

Fig. 3.26-3.27. Our reconstruction of the geography of Russia in the Middle Ages. Novgorod the Great as described in the chronicles identifies as the Vladimir and Suzdal Russia with its centre in Yaroslavl on the Volga. It was known as “Yaroslavl’s Court” of Novgorod the Great. The arrows indicate the transfer of the Russian capital in the XIV-XVI century.

had traded with Europe by proxy of Novgorod the Great, which is supposed to have been at the crossroads of important trade routes. However, the excavations that have been going on in modern Novgorod for many years, demonstrate it rather plainly that Novgorod-upon-Volkhov has never been an important trade centre. One also wonders about the nature of the trade routes that intersected here. It would be hard to find another town whose location would be quite as inconvenient for trade; it is distanced from every known mediaeval trade route, and its geographical location was hopeless from the commercial point of view.

The Novgorod *veche*, or assembly, is rather famous in history. It had congregated at the so-called Yaroslavl’s Court in Novgorod. The Novgorod chronicles tell us about people of Novgorod making decisions “assembling a *veche* at Yaroslavl’s Court” ([8], Volume 1; also [759], page 59). In the XVI century Ivan the Terrible

had stayed at Yaroslavl’s Court during his visit to Novgorod ([775], page 474). Historians are of the opinion that Ivan had even thought of transferring the capital to Novgorod. Oddly enough, modern historians still haven’t managed to find so much as a trace of this famous place in modern Novgorod. Great Princes had visited Novgorod constantly, in Kiev and Vladimir-Suzdal Russia. The city is known to have been connected to Moscow by “The Great Route” ([776], page 13). Let us consider the possible location of this route, assuming that the chronicle Novgorod is the town on the Volkhov River. It is still surrounded by marshes and next-to-impassable terrain, qv in the maps of European Russia as presented in figs. 3.26 and 3.27.

In 1259, for instance, the Vasilkovich brothers had celebrated the arrival of Alexander Nevskiy in Rostov en route from Novgorod to Vladimir (CCRC, Volume 1, pages 203 and 226; also Volume 15, page 401).

“En route” implies that Rostov lies between Novgorod and Vladimir. Nothing odd about it so far; despite the fact that Alexander had to make a diversion, it hadn’t been that great, qv on the map.

However, we also learn that Great Prince Vassily Vassilyevich had been defeated by Prince Yuri under Rostov in 1434, and then fled to Novgorod the Great, making his further escape to Kostroma and Nizhniy Novgorod (Lower Novgorod) – see [36], page 85. A short while later (the same year), Prince Vassily Yourievich “Kossoi” (“Cross-Eyed”) had “travelled [from Moscow – Auth.] to Novgorod the Great, and thence to Kostroma, and started to gather his troops” ([36], page 85).

We therefore find out that Novgorod the Great had been located between Moscow and Kostroma, and also between Kostroma and Rostov. A study of the map tells us that anyone who would decide to get from Moscow to Kostroma via the modern Novgorod nowadays would be considered eccentric nowadays to say the least – it is all but a journey there and back again. Historians are trying to convince us that Prince Vassily Vassilyevich, who had been defeated near Rostov, had covered 500 kilometres of marshland from Rostov to Novgorod, and then headed back with equal pace, right across the marshland, in order to reach Kostroma as soon as possible.

He may naturally have visited Novgorod en route due to special circumstances – but how can we explain the fact that a few months later his foe takes the same absurd route in order to get from Moscow to Kostroma as soon as possible? Even today, the distance between Moscow and Novgorod-upon-Volkhov would be impossible to cover without the earth-fill railroad and the motorway that connects them. There is a 120-kilometre road between Rostov and Kostroma, which had been solid enough even in the Middle Ages. Another famous mediaeval route connects Moscow and Kostroma; its length equals about 270 kilometres. There are several well-known towns and cities along the way – Sergiev Posad, Pereyasavl Zalesskiy, Rostov and Yaroslavl. The distance between Moscow and Novgorod-upon-Volkhov equals about 500 kilometres, most of the terrain being marshland. Modern earth-fill roads with hard surface had not existed in the Middle Ages; therefore, the prince who was fleeing makes a gigantic diversion through the northern

marshes (one of 1000 kilometres, no less), and then repeats it on his way back, instead of using a decent road. Wouldn’t it be easier to reach Kostroma directly from Moscow via Yaroslavl?

All of the above naturally makes one very suspicious about the fact that it is correct to identify the historical Novgorod the Great as the modern city on river Volkhov, which clearly does not satisfy to conditions specified in the ancient chronicles.

11.2. Our hypothesis about Yaroslavl being the historical Novgorod the Great

11.2.1. Why the traditional identification of the Old Russian capital (Novgorod the Great) as the modern town of Novgorod on the Volkhov is seen as dubious

Once we identify the historical city of Novgorod the Great as Yaroslavl and not Novgorod-upon-Volkhov, we shall eliminate one of the greatest contradictions in Russian history. It is presumed that the Great Princes of Kiev, Vladimir and Moscow had constantly travelled to Novgorod, and that the Great Principality of Kiev and later Moscow had constantly been in touch with Novgorod. This presumes the existence of roads and old towns and cities in between Moscow and the chronicle Novgorod. However, this is not the case; Novgorod-upon-Volkhov is a completely isolated town. There are no old historical centres in the direction of either Moscow (about 500 km away) or Kiev (at a distance of more than 1.000 km). There is a great number of old monasteries in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov, which is hardly surprising – monasteries were often built in remote and desolate places, and the modern town of Novgorod had been exactly this in the days of yore, a remote and desolate place. The closest historical Russian cities (apart from the neighbouring Pskov) are Vologda, Yaroslavl and Tver; however, all of them are at least 500 kilometres away.

Historians consider Novgorod one of the most important trade centres in the Middle Ages that had been active before the foundation of St. Petersburg, yet they tell us nothing about the seaport it had used for trading with Europe. Yaroslavl, for instance, had been located at the crossroads of the Northern Dvina and Volga, both of them navigable waterways, and traded with Europe by proxy of Archangelsk and Kholmogory, whereas Pskov had traded through

Ivangorod and Narva. But what about the modern Novgorod on river Volkhov?

11.2.2. *Yaroslavl as an ancient trading centre.*

The Molozhskaya fair

Yaroslavl is the greatest trading centre on the Volga. “Yaroslavl’s location placed it in between Moscow and the White Sea, and also right next to the Volga route. In the second part of the XVI century, there had been a residence of English trade delegates in the city, and many foreign goods were bought and sold... Yaroslavl had played a major part in Russian foreign commerce, and its large warehouses had made the city a trade centre of paramount importance... In the early XVIII century the primary trade route has moved to St. Petersburg from Archangelsk, and Yaroslavl had ceased to be of any importance in matters of foreign commerce... however, it has remained a prominent domestic centre of trade” ([994], pages 16, 17 and 24). A whole chapter of the book ([994]) that deals with the history of Yaroslavl in the XVII century is entitled “The Third Most Important Trade Centre of the Country”.

According to N. M. Karamzin, the period of active trade with the Germans began under Ivan Kalita. Historians are of the opinion that the key figure of this trade had been the modern town known as Novgorod, telling us that “Novgorod had been an ally of the Hanse and sent the produce of the German manufacturers to Moscow and other regions of the country”. One wonders about just how and where Novgorod had procured German wares in the first place before sending them to Moscow. Apparently, Karamzin directly refers to the fact that the main marketplace of the country had been located near Yaroslavl, in the Mologa estuary ([362], Volume 4, page 149). Deacon Timofei Kamenevich-Rvovskiy, a XVII century historian, writes the following in his essay entitled *On Russian Antiquities*: “In the mouth of the glorious Mologa river there have been great fairs since times immemorial, even before the great and fearsome king Vassily Vassilyevich Tyomniy [“The Dark”]... Many foreign merchants came to trade – from Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Greece and Rome, likewise Persia and other lands, as it is told” ([362], Volume 4, comment 323).

One also learns that the amount of ships collected

in the Mologa estuary had been so great that people could cross the estuary, and even river Volga itself, no less, without a bridge, moving from one ship to another. The marketplace had been at the Molozhskiy meadow: “great and beautiful, seven by seven verst. The treasury of the Great Prince would collect 180 and more poods of silver [1 pood = 16.38 kilos – Transl.] in duty fees alone” ([362], Volume 4, page 323). The famous Old Russian marketplace must have been located here up until the XVI century, if its memory had been quite as fresh and vivid in the XVII century. This must have been the famous “Novgorod fair”, whence the goods would get to all the other Russian towns and cities.

Deacon Timofei proceeds to report the fragmentation of the enormous historical marketplace into several smaller ones – namely, the famous Fair of Yaroslavl (Yaroslavskaya) gave birth to the following most important fairs of the XVI-XVII century, known as Arkhangelskaya, Svinskaya, Zheltovodskaya (aka Makaryevskaya – in the vicinity of Nizhniy Novgorod, which is to be duly noted), Yekhonskaya, Tikhvinskaya of Novgorod (!) etc. Thus, the Fair of Yaroslavl had not only been the first and most important; it can also be regarded as the progenitor of all the Russian fairs and marketplaces, including the Tikhvinskaya fair in the vicinity of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov – a mere splinter of the oldest and greatest Russian fair in Yaroslavl.

11.2.3. *Novgorod and Holmgrad*

It is common knowledge that the Scandinavians who had traded with the chronicle Novgorod used to call it Holmgrad (qv in [758], for instance). This name instantly associates with Kholmogory near Archangelsk. Old sources specifically refer to Kholmogory and not Archangelsk as an old port on the White Sea, the initial point of the famous Northern Dvina trade route, which had retained its importance for commerce until the foundation of St. Petersburg. Yaroslavl had been at the intersection of the Northern Dvina and the Volga trade routes; therefore, the merchants who traded through the port in Kholmogory had been from Yaroslavl, qv above in section 11.2.2. Bear in mind that the Northern Dvina trade route that had led from the White Sea to Vladimir, Suzdal and Moscow passed through Arkhangelsk (Kholmogory), then Velikiy Oustyug and Vologda, approaching Volga

right next to Yaroslavl; the great fair had been right here, in the estuary of Mologa. Therefore, the Scandinavians would associate Russian tradesmen with the name Kholmogory, the latter being the closest seaport on the way to Yaroslavl. As for Novgorod-upon-Volkhov, it is withdrawn from all possible trading routes, and couldn't have traded with anyone in the Middle Ages.

11.2.4. Yaroslav's Court as the court of a Great Prince

One needn't look for too long in order to find Yaroslav's Court in Yaroslavl – it is apparently the famous Yaroslavl Kremlin. A propos, modern historians are of the opinion that the term “Kremlin”, which is used by everyone including the inhabitants of Yaroslavl, is “incorrect”, and that one should call it a “monastery”, since “no princes have ever occupied the premises” – this is what they teach in Yaroslavl schools nowadays. We must note that the Yaroslavl Kremlin is made of white stone, just like its counterpart in Moscow is presumed to have once been. The word “court” was apparently used for referring to the court of the prince, or the Kremlin.

11.2.5. How Nizhniy Novgorod had received its name

Once we return the true name of Novgorod the Great to Yaroslavl, we instantly understand why Nizhniy Novgorod is called “Nizhniy”, or “Lower” – it is indeed located lower on the Volga than Yaroslavl, qv on the map.

11.2.6. The Yaroslavl Region as the domain of the Great Prince

Usual mediaeval dynastic practice would make old capitals residences of the rulers' second sons. Indeed, Sigismund Herberstein wrote in the XVI century that “the city and the fortress of Yaroslavl on the banks of the Volga are 12 miles away from Rostov, straight along the road to Moscow. Likewise Rostov... this territory had been hereditary property of the rulers' second sons (or brothers)” ([161], page 154). This is another indirect proof that Yaroslavl is the old capital of the state. Indeed, it is known that before the XVI century, under Ivan Kalita and his successors, the entire region of Yaroslavl, Rostov and Kostroma had not been hereditary property, but rather considered the domain of the Great Prince, or a capital area. It

had belonged to the regnant Great Prince. When N. M. Karamzin tells us about the testament of Ivan Kalita, he points out that “there isn't a single word about either Vladimir, Kostroma, Pereyasavl or any other town that had belonged to whoever was titled Great Prince” ([362], Volume 4, Chapter 9, page 151). The cities named by Karamzin outline the region of Yaroslavl and Rostov. Ivan III had already mentioned Yaroslavl as his domain ([759], page 62). Then this region became the domain of the rulers' second sons, since the capital had been transferred to Moscow. Don't forget that, according to our hypothesis, Moscow only became capital in the XVI century.

11.2.7. “Gospodin Velikiy Novgorod” (“Lord Novgorod the Great”) as the agglomeration of towns and cities in the Yaroslavl region

Our hypothesis is as follows. The term “Lord Novgorod the Great”, or “*Gospodin Velikiy Novgorod*” had been used for referring to a whole agglomeration of cities and not just Yaroslavl – the region in question had been a Great Principality up until the transfer of the capital to Moscow; the latter took place in the XVI century, according to our hypothesis.

The Great Principality, or the agglomeration of towns and cities that had formed the capital of Russia between Ivan Kalita (Caliph) and Ivan III consisted of the following cities and their environs: Yaroslavl, Rostov, Kostroma, Pereyasavl, Mologa, Vladimir and Suzdal ([362], Volume 4, Chapter 9, page 15; also [362], Volume 5, Chapter 1, page 21).

It is known that Scandinavian sources used to call Novgorod the Great a “land of cities” ([523], page 47) – in other word, considered it to be an agglomeration of towns; see CHRON5 for a more in-depth discussion of this issue. Russian sources also tell us about independent *ends* of Novgorod, which even rose against one another occasionally. All of these *ends* were independent from each other, and each had a leader and a seal of its own. The entire Novgorod region had been shared between them; one must also note that all official documents from Novgorod used to have several seals, one for each *end* – there are eight of them on one of the oldest edicts from Novgorod ([8], Volume 1; also [759], page 59). The representatives of *ends* used to meet for the discussion and solution of important issues; these meetings were known as *veches*,

and there were two of them at least – at the “Court of Yaroslavl”, qv above, and the “*Veche* of Sophia”. The former is presumed to have been the most important. Apparently, the representatives of all the cities that had been part of the Great Prince’s domain used to congregate in Yaroslavl and issue edicts from “Lord Novgorod the Great” thence.

The “*Veche* of Sophia” must have taken place in Vologda, which is located near Yaroslavl. The gigantic Cathedral of Sophia exists in Vologda to this day ([85]). It is dated to the XVI century, and must be the famous Cathedral of Sophia from Novgorod the Great. It is most likely to have been rebuilt in the XVII century.

11.2.8. The famous Icon of Novgorod and the Icon of Yaroslavl

The famous Russian icon known as “The Omen Given to Our Lady in Novgorod” is usually associated with the historical Novgorod the Great. This is a very characteristic representation of Our Lady – bust with two raised hands, with a circle on her breast. We see baby Jesus in the circle; his hands are also raised upwards. The disposition of both characters is different from all the other icons. It turns out that there’s another version of this icon, full-length – the Icon of Yaroslavl, also known as “Our Lady the Great Panhagia”, qv in fig. 3.28, [142], page 11, and also [255]. There is no name on the actual icon – it must be a later invention, since ecclesiastical sources tell us nothing of the kind. This must be a version of the same “Omen” icon, which had been revered in Russia – there has even been a special ecclesiastical feast in its honour. The obvious relation between the two icons led to the introduction of a different name, otherwise the chronicle Novgorod would become mysteriously associated with Yaroslavl.

The famous historical Great Novgorod School of art is very close to the Moscow school, which is perfectly natural and explained by the geographical proximity of the two cities. Modern Novgorod on the Volkhov is at a great distance from Moscow, but rather close to Pskov. The style of iconography prevalent in Pskov is considerably different from the above; one must hardly be surprised about the fact that the old churches of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov are decorated in the Pskov style and don’t resemble those of Nov-

gorod the Great and Moscow. Novgorod-upon-Volkhov had been a satellite town of Pskov; we see more indications telling us that the historical Novgorod the Great has got nothing in common with the modern town of Novgorod on the Volkhov; one must also bear in mind the distance between the two.

12. THE FALSIFICATION OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF NOVGOROD-UPON-VOLKHOV

12.1. The real chronology implied by the “layer section” of the pavements in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov

The information collected in the present section is based on the observations concerning the dendrochronology of Novgorod made by Y. A. Yeliseyev.

We are told that Novgorod-upon-Volkhov, which historians identify as Novgorod the Great as described in the chronicles, possesses a unique means of absolute dating – different layers of the allegedly ancient Novgorod pavements. All the objects found in these layers are confidently dated by modern historians and archaeologists with the precision rate of 10-15 years ([993]); also, the datings in question are presented as independent from consensual Russian history according to Scaliger and Miller. The dendrochronology of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov is considered to prove the Romanovian version of Russian history independently. In fig. 3.29 we present a photograph of an excavation with all 28 layers of old Novgorod pavements visible; they are in excellent condition. Thus, 28 is the maximal number of pavement layers found in the town ([993], page 16). Academician V. L. Yanin tells us that “over the 550 years that the formation of this ancient occupation layer has taken... one sees here... 28 pavement layers – a gigantic stack of pine floorings in excellent condition” ([993], page 16). V. L. Yanin writes further that “the [presumably – Auth.] 800-year logs... can still be used for construction purposes” ([993], page 15).

Why is Yanin referring to 550 years above? The matter is that the time intervals between pavement layers can be estimated through a comparison of annual ring width distribution. The concept is simple



Fig. 3.28. The Yaroslavl icon known as “Our Lady of Yaroslavl, the Great Panhagia”, or the “Horanta of Yaroslavl”. From the Spaso-Preobrazhenskiy Cathedral of the Spasskiy Monastery, the 1320’s ([142], page 11). The city of Yaroslavl. Taken from [142], page 11.

and clear enough. We haven’t checked the practical implementation of this method – however, even assuming this estimation to be correct, one is instantly confronted with the following issue.

The streets of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov must have been paved with wood up until the XX century and the introduction of asphalt; one sees no reason why the inhabitants of the town would want to cease with the practice and wallow in dirt. Novgorod pavements are typical log-roads that have been a *sine qua non* element of human life in marshlands, used constantly. This gives us an excellent opportunity to estimate the

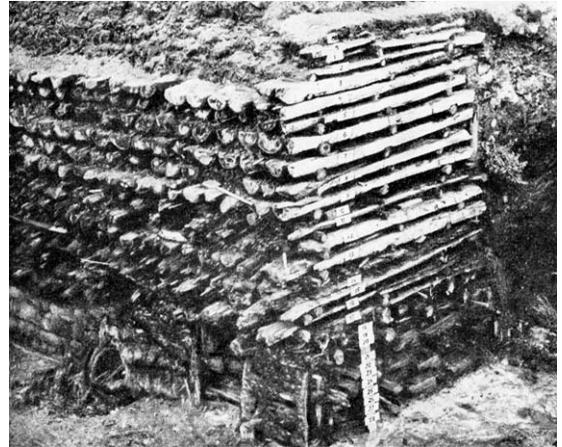


Fig. 3.29. Photograph of an excavation where one can see all 28 layers of the old paved streets of “Novgorod” on River Volkhov. Taken from [993], page 21.

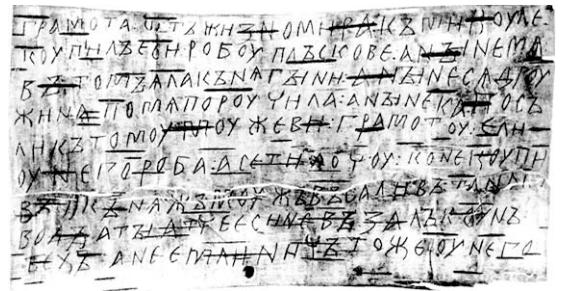


Fig. 3.30. Birch bark document #109 from Novgorod-upon-Volkhov. Arbitrarily dated to the alleged XII century; in reality, the documents dates from the XVI-XVII century. Let us point out the use of colons in punctuation. Taken from [993], page 172.

date of the modern Novgorod’s foundation. A subtraction of 550 years from an arbitrary XX century date such as 1940 shall leave us with the approximate dating of 1400.

How could this be true? Let us regard the issue from the viewpoint of a Scaligerite historian, who would insist upon the foundation of the chronicle Novgorod in the X century A.D., and the identification of the city as the modern Novgorod-upon-Volkhov (and not Yaroslavl on the Volga implied by our reconstruction). The implication is that the construction of the log-roads would have to coincide

with the foundation of any kind of settlement in these parts; historians agree with this as well. The ideal condition of the lowest layer makes it the first; had there been earlier ones that decomposed completely, the lowest layer would have been semi-decomposed. We see nothing of the kind. Therefore, the layers are telling us that the first settlement in these marshes must be dated to the XV century and not the X.

The “dendrochronologists” headed by Academician V. L. Yanin suggest to shift the chronology of Novgorod backwards by 500 years, and claim that all the pavement layers need to be dated to the epoch of the X-XV century ([993], page 16). Let us quote from V. L. Yanin:

“And so, the formation of the ancient occupation layer took place between the middle of the X century and the end of the XV; the process had taken 28 pavement years and lasted for longer than 550 years” ([993], page 16). In other words, we are being told that the top layer of Novgorod pavements dates from the XV century. In this case, what happened to the numerous layers of log-roads paved in the next 500 years (the XV-XX century)? These are said to have “rotted and decayed completely”, which appears extremely bizarre. “Ancient” pavements remain intact, whilst the newer ones (from the XVI century and on) have all disappeared without a trace.

Yanin tells us that “organic matter remains in excellent condition due to the high humidity prevalent in the bottom layers of Novgorod ground” ([993], page 16). In other words, marshes preserve organic matter from decay; this is a widely known fact. Since the town of “Novgorod” on the Volkhov has been founded among marshes, there have really been no problems with the preservation of organic matter – however, one has to enquire about the reasons this should have stopped being the case in the XV century. Yanin writes that “no organic matter from later layers has reached our day (the second half of the XV century and on)” ([993], page 46). What cataclysm has befallen the Volkhov region in the XVI century, and why has the preservation of organic matter stopped? The “Volkhov archaeologists” can give us no intelligible answer. In other words, one sees that all the findings from the Volkhov area are arbitrarily dated to pre-XV century epochs. This has led to a strange gap in the “archaeology and chronology of the

Volkhov region” – one of 400 years, no less. This gap obliterated every historical event that took place in this region between the XV and the XX century.

The archaeologists have apparently noticed this chronological gap, and become rather alarmed on this account. Yanin mentions a gap of 400 years in the dendrochronology of the Volkhov region in the new edition of his book ([993]). He claims the gap to have been filled, but doesn’t care to divulge any details or explain how it was done.

Let us return to the issue of finding an absolute dating for the pavement layers from the Volkhov region. Why have they been dated to the X-XV century epoch? Yanin’s book contains the following answer: “We have first... managed to construct a relative dendrochronological scale... and then came up with the absolute datings. We have studied the logs from the foundations of Novgorod churches; the dates when the latter were founded are known to us from chronicles” ([993], page 20). Yanin repeats this claim in the 1998 re-edition of his book.

Everything becomes perfectly clear – Yanin tells us explicitly that the entire dendrochronology of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov is based on the Scaligerian-Millerian chronology of Russian chronicles, which have been used as the source for the dates of several churches’ construction. The logs from their foundations were ipso facto “dated”, and the datings of the pavement layers were calculated further on. However, we already know the chronicles in question to be forgeries or editions of the XVII-XVIII century, qv in CHRON4, Chapter 1. Independent “dendrochronological” dating of objects excavated in the region of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov is therefore right out of the question.

V. L. Yanin has apparently been aware of this, since we find the following passage in the 1965 edition of his book: “B. A. Kolchin is currently collecting specimens of logs dating from the XVI, XVII and XVIII century in order to complete the scale and make it reach the present day, and then go back to front for absolute certainty” ([993], pages 20-21).

Unfortunately, the 1998 edition is dead silent about the details of this “verification” – it would be very interesting to learn how B. A. Kolchin has managed to fill the 400-year gap in the dendrochronology of “Novgorod”.

The important circumstance that the entire history and chronology of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov are based on nothing but chronicles, or written sources, is recognized by historians themselves. M. Karger, a historian, tells us “these reports... have remained the sole source for the reconstruction of the city’s ancient history until very recently” ([365], page 8).

Our reconstruction of the real chronology of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov is as follows. Some kind of settlement was founded here in the XV century, possibly later. In the XVII century, during the war with Sweden, a small fortress had to be built here. Due to the marshy character of the terrain, the streets of the settlement required paving; these wooden pavements eventually sank, and new layers of planks were required. This activity must have continued until the XX century, since one sees no other reason but the advent of asphalt for its termination; the last layers of pavements must therefore date from the XIX or even the XX century ([365], page 8). Don’t forget that the “Novgorod excavations” have only started in the XX century ([365], page 8). One might well wonder about the reason why the XIX century archaeologists didn’t come up with the brilliant idea to excavate the famous “ancient pavements of Novgorod the Great”; could it be that these pavements have still been used actively in the XIX century? The top layer of the log-roads dated to the XV century nowadays had still been plainly visible to everyone in the XIX century and considered recent; dating it to the XV century would therefore prove impossible.

The excavations of the famous pavement layers only began in 1951, at the sites of the constructions destroyed in the war of 1941-1945. Yanin reports the following:

“In 1951, when the archaeologists were estimating the coordinates of future excavations, the territory had been a wasteland covered in rank burdock and elderberry bushes... rusted pieces of ferroconcrete armaments could be seen through the weeds, tufts of grass were growing amongst the debris of bricks and mortar – 1/250th of the dead wasteland the Nazis had left of a flourishing town. It had been the seventh year after the war; Novgorod was slowly recuperating, rising from the charred ruins and rebuilding itself” ([993], page 10).

Academician V. L. Yanin proceeds to tell us that the

“occupation layer” of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov has risen by two metres since the end of the XV century ([993], page 16). In other words, the occupation layer comprised of log-road pavements had been at the depth of around two metres – this may well have been the pre-war XX century pavement, predating the excavations by a decade or so.

Our opponents may remind us that a number of “ancient” documents written on birch bark have been discovered in between the pavement logs; those are presumed to date from the XI-XV century. The idea that birch bark may have been used for writing in the XIX century is considered preposterous. We shall mention the contents of the XIX century chronicles below; as we shall see, they contain nothing that couldn’t have been written in the XIX century. As for the very recent use of birch bark for writing, let us quote from V. L. Yanin himself: “Many birch bark documents have survived, and are kept in museums and archives nowadays – among them, later chronicles dating from the XVII-XIX century, and entire books... in 1715, the Siberians used a book made of birch bark for keeping tax records... The ethnographer S. V. Maksimov, who had seen a book of birch bark in an old-believer settlement on the Mezen river had even voiced his fascination with this writing material, so uncommon to us... it is also known that the Swedes had used birch bark for writing in the XVII-XVIII century” ([993], page 27).

Further also: “the ethnographer A. A. Dounin-Gorchavich, who had seen the khanty [an indigenous ethnic group from the North of Russia – Transl.] prepare birch bark for writing in the beginning of this century [the XX – Auth.] reports that the material is boiled in water in order to make it fit for writing” ([993], page 29).

One of our readers, a geologist engineer from the Komi region of Russia (city of Oukhta) by the name of Vitaliy Vassilyevich Kozlov, has sent us information about the book on the history of publishing during WW II. The section on guerrilla publications (news-papers, flyers, brochures etc) tells us about the use of birch bark in printing, in particular by the guerrillas from the North-West, where Novgorod-upon-Volkhov is located. Birch bark has therefore been used as a material for writing as recently as in the middle of the XX century.

Therefore, the fact that there were birch bark documents found in the top layers of Novgorod pavements doesn't necessarily imply these layers to be of a great age. They may just as well date from the XIX and even the XX century.

One might ask about the reasons for using birch bark as a writing material in the XIX century, after the invention of paper. The matter is that paper had remained rather expensive up until the XX century – birch bark was much cheaper, especially in the North. The writing material in question wasn't mere pieces of bark peeled off a tree:

“Birch bark would be boiled in water to make it more elastic and fit for writing; coarse layers would be removed... sheets of birch bark were usually given a rectangular shape” ([993], page 33). Therefore, birch bark may have competed with paper up until the XIX century, given its low cost.

V. L. Yanin tells us that “all the books and documents made of birch bark that had been known to scientist before 26 July 1951 were written in ink, with no exceptions” ([993], page 30). However, the famous birch bark documents from Novgorod-upon-Volkhov are scratched on pieces of bark, with no traces of ink anywhere. Why would that be? Marshy ground must have been so humid that the ink became washed away; the only pieces of birch bark with any text on them are the ones where the letters have been scratched. A typical document found in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov can be seen in fig. 3.30.

Let us return to the contents of the “ancient” documents found in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov. Nearly every such document mentioned in Yanin's book entitled *I Have Sent Thee a Birch Bark Epistle* are of a quotidian nature; their text contains no signs of their “great antiquity”, although modern historians try to read them into the text of the documents. Yet these “signs” may well be those of the XIX century – as is the case with Document #288, for instance, dated to the alleged XIV century (the real dating is 400 years more recent, as we are beginning to understand, and pertains to the epoch of the XVIII-XIX century).

The document says the following: “*khamu*, three cubits... a *zolutnik* [1/96 of a pound – Transl.] of green silk thread, another of gilded silk, and one more, coloured yellow and green... a *zolutnik* of bleach for one bleaching, some Bulgarian soap for the same

bleaching, and for another bleaching...” ([993], pages 45-46). Yanin comments this text in the following manner: “although this epistle has neither got a beginning nor an end, one can be certain that it was written by some embroider. The fabric (*kham* in Old Russian) needed to be bleached with bleach and soap” ([993], page 46). Who told Yanin about *kham* standing for “fabric” in Old Russian? We find nothing of the kind in V. Dahl's dictionary ([223], [224] and [225]). However, we shan't argue about this for the time being; maybe there was some text where the word *kham* referred to a fabric of some sort. Still, since the document in question is concerned with silk embroidery, wouldn't it make more sense to assume that “*khamu*” is really a part of the word “*barkhatu*” (the genitive case of “*barkhat*”, the Russian word for “velvet”), with the letter “T” written in a special manner common for Russia, with three “stalks” at the bottom – it can easily be confused for the letter M. Silk would more often be used for embroidery on velvet, after all; in general, all the objects mentioned in the text – velvet, soap, bleach and coloured silk, have been common in the XIX century.

We witness the same to be the case with all other documents from Novgorod-upon-Volkhov.

Let us sum up. The entire situation looks very odd indeed – a mere 50 or 100 years after the wooden pavements cease to be used, historians and archaeologists rediscover them and make the proclamation that the logs used for paving date from times immemorial. This is a direct consequence of the fact that historical science still lacks the means of objective dating; consensual chronology is therefore a total chaos of subjective datings. We have witnessed this to be the case many a time; the excavations in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov are but another example.

12.2. Novgorod-upon-Volkhov had also been known as “*okolotok*” (Russian word used for a parochial settlement)

Let us remind the reader that, according to our research, Novgorod the Great as described in the chronicles has got nothing in common with the town in the marshlands of the Volkhov region known under the same name nowadays (apparently, this proud name only became associated with the town in question in

the XVIII century. It is most likely that the Russian chronicles have used the name “Novgorod the Great” for referring to the agglomeration of towns and cities located in the interfluvium of Volga and Oka and not just a single city – in other words, the entire land known as the “Vladimir and Suzdal Russia” nowadays. The administrative centre of the agglomeration had been in the city of Yaroslavl on the Volga (the famous “Court of Yaroslavl”), according to our reconstruction.

Thus, one might well wonder about the old name of the modern Novgorod on the Volkhov – one that had been used before the XVII century, when this town had been misnamed “Novgorod the Great”. Seeing as how this has happened a mere 300 years ago, we have some hope of reconstructing the proper old name of the town on the Volkhov with the aid of historical sources.

This hope of ours isn’t vain – moreover, it is very easy to find out about the real name of “Novgorod” on the Volkhov. We learn the following from the guidebook entitled *The Novgorod Citadel* ([731]): “Everything that was located outside the initial settlement of Novgorod had been known as *okolotok*. Even in the XIV–XVI century this name was used for referring to the entire territory of the citadel, apart from the Sovereign’s Court. *Okolotok* had come to replace the original name of Novgorod” ([731], page 9).

Under the “initial settlement” the authors of the book understand the rather diminutive citadel in the centre of the city: “Novgorod (or its citadel, the two being the same thing in reality) had been the *veche* centre of the entire town that was built on the Volkhov river... the small princely court had initially spanned the entire town” ([731], page 9).

The details divulged about the “heroic” history of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov are therefore of the utmost interest – we are told that the name of Novgorod had only been used for referring to the small citadel in the centre of the town, while the rest of it had possessed a different name in the “deep antiquity”, as we can see now. In the XVI century even the Kremlin wasn’t known as Novgorod anymore, but rather as “*okolotok*”, qv above. There is a possibility that the sovereign’s court had still been known as Novgorod. Historians are therefore of the opinion that the inhabitants of the town on the Volkhov River had still remembered its chronicle name of “Novgorod”, using it for a single

court in town; it is also admitted that the word “*okolotok*” had been used for the rest of the modern “Novgorod”. One might well wonder about the reasons why the name of “Novgorod the Great” could have become forgotten by the inhabitants of the town – a minor military or monastic settlement on the Volkhov river may have been known as “Novgorod” once, after all, since the name translates as “New City”, and the settlement had been freshly-built in the XV century. However, we are told that it has never been known as “The Great”.

We are of the opinion that the above implies the non-existence of a proper name for the small town on the Volkhov River in the XVI century, or the pre-Romanovian epoch – the name “*okolotok*” is of a very general and descriptive nature. It was still in use relatively recently for referring to a group of villages, a suburb or a parochial settlement ([224], Volume 2, page 1717). The police rank of the “*okolotochniy nadziratel*”, or “officer in charge of an *okolotok*”, had existed in Russia up until the XX century (ibid).

The town of Novgorod on the Volkhov River had therefore been a recent settlement of minor importance in the XVI – early XVII century, without so much as a name of its own. There may have been a remote monastery there, or a small fort; the settlement that had appeared nearby became known as “*okolotok*”. This word is probably derived from the Russian word “*okol*”, which stands for “near” – “the environs”, that is (of the military citadel, for instance). Somewhat later, in the XVII century, when the entire Russian history was being distorted to serve the interests of the Romanov dynasty, the hoaxers needed a Russian city that would play the part of Novgorod the Great as described in the chronicles in lieu of the original Novgorod, or Yaroslavl. The events related in the chronicles were thus transferred to the marshy banks of the Volkhov River in paper sources. New maps, likewise counterfeit “ancient” maps mass-produced in the XVIII–XIX century, have adopted the formula “Novgorod the Great”.

The locals have taken to the new name without much procrastination; one must think that their first acquaintance with the allegedly great history of “Great Novgorod” on the Volkhov River has really taken place some 100–200 years later, when they read N. M. Karamzin’s *History*, where the Volkhov localization of

Novgorod the Great is already quite explicit. It must be said that Novgorod-upon-Volkhov became Novgorod the Great officially in the end of the 1990's.

This explains the condition of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov in the XVII century, poor enough for the historian M. Karger to write about the “historical destiny of the city that has transformed into a backwater centre of the nondescript Novgorod province...” ([365], page 5). Everything is perfectly clear – the newly built settlement was only beginning to establish itself in the XVII century; there had been a stockade here. We learn that “the Moscow government was still taking care of maintaining the Novgorod stockade’s defensive capacity” ([365], page 12-13).

12.3. The tourist sights presented as the famous “Sovereign’s Court”, where the Archbishop of Novgorod the Great had resided

The chronicle history of Novgorod the Great tell us a great deal about the famous “Sovereign’s Court”, or the residence of the Archbishop of Novgorod. The archbishop was known as the Sovereign of Novgorod, and had ruled over the entire city, according to the chronicles. His influence had been immense – not just in Novgorod, but Russia in general, likewise his wealth. Is there anything left of his court, which must have been drowning in luxury and opulence? Chronicles tell us that the territory of the “Sovereign’s Court” had housed the Archbishop’s palace and a number of other buildings. Do we see so much as a trace of them anywhere in the modern Novgorod?

The guidebook by L. A. Rozhdestvenskaya entitled *The Novgorod Citadel* ([731]) is confident enough when it repeats the following after the chronicles: “the Archbishop, also known as the Sovereign, had been the only lord and master of the citadel and the court, which formed the centre of Novgorod in the earliest days of the city’s existence” ([731], page 9). Then Rozhdestvenskaya moves on from “ancient history” to the modern condition of the locale:

“The Sovereign’s Court of the Novgorod citadel is a remarkable civil construction complex that had housed administrative and economical services. The Archbishop of Novgorod had also lived here, known as the owner of a tremendous treasury; the Council of the Lords used to assemble at the citadel as well,

deciding upon the domestic and the foreign policies of Novgorod the Great” ([731], page 24).

It turns out that historians do indeed demonstrate to us a “Sovereign’s Court” in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov, qv in fig. 3.31. One must say that the building we see is thoroughly unremarkable – we see the wall of a citadel and a simple two-story building, which is clearly anything but ancient. Let us enquire about the age of the buildings that form the ensemble of the alleged “Sovereign’s Court”, and also about their fate in the XVII-XIX century – reconstructions, renovations, general use etc.

What we learn is that nearly every building from the “Sovereign’s Court” (with the single exception of the “faceted chamber”) was built in the XVII-XIX century ([731], pages 24-28) – postdating the epoch of the Archbishop’s alleged residence in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov by a few hundred years. We are of the opinion that there has never been an Archbishop of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov. It is known that “ever since the XVII century the citadel of Novgorod has been a stronghold where military leaders had resided” ([731], page 18). Military leaders, mind you, and not archbishops. The main building of the “Sovereign’s Court” is the so-called “Faceted Chamber”; we shall ponder it at length below.

Moreover, there are no signs to indicate the former residence of a sovereign, or an archbishop, at the “Sovereign’s Court”. Historians still haven’t reached any consensus in selecting a single building of the “Sovereign’s Court” and calling it the “Archbishop’s Palace”; apparently, it is a “serious scientific problem”, and there is no unanimity in the ranks of historians. For instance:

“According to the architect V. N. Zakharova, the archbishop’s palace is the building between the Likhoudov building and the Metropolitan’s Tower ... since the latter must be in the immediate vicinity of the palace” ([731], page 28). We see that the building considered the “Archbishop’s Palace” traditionally is something entirely different in the opinion of the architects. Even modern guidebooks obliquely dub it “the so-called Archbishop’s Palace” ([731], page 28).

Historians are exceptionally proud of the so-called Faceted Chamber of the citadel in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov; the guidebook ([731]) allocates an entire chapter to this building. L. A. Rozhdestvenskaya writes:



Fig. 3.31. The alleged “Governor’s court of Novgorod the Great” in the modern town of Novgorod on River Volkhov. Taken from [731], pages 64-65, insets.

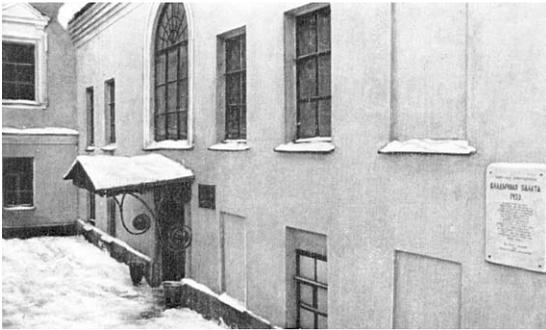


Fig. 3.32. The small building inside the citadel of the modern Novgorod upon River Volkhov, which plays the part of the “faceted chamber” in the “Governor’s court of Novgorod the Great”. The construction of the building is therefore dated to the XV century. However, it is a typical construction of the XVII-XVIII century. It is unclear just why this particular building was dated to the XV century and called the “Faceted Chamber” – we see no facets anywhere upon it, whereas the very name suggests the walls to be decorated in a particular way. Taken from [731], pages 64-65, insets.

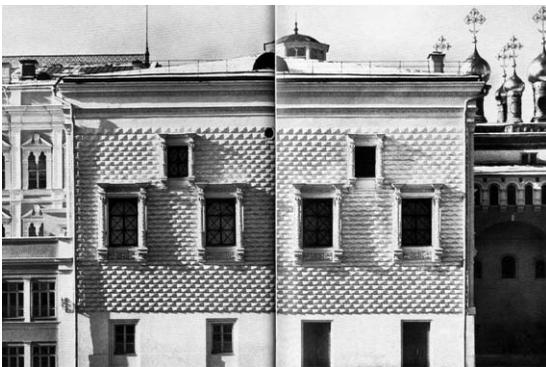


Fig. 3.33. The Faceted Chamber of Kremlin in Moscow. We see the eastern front part of the chamber’s outer wall with faceted blocks of stone, hence the name. Taken from [191], inset.

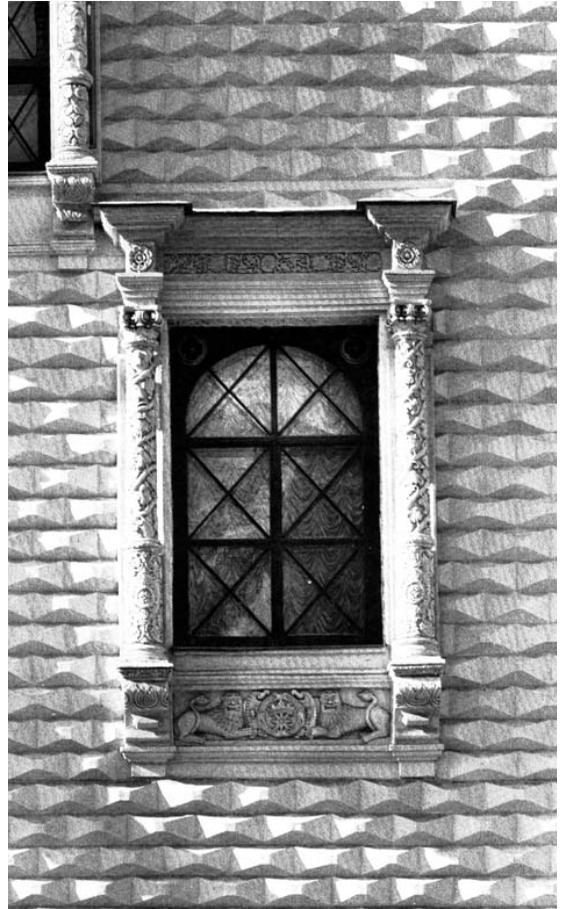


Fig. 3.34. Close-in of a fragment of the Faceted Chamber’s front wall. The faceted blocks that it owes its name to are clearly visible. Taken from [191], inset.



Fig. 3.35. The inside of the nondescript building that is claimed to be the “Faceted Chamber of Novgorod the Great”. Presumed to date from the XV century – however, the artwork is a mere imitation of the XV century style, and most likely dates from the XIX century. Taken from [731], pages 64-65, insets.



Fig. 3.36. Photograph of the ceremonial hall of the Faceted Chamber in Moscow. Taken from [191], inset.

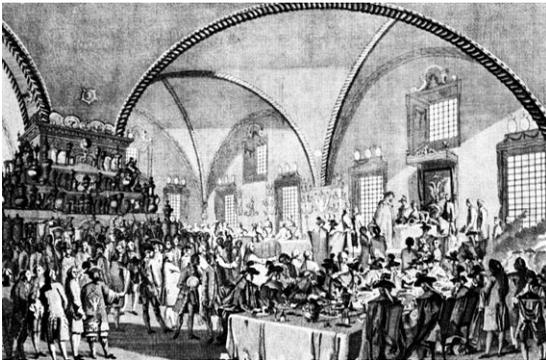


Fig. 3.37. Ancient engraving of the XVIII century depicting a feast in the splendid Faceted Chamber of the Muscovite Kremlin. Taken from [191], page 15.

“The Faceted Chamber, also known as the Sovereign’s Chamber, is one of the most remarkable buildings out of the entire ensemble of Sovereign’s Court, and the only such construction that has reached our age. A Novgorod chronicle dating from 1433 reports: ‘In the very same year did his Holy Highness Euphimeï build a chamber in his court, one of 30 doors. The craftsmen of Novgorod were working alongside their German counterparts’” ([731], page 33).

A modern photograph of this “XV century masterpiece of Old Russian architecture with 30 doors”, whose construction required joint efforts of the Russian and the German craftsmen, can be seen in fig. 3.32. What we see is a very ordinary house of the XVII-XIX century – there is a great abundance of similar

houses in many Russian cities. By the way, we only see a single door on the photograph (fig. 3.32). It is a mystery just how one could make 30 doors here. One might assume exaggeration from the part of the chronicler, or the inclusion of the building’s inner doors into the number. However, such “boasting” would look rather odd; we clearly see that the chronicler is referring that he had thought fascinating himself. There’s nothing surprising about 30 inner doors – nearly every large house will have that many or more. 30 entrances, on the other hand, imply a large size of the building and a certain eccentricity of its architecture. All of this appears to have existed in reality; however, it was in the enormous Yaroslavl, the historical Novgorod the Great, which had been dealt a great deal of harm in the “Novgorod massacre” of the XVI century, and not in the “backwater centre of the non-descript Novgorod province...” ([365], page 5).

Let us return to the town on the Volkhov River. Where did the so-called “Faceted Chamber” get its name?

We all know what the famous Faceted Chamber of the Kremlin in Moscow looks like. Its façade is faced with tetrahedral blocks of stone with manifest facets, which make the Chamber quite unique (see figs. 3.33 and 3.34). The very name of the Chamber is derived from these blocks of stone, which is emphasized by the historians as well ([191], page 8).

Are there any faceted blocks anywhere on the “Faceted Chamber of Novgorod” (fig. 3.32)? None! The walls are perfectly ordinary, smooth and plastered. Not a sign of a facet anywhere. Our opponents might say that someone must have chiselled the facets off and replaced them by stucco. But when did that happen, and how? Neither the documents nor the guidebook ([731]) tell us a single word about this.

We are of the opinion that what we encounter here is but an attempt to find a solid foundation for the freshly introduced Romanovian version of Russian history, and a clumsy one, at that. The concept had been rather simple – one needed to prove a small settlement on the Volkhov to have once been Novgorod the Great as mentioned in the chronicles. The latter specified the existence of the famous Faceted Chamber in Novgorod the Great, and so the Romanovian historians apparently decided that a certain XVIII century house could serve as the famous Faceted