *Sub specie aeternitatis: Sbornik nauchnykh statei k 60-letiyu V.B. Krysk'o* (Collection of research papers dedicated to the 60th anniversary of V.B. Krysk'o). I.M. Ladyzhenskii, M.A. Puzina., Eds. 2021. P. 394–402.

³⁶See: GVNP. no. 23. P. 41, No. 24. P. 43–44, No. 25. P. 44. No. 26. P. 45, No. 27. P. 48, No. 48. P. 85, 86, No. 49. P. 87, No. 61. P. 100, No. 73. P. 120, No. 74. P. 124–125, no. 77. P. 130, No. 90. P. 147, No. 91. P. 148. No. 92. P. 148.

³⁷See: Ibid. No. 21. P. 38, No. 62. P. 103, No. 64. P. 107, No. 67. P. 110, No. 72. P. 118, No. 76. P. 127, No. 91. P. 148, No. 95. P. 150–151, No. 96. P. 152, No. 98. P. 154, No. 101. P. 156.

³⁸Bernadskii V.N. *Novgorod...* P. 156. The most influential concept of the development of Novgorodian republican magistracies was proposed by V.L. Yanin (Yanin V.L. *Novgorodskie posadniki* (Posadniki of Novgorod); Yanin V.L. *Novgorodskie akty XII–XV vv. Khronologicheskii kommentarii* (The Acts of Novgorod of the XII–XV centuries. Chronological Commentary. Moscow, 1991. P. 10–78). However, many aspects of this concept remain debatable and hypothetical.

³⁹*Hansisches Urkundenbuch*. Bd. V. Ed. K. Kunze. Leipzig, 1899. №№ 883, 1070. S. 464, 556–557.

⁴⁰Lukin P.V. *Novgorodskoe veche* (Veche of Novgorod). P. 378–398, 522–538.

of Vladimir and later the Grand Prince of Moscow, **the relationships between Novgorod and the Grand Principality of Moscow** in the fifteenth century were not easy. With the strengthening and territorial growth of the Grand Principality of Moscow, it began to exert increasing pressure on Novgorod. The Grand Princes of Moscow aspired to oust the Novgorodians from strategically and economically important areas of the Russian North and to make their rather formal suzerainty over the Republic really important. The conflicts between Moscow and Novgorod erupted more than once and were accompanied by armed confrontation. Ecclesiastical controversies associated with the ambivalent position of the Archbishop of Novgorod on the question of the Russian metropolitanate also played an important role beginning from the mid-fifteenth century. On the one hand, Novgorodian church hierarchs were traditionally consecrated in Moscow and were canonically subordinated to the Moscow Metropolitan. On the other hand, Novgorodian ambassadors went to the Council of Constance of the Catholic Church (in addition to Novgorod, Russian lands were represented there only by subjects of the rulers of Poland and Lithuania, who hoped for conclusion of the church union between Catholicism and Orthodoxy), and the Novgorodian Archbishop did not take part personally in the consecration of the Metropolitan Jonah (1448) elected by the bishops of North-Eastern Rus on the initiative of the Grand Prince of Moscow and without the consent of Constantinople, and his successors, the Metropolitans Theodosius (1461) and Philip I (1464).

A bloody Moscow–Novgorod war took place in 1393 and was accompanied by the capture of Torzhok, Volok Lamskii, and Vologda by Muscovites and Ustyug and Ustyuzhna by Novgorodians. After that, peace was concluded “*po starine*” (“as it was in the olden days”). Apparently, in the following decades the authorities of Novgorod and the princes of Moscow disputed their control over some volosts that were under their joint governance: Volok Lamskii, Bezhetskii Verkh, and Vologda.⁴¹

In 1397–1398, a fierce struggle between Novgorod and Moscow broke out for the Dvina land, a key region on the way to the resources of the Russian North of vital importance for Novgorod. As mentioned above, the Dvina land had seceded from Novgorod, and the Dvinian boyars had confiscated and divided among themselves the possessions of the Novgorodian boyars. Novgorod still succeeded in regaining control over the Dvina land, and the initiators of siding with Moscow were executed.⁴²

⁴¹See a different point of view: Yanin V.L. *Ocherki...* P. 269–271; Chernov S.Z. *Volok Lamskii...* P. 51–55; Frolov A.A. *Administrativnaya sistema...* P. 40.

⁴²PSRL. Vol. III. P. 389–393.

In the 1430s and the first half of the 1450s, a situation that developed during the Dynastic War in the Grand Principality of Moscow (or The Muscovite War for Succession, or the Feudal War) had a decisive impact on these relations between Moscow and Novgorod. The policy of Novgorod, like in other situations, was evidently determined by pragmatic considerations and was generally the tactics of maneuvering typical of the Republic, which was manifested, in particular, in simultaneously entitling as “Grand Prince” both Vasily Vasilyevich and his rivals, Yurii Dmitrievich and later Dmitrii Shemyaka, who were fighting for the Moscow throne.⁴³ However, Novgorodian authorities seemed to sympathize largely with Shemyaka. The reason, to all appearance, was the fact that in 1440–1441 Vasily Vasilyevich was at war with Novgorod with the support of Pskov and Tver, ravaged a lot of the Novgorodian territory, and exacted a contribution of 8000 rubles (presumably for nonpayment of revenues that were due to the Grand Prince).⁴⁴ In the 1440s, rapprochement between Novgorod and Dmitrii Shemyaka were not unequivocal, while in 1450, after being defeated by Vasily Vasilyevich (Vasily II the Blind), he fled to Novgorod (his family had been sent there in advance) and occupied the traditional princely residence in Rurikovo Gorodische near Novgorod. At the same time Shemyaka and the political community of Novgorod swore oaths to each other. All the above was an open challenge to Vasily the Blind.⁴⁵ Relying on Novgorod, Dmitrii Shemyaka acted against Moscow and even seized Ustyug (Veliky Ustyug) for a while.⁴⁶ In 1453, Shemyaka died in Novgorod. According to a chronicle account independent both of Novgorod and of the Grand Prince of Moscow, it happened as a result of a conspiracy in which the clerk Stefan Bradaty who had come from Moscow and brought poison with him, and the *posadnik* Isak Boretskii, who bribed the prince’s cook took part.⁴⁷

⁴³PSRL. Vol. III. P. 417; PSRL. Vol. XVI. Moscow, 2000. Col. 191.

⁴⁴PSRL. Vol. III. P. 421; Vol. V. Issue 1. Moscow, 2003. P. 45; Vol. V. Issue 2. Moscow, 2000. P. 46–47, 134; Vol. XV. Moscow, 2000. Col. 491. See also: Bernadskii V.N. *Novgorod...* P. 247; Klug E. *Knyazhestvo Tverskoe (1247–1485)* (Principality of Tver). Translated from German by A.V. Chernyshev. Tver, 1994. P. 293–294; Florya B.N. *Lektsii po russkoi istorii* (Lectures on Russian History). P. 337–338.

⁴⁵PSRL. Vol. XVI. P. 192; *Akty arkheograficheskoi ekspeditsii* (Acts Collected by the Archaeographic Expedition). Vol. 1. Saint-Petersburg, 1836. No. 372. P. 465.

⁴⁶PSRL. Vol. XVI. P. 293; Vol. XXVII. Moscow, 2007. P. 88–89. See also: Bernadskii V.N. *Novgorod...* P. 253–254; Zimin A.A. *Vityaz na raspute: Feodalnaya voina v Rossii XV v.* (The Knight at the Crossroads: The Feudal War in Russia in the 15 Century). Moscow, 1991. P. 148–151; Krupa K. *Polityczne związki Giedyminowiczów z Nowogrodem Wielkim w latach 1430–1471*. In *Przegląd Historyczny*. 1993. Vol. LXXXIV. Zesz. 3. S. 294–295.

⁴⁷PSRL. Vol. XXIII. Moscow, 2004. P. 155.

In 1456, the troops of Vasily the Blind invaded the Novgorod land and defeated the Novgorodians at Rusa. According to the Novgorod chronicle, the Tatar detachments allied to the Grand Prince of Moscow played an important role in the victory of Muscovites. The war ended with the peace treaty of Yazhelbitsy, which was beneficial to Moscow; Novgorod had to pay a reparation, to pass over to Moscow the trans-Dvina volosts considered by Moscow authorities as their rightful inheritance from the Sretenskaya half of the Rostov Principality, which by that time had passed into the power of Moscow, and to make other concessions, among which there was the obligation of Novgorod not to accept disgraced princes of Moscow Rurikids (in particular, Ivan, the son of Dmitrii Shemyaka), nor any “plotting evil against grand princes.” This provision of the treaty explains well the reasons for this Moscow–Novgorod war.⁴⁸

The pressure of Moscow on Novgorod temporarily weakened in the 1460s, when there was a protracted and difficult war between the Grand Principality of Moscow and the Khanate of Kazan, which ended only in 1469.⁴⁹ Only thereafter could Ivan III pass on to an active policy toward Novgorod.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, the Grand Princes of Moscow did not abandon attempts to take control of distant but economically important colonies of Novgorod. There is evidence in a chronicle of the march of the Moscow army in 1465 from Ustyug to Yugra, a region in the southern reaches of the Ob River; as a result, local princes recognized their dependence on Moscow and pledged to pay tribute.⁵⁰ However, even in the early 1470s, Yugra was referred to as a Novgorod volost in a Moscow–Novgorod treaty.⁵¹

For quite a long time, the Novgorodian elites maintained a successful balance between the two largest polities of Eastern Europe: the Grand Principality of Moscow and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Nevertheless, both of these powers attempted to secure the republic in their sphere of influence in oneway or another.

By the fifteenth century, **Novgorod and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania** had been linked by diverse relations, not only political that have been mentioned above, but also trade, ecclesiastical, cultural, etc. The

Lithuanian policy toward Novgorod after a break in the middle and second half of the fourteenth century became more active under the reign of the Grand Duke Vytautas (1392–1430). As before, Novgorod attracted the Lithuanian ruler, and its milieu and subjects were seen as a potential source of wealth⁵²; however, factors such as its traditional recognition of the power of the Grand Princes of Vladimir (Moscow) and the logistical difficulties of a military campaign, which became evident while Vytautas was preparing and executing his Novgorod campaign in 1428, led to a situation in which the Lithuanian ruling circles tried to enhance their influence in Novgorod mainly by less costly means: by diplomacy (or by the threat of war as in 1398, when Novgorod was attributed to the sphere of interests of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania under the Treaty of Salin (Sallinwerder) with the Teutonic Order,⁵³ or in 1413⁵⁴) and by the above-mentioned experience of sending to the Novgorodian suburbs of serving dukes with their troops, conventionally considered by the Lithuanian establishment as agents of their influence. In the ecclesiastical sphere, there were attempts to extend the power of the pro-Lithuanian metropolitan to Novgorod and to use the rhetoric of “the conversion of infidels” addressed to the Latin world.

The campaign against Novgorod in 1428 signified the “golden autumn” of Lithuanian expansion into Russia. It was due not only to the dynastic war that engulfed the Grand Duchy of Lithuania soon after Vytautas’ death in 1430 and naturally weakened this state, but also to the profound socioeconomic processes that had begun earlier. Even in the time of Vytautas, the system of material provision for the nobility of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the basis of its troops, changed radically. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the welfare of Lithuanian boyars was based on military campaigns resulting in the capture of booty, taking captives, and, in case of the greatest success, submission of new lands to the Lithuanian princes; from the end of the fourteenth century, the Lithuanian ruler actively distributed land to his subjects for service. Another series of such distribution

⁴⁸PSRL. Vol. XVI. Col. 194–196; Vol. V. Issue 1. P. 53–54; GVNP. No. 22–23. P. 39–43 (Peace Treaty of Yazhelbitsy). See: Yanin V.L. *Bor’ba Novgoroda i Moskvy za Dvinskije zemli v 50–70-kh godakh XV v.* (The Fight between Novgorod and Moscow for the Dvina Lands in the 1450–70s). In: Yanin V.L. *Srednevekovyi Novgorod: Ocherki arkheologii i istorii* (Medieval Novgorod: Essays in Archeology and History). Moscow, 2004. P. 369–389.

⁴⁹See: Bazilevich K.V. *Vneshnyaya politika Russkogo tsentralizovannogo gosudarstva. Vtoraya polovina XV veka* (External Policy of the Russian Centralized State. The Second Half of the 15 Century). Moscow, 1952. P. 64–72.

⁵⁰PSRL. Vol. T. XXXVII. Leningrad, 1982. C. 91.

⁵¹GVNP. No. 26. P. 47.

⁵²Cf. the image of Novgorod in the work of Jan Długosz, for whom one of the sources was the stories of Polish knights participating in the Lithuanian campaign of 1428: Kijas A. *Nowogród Wielkiw Rocznikach Jana Długosza*. In *Europa Orientalis. Polska i jej wschodni sąsiedzi od średniowiecza po współczesność. Studia i materiały ofiarowane Profesorowi Stanisławowi Alexandrowiczowi w 65 rocznicę urodzin*. Toruń, 1996. S. 25–34.

⁵³LECUB. Bd. IV. № 1478, 1479. Sp. 218–227; Kolankowski L. *Dzieje Wielkiego księstwa Litewskiego za Jagiellonów*. T. I. 1377–1499. Warszawa, 1930. S. 63–64; Kubon S. *Die Außenpolitik des Deutschen Ordens unter Hochmeister Konrad von Jungingen (1393–1407)*. Göttingen, 2016 (Nova Mediaevalia. Quellen und Studien zum europäischen Mittelalter. Bd. 15). S. 110–113.

⁵⁴Polekhov S.V. *Lugven, Novgorod i vostochnaya politika Vitovta (1411–1414) v svete maloizvestnykh istochnikov Kenigsbergskogo arkhiva* (Lengvenis, Novgorod and the Eastern Policy of Vytautas (1411–1414) in Light of Little-known Sources of the Koenigsberg Archive), *Mstsislay i Mstsislayski kraï*. Minsk, 2019. P. 58–78.

occurred after 1440, when Kazimierz Jagiellończyk (Casimir Jagiellon), who was enthroned as the Grand Duke of Lithuania while not yet 13 years old, and his entourage needed to strengthen their position in the face of protest actions of the periphery (Smolensk, Lutsk, and Žemaitija) against the state center, the territorial claims of their neighbors (Podlasie), and the claim of prince Mykolas Žygimantaitis (Michał Zygmuntowicz) to the grand-ducal throne. The boyars, in turn, settled down on the granted lands, lost interest in distant and risky military campaigns (especially since the reign of Kazimierz was very quiet in this respect after many years of wars), and preferred the revenues from their positions, exploitation and expansion of the accrued land estates, taking advantage of favorable conditions, and being involved in timber and grain trade.⁵⁵

Another peculiar feature of the position of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was its personal union with the Kingdom of Poland. It emerged in 1447, when the Lithuanian Grand Duke Kazimierz Jagiellończyk was crowned in Cracow and thus occupied two thrones: the Polish and the Lithuanian. At the same time, it is inappropriate to speak of the “Polish–Lithuanian state,” as is often done in the Russian literature, because the two states had no common political institutions: the Polish–Lithuanian summits convened from time to time never became regular and the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania pursued independent foreign policies (e.g., the latter did not participate in the Thirteen Years’ War of 1454–1466 between Poland and the Teutonic Order). The Polish–Lithuanian rivalry for Volhynia remained very significant until the mid-1450s. Since the time of his coronation, Kazimierz stayed alternately in Lithuania and in Poland, causing permanent discontent from both Polish and Lithuanian subjects with the absence of the ruler in the country. The independence of the Lithuanian Council of Lords (*panowie rada*), increased under these circumstances, which was reflected in the draft of the Novgorod–Lithuanian Treaty of 1471.

In these circumstances the relations between Novgorod and Lithuania were developing under Kazimierz. At the beginning of his reign, he concluded a treaty with Novgorod, which confirmed the good-neighborliness;⁵⁶ later, Lithuanian dukes came to Novgorod for “feeding”: Ivan Vladimirovich (Algirdas’ grandson) in 1443, and Yuri Semenovich (probably well-known to Novgorodians as Yuri Lugvenevich) in 1458.⁵⁷ According to the treaty between Vasily II

and Kazimierz, which was concluded on August 31, 1449, Novgorod and Pskov were regarded as the sphere of influence of Moscow.⁵⁸ This was defined more concretely in the Treaty of Yazhelbitsy of 1456 with Vasily II, according to which Novgorodians were ordered not to accept “the Grand Princes evildoers” who escaped from the Principality of Moscow “to Lithuania or to the German lands (*Nemtsy*).”⁵⁹ Nevertheless, some contacts between Novgorod and Lithuania were continued even in the absence of Kazimierz there.⁶⁰ In 1463, the Novgorodians sent envoys to Kazimierz and to the ardent enemies of Ivan III, the princes Ivan Andreevich Mozhayskii and Ivan Dmitrievich, the son of Dmitrii Shemyaka, who escaped to Lithuania, “about the prince’s indignation over Novgorod the Great of Ivan [III] Vasilyevich,” with an unequivocal offer “to fight for Novgorod the Great against the grand prince.” If we believe this Novgorod chronicle, the agreement in principle to aid Novgorod, “as God wills,” was received.⁶¹ In the early 1460s, the Crimean Khan Haji Giray granted Kazimierz an edict (*yarlyk*) for the Rus lands, with Novgorod among them (this grant was given once again by the following Khan, Mengli Giray, between 1472 and 1474, i.e., after the Novgorod campaign of Ivan III).⁶² Judging by the narration of *yarlyks*, the counsellors of the Grand Duke of Lithuania played a significant role in this event. However, there is significant evidence indicating that they were solicited with the involvement of Kazimierz.⁶³ Nevertheless, one could hardly expect

⁵⁸ *Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty velikikh i udel’nykh knyazei* (Testaments and Treaties of Grand and Appanage Princes) (Hereafter: DDG). No. 53. P. 162.

⁵⁹ GVNP. No. 23. P. 43.

⁶⁰ Polekhov S.V. *Litovskaya Rus’ v XV veke: edinaya ili razdelenaya? (Na materiale konfliktov mezhdru russkimi zemlyami Velikogo knyazhestva Litovskogo i gosudarstvennym centrom)* (Lithuanian Rus in the XV century: United or Divided? (Based on the data on the conflicts between Ruthenian lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the State Center)). In *Drevnyaya Rus posle Drevnei Rusi: diskurs vostochnoslavianskogo (ne)edinstva* (Ancient Rus after Ancient Rus: Discourse of East Slavic (Non)Unity). Moscow, 2017. P. 85–86.

⁶¹ PSRL. Vol. XVI. P. 214.

⁶² Kołodziejczyk D. *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania. International Diplomacy on the European Periphery (15th–18th Century). A Study of Peace Treaties Followed by Annotated Documents (The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage. Politics, Society and Economy. Vol. 47)*. Leiden; Boston, 2011. P. 530, 533, 540, 543.

⁶³ Nazarov V.D. *Yarlyk Khadzhi Geraya Kazimiru IV i russko-litovskie otnosheniya* (Yarlyk of Khadzhi Geray to Kazimir IV and Russian–Lithuanian relations), *Vneshnyaya politika Drevnei Rusi. Yubileinye chteniya...* (External Policy of Ancient Russia), *Tezisy Dokl. Moscow*, 1988. P. 57–60; Gulevich V.P. *Neskol’ko nablyudenyi otnositel’no problemy “pozhalovaniya” russkikh zemel’ Kazimiru IV v yarlykakh krymskikh khanov Khadzhi Gireya 1461 g. i Mengli Gireya 1472 g.* (Some observations concerning the problem of “granting” Russian lands to Kazimir IV in *yarlyks* of Crimean khans Khadzhi Girey in 1461 and Mengli Girey in 1472). In *Rus i mir kochevnikov (vtoraya polovina IX–XVI vv.)* (Rus and the World of Nomads (the Second Half of the IX–XVI century)) (Colloquia Russica. Ser. I. Vol. 7.) Krakov, 2017. P. 369–378.

⁵⁵ Łowmiański H. *Uwagi w sprawie podłoża społecznego i gospodarczego unii jagiellońskiej*. Łowmiański H. *Studia nad dziejami Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego* (Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza. Ser. Historia. № 108). Poznań, 1983. S. 365–454.

⁵⁶ GVNP. No. 70.

⁵⁷ Varonin V.A. *Knyaz Yurai Lyngvenevich Mstislavski. Gistorychny portret* (Prince Yurai Lyngvenevich Mstislavski. Historical Portrait). Minsk, 2010. P. 44–47.

that Kazimierz would take any large-scale actions, like those in the reign of Vytautas.

Of the Russian lands, apart from Moscow and Lithuanian Rus, the most important for Novgorod were contacts with Tver and certainly with Pskov, which, though still formally regarded as Novgorod's "younger brother," became a de facto independent republic during this period and pursued a virtually independent domestic and foreign policy. The only lever of Novgorod's influence on Pskov was the an ecclesiastical one: Pskov had no archbishop of its own and was formally under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Novgorod (except for a short period in the second half of the 1430s and early 1440s, when the Metropolitan Isidore actually withdrew Pskov from ecclesiastical subordination to Novgorod and controlled it through his deputies).⁶⁴ On the other hand, there was a gradually proceeding rapprochement between Pskov and Moscow. Since 1399, Pskov had been given princes "from the hand" of the Grand Prince of Moscow. Beginning from 1460, Pskov recognized itself as the Grand Duke's "patrimony." However, not everything is clear yet; historians interpret in different ways the extent of dependence of the "younger brother" of Novgorod the Great on the Grand Prince of Moscow in this period, but the very fact of increased influence of the latter in Pskov is beyond doubt (one of its most important reasons was apparently the need for Pskov to rely on the support of Moscow in its confrontation with neighboring Livonia and Lithuania).⁶⁵

Several circumstances should be taken into account when characterizing the relations between Novgorod and the neighboring Livonia in the fifteenth century. Livonia was not a unity but a conglomeration of secular and spiritual *Landsherren* ("lords of the land"): the Livonian department (branch) of the Teutonic Order (which is traditionally but erroneously referred to as the Livonian Order in the Soviet and Russian literature), the Archbishopric of Riga, and the bishoprics of Dorpat, Courland, and Ösel. The Livonian Hanseatic cities of Riga, Revel, and Dorpat were of great importance. In the fifteenth century, the Teutonic Order in Livonia struggled against the Archbishopric of Riga for hegemony, on the one hand, and gradually strengthened its independence from the Prussian branch of the Order and the holder of its

supreme office, the Grand Master (who became a vassal of the Polish king in 1466), and its chapter knights, on the other hand. The latter had to follow the initiatives of the Grand Duke of Lithuania or the Livonian Master (Landmeister), as is shown by the history of the Salin Treaty and the attempts to implement it, or by the course of the war (1443–1448); at the same time, Novgorod was an important trading partner for the Prussian branch of the Teutonic Order.⁶⁶ Pskov was a clear priority for the relations of the Livonian branch of the Order with neighboring Rus, as the conflicts between them over the boundaries of their possessions continued. The relations between Novgorod and the Order were affected by the balance of power in the region and by the relations of both sides with its other powers: the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Hansa, and the states of the Kalmar Union that united Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.

Of the entire length of the Russian–Livonian border (more precisely, the frontier zone) of about 500 km, the share of Novgorod was only about 20 km in the lower reaches of the Narova River to its mouth. On its opposite bank, there were the possessions of the Teutonic Order, including the town of Narva, an important center of Novgorodian trade, which was not part of Hansa and competed with it, of which Novgorod merchants took advantage. In 1421, Novgorod made peace with the Livonian branch of the Order.⁶⁷ Taking advantage of the complicated international position of the Order and the troubles in Livonia, the Novgorodians succeeded in achieving guarantees of free and safe passage and trade and favorable conditions for using the Narova River.⁶⁸ Later, the conditions of this treaty were repeated in the truce that Novgorod and Pskov concluded with the Livonian *Landsherren* after the war of 1443–1448.

In the third and fourth decades of the fifteenth century, the relations between Novgorod and the Order were relatively smooth, being only occasionally overshadowed by unavoidable incidents. However, one of such incidents, the murder in 1438 of the interpreter of Gerhard, the Count of Mark and Cleves (situated in

⁶⁴PSRL. Vol. V. Issue 1. P. 44–46; Issue 2. P. 46, 133–134. See: Akishin S.Yu., Florya B.N. *Isidor. Biography*. In *Pravoslavnaya entsiklopediya* (Orthodox Encyclopedia). Moscow, 2011. Vol. 27. P. 178.

⁶⁵See Vovin, A. and Krom, M., "The City of Pskov in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries: Baltic Trade and Institutional Growth." W. Blockmans, M. Krom, J. Wubs-Mrozewicz (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Maritime Trade Around Europe 1300–1600*. London; New York, 2017. P. 313–330; Gorodilin S.V. *The Prince of Rostov, Vladimir Andreevich, and his short-term Pskovian reign*. In *Proc. Inst. Russian History, Russian Academy of Sciences*. 2021. Issue 16. P. 84–145.

⁶⁶Lesnikov M.P. *Trade relations between Novgorod the Great and the Teutonic Order at the end of the 14th–beginning of the 15th century*. In *Istoricheskie zapiski* (Historical Notes), Vol. 39. Moscow, 1952. P. 259–278; Sarnowsky J. *Die Wirtschaftsführung des Deutschen Ordens in Preußen (1382–1454)* (Veröffentlichungen aus den Archiven Preussischer Kulturbesitz. Bd. 34). Köln; Weimar; Wien, 1993. S. 86–115. The latest publication of the sources: *Schuldbücher und Rechnungen der Großschäffer und Lieger des Deutschen Ordens in Preußen* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte. Bd. 62). Bd. 1–4. Köln, 2008–2018.

⁶⁷GVNP. No. 60 (Russian text); LECUB. Bd. V. № 2511 (German text).

⁶⁸Kleinenberg I.E. *The fight of Novgorod the Great for Narova in the XV century*. In *Nauchnye Dokl. Vyshei shkoly. Istoricheskie nauki*. 1960. No. 2. P. 140–151.

the Lower Rhine region), who headed for the Holy Land through Livonia, led to a major conflict, the war of 1443–1448. The war was a consequence of political circumstances of that time: the defeat of Livonian troops in the battle at Wiłkomierz in 1435, the struggle between the “parties” of the Westpalians and the Rhinelanders in the Livonian branch of the Order, the attempt of Westphalians to use the interpreter’s murder as a *casus belli*, and a reason for the war against “schismatics” who had just rejected the Florence union. The military actions that began in 1443–1444 were soon interrupted by a two-year truce; in 1447, despite diplomatic success, Livonian troops, including the fleet, lost a battle at the mouth of the Narova River. In 1448, a 25-year truce was concluded, which involved not only Novgorod but also Pskov, while on the Livonian side, in addition to the Order, there were all the bishops and the town of Dorpat.⁶⁹ It confirmed the terms of the treaty of 1421 and added the clauses on the order of trade, which is evidence of its increasing importance.⁷⁰

In the mid 1460s, in the midst of conflict between the Livonian *Landsherren* and Pskov, there was another rapprochement between the Order and Novgorod. Researchers associate it with the appeal of the Novgorodians to the Livonian Master Johann Waldhaus von Heerse in 1471, as they proposed to extend the truce of 1448, which was to expire in 1473, but without Pskov, aimed the new treaty against Pskov and actually against the Grand Principality of Moscow.

Further events showed that Pskov remained the priority in the policy of the Teutonic Order in Livonia, which was already pursued by the following masters: Bernd von der Borch and Johann Freitag von Loringhoven. The truce of 1474 in its “Novgorod” part was kept by the Livonians, while the invasion of the troops and allies of Ivan III in Livonia during his campaign against Novgorod in 1477–1478 was the reason for the war not with Novgorod or Moscow but with Pskov.

⁶⁹GVNP. No. 72, 73.

⁷⁰Kleinenberg I.E. *Naval activities of Novgorodians in repulsing the aggression of the Order in 1443–1448*. In *Istoriya SSSR*. 1958. No. 4. P. 114–123; *On the problem of firearms of Novgorodian army*. In *Vestn. Leningradskogo Univ.* 1959. No. 20. *History, language and literature series*. Issue 4. P. 131–134; Kazakova N.A. *Russian–Livonian and Russian–Hanseatic relations*. P. 62–78, 120–123; Bessudnova M.B. *The war of the Livonian Order with Novgorod in 1443–1448*. In *Vestn. Voronezhskogo Gos. Univ. Series: History. Politology. Sociology*. 2012. No. 1. P. 79–83; Selart A. *Ein westfälisch-russischer Krieg 1443–1448? Bemerkungen zum Krieg des livländischen Deutschen Ordens gegen Novgorod*. In *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*. 2012. Bd. 61. H. 2. S. 247–262.

THE EVENTS OF 1470–1471

The decisive events that determined the fate of Novgorod the Great unfolded in the early 1470s.⁷¹ The pro-Lithuanian party in Novgorod became stronger under unceasing pressure from the Grand Principality of Moscow.

The invitation of the great-grandson of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Algirdas, the son of Prince Alexander (Olelko) Vladimirovich of Kyiv and a cousin of Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, Mikhail Olelkovich, the Orthodox Gediminids, who owned Kopyl and Slutsk (in the modern Minsk region of Belarus) to Novgorod should be associated with the activity of the pro-Lithuanian party. Mikhail arrived at Novgorod in November 1470. The agreement on sending Mikhail to Novgorod could have been reached in the first months of 1470, when Kazimierz visited the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and, after a long break, travelled to Polotsk, Vitebsk, and Smolensk. However, Mikhail Olelkovich stayed in Novgorod only a little over four months: in the middle of March 1471, he left the city, apparently because of the death of his brother Simeon, the last Prince of Kiev (1455–1470), whose throne he could claim.

There are different, even opposing opinions in the literature regarding this event: from recognizing his invitation “to the Novgorod throne” as the most important action of the pro-Lithuanian party aimed at including Novgorod into the sphere of influence of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to the actual denial of the presence of the pro-Lithuanian party in Novgorod and association of the invitation of Mikhail with this party.⁷² Such extreme estimates are not confirmed by source information. The invitation of princes from Lithuania to Novgorod, as mentioned above, was a common practice in Novgorod of that time and com-

⁷¹It would be inappropriate to dwell here in detail on the historiography of these events that were crucial for the fate of Novgorod, as it is very comprehensive and diverse. We will mention only a few works that seem to us most significant and, at the same time, remain relevant: Leuschner, J., *Novgorod. Untersuchungen zu einigen Fragen seiner Verfassungs- und Bevölkerungsstruktur*. Berlin, 1980 (Giessener Abhandlungen zur Agrar- und Wirtschaftsforschung des europäischen Ostens. Bd. 107. S. 152–167, 184–252 (an attempt at unbiased analysis of the events with particular attention to the positions of different social groups in Novgorod); Alekseev Yu.G. *Pod znamenami Moskvy: Borba za edinstvo Rusi* (Under the Banners of Moscow: Fight for the Unity of Russia). Moscow, 1992. P. 125–172 (a high-quality and rather detailed review, though with a marked pro-Moscovian tendency); Lurie Ya.S. *Dve istorii Rusi...* (Two Histories...). P. 123–143 (characterization of the preceding historiography, textological analysis of chronicles, criticism of pro-Moscovian interpretations based on the “independence” of Moscow but not of other political centers, chronicles); Yanin V.L. *Novgorodskie posadniki* (Posadniks of Novgorod), p. 411–447 (substantiation of the concept of oligarchic transformation of the political structure of Novgorod as a cause of the downfall of the Republic).

⁷²See, e.g., Alekseev Yu.G. *Pod znamenami Moskvy...* (Under the Banners of Moscow...). P. 127–129; Yanin V.L. *Ocherki...* (Essays...). P. 322–323; Lurie Ya.S. *Dve istorii...* (Two Histories...). P. 139.

plied with the standard policy of Novgorod authorities aimed at maneuvering between different centers of power. Even the Moscow chronicler blaming the Novgorodians who had invited Mikhail for betraying Orthodoxy mentioned that they, after accepting the Lithuanian prince, “did not deport the Grand Prince’s deputies from the Gorodishche,” i.e., the deputies of Ivan III continued to exercise their authorities and did not leave the residence of the Prince of Novgorod at the Rurikovo Gorodishche. The serving prince from another princely dynasty, Vasily Vasilyevich Grebenka of the Suzdal Rurikids, who was sent by the Novgorodian authorities to protect the frontier in Zavolochye, on the Northern Dvina River,⁷³ also stayed in the Novgorodian lands. Thus, Mikhail Olelkovich was formally regarded in Novgorod, most likely as his predecessors, as a prince in the service of the Republic with the mission to strengthen its military support and to maintain the balance of power between Moscow and Vilnius by the very fact of his stay in Novgorod.⁷⁴

At the same time, in the context of the developing confrontation with Moscow, the invitation of Mikhail Olelkovich objectively played into the hands of the pro-Lithuanian party. The main evidence is the text of the treaty between Novgorod and Kazimierz Jagiellończyk preserved in the collection of Novgorod documents compiled in the Moscow Grand Princely Chancery in the 1470s.⁷⁵ It seems most reasonable to consider it as a Novgorod draft treaty that was not approved by Kazimierz: the document was drawn up on behalf of Novgorod and filled with its claims; there was no name of the *stepennyi* posadnik (only the names of the Archbishop Theophilus and the *stepennyi tysyatskyi* Vasily Maksimovich), even the name of Kazimierz himself was not mentioned (there is an abstractive “King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania”).⁷⁶ This fact does not rule out the existence of a mutual aid agreement between Novgorod and Lithuania, because, as becomes clear from subsequent events, the Novgorodians proceeded on the assumption that there was such an agreement.

The drafting of the document should be dated to the period of time when Theophilus had already been elected to the Episcopal chair but not yet consecrated, i.e., between November 15, 1470, and December 15,

⁷³PSRL. Vol. XXV. P. 285.

⁷⁴See: Manusadžianas T. *Novgorod on the political crossroads in 1470–1471*. In *Problemy istorii Rossii. Novgorodskaya Rus: Istoricheskoe prostranstvo i kulturnoe nasledie* (Problems of Russian History. Novgorodian Rus: Historical Space and Cultural Heritage). Ekaterinburg, 2000. P. 221–222.

⁷⁵GVNP. No. 77. P. 129–132.

⁷⁶Zimin A.A. *O khronologii...* (On Chronology...). P. 324–327; Lurie Ya.S. *Dve istorii...* (Two Histories...). P. 140–141; Goehrke C. *Unter dem Schirm...* S. 355–356.

1471.⁷⁷ Since Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, whom the Novgorodians sent for, came to Lithuania from Poland in January 1471, and departed from there at the very end of April or in early May,⁷⁸ it would be right to date the drafting as of the spring of 1471.⁷⁹ Thus, the negotiations on the alliance with Lithuania were carried out just before the beginning of military actions in May 1471, as is evidenced by the news about the failed embassy from Novgorod to the Grand Duchy, “so that the king would ride his horse for Novgorod,” which was not let pass through by the Livonian Master.⁸⁰

Thus, by the time of drafting this document, Mikhail Olelkovich was no longer in the Novgorodian land: he had stayed there for about four months and left in March 1471, apparently hoping to obtain the “patrimonial” Kiev. In the literature it is stated that Mikhail Olelkovich left Novgorod without Kazimierz’ permission, with reference to the “Excerpt on Execution of the Princes of Slutsk.” According to this source, one of the accusations against Mikhail in 1481, when he was executed on the order of Kazimierz, was leaving Novgorod unprotected against the enemy (i.e., the Grand Prince of Moscow) contrary to the king’s order (*iniussu regis*).⁸¹ However, this source survived in the manuscripts of the eighteenth century. Some circumstances indicate its later emergence, and it is not always clear which of the data go back to the earlier sources and which of them are the fruit of the author’s reconstructions or speculations.⁸²

Nevertheless, the fact that Novgorodians were seeking support from the “Lithuanian king” when

⁷⁷PSRL. Vol. IV. Part 1. P. 449; Vol. V. p. 172; Vol. VI. Issue 2. P. 208; Vol. XXV. P. 293. Theophilus is mentioned as “elected” in the act and epistolary sources: in the message of the Moscow Metropolitan Philip I to Novgorod of March 22, 1471, and in the letter of grant from Novgorod the Great to the Trans-Dvina lands, issued with the blessing of Theophilus himself not before August 11, 1471 (*Russkaya istoricheskaya biblioteka* (Russian Historical Library). Vol. VI. no. 102. Stb. 721–722; GVNP. No. 98. P. 154. For dating, see Yanin V.L. *Novgorodian Acts...* P. 192–193).

⁷⁸Rutkowska G. *Itinerarium króla Kazimierza Jagiellończyka 1440–1492* (Itineraria Jagiellonów. T. 1). Warszawa, 2014. S. 231–233.

⁷⁹Bazilevich K.V. *Vneshnyaya politika...* (External Policy...) P. 96; Yanin V.L. *Novgorodskie akty*. P. 187–189 (here, it is accepted on the basis of the evidence of the Moscow chronicle of the existence of at least two contracts of Novgorod with Kazimierz 1470–1471); Lurie Ya.S. *Dve istorii...* (Two Histories...) P. 141.

⁸⁰PSRL. Vol. IV. Part 1. P. 447; Yanin V.L. *Novgorodskie akty*. P. 187–189; Goehrke C. *Unter dem Schirm...* S. 356.

⁸¹Halecki O. *Dzieje unii Jagiellońskiej*. T. 1. *W wiekach średnich*. Kraków, 1919. S. 427, przyp. 3; Kolankowski L. *Dzieje...* S. 349–350. Publication of the text: Rowell S.C. *Išdavystė ar paprastai nesutarimai? Kazimieras Jogailaitis ir Lietuvos diduomenė 1440–1481 metais*. In *Lietuvos valstybė XII–XVIII a.* Vilnius, 1997. P. 71–72.

⁸²Polekhov S.V. *Litovskaya Rus v XV veke* (Lithuanian Rus in the 15th Century). P. 87, note 78.

they invited Mikhail Olelkovich is confirmed by the Pskov Chronicle, which is relatively independent of both Novgorod and Moscow.⁸³ Therefore, the presence of Mikhail Olelkovich in Novgorod was most likely coordinated with or even initiated by Kazimierz. It was probably also viewed as a threat in Moscow. It is hardly a coincidence that already during the Christmas “*govenye*” (fasting), i.e., several weeks after Mikhail Olelkovich had appeared in Novgorod, the Moscow ambassador Selivan, the boyar of Ivan III, arrived in Pskov, according to the Pskov Chronicle, “to raise the Pskovians against Novgorod the Great.”⁸⁴ However, then there was an early departure of the Lithuanian prince from Novgorod, which was accompanied by scandals and conflicts. Obviously, under these circumstances Novgorod and Lithuania began to prepare concluding a formal agreement.

The treaty of 1471 confirms both the presence of a powerful pro-Lithuanian party in Novgorod and the fact that it succeeded in gaining the upper hand in the internal political struggle of that time and leading the way to rapprochement between Novgorod and Lithuania. Nevertheless, the agreement per se (at least, in the Novgorodian interpretation; we know nothing about its Lithuanian interpretation) did not at all imply, as is sometimes assessed in the historiography, the entry of Novgorod “into the system of the Polish–Lithuanian state” (which, as already mentioned, did not exist in the fifteenth century) or the conclusion of a union with Lithuania.⁸⁵ According to the treaty, Novgorod recognized the suzerainty of the Grand Duke of Lithuania, who pledged himself, in case of an attack on Novgorod from Moscow, “to ride a horse for Novgorod the Great ... against the Grand Prince [of Moscow], and to defend Novgorod the Great.” At the same time, its comparison with the previous treaties between Novgorod and the Grand Princes of Vladimir (Moscow) and Lithuania shows that the authority of Kazimierz as the supreme ruler was strictly limited.

⁸³PSRL. Vol. V. Issue 2. P. 175.

⁸⁴PSRL. Vol. V. Issue 2. P. 173.

⁸⁵Cf.: Bernadskii V.N. *Novgorod...* P. 272; Alekseev Yu.G. *Pod znamenami Moskvy...* (Under the Banners of Moscow...). P. 139. Such an estimate seems to be due to the fact that historians often preferred to analyze not the document per se but its rather biased narration by Moscow scribes in the Grand Princely Chronicles of the 1470s and “*Slovesa izbranna*” associated with the Metropolitan Philip I of Moscow (see different opinions of these tests, not quite well studied in the respect of source study: Nasonov A.N. *Istoriya russkogo letopisaniya XI–nachala XVIII veka* (History of Russian Chronicles of the XI–early XVIII century). Moscow, 1969. P. 253–255; Lurie Ya.S. *Obshcherusskie letopisi XIV–XV vv.* (Russian Chronicles of the XIV–XV centuries), Leningrad, 1976. P. 122–167; Kloss B.M. *Preface to the edition of 2004*. In *Moskovskii letopisnyi svod kontsa XV veka* (PSRL. Vol. XXV). Moscow, 2004. P. V–X); Kloss B.M. *Preface to the edition of 2006*. In *Vologodsko-Permskaya letopis* (PSRL. Vol. XXVI). Moscow, 2006. P. V–XV).

First of all, it concerns the religious sphere. In particular, one of the conditions was “not to deprive us of our Greek Orthodox faith.” The Grand Duke’s deputy to be sent by Kazimierz was also obliged to adhere to Orthodoxy. It was forbidden to erect Catholic churches in the Novgorodian lands. Nonetheless, Novgorod was accused of attempting to convert to “Latinism,” which played a significant role in ideological support of the policy of the Grand Prince Ivan III toward Novgorod and was reflected in the official chronicles of Moscow. These accusations, however, were by no means consistent with reality and demagogic, directly distorting the terms of the treaty, which was apparently used by Moscow scribes. On the contrary, the Novgorod church organization, beginning from Archbishop Euthymius II, was characterized by a “[s]trictly Orthodox, even belligerent stance” toward the church union.⁸⁶

The Lithuanian viceroy was obliged to act in accordance with the Novgorodian “old times” and “duty.” The number of Lithuanian people in the viceroy’s entourage at the Rurikovo Gorodischche was limited to fifty, which apparently was to guarantee Novgorod against the attempts of coercive pressure from Lithuania. As the supreme ruler, Kazimierz, similar to the Grand Princes of Moscow, was granted the right to hold his *tiuns* (court servants) in the estates owned jointly with Novgorod: Torzhok and Volok Lamskii. As the Grand Duke of Lithuania, he was also obliged, in the wake of his predecessors, to keep his *tiun* in Luki together with the Novgorodians and to get “*chernaya kuna*” from the frontier volosts (Rzheva, Kholmiskii *pogost*). However, it was specially emphasized that these lands belonged to Novgorod the Great.⁸⁷

In May–June 1471, the troops of Ivan III and his allies (Pskov, Tver) came out against Novgorod, which did not receive any help from Kazimierz, although, as mentioned above, the Grand Prince of Moscow had started direct preparations for war at least since the end of 1470. Under the treaty of 1471, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was obliged to help Novgorod, and it was specifically stipulated that if “the honest king, without having reconciled Great Novgorod with the Grand Prince [of Moscow],” went “to the Lyakh Land (Poland, *P.L.*, *S.P.*) or to the German Land,” and at this time Novgorod will be attacked by the Moscow army, in this case “your Lithuanian Council of Lords will ride horse for Novgorod the Great.”⁸⁸ It means that the agreement provided for military aid to Novgorod only from Lithuania but not from the

⁸⁶Tarasov A.E. *Church and submission of Novgorod the Great*. In *Novgorodskii istoricheskii sbornik*. 2011. Issue 12 (22). P. 74–75.

⁸⁷Yanin V.L. *Novgorod i Litva...* (Novgorod and Lithuania...). P. 5–8.

⁸⁸GVNP. No. 77. P. 130.

Kingdom of Poland. As has already been mentioned, the fact that Kazimierz was not only the Grand Duke of Lithuania but also the King of Poland not only increased his influence, resources, and possibilities, but also caused more problems in establishing the relations with his subjects and neighbors. Here, one should take into account the broad context of foreign policy with regard to the events that took place. On March 22, 1471, the Czech King Jiří of Podebrady died, and Kazimierz Jagiellończyk became embroiled in a struggle for the Czech throne for one of his sons, sending troops under the command of the princes Władysław and Kazimierz against his rival in this struggle, the Hungarian King Matyáš Korvin (Hunyadi). The crisis that the warfare of the Kingdom of Poland was undergoing in the middle and second half of the fifteenth century added to the challenge: by that time, the fighting efficiency of *pospolite ruszenie* (organization of the troops based primarily on the duty of the nobility) dramatically decreased; payment to mercenary units that had become the basis of the troops, in view of modest financial resources, required the consent of the nobility for one-time taxes or loans. All the above hindered not only the active actions of foreign policy but even the defense against Turkish and Tatar raids.⁸⁹ Under such conditions, the Lithuanian ruling circles could not count on the support of the Kingdom of Poland and even on the personal involvement of Kazimierz in the confrontation with Moscow: at that time he went to Poland, not daring to provide military aid to Novgorod.⁹⁰ It is noteworthy that the expense records show the stay of “Muscovites” with Kazimierz in Cracow in July and December of 1471.⁹¹ The time span of a few months suggests that what is meant here are two different embassies from Moscow, which undoubtedly were sent to Cracow to discuss the fate of Novgorod the Great. On the other hand, the Gold Horde Khan Ahmed (Ahmad), with whom Kazimierz had probably negotiated with regard to Novgorod, just like with the Crimean khans, was able to start his campaign against Moscow only in the summer of 1472, when

the fate of the Republic had been already decided, so he did not succeed.⁹²

The decisive battle took place on the Shelon River on July 14, 1471, where the Novgorodian army was completely defeated; on July 27 of the same year, the military boat forces of Novgorod were defeated on the Northern Dvina River. In the historiography, attention was rightly drawn to the peculiarities of organization of the army of Novgorod. It was based on the militia of citizens who had no serious military experience, as was noted by the Moscow chronicler, not without pleasure.⁹³ It was apparently formed of militias of the five ends (*konets*) headed by the *konets* voivods. The Novgorodian army also included boyar detachments, which probably consisted mainly of combat serfs, the armed forces of serving princes, and some other units such as the archbishop’s “banner,” i.e., the armed secular servants of the Archbishop of Novgorod. There were serious problems such as a lack of cavalry, which was predetermined by the very nature of military organization with militia as its core, as well as the lack of unity of command and a clear structure.⁹⁴ The military organization of Novgorod was certainly inferior to that of Moscow, with cavalry men playing the key role. However, the Novgorodian chronicler sees the main reason for the defeat in discords, and the lack of coordination and disorder in the army of Novgorod. The cavalry could not act in accord with the boats, because the Archbishop’s (*Vladychny*) regiment refused to fight with the Muscovites, declaring that the Archbishop allowed them to fight only with the Pskovians. Common soldiers complained of the lack of horses and good weapons: “I am a young man, I have lost my

⁸⁹Papée F. *Polska i Litwa na przełomie wieków średnich*. T. 1: *Ostatnie dwunastolecie Kazimierza Jagiellończyka*. Kraków, 1904. S. 310–330; *Zarys dziejów wojskowości polskiej do roku 1864*. T. 1: *Do roku 1648*. Warszawa, 1965. S. 247–295 (text by Z. Spirański).

⁹⁰Kolankowski L. *Dzieje...* S. 312–314; Bazilevich K.V. *Vneshnyaya politika...* (External Policy...). p. 99; Florya B.N. *Lektzii...* (Lectures...). P. 351–352.

⁹¹*Rachunki wielkorządowe krakowskie z r. 1471*. Wyd. R. Grodecki. (Archiwum Komisji Historycznej. Ser. II. T. IV. Ogólnego zbioru t. XVII. Nr 7.) Kraków, 1951. S. 37 (k. 69); *Rachunki królewskie z lat 1471–1472 i 1476–1478*. Oprac. S. Gawęda, Z. Perzanowski, A. Strzelecka. Wrocław; Kraków, 1960. S. 41.

⁹²See: Kolankowski L. *Dzieje...* S. 318, 327; Gorskii A.A. *Moskva i Orda* (Moscow and Horde). Moscow, 2000. P. 156–158. Here we deliberately do not touch upon the merely military aspects of the Moscow–Novgorod war, which have been analyzed in detail by Yu.G. Alekseev in a work devoted specially to this subject. However, it should be taken into account that the historian bases his analysis mainly on the data from the Moscow Grand Princely Chronicle and sometimes takes at face value data that do not seem reliable, but recognizes the detailed narrative as a criterion of reliability. For example, noting the uncertainty of the number of 40 000 people for only the part of the Novgorodian army that acted against the Pskovians (it is presented by the Pskovian chronicler), the historian, due to not quite obvious reasons, nevertheless considers it likely that there was “a great numerical superiority of Novgorodian troops over the Grand Prince’s troops” (Alekseev Yu.G. *Pokhody russkikh voisk pri Ivane III* (Campaigns of the Russian Army under Ivan III). 2nd Edition. St. Petersburg, 2009. P. 96–142, here: 117–120).

⁹³PSRL. Vol. XXV. P. 289.

⁹⁴See: Rabinovich M.G. *Novgorodian army*. In *Kratkie soobshcheniya o dokladakh i polevykh issledovaniyakh Instituta istorii materialnoi kultury* (Brief Notes on the Reports and Field Surveys of the Institute for the History of Material Culture). Moscow, Leningrad, 1947. Issue XVI. P. 180–182; Rabinovich M.G. *On social composition of Novgorodian army in X–XV centuries*. In *Nauchnye doklady vysshei shkoly. Istoricheskie nauki*. 1960. No. 3. P. 94–96.

horse and armor,” and “they began... to yell to the great men.” The pro-Moscovian party became active in Novgorod, and a panic broke out. Again, according to the Novgorodian chronicler, a “great deal of talk” began in Novgorod: “some people wished to follow the Prince, others wished to follow the King of Lithuania.” The “best people,” i.e., primarily boyars, were accused of “having brought the Grand Prince to Novgorod.”⁹⁵ All the above points to a deep internal split within Novgorod, being evidence of the actual existence of both pro-Lithuanian and pro-Moscovian parties there, as well as to the social contradictions between the boyar elite and the common people, who considered themselves to be an integral part of the “Lord of Novgorod the Great.”⁹⁶ The contradictions between residents of the periphery, who were deprived of the right to participate in the political life of all of Novgorod, and the Novgorodian political community are also confirmed by the evidence of the Novgorod Chronicle that “the Dvinians did not align;” i.e., they did not join (at least actively) the voivods who commanded the army of Novgorod at another theater of military operations, in Zavolochye (over the portages).⁹⁷

After being defeated in the war, the Novgorodians were forced to conclude the Treaty of Korostyn, where Novgorod the Great recognized itself as a “patrimony” of the Grand Princes of Moscow, although retaining the status of “free men”; gave up attempts to “surrender” itself to the Grand Duke of Lithuania and renounced the invitation of princes from Lithuania; recognized the exclusive right of the Metropolitan of all Russia to appoint Novgorodian archbishops, and made other important concessions.⁹⁸ The independence of the Novgorod Republic was thereby limited, but its autonomy and republican structure were retained.

Nonetheless, even after the defeat, the Novgorodian authorities tried to find allies to oppose Moscow. On August 13, 1471, the Livonian Master Johann Waldhaus von Heerse wrote to Heinrich von Richtenberg, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, that Novgorodians had already sent “high-ranking ambassadors” to him twice by that time. Novgorodians begged the Order for help against Pskovians, but also mentioned that they “every day suffer severe damage from the Prince of Moscow and Pskovians,” i.e., they undoubtedly needed help in the context of their conflict with Ivan III and with Pskov as his ally. The Livonian Master advised not to leave the appeals of Novgorod unanswered for the reason that, if Novgorod was subjected to a sovereign, the Livonian

Landsherren would be unable to regain the disputed lands that were under the power of Pskov. Novgorodians asked the Order to withdraw from the peace treaty with Pskov, arguing that in this case the Pskovians would not be able to attack Novgorod, which in turn would be able to defend itself against the onslaught of the Prince of Moscow. The Livonian master suggested promising support for Novgorod, because he thought it would be an excellent opportunity to divide Novgorod and Pskov but on the condition that Novgorodians would make an unanimous decision regarding such support: “If the Lord Archbishop [of Novgorod], *posadniks*, *tysyatskye*, the oldest and best people of Novgorod unanimously approve, seal, certify, and swear on them [what is meant here is kissing the Cross, *P.L.*, *S.P.*].” The appendix to the message contained the terms of agreement with Novgorod for the mutual aid against Pskov. Most curiously, the condition of support for Novgorod by the Order was formulated in quite the same way as a similar condition in the treaty between Novgorod and Kazimierz Jagiellon: in case of a conflict between Novgorod and Pskov, the Master was obliged to “ride a horse with his army to defend Novgorod....”⁹⁹ This most interesting source underestimated in the historiography allows us to make the following conclusions. The pro-Lithuanian party in Novgorod was not so much pro-Lithuanian as anti-Moscow.¹⁰⁰ Its main goal was to protect the independence and political system of Novgorod from encroachments of the Grand Prince of Moscow. The attempts of this party, i.e., a significant part of the Novgorodian elite, to find allies were not given up even after the defeat on the Shelon River. Its foreign policy can be regarded as quite consistent: at first, it acted in a traditional manner, inviting Mikhail Olelkovich as a serving prince; then it decided to conclude an alliance with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, recognizing the suzerainty of its ruler over Novgorod (however, even more limited than the suzerainty of the Grand Princes of Moscow); after this project had failed, it tried to attract the Order to its side as the only significant player remaining in this domain. There were no underlying ideological reasons, as is shown clearly by the terms of agreement with Kazimierz and by the absence of any mention of religious subjects in the negotiations with the Livonian Master (the latter, by the way, did not say a word about his plans to support the “schismatics” and did not set any conditions

⁹⁵PSRL. Vol. IV. Part 1. P. 446–447.

⁹⁶Cf.: Lurie Ya.S. *Dve istorii...* (Two Histories...). P. 139–140; Florya B.N. *Lektsii...* (Lectures...). P. 138–139.

⁹⁷PSRL. Vol. IV. Part 1. P. 447.

⁹⁸GVNP. No. 26–27. P. 45–49.

⁹⁹LECUB. Bd. XII. № 840. S. 478–480 (Willen de herre ertzbischoff, burgermeistere, hertzogen, oldesten und wegesten der von Nawgarden sottane artikelle yntrechtighen machen, vorsegheln, bevesten und besweren, so worden wie enne nah radthedusser lande helffen... so will der herremeister mit seyner behaltinge sitzen uff seyne pfeerde Nawgarden entsetzen un deinen das erehelffenmanen). See below, Note 104.

¹⁰⁰For more information, see Leuschner, J., *Novgorod*. pp. 229–232. This historian seems to arrive at a rightful conclusion that all groups of the Novgorodian elite desired the same goal: maintenance of the autonomy of Novgorod, though they saw differently the way to achieve it.

in this regard). The matter in question was merely a political struggle, while the ideological accusations of Novgorodians in Moscovian political essays, as mentioned above, were a kind of information warfare. Moscow accused Novgorodians of striving to come under the ecclesiastical authority of the Lithuanian Union Metropolitan Grigory Bolgarin. However, Grigory Bolgarin converted to Orthodoxy, and this conversion and his status as the Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Russia were recognized as early as 1467 by Dionysius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, a zealot for Orthodoxy and the disciple of St. Mark of Ephesus, the famous opponent to the Union of Florence.¹⁰¹ After that, Moscow had no canonical reasons to bring ecclesiastical accusations against Novgorodians.¹⁰²

Nevertheless, an alliance between Novgorod and the Order was never concluded. Historiography rightly draws attention to the annals indicating that the Order was wary of direct confrontation with Moscow or perhaps even assisted (“humored”) Ivan III. The chronicles presenting Novgorod’s interpretation of the events report that Novgorodians, after the Battle of Shelon, sent an ambassador to Lithuania for help, but it was the Livonian Master who did not let him pass through his territory.¹⁰³ The explanations should be sought in

the circumstances of the Livonian political life, where there was a fierce struggle, both within the Order and with the Archbishopric of Riga (under the conditions of strained relations with Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, whom the Novgorodians initially counted on), and the main foreign policy trump card in the intra-Livonian game was the problem of disputed territories between the Order and Pskov.

However, as is shown by the aforementioned letter of the Livonian Master, the situation in Novgorod also seemed to be a problem. The Order could not have been unaware both of the rather shameful defeat on the Shelon River and of the severe internal conflict. It is no coincidence that the Order sought to make any negotiations regarding the support for Novgorod conditional on a guarantee of unity in the political community of Novgorod. And there was no such unity. Nevertheless, the Livonian Master continued to prepare for war with Pskov and Moscow but was soon deposed by dignitaries dissatisfied with his policies.¹⁰⁴

THE FALL OF THE NOVGOROD REPUBLIC AND THE CAUSES OF THE NOVGOROD’S DEFEAT

One of the milestones on the path to subjugation of Novgorod was the “campaign of peace” of Ivan III in 1475–1476. It was peaceful only insofar as it met with no resistance from the defeated in 1471 Novgorodians. “And at that time the Novgorod region suffered a lot of damages with blood,” the chronicler remarks sorrowfully.¹⁰⁵ Ivan III stayed in Novgorod for nine weeks, administered justice and reprisals against some Novgorodians on the complaints of others, occupied monasteries and their estates, and arrested six Novgorodian boyars including the *stepennyi posadnik* who were taken to Moscow. So the social contradictions in Novgorod were used by the Moscow authorities to subdue it.¹⁰⁶

The complete annexation of Novgorod to Moscow took place in 1477–1478. The reason for this was the issue of recognition of Ivan III and his son and heir at that time, prince Ivan Ivanovich the Young, as “*gospodars*” (sovereigns) of Novgorod the Great. It had not

¹⁰¹Lurie V.M. *Russkoe pravoslavie mezhdru Kievom i Moskvoi: Ocherk istorii russkoi pravoslavnoi traditsii mezhdru XV i XX vekami* (Russian Orthodoxy between Kiev and Moscow: Essay of History of the Russian Orthodox Tradition between the XV and XX centuries. 2nd Edition, suppl. Moscow, 2010. P. 82–83; Tarasov A.E. *Tserkov i podchinenie...* (Church and Submission...). P. 85–86.

¹⁰²In the Russian historiography, beginning with N.M. Karamzin, the central figure of the pro-Lithuanian party in Novgorod is often believed to be Marfa Boretskaya, the widow of *posadnik* Isak Boretskii, and the mother of another *posadnik*, Dmitrii Boretskii. However, she plays an important role only in the story of “*Slovesa izbranna*”, where she is compared with the famous “wicked women” from the Bible and church history (Lurie Ya.S. *Dve istorii...* (Two Histories...). P. 129). In particular, it is asserted that Mikhail Olekovich intended to give her in marriage to a certain “Lithuanian gentleman” (PSRL. Vol. VI. St. Petersburg, 1853. P. 5). Even in the Grand Princely Chronicle of Moscow, she is described only as one of “some” representatives of the Novgorodian nobility who opposed Moscow (PSRL. Vol. XXV. P. 284). It can be suggested that the formation of the image of Marfa in the “Words,” a source associated with the Metropolis, as has been mentioned above, was substantially affected by the anti-feminist tendencies typical of the medieval clerical worldview (Lenhoff, G. and Martin, J., *Marfa Boretskaia, Posadnitsa: A Reconsideration of Her Legend and Her Life*. In *Slavic Review*. 2000. Vol. 59. no. 2. P. 343–368). At the same time, there are no grounds at all to doubt her role in the events (Lurie Ya.S. *Dve istorii...* (Two Histories...). P. 140): the Pskov Chronicle not depending on Moscow describes, without any special comments, as something evident, the arrest of several Novgorodian boyars after the final joining of Novgorod to Moscow in 1478 and, separately, that of “Marfa,” and she was the only one whose name was mentioned (PSRL. Vol. V. Issue 1. P. 75; Issue 2. P. 58, 218). Thus, Marfa Boretskaya seemed to really take an active part in the internal political struggle in Novgorod in the 1470s and, as a phenomenon rather extraordinary for a woman, it was specially mentioned in the sources, but in the “*Slovesa izbranna*” her significance was disproportionately exaggerated.

¹⁰³PSRL. Vol. IV. Part 1. P. 447; Vol. XXXVII. P. 92; see: Lurie Ya.S. *Dve istorii...* (Two Histories...). P. 142.

¹⁰⁴Kazakova N.A. *Russko-livonskie i russko-ganzeiskie otnosheniya* (Russian–Livonian and Russian–Hanseic relations). P. 144–147; Bessudnova M.B. *Veliky Novgorod vo vneshnei politike livonskogo magistra Ioganna Waldhausa von Herse (1470–1471)* (Novgorod the Great in the external policy of Livonian Master Johann Waldhaus von Heerse (1470–1471)). In: *Novgorodskii istoricheskii sbornik*. Issue 12 (22). Moscow; St. Petersburg, 2011. P. 110–125; Baranov A.V. *Russko-livonskie mirnye dogovory 1474 goda: predposylki, peregovory, posledstviya* (Russian–Livonian peace treaties of 1474: Preconditions, negotiations, consequences). In *Srednevekovaya Rus*. Issue 12. Moscow, 2016. P. 214–217.

¹⁰⁵PSRL. Vol. IV. Part 1. P. 449. See also: PSRL. Vol. XXXVI. P. 48, 94.

¹⁰⁶PSRL. Vol. IV. Part 1. P. 449; Vol. V. Issue 2. P. 200; Vol. XXV. P. 290, 304–308; Vol. XXXVI. P. 48, 94; Florya B.N. *Lektsii...* (Lectures...). P. 358–362.

only a symbolic but also a specific political significance, since the declaration of the Grand Prince of Moscow as his “Lord” simultaneously implied its absolute subjection, the loss of the status of the ruler of Novgorod the Great (“sovereignty”) by the Novgorodian political community, and the dismantling of the elements of independence of the Novgorod Republic, which were still retained in accordance with the dual formula of the Korostyn Peace Treaty: “the patrimony of Grand Princes, the free men [i.e. Novgorodians].” In the autumn of 1477, Ivan III undertook another big campaign to Novgorod, which now surrendered without any resistance. The Novgorodians had to agree to “have no *veche* bell... in Novgorod, nor *posadnik*,” and their “sovereignty” became the same as in Moscow which implied the recognition of the absolute power of the Grand Princes of Moscow.¹⁰⁷ The Novgorod Republic and its key political institutions ceased to exist. The subjugation of Novgorod was completed after the arrest and deportation to Moscow of Theophilus, the last elected archbishop of Novgorod, in 1480; the confiscation of the archbishop’s treasury; and the mass deportation from Novgorod of the elite (boyars and *zhityi liudi*), who were given estates in North-Eastern Rus instead of their possessions, as well as merchants, and their replacement with the Moscow nobility granted with land domains in Novgorod (the 1480s) and “*gosti*” (merchants). After the abolition of the republican system in Pskov in 1509–1510, the long history of the republican variant of the Russian statehood came to an end.

Summarizing what has been said above, the question posed in the title of the article can be answered as follows. The main cause of the defeat of Novgorod was undoubtedly the military and political superiority of the Grand Principality of Moscow and the vulnerability of the Republic in the conditions of weakness and inactivity of potential allies, the archaic type of its own military organization, and the absence of its own navy, the existence of which was a great aid for other medieval European merchant republics. However, even contemporaries, including Novgorodians, saw an internal reason for the defeat: the internal split that largely deprived Novgorodians of the will to win. What was its essence?

The summarizing works of the Soviet time suggested the idea of the social nature of the split in Novgorod. Supposedly, “craftsmen and petty merchants” openly took the side of the Grand Prince of Moscow, while the pro-Lithuanian party was represented by the “boyar elite.”¹⁰⁸ It was also suggested that

the lower social strata of Novgorod regarded the Grand Prince of Moscow as a “fair tsar” who was to bring “order” to Novgorod.¹⁰⁹ Meanwhile, the Soviet historiography actually disproved this simplified and anachronistic point of view, although the pro-Moscow tendencies among the ordinary population of Novgorod were still emphasized.¹¹⁰ It is interesting that the Moscow grand princely chronicles contemporary to those events put accents in the opposite way: according to it, “great people” took the side of Moscow, being opposed by a handful of renegades, who raised mercenaries from bond peasants and “non-neminent men” to rebel against the Grand Prince.¹¹¹ In fact, the sources do not report on anything like that. Both parties were headed by representatives of the aristocratic elite. It can be supposed that differentiation in this case was not social or ideological but primarily clannish and territorial, as was traditional for Novgorod.¹¹² As regards ordinary Novgorodians, when it comes to country people, no one asked their opinion as usual. Free citizens, the non-elite part of the political community of Novgorod, as has been mentioned above, really hoping for the Grand Prince as the supreme arbiter and intercessor before the powers that be, were not at all ready to abandon the independence and republican system of Novgorod and even strongly opposed to it. As is noted in the report of the Ustyug Chronicle Compilation in 1477/1478 regarding the *veche* dispute about entitling Ivan III as a “*gospodar*” (“Lord”), the non-elite part of the political community of Novgorod (“the rabble”) was interested in maintaining the independence and republican system of Novgorod.¹¹³

The most important cause of the split in Novgorod was not social contradictions (although they played a certain role and were used by Moscow) but the fact that both pro-Moscow and pro-Lithuanian parties gave different, but equally inconsistent with the mainstream political ideology of Novgorod, answers to the crisis circumstances.

¹⁰⁹Lepko I.V. Social and political struggle in Novgorod the Great in 1477–1478 (According to the Chronicles). In *Uchenye zapiski Volgodskogo pedagogicheskogo instituta im. V.M. Molotova*. 1951. Vol. IX. Historical. P. 52.

¹¹⁰Cherepnin L.V. *Obrazovanie Russkogo tsentralizovannogo gosudarstva v XIV–XV vekakh. Ocherki sotsialno-ekonomicheskoi i politicheskoi istorii Rusi* (Establishment of Russian Centralized State in XIV–XV centuries. Essays of Social–Economic and Political History of Russia), Moscow, 1960. P. 856–859; Bernadskii V.N. *Novgorod...* P. 276–278.

¹¹¹PSRL. Vol. XXV. P. 285.

¹¹²Yanin V.L. *Posadniki of Novgorod*. P. 444–447.

¹¹³PSRL. Vol. XXXVII. P. 94. This news seems to be the remainder of the last chronicle records of the Republic of Novgorod (Bobrov A.G. *Novgorodskie letopisi...* (Novgorod Chronicles...). P. 239–240, see also: Lurie Ya.S. *Obshcherusskie letopisi...* (Russian Chronicles...). P. 196, footnote; Lurie Ya.S. *Dve istorii...* (Two Histories...). P. 146). About the position of common people, see: Leuschner J., *Novgorod*. pp. 245–247.

¹⁰⁷PSRL. Vol. XXV. P. 318.

¹⁰⁸*Ocherki istorii SSSR. Period feodalizma, v dvukh chastyakh* (Essays of the History of the USSR. Period of Feudalism, in two parts). Part II. XIV–XV centuries. Moscow, 1953. P. 273–277 (text by S.V. Bakhrushin); *Istoriya SSSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (History of the USSR from the Most Ancient Times to the Present). Moscow, 1966. Vol. II. P. 118, 122 (text by A.L. Khoroshkevich).

The supporters of the Grand Prince of Moscow were accused of being ready to lose the hard-won liberty of Novgorodians and of putting under threat the republican system, although remaining loyal to the traditional suzerain. These accusations, as time has shown, were not unreasonable.

The opponents of Moscow sought to maintain the independence of Novgorod and the republican pattern of its political system inviolable but, on the other hand, the recognition of the Grand Duke of Lithuania as a suzerain was clearly in conflict with the entire political tradition of Novgorod. Beginning from the second half of the thirteenth century, Novgorod rather consistently recognized itself as a “patrimonial estate” (hereditary dominion) of the Grand Princes of Vladimir and later of Moscow, which implied recognition of the rights of the Grand Princes of Moscow to supreme power. Novgorodians, when accepting the “free men—Grand Prince patrimony” formula of the Treaty of Korostyn, put an emphasis on their own liberty and the Grand Prince’s duty to protect Novgorod without interfering in its affairs, while the Grand Princes of Moscow sought to turn their rights over Novgorod from formal to real ones. Lithuanian rulers, despite their longstanding and close contacts with and claims to power over Novgorod, were never regarded by Novgorodians as their own, as is confirmed by their negative assessment in the Novgorod chronicles. On the contrary, even in the time of wars with the Grand Principality of Moscow, its rulers were regarded as suzerains, as during the war for the land of Dvina in the late fourteenth century. Under these circumstances, the drastic change of course that became apparent to the political community of Novgorod just shortly before the Shelon disaster could not but cause confusion and disorder among both the elite and the ordinary people. This is all the more as so regards the Teutonic Order: it is no coincidence that the alliance with the Order was intended to be formal, only to oppose Pskov but not the Grand Prince of Moscow. At the back of it, there seemed to be not only the tradition of loyalty to a particular dynasty. The political community of Novgorod, despite its undoubted desire to maintain its liberty, had never imagined itself beyond the Rus’ian land, as is demonstrated by the absence of a separate ethnic name for the Novgorodians. Some Novgorod scribes of the fifteenth century made attempts to develop or actualize a specific Novgorodian political mythology that would detach Novgorod from the rest of Rus: we can mention the legends about Gostomysl, the legendary first *posadnik* who did not belong to Rurikids, and about the origin of Novgorodians from the Varangians but not from the Slavs, or

the above-mentioned motive of Novgorod as a “patrimony” of Novgorodians themselves (i.e., not Rurikids) in the publicist works of the fifteenth century dedicated to the Miracle of the Icon of Our Lady of the Sign.¹¹⁴

At the same time, the anti-Moscow party that prevailed for a while had no resources to rally the Novgorodians around it by force. The political “architecture” of the Novgorod Republic, especially the *veche* assemblies and related practices (*veche* reprisals against people undesirable for the political community) hindered the consolidation of the elite and the development of a consistent, unified political course. The problem here is not the republican pattern of Novgorod statehood per se (oligarchic medieval republics such as Venice or Dubrovnik (Ragusa) existed until the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) but rather the maintenance of the *veche* as the most important political institution, which made any backstage maneuvers extremely difficult, even when they were necessary for survival of the Republic. Nevertheless, we should hardly consider the downfall of the Novgorod Republic at that time as inevitable and predetermined: it was a result of a specific constellation of internal and external factors unfavorable for Novgorod, and no one knows what its fate would have been had it had more time to develop its political institutions further and strengthen the republican identity, a process that was going on throughout the fifteenth century, up until the annexation by Moscow.

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Translated by E. V. Makeeva

¹¹⁴For more detail, see: Lukin P.V., *Novgorod i Venetsiya...* (Novgorod and Venice...).