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# Novgorod and the “Novgorodian Land”

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## NOVGOROD AND THE “NOVGORODIAN LAND”

THE MEDIEVAL CITY-STATE OF NOVGOROD, best known as Lord Novgorod the Great, continues to occupy the interest of specialists in the early history of the East Slavs. Indeed, Knud Rasmussen wrote that “No other medieval Russian city has drawn as much attention from scholars, as Novgorod the Great.” Rasmussen attributed this unflagging attention to the quantity and quality of the surviving source material, which both raised innumerable questions and failed to provide definitive answers.<sup>1</sup> The gaps in the extant sources derive in part from the disappearance of Novgorod’s state archive, although Shaskol’skii has absolved Ivan III, who annexed Novgorod in 1471 and incorporated it into Muscovy in 1478, from responsibility for that unfortunate development.<sup>2</sup> Mythology and politics have long infused research about Novgorod. Eve Levin recently concluded that “Most Western scholars still subscribe to the nineteenth-century romantic depiction of Novgorod as Russia’s democratic alternative to Muscovite oriental despotism,” even though “The historical framework espoused by most Western historians of Russia was abandoned by serious students of the Novgorodian past several decades ago.”<sup>3</sup> The

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1. Knud Rasmussen, “300 zolotykh poiasov drevnego Novgoroda,” *Scando-Slavica*, 25 (1979): 93. For example, A. L. Khoroshkevich concluded that it was impossible even to tell if *tamozhennye knigi* (customs books) existed in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Novgorod. See A. L. Khoroshkevich, *Torgovlia Velikogo Novgoroda s Pribaltikoi i Zapadnoi Evropoi v XIV-XV vekakh* (Moscow, 1963): 17 n. 38.

2. I. P. Shaskol’skii, “Sud’ba gosudarstvennogo arkhiva Velikogo Novgoroda,” *Vspomogatel’nye istoricheskie distsipliny*, 4 (1972): 213-228. V. L. Yanin, “The archaeological study of Novgorod: An historical perspective,” in V. L. Yanin, E. N. Nosov, A. S. Khoroshev, A. N. Sorokin, E. A. Rybina, V. I. Povetkin, P. G. Gaidukov, *The archaeology of Novgorod, Russia: Recent results from the town and its Hinterland*, Mark A. Brisbane, ed., Katherine Judelson, tr. (Lincoln, England, 1992; The Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series, 13): 89 blames its destruction upon Ivan IV’s sack of the city in 1570.

3. Eve Levin, “Novgorod birchbark documents: The evidence for literacy in medieval Russia,” in Charles L. Redman, ed., *Medieval archaeology. Papers of the Seventeenth annual conference of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies* (Binghamton: State University of New York, 1989): 128, 129.

idealization of Novgorodian freedom began in the eighteenth century, and had already peaked by the time of Radishchev and the Decembrists.<sup>4</sup> Contemporary scholarly research owes much of its energy and excitement to the discovery of the Novgorodian birchbark correspondence by Soviet archeologists led by Artsikhovskii, and the stimulating and prolific publications of Ianin.<sup>5</sup> On many significant issues of Novgorodian history, consensus is still lacking not only between Western and Russian scholars, but even among Russian specialists.

Little research has focused on Novgorod's political ideology. Usually ideological significance has been found in Novgorod's sponsorship of its own chronicle-writing tradition, church architecture, *vitae*, coins, seals, and icons.<sup>6</sup> There have been noteworthy recent studies of Novgorodian saints, icons and cults.<sup>7</sup>

4. Christian Lübke, *Novgorod in der russischen Literatur (bis zu den Dekabristen)* (Berlin 1984; Osteuropastudien der Hochschulen des Landes Hessen. Reihe I. Giessener Abhandlungen zur Agrar- und Wirtschaftsforschung des Europäischen Ostens, 130); O. V. Martyshin, *Vol'nyi Novgorod. Obshchestvenno-politicheskii stroi i pravo feodal'noi respubliki* (Moscow, 1992): 6-26. On the often political nature of discussions of Novgorod, even the greatest experts agreed: see V. L. Yanin, "Forward," to Henrik Birnbaum, *Novgorod in focus. Selected essays* (Columbus, OH, 1996): 9-10.

Thomas C. Owen, "Novgorod and Muscovy as models of Russian economic development," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 19 (1995): 497-512, especially 498-501, 507, provides evidence of the perseverance of the reified contrast noted by E. Levin.

5. On the birchbark correspondence see E. Levin, *art. cit.*: 127-137 *passim*, with citations to relevant literature. Surveys of Ianin's contributions and current historiography include: A. L. Khoroshkevich, *op. cit.*: 5-16; Lawrence N. Langer, "V. L. Ianin and the history of Novgorod," *Slavic Review*, 33, 1 (March 1974): 114-119; A. S. Khoroshev, "The origins of Novgorod in Russian historiography," *Soviet Studies in History*, 23, 4 (Spring 1985): 22-45, translated from "Proiskhozhdenie Novgoroda v otechestvennoi istoriografii," *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta*, 6 (1983): 40-53; A. N. Tsamutali, "Istoriia Velikogo Novgoroda v osvshchenii russkoi istoriografii XIX-nachala XX vv.," *Novgorodskii istoricheskii sbornik*, 1, 11 (1982): 96-112; L. A. Kochoa, "S. M. Solov'ev o novgorodskoi istorii," *ibid.*: 113-118; V. F. Andreev, "Problemy sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii Novgoroda XII-XV vv. v sovetskoii istoriografii," *ibid.*: 119-145; N. A. Kazakova, "Vneshniaia politika Novgoroda v russkoi i sovetskoii istoriografii," *ibid.*: 146-164; E. A. Rybina, "Torgovlia srednevekovogo Novgoroda v istoricheskoi literature," *ibid.*: 165-188; O. V. Martyshin, *op. cit.*: 31-49; and especially E. Levin, *art. cit.*: 128-129. I. Ia. Froianov expanded his views of Novgorodian history in his *Miatezhnyi Novgorod. Ocherki istorii gosudarstvennosti, sotsial'noi i politicheskoi bor'by kontsa IX-nachala XIII stoletii* (St. Petersburg, 1992). Cf. V. L. Ianin, *Ia poslal tebe berestu...* 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1975): 105-106 for a contrast between the "old" and "new" images of Novgorod.

6. For example, Joel Raba, "Novgorod in the fifteenth century: A re-examination," *Canadian Slavic Studies*, 1, 3 (Fall 1967): 351-353.

7. For example, Paul Bushkovitch, "Urban ideology in medieval Novgorod: an iconographic approach," *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique*, 16, 1 (1975): 19-26; A. S. Khoroshev, *Tserkov' v sotsial'no-politicheskoi sisteme Novgorodskoi feodal'noi respubliki* (Moscow, 1980), on which see Richard O. Bosley, "The saints of Novgorod: à propos of A. S. Chorošev's book on the church in mediaeval Novgorod," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, N.F., 32, 1 (1984): 1-15; V. A. Plugin, "The Boyar Vasilii Danilovich Mashkov and Feofan Grek," *Soviet Studies in History*, 23, 4 (Spring 1985): 47-70 translated from "Boiarin Vasilii Danilovich Mashkov i Feofan Grek," in *Drevnii Novgorod* (Moscow, 1983): 248-270; Michael S. Flier, "The semiotics of faith in fifteenth-century Novgorod: An analysis of the quadripartite icon," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 25, 1-4 (1991): 121-158; and Vladimir Vodoff, "Le culte de Znamenie à Novgorod: Tradition et réalité historique," *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, N.S., 28 (1995): 1-19.

In narrative sources of Novgorodian provenance, the Novgorodians fought for "God and St. Sophia," thus identifying their polity with its cathedral church and visible symbol, the Holy Wisdom. In its treaties with northeastern princes and Western powers, Novgorod defended its rights and privileges in terms of custom or tradition (*poshlina* or *starina*), sometimes embodied in *starye gramoty* (old charters). Relationships, in treaty or narrative, were defined according to the *vole/volia* ("will") of Novgorod. Such a conception of ancient rights, even or especially when advancing innovations, was as typical of the medieval world as invocations of God and divine protection.

Novgorod projected its identity through its self-designation: Novgorod became *Velikii Novgorod*, Great Novgorod or Novgorod the Great, as Klug has cogently argued, to distinguish itself in the last quarter of the fourteenth century from Nizhnii (literally: lower) Novgorod, on the lower Volga, which called itself just "Novgorod." Novgorod-on-the-Volkhov did *not* call itself *Verkhonii* ("Upper") Novgorod, nor was it so called by the inhabitants of the northeast; such a purely geographic appellation would surely have offended Novgorodian sensibilities.<sup>8</sup> Increasing Novgorodian political pretensions generated the more exalted *gospodin Velikii Nogorod* (Lord Novgorod the Great) well-known in scholarship, and even *gosudar' gospodin Velikii Novgorod* (sovereign Lord Novgorod the Great).

Governmental actions emanated from these urban denotations. The Novgorod Judicial Charter, from the 1470s, was issued on behalf of Great Novgorod.<sup>9</sup> When Novgorod began issuing its own coinage in 1420, the inscription was always "Great Novgorod" (*Velikii Novgorod*).<sup>10</sup> Novgorodian lead seals were mostly *ex officio*, containing the name of the officeholder and the name of his office, but Ianin identified a series of seals as representing the *sovet gospod* (Council of Lords), an executive body of officials first attested in the last decade of the thirteenth century, which subsequently dominated the *veche*. These seals carried the inscription:

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8. Ekkegard Klug, "Novgorod: Groß-Novgorod und Nižnij Novgorod. Zum Terminologie altrussischer Urkunden und Chroniken des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, N.F., 33, 1 (1985): 92-102, despite V. V. Nizov, "Iz istorii titulirovaniia Novgoroda 'Velikim'," in *Shvedy i russkii sever: istoriko-kul'turnye sviazi* (Kirov, 1997): 60-72.

9. *Pamiatniki russkogo prava*. II: *Pamiatniki prava feodal'no-razdroblennoi Rusi* (Moscow, 1953; reprint Ann Arbor, MI, 1975): 212-218. Ironically, both the Beloozero Judicial Charter of 1488 and the 1497 Beloozero Customs Charter, both written after Muscovite annexation of Novgorod, do mention the "Novgorodian Land"; see *Pamiatniki russkogo prava*. III: *Pamiatniki prava perioda obrazovaniia russkogo tsentralizovannogo gosudarstva XIV-XV vv.* (Moscow, 1955): 170-174, 175-178. In several instances parallel phrases might have inspired this usage.

For post-1478 Muscovite usage of the "Novgorodian Land" in diplomatic correspondence, see the references in V. N. Bernadskii, *Novgorod i novgorodskaiia zemlia v XV veke* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1961): 349; in the Muscovite cadastres from 1563, L. V. Danilova, *Ocherki po istorii zemlevladieniia i khoziaistva v Novgorodskoi zemle v XIV-XV vv.* (Moscow, 1955): 291 n. 1.

10. Graf Iv. Iv. Tolstoi, *Russkaia dopetrovskaia numismatika*. Vyp. I: *Monety Velikogo Novgoroda* (St. Petersburg, 1884). See the comments of V. L. Ianin, *Novgorodskie posadniki* (Moscow, 1962): 272-273.

*Pechat' Novgorodskaiia* (Novgorodian Seal) or *Pechat' Velikogo Novgoroda* (Seal of Great Novgorod) or *Pechat' vsego Novgoroda* (Seal of All Novgorod).<sup>11</sup> Novgorod's treaties also contained these self-identifications.

And yet, these mutually consistent aspects of Novgorodian ideology do not tell the whole story. Something is missing, something, unfortunately, which the vagaries of scholarly prose have obscured. What these sources do not contain is any ideological invocation of the *Novgorodskaiia zemlia* (Novgorodian Land). We now turn to why there "should" have been such a concept, and why historians have failed to notice its absence.

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Early East Slavic sources articulated a series of political and historical myths linked to the concept of the "land," most notably, of course, the *rusaskaia zemlia* (East-Slavic Land), one of the most important, widespread, and malleable intellectual constructs in early East Slavic history.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the following "Lands" may also be mentioned: the *Suzdal'skaia zemlia* (Suzdalian Land),<sup>13</sup> the *Riazanskaia zemlia* (Riazanian Land),<sup>14</sup> and the *Tverskaia zemlia* (Tverian Land).<sup>15</sup> Even the phrase *Moskovskaia zemlia* (Muscovite Land) made its appearance.<sup>16</sup> This system

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11. V. L. Ianin, *Aktovye pechati drevnei Rusi X-XV vv.* Tom II: *Novgorodskie pečati XIII-XV vv.* (Moscow, 1970): 125-133, 220-228.

12. I have previously translated *rusaskaia zemlia*, erroneously for the Kievan period, as the "Russian Land." It is not possible to preserve the grammatical structure of the phrase in a graceful English translation ("the Rus' Land" fails because *Rus'* is not an adjective). It seems best not to translate it at all. See Charles J. Halperin, "The concept of the Russian Land from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries," *Russian History*, 2, 1 (1975): 29-38; id., "The Russian Land and the Russian Tsar: The emergence of Muscovite ideology, 1380-1408," *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 23 (1976): 7-103; id., "The concept of the *rusaskaia zemlia* and medieval national consciousness from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries," *Nationalities Papers*, 8, 1 (Spring, 1980): 75-86. See also Iu. G. Alekseev, "Istoricheskaia kontseptsia Russkoi zemli i politicheskaia doktrina tsentralizovannogo gosudarstva," in *Genezis i razvitie feodalizma v Rossii. Problemy ideologii i kul'tury. K 80-letiiu prof. V. V. Mavrodina* (Leningrad, 1987): 140-154, especially pp. 140-147, and the recent comment by Horace G. Lunt, "What the Rus' Primary Chronicle tells us about the origins of the Slavs and Slavic writing," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 19 (1995): 335.

13. C. J. Halperin, "The concept of the Russian Land...," *art. cit.*: 33-35; id., "The Russian Land and the Russian Tsar...," *art. cit.*: 66-67; id., "The concept of the *rusaskaia zemlia*...," *art. cit.*: 78; and the texts discussed in Ellen S. Hurwitz, "Andrei Bogoliubskii: An image of the Prince," *Russian History*, 2, 1 (1975): 39-52 and id., *Prince Andrej Bogoljubskij: The man and the myth* (Florence, 1980; *Studia Historica et Philologica* XII, Sectio Slavica, 4).

14. C. J. Halperin, *The Tatar yoke* (Columbus, OH, 1986): 39-43.

15. C. J. Halperin, "Tverian political thought in the fifteenth century," *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique*, 18, 3 (1977): 267-273, with corrections in Vladimir Vodoff, "Le *Slovo pokhval'noe o velikom kniaze Borise Aleksandrovicze*: est-il une source historique?" in Daniel Clarke Waugh, ed., *Essays in honor of A. A. Zimin* (Columbus, OH, 1985): 379-403, especially nn. 41 on p. 399, 72 on p. 402.

16. C. J. Halperin, "Tverian political thought...," *art. cit.*: 272-273; id., "The concept of the *rusaskaia zemlia*...," *art. cit.*: 79 n. 37.

of land-nomenclature so pervaded the early East-Slavic sources that scholars utilize cognate terms almost indiscriminately, even inventing variants.<sup>17</sup> This system, and the specific terms which comprised it, merit further study,<sup>18</sup> but its most striking ideological feature is well known: The *russkaia zemlia*, the land of the Rus', was intimately associated with the East-Slavic dynasty, the Riurikids, the supposed descendants of the legendary Riurik, founder of the Rus' state. Derivative terms applied to specific princely lines Vladimir-Suzdalian, Riazanian, Tverian, Muscovite. Although the system of land-names became commonplace, its most significant reflections were all assimilated into the medieval East-Slavic princely cult. Given the prevalence of this system, the question of its application to Novgorod deserves to be raised.

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The ubiquity of this system of "land" nomenclature, it seems to me, lies at the foundation of the habitual use of the *Novgorodskaia zemlia* (Novgorodian Land) in scholarship. It found its way into the names of Bernadskii's seminal monograph and Kuza's article on historical geography.<sup>19</sup> Simply put, all scholars writing in Russian, and some writing in other languages, commonly use the phrase. It was not invented; it did occur in narrative and documentary sources from eleventh- to fifteenth-century Novgorod<sup>20</sup>; and it does merit attention, not only for what it may

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17. For example, P. P. Tolochko entitled his article "Kievskaiia zemlia," in *Drevnerusskie kniazhestva X-XIII vv.* (Moscow, 1975): 5-56, although he noted that the contemporary sources referred to the Dnipro valley as *russkaia zemlia*. The "Kievan Land" did occur much later, e.g. *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* [hereafter *PSRL*], IV (St. Petersburg, 1848), s.a. 6992 (1482): 134 (Academic manuscript of the Novgorod IV Chronicle); it was just as anachronistic for Tolochko to refer to the *Kievshchina* (P. P. Tolochko, *art. cit.*: especially 5-7). Similarly, P. V. Alekseev justified the name of his monograph, *Polotskaia zemlia (Ocherki istorii severnoi Belorussii) v IX-XIII vv.* (Moscow, 1966), on the basis of a single chronicle reference to the "Polotskian Land" (p. 5); cf. *PSRL*, I (Moscow, 1962), s.a. 6636 (1128): 299 (Laurentian Chronicle).

18. I do not believe that this "land" system resulted from Scandinavian influence. It is true that medieval Scandinavian sources (the "old" versions of Icelandic, Swedish, Norse, Danish, plus perhaps German, Anglo-Saxon and others) commonly used geographic-political names which included land/lond/lat/la, but the names of the three Scandinavian states had other forms: Danmark (Denmark), Svithjod/Svithjoth [Svíþjóð] (Sweden, sometimes Scythia), and Noregr (Norway), and the East-Slavic area of the Rus' was Gardarik. Therefore, despite innumerable terms such as Serkland (Land of Islam), Grekland (Greek Land), and of course Iceland, Finland, Gotland, Greenland, Vinland/Wineland, etc., the medieval Scandinavians do not seem to have had a *system* of politicized land-names. See the numerous quotations from sources in Omeljan Pritsak, *The origins of Rus'*. Vol. 1: *Old Scandinavian sources other than the sagas* (Cambridge, MA, 1981).

19. V. N. Bernadskii, cited above n. 9; A. V. Kuza, "Novgorodskaiia zemlia," in *Drevnerusskie kniazhestva...*, *op. cit.*: 144-201. It also appeared, less prominently, in the title of L. V. Danilova's earlier but still valuable study, also cited above n. 9, and in more article titles than can be counted.

20. For earlier comments on the relationship of the Novgorodian Land to the *russkaia zemlia*, see C. J. Halperin, "The concept of the *russkaia zemlia*..." *art. cit.*: 77 n. 13, 79, 80.

have meant, but also as a reflection of some fundamental principles of the Novgorodian political and social order. As we shall see, the Novgorodians did not invest the phrase with any ideological baggage; they did not fight for it or make treaties in its name. Indeed, they seem not to have projected any specific definition onto it at all, which explains the confusion and contradictions in its geographic content, and the arbitrariness and infrequency of its appearance in Novgorodian sources. At the conclusion of this article we shall advance a tentative explanation for the absence of a concept of the Novgorodian Land.

It is best to begin with geography. To understand existing geographic definitions of the Novgorodian Land, it is useful to recapitulate briefly the political structure and administrative infrastructure of Novgorod.<sup>21</sup> The city of Novgorod was eventually divided into five *kontsy* (boroughs; literally: ends), each with its own *veche* (communal assembly), beneath which functioned *ulitsy* (“streets”).<sup>22</sup> In addition, a decimal administrative structure organized people into ten *sotni* (hundreds), supervised by the *tysiatskii* (chiliarch). There were also socio-economic organizations of merchants dealing with specific foreign trading partners and/or patronizing a specific church, the most famous the *sto* (hundred) of the Church of St. John the Baptist. (Whether such fraternities constituted guilds similar to those of western Europe is a separate matter.) Outside the city itself, Novgorod’s territorial empire included *prigorody* (subordinate or “satellite” cities); *volosti* (districts), perhaps later converted under Muscovite rule to *piatiny* (literally: fifths),<sup>23</sup> and very outlying tribute-paying zones only irregularly visited by Novgorodian expeditions, having at most temporarily occupied *pogosty* (outposts). These systems were not static. Over the course of Novgorodian expansion to the north and northeast and the political and social development of Novgorod-city and its dependencies, such as Pskov, these overlapping organizational forms changed. Gradually, full sovereignty came to reside in the “city” *veche*, which at times included representatives from other cities and districts. The “city” *veche* chose Novgorod’s prince, elected the three nominees from whom its archbishop was

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21. This depiction can be found in any standard work on Novgorod. See V. N. Bernadskii, *op. cit.*; V. L. Ianin, *Novgorodskie posadniki, op. cit.*; Jörg Leuschner, *Novgorod. Untersuchungen zu einigen Fragen seiner Verfassungs- und Bevölkerungsstruktur* (Berlin, 1980; Osteuropastudien der Hochschulen des Landes Hessen. Reihe I. Giessener Abhandlungen zur Agrar- und Wirtschaftsforschung des Europäischen Ostens, 107); Henrik Birnbaum, *Lord Novgorod the Great. Essays in the history and culture of a medieval city-state. I: The historical background* (Columbus, OH, 1981; UCLA Slavic Studies, 2); and *id.*, *Novgorod in focus, op. cit.*

22. See e.g. I. E. Kleinenberg, A. A. Sevast’ianova, “Ulichane na strazhe svoei territorii (po materialam ganzeiskoi perepiski XV v.),” *Novgorodskii istoricheskii sbornik*, 2, 12 (1984): 157-164.

23. O. V. Martyshin, *op. cit.*: 243, is a rarity in explicitly relegating the term *piatiny* to post-independence times, but his assertion that the *volosti* were converted into “fifths” must be taken only in general terms: the territory covered by the term *volosti* may have been reorganized as *piatiny*, but there was no one-to-one relationship between old *volosti* and new *piatiny*. V. L. Ianin, *Novgorodskie akty XII-XV vv. Khronologicheskii kommentarii* (Moscow, 1991): 7 also dates the *piatiny* to after the unification of Novgorod and Muscovy.

chosen by lot, elected the archimandrite who supervised the monasteries, elected the *posadniki* (“mayors”) and *tysiatskie*, and decided all major political issues, including war and peace. Novgorod’s *veche* governed an empire stretching from the Baltic to the Arctic Seas, from Lake Peipus to the Urals and Siberia, and south and southeast to the borders of the Vladimir-Suzdalian (later Tverian and Muscovite) principalities. Novgorod conducted foreign relations with Scandinavia, the Hanseatic League and later Livonia, and Poland-Lithuania among its “western” neighbors.

To how much of this territory did the term “the Novgorodian Land” apply? Only to Novgorod-city proper? to the entire landmass incorporated under Novgorodian control? to a subset of subordinate cities and districts? Most scholars have merely assumed the broadest application of the term, and then utilized circumlocutions in a multiplicity of not always consistent ways to rationalize anomalies. A few examples will suffice. Birnbaum summarized the Muscovite annexation of 1471 as follows: “The city on the Volkhov was formally annexed by the Muscovite state together with its widespread possessions – the so-called Novgorod land (*Novgorodskaiia zemlia*).”<sup>24</sup> Why “so-called”? Danilova included the *prigorody* and *piatiny* in the Novgorodian Land, but also referred to the “core” or “primary” territory of the Novgorodian Land, into which areas like the Dvina or Obonezh’e were incorporated after colonization and assimilation of the native non-Russian population.<sup>25</sup> Kuza defined the Novgorodian Land within maximal limits, but also referred to the “core” (*iadro*) or the central region (*oblast’*) of the Novgorodian Land, as well as the “Novgorod Land itself” (*sama*), defined the *volosti* as “provinces” (*provintsii*), and mentioned the “core Novgorod Lands” [*nota bene* the plural form].<sup>26</sup> Ianin tried to separate the *volosti* where princes could not own lands from the Novgorodian Land where they could. Although he defined the Novgorodian Land as including the *prigorody* and the lands eventually organized as *piatiny*, he also contrived the expression “the Novgorodian Land properly speaking” (*sobstvennaia Novgorodskaiia zemlia*).<sup>27</sup> Later he included the *piatiny* in the Novgorodian Land,<sup>28</sup> and most recently defined the Novgorodian Land as Novgorod and its adjacent lands, including the Dvina Land.<sup>29</sup> Khoroshev also both referred to the “Novgorodian Land” and to “Novgorodian Lands.”<sup>30</sup> Finally,

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24. H. Birnbaum, *Lord Novgorod the Great*, *op. cit.*: 40.

25. L. V. Danilova, *op. cit.*: 4, 20, 34, 290, 297.

26. A. V. Kuza, *art. cit.*: *passim*

27. V. L. Ianin, *Novgorodskie posadniki*, *op. cit.*: 111-112, 157, 371.

28. V. L. Ianin, *Novgorodskaiia feodal’naia votchina (Istoriko-genealogicheskoe issledovanie)* (Moscow, 1981): 253. Cf. V. L. Ianin, *Ocherki kompleksnogo istochnikovedeniia. Srednevekovi Novgorod* (Moscow, 1977): 78-79, 86-87.

29. V. L. Ianin, *Novgorodskie akty....*, *op. cit.*: 7, 130-131.

30. A. S. Khoroshev, *Tserkov’....*, *op. cit.*: e.g. 49, 70, 72, 107, 141 vs. 134, 141 (both singular and plural on the same page), 143, 154, 159. Khoroshev identified the *volosti* as “lands.” [Obviously this enumeration is hardly exhaustive.]



Leuschner defined the Novgorodian Land as “all Novgorodian territory,” but then assigned the *piatiny* to the “core lands” in contradistinction to the *prigorody*.<sup>31</sup> In these interpretations, the “Novgorodian Land” both circumscribed some core territory surrounding the city proper, and the totality of territories subsumed under the Novgorodian Empire, for which there was no separate term.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the difficulty in defining the “Novgorodian Land” lies in the obvious but overlooked fact that it had no specific geographic meaning. It was used in both the narrower and broader senses historians have postulated, exactly as the term “Great Novgorod” could apply to city, city-state, or empire.<sup>33</sup> Confusion in the use of the phrase the “Novgorodian Land” results from a combination of the linguistic habit of scholars of early East Slavic history of invoking “land” nomenclature and the disposition of the term in the sources, to which we now turn.

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We begin with narrative sources, specifically chronicles. There was only a single entry in the Old Recension of the Novgorod First Chronicle<sup>34</sup> which referred to the Novgorodian Land<sup>35</sup>: in 1137 Sviatoslav Ol’govich gathered the “entire Novgorodian Land” (*vsiu zemliu novgorod’skuiu*) to make war on his brother Gleb.<sup>36</sup> There was only a single – and ambiguous at that – new invocation of the

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31. J. Leuschner, *op. cit.*: 57-58.

32. The phrase “Novgorodian state” (*gosudarstvo*) is obviously not contemporary, e.g. L. V. Cherepnin, *Novgorodskie berestiane gramoty kak istoricheskii istochnik* (Moscow, 1969): 225, 319 implicitly equated the Novgorodian Land and the Novgorodian “state.”

33. Eduard Mühle, *Die städtischen Handelzentren der nordwestlichen Rus’. Anfänge und frühe Entwicklung altrussischer Städte (bis gegen Ende des 12. Jahrhunderts)* (Stuttgart, 1991; Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des östlichen Europa, 32): 303, observed that terms for the people of a city entailed also the people of the state = Land. Thus “Novgorodians” (*novgorodtsy*) referred to all inhabitants of the Novgorodian Land. This scenario is complicated by his citation of the term “Ladogans” (*ladozhane*), since Ladoga was a Novgorodian *prigorod*.

34. There is solid consensus on the dating of the Novgorod First Chronicle. Two recent statements are Vladimir Vodoff, “Quelques remarques sur la première chronique de Novgorod,” in Michele Colucci, Guiseppe Dell’Agata, Harvey Goldblatt, eds., *Studia Slavica Mediaevalia et Humanistica Riccardo Picchio Dicata* (Rome, 1986), vol. 2: 741-753 and B. M. Kloss, “Letopis’ Novgorodskaia pervaia,” in D. S. Likhachev, ed., *Slovar’ knizhnikov i knizhnosti drevnei Rusi*. Vyp. I: *XI-pervaia polovina XIV v.* (Leningrad, 1987): 245-247.

35. A. N. Nasonov, ed., *Novgorodskaia pervaia letopis’ starshego i mladshego izvodov* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950) [hereafter *NPL*].

The Novgorodian chronicles utilized both the March and Ultramarch calendars, so converting their dates to Western equivalents requires careful study. However, since this article does not attempt to create a chronological sequence, it is not necessary to document every chronicle entry. I have therefore relied upon N. G. Berezkhov, *Khronologiia russkogo letopisaniia* (Moscow, 1963): 212-306, to identify which years employed which calendrical style.

36. *NPL*, 6645 (1137-1138): 25. Obviously, in this citation the phrase the “Novgorodian Land” applied to a collective of people, probably military, which is common in early East Slavic terminology; see *Slovar’ russkogo iazyka XI-XVII vv.*, Vyp. 5 (Moscow, 1978), s.v. *zemlia*,

Novgorodian Land in the Younger Recension: in 1441-1442 grand prince Vasilii II of Moscow made war on "many Novgorodian lands" (*mnogo zemle Novgorodchkoj*).<sup>37</sup> Given the frequency of scholarly references to the Novgorodian Land, the paucity of such invocations in the chronicles is surprising.

This phenomenon was not the product of ignorance of "land" nomenclature. The Old Recension of the Novgorodian First Chronicle utilized the following phrases: the Suzdalian Land,<sup>38</sup> Riazanian Land,<sup>39</sup> Danish Land,<sup>40</sup> Volhynian Land (in the southwest),<sup>41</sup> German Land,<sup>42</sup> Chud Land,<sup>43</sup> and Em' Land.<sup>44</sup> Naturally, the Novgorod First Chronicle employed the term *rusaskaia zemlia* to apply to the Dnipro river valley triangle of Kiev, Chernihiv and Pereiaslav', but other entries implicitly raised the issue of Novgorodian inclusion within the aegis of that term: in 1263 Aleksandr Nevskii labored for "Novgorod and the whole *rusaskaia zemlia*,"<sup>45</sup> and in 1270 the metropolitan asserted his jurisdiction over "the *rusaskaia zemlia*."<sup>46</sup> Some sort of *translatio* to the northeast, Vladimir-Suzdalian Rus', might or might not be implied by the entry in 1327 that the Tatar general Shevkal had taken Tver', Kashin and Torzhok (Novyi Torg, a Novgorodian possession), and "simply stated, laid waste the entire *rusaskaia zemlia*. God and St. Sophia protected only Novgorod" (*prosto reshchi vsiu zemliu russkiiu polozhisha pustu, tol'ko Novgorod ubliude bog i svataia Sofiia*).<sup>47</sup> Novgorod's chroniclers were perfectly conversant with the names of "lands."

One might argue that these allusions to "lands" derived from non-Novgorodian perceptions. However, the appearance of a novel term in Novgorodian chronicles, one which could only have originated from a Novgorodian perspective, clinches the argument that the virtual omission of references to the "Novgorodian Land" in the

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definition 9, pp. 376 right column-377 left column. Alternative terms in Novgorodian sources also carried both geographic and (in the literal sense) popular meanings. In this article my focus is simply on identifying the presence of such terms, not with exploring their alternate geographic or social definitions.

37. *NPL*, 6949: 421. The use of the plural "lands" in and of itself suggests an accidental phrase, not a political concept. This entry was the only significant use of the phrase I found in the Chronicle of Avraamka, which also reflects fifteenth-century Novgorodian chronicle-writing. See *PSRL*, XVI (St. Petersburg, 1889), s.a. 6949: 182.

38. *NPL*, 6812 (1304-1305): 92.

39. *NPL*, 6746 (1237-1238): 74.

40. *NPL*, 6810 (1302-1303): 91.

41. *NPL*, 6838 (1330-1331): 99.

42. *NPL*, 6776 (1267-1268): 86 (the "entire German Land" = people); 6819 (1311-1312): 93.

43. *NPL*, 6684 (1176-1177): 35; 6722 (1214-1215): 52; 6731 (1223-1224): 61 (*vsiu Chudskuuiu zemliu* here is geographic: the entire Chud Land); 6745 (1236-1237): 74; 6750 (1242-1243): 78.

44. *NPL*, 6764 (1256-1257): 81.

45. *NPL*, 6771 (1263-1264): 84.

46. *NPL*, 6778 (1270-1271): 89.

47. *NPL*, 6835 (1327-1328): 98.

Novgorodian chronicle was deliberate. The Novgorod First Chronicle designated Vladimir-Suzdalian Rus' as the "Lower Land" (*Nizovskaia zemlia*)<sup>48</sup> a term derived from referring to the people of the Volga-Oka mesopotamia as the *Niz'* (those who dwell down-river). I suspect that all appearances of this term, also modeled grammatically on the *ruskaia zemlia*,<sup>49</sup> were of Novgorodian provenance. In short, the Novgorodian bookmen were familiar enough with the system of land-terminology to invent a substitute for the (too ideological?) phrase the "Suzdalian Land."

At the same time, the "authors" of the Novgorod First Chronicle used other terms for what scholars call the Novgorodian Land, similarly in a non-ideological fashion. First, mention should be made of the term "the Novgorodian region" (*Novgorodskaia oblast'*),<sup>50</sup> often with the qualifier "all" or "the entire." Secondly, the Novgorod First Chronicle employed the term *novgorodskaia volost'* (Novgorod district, singular) or *novgorodskie volosti* (Novgorod districts, plural), also sometimes with "all" or "the entire," and sometimes identifying specific locations as *volosti*.<sup>51</sup> From these citations it appears that the three terms cannot be entirely separated chronologically or thematically. Sometimes they were used as synonyms, and at other times they possessed different meanings according to context.<sup>52</sup>

Little elucidation of these terms can be found in the translations of the Novgorod First Chronicle. In the English translation,<sup>53</sup> *Novgorodskaia zemlia* became "the

48. *NPL*, 6761 (1253-1254): 80; 6767 (1259-1260): 82; 6777 (1269-1270): 88; 6823 (1315-1316): 94; 6824 (1316-1317): 95; 6826 (1317-1318): 95; 6830 (1322-1323): 96; 6833 (1325-1326): 97. Note that both "land" and locational terms could be applied to a social group: both "the entire *Niz'*" and "the entire *Nizovskaia zemlia*" could be used to designate an invading army from Vladimir-Suzdalia.

49. Geographic viewpoint also substantiates the interpretation of the phrase *Zalesskaia zemlia* (land beyond the forest), to denote Vladimir-Suzdalia, as southern in origin, either Kievan or perhaps steppe. See C. J. Halperin, "The Russian Land and the Russian Tsar...." *art. cit.*: 18-19 (almost without fail I distorted the name of the putative author of the *Zadonshchina*, here and everywhere in my publications, as Sofronii, when it should be *Sofonii*).

50. *NPL*, 6642 (1134-1135): 23; 6650 (1142-1143): 26; 6655 (1147-1148): 27 (*so vseiu oblastiu Novgorodskoiu* – with the entire Novgorodian region, people); 6706 (1198-1199): 44; 6748 (1240-1241): 77 (*vsiu oblast' Novgorodskuiu* – the entire Novgorodian region, geographic).

51. *NPL*, 6692 (1184-1185): 37; 6724 (1216-1217): 56 Voloč; 6748 (1240-1241): 78; 6761 (1253-1254): 80; 6778 (1270-1271): 89 the "entire" (*vsia*) *volost' Novgorodskii*, the Pskovites, Ladogans, Korelians, Izhera, and Vozhan = people. Cf. new entries in the Younger Recension: 6781 (1272-1273): 322, the *volost' Novgorodskuiu* consists of Voloč, Bezhitsi, and Vologda; 6856 (1347-1348): 360; 6953 (1445-1446): 425, fifty Novgorodian *volosti*.

As a matter of principle I have avoided citing Pskovian material as evidence of Novgorodian views, but it is legitimate to point out their compatibility. For example, the Pskov I Chronicle, A.N. Nasonov, ed., *Pskovskie letopisi*, 2 vols (Moscow-Leningrad, 1941, 1955), I, 6851 (1343): 21 records that Olgerd attacked the "Novgorodian *volost'*".

52. Apparently Nasonov thought the terms had the same meaning, since they are gathered under a single entry in his geographic index (*NPL*: 610).

53. *The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016-1471*, trans. Robert Michell and Nevill Forbes; Intro. C. Raymond Beazley (reprint New York, 1970; Camden Third Series, vol. 25, 1914; ). To 1333 the translators relied on the Synodal ms; after that, on the Commission and other mss.

Novgorod land," *Novgorodskaiia oblast'* "the Novgorod province," *Novgorodskaiia volost'* "the Novgorod district."<sup>54</sup> The lower case initial letter of the second word in each case testifies that these were not considered technical terms. Indeed, the translators were inconsistent in rendering *zemlia* as "land": *Volynskaia zemlia* was translated as "Volhynia" and as "the country of Volhynia"<sup>55</sup> and other "land" phrases became "the country of ..."<sup>56</sup>; obviously the "land"-system of nomenclature got lost in the translation. Nor is the more recent and more scholarly German translation superior in this regard:<sup>57</sup> *Novgorodskaiia zemlia* was translated "Novgoroder Land"<sup>58</sup> but *Novgorodskaiia oblast'* as "Novgoroder Land," "Novgoroder Herrschaftsbereich" (realm) and "Novgoroder Gebiet" (district),<sup>59</sup> and *Novgorodskaiia volost'* both as "Novgoroder Herrschaftsbereich" and "Novgoroder Gebiet."<sup>60</sup> Such examples could be multiplied, but obviously to the translator these were not technical terms but expressions to be translated according to context.<sup>61</sup> Once again the system of "land" nomenclature was disregarded.<sup>62</sup> These translations reflect lack of scholarly appreciation of the nature of early East-Slavic political terminology.

Material about Novgorod or of Novgorodian provenance found its way into novel entries in non-Novgorodian chronicles. An initial search uncovered very few unambiguous invocations of the Novgorodian Land. Two chronicles will suffice as examples. In the reconstructed Trinity Chronicle, *circa* 1408, in 947 the Kievan grand prince Oleg collected tribute "from the whole *Rus'* and Novgorodian Lands"<sup>63</sup> and in 1264 Iaroslav Iaroslavovich became grand prince "of the Vladimirian and Novgorodian Lands."<sup>64</sup> Parallel grammatical constructions mar the purity of these references to the Novgorodian Land. Similarly, the mid-fifteenth-century Novgorod Fourth Chronicle attributed to prince Mstislav

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54. *Ibid.*, 6645 (1137): 15; 6642 (1134): 13; 6692 (1194): 32.

55. *Ibid.*, 6838 (1330): 126; 6857 (1349): 143.

56. *Ibid.*, e.g. "Low country" for *Nizovskaia zemlia* (6742/1234: 79 n. 2); "Country beyond the Volok" for *Zavolochkaia/Dvinskaia zemlia* (6894/1386: 161 n. 1).

57. *Die erste Novgoroder Chronik nach ihrer ältesten Redaktion (Synodalhandschrift) 1016-1333/1352*, tr. & ed. Joachim Dietze (Munich, 1971), contains an edition of the original text, a German translation, and a photofacsimile of the manuscript.

58. *Ibid.*, 6645 (1137): 59.

59. *Ibid.*, 6642 (1135): 58; 6706 (1198): 77; 6650 (1142): 61.

60. *Ibid.*, 6692 (1192): 71; 6748 (1240): 110.

61. See *ibid.*: 589, nn. 60 (to p. 62) and 62 (to p. 67) for explicit commentary on the terms. Even Leonard A. Jones, who translated the German Introduction into English (pp. 7-28; the German is on the top half of the page, and English on the bottom half; synchronicity is soon lost), mixed German and English equivalents: German "Land" became English "territory," "Herrschaftsbereich" became "realm" or "area," and so forth (e.g. pp. 8, 18/19, 23/24 etc.).

62. *Ibid.*, 6838 (1330): 139 *iz Vylenskoi zemli* = "aus Volhynian."

63. M. D. Priselkov, comp., *Troitskaia letopis'*. *Rekonstruktsiia teksta* (Moscow-Leningrad 1950), s.a. 6655: 81-82 "po vsei zemli Rus'tei i Novgorod'stei."

64. *Ibid.*, 6772: 328 "byst' kniaz' velikii Volodimerskoi i Novgorodskoi zemli."

Rostislavovich in 1179 the wish to free “the Novgorodian Land” from the “pagans,” here the Chud’.<sup>65</sup> This kind of unambiguous invocation was rare; once again, compound phrases obscure the landscape.<sup>66</sup> Comprehensive investigation of the geographic indices of all later chronicles would probably not significantly alter this pattern.<sup>67</sup>

Aside from chronicles, non-chronicle Novgorodian literature, to judge from standard anthologies, did not refer to the Novgorodian Land with any frequency. It did not occur in the “Tale of the trip of Ivan of Novgorod to Jerusalem on a devil,”<sup>68</sup> or in the “Tale of Novgorodian *posadnik* Shchil”<sup>69</sup> or in the “Tale of the White Cow”<sup>70</sup> or the “Narration of the battle of the Novgorodians with the Suzdalians.”<sup>71</sup> The “Novgorodian Land” did not occur in the “Life of Mikhail of Klopsk” until the second redaction, probably composed after Novgorod’s annexation by Muscovy.<sup>72</sup> The absence of references to the Novgorodian Land in these works does not bespeak an active political concept.

Taken as a whole, the narrative sources by or about Novgorod suggest that any usage of the phrase “the Novgorodian Land” was conspicuous by its rarity. It was not a central or prolific concept of Novgorodian identity. This pattern contrasts sharply with Novgorodian familiarity with “land” nomenclature and imaginative derivation of the term “the Lower Land” to describe Vladimir-Suzdalia. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the Novgorodian bookmen deliberately refrained from developing a concept of the Novgorodian Land.

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The Novgorodian Land and Novgorodian *volosti* (but not Novgorodian *oblast’*) figured prominently in Novgorod’s treaties with East Slavic princes; it is

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65. *PSRL*, IV, s.a. 6687: 15.

66. E.g. *ibid.*, s.a. 6724 (1216): 22-23.

67. Again, from Pskovian material, the Pskov III chronicle described Vasilii II as having made peace with Novgorod in 6964/1456 “in lazolvtsakh in the Novgorodian Land,” after having “stood” (campaigned) in the Novgorodian Land for four weeks (A. N. Nasonov, ed., *Pskovskie letopisi*, *op. cit.*, II: 142 [Stroev manuscript]), but the Pskov II chronicle (Synodal manuscript), contained this entry for 6930/1422: “In the entire *ruskuiu zemliu* there was a great famine for three years, previously in Novgorod and all its *volosti*, and in Moscow, and in the entire Muscovite and the entire Tverian (*i po vsei Moskovskoi, i po vsei Tverskoi*) [Lands?]” (*ibid.*: 38). This curious phrasing, which grammatically implied invocations of the Muscovite and Tverian Lands, did not utilize the phrase “the Novgorodian Land.”

68. N. K. Gudzii, comp., *Khrestomatiiia po drevnei russkoi literatury XI-XVII vekov* (5th ed., Moscow, 1952): 210-212 and *Pamiatniki literatury drevnei Rusi XIV-seredina XV veka* (Moscow, 1981): 454-463.

69. N. K. Gudzii, *op. cit.*: 213-215.

70. *Ibid.*: 244-253; this text lauded the “*ruskaia zemlia*.”

71. *Pamiatniki literatury...*, *op. cit.*: 448-453.

72. L. A. Dmitriev, ed., *Povesti o zhitii Mikhaila Klopskogo* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1958): 120: “there was famine in the entire Novgorodian Land.”

unexpected that, in treaties concluded on behalf of "Great Novgorod," the phrase "the Novgorodian Land" should be found more frequently than in the chronicles. Unlike the different annals in a chronicle, which might have been written by different chroniclers at different times, the articles in a treaty were a chronological whole, composed and ratified together. For that reason, the treaties must be considered not thematically, by term, but chronologically. Newer treaties conservatively repeated clauses from older treaties, but precisely this feature of their language highlights the arbitrariness, and hence inconsequence, of usages of the "Novgorodian Land."

The earliest extant princely treaty<sup>73</sup> was concluded in 1264 with Tver' grand prince Iaroslav Iaroslavovich. It meticulously restricted the grand prince's rights in the Novgorodian *volosti*, which it defined as: Bezhiče, Gorodets, Melechia, Shipino, Egna, Vologda, Zavoloch'e (Beyond the Volok, but including Volok itself?), Koloperem', Tre, Perem' (Perm'), Iugra, and Pechera.<sup>74</sup> It forbade the prince to own villages (*sela*) in these Novgorodian *volosti*. It forbade him to export dependents from the "entire Novgorodian *volost*" (*A vyvod" ti, kniazhe, po vsei volosti Novgorod'skoi ne nadobe*). And it defined the prince's own realm as the Suzdalian Land.<sup>75</sup> The 1266 treaty with the same prince repeated the listing of Novgorodian *volosti* with a few minor variations, adding Torzhok, the *volosti* attached to Volok,<sup>76</sup> and redefining Gorodets as Gorodets Palits' (which it remained in later documents). The prohibition on deportation of people was rephrased for Bezhitsy but the blanket proscription was not repeated. The Suzdalian Land still occurred.<sup>77</sup> The 1270 treaty with the same Tverian prince made no fundamental changes to the list of *volosti*, referred for the first time to the *Niz*' (here meaning territory, not people),<sup>78</sup> and restored the blanket deportation clause in a new form: "And you, prince, will not export people between the Suzdalian Land and Novgorod" (*A vyvoda, ti, knizhe, mezhi Suzhdal'skoiu zemleiu i Nov'm'gorodom" ne chiniti*).<sup>79</sup>

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73. All texts from S. N. Valk, ed., *Gramoty Velikogo Novgoroda i Pskova* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1949; Düsseldorf, 1970, Slavica Reprint, 32) [hereafter *GVNP*].

Again, since I am not constructing a narrative, there is no need to argue the dating of each treaty, and only the datings in *GVNP* will be given. For recent discussion of the accuracy of those datings, see V. L. Ianin, *Novgorodskie akty...*, *op. cit.*

74. As we have seen, the Novgorod First Chronicle mentioned at least Volok, Bezhitsy, and Vologda as *volosti*, so there is some compatibility between the narrative and documentary material.

75. *GVNP*, #1: 9-10.

76. This is intriguing. The Novgorodian administrative apparatus seems to have been hierarchical, so how could a *volost*' contain *volosti*? This was not a slip of the quill: similar language reoccurred in later treaties.

77. *GVNP*, #2: 10-11.

78. The further usage of this term will not be traced; it is sufficient to note that it did find its way from the chronicles into the more "official" Novgorodian treaties.

79. *GVNP*, #3: 11-13.

In Novgorod's treaty with Tverian grand prince Mikhail Iaroslavovich in 1304-1305, the list of Novgorodian *volosti* remained as previous. The Suzdalian Land was referenced in a new clause guaranteeing, by authority of the Mongol khan, the safe passage of Novgorodian merchants across the Suzdalian Land. More intriguing was a change in the deportation prohibition clause, which now read: "between the Suzdalian Land and the Novgorodian" (*mezhiu Suzhdal'skoiu zemleiu i Novgorod'skoiu*).<sup>80</sup> This first, albeit implicit, appearance of the "Novgorodian Land" in the treaties obviously resulted from a scribe's conscious or unconscious use of grammatical parallelism, which is in itself very telling.

Another treaty with the same prince, from the same years, contained yet further emendations. The Novgorodian *volosti* list remained substantially the same, although there was an allusion to "all Volok *volosti*." A new clause forbade the prince, his princesses or nobles, to own villages (*sela*), in the Novgorodian Land; in restoring and amplifying the 1264 clause the clerk altered "Novgorodian *volost*" to read Novgorodian Land. But lest one jump to the conclusion that the "Novgorodian Land" was becoming more widely disseminated in the treaties, it must be noted that the population movement clause was rewritten to refer only to the Novgorodian *volost*' (*A vyvod" ti, knizhe, v" vsei Novgorod'skoi volosti ne nadobe*), the movements of people fleeing Torzhok "on the Novyi Torzhok land" (*Novot"rzk'koi zemli*) were discussed, and there was a reference to the runaway slaves entering the "Tverian *volost*" (*Tfer'skuu volost*'), neither the Tverian Land nor the Suzdalian Land.<sup>81</sup>

The 1307-1308 Novgorod treaty with Mikhail Iaroslavovich again retained the list of Novgorodian *volosti*; reiterated the prohibition of princely landholding in the "Novgorodian Land"; affirmed the traditional boundary between the "Suzdalian Land and the Novgorodian" (*mezhiu Suzhdal'skoiu zemleiu i Novgorod'skoiu*), a new clause with another grammatical parallelism behind its usage; and restored the prior formulation of the population movement clause "between the Suzdalian Land and the Novgorodian," so that this phrase appeared twice in the same treaty.<sup>82</sup> These innovations were faithfully preserved in the Tverian version of the same treaty.<sup>83</sup> However, these slightly heightened invocations notwithstanding, usage of the Novgorodian Land in the treaties was not evolving in a linear direction.

The 1318-1319 Novgorod treaty with the same prince was badly mutilated, but definitely contained a new prohibition against Tverian officials crossing into the Novgorodian *volost*'.<sup>84</sup> The 1326-1327 treaty with Tverian prince Aleksandr Mikhailovich, while again retaining the list of Novgorodian *volosti*, reverted to the Bezhitsy formula concerning deportations, thus losing the reference to the

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80. *GVNP*, #6: 15-16.

81. *GVNP*, #7: 16-18.

82. *GVNP*, #9: 19-20.

83. *GVNP*, #10: 21-22.

84. *GVNP*, #13: 25-26.

Novgorodian Land, and reformulated the definition of the border as between "your patrimony (*otchinu*) and the entire Novgorodian *volost'*," again omitting any reference to the Novgorodian Land. The Suzdalian Land still appeared.<sup>85</sup> But the 1371 Novgorod treaty with Mikhail Aleksandrovich of Tver', without modifying the definition of Novgorodian *volosti*, restored the border definition to "between the Suzdalian Land and the Novgorodian" and the population movement prohibition to "between the Suzdalian Land and the Novgorodian."<sup>86</sup> A 1375 Novgorodian treaty with the same prince, with different subject matter, also alluded to the Tverian *volost'*.<sup>87</sup>

The 1435 Novgorod treaty with Vasilii II of Moscow preserved the list of Novgorodian *volosti*, the references to the Suzdalian Land, the prohibition on sending officials into the "entire Novgorodian *volost'*," and the depopulation clause "between the Suzdalian Land and the Novgorodian." However, it also rephrased the landowning restriction to forbid the prince to establish *volosti* on the Novgorodian Land (*A na Nougorodskoi zemli volostei ne staviti*).<sup>88</sup>

The 1446-1447 Novgorod treaty with Boris Aleksandrovich of Tver' included the prohibition of Tverian ownership of *sela* in the Novgorodian Land, referred to the boundary with the Novgorodian *otchina* (patrimony), and forbade Tverian gentry and officials (*dvoriane i pristavy*) from entering the Novgorodian or Novyi-Torg *volosti*. It contained no references to the Suzdalian Land, no list of Novgorodian *volosti*.<sup>89</sup>

The 1456 Novgorod treaty with Vasilii II, under the new political environment created by the Novgorodian defeat at the battle of Iazhelbitsy, did not alter the definition of Novgorodian *volosti*, prohibited the establishment of princely villages in the Novgorodian Land (*na Nougorodskoi zemle sel' ne staviti*) (a purer sentence than in the preceding treaty), and continued the export of people clause "between the Suzdalian Land and the Novgorodian." (The boundary definition clause was not repeated.)<sup>90</sup> Finally, the 1471 Novgorod treaty with Grand Prince Ivan III of Moscow, after the final defeat of the Novgorodians on the Shelon' river, nevertheless still repeated the list of Novgorodian *volosti* (although omitting Volok and Vologda, no longer under Novgorodian secular rule),<sup>91</sup> prohibited princely ownership of villages in the Novgorodian Land, still used the phrase the Suzdalian

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85. *GVNP*, #14: 26-28.

86. *GVNP*, #15: 28-30.

87. *GVNP*, #18: 33-34.

88. *GVNP*, #19: 34-36.

89. *GVNP*, #20: 36-38.

90. *GVNP*, #22: 39-41. The Muscovite version, #23: 41-43, equated the Muscovite Land, the *russkaia zemlia*, and the "grand principality," reflecting Muscovite pretensions and control.

91. Noted in V. L. Ianin, *Novgorodskie akty...., op. cit.*: 190, which I had missed.



Land for customs control, and referred to the export of people “between the Suzdalian Land and the Novgorodian.”<sup>92</sup>

Little need be said of the texts of Novgorod’s treaties with her “western” neighbors. The German-language treaties referred to “Novgorod,” and only rarely to the Novgorodian Land.<sup>93</sup> The 1323 treaty with Sweden referred to the German Land, the Swedish Land (several times), and even the Korelian Land, but never to the Novgorodian Land: “And peace to Novgorod, and all its *prigorody* and to all Novgorodian *volosti*, and to the entire Swedish Land.”<sup>94</sup> An agreement dated between 1440 and 1447 with Casimir, grand prince of Lithuania, referred to Novgorodians from “the entire Novgorodian *volost’*,” and frequently used that phrase, but the Novgorodian Land did not appear.<sup>95</sup> Finally, the treaty with Casimir IV, King of Poland and Grand Prince of Lithuania, from 1470-1471,<sup>96</sup> was largely repetitious in its use of the expressions discussed here. It mentioned the “Polish” (*liatskuiu*) and German Lands. It itemized “Rzhev, and Veliki Luki, and Kholmovskii outpost (*pogost*) [later the city of Kholm],” as “Novgorodian lands” (*a to zemli Novgorodskie*). It reworded the traditional clause about population deportation as follows: “And you, honorable king, will not deport people from the Novgorodian patrimony” (*iz Novgorodskoi otchiny*), although it continued using the phrase Novgorodian *volosti*, which, for the last time, it listed, (although restoring Volok and Vologda, perhaps a bit of Novgorodian irredentism). The King was forbidden villages in the Novgorodian Land, and envoys and merchants were guaranteed a clear path through “the Lithuanian Land and the Novgorodian,” one parting syntactic parallel. Down to the end, Novgorod treaty-writers persisted in their eclectic use of political-administrative terminology.

Several preliminary conclusions can be drawn from this rich material. First, the phrase “the Novgorodian Land” and derivatives most often developed as a result of linguistic parallelism, a result of the use of other “land” nomenclature. In other words, treaty-drafters were less successful than chroniclers in resisting the

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92. *GVNP*, #26: 45-48. The Muscovite version, #27: 48-51 mentioned Novgorodian nobles who had bought “Rostovian and Beloozerian lands,” and rights of safe passage across the Novgorodian Land and the Pskovian Land.

93. The exception were the 1371 Lübeck treaty draft, *GVNP*, #42: 74-76, “der Nowerder lande” (twice), “der Nowerder lant” (once), and the 1420 treaty draft with the Livonian Order and the bishop of Dorpat, #59: 96-98, “daz Noghardesche land” (once).

Rybina observed that the German sources transliterated Novgorodian terms rather than translating them: thus the term Neustadt (New City) did not occur in reference to Novgorod. E. A. Rybina, *Inozemnye dvory v Novgorode XII-XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1986): 28. Nevertheless, even Teutonic literalism has sometimes gotten lost in the translation. Paragraph 92 of the Fourth Redaction of the Hanseatic Schra (*skra*), the statutes of the Hanseatic Hof in Novgorod, forbade anyone older than twenty to study Russian “in deme Nougorodeschen righte [realm – CJH] noch to Nougarden,” which I. E. Kleinenberg translated as “in the Novgorodian Land nor in Novgorod itself.” (*Ibid.*: 157). The Schra also recapitulated a reference to the *Niz’* (Nisowern) (Paragraph 97; *Ibid.*: 159).

94. *GVNP*, #38: 67-68.

95. *GVNP*, #70: 115-116.

96. *GVNP*, #77: 129-132.

temptation posed by the system of land-terminology to create a "Novgorodian Land." Second, the pattern of usage, in which the "Novgorodian Land" appeared and disappeared from one treaty to the next, does not suggest that it possessed a rigorous substantive referent. Finally, the peculiar pattern of chronicle usage of the phrase the "Novgorodian *volost*" in both singular and plural forms was if anything exacerbated by the inclusion in the treaties of what appears to be a technical list of local and strictly defined Novgorodian *volosti*. Apparently the term *volost* served equally well in finite and amorphous contexts.<sup>97</sup> This confirms the suspicion that the term had no ideological content.

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The cumulative evidence of Novgorodian chronicles, treaties, law codes, coinage and seals undermines any attempt to specify what the phrase "the Novgorodian Land" meant, i.e. which territories it encompassed, which levels of Novgorodian political and administrative organization were subsumed under it. The expression appeared most in Novgorod's treaties with northeastern princes, where it seems to have meant "Novgorodian land," that is, any territory under Novgorodian jurisdiction. It was not used in any ideologically pregnant sense.

The absence of a concept of the Novgorodian Land can be explained both positively and negatively. Positively, Novgorodian spokesmen put their faith in the identification of the city-state with its divine protectress, Hagia Sophia.<sup>98</sup> In view of the role of the archbishop of Novgorod, prelate of the St. Sophia cathedral, in the life of the city, this equation elicits no dissent. The archbishop of Novgorod served as its head of state. The archiepiscopate was the largest landowner in Novgorod.<sup>99</sup> The "state" treasury was stored in the St. Sophia cathedral. The archbishop often administered border territories directly,<sup>100</sup> his lieutenants and regiment led the Novgorodian army, he headed diplomatic embassies on behalf of the city, he chaired the "Council of Lords" and his representative chaired the city *veche*, his intervention often calmed the city's heated political disputes, foreign merchants were judged in his court,<sup>101</sup> other "courts" met on his property. The church was guardian of the legal weights and measures, a critical function in a commercial

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97. J. Leuschner, *op. cit.*: 57-58, assigned one *prigorod* (Beistadt) to each *volost*, listing Volok Lamskii, Torzhok, Rzhev, Velikaia Luka, and Bezhitsy.

98. See conveniently Joel Raba, "Evfimij II., Erzbischof von Groß-Novgorod und Pskov. Ein Kirchenfürst als Leiter einer weltlichen Republik," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, N.F., 25, 2 (1977): 161-173, as well as id., "Church and foreign policy in the fifteenth-century Novgorodian state," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 13, 1-2 (1979): 52-58.

99. L. V. Danilova, *op. cit.*: 146-161 (on St. Sophia), compared to pp. 99-145 (lands of Bogdan Esipov), 145-146 (summary of Shurichina's work on the lands of Marfa Boretskaia), 161-180 (Iur'ev and Arkazhskii monasteries' lands).

100. J. Leuschner, *op. cit.*: 124-128; O. V. Martyshin, *op. cit.*: 210-222.

101. Whenever the German Hof was shut down, its keys were placed in the hands of the archbishop for safekeeping (e.g. E. A. Rybina, *art. cit.*: 70).

city.<sup>102</sup> In short, the archbishop guaranteed the domestic tranquillity and prosperity of the city. The equation of St. Sophia and Novgorod resonated with the prominent institutional role of the archbishop and his cathedral apparatus.

The Orthodox Christian faith of the Novgorodians was conducive to this identification of Church and “state.” Novgorodian coins showed St. Sophia handing over or receiving a sign of sovereignty from a man (prince? *posadnik*?); Novgorodian seals included the *Vsederzhitel’* (Almighty, usually translated as Pantocrator<sup>103</sup>) as well as other, more secular, symbols. The hard-headed, practical Novgorodian *boyare*<sup>104</sup> and merchants adorned and surrounded the city with churches and monasteries, decorating them with icons and frescoes of lasting beauty; the *boyare* sometimes took the cowl and “retired” to the monasteries. The seals of Novgorodian officials carried icons of their patron saints. It is no surprise that Novgorodians thought themselves favored by the Divine Wisdom, and fought in her name.<sup>105</sup> Historians have not explored the potential consequences of this identification, redolent not only of St. Sophia in Kiev but also of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, for Novgorodian self-perceptions as a Chosen People.

But Novgorod’s political theology need not have entailed the absence of a concept of “the Novgorodian Land,” parallel to that of other early East-Slavic polities.<sup>106</sup> The Muscovite army in the *Zadonshchina* fights “for the *russkaia zemlia* and the Christian faith,”<sup>107</sup> but had the Novgorodians participated, they could have

102. A. L. Khoroshkevich, *op. cit.*: 141 reproduces the official seal for wax parcels, but neither transcribes nor explains it. This seal carried the slogan “*tovar’ bozhii*” (literally: God’s goods), either because various seals for weights and measures were kept in churches, or because of the use of wax for church candles and other “sacred” functions, or because the wax might have come from a monastery. (My thanks to Professor Eve Levin for her ideas on this seal.) All churches were utilized as storage facilities for goods, for security reasons; see L. V. Cherepnin, *op. cit.*: 305, 313, 315-316.

103. My thanks again to Professor Eve Levin for suggesting the more precise definition.

104. A. S. Khoroshev, *Tserkov’...*, *op. cit.*: 42-43, even identified one archbishop as of *boyar* origin, Dobrynia Iadreinovich, monastic name Antonii, archbishop 1210-1220. The *boyars* usually controlled the churches and monasteries via patronage (*ktitorstvo*) (pp. 156-169).

105. I do not know where to situate the “political” piety of the Novgorodians within H. Birnbaum’s picture of their *mentalité* as a contrast between down-to-earth practicality and the kind of fantasy epitomized by the “Tale of the trip of Ivan of Novgorod to Jerusalem on a devil.”

106. This aspect of Novgorodian history has no parallel to Western Europe. For comments on the comparison and contrast between Novgorod and medieval Europe, see L. N. Langer, *art. cit.*: 118-119; V. F. Andreev, *art. cit.*: 145; V. L. Ianin, *Novgorodskie posadniki...*, *op. cit.*: 272-273 identifying parallel development of the sphragistic symbolism in Novgorod and Venice; H. Birnbaum, *Lord Novgorod the Great...*, *op. cit.*, on St. Sophia/Venice’s San Marco/Dubrovnik’s St. Vlahos, and H. Birnbaum, “Novgorod and Dubrovnik: Two Slavic city republics and their civilization,” in his *Aspects of the Slavic Middle Ages and Slavic Renaissance culture* (New York, 1991; American Universities Studies, Series XII, Slavic Languages and Literatures, 4): 355-395 [originally a pamphlet, Zagreb, 1989]; Anna Leonidovna Choroškevič, “Der deutsche Hof in Novgorod und die deutsche Herberge (Fondaco dei Tedeschi) in Venedig im 13./14. Jahrhundert. Eine vergleichende Vorstudie” (tr. Gertrud Pickhan), in Ortwin Pelc, Gertrud Pickhan, eds, *Zwischen Lübeck und Novgorod. Wirtschaft, Politik und Kultur im Ostseeraum von frühen Mittelalter bis ins 20. Jahrhundert. Norman Angerman zum 60. Geburtstag* (Lüneberg, 1996): 67-87; and O. V. Martyshin, *op. cit.*: 49-57.

107. For a convenient text, M. N. Tikhomirov, V. F. Rzhiga, L. A. Dmitriev, eds, *Povesti o Kulikovskoi bitvy* (Moscow, 1959): 9-17.

mustered only half such a slogan. The ubiquitous appearance of the “Novgorodian Land” in scholarly works owes more to the influence of the myth of the *russkaia zemlia* than to the medieval Novgorodians; while not as anachronistic as allusions to *Novgorodshchina*,<sup>108</sup> its use ought to be tempered.

It is, in conclusion, the negative explanation for the absence of a concept of the “Novgorodian Land” which must take precedence, and that explanation is Novgorod’s primary political attribute, the lack of an inherited princely line.<sup>109</sup> Because of that absence, the city-state was able to develop a “republican” form of government and an oligarchic social order. Indeed, the limits of Novgorodian expansion were defined by the territories of western and East-Slavic princely lines.<sup>110</sup> Without an entrenched domestic princely line, Novgorod could manipulate rival princely contenders and principalities to maintain its autonomy, a game Novgorod played well, until Muscovy changed the rules.<sup>111</sup> Novgorod’s way of life could not be exported to monarchic states.<sup>112</sup> Novgorod could not articulate a “land” ideology, since that form of ideology depended upon the intimate connection between the Riurikid clan and the “land.” In this sense, the lack of a myth of the “Novgorodian Land” testifies to Novgorodian recognition of its political uniqueness. There was no concept of “The Novgorodian Land,” only the phrase “Novgorodian land,” because Novgorod lacked the essential element of a *zemlia*, its own dynasty.

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108. For example, I. Ia. Froianov, *op. cit.*: 181.

109. For this reason, references to Novgorod as a “patrimony” (*otchina i dedina*) require further elucidation. See *GVNP*, #20, 1446-1447: 37, #77, 1470-1471: 131; *NPL*, pp. 51 (6718/1209-1210), 54 (6723/1215-1216), 81 (6763/1255-1256), 89 (6778/1270-1271) from the Old Recension; 346 (6841/1333-1334), 360 (6856/1348-1349), 391 (6906/1398-1399), 418 (6943/1435-1436), 426 (6953/1445-1446) from the Young Recension.

110. E. Mühle, *op. cit.*: 142.

111. H. Birnbaum, *Lord Novgorod the Great...*, *op. cit.*: 82-100.

112. For this reason I have difficulty with the assertion that Novgorod and Moscow were “rivals” in the late fifteenth century, or alternative political options for all of Russia. Had Moscow lost the battle on the Shelon’ river, Novgorod might have survived longer as an autonomous city-state, but how would Moscow’s political organization have been changed? The most explicit exposition of this argument is in Henrik Birnbaum, “Did the 1478 annexation of Novgorod by Muscovy fundamentally change the course of Russian history?” in Lindsey Hughes, ed., *New perspectives on Muscovite history. Selected papers from the Fourth World Congress of Soviet and East European Studies, Harrogate 1990* (New York, 1993): 37-50, reprinted in H. Birnbaum, *Novgorod in focus...*, *op. cit.*: 166-180 (Birnbaum took this hypothetical conceit from A. V. Isachenko), but it is also implicit in the works of many other scholars, for example, Joel Raba, “Novgorod in the fifteenth century,” *art. cit.*: 348-364, and id., “The fate of the Novgorodian republic,” *Slavonic and East European Review*, 45, 105 (July 1967): 307-323.