

Chamber, the memorial plaque saying “Sovereign’s Chambers. 1433 A.D.” that one finds attached thereto being the primary proof of this identification (qv in fig. 3.32). The memorial plaque secures the transformation of a simple building into a tourist sight – one that has been active in this capacity for many years.

Could it be that the interior of the rather unprepossessing “Faceted Chamber” in the Volkhov settlement is capable of surprising us with the lavishness of its decoration, leaving no doubt about the fact that the nondescript building one sees in fig. 3.32 had once been the famous Faceted Chamber of Novgorod the Great?

The same guidebook as we’ve been quoting from is telling us that there is a famous historical front hall in the so-called “Faceted Chamber”:

“The Sovereign’s Chamber has been the silent witness of many historical events. The envoys of the Great Prince of Moscow had been received here, likewise visitors from faraway lands; many a royal decree was read here. In 1478 it heard the edict of Ivan III about the annexation of the Novgorod lands by Moscow... and in 1570 it saw the grim feast of Ivan the Terrible” ([731], page 34).

We know what the royal front halls had looked like in the XV-XVI century, the best example being the buildings of the Kremlin in Moscow, dated to the same XV century as the Faceted Chamber of Novgorod the Great by historians. Some of them even claim certain fragments of the above to date from the XII century ([557], page 37); however, the date on the memorial plaque is that of 1433, qv in fig. 3.32.

Let us now consider the “front hall” of the building in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov, whose modern photograph can be seen in fig. 3.35. The interior of this “front hall” is in very poor correspondence with the architecture of the XV-XVI century; moreover, what we see here is typical XVIII-XIX century architecture with intentional anachronistic elements. The real front hall of the Faceted Chamber in Moscow is represented in fig. 3.36 for comparison (photograph), and in fig. 3.37 we see an old engraving of the XVIII century that depicts a feast in the Faceted Chamber of the Moscow Kremlin.

One gets the impression that the front hall of the “faceted chamber from the town on the Volkhov” was constructed in the XVIII-XIX century in emulation

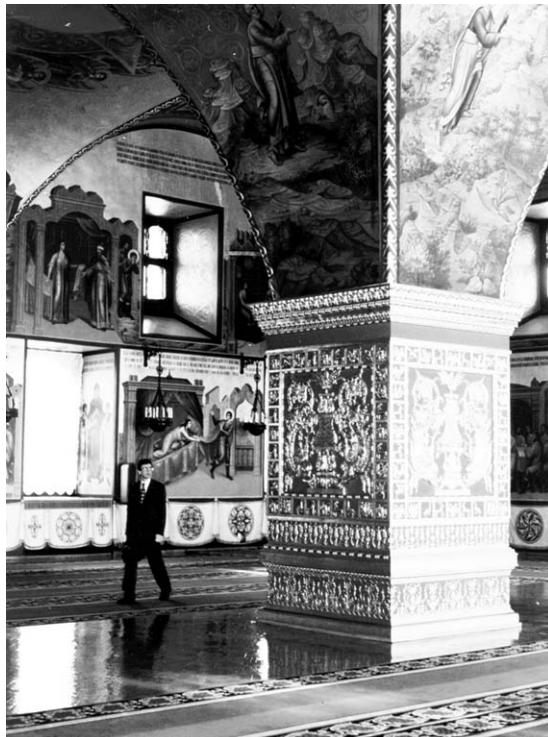


Fig. 3.38. Photograph of the Muscovite Kremlin’s Faceted Chamber. Taken by the authors in 2000.

of the Faceted Chamber in Moscow; however, this resulted in a severe disproportion, since the chamber needed to be fit into an already existing building. The Romanovian architects ended up with low ceilings and a central column whose top widens in too drastic a manner, leaving a looming impression. The strange stripes on the ceiling look very conspicuous (see fig. 3.35). Historians suggest this building to be “the sole relic of the early Gothic style in Russia” ([557], page 22). We see nothing of the kind in truly old Russian buildings – these “Gothic stripes” must be emulating the relief facets of the original Faceted Chamber in Moscow, where they have an actual architectural function common for old Russian architecture (see figs. 3.36 and 3.38).

It is peculiar that the guidebook ([731]) should dedicate a whole chapter to the “Faceted Chamber” in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov without uttering a single word about any reconstructions or renovations of the building, divulging a great many more details of this

kind that concern other constructions in the citadel, and of a lesser fame at that – all the reparation works performed in the XVIII-XIX century are reported very meticulously, qv in [731], pages 24-31. Could historians be avoiding the topic deliberately so as not to attract any attention to the true date of this forgery's creation. Apparently, no renovations have ever taken place – the chamber has been in its present condition ever since its construction in the XVIII-XIX century; however, the guidebook ([731]) tries to convince one that the “Faceted Chamber” in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov was built in the XV century ([731], page 33) – or even the XII century, according to [557], page 37, having reached us in its initial condition, more or less. This is not true, as it is becoming clear to us today.

Apparently, this dim “Gothic hall” in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov in its modern condition was prepared for exhibition rather recently – in the XIX century, during the preparations for the 1862 celebration of “Russia’s Millenarian Anniversary” in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov (a very lavish festivity attended by Czar Alexander II himself, as well as numerous guests from every corner of Russia ([731], pages 80 and 82). This is when the grandiose monument that one sees inside the citadel was erected (*ibid*). Apparently, this was when the first necessity to demonstrate something “ancient” to the public had arisen; this had been accomplished successfully.

12.4. Novgorod-upon-Volkhov: oddties in occupation layer datings

As we have seen, historians are of the opinion that the occupation layer of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov has grown by a mere two metres over the last 400 years, starting with the end of the XV century ([993], page 16). However, it had grown twice faster in the previous 500 years ([993], page 16). We learn that “over the 550 years that had passed between the middle of the X century and the end of the XV it had grown by 5.5 metres” ([993], pages 15-16). This is truly bizarre; the growth of the occupation layer directly depends on human activities. Academician V. L. Yanin describes the process of occupation layer formation rather vividly:

“Human activity has the following side effect, which is very important for archaeology: the formation of the occupation layer in every area inhabited

by humans for a more or less prolonged period of time. Someone ... cuts down wood to build a house, with wood chips flying in every direction and falling on the ground. Then someone’s shoes tear, and an old shoe sole is thrown away; then a house burns down, and somebody levels the scene of conflagration and erects a new dwelling ... this is how the occupation layer is formed wherever there are humans, year by year, slowly but steadily. The thickness of this layer depends on the intensity of human activity and the organic matter conservation capacity of local soil” ([993], page 15).

How are we supposed to relate to the situation with Novgorod-upon-Volkhov in this case, seeing as how over the first 550 years the occupation layer had grown at the rate of one metre per century, how could it have slowed down to 50 centimetres in the following 400 years? Could the intensity of human activity have diminished and dwindled? This seems very odd indeed; human activity has become a great deal more intense in the recent epoch, if anything. Should soil conservation capacity in the Volkhov region have changed drastically at some point in the XV century, one would certainly like to hear more about that.

All of the above must imply that the consensual dating of the occupation layer in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov is blatantly incorrect. It appears that the entire formation of the occupation layer must have taken place at a steady speed in the last 400-500 years, possibly with a slight acceleration, starting with the XV century, or the foundation of the settlement on River Volkhov. The considerable height of this layer is explained by the fact that “organic matter preserves well in the environs of Novgorod” and nothing else, according to archaeologists themselves ([993], page 15). Bear in mind that marshlands preserve organic matter very well indeed, and it hardly ever rots there.

Let us now observe the rate of the occupation layer’s growth around the Cathedral of St. Sophia in the Volkhov region, presumably one of the oldest buildings in Russia, and one which “has never been rebuilt since the XI century and preserved ... its original shape until the present day”, as we are being told ([731], page 53). It turns out that “over the last nine centuries, the occupation layer has covered two metres of the building’s lower part” ([731], page 54). That is to say, the occupation layer that has formed

around the principal cathedral of the Volkhov region over the last 900 years is presumed equal in height to the layer that has formed in the centre of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov over 400 years ([1993], page 16). Even if one were to trust the consensual chronology of this occupation layer, the “extremely ancient” Cathedral of St. Sophia would have to be dated to the XV century and not the XI.

We are of the opinion that this cathedral was constructed even more recently – in the XVII century and not the XVIII. Therefore, the occupation layer around it has been growing by the factor of circa one metre per century.

It must be said that the speed of the occupation layer growth has been calculated by archaeologists from pavement layers, among other things – or concurs with the relative “dendrochronology of Novgorod” at the very least. Indeed, according to V. L. Yanin:

“The occupation layer in Novgorod wasn’t subject to putrefaction and had been growing by a factor of one centimetre per year in the Middle Ages. It had grown by 5.5 metres between the middle of the X and the end of the XV century... thus, the formation of the ancient occupation layer has taken 28 pavements and 550 years” ([1993], pages 15-16). The height of the pavement layers is therefore equal to 5 metres, and their formation has taken 550 years – roughly one metre per century, or one centimetre per year, just as we learn from historians.

We can therefore count approximately 500 years backwards from the XX century, and end up with the XV century as the dating of the town’s foundation. The Cathedral of St. Sophia must have been built in the XVII century, since it has submerged by 2 metres.

We must also point out the fact that traces of chiselled-off frescoes were found in the cathedral during excavations:

“Many chiselled-off fresco fragments have been discovered during the excavations of the Martiryevskaya parvis... The restoration of the dome artwork began in 1944 ... it turned out that the Pantocrator and the top part of the archangel figures... were painted in the XVI century the earliest over fresh ground” ([731], page 62). That is to say, the plaster was chiselled off in the XVI century the earliest, and the fresh ground must date from roughly the same epoch; therefore, the Cathedral of St. Sophia on the

Volkhov bears distinct marks of later Romanovian reconstruction works (fresh ground and the chiselled-off frescoes).

However, the radical alterations of the original design did not stop there. According to M. V. Mouravyov:

“In 1688 and 1692 the floor of the cathedral was raised by 1.62 metres... the three round posts have been demolished, the original narrow windows widened and more windows cut in other walls. In 1837 the entire northern wall was reconstructed; in 1861 the small headstones over the persons buried in the cathedral were removed. Finally, in 1893-1904 the cathedral underwent a complete overhaul, which resulted in the replacement of the original works of Italian masters by the daubery of the decorators from the co-operative of contractor Safronov” ([557], page 15).

Has anything remained from the original XVI century cathedral? We see that even the XVIII century artwork has gone without a trace.

M. V. Mouravyov tells us about another rather characteristic occurrence:

“There had been a great deal of graffiti on the inner walls of St. Sophia (inscriptions scratched on the plaster) – some of them are in *glagolitsa* [pre-Cyrillic script – Transl.]... they can be regarded as the old temple’s stone chronicle of sorts... These graffiti were discovered by I. A. Shlyapkin during the last restoration, as the fresh layers of plaster were being chiselled off; however, when the Archaeological Commission had expressed a wish to carry on with the study of the graffiti, the walls were already covered with fresh stucco, which has deprived the scientists of the larger part of the research materials” ([557], page 17).

Verily, one calls the oddest activities “restoration” these days.

The information that we have about the “ancient” events, which have presumably taken place in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov, comes from Russian chronicles in their edition and interpretation of the XVII-XVIII century ([365]). As we are beginning to understand nowadays, the lost originals must have referred to Yaroslavl events. After the Romanovian reform of the XVII-XVIII century these events were transferred from the Volga to the Volkhov region. In the XIX-XX century the confused historians and archaeologists have started to make pilgrimages to the “backwater centre

of the nondescript Novgorod province”, as M. Karger is correct enough to call it ([365], page 5). Events described in chronicles would eventually become tied to the Volkhov locale; some of them were vague enough to permit this, others weren’t. There were some complete fiascos – nevertheless, the churches of the Volkhov region are still stubbornly misidentified as “the Novgorod temples from the days of yore reflected in the chronicles”. One of the countless empty sites has been declared “the very square where the famous Novgorod *veche* used to assemble”. The notorious Novgorod massacre became associated with the Volkhov region instead of Yaroslavl, and a room where the “grim feast of Ivan the Terrible had taken place” ([731], page 34) was promptly found and has by now been photographed by countless tourists, awed and gullible. The list goes on.

None of the above is true; the events that we learn about from chronicles had all taken place elsewhere – in Yaroslavl on the Volga, according to our reconstruction. A propos, the very name Volkhov is a slightly corrupted version of the name Volga.

12.5. Birch bark documents had been used by the “ancient” Romans, and therefore cannot predate the XIV century

All the considerations voiced above give us a new perception of the fact that the allegedly ancient Romans have widely used birch bark for writing. As we are beginning to realise, the “ancient” Roman birch documents must also have been written in the XIV-XVIII century and not “deep antiquity”. The history of their discovery is as follows.

In 1973 Robert Burley, a British archaeologist, began his excavations near the famous Hadrian’s Wall [the Horde’s Wall?], which dates to the alleged II century A.D. “He came across two thin slivers of wood. Burley reckons they had rather looked like wood-shavings ... they were accurately unrolled with a penknife, and the archaeologists have fragments of messages in Latin inside. Burley himself recalls that ‘we were looking at the miniscule missive and refusing to believe our eyes’ ... Burley was holding the remnants of a letter that was written in ink and mentioned garments sent by someone to a soldier who had served in Vindolanda around 102 A.D.” ([726], page 124).

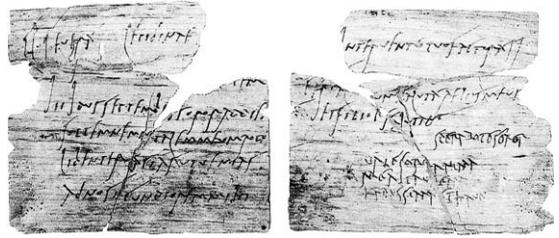


Fig. 3.39. One of the Roman documents written on birch bark, discovered in England and presumed to date from times immemorial. These documents are most likely to date from the epoch of the XV-XVII century; they may have been written in one of the Russian garrisons, which were quartered in all parts of the gigantic Great = “Mongolian” Empire. Taken from [726], page 127.

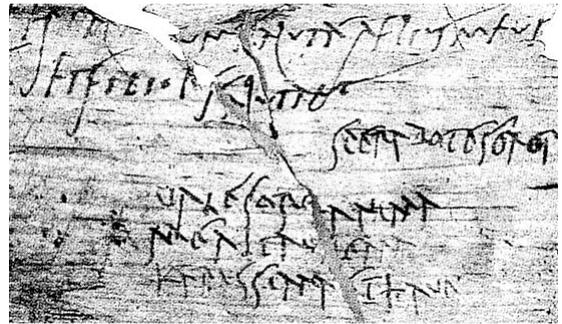


Fig. 3.40. A close-in of a fragment of a “Roman” birch bark document misdated to the II century A.D. today. Historians point out that it is set in demotic writing, virtually identical to the Egyptian shorthand and used in every region of the Empire ([726], page 127). According to our reconstruction, the document in question dates from the epoch of the Great = “Mongolian” Empire, or the XIV-XVII century. Taken from [726], page 127.

Let us emphasize that the letter was written in ink; had it remained underground for two millennia, the ink would have most probably been washed away by the time the birch bark was unearthed. Therefore, such messages must be a great deal less ancient than it occurs to the English archaeologists and historians.

“Burley had every reason to be fervent, although he hadn’t suspected it at the moment. He had unearthed the greatest cache of documents that has ever been found in the northern provinces of the Roman Empire. Over the next four years Burley and his assistants managed to find more than two hundred

documents or fragments of documents with old inscriptions; by 1988 they have collected over a thousand of them, including two hundred pieces of bark with distinct Latin texts on them... Most of them were made of birch or alder white peeled off very young trees, and the inscriptions were made with ink and a reed. These freshly-gathered pieces of bark were so elastic that they were fashioned into scrolls rolled crosswise the fibres, which was equivalent to sealing a letter, and tied with a thread. The largest pieces of bark are 20 by 8 centimetres... This is how the oldest group of British historical documents was discovered; it turned out to be a unique source of information concerning the Roman garrisons in the north-west. After some 1900 years of oblivion the Romans quartered in Britain spoke to their descendants through this collection of epistles" ([726], pages 124-125).

According to our reconstruction, the documents in question are the birch bark epistles used by the Cossack troops in the XV-XVII century, including the ones quartered on the British isles after the Great = "Mongolian" conquest. Some chronicles had referred to them as to Roman troops, which is how they are known to Scaligerian history, which had dated them to a fictional ancient epoch.

One of such documents can be seen in fig. 3.39. Historians write the following in this regard:

"This letter has been preserved in one of the oldest layers of Vindolanda; it was written on wood with ink. The missive is a birthday party invitation sent to some military commander's wife by the spouse of some other Roman troop leader... her writing is very similar to the demotic (non-hieroglyphic) script found on Egyptian papyri of the same epoch; it appears that the entire empire had used the same shorthand system" ([726], page 127; see also fig. 3.40).

Everything is perfectly clear, and explained perfectly well by our reconstruction. We see that the entire Great = Mongolian Empire of the XIV-XVI century had used the same shorthand system – just the way a centralized state should, where the life of the imperial provinces, no matter how distant, is in sync with that of the centre, with similar customs and principles used in the town on River Volkhov, Horde garrisons in faraway Britain and Egypt in Africa (see CHRON5 for more details).

12.6. In re the "Novgorod Datings" of A. A. Zaliznyak and V. L. Yanin. How the abovementioned Academicians date late XVIII century birch bark documents to the XI century

We must say a few words about the article of the Academicians A. A. Zaliznyak and V. L. Yanin entitled "The Novgorod Book of Psalms of the XI century as Russia's Oldest Book" ([290:1]) published in the "Vestnik Rossiyskoi Akademii Nauk" (the official journal of the Russian Academy of Sciences) in March 2001. This is the article that opens the March issue; we are grateful to A. Y. Ryabtsev for drawing our attention to this publication, since it contains passages that are most bizarre from the point of view of chronology and dating methods.

The article of Zaliznyak and Yanin is concerned with the discoveries in the field of "Novgorod" archaeology, which have made quite a resonance as of late; firstly, the piece of birch bark with a drawing that depicts St. Barbara on one side, qv in fig. 3.41, and, secondly, the three waxed tablets with inscriptions scratched in wax that Zaliznyak and Yanin call "The Novgorod Book of Psalms" ([290:1], pages 202-203). Both objects were discovered during the excavations of 2000 in Novgorod-upon-Volkhov ([290:1]).

The finding has enjoyed great publicity; on 27 March 2001 the Russian Academy of Sciences has held an extended session of its Presidium attended by Russian government officials. Academician Y. S. Osipov, President of the RAS, emphasized this finding in his report, having mentioned it first and foremost as he was speaking about the achievements of Russian history and archaeology. He has called it a stupendous discovery (see the text of his report in the "Vestnik" journal, 2001, Volume 71, Issue 8, page 682).

We shall withhold from judging the value of this findings for historical and linguistic science. The issue that interests us is of a formal nature. How were the ancient objects with inscriptions that Yanin and Zaliznyak mention in their article dated? The two authors are trying to date the findings to the beginning of the XI century ([290:1]). More precisely, they are dating the layer of ground whence the birch bark drawing in question was extracted to the first third of the XI century ([290:1], page 202). As for the layer where the

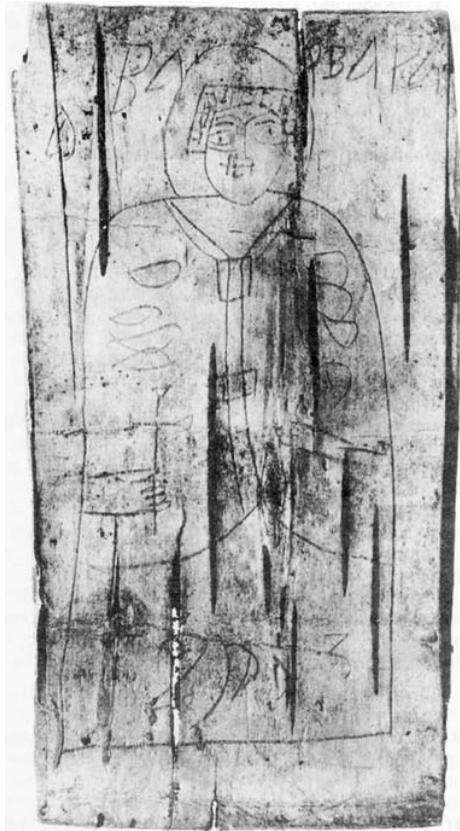


Fig. 3.41. A sheet of birch bark depicting St. Barbara. Found during excavations in Novgorod on River Volkhov; the layer it was discovered in was dated to “the first third of the XI century” by V. L. Yanin ([290:1], page 202). However, we see a date at the bottom of the sheet – 7282 “since Adam”, which converts to modern chronology as 1774 A.D., or the very end of the XVIII century. Photograph taken from [290:1], page 203.

three tablets comprising the “Book of Psalms” have been found, it is dated to the first quarter of the same XI century ([290:1], page 203). Thus, according to the opinion of Zaliznyak and Yanin, both objects hail from the “ancient Novgorod” and were made about a thousand years ago. This leads them to the conclusion that the two findings must be nothing else but truly ancient Russian texts. The three-plank “Book of Psalms”, for instance, is said to have been written by a representative of “the first generation of literate Russians”, who had “almost certainly been a witness of Russia’s baptism” ([290:1], page 206).

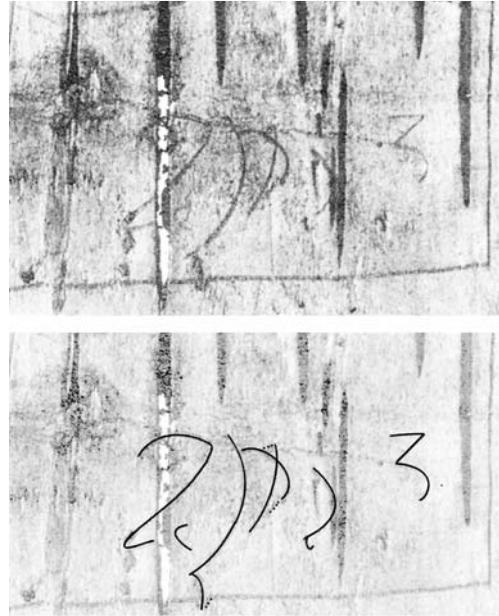


Fig. 3.42. The dating on the birch bark underneath St. Barbara. A close-in of the photograph (top) and a drawn copy of the figures (bottom). We see typical XVIII century handwriting and the dating of 7282 (or 1774 A.D.) set in regular Arabic numerals. In the top right corner we see the Church Slavonic letter of 3, which stands for 7. The figure in question corresponds to the so-called indiction, or the church year given according to a 15-year cycle, beginning in September. The indiction did in fact equal 7 in 1774. The added indiction makes the dating more ecclesiastical, in a way, since it corresponds to the style common for the old Russian church literature. It is quite natural that the archaic indiction date should be transcribed in the ancient Slavonic numerals and not their modern Arabic equivalent. The photograph is taken from [290:1], page 203 (a close-in).

The “precision” of datings offered in [290:1] is impressive – Zaliznyak and Yanin reckon that the “Book of Psalms” must be dated to “the epoch between the early 990’s and the late 1010’s”, thus offering us a dating with the precision rate of 10 years; the same equals around 15 years in either direction for the “Novgorod” dating of the piece of birch mentioned earlier, which is dated to the “first third of the XI century” ([290:1], page 202).

We have put the word “Novgorod” in quotation marks for a good reason – according to our research, the town on the Volkhov known as Novgorod today

has got nothing in common with Novgorod the Great that is known to us from Russian chronicles. Apparently, the modern “Novgorod” had only received this name under the first Romanovs in the XVII century, in the course of their campaign for the falsification of the Old Russian history. As recently as in the XVI century this town was known as “*okolotok*” (the word translates as “parochial settlement”, qv in [731], page 9, and in CHRON4, Chapter 3:12.2. As we have discovered, the history of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov can hardly be traced any further backwards than the XV-XVI century A.D. Also, it is most certainly the history of a small settlement and not a large town – the Novgorod stronghold grandiloquently known as “The Citadel” or even “The Kremlin” nowadays is most likely to have been built in the XVII century and not any earlier – as a mere fortification settlement during the war with Sweden.

Let us reiterate that, according to the results of our research, the oldest objects found in the pavement layers of Novgorod-upon-Volkhov date from the XV-XVI century and not any earlier, since neither the town, nor the pavements, had existed back then. The XI century dating of the lowest pavement layer offered by V. L. Yanin appears erroneous to us. The correct dating is a much later one, qv in CHRON4, Chapter 3:12.

How do Zaliznyak and Yanin date the first object (the drawing, whose photograph, as cited in their article, can be seen in fig. 3.41)?

The method of dating insisted upon in the article by A. A. Zaliznyak and V. L. Yanin ([290:1]) is based on the dendrochronological dating of the old pavement layers buried deep in the ground. They write:

“The season of 2000 began with a pleasant surprise. A small piece of birch bark was found in the layer dated to the first third of the XI century, with sketches of human figures scratched on either side. One of the figures can be identified as Jesus Christ. The figure on the flip side is accompanied by the inscription that can be easily read as “Varvara” (Slavic version of the name Barbara) preceded by the letter A in a circle, which had been the usual abbreviation for the Greek word for “holy” (*agioV*). The image of St. Barbara corresponds to the canon completely – she is wearing a crown and holding the cross of a martyr in her hand” ([290:1], page 202). See fig. 3.41.

Thus, the piece of birch bark in question is dated by [290:1] in accordance with the dating of the soil layer where it has been discovered. The actual dendrochronological layers of “Novgorod”, in turn, depend on the dendrochronology of wooden pavements that were unearthed as late as in the XX century. The group of architects that had conducted the excavations was led by V. L. Yanin for the most part; his scale of “Novgorod” datings was developed rather recently. Although the concept of dendrochronological dating makes sense theoretically, its implementation suggested by V. L. Yanin in case of the “Novgorod dendrochronology” strikes us as dubious. We have explained our position with the utmost caution to detail in CHRON4, Chapter 3:12. The abovementioned piece of birch bark shall confirm the validity of our doubts.

The matter is that the bark piece in question contains a rather explicit dating, which is well visible and in excellent condition. Ergo, we get an excellent opportunity of verifying the dendrochronological datings of V. L. Yanin. Does the date from the drawing correspond to the XI century A.D., or Yanin’s dating of the pavement layer where it has been found? If the answer is in the positive, the dendrochronology of “Novgorod” shall receive some validation at least; otherwise we shall end up with Yanin’s datings of the findings contradicting the information contained in the findings themselves. In the latter case it would also be very interesting to learn the exact nature of this dating and whether it differs from the one suggested by Yanin for the respective layer of soil drastically (the alleged XI century A.D.)

By the way, the actual presence of a date underneath the drawing of St. Barbara is not disputed by either author: “Another noteworthy detail is that we find a date scratched on the tablet underneath the drawing of St. Barbara” ([290:1], page 203). The interpretation of this date by Yanin and Zaliznyak shall be discussed separately in a short while.

Let us turn to fig. 3.42, where one sees a close-in of the tablet with the date scratched thereupon – scratched and not written, mind you ([290:1], page 203). This explains the fact that the writing lacks the ease and the flowing curves of the quill; it is heavy, rigid and straight-lined.

The interpretation of the dating in question is hardly a difficult task – we see typical XVIII century

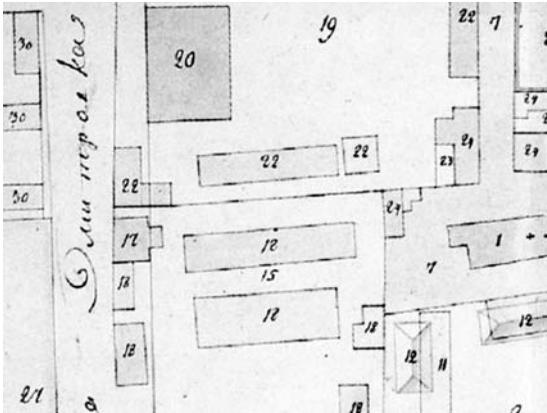


Fig. 3.43. A XVII century map used to provide a specimen of the handwriting typical for that epoch. Taken from a book entitled “History of Moscow in the Documents of the XII-XVIII Century”, wherein it figures as “A Draft of the Plot of Land on Petrovskaya Street Reserved for a Construction of a Theatre. 1776.” Taken from [330:1], page 218.

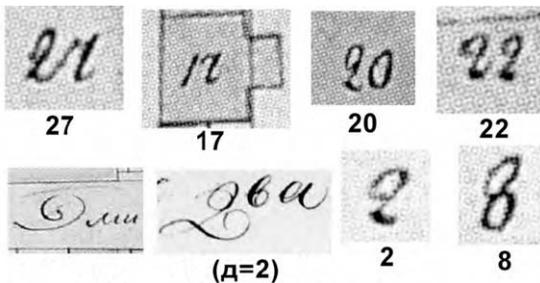


Fig. 3.44. Specimens of handwritten numerals and the letter *D* (*И*) similar to 2, Russian handwriting of the late XVIII century. Taken from [330:1], page 218.

writing and regular Arabic numerals saying 7282. It must be standing for the year according to the Russian ecclesiastical era “since Adam”, or the Byzantine era. The beginning of the new (A.D.) era falls over the year 5508 since Adam.

This chronology had been official in Russia until the reforms of Peter the Great. However, Russians have used it for many years to follow, especially for church needs. Even nowadays certain ecclesiastical publications use these datings, which might look archaic but are nonetheless still alive. It is easy enough to calculate that the year 7282 as specified on the document under study corresponds to the year 1774 A.D. in con-

sensual chronology, since $7282 - 5508 = 1774$. Late XVIII century, no less!

The handwriting of the author is typical for the XVIII century and none other. Indeed, take a look at how he wrote the numbers. First we see a figure of seven, which only differs from its modern counterpart by a single stroke (or a bend) typical for the late XVIII century and anachronistic nowadays, *qv* in fig. 3.42.

Let us turn to old documents that date from the same epoch for proof. In fig. 3.43 one sees a fragment of a handwritten plan of Moscow streets dating from 1776; we see a great many numbers, all of them in late XVIII century writing. One also sees the written name of the Dmitrovka street (fig. 3.43). This plan was taken from the book entitled *History of Moscow in the Documents of the XII-XVIII Century* ([330:1], page 218); it is marked “Plan of the site on Petrovskaya street allocated for the construction of the theatre”. This document is an XVIII century original ([330:1], page 218).

Close-ins of numerals used in the plan can be seen in fig. 3.44 – we see that the figure of seven has the very same “tail” at the bottom as its cousin from the birch bark document from “Novgorod”. Therefore, the first numeral of the “birch” date is a figure of seven.

The second and fourth numerals look exactly the same – two arcs with strokes at the bottom end, *qv* in fig. 3.42. It is quite obvious from the examples presented in fig. 3.44. By the way, the figure of two was identical to the Russian letter *D* in late XVIII century writing – possibly because of the fact that the Russian word for “two” (*dva*) begins with this very letter. The fact that the two were interchangeable is obvious from the inscription on another XVIII century illustration that one sees in fig. 3.45. It was also taken from *History of Moscow in the Documents of the XII-XVIII Century*, section entitled “Pedestrian Bridges over the Ponds of Presnya, XVIII century illustrations” ([330:1], page 210). A close-in of this illustration is presented in fig. 3.46; we see the letter and the numeral to be identical.

In this case, one cannot help noticing that the letter *D*, also known as the figure of two, was occasionally written with no stroke at the bottom whatsoever; apparently, this detail had been optional. This is how we see this letter written in the beginning of the word “*Dmitrovka*” from the abovementioned plan of 1776,

qv in figs. 3.43 and 3.44 – a mere arc without any strokes at the bottom; we see this figure treated in the exact same manner in the birch bark document – the bottom strokes are rudimentary, but present nevertheless, qv in fig. 3.42.

As for the third numeral – we recognise the figure of eight without any problems; it is written as two curved scratches, just as one would expect a figure of eight scratched on a piece of birch bark to look. Despite the complications arising from the writing method, the numeral is very clear, qv in fig. 3.42.

The date we come up with is the year 7282 – as we have mentioned above, it is in a different chronological system but understandable nonetheless, and converts into 1774 A.D. – late XVIII century, the reign of Catherine the Great.

In fig. 3.47 one sees the birch document dating of 7282 as compared to the same number written in XVIII century handwriting, with the numerals taken from the abovementioned plan of 1776. We see the same number, the sole difference being the writing materials used in either case (smooth paper and rougher birch bark). Scratched lines naturally tend to have fewer curves in comparison to the ones drawn with a quill.

Let us also mark the Church Slavonic letter *з* (standing for “7”) above the date and to the right (see fig. 3.42). It is easy to understand in the present case – the figure in question refers to the indiction, or the number of the year in a special cyclic chronology with a 15-year cycle. It must be emphasised that the indiction value for 1774 *does indeed equal 7*.

The fact that this date is accompanied by an indiction number makes it more “ecclesiastical”, in a way, or more congruent with the datings common for Old Russian church books. It is also perfectly natural that the archaic indiction number is transcribed in ancient Slavonic numerals and not the modern Arabic ones.

Let us finally pay attention that there is a small squiggle that follows the first figure of seven in the birch date, apparently in lieu of a dot, qv in fig. 3.42, since one cannot quite scratch a dot on a piece of birch bark the way one would draw it on paper. It is likely to separate the thousands place, and has been used in Arabic numeration very widely.

A propos, no such indication was ever used in



Fig. 3.45. At the end of the XVIII century the handwritten letter D was identical to the handwritten figure of 2. In other words, the two had been interchangeable. The picture is taken from a book entitled “History of Moscow in the Documents of the XII-XVIII Century”, wherein it is entitled “Bridges for Strollers at Presnya Ponds. XVIII Century Drawings”. Taken from [330:1], page 210.

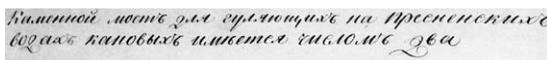


Fig. 3.46. A close-in of the previous drawing with the lettering. Taken from [330:1], page 210.



This is how the dating of “7282, 7th Indiction” (or 1774 A.D.) would be written by an XVIII century scribe.



It is written similarly on the birch bark document from “Novgorod”, the only difference being that the specimen above was written by a quill, whereas this one was scratched on a piece of birch bark.

The indiction is represented by the Church Slavonic letter “з”, which stands for 7.

Fig. 3.47. The dating on the birch bark: 7282 (Arabic numerals), [indiction] 7 (the Church Slavonic letter “zemlya”) as compared to the same date whose individual numerals were culled from specimens of the late XVIII century handwriting. This dating converts to the modern chronological scale as 1774 A.D. ($7282 - 5508 = 1774$).

Church Slavonic numeration; the thousands place was indicated by a special sign that used to stand before the corresponding numeral and not after it; this sign consists of straight lines and would be easy to scratch on a piece of birch bark. Its absence per se leads one to the conclusion that the numerals used aren’t Church Slavonic, as A. A. Zaliznyak and V. L. Yanin happen to believe ([290:1]).

The interpretation of this date insisted upon by Zaliznyak and Yanin is very noteworthy, and quite edifying, in a way. Let us quote:

“Another curious [could that translate as “relatively unimportant”? – Auth.] detail is the date scribbled on the bark; this date reads as 6537 (since Genesis) and corresponds to 1029 A.D. The first, third and fourth numerals are in Church Slavonic indication, whereas the second is Roman, as S. G. Bolotov suggests. Therefore, St. Barbara was drawn by a person who had found it difficult to transcribe the date correctly in Church Slavonic numeration, being however aware of the correct Western transcription” ([290:1], page 203).

We shall refrain from extensive commentary concerning such an odd interpretation of a number transcribed in regular Arabic numerals used to this date. Let us merely inform the readers about the transcription of the dating 6537 (or 1029 A.D., since 6537 – 5508 = 1029) in Church Slavonic numeration. It is as follows:

S Φ Ι 3

“S” stands for the Church Slavonic letter “*zelo*”, which stands for 6000 (accompanied by a special sign),

“Φ” is the Church Slavonic letter “*fert*”, which stands for 500,

“Ι” is the Church Slavonic letter “*lyoudi*”, which stands for 30,

and “3” is the Church Slavonic letter “*zemlya*”, which stands for 7.

There is nothing of the kind on the piece of birch bark that we have under study except a single letter – namely, “*zemlya*”. However, this letter alone doesn’t play any decisive part – firstly, because it pertains to unit digits, and therefore couldn’t have affected the dating substantially, even if it had been in any relation therewith; however, it does not relate to the primary date – it is plainly visible in fig. 3.42 that the letter “*zemlya*” is at a considerable distance from the primary date, and must therefore indicate something else by itself. As we have already mentioned, this numeral stands for the indiction of 1774, which had indeed equalled 7.

Let us turn to the first three numerals (fig. 3.42). If they represent the Church Slavonic number 6537, as the authors of [290:1] are claiming, these numerals must look like the Church Slavonic letters “*zelo*”,

“*fert*” and “*lyoudi*”. Is there any chance of interpreting the document characters as those letters? Let us see for ourselves.

The first thing that needs to be mentioned is that the first letter “*zelo*” that stands for 6000 must be accompanied by a special sign in order to transform it into a thousands place – there is none such sign anywhere, qv in fig. 3.42.

However, there are more important observations to be made – after all, the sign could have been omitted. In general, the figure of 7 on the birch bark can be interpreted as the Church Slavonic letter “*zelo*” – we consider this interpretation to be strained, since one looks like a mirror reflection of the other, but many historians apply this method to Church Slavonic datings nonetheless. However, let us assume that Zaliznyak and Yanin have interpreted the first numeral correctly.

Let us turn to the most important numeral – the second. Why do we consider it the most important? The answer is simple – it is a hundred’s unit and therefore determines the approximate dating. Other figures are less important – the thousand’s unit is easy enough to guess, although certain “ancient” datings contain millenarian discrepancies, qv in CHRON1 and CHRON2. As for decades and years – they cannot shift any dating further than a 100 years in either direction, and also don’t affect the approximate dating all that much.

Thus, the critical numeral is the hundred’s unit. Let us see what it should look like in the unlikely case that the “Novgorod” dendrochronology is correct and enquire whether anything of the sort can be seen anywhere in the birch bark document (this turns out to be impossible). As one sees from the quotation given above, the authors of the article agree with this.

Bear in mind that the document was found in the layer dated to the first third of the XI century by V. L. Yanin’s method ([290:1], page 202). A simple arithmetical calculation demonstrates that the numeral in question must indicate 500 or 400 in order to make the year correspond to the dating suggested by Yanin.

In the first case we would come up with 6500, or 992 A.D. Decades and years would shift this date into the XI century A.D., as it is “required” – any number would do except for 90. This case would be ideal for a final XI century dating.

The second case would be a great deal worse – should the second digit turn out to be 400, we would come up with the year 6400, or 892 A.D., without years or decades ($6400 - 5508 = 892$). This is much “worse” than the first case, since the only way of placing the final date in the XI century would be applying very rigid criteria to the decades digit – the only fitting figure would be 90, indicated by the letter $_$ in Church Slavonic (known as “*cherv*”). It would take quite an effort to make anything found on the birch bark look like the letter in question, due to the simple fact that there’s no such thing there, *qv* in fig. 3.42.

Zaliznyak and Yanin insist on the former to be true; however, they did not dare to make an open declaration that the Church Slavonic symbol for 500, or the letter Φ (“*fert*”) was present in the document. As for the abovementioned presumption voiced in [290:1] about the numerals being Church Slavonic with the sole exception of the most important one, which turned out to be Roman for some reason, our commentary is as follows. Since the figure in question is of a decisive character, the assumption that it belongs to a different numeric system renders the entire “interpretation” of this date completely invalid. It is perfectly obvious that no matter any symbol can get some sort of a numeric interpretation in some foreign system; not an obvious one, perhaps, but a permissible one at the very least. Bear in mind that we’re talking about scratches on a piece of birch bark and not a calligraphically written dating.

One may wonder about whether the second figure (2) looks anything like the Roman numeral D used for 500 (see fig. 3.42)? Strictly speaking, it does not; however, one may yet come up with a rather far-fetched interpretation that will even make a certain sense – indeed, we see a figure of two here, which used to be transcribed in the exact same manner as the Russian letter Д by many XVIII century calligraphists. This is the very latter that corresponds to the Roman D; handwritten versions of both letters may have been similar.

But why did the pair of authors interpret the fourth numeral differently? It is an identical figure of two; however, this time they did not read it as the Roman D, or 500, but rather the Church Slavonic “*lyoudi*” (Л) with the numeric value of 30? The letter has always been written in its present manner, and the symbol on

the birch bark consists of a great many more details, *qv* in fig. 3.42. But if one is to interpret symbols the way one wants them to be interpreted, any date can receive an a priori known “interpretation”.

Let us therefore ask the following question, a purely rhetorical one – is it possible to claim that a dating that explicitly says 1774 A.D. refers to the XI century? We do not think so – one would have to try very hard to validate such a claim, at the very least. However, anyone who reads the work of A. A. Zaliznyak and V. L. Yanin can witness that it can be done with great ease, should such a need arise. We have seen an excellent example of how eager certain historians are to make datings found on ancient artefacts prove Scaligerian chronology, and what colossal efforts they are prepared to make for that end.

A propos, the XI century dating of the piece of birch bark did create a “problem” in historical science nevertheless:

“The finding had instantly led to a problem. Manor ‘E’, where it was found, is located on the old Cherenitsyna Street, whose name translates as ‘Nun Street’ and received its name from the convent of St. Barbara that had once stood nearby. It is obvious that there could be no convent here in the first part of the XI century: the earliest Russian monasteries date to the second half of the XI century, and the Novgorod convent of St. Barbara had first been mentioned in a chronicle that was referring to 1138 A.D., which postdates our finding by over a century” ([290:1], page 202).

We learn that the convent of St. Barbara had once stood at the site where the piece of birch bark was found, and the drawing we find thereupon is one of St. Barbara and none other (see fig. 3.41). It is obvious that the drawing must have been lost or buried here when the convent had still existed. It must have still been around in 1774, when the inscriptions on the birch bark were made. This makes everything fall into place.

One might enquire about the actual dating of 1774 as well as the reasons why we should find this particular figure on the birch document, and why there should be one at all, for that matter, since it was anything but customary in ancient Russia to write datings under drawings of saints. There may be different opinions on this matter, but one cannot fail to point out that the year in question had been the year

of Pougachev's final defeat, with severe persecutions of the "rebel's" supporters initiated all across Russia ([941], page 52; also [85], Volume 35, page 280). We are only beginning to realise the true scale of this event nowadays, as it is becoming clear that the defeat of Pougachev had not come as a result of a mere "suppression of a peasant rebellion", as it is taught in schools, but rather the defeat of a gigantic Russian Siberian state with its capital in Tobolsk, which had been hostile towards the Romanovs. This state must have been known as the "Moscovian Tartaria" in the West, qv in the section that deals with our reconstruction of the "War with Pougachev" (CHRON4, Chapter 12). Therefore, 1774 must have been one of the most important years in the history of Russia and the world in general; it marks a breakpoint that had afflicted every stratum of the Russian society. This may be the reason why we see a date underneath the drawing of St. Barbara in the first place.

Let us conclude with a few words about the other item discussed in [290:1] – the three-tablet *Novgorod Book of Psalms*. Unfortunately, we find nothing in the way of an explicit dating thereupon (there aren't any mentioned in [190:1], at least). However, the XI century A.D. dating of these tablets as suggested by [290:1] appears to be based on a mere fancy. The fact that it has been found in the layer dated to the "first quarter of the XI century" by V. L. Yanin ([290:1], page 203) doesn't mean anything whatsoever, as we have already observed in case of the birch document that bore the dating of 1774. Therefore, these tablets may well be XVIII-century objects. All the individual words encountered upon them (as cited in [290:1], page 106) can also be seen in manuscripts that date from the XVIII century (those written by the old-believers, in particular). One can say the same about the writing style of the tablets as represented by the photograph published in [290:1], page 205 – it has no characteristics that suggest an earlier dating than the XVIII century.

A propos, its very name of these plaques is rather curious – they were known as *tabellae cerae*, whereas the instrument used for writing was called a stylus. Styli were small rods made of metal or bone used for writing on wax; such instruments... were necessarily equipped with a small trowel used for erasing" ([290:1], pages 202-203).

We therefore learn that the "ancient" Greek and Roman waxed tablets used for writing were called *cerae*, whereupon letters were written with styli. One cannot help noticing the similarity between the "ancient" Greek word *cera* and the Russian words for "scratching" and "draft" (*tsarapat* and *chernovik*, respectively). The trowel, which was a sine qua non attribute of every stylus, may well have been called a *styorka* in modern Russia; as for the flexion between R and L, it suffices to remind the reader of how the word Amsterdam used to be spelt in the Middle Ages – Amsteldam, Amstelredam etc (see CHRON1, Chapter 1 etc).

SUMMARY: the interpretation of the birch tablet dating suggested by Zaliznyak and Yanin (the alleged XI century) strikes us as profoundly erroneous. They are some seven hundred years off the mark; the above argumentation demonstrates the dating in question to stand for 1774, or the second half of the XVIII century.

12.7. Historians' response to our article on the Novgorod datings of A. A. Zaliznyak and V. L. Yanin

In February 2002 we published an article entitled "On the 'Novgorod' Datings of A. A. Zaliznyak and V. L. Yanin" in the "Vestnik Rossiyskoi Akademii Nauk". It was concerned with the interpretation of the dating on a recently discovered birch tablet from Novgorod-upon-Volkhov ([912:2]). We have discussed this in detail above.

The very same issue of the "Vestnik" contains commentary of the article written by the staff of the RAS Institute of Archaeology, published at the insistence of the editorial board. Namely, the editors ordered and published the following two articles: "The Dendrochronological Scale of Novgorod as the Most Reliable Scale in the Ancient World" by R. M. Mounchayev and Y. N. Chyornykh ([912:2], pages 141-142) and "Awkward Palaeography" by A. A. Medyntseva ([912:2], pages 143-146). According to the editorial commentary, they contain a "perfectly objective estimation of the article from the editorial point of view", allegedly also "exhausting the topic related therein completely" ([912:2], page 146). However, our question to the historians remains unanswered: what is the date written

on the birch? The negative estimation of our work given in the abovementioned articles is completely unfounded; their authors haven't done anything in the way of analysing the problem. However, even this trinity lacked the nonchalance to confirm the XI century "interpretation" of the date suggested by Zaliznyak and Yanin; the issue of the correct dating is drowned in utter silence.

Let us give a brief account of the articles' content. R. M. Mouchayev and Y. N. Chyornykh, the authors of the article pretentiously entitled "The Dendrochronological Scale of Novgorod as the Most Reliable Scale of the Ancient World" ([912:2], pages 141-142) attempt to ruminate at length on the subject of "errant researchers of chronology" in general, leaving such trifles as the actual analysis of datings scribbled on birch tablets outside the scope of their venerable academic attention. They begin in the following way: "The article of A. T. Fomenko and G. V. Nosovskiy seems to be concerned with a particular case; however, it is prudent and even mandatory to view it in a more general context..." They carry on with general contexts all the way. For instance, Mouchayev and Chyornykh are of the opinion that before we may dare to interpret a dating found on a birch tablet, we should "convince the specialists... that all the dendrochronological scales of the Eastern Europe owe their existence to a conspiracy of the so-called specialists, or utter ignorance from the part of the latter" ([912:2], page 142). Otherwise, "the very discussion (or so much as a semblance thereof) concerning the issue of mediaeval relics and their antiquity is rendered thoroughly meaningless" ([912:2], page 142). All commentary is quite extraneous in this case, really.

Let us cite the only objection that Mouchayev and Chyornykh could make that is in some relation to the issue under discussion: "The approach of A. T. Fomenko and G. V. Nosovskiy to the study of the birch tablets can be classified as scholastic... Such "methods" have been rejected by academic science a long time ago. We consider it needless to carry on with the discussion of this topic". In other words, the article is telling us that historical science has got an established system of taboos that concern certain approaches to the solution of historical and chronological problems. The label "scholastic" doesn't really explain anything at all, being nothing but a desire to protect the erro-

neous chronology of Scaliger and Petavius safe from criticisms and attempts of revision.

Now let us turn to the "Awkward Palaeography" by A. A. Medyntseva ([912:2], pages 143-146). The author is trying to refute our interpretation of the dating on the birch bark; however, for some odd reason, she only discusses the first figure of the four (the thousands place), saying nothing about the hundred's unit, which is of the greatest interest to us and happens to be decisive for dating. Could it be that the XI century "interpretation" of the remaining three figures suggested by Zaliznyak and Yanin is just too completely and obviously out on a limb.

As for the first figure, Medyntseva says that she prefers the interpretation of Yanin and Zaliznyak, who suggest it to stand for the Church Slavonic letter *zelo*. She cites a table with different versions of several Church Slavonic letters (see fig. 1 in her article). It is amazing that the very letter she is talking about ("*zelo*") is altogether absent from the table. The reason is obvious – the Church Slavonic letter "*zelo*" looks nothing like the Arabic numeral supposed to represent it (a figure of seven). Apparently, this letter was excluded from the table in order to avoid "awkwardness" in the relation of facts.

Let us emphasise that despite the obvious wish to "defend" the interpretation of Yanin and Zaliznyak, Medyntseva lacks the self-confidence required for proclaiming the above to be correct. She only managed to agree with how they read the very first numeral without demanding proof, remaining tactfully taciturn about the other three.

13. A HYPOTHESIS ABOUT THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD "RUSSIA" ("*ROUSS*")

It is a known fact that the Mongolian Empire was divided into a number of provinces – the so-called *uluses*. Bearing the frequent flexion of R and L in mind, one might suggest the words *Ulus* and *Rouss*, or *Russia*, to be of the same origin (also cf. the name of the famous Princes *Urusov*). We see an explicit phonetic parallel. However, in the latter case one wonders whether the very name *Russia* may be derived from the word "*rus*" (or "*ulus*" in its Turkic version), which used to stand for a province of the Great = Mongolian Empire?



Fig. 3.48. One of the laws contained in the Sobornoye Ulozhenie of 1649. We see the word “Russian” used in reference to a confession rather than an ethnic group – it is synonymous to “Orthodox” here. Photographed edition of the XVII century.

A similar thing happened to the name “Ukraine” – this word used to mean “borderlands” (cf. the modern Russian word “*okraina*” that translates as “purlieu”). There were many territories known as “*ukraina*”; however, the name eventually became attached to a single region – namely, the modern Ukraine. The same thing could have happened to the word Russian; it may have meant a province initially, later becoming the name of the entire country. In this case, “Russian” must have meant “a representative of a certain Imperial province” at some point in time, and later became the name of an ethnic group.

Let us study the Sobornoye Ulozhenie of 1649 – a collection of Russian laws of the XVII century, which was the epoch of the first Romanovs. We shall see that even in the XVIII century official documents (and the source in question is as official a document as they get) used the word Russian for referring to a confession and not a nationality. We cite a photograph of one such law in fig. 3.48. The law begins with the words: “Whether the person is Russian, or belongs to a different faith”, which is quite self-explanatory.