

# “Invitation of the Varangians” and “Invitation of the Swedes” in Russian History: Ideas of Early Historiography in Late Russian Medieval Society

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THE PROBLEM OF THE GENESIS of the Russian state has been a subject of debate among politicians and historians for several centuries. This discussion is stimulated, inter alia, by the ardent national aspiration for self-identification of Russian culture, in which the state has played a much more important role than in other European cultures. The problem of historical and mythical explanation of the origins of the Muscovite Kingdom perturbed the minds even of medieval chroniclers and politicians. As early as in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, the *Tale of the Grand Princes of Vladimir* (*Skazanie o velikikh knyaz'yakh Vladimirskikh*) appeared<sup>1</sup>. This narrative was based on a legend alleging that the Rurikids dynasty had originated from the Roman Emperor Augustus, who dispatched his relative Prus to rule the region of *Prussia Regalis* (the northern territories of what is now Poland, Lithuania and Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation). This *Tale* asserted that the ambassadors had actually departed specifically for *Prussia*. According to the *Primary Russian Chronicle*, they were sent in 862 by the Slavs and Finno-Ugrians to invite the “Varangians” to reign in Eastern Europe<sup>2</sup>. Acceptance of that assertion allowed medieval Russian politicians and ideologists to regard Prus as an

ancestor of the Russian princes. The same discourse, based on the presumable name of the Prussian tribe of Rus, which seemed consonant with that of Prus, would ground the geographical identification of the “cradle” of the Rurikids, thus enabling the link between Early Rus’ with Prussia, i.e. with the Western Slavs. The historical tradition of equalling Muscovite tsars with the Holy Roman Emperors was further substantiated through a myth about the transference of the Imperial regalia, including the so-called “Monomakh’s Cap” (*Shapka Monomakh* – the crown used in the 16<sup>th</sup> century during the coronation ceremony of Russian tsars), allegedly given by the Byzantine emperor Constantine Monomachus (1042-1055) to Vladimir Monomakh, prince of Kiev (1053-1125). As a matter of fact, this legend constitutes the second part of the late medieval tale mentioned.

Evidently, the *Tale of the Grand Princes of Vladimir* voiced the ambition of the Muscovite grand princes for Roman political heritage. A decade later, the concept nominating Moscow as the “Third Rome” was formulated<sup>3</sup>. This was the period when Russian early chronicles

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1. *Skazanie o knyaz'yakh Vladimirskikh*, R. P. DMITRIEVA (ed.), Moscow-Leningrad, Academy of Sciences, 1955.

2. *Lavrent'evskaya letopis'*, E. F. KARSKIY and B. M. KLOSS (eds.), *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei*, 1, Moscow, Yazyki russkoj kul'tury, 2001, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., col. 19-20.

3. V. N. MALININ, *Starets Eleazarova monastyrya Filofej i ego poslaniya, Istoriko-literaturnoe issledovanie*, Kiev, Pechersk Monastery, 1901; W. LETTENBAUER, *Moskau das dritte Rom. Zur Geschichte einer politischen Theorie*, München, Pustet, 1961; N. V. SINITSYNA, *Tretij Rim, Istoki i évoljutsiya russkoj srednevekovoj kontseptsii 15-16 veka*, Moscow, Indrik, 1998; M. POE, “Moscow, the Third Rome: the Origins and Transformations of a ‘Pivotal Moment’”, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 49, 2001, pp. 412-429.

(including the *Primary Russian Chronicle*) were introduced into the shortlist of secular reading for Russian society. During the 16<sup>th</sup> century, that list was considerably enlarged. The idea of the origins of Muscovite princely power as inherited from Caesar Augustus was favourably accepted by contemporaries in Moscow Rus. In 1613, during the negotiations in Vyborg about the conditions of accession of the Swedish Crown-Prince Charles Philip (Karl Philipp, Carl Filip; 1601-1622) to the Russian throne, the Archimandrite of Khutyn' monastery near Novgorod Cyprian Starorusenkov († 1634), afterwards the Archbishop of Siberia (1620-1624) and Metropolitan of Novgorod (1626-1634), proposed his own interpretation of the genesis of the Muscovite dynasty as originating from Ryurik, Prus and Augustus. This new idea, evidently combining the previous conceptions, caught the attention of contemporary Swedish scholars, including the clerk Daniel Hjort († 1615), diplomat Petrus Petrejus (Peer Persson de Erlesunda, 1570-1622)<sup>4</sup>, and Johan Widekindi (1618?-1675/1678), the priest and royal librarian at the Swedish Court<sup>5</sup>. Since that time, the long discussion on the origination of the Muscovite reign has been ongoing both in political and scientific historical circles.

Today, it is of no small interest to study the presumable impact of the earliest historiography on the late medieval mentality and political conceptions, which, perhaps, are also subconsciously rooted in present-day scientific and political thought. Results and conclusions of such a study would be helpful in explaining the mechanisms for generating ideas in the Middle Ages, as well as how those

mechanisms are being inherited in modern times. For a better understanding of such issues as the beginnings of the Early Russian state, the role of the Scandinavians in Russian history, and the culture and origins of the ethnicity and the name of *Rus'*, it is necessary for modern researchers to revise the late medieval ideological tradition of treating early medieval sources.

It is of great importance, for instance, to trace the interest in problems of the historical origins of the Russian state back to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The acute political crisis of Muscovy in 1605-1617, called *Smutnoe Vremya* or the *Time of Troubles* in the Russian historical tradition<sup>6</sup>, brought to light many specific features (including political and cultural aspects, issues of local autonomy) of particular regions in the vast country. It also suddenly roused regional political thought, having attracted it to local traditions and historiography.

To a great extent, this is true of the political formation called the *Novgorod Land*. The specifics of the Novgorod community were found in the composition of its elite. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, it consisted not of descendants of the local landowners (Novgorod boyars), but of the serving men (*sluzhilye lyudi*), whose ancestors moved to Novgorod from central and eastern Muscovy in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. The origins of the Novgorod black clergy of the *Time of Troubles* were probably similar, for its connections with the pre-Muscovite traditions are so far impossible to trace. Nevertheless, the regional self-identity of the Novgorodians during the *Time of Troubles* was no less manifest than during the period of independence of the Novgorod Land.

4. PETRUS PETREIUS, *Regni Muschovitici sciographia*, Stockholm, Ignatium Meurer hoos, 1615.

5. JOCHAN WIDEKINDI, *Historia belli Sueco-Moscovitici decennalis, quod junctis armis cum magno Moscorum duce Johan Basilio Svischio, primum adversus rebelles et Lithuanos, mox Polonos, tandem data causa contra ipsos Moscovitas, auspiciis regum Sueciae Caroli IX, et Gustavi Adolphi ductu Jacobi de la Gardie, varia fortuna ab anno seculi hujus septimo, in decimum septimum gestum et ardua pace compositum est, totidem libris distincta*, Stockholm, Nicolaum Wankijf Reg. Typographum, 1672; JOCHAN WIDEKINDI, *Thet Svenska i Ryszland tijo åhrs Krijgz-Historie, hwilket under Konung Carls IX och K. Gustaf Adolphi den Andres och Stores Baneer, Storfursten Ivan Vasilivitz Suischi och Ryszland til hielp, först emoot the Rebeller och Lithower, sedan the Pälér, sidstonne emoot sielfve Muskowiterne, ifrån år 1607 in til 1617. Aff Feldherren Gref Jacob de la Gardie uthfördt, och medh en reputeligh Fredh bijlagdt är*, Stockholm, Nicolaum Wankijf Reg. Typographum, 1671. About the character of the J. Widekindi's historical information, see below. See also: CONRAD BUSSOW, *The Disturbed State of the Russian Realm*, G. E. ORCHARD (trans., eds.), Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994.

6. The Time of Troubles was a particular period in the history of Russia comprising the interregnum between the end of the Ryurikids reign with the death of Tsar Feodor Ivanovich (1598) and the access to power of the dynasty of the Romanovs (1613) with the election of Tsar Mikhail Romanov. After famine and mass mortality among the population in 1601-1603, a civil war began with the active participation of Russian neighbours: Sweden, at first playing the role of a third-party, and the Polish-Lithuanian State. For a general description of the period, see for example N. RIASANOVSKY, *Histoire de la Russie des origines à 1996*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1996, pp. 174-193 (revised edition and French translation of N. RIASANOVSKY, *A History of Russia*, Oxford University Press, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993); M. MEDVEDEV, "La fin de l'indépendance de Novgorod: les 'Temps Troubles' ou deuxième 'Appel aux Varègues'", in *Russie viking, vers une autre Normandie? Novgorod et la Russie du Nord, des migrations scandinaves à la fin du Moyen Âge (VIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> s.)* [Exhibition catalogue, Caen, Musée de Normandie, June 24-October 31, 2011], S. BERTHELOT and A. E. MUSIN (eds.), Paris, Errance, 2011, pp. 139-143.

When discussing cultural events in Novgorod society during the *Time of Troubles*, it is necessary to mention the continuous interest in Early-Russian historiographic heritage among the educated people of the period. The number of written sources claimed by the intellectual life of Novgorod during the *Time of Troubles* is fairly small. The well-studied "Novgorod Occupation Archives" (collection of Novgorod state documents of 1611-1617 housed now in the Krigsarkivet and Riksarkivet archives in Stockholm) contain no information on this subject<sup>7</sup>. Only in rare cases, documentary sources (city rumours, petitions of various clerks and scribes, etc.) "spill the beans" and mention some trends in the everyday life of the epoch. On the other hand, some particular historical events of Novgorodian life during the period under consideration are known to us. These events suggest that notions and spiritual searches of educated people were fairly specific and unconventional at that time.

There are documents which allow us to form an idea of the circle of reading of the well-educated Novgorodians in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, as well as of the extent of literary erudition of the official milieu. Thus Ivan Timofeev (ca. 1553-1631) was a prominent "erudite" of the time. He was a *d'yak*, i.e. the "chief clerk" or the "chief of the office department" (*prikaz*). Although the language of his *Vremennik* (Chronicle) is confidently attributed to 17<sup>th</sup>-century literature<sup>8</sup>, researchers distinctly see that he used in his work some earlier literary monuments (*Tale about the Novgorod White Cowl [Klobuk] of the Novgorodian Bishops*<sup>9</sup>, various chronicles, etc.).

The style itself of official documents of the 17<sup>th</sup> century suggests that literary erudition was not too uncommon among the Novgorodian bureaucracy of the period. The acts of borderline demarcation in Karelia, negotiated between Russia and Sweden in 1618-1620, have

preserved examples of the language of another Novgorod functionary, minor clerk (*pod'yachij*) Vasilij Chastoj. His letter to Swedish partners was profusely ornamented with archaic words, as well as quotations from the New Testament and other literature<sup>10</sup>. It seems likely that the reproachful letters of the Ambassador Chancellery Secretaries sent to Muscovite representatives at the border-demarcation negotiations were concerned specifically with Chastoj's literary style. The secretaries wrote that they were unable to understand the letters of the representatives. These writings, according to the secretaries, "were presented neither in Russian, nor in a foreign language (*"ni po-russki, ni po-nemetski"*), although, perhaps, rather in a foreign style than in Russian, but without regular use of tenses and cases, so that nobody was able to conceive the sense"<sup>11</sup>.

Recently, Vera Vovina supported Sergej V. Dmitrievskij's hypothesis from the mid-1950s<sup>12</sup>. S. V. Dmitrievskij suggested that the clerk Timofeev was not the author, but rather the editor of the "*Vremennik*"<sup>13</sup>. The two researchers based their supposition on differences between the bureaucratic language of the time (which must have been habitual to Ivan Timofeev) and the ornate bookish language of the "*Vremennik*". The above observations on the Novgorod clerk's florid language engender additional doubts concerning the authorship of the "*Vremennik*". The clerk Vasilij Chastoj, who undoubtedly must have been acquainted with Timofeev, used a bookish language also in official documents. This discussion suggests that the

7. L. NORDQUIST and E. LÖFSTRAND, *Accounts of an Occupied City. Catalogue of the Novgorod Occupation Archives 1611-1617*, vol. 1, Skrifter utgivna av Riksarkivet, 24, Stockholm, Riksarkivet, 2005; vol. 2, Skrifter utgivna av Riksarkivet, 31, Stockholm, Riksarkivet, 2009.

8. *Vremennik Ivana Timofeeva*, V. P. ADRIANOVA-PERETS and O. A. DERZHAVINA (eds.), St Petersburg, Nauka, 2004.

9. *Povest' o belom klobuke*, N. N. ROZOV (ed.), in *Pamyatniki literatury Drevnej Rusi, Seredina 16 veka*, L. A. DMITRIEV and D. S. LIKHACHEV (eds.), Moscow-Leningrad, Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1985, pp. 198-233; M. LABUNKA, *The Legend of the Novgorodian White Cowl (the Study of its "Prologue" and "Epilogue")*, Ukrainian Free University, Monographs, 56, München, Ukrainian Free University, 1998; see the review by S. FRANKLIN in *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 78, 4, 2000, pp. 773-775.

10. The text of this letter is difficult to comprehend even for proficient researchers. Vasilij Chastoj reproaches his addressee with presenting false information about him and, employing pompous religious phrases, points to the responsibility of the latter before God (Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj arkhiv drevnikh aktov = Russian State Archives of Ancient Documents, Moscow, Russia, collection 96. 1620, manuscript 2, ff. 528-555).

11. The reply letter, indicating an essential disruption in the cultural tradition, is concerned not only with the indispensability to write in contemporary Russian, but, moreover, with the fact that the bookish language was foreign to a common man of that time, i.e. not the native language (Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj arkhiv drevnikh aktov = Russian State Archives of Ancient Documents, Moscow, Russia, collection 96. 1620, manuscript 2, ff. 572-577).

12. S. V. DMITRIEVSKIJ, "D'yak Ivan Timofeev i ego istoricheskij trud", *Chelo*, 2, 2000, pp. 34-35 (= Riksarkivet, Stockholm, Sweden, Ämbestearkiv, Huvudarkiv, FVa Historiska utredningar och anteckningar, v.45, 1950, S. Dmitrievskys arbetspapper).

13. V. G. VOVINA-LEBEDEVA, "K voprosu ob Ivane Timofeeve, 'Vremennike' i mitropolite Isidore", in *Novgorodika 2008: Vechevaya respublika v istorii Rossii*, Materialy nauchno-prakticheskij konferentsii, 21-23 September 2008, 2, D. B. TERESHKINA et al. (eds.), Velikij Novgorod, State University, 2009, pp. 146-155.

acquaintance with literature of the precedent periods was more widespread than we supposed before, so it may have reflected strongly on both the literary style and the set of ideas in late medieval society.

Thus, in Novgorod of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, literary works of the precedent age had a significant influence. After the fall of the court of False Dmitrij II († 1610), in his Tushino camp near Moscow, several writings by Prince Andrej Kurbskij (1528-1583), the prominent Russian *dissident* and emigrant during the reign of Ivan the Terrible, were found among the belongings of the Tushino *d'yak* (Secretary) Denis Safonov, who served in Novgorod in 1611.

Both in official documents and literary works of the period under consideration, the version about the Prussian/Varangian origin of Rurik is particularly widespread, as well as the legend about the "Invitation of the Varangians" of the chronicles deriving the first Russian ruling dynasty "from overseas" and equating *Varangian* with *Scandinavian/Swedish*.

This genealogical legend was repeated both in Ivan Timofeev's "Vremennik" and thrice reiterated by the Novgorodian ambassadors during the negotiations of 1611-1613 with the Swedish Crown (on July 25 and December 25, 1611; August 26, 1613). In historical sources, it is especially emphasized that the allusion to the events of the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century during the negotiations of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century was quoted by Russian ambassadors according to a special memorandum from "the whole of Novgorod", i.e. by a direct order of the Novgorodian civil community, its seniors and all its citizens. But what was the source from which this political and ideological guideline was derived for contemporaries in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century?

It seems that this historiographical tradition was resuscitated in the difficult political situation in order to create a new social and cultural identity as a basis for a new political system. Both the clerk Timofeev and Archimandrite Cyprian were influenced by the literary tradition, and particularly by the political rhetoric, circulating even as early as during the times of Ivan the Terrible. In the 1560s and 1570s, new concepts on the origins of the Early Russian state and first dynasty were formulated by the Muscovite intellectual elite in *Kniga stepennaya tsarskogo rodosloviya* (Book of Generations of the Tsar's family), *Litsevoj letopisnyj svod* (Collection of Illuminated Chronicles) and *Istoriya o Kazanskom tsarstve* (History of the Kazan' Kingdom)<sup>14</sup>. It was during that period that the

legends found in texts of the *Primary Russian Chronicle* became widely known, particularly the legend about the invitation for Rurik to rule in Novgorod. In 1611-1617, the new, very specific variant combining different versions of this legend appeared and became especially popular in Novgorod.

The first address to Early-Russian historiographic heritage in the Novgorod political rhetoric is found in the Memorandum of December 25, 1611, for the participants of the Novgorod Embassy of the abbot Nikandr, which were to represent "all Russian Lands (i.e. States) of the Muscovite Tsardom" in negotiations with the Swedish Crown concerning the arrival of the Swedish prince to Russia as the legitimate tsar. Here it must be noted that, at the end of June, 1611, Prince Karl Philipp of Sweden was elected to the Moscow throne by representatives from all Russian Lands in the military camp of the so-called First Militia (*Opolchenie* – anti-Polish forces). The board of the ambassadors was headed at that time by Archimandrite Nikandr, the Father Superior of the Novgorod Yur'ev Monastery. The Memorandum alluded to the Varangian origin of Rurik and drew parallels between the historical situations of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, justifying the new invitation of a Scandinavian prince by the historical practice of inviting the Varangian *konung*. The Novgorodian notions were based on the beliefs of an ethnic kinship or even identity between the Swedes and Varangians<sup>15</sup>. In this context, it becomes possible to understand the allusion to the Varangian legend in Archimandrite Cyprian's speech during the next Vyborg negotiations in summer/autumn of 1613, which, as mentioned above, was noted by Swedish chroniclers. The acuteness of the political situation in Novgorod and in the Muscovite state in general thus dramatically necessitated an examination of the historical tradition and the legends of chronicles.

Cyprian was one of the extremely inconsistent figures in Novgorod of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Like many Novgorodian father superiors, he took part in embassies

Archaeographical Commission, 1908, 1913; *Kazanskaya istoriya*, A. V. ADRIANOVA-PERETS and G. P. MOISEEVA (eds.), Moscow, Academy of Sciences, 1954.

15. 1611, dekabrya 25. Prigovor Novgorodskogo Mitropolita Isidora, voevody knyaz'ya Ivana Odoevskogo i zemskikh chinov ob otpuske v Stokholm Yur'evskogo arhimandrita Nikandra s upolnomochennymi dlia predlozheniya Rossijskogo prestola odnomu iz Shvedskikh printsev Gustavu Adolfu ili Karly Filippu, in *Dopolneniya k aktam istoricheskim, sobrannye i izdannye Arkheograficheskoy Komissiej*, vol. 1, YA. BEREDNIKOV and M. KORKUNOV (eds.), St Petersburg, Tipografiya II otdeleniya Sobstvennoj Ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Kantselyarii, 1846, p. 284.

14. *Kniga stepennaya tsarskogo rodosloviya*, P. G. VASENKO (ed.), Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisej, 21, vol. 1-2, St Petersburg, Imperial



sent from Novgorod to Sweden, Moscow and other political centres in 1611-1615. However, the role of other monastic fathers of Novgorod, such as Gennadij, the head of the St Nicolas monastery in Vyazhishchi, or Nikandr, the abbot of the Yur'ev monastery, are still little known to us due to a lack of documentary sources. Cyprian's position during all his embassies seems to have been fairly distinctive and independent. Both during his life and after his death, the extraordinary person of the archimandrite was evaluated differently and very discrepantly, ranging varying from poignant defamations to encomiums.

Cyprian was characterized positively in the *Novyj Letopisets* (New Chronicle, ca. 1630), created in circles close to Patriarch Philaret (Romanov) of Moscow (1619-1633), father of the young Tsar Mikhail (1613-1645). This document depicts the archimandrite as a person who suffered for the "True Orthodox Faith" and impelled the Novgorodians for loyalty to the newly elected Tsar Mikhail<sup>16</sup>. According to Lyudmila E. Morozova, *Novyj Letopisets* was compiled by Cyprian himself<sup>17</sup>. This opinion was disputed by V. G. Vovina-Lebedeva, who stated that there were no solid grounds to suppose that the document was written by a cleric<sup>18</sup>. As V. G. Vovina-Lebedeva justly noted, in the official message sent from Moscow to Novgorod in 1615, Cyprian, along with all the other Novgorodians, was impeached of treason<sup>19</sup>. However, one of the interesting passages in the *New Chronicle* is quite noteworthy here: the episode of Cyprian's sufferings when he was imprisoned in Novgorod by order of the Swedish authorities. Some time ago, Yakov G. Solodkin also formulated serious doubts that Archimandrite Cyprian could himself have been the source of the story in the *Novyj Letopisets* on his imprisonment, so this passage cannot be regarded as his attempt at self-justification<sup>20</sup>.

When Cyprian was the Novgorod Metropolitan, he provoked serious hostility in a significant part of the Novgorod elite. He was impeached for "falsehood and inappropriate speeches"<sup>21</sup>. A painstaking essay about Cyprian has been published by Ekaterina K. Romodanovskaya. She pointed out his wide scale of political and cultural activities. He promoted the veneration of Novgorod's saints and their relics and shrines in Siberia, initiated the codification of the *Typikon* (Statute) of the Novgorod St Sofia Cathedral, and presumably patronized the writing of the *Tale of Sloven and Rus*. The latter work presented a legend about the origin of the Slavic people from a single kin, the rise of Novgorod preceded by the legendary town of Slovensk, and the establishment of the Russian State in general. This *Tale* was based both on the legend about the *Invitation of the Varangians* and the one deriving Rurik from Emperor Augustus, which was cited by Cyprian during the negotiations of 1613<sup>22</sup>. The *Tale* thus was influenced by Southern and Western Slavic traditions, as well as by the late medieval Central-European mythology inspired by the ideology of the Renaissance. In the above-mentioned article by V. G. Vovina-Lebedeva, a particular closeness between Cyprian and Philaret is presupposed. She also writes, however, about the particular autocracy and ambitiousness of Cyprian, which may have been the cause of dissension between the two figures, notwithstanding that closeness<sup>23</sup>. In works by Elena I. Kobzareva, a highly negative assessment of Cyprian is presented. She considers the archimandrite a "cowardly person, who was ready to serve anybody

16. *Novyj Letopisets*, in *Khroniki Smutnogo vremeni*, A. LIBERMAN (ed.), Moscow, Fond Sergej Dubov, 1998, p. 391.

17. L. E. MOROZOVA, *Smuta nachala XVII veka glazami sovremennikov*, Moscow, Institute of the Russian History, 2000, *passim*.

18. V. G. VOVINA-LEBEDEVA, *Novyj Letopisets. Istoriya teksta*, St Petersburg, Dmitri Bulanin, 2004, p. 32.

19. *Pravyashchaya elita Russkogo gosudarstva. IX-nachala XVIII veka. Ocherki istorii*, A. P. PAVLOV (ed.), St Petersburg, Dmitri Bulanin, 2006, p. 385.

20. YA. G. SOLODKIN, "O nekotorykh spornykh voprosakh proiskhozhdeniya Novogo letopistsa", in *Ocherki feodal'noj Rossii*, 9, S. N. KISTEREV (ed.), Moscow, Al'yans-Arkheo, 2005, pp. 335-350.

21. A. N. ZERTSALOV, "O 'nepravdakh i neprigozhikh rechakh' novgorodskogo mitropolita Kipriana (1627-1633 gody)", *Chteniya v moskovskom Obshchestve istorii i drevnostej Rossijskikh*, 1, 1896, pp. 1-36.

22. E. K. ROMODANOVSKAYA, "Kiprian Starorusenkov", in *Slovar' knizhnikov i knizhnosti Drevnej Rusi*, vol. 3: XVII vek, part 2, D. M. BULANIN and A. A. TURILOV (eds.), St Petersburg, Dmitri Bulanin, 1993, pp. 156-163. See also the article by Evgenij N. Nosov in the present volume.

23. *Pravyashchaya elita Russkogo gosudarstva*, pp. 389-390. It should be mentioned that one of the accusations was linked with Cyprian's order to call him "Reverend (Gospodin) Metropolitan", which was rather uncommon in the Russian Church practice. In this case, however, the term "Gospodin" was simply an equivalent of the Greek word "Kyr", which was an ordinary title of a bishop in the Byzantine Church – another re-established tradition which was not recognized by the contemporaries.

only to avoid his own troubles”<sup>24</sup>. Kobzareva thus characterizes Cyprian after his return from Moscow in the summer of 1615: “Once again, frightened Cyprian repented of his deeds”<sup>25</sup>.

References to the Varangians in the political rhetoric of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century’s Novgorod have by now been rather extensively covered in a number of articles and monographs (which often repeat each other) by the “neo-Antinormanist” Vyacheslav V. Fomin, former professor of the Lipetsk University and current Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of Russian History, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow<sup>26</sup>. The focus of his work is not, however, on the historical origin of Novgorod’s late-medieval claims for the early-medieval political and cultural traditions borrowed from the *Primary Russian Chronicle*, but on demonstrating the 17<sup>th</sup> century’s Swedish origin of the Russian “Normanistic” historiography of the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

V. V. Fomin defends the “Prussian”/West-Slavic version of the Varangians’ identity, although the latter actually seems to have been “invented” in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. To corroborate his position, the researcher uses an allusion to the *Primary Russian Chronicle* found in a letter sent in 1573 by Ivan the Terrible to Johan III of Sweden. V. V. Fomin connects the mention of *Nemtsy*/Varangians in the letter with the Germans of the Southern Baltic region, i.e. the historical *Prussia Regalis*, rather than with Scandinavians of the northern Baltic Sea regions. The issue is really to some extent obscure, because the term *nemtsy* used in the letter originally implied in Russian any foreigner of West-European provenance, and only later became narrowly understood as the *Germans* proper<sup>27</sup>.

24. E. I. KOBZAREVA, “Novgorod mezhdru Stokgol’mom i Moskvoy (1613-1617 gg.)”, *Otechestvennaya istoriya*, 5, 2006, p. 20.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

26. For a synthesis, see: V. V. FOMIN, *Varyagi i Varyazhskaya Rus’. K itogam diskussii po varyazhskomu voprosu*, Moscow, Russkaya panorama, 2005.

27. According to V. V. Fomin, this allusion to the Primary Chronicle tradition by Ivan the Terrible in 1573 may be explained by attempts of the Swedish kings at direct connections with Moscow bypassing Novgorod. Meanwhile, a tradition, strictly followed even in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, upheld the ancient Novgorodian privileges requiring that all the foreign relations of Russia with Northern Europe should be effectuated not directly by Moscow, but through the agency of the Great Prince’s deputies in Novgorod. However, Johan III of Sweden was actually the first to mention the Varangians in that correspondence, while Ivan the Terrible was only reciting the Swedish king, thus intending to stress that the Varangians of the 11<sup>th</sup> century were subordinated to Prince Yaroslav the Wise.

However, V. V. Fomin also makes the interesting observation that in the voluminous edition of the *Tale about the Siege of the Tikhvin Monastery*, in the episode of the *Time of the Troubles* regarding the rivalry between Stockholm and Moscow for domination in Novgorod in 1613, the Swedish troops were called “Varangians” eight times, first since the 12<sup>th</sup> century, while the pro-Cyprian *Novyy Letopisets*, describing the same events, called the Swedes by a more general name: *nemtsy*, i.e. foreigners<sup>28</sup>. In his search for historical parallels, V. V. Fomin manifestly tries to place the Muscovite diplomacy within a deep historical context by comparing the subordination of the Varangians of the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the Russian Prince Yaroslav the Wise († 1054) with the Treaty of Stolbovo of 1617 between Moscow and Stockholm. According to the Stolbovo Peace Treaty, which marked the end of the *Time of Troubles*, considerable territories of the Novgorod Land had been conceded to Sweden by the time of the Northern War (1700-1721). Yet, naming the Swedes *Varangians* in the *Tale of The Siege* may be regarded as an attempt at eliminating the historical foundations from those who hoped for a union with the *new Varangians*.

The weak point of V. V. Fomin’s attempts to prove a non-Scandinavian origin of the Varangians was demonstrated recently in a monograph by Leo S. Klejn<sup>29</sup>. Although L. S. Klejn justly stresses V. V. Fomin’s perseverance and meticulousness in his studies of the events during the Vyborg negotiations in late August of 1613, in V. V. Fomin’s opinion, the Swedish secretary Daniel Hjort, in his report about the Vyborg negotiations, directly reproduced a speech of Archimandrite Cyprian, who mentioned that “their first Great Prince was from the Roman Empire and called Rodorikus (i.e. Ryurik)”. So it seems that in the archimandrite’s interpretation, the legend about Caesar Augustus was simply repeated in its 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>-century version, devoid of any accentuated allusion to the Swedish continuity with the Varangians of the *Primary Russian Chronicle*. Thus, in the Novgorodian political discourse, ideas familiar to the Muscovite intellectual elite in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century were widespread, along with the legend of the Early Rus’ history.

Yet another important written source tells us about similar, although to some extent differing, notions that were circulating in medieval Russian society: the

28. V. V. FOMIN, “Varyagi v perepiske Ivana Groznogo so shvedskim korolem Yukhanom III”, *Otechestvennaya istoriya*, 2, 2004, pp. 121-133.

29. L. S. KLEJN, *Spor o varyagakh: istoriya protivostoyaniya i arge-menty storon*, St Petersburg, Evraziya, 2009, pp. 216-220.

historical description of the *Time of Troubles* already mentioned by Johan Widekindi, who probably based his observations on several documents from the State Archives of Stockholm. He wrote: "From ancient history it is known that several hundred years before the subjugation of Novgorod by the Moscow power, its people gladly received Prince Ryurik from Sweden. That is why fairly numerous Novgorodians are now ready to support the Duke"<sup>30</sup>. Two years after the events of 1613, Peer Persson attempted to elucidate the term "Varangians", which supposedly was used in Cyprian's speech.

In order to form an idea of Cyprian's activities during the Vyborg negotiations, we must provide an overview of his entire literary heritage in more detail. The "Siberian" period in his biography (1620-1624) is studied most comprehensively. This stage included the foundation of the Archbishopric of Tobol'sk, construction of the church of St Sophia in Tobol'sk, dissemination of the cult of the Novgorodian Saint Varlaam of Khutyn' († 1192) throughout Siberia and the rewriting of the "Story of Ermak's Life". Cyprian's last years, when he was the Metropolitan of Novgorod, are also the subject of extensive study. As noted above, Cyprian was, according to some researchers, the author of the *Tale of Sloven and Rus*. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Russian historical science provoked great interest among the public, this text became a subject of heated discussion. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the *Tale of Sloven and Rus* enjoyed the fame of a truly inexhaustible source for Russian provincial historiography<sup>31</sup>. Up until our time, the *Tale* was used in various popular pseudoscientific studies, especially those of the so-called "national-patriotic" orientation. The liturgical works by Cyprian, which came to be widely known and studied since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, also demonstrated links with the Early-Russian tradition, following the principles of the Church Statutes adopted by princes Vladimir the Saint and Yaroslav the Wise<sup>32</sup>.

Cyprian's speech of 1613 in Vyborg must be considered within a wider context of the references to the Early Rus' tradition by Novgorodians of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. In terms of the present study, the figure of Isidor, the Metropolitan of Novgorod and a contemporary of Cyprian's, is also of great interest. The role of Isidor most likely varied during the period of 1611-1617. Pains-taking articles on Isidor have been published by Yakov Solodkin and Elena V. Krushel'nitskaya. E. V. Krushel'nitskaya described Isidor as a prominent bibliophile. Monastic hymns composed by him played a significant role in the subsequent manuscript tradition<sup>33</sup>. L. E. Morozova, in her article on the *Time of Troubles* in Novgorod, even regarded Isidor as the author of "the plan for establishment of an independent Novgorod State under the rule of Prince Karl Philipp". According to L. E. Morozova, such a Novgorod State really did exist from July 1611 until February 27, 1617, the date of signing of the Treaty of Stolbovo<sup>34</sup>. This view seems rather ungrounded, however. Nikolaj I. Kostomarov mentioned a cross-bearing procession organized by Metropolitan Isidor on July 9, 1611 (a week before the Swedish general Jacob Pontusson De La Gardie [1583-1652] seized Novgorod), the Icon of Our Lady of Sign (*Znamenie* Icon) – the symbol of Novgorod's victory over the Suzdal' princely army in 1170<sup>35</sup>. Isidor was a participant in the negotiations with the Swedes that began on July 16 and one of the authors of the peace treaty after the Swedish army entered Novgorod on July 25, 1611; yet, he had no real power during the first years of the Novgorod-Swedish joint government. The recognition of the existence of the latter political alliance in Northern Russia is nowadays slowly eliminating the archaic notions of Swedish intervention and occupation of Novgorod that are still dominant among the Russian public and scientists under the influence of Soviet historiography. On April 8, 1612, when the Russian ambassador Ivan Yakushkin returned

30. Cf. JOHAN WIDEKINDI, *Istoriya desyatiletnej shvedsko-moskovitskoj vojny*, O. N. AGEEV, S. A. ANNINSKAYA and A. M. ALEKSANDROV (trans., eds.), Moscow, Pamyatniki istoricheskoy mysli, 2000, pp. 279-280.

31. *Mazurinskij letopisets*, in *Letopisty poslednej chetverti XVII veka*, V. I. BUGANOV (ed.), Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisej, 31, Moscow, Nauka, 1968; F. GILYAROV, *Predaniya nachal'noj russkoj letopisi*, Moscow, Sovremennye izvestiya, 1878, pp. 15-33.

32. KIPRIAN STARORUSENKOV, "Tserkovno-sudebnye opredeleniya Kipriana, mitropolita novgorodskogo", *Pravoslavnyj sobesednik*, 11, 1861, pp. 335-348.

33. E. V. KRUSHEL'NITSKAYA, "Kelejnyj sbornik novgorodskogo mitropolita Isidora Solovetskoj biblioteki n° 860/970: Opyt izucheniya odnoj éntsiklopedicheskoj kompilyatsii kontsa XVI veka", in *Istoriya v rukopisyakh i rukopisi v istorii, Sbornik nauchnykh trudov k 200-letiyu Otdela rukopisej Rossijskoj Natsional'noj Biblioteki*, G. P. ENIN (ed.), St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, 2006, pp. 379-398.

34. L. E. MOROZOVA, "Smuta v Rossii nachala XVII veka v sochineniyakh ee sovremennikov", in *Kul'tura srednevekovoj Moskvy. XVII vek*, L. A. BELYAEV and B. A. RYBAKOV (eds.), Moscow, Nauka, 1999, pp. 249-277.

35. N. I. KOSTOMAROV, *Smutnoe vremya Moskovskogo gosudarstva v nachale XVII veka*, vol. 3, St Petersburg, Dmitrii Kozhanchikov, 1868, p. 203.



to Novgorod after his visit to Sweden with a decree of King Gustav II Adolf (1594-1632), that decree was read in the residence of Metropolitan Isidor in the presence of General De La Gardie as a witness of its authenticity<sup>36</sup>. German Zamyatin cited Metropolitan Isidor's report of November 15, 1612, sent to Moscow three months before Mikhail Romanov was elected in February 1613. That report characterizes very well the policy of Isidor during the period under consideration. The Metropolitan attempted to convince representatives of the Muscovite State to act in alliance with Novgorod and recognize Karl Philipp as the legitimate Russian tsar<sup>37</sup>. The Moscow boyars answered noncommittally, but expressed no direct refusal. They allegedly had to ask for advice from all parts of the state and await the Prince's arrival to Novgorod.

Metropolitan Isidor was later the initiator of another attempt at reviving the political and cultural traditions of Early Rus'. In 1613 or 1614, the Swedish soldiers quartering in the Yur'ev Monastery opened the tomb with the remains of Saint Prince Feodor Yaroslavich († 1234), Saint Alexander Nevskij's brother, who was also canonized. Metropolitan Isidor organized solemn transference of the holy relics from Yur'ev to St Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod.

Studies by Petrus Petrejus (Peer Peersson), the Swedish diplomat and historian specializing in the Muscovite political history, hold a special place among the number of narrative sources on the Novgorod history of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>38</sup>. The political sharpness of his works and the importance of the problem of relations between Russia and the West in the political rhetoric of different periods compel scholars to incessantly return to Peer Peersson's works and appreciate them anew each time<sup>39</sup>. During the

last few years, in studies by V. V. Fomin<sup>40</sup> and some by Sergej Yu. Shokarev, a negative view of Peer Peersson's book was proposed. V. V. Fomin called Peer Peersson a progenitor of the so-called "Normanist theory" who has significantly influenced the scornful attitude toward Russia in Western Europe. S. Yu. Shokarev even considered Peer Peersson nothing less than a "spy" whose activities were particularly directed at the substantiation of the Swedish claims on northwestern Russia<sup>41</sup>.

Information of Peer Peersson received a positive appraisal from G. A. Zamyatin, however. According to this scholar, the events in Moscow in 1612-1613, before *Zemskij Sobor* (assembly of representatives from Russian lands) elected Mikhail Romanov as the Russian Tsar, were recounted by Peer Peersson much more realistically than by the "*Novyj Letopisets*"<sup>42</sup>. Gennadij M. Kovalenko, who scrupulously analysed Peer Peersson's book, stressed its significance for the creation of a positive image of Novgorod in Sweden. According to G. M. Kovalenko, the Swedes were acquainted with the legend about the Scandinavian origin of Rurik from Peer Peersson's study of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, Peer Peersson's views on the genealogical mythology created by the great Moscow princes in the 16<sup>th</sup> century were fairly critical. For example, unlike Ivan Timofeev, Peer Peersson did not believe in the descent of Rurik from Caesar Augustus<sup>43</sup>. G. M. Kovalenko reasonably treated Peer Peersson not as a "spy", but as a scholar who studied very interesting moments in the history of Novgorod of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century using the most advanced historical methods of his time and proceeding from the most reliable sources from the official Swedish archives. From the present-day scientific standpoint, there are no serious mistakes in the work of Peer Peersson. His judgement of the political events in northwestern Russia in 1611, and generally in the Muscovite state in 1612-1613, was quite sensible. The personal participation of Petrus Petrejus, a gifted Swedish professional diplomat, in the identification of False Dmitrij III of Pskov († 1612), and afterwards in the Stolbovo negotiations in 1617, makes his evidence very reliable, especially when it comes to the

36. G. A. ZAMYATIN, *Rossija i Shvetsiya v nachale XVII veka. Oчерki politicheskoi i voennoi istorii*, St Petersburg, Evropejskij dom, 2008, p. 66.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

38. PETR PETREJ, *Istoriya o velikom knyazhestve Moskovskom...*, A. I. SHEMAKIN (trans.), Moscow, Katkov, 1867 (reprinted: PETR PETREJ, "Istoriya o velikom knyazhestve Moskovskom", in *O nachale vojn i smut v Moskovii*, A. LIBERMAN [ed.], Moscow, Fond Sergei Dubov: Ritta-Print, 1997).

39. YU. A. LIMONOV, "Sochinenie shvedskogo istoriografa nachala XVII veka Petra Petreya o Rossii", in *Ėtnograficheskie i kul'turno-istoricheskie aspekty: Sbornik dokladov 2-go mezhdunarodnogo simpoziuma "Skandinavskie chteniya" 13-16.10 1998 goda = Skandinavskie chteniya 1998 goda*, A. S. MYL'NIKOV (ed.), St Petersburg, Nauka, 1999, pp. 104-113; G. M. KOVALENKO, *Velikij Novgorod v evropejskoj pis'mennosti XV-nachala XX veka*, Velikij Novgorod, State University, 2007, pp. 67-71.

40. V. V. FOMIN, *Varyagi i Varyazhsкая Rus'*, pp. 17-21.

41. S. YU. SHOKAREV, "Sochineniya I. Massy i P. Petreya o Smutnom vremeni", in *O nachale vojn i smut v Moskovii*, pp. 469-472.

42. G. A. ZAMYATIN, *Rossija i Shvetsiya v nachale XVII veka*, pp. 197-198.

43. G. M. KOVALENKO, *Velikij Novgorod v evropejskoj pis'mennosti XV-nachala XX veka*, p. 68.



particulars. All the above considerations allow us to estimate Peer Peersson's works very highly.

In sum, it must be stated that the *Time of Troubles* came to be the most important period in the establishment of the ideology of northwestern Russia. All the literature of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and, to a significant extent, that of the subsequent ages, was concerned with the events of that period.

In Novgorod of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the notions about the Early Russian period were based mainly on the mid-16<sup>th</sup>-century legend about Caesar Augustus as the founder of the Russian dynastic family. This version was most likely introduced by the "*Stepennaya Kniga*" (Book of Generations) or some other late-medieval literary work. The tradition inherited from the 16<sup>th</sup> century was generally popular throughout the period under consideration. During the crisis of the Muscovite reign and the complicated political situation in Novgorod in 1613-1614, the idea of a Novgorodian state independent from Moscow was raised on the basis of the tradition from the *Primary Russian Chronicle's* narration about the "Invitation of the Varangians". This idea was not supported by all the Novgorodians, however. One of the heroes of this article, Archimandrite Cyprian, it seems, was among its opponents. Evidently, he based his innovative conception both on the legend about the Varangians and that about the Roman origin of Prince Rurik. However, he tackled them both in an original manner.

In 1613, the two most prominent Novgorodian representatives at the Vyborg negotiations, Archimandrite Cyprian and the ambassador Stepan Igolkin, fervently disowned the idea of the Novgorod independence from the rest of Russia. It is noteworthy that Yakov Boborykin, another participant of Cyprian's embassy of 1613 in Vyborg, mentioned a misunderstanding which took place when a Novgorodian citizen, Tomilo Pristaltsov, arrived to the embassy with a verbal order of Metropolitan Isidor, Governor Prince Ivan Bolshoj-Odoevskij and Novgorodian citizens for the embassy to swear allegiance to King Gustav II Adolf. The ambassadors refused to fulfil that order. When Yakov Boborykin informed the Novgorod authorities of his confusion, both Metropolitan Isidor and Prince Odoevskij denied that they had ever issued such an order. When Yakov Boborykin mentioned this case to General De La Gardie, the latter declared his ignorance that such an oath was expected. With this in mind, it would seem that there was a group of instigators in Novgorod who hoped to gain independence from Moscow<sup>44</sup>.

It is of special importance to take into consideration this evidence of the plurality of opinions circulating in Novgorod at that time. Certain documents of that period (e.g. Secretary Pyatoj Grigor'ev's petition to Tsar Mikhail Romanov)<sup>45</sup> and the later Russian ideological tradition hold that among the Novgorodians, just like in other political centres and lands of the Muscovite kingdom, there was an outstanding unanimity during the *Time of Troubles*<sup>46</sup>. Although the citizens of Novgorod demonstrated their readiness to swear loyalty to Prince Karl Philipp in 1611 and later, at heart they allegedly cherished a hope to return before long to Moscow's rule. Meanwhile, the mere collation of two synchronous and highly partial messages to Moscow, one by Secretary Pyatoj Grigor'ev and the other sent by Grigorij Suleshev, a clerk from Staraya Rusa, demonstrates that no such unanimity really existed. The residents of Novgorod did not unreservedly support Tsar Mikhail Romanov, and in fact frequently appealed to their traditional right to invite a ruling prince of their own accord, albeit one of a "Varangian", or foreign, origin. Part of the Novgorodian elite was perturbed by diverse hesitations and doubts. Moreover, it is hardly justified to assert that Novgorodians were totally ready to heroically oppose the Swedish domination. On the contrary, many of them were looking quite pragmatically for the best. The dilemma to swear or not to swear allegiance to King Gustav Adolf troubled the Novgorodians during several months from late 1613 until the conclusion of the Treaty of Stolbovo.

Discussion of the historical authenticity of the *Legend of the Invitation of the Varangians* is beyond the scope of the present essay. However, it is of significance to demonstrate its importance for the Russian and, especially, Novgorodian society of the *Time of Troubles*. The striking literary merits of the early medieval *Legend of the Varangians* and social requirements in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century were conducive to reminisce about the ancient past. The *Legend* held a special place in these

tion 96. 1614, manuscript 1, ff. 10-11.

45. Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj arkhiv drevnikh aktov (= Russian State Archives of Ancient Documents, Moscow, Russia), collection 96. 1615, manuscript 3, ff. 263-268.

46. I. P. KULAKOVA, "Sotsial'no-politicheskaya terminologiya i évoljutsiya vzaimootnoshenij vlasti i soslovij v Rossii vtoroj poloviny XVI-nachala XVII veka", in *Sosloviya i gosudarstvennaya vlast' v Rossii. XV-seredina XIX vekov. Chteniya pamyati akademika L. V. Cherepnina*, 1, N. V. KARLOV (ed.), Moscow, Mezhdunarodnyj tsentr gumanitarnogo obrazovaniya MFTI "Petr Velikij", 1994, pp. 254-272; B. N. FLORYA, "O prigovore Pervogo opolcheniya", *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 8 (126), 2005, pp. 85-114.

44. Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj arkhiv drevnikh aktov (= Russian State Archives of Ancient Documents, Moscow, Russia), collec-

reminiscences and, inter alia, like eight centuries ago, it turned out to be in demand for the political discourse of 1611-1613, and particularly during the negotiations with Sweden on the adoption of a new dynasty. Novgorod intellectuals needed the idea of continuity with Early Rus' to coin the Novgorodian identity supported by the past traditions, since the historical parallelism was one of the constituents of the medieval mentality.

Meanwhile, the legend they found in ancient chronicles told nothing about the ethnic sources of the Russians and Russian culture. Considering that, Metropolitan Cyprian later had to formulate a new conception of the Pan-Slavic unity, combining the early tradition with the *Tale of Sloven and Rus*.

During the *Time of Troubles*, the terms "Varangians" (*Varyagi*) and "Varangian" were re-established in Novgorodian political rhetoric. However, they were not related to any specific ethnicity, referring instead to merely any powers foreign to Novgorod. The events of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century had a considerable influence on the imagery of the past among the educated elite of Novgorod, who got their political ideas from reading ancient chronicles. That influence was particularly manifested during the *Time of Troubles*, in the lively interpretation of the Early Rus' history in the official diplomatic messages, in the "Tale about Sloven and Rus" and in mentioning the Swedes as "Varangians" in the *Tale about the Siege of the Tikhvin Monastery*<sup>47</sup>.

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47. The research leading to these results has received funding from the Basic Research Program at the National Research University – Higher School of Economics.