

is 1509; the veracious one is most likely to be 1609. Pay attention to the figure of 5 (or the archaic version of the figure of six). The difference between the symbol used here and the modern figure of five is that the former is a mirrored version of the latter. By the way, the appearance of the “ancient” Biblical King David is of the utmost interest – we see a typical mediaeval knight in heavy armour. Moreover, we see

Abigail’s hat and gloves right next to her on the ground. Lucas Cranach, the mediaeval artist, had therefore considered it natural that the “ancient” Biblical Abigail should be represented as a mediaeval woman alongside such late mediaeval accessories as gloves and a brimmed hat.

Let us carry on with our study of surviving mediaeval datings.



Fig. 13.58. The engraving of Lucas Cranach entitled “David and Abigail”. The Biblical David looks like a mediaeval knight in armour. Abigail is dressed as a mediaeval woman. Taken from [1310], page 7.



Fig. 13.59. Fragment with the date on the engraving of Lucas Cranach. The figure of 5 is transcribed as its mirror reflection. Taken from [1310], page 7.

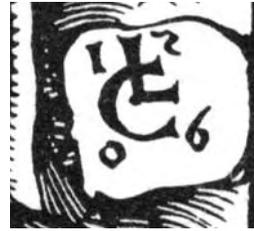


Fig. 13.60. Fragment with the date on the engraving of Lucas Cranach entitled “St. George”. The figure of 5 looks like a mirror reflection of itself. Taken from [1258], page 9.



Fig. 13.61. Fragment with the date on the engraving of Lucas Cranach that depicts St. Hieronymus. The figure of 5 looks like a mirror reflection of itself. Taken from [1310], page 14.



Fig. 13.62. Fragment with the date on the engraving of Lucas Cranach entitled “Johannes der Täufer im Wald preligend” allegedly dating from 1516. The figure of 5 looks like a mirror reflection of itself. From [1258], page 35.



Fig. 13.63. Fragment with the date on the engraving of Lucas Cranach entitled “Fencing Tournament” allegedly dating from 1509. The figure of 5 already has its modern form. Taken from [1310], pages 8-9.



Fig. 13.64. Fragment with the date on the painting of Lucas Cranach depicting Hans Luther, allegedly dating from 1527. The figure of 5 looks just like it does nowadays. Taken from [1258], page 541.

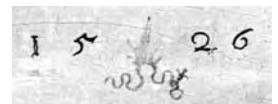


Fig. 13.65. Fragment with the date on a female portrait by Lucas Cranach allegedly dating from 1526. Kept in the State Hermitage of St. Petersburg. The figure of 5 already looks modern. From [1310].

The figure of 5 is also mirrored in the date from Cranach's engraving entitled "St. George" – this transcription strikes us as uncanny nowadays ([1258], page 9; see fig. 13.60). We are told that the date we see here stands for 1509 – which means it should really be interpreted as 1609 – the first decade of the XVII century, that is.

The figure of 5 is mirrored once again in Cranach's engraving that depicts St. Hieronymus ([1310], page 14; see fig. 13.61). The plaque with the date is drawn upside down here. We have turned it over for the sake of convenience; the date is most likely to stand for 1609.

We encounter yet another mirrored figure of 5 in Cranach's engraving known as "Johannes der Täufer im Wald preligend", allegedly dating from 1516 (taken from [1258], page 35). The fragment with the date is reproduced in fig. 13.62; the date probably reads as 1616.

However, the datings found on some other works of the very same Lucas Cranach utilize a different transcription of 5, which is similar to the modern version. We observe this to be the case with his engraving entitled "The Espalier Tournament", allegedly dating from 1509 ([1310], pages 8-9). The fragment with the date is represented in fig. 13.63. The engraving should date from 1609 in reality.

We see a similar transcription of this symbol in Cranach's portrait of Hans Luther, allegedly dating from 1527 ([1258], page 41). The fragment with the date can be seen in fig. 13.64. We are of the opinion that the portrait was painted 100 years later – in 1627.

In fig. 13.65 we reproduce the fragment of Cranach's "Portrait of a Woman" (State Hermitage, St. Petersburg) that contains the date ([1310]). The figure of 5 already looks modern; as we understand now, the date must read as 1626.

NOTA BENE. When we look at the old engravings of the XVI-XVII century (drawings, maps etc), we are usually convinced that the prints we see were made by the artist himself in the XVI or the XVII century. However, this might prove wrong. The authors would usually carve the artwork on a copper plate (the first engravings were made with the use of wood; however, this method had soon become obsolete). The copper plate could then be used for making prints. The grooves in the plate were filled with

black paint, with all the extra paint carefully removed so as to keep it all inside the grooves. The plate was then covered with wet paper and a layer of felt on top. The print would then be "rolled" under high pressure, with the paper reaching into every groove, under pressure applied through the felt, and soaking up the paint.

This is how prints were made. These prints could be produced much later than the copper plates were made; the latter had not been disposable, and would pass from one owner to another, end up sold to third parties and so on.

Prints from old plates could therefore be made in any epoch up to the XVIII and the XIX century; however, the technique of introducing minor alterations into the artwork had been relatively unsophisticated, and easily allowed to change the date on a drawing, or the name on a map. The required part of the plate needed to be polished for this purpose, with another groove carved in its place, albeit a deeper one. The rolling procedure would still provide for excellent contact of the paper and the dye, notwithstanding the deeper grooves carved into the plate by the editors.

This is how one could make slightly altered versions of the "famous old engravings".

The wide use of this technique is common knowledge – with geographical maps, for instance. We have personally seen it in action at the exhibition of old geographical maps that took place in October 1998, at the Union Exhibition Gallery in Moscow. We learnt about it from the organizers of the exhibition, who specialise in the research of the ancient maps. In particular, we were shown two prints of an old map made from one and the same copper plate, before and after the application of the editing technique in question. In this particular case, the objective had nothing to do with forgeries of any kind – an old map had needed to be updated and complemented with new geographical data.

However, it is obvious enough that the very same thing could be done in order to falsify the date on a map, or some name present thereupon. It would take a great deal of labour to change the surface of the entire plate in a radical way; however, the introduction of several minor but decisive changes is hardly of any difficulty at all.

6. RUSSIAN ALPHABET BEFORE THE XVII CENTURY. THE POORLY LEGIBLE INSCRIPTION ON THE CHURCH-BELL OF ZVENIGOROD DECLARED A “CRYPTOGRAM”

The readers accustomed to the Scaligerian version of history must be thinking that the Russian writing before the XVII century had been closely related to the Cyrillic script used nowadays, with minor differences that should present no problem for the specialists whatsoever. We are being shown heavy volumes that presumably date from the XI-XII century, Russian chronicles said to date from the XV and so on – all of them legible perfectly well, with maybe just a couple of obscure passages every here and there. We are taught that the Russian writing had not undergone any drastic changes from the XI and up until the XVIII century.

However, this is not the case. As we shall see below, the Russians had used a script that we completely fail to understand nowadays. There had been many such alphabets in Russia; some of them had still been occasionally used in the XVII century. Nowadays they require decipherment, which doesn't always prove a success. Moreover, even in cases when the researchers encounter the well familiar Cyrillic script in pre-XVII century sources, they often find it hard to interpret. Above we already cite the example of a Russian inscription that dates from the early XVII century and had been deciphered by N. Konstantinov ([425]; see fig. 3.23). We shall cite a similar example below, and a very illustrative one at that.

As we shall be telling the readers below, most of the old Russian church-bells had been recast in the epoch of the first Romanovs. Some of them were mutilated, with every inscription found upon them chiselled off, replaced by a new one, and generally made illegible in one way or another. Nowadays it is difficult to descant about the content or the style of the inscriptions found upon the old Russian church-bells. However, some of such “heretical” artefacts, or their copies, have survived until the XX century, in total defiance of the dominating historical discourse. We know of only one such bell; it dates from the XVII century, and must be adorned by a copy of an even older inscription (either that, or there had been some other reason for using the old Russian alphabets). We



Fig. 13.66. Old photograph of the great bell of the Savvino-Storozhevskiy Monastery in the city of Zvenigorod near Moscow. The bell was destroyed in 1941. This old postcard is kept in the Museum of Zvenigorod. We don't know of any other representations. Taken from [422], page 176.

are referring to the famous Great Church-Bell of the Savvino-Storozhevskiy monastery ([422], pages 176-177). Its destruction took place as late as in the middle of the XX century. We cite an old photograph of the bell in figs. 13.66, 13.67 and 13.68. It is assumed to have been “cast in 1668 by ‘Alexander Grigoryev, the Imperial manufacturer of cannons and bells’. The bell had weighed 2125 *puds* and 30 *grivenki* (around 35 tonnes); we find it on Zvenigorod's coat of arms. Destroyed in October 1941” ([422], page 176). We see one of its pieces in fig. 13.69. The remnants of the bell are kept in the Museum of Zvenigorod, which is



Fig. 13.67. Close-in of a fragment. The top part of the Zvenigorod bell. Taken from [422], page 176.



Fig. 13.68. Close-in of a fragment. The bottom part of the Zvenigorod bell. Taken from [422], page 176.



Fig. 13.69. Surviving fragment of the Zvenigorod bell. From the collection of the Museum of Zvenigorod. Taken from [422], page 177.

situated on the premises of the Savvino-Storozhevskiy monastery.

A drawn copy of the inscription found on the church-bell of Zvenigorod is reproduced in fig. 13.70; it was taken from [808], a publication of 1929.

The second half of the inscription is rendered in several alphabets that all look thoroughly cryptic to us today; inscriptions in different alphabets are separated from each other by crests of some sort – bicephalous eagles etc. It appears that the crests correspond to the alphabets used herein. The first few lines of the inscription have been deciphered; however, the last lines remain a mystery to this day, notwithstanding the fact that the two lines in the bottom are set in the familiar Cyrillic script. We quote the translation of this inscription below (after [808]).

“By the grace of the all-merciful and all-generous Lord, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the prayers of the Most Reverend Sava the Worker of Miracles, and the promises and orders of Czar Alexei, the humble servant of the Lord, and the divine love and heartfelt wish to cast this bell for the house of Our Lady, may she be praised on this day of hers, the holiest of days”.

It has to be said that the above translation suggested by M. N. Speranskiy in [808] contains substantial distortions of the original text. Many of the words are indeed translated correctly; however, some of them have been replaced by other words that provide for a smoother version of the text guaranteed to raise no eyebrows. Some of the words we find in the original text are drastically different from what we see in the translation quoted above. Some of the words are names, and some of the names belong to deities and sound very uncanny nowadays. M. N. Speranskiy decided to replace them with something more familiar (see more details below). This appears to be the very approach to the “translation” of the ancient texts that we find very characteristic for historians in general, and this is by no means the first such occasion. The position of the historians can be formulated as follows: ancient texts should by no means be translated in their entirety or stay faithful to the original; the option of translating word for word is right out. The readers must be protected from heresy and “dangerous” facts. The translation has to look clean and standard, without provoking any questions from any



Fig. 13.70. Lettering from the Zvenigorod bell. Dates from the XVI-XVII century. Taken from [808].

part. This is clearly the key to a problem-free historical science.

Other historians “translate” the inscription on the church-bell of Zvenigorod differently. Let us consider the “translation” made by Alexander Ouspenskiy in 1904. He writes the following: “The largest church-bell ... was donated by Czar Alexei Mikhailovich. We find two inscriptions upon it; the one in the bottom (three lines) is comprised of 425 cryptographic symbols that translate as follows: ‘By the grace of the all-merciful and all-generous Lord, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the prayers of the Most Reverend Sava the Worker of Miracles, and the promises and orders of Czar Alexei, the humble servant of the Lord, and the divine love and heartfelt wish to cast this bell for the house of Our Lady, may she be praised on this day of hers, the holiest of days, and also in the honour of the Most Reverend Sava the Worker of Miracles, in Zvenigorod, also known as Storozhevskiy’.

The top inscription is comprised of 6 lines. It is in Slavic, and indicates the date when the bell was cast: ‘This church-bell was cast ... in the 7176th year since Genesis, and the year 1667 since the Nativity of the Lord’s Own Son, in the 25th day of September ... The bell was cast by the bell-maker Alexander Grigoriev’. We also find a list of the royal family and the Orthodox patriarchs (Paisius of Alexandria, Makarios of Antiochia and Joasaph of Moscow and the Entire Russia), who had lived in that epoch” ([943], page 80).

V. A. Kondrashina, a modern historian, suggests yet another translation of the inscription. This is what

she writes: “It is most noteworthy that the first and the second church-bells were decorated with the following cryptogram written by the Czar, as well as its translation: ‘A deep bow from Czar Alexei, the humble sinner, servant of the Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary, joined by the Czarina and their offspring. Signed by the very own hand of the Czar, ruler of all Russia and master of many arts and sciences, in 12 alphabets. May 7161 (1652)’. We know not whether the above has any deep sacral meaning, or should be regarded as a prank of an educated man” ([294], page 117).

It has to be noted that historians adhere to the opinion that the famous church-bell of Zvenigorod had been cast in two copies, the first one dating from the alleged year 1652 and presumed lost ([294], page 116). The second bell was cast in 1668; it had remained in Zvenigorod until the day of its destruction in 1941. This is the bell whose photograph we see in fig. 13.66. One cannot help enquiring about how the “cryptogram” of Czar Alexei as cited by V. A. Kondra-



Fig. 13.71. Lettering from the Zvenigorod bell transcribed into modern letters.

shina fits into the inscription on the church-bell of Zvenigorod, considering that the “translation” of Alexander Ouspenskiy mentions nothing of the sort.

The inscription on the church-bell of Zvenigorod has caused a great amount of confusion and controversy. According to V. A. Kondrashina, “we know nothing of the fate that befell ... the first church-bell of this calibre, which was cast in the reign of Czar Alexei Mikhailovich. The second bell, which had weighed 35 tonnes and made the name of the Savvino-Storozhevskiy monastery famous, in Russia as well as abroad, appeared much later, in 1668. However, we do know the meaning of the inscription that had adorned the first bell; its author is none other but Czar Alexei Mikhailovich, and we have a surviving copy that was found in his chancellery:

“By the grace of the all-merciful and all-generous Lord, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the prayers of the Most Reverend Sava, the Worker of Miracles, and the promises and orders of Czar Alexei, the humble servant of the Lord, and the divine love and heartfelt wish to cast this bell for the house of Our Lady, may she be praised on this day of hers, the holiest of days, and also in the honour of the Most Reverend Sava the Worker of Miracles, in Zvenigorod, also known as Storozhevskiy, under the good Archimandrite Hermogen and Velyamin Gorskin, the reverend cellarer ...” The names of all the monks in the friary were listed below (one regulation specialist, seven reverend elders, a cup-bearer, 23 priests, 18 deacons and 10 simple monks. The Czar wrote the following in order to eliminate all possible doubts concerning his authorship: “The facsimile of the Czar’s own hand” ([294], page 116).

The real situation is most likely to be as follows. Historians suggest a certain text found in the archive of the royal chancellery to be the

“translation” of the inscription from the church-bell of Zvenigorod. The dating of this “cryptogram translation” remains unclear – it may have been made by the chancellery staff in the epoch when the old Russian alphabets of the XVI-XVII century had already been largely forgotten. The interpretation of the inscription must have already been problematic; therefore, the “translation” in question is more likely to be a rather approximate rendition of the original text. There must have been several interpretation at-

tempts; the resultant translations had therefore differed from each other. Some of them have reached our day, and may be perceived as inscriptions from two different bells. The legend about the two church-bells of Zvenigorod bearing two similar inscriptions, one of which contained a list of the royal family members, and the other – that of the friary’s elders and monks, must own its existence to this very fact.

One gets the impression that the historians of today are reluctant to decipher the original of the inscription from the church-bell of Zvenigorod, and resort to quoting the varied and rather approximate “translations” thereof, which were made in the XVIII-XXI century.

Therefore, we decided to attempt our own reading of the inscription from the church-bell of Zvenigorod. We haven’t managed to decipher everything; however, it turns out that a part of the inscription cited by N. M. Speranskiy contains a number of names or other words that cannot be translated today, which he had replaced with other words of a more “standard” kind. Some of these words and names contain letters that aren’t repeated anywhere else in the text and therefore cannot be read. We came up with the following translation, wherein the unfamiliar letters are replaced with question marks. The word “crest” correlates to the separating symbols, since most of them resemble crests in shape (the crowned bicephalous eagles in the fourth line from the top and at the end of the text, qv in fig. 13.70). Some of the letters that were merged into a single symbol are rendered to individual letters taken in braces. The Slavic *titlo* symbols are transcribed as tildes. The order of lines corresponds to that given by N. M. Speranskiy. One must remember that the letter Ъ used to stand for the sound O.

[Crest] Изволениемъ всеблагагъ и въсещедрагъ {ба~}
 гогръ нашегъ
 [Crest] заступлениемъ ?и?о?уицы заступлници
 л?етцзуызцс
 ды?ицы нс?ез? богородицы [Crest] и за молитвь отьца
 нашего [Crest] [Crest] и молосьтиваго заступника
 преподобнаго псав ??дотворьца [Crest] ы по ?????нию и
 по повел(ять)ния раба христова яря Оле(кси)(ять)я {от}
 ?любви своя душевныя и {от} серьдечнаго желания
 [Crest] [Crest] [Crest] зьлт сей колокол

с??л????ел?т??ил?л?л?к????ет??л?
 ??т??л??л??ет?? [Crest] и великаго и преподобнаго и
 {бг}а нашго вавъ чудотъворца цговъ
 ве?лио?од??а?икае?цивго?о?еквл [Crest] [Crest] [Crest]

In fig. 13.71 we see the original of the text, with modern Cyrillic equivalents of the letters indicated underneath.

Pay attention to how M. N. Speranskiy and his predecessors have managed to transform the above into a smooth text. The last two lines are rather curious, since they are rendered in the usual mediaeval Cyrillic script; however, each letter appears to have been used in an altogether different meaning, as though the order of letters in the alphabet had differed from the present. M. N. Speranskiy hadn't bothered to translate this part; unlike him, we cite our translation of its first half, which was translated by M. N. Polyakov, a fellow mathematician and a graduate of the MSU Department of Mathematics and Mechanics. The second half remains illegible to date. We see a very interesting reference to a certain "God Vavo, the Worker of Miracles". It is possible that "Vavo" was used instead of "Sava". The first line contains a similar formula: "Our Lord, the All-Generous God Gogro". The presence of such names in an Old Russian religious text, which also uses perfectly standard Orthodox formulae, cannot fail to raise an eyebrow. Could this be the real reason why M. N. Speranskiy and his predecessors distorted the translation, replacing the "God Gogro" with the word "Bogog", which obviously reads like "*bog*", the Russian word for "God", indicating no names? As a result, the readers remain unaware of the fact that some of the formulae used by the Russian Orthodox Church in the XVI-XVII century had been completely different from their modern equivalents, and referred to different gods under a variety of names.

Historians usually refrain from referring to the old tradition of referring to the Russian saints as to gods; however, there are exceptions. For instance, G. A. Mokeyev, the author of the book entitled *Mozhaysk, the Holy Russian City* ([536]), which deals with the famous Old Russian figure of St. Nikola the Worker of Miracles, or "Nikola of Mozhaysk", names one of the chapters "The Russian God". It turns out that the foreigners had referred to St. Nikola (Nicho-

las) in this manner, while the Russian had simply called him God. G. A. Mokeyev tells us the following: "The concept of saviour had also included this figure [St. Nikola – Auth.] ... It was for this reason that the foreign authors mentioned 'the Russian Orthodox Christians worshipping Nikola ... as a deity' (Zinoviy of Oten). Foreign expatriates living in Russia had also called him 'Nikola the Russian God'. Ecclesiastic Russian texts refer to 'St. Nikola, our mighty Lord', also calling him 'The Sea God', 'The God of the Barge-Haulers' and even 'Everyone's God' ... one must also mention the slogan 'Nikola is on Our Side', resembling the famous 'God is on Our Side'" ([536], page 12).

G. A. Mokeyev's explanation is that "The Russians had referred to icons as to gods" ([536], page 12). However, this explanation does not really change anything. One cannot ignore the fact that many of the Russian saints had been referred to as gods before the XVII century, including "The Sea God" Nikola (the "ancient" Poseidon being his possible reflection), "The Animal God" Vlasiy (or Veles, qv in [532], page 120), the gods Gogr and Vav (Sava) as mentioned on the church-bell of Zvenigorod, and other "Russian gods".

One immediately recollects the fact that the Bible refers to many Syrian and Assyrian gods as it speaks about Assyria (Russia, or the Horde). For instance: "At that time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him... For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me ... And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods" (2 Chronicles 28:16, 28:23 and 28:25).

The Bible is apparently referring to Russia, or the Horde, of the XV-XVI century (see CHRON6), mentioning the Russian gods (or Syrian gods in Biblical terminology). We see that the saints in Russia had been worshipped as gods up until the XVII century.

The identity of the Russian Czar ("yar") Alexei as mentioned in the inscription on the church-bell of Zvenigorod also remains uncertain. He may identify as Czar Alexei Mikhailovich, as historians opine ([425], [808], [294], [422] and [943]). However, if the inscription upon the church-bell cast in 1668 is really a copy of the lettering from an older church-bell, it is possible the initial reference had been to a

different Czar Alexei. Historians cannot allow this, since they believe that there had only been one Czar in Russia after the ascension of the Romanovs to the throne, a representative of their dynasty. We have already witnessed the opposite to be the case – let us recollect that Stepan Razin had been a military commander in service of a certain Czar Alexei, qv in CHRON4, Chapter 9. This Czar had apparently been a contemporary of Alexei Mikhailovich, with his capital in Astrakhan. It is possible that the church-bell of Zvenigorod had been cast by Czar Alexei of the Horde in Astrakhan, ending up in Zvenigorod eventually. At any rate, this inscription deserves an attentive study. However, learned historians made a false translation of the inscription and promptly forgot about the original. Apparently, they find it a great deal more entertaining to ponder harmless notes upon pieces of birch bark in a thoughtful and meticulous manner, arbitrarily dating them to “the early days of Novgorod”, despite the fact that they are most likely to have been written in the XVI-XVIII century, when paper had still been a luxury.

Let us sum up. The inscription upon the church-bell of Zvenigorod is by no means a cryptogram, but rather a regular inscription that one might expect to find on a church-bell, intended to be read and understood by everyone – nothing remotely resembling a cryptogram, that is. The same applies to the inscription of the book that was deciphered by N. Konstantinov ([425]) as quoted above. This inscription does not contain any “secret messages” either. We emphasise this because modern historians have invented a very convenient theory for dealing with Old Russian texts of this kind, namely, the “cryptogram theory”. Russians are said to have used nothing but the well-familiar Cyrillic script in the days of yore, the way they do today. All the evidence to the opposite is explained by the theory that our ancestors had been “cryptogram-prone”. As far as we know, there isn’t a single example of a deciphered “cryptogram” that would go beyond the confines of regular texts that are a priori known to contain no secrets. The examples cited herein are typical. It is perfectly obvious that the lettering on the church-bell of Zvenigorod has got nothing in common with cryptograms – there is nothing secret or extraordinary about the message.

The position of the historians is easy to under-

stand – if we admit the existence of another alphabet in Russia before the XVII century, we shall instantly become confronted with a fundamental question: what should we make of the numerous “ancient” Russian texts that are said to date from the XI-XV century demonstrated to us as evidence that allegedly supports the Scaligerian version of history? Why don’t they contain any of the peculiar signs we see? Historians decided to declare all the real remnants of the ancient Russian alphabets to be “cryptograms” – enigmatic and of little interest to a discerning researcher. The XVII-XVIII century forgeries were proclaimed to be “authentic Old Russian texts”, much to everyone’s delight.

However, it becomes perfectly obvious that such “illegible” or badly legible Old Russian texts need to be searched for and studied most thoroughly. It is there, and not in the forgeries of the Romanovian time (extremely bold ones at times), that we may discover the most vivid and the most dangerous kind of veracious historical information about historical events of the XI-XVI century. Philologists and researchers of the Old Russian writing have got an enormous field of work here.

Let us conclude with the observation that modern historians are rather close-lipped and vague whenever they are forced to mention the church-bell of Zvenigorod – apparently, so as to avoid attracting independent researchers lest they discover the above-mentioned oddities. It is most significant that the materials of two scientific conferences held in the wake of the Savvino-Storozhevskiy monastery’s 600th anniversary in 1997 and 1998 don’t contain a single reference to the church-bell of Zvenigorod, the town’s most famous historical artefact ([688]). This is extremely odd – the conferences were focussed on the history of the very monastery that had housed the church-bell of Zvenigorod for some 300 years – we find this very church-bell on the coat of arms of Zvenigorod ([422], page 176; see fig. 13.72). Historians themselves report that the church-bell had made the monastery famous in every part of Russia as well as abroad ([294], page 116). How could it be that anniversary conferences with nothing but the history of the monastery on their agendas could fail to utter so much as a single word about the bell and the lettering that decorates it. How can historians be so reluc-



Fig. 13.72. Coat of arms of Zvenigorod. From the description of the coat of arms: “A great bell against a field of light blue, with letters unknown in our age at the bottom; this bell, cast in copper, is still kept there” ([185], page 144).

tant to study the alphabets used in Russia before the XVI-XVII century? Are there any skeletons in their closets?

Let us proceed. The voluminous publication dedicated to the history of the Savvino-Storozhevskiy monastery couldn't find space for a drawn copy of the lettering that adorns the church-bell of Zvenigorod anywhere on any of its two hundred pages for some strange reason. All we see is an old photograph of the bell, and a very small one at that ([688], page 176), and a newer one where we see the surviving fragment of the bell that is exhibited in the monastery's museum. There isn't a drawn copy of the inscription on the bell anywhere in [294], [422], [943] and [688], all of them publications that were sold on the premises of the monastery in 1999. Why would that be? Let us reiterate that the famous bell had made the monastery famous in Russia as well as abroad (see [294], page 116), and we also find it on the old coat of arms of Zvenigorod.

By the way, who had destroyed the bell in 1941, and under what circumstances exactly? Not a word about it anywhere in [294], [422], [943] or [688]. What about other fragments of the bell apart from the one in the museum? Sepulchral silence. The only other fragment of the bell that we saw during our visit to the monastery in 1999 was a fragment of the bell's clapper next to the bell-tower (see fig. 13.73). There is no old lettering anywhere upon it. It has to



Fig. 13.73. Fragment of the Zvenigorod bell's striker put up for exhibition next to the belfry of the Savvino-Storozhevskiy Monastery. Photograph taken by the authors of the book in May 1999.

be pointed out that Zvenigorod had not been captured by the German army in World War II, and that no shells ever fell on the monastery, where the bell had hung up until 1941 ([422], page 187). Therefore, the destruction of this priceless historical relic cannot be blamed on the Nazis. “A regiment of the Soviet Army was billeted in the Savvino-Storozhevskiy monastery during World War II” ([422], page 190). However, it seems highly unlikely that the Soviet army should have destroyed the enormous 35-tonne church-bell. After all, copper has got nothing to do with modern cannons – those are made of steel.

The book *Old Zvenigorod* ([581]) offers the following version of the bell's demise: “An attempt to remove the bell for safekeeping was made in 1941, as the Nazi army was approaching the town – however, the bell broke (the museum of Zvenigorod has only got fragments at its disposal)” ([581], page 186). Let us agree with that and assume that the historians and archaeologists had indeed planned to remove the bell and take it away to a safe place, but accidentally broke it. One must assume that the caring scientists should have made the careless workers collect every single piece of the bell, load them onto the lorries that they must have commandeered for this specific purpose, and send them away to safety. Why weren't all of the fragments put up for exhibition after the war? Even a mutilated bell would be worthy of seeing it; at the end of the day, some of them could even be pieced

together. All that we see is a single fragment of the bell, qv in fig. 13.69. Where is the rest? If there is no trace of the remaining fragments to be found nowadays, who could have destroyed them, and how?

Indeed, who broke the bell? Could it be a chance occurrence that the famous bell had perished as soon as the circumstances were right – war, destruction and so on? Did someone make it fall from the bell-tower? Who could it be? The very same parties who had long wished for the destruction of this unique Russian relic that had blatantly refused to fit into the Scaligerian and Romanovian history, perhaps, and using a convenient chance to eliminate an important witness of the true Russian history and the epoch of the Horde?

We must point out another odd fact about the church-bell of Zvenigorod that has been pointed out to us by V. N. Smolyakov. Above we reproduce the old coat of arms of Zvenigorod with a bell upon it (see fig. 13.72). The book entitled *The Coats of Arms of the Russian Empire* ([162]) contains a reproduction of the coat of arms on page 1781, and another one right next to it, a more recent version that was approved by the royal court in 1883. The two are drastically different – the description of the old coat of arms (the version of 1781) says that the great bell is made of copper and has lettering in an “unknown alphabet” upon it, whereas the version of 1883, approved by the royal court et al, has no trace of any “secret alphabets”. The actual bell is allegedly made of silver: “A silver bell with golden decorations upon an azure shield” ([162], page 56). Not a single word about any mysterious lettering anywhere. One wonders why the Romanovs would want to change the copper bell as found on the coat of arms of Zvenigorod for a silver one, removing the “illegible” inscription as they were at it?

Another question that one feels obliged to ask in this respect is about whether the bell destroyed in 1941 is actually the same Great Church-Bell of Zvenigorod that we know of from mediaeval chronicles? After all, it is presumed that two such church-bells were made in Zvenigorod. It is possible that the first one, the old Great Church-Bell of Zvenigorod cast in the alleged year 1652, whose fate “remains unknown”, had been destroyed by the Romanovs, who must have disapproved of it strongly for some reason. The de-



Fig. 13.74. Belfry of the Savvino-Storozhevskiy monastery in 1999. We see a large empty niche (with a window at the back), where the enormous bell of Zvenigorod had hung until 1941. Photograph taken by the authors of the book in May 1999.

stroyed bell immediately became declared missing. Another one came to replace it in the alleged year 1668; this is the bell that was destroyed in 1941. The “secret alphabet” upon it must have been “less dangerous” – one must think that quite a few such bells with “mysterious alphabets” upon them had still been about in the XVII-XVIII century, so it was possible to replace one with another. However, even the “less dangerous” bell got destroyed in 1941, as soon as a convenient opportunity had presented itself.

V. N. Smolyakov voiced the following idea about the “cryptogram” on the bell that is part of Zvenigorod’s old coat of arms (which amounts to a single word, qv in 13.72) in his letter to us: “I decided to attempt a translation of the inscription using the ‘Alphabet of Volanskiy’. We shall give a detailed de-



Fig. 13.75. Ancient armaments of a Russian warrior exhibited in the museum of the Savvino-Storozhevskiy Monastery. The Russian shield is covered in Arabic lettering – more precisely, the lettering that is presumed to be exclusively Arabic nowadays. Photograph taken by the authors of the book in May 1999.

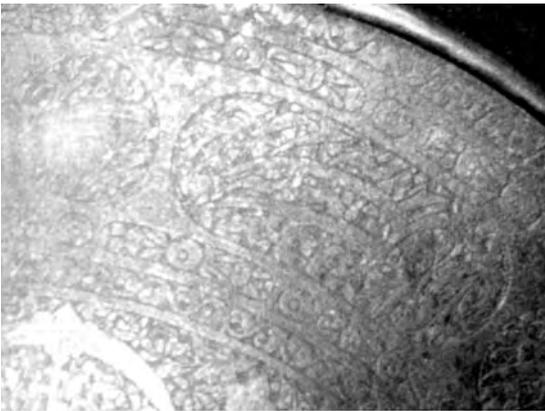


Fig. 13.76. Fragment of a shield with Arabic lettering.

scription of Volanskiy’s table, which suggests to interpret the “ancient” Etruscan letters as old Cyrillic characters, in CHRON5: “All of the letters can be identified with certainty, with the exception of the second, which can be read as either LA or AL. In the latter case we shall end up with the word DALDOVKHOM, which sounds perfectly Slavic. The word can be separated in two – DALDOV (cf. *daldonit*, which translates as ‘to ring’ or ‘to chatter’ – see V. Dahl’s dictionary, Volume 1, page 414) and KHOM, or KHAN –

Czar. I am of the opinion that the inscription says “The Czar (Khan) of Bells”. It goes without saying that a reliable translation of such a short inscription is a very difficult task; however, the version related above looks perfectly plausible.

Let us also point out another interesting fact. The museum of the Savvino-Storozhevskiy monastery in Zvenigorod exhibits several ancient armaments of a Russian warrior. We see a Russian shield covered in Arabic lettering (see figs. 13.75 and 13.76). We explain this fact above, in the first section of the present chapter.



Fig. 13.77. Lettering on the left side of the Platerias Doorway of the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral in Spain. It is interpreted in a variety of ways today, and considered to be “barely legible”. Taken from [1059], page 42.



Fig. 13.78. Our drawn copy of the lettering on the left side of the Platerias Doorway of the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral.



Fig. 13.78a. The same lettering at the doorway of the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral photographed a while later – in 2002. This photograph of the lettering, as well as the ones that follow it, were made by Ignacio Bajo, Professor of Mathematics from the University of Vigo in Spain at our request. A comparison with the previous photograph of the same lettering that we have taken from the book ([1059], page 42) published in 1993 leads us to he thought that the inscription must have undergone a “restoration” over the last decade. On the photograph of 2002 it looks a great deal more “elegant” than ten years ago. It is possible that traces of other signs were obliterated during the “restoration” – the “unseemly” gaps between the wooden blocks of the doorway were filled with cement first, and the lettering was tampered with later.



Fig. 13.78b. The top symbol of the inscription found on the Platerias Doorway of the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral. Photograph taken in 2002. If we compare the photograph to the old one, we shall clearly see that the “restorers” have tried to make the lettering look “more elegant”. They must have applied fresh concrete, meticulously tracing out whatever lines struck them as necessary, with the rest of them plastered over. The lettering didn’t get any clearer – however, it looks more academic, smooth and elegant now.



Fig. 13.78c. The second and third symbols from the top of the inscription found on the Platerias Doorway of the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral. Photograph taken in 2002. We see the same to be the case – the restorers “improved” the illegible text, having almost completely obliterated the traces of letters inscribed below. This demonstrates the utility of comparing different photographs of the same object separated by more or less substantial time periods. We can occasionally see the undercover work on the “rectification of history”. It doesn’t necessarily have to imply forgery – often enough the objective pursued is a “sleeker” look that will attract more tourists (and, ultimately, be of greater commercial success). However, this results in the distortion of history, whether deliberate or accidental.



Fig. 13.78d. The fourth symbol from the top of the lettering on the Platerias Doorway of the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral. Also “restored” – the edges of the lines became smoother. Photograph taken in 2002.



Fig. 13.78e. The fourth symbol from the top of the lettering on the Platerias Doorway of the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral. “Restored”. Photograph taken in 2002.

7. EUROPEAN WRITING BEFORE THE XVII CENTURY. THE SO-CALLED “EUROPEAN CRYPTOGRAMS”

Traces of old alphabets that must have been in use before the XVII-XVIII century can be found in Europe as well. Such relics are usually declared illegible or cryptogrammic, which is exactly how the inscription on the church-bell of Zvenigorod gets treated. Etruscan writing is the most famous example; we shall study it attentively in CHRON5. However, apart from the “illegible” Etruscan texts, there are many other “mystery inscriptions”.

Let us consider the lettering on the left side of one of the doorways that lead into the famous Santiago de Compostela cathedral in Spain (see fig. 13.77). Our drawn copy of this lettering is reproduced in fig. 13.78. Nowadays it is presumed to stand for the dat-



Fig. 13.78f. A shallow trace of some other sign on the Platerias Doorway of the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral. Photograph taken in 2002.



Fig. 13.78g. The head of some fantasy animal – a chimera with two large tongues on the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral. The meaning behind such artwork appears to be lost today. Photograph taken in 2002.

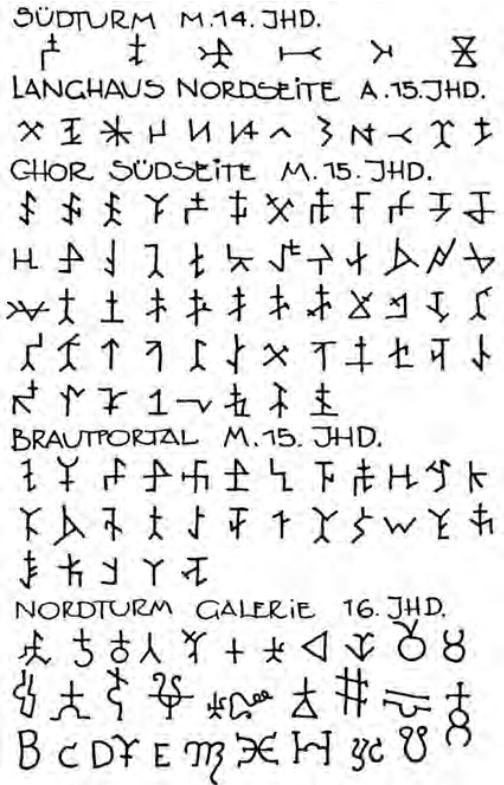


Fig. 13.80. Strange signs on the stones of the St. Lorenz Cathedral in Nuremberg. They are supposed to be guild symbols of the XIV-XVI century masons. It is possible that the signs in question are letters of a forgotten alphabet, which had been used in Europe up until the XVII century. Taken from [1422], page 40.



Fig. 13.79. Strange signs on the stones of the St. Lorenz Cathedral in Nuremberg. They are supposed to be guild symbols of the XIV-XVI century masons. It is possible that the signs in question are letters of a forgotten alphabet, which had been used in Europe up until the XVII century. Taken from [1417], page 8.

ing of the cathedral’s foundation: “Inscribed on the left side of the doorway [Platerias Doorway – Auth.] ... we find the dating of the cathedral’s foundation, which is still an apple of discord for the modern scientists. Some of them are convinced that it reads as 1112 (or 1072 in the modern calendar), others suggest 1116 (1078) or even 1141 (1103). In the beginning of the XII century it was interpreted as ‘año 1078’...” ([1059], page 38).

It is difficult to estimate the correctness of the text’s interpretation suggested by the modern historians. It may have been written in a forgotten or almost forgotten alphabet that had been used in the

Western Europe before the XVII-XVIII century; one needs to conduct additional research in this area. In fig. 13.78 (a, b, c, d, e and f) one sees photographs of the very same inscription that were made in 2002. It is obvious that the lettering has undergone “restoration”. In fig. 13.78d we see the head of a chimera, a detail of the cathedral’s artwork.

Another example is as follows. Many strange signs have been discovered inscribed on stones in the Cathedral of St. Lorenz in Nuremberg, Germany. The discovery of these signs in the cathedral’s northern tower, for instance, was made in 1908 ([1417], page 8). We reproduce some of them in figs. 13.79 and 13.80. His-



Fig. 13.81. The Orthodox Christian Canon (also known as the Nomocanon) written in Arabic. Among other things, this book contains the rules and edicts of the local and ecumenical councils of the Christian Church. It was considered the primary canonical Christian book in the Middle Ages, used to regulate all the ecclesiastical activities. Thus, apart from the Slavic, Greek and Latin, the Arabic language had also been used for the canonical Christian literature. This book was manufactured in Syria in the XIX century. Nowadays it is kept at the Rom Historical Museum in Toronto, Canada. Photograph taken by the authors in 1999.

torians write the following: “These signs on stones were left in the course of the XVI century restoration works” ([1417], page 8). It is reported further that the scientists are busy studying the signs, but the book ([1417]) doesn’t indicate anything in the way of a translation. Some of them are presumed to be special guild signs of the clans that carved stone in the XIV-XVI century ([1422], page 40).

This interpretation is, of course, possible, but it does not solve the general issue. The mysterious clan signs may be letters of a forgotten alphabet that had been used until the XVI century at least; in this case they may be the initials of the craftsmen who did the restoration works.

It turns out that canonical Christian texts weren’t only written in Slavonic, Greek and Latin, but also in Arabic, qv in fig. 13.81.