

An Occult Version of the Early Medieval History of Russia and Description of Arctic Navigation Routes in the *Pskov Chronicle* of 1689

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The Manuscript Department of the State Historical Museum (GIM, Moscow) holds a notable example of later Russian chronicle writing that contains a unique and extensive legendary account of the initial opening up of the Russian north, including a description of Arctic navigation routes. The *Pskov Chronicle* (entitled ‘The Book at the Beginning of the Primordial World According to the Alphabet [Abecediary]’) is extant in only one copy, dated 1689 (GIM, I. E. Zabelin Collection, No. 460/468 (129)–Q). Zabelin (1820–1908) was one of the founders and organizers of the Historical Museum in Moscow; he was also a famous historian of Moscow, a specialist on the history of everyday life, habits and customs, an archaeologist, and a connoisseur and collector of manuscripts.¹

The text of the *Pskov Chronicle* is a typical example of the late ‘legendary’ mode of Russian chronicle writing (such as *The Tale of Slovensk the Great*).² The Chronicle begins with highlights of world (i.e. Biblical) history from Adam and Noah onwards, and written legends recounting the early history of the Slavs. The latter mostly repeat stories borrowed from the *Tale of Slovensk*. Thereafter the narrative focuses mainly on the history of the Pskov region, and primarily on the main character of the Chronicle, Princess Olga. The date of the text (or the extant copy) is mentioned in the introduction (fol. 3r). Paleographic features and watermarks of this manuscript are quite consistent with the date.³ The extant manuscript, which contains the text of the Chronicle, also includes fragments of two more literary texts. One provides geographical descriptions; the other contains a prophecy about the Last Judgment.

From a textual viewpoint, comparative analysis of extant literary works in the Pskov chronicle tradition is quite a challenge and experienced scholars have repeatedly applied themselves to these texts.⁴ The Pskov chronicles contain exceptionally extensive information on Russian–Livonian relations as well as events of the so-called ‘Time of Troubles’ (the interregnum and Polish intervention of 1598–1613). Entries in the Pskov chronicles reflecting local Pskov events are dated starting from 1266, the year of accession of Prince Dovmont (Lithuanian *Daumantas*). The second archive manuscript of the Pskov 3rd Chronicle notes

¹ A. A. Formozov, *Istorik Moskvy I. E. Zabelin*, Moscow, Moskovskiy rabochiy, 1984.

² Slovensk was the legendary precursor of the town of Novgorod (the Great). See A. N. Popov, *Izbornik slavyanskikh i russkikh sochineniy i statey, vnesennykh v khronografy russkoy redaksii*, St Petersburg, 1869, pp. 442–4; F. Gilyarov, *Predaniya russkoy Nachal'noy letopisi*, Moscow, 1869, Appendix, pp. 15–22.

³ See A. A. Turilov, A. V. Chernetsov, ‘Deyaniya knyagini Ol’gi v ‘Pskovskom Kronike’ 1689’, *Drevnyaya Rus’*. *Voprosy medievistiki*, 2016, no. 3 (65), p. 58.

⁴ A. N. Nasonov, ‘O spiskakh pskovskikh letopisey’, *Pskovskie letopisi*, ed. A. N. Nasonov. Moscow–Leningrad, 1941, vol. I (republished in *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisey* [hereafter *PSRL*], Moscow, 2003, vol. V, no. 1); A. N. Nasonov, ‘Iz istorii pskovskogo letopisaniya’, *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 18, 1946, pp. 255–94 (republished in *PSRL*, V, 1, Moscow, 2003, pp. 10–44); H.-J. Grabmüller, *Die Pskover Chroniken. Untersuchungen zur russischen Regionalchronistik im 13–15 Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden, 1975; H.-J. Grabmüller, ‘Autoreferat’, *Russia Mediaevalis*, München, Bd. 3, 1977, pp. 132–4.

specifically that the date of the foundation of Pskov is unclear: 'There is no mention made in the chronicles about the town of Pleskov (Pskov), by whom and by which people it was founded'.⁵ Apparently, the Chronicle compiler was familiar with the main chronicle texts of Pskov and deliberately tried to fill up the gap in them by recounting in detail how the land of Pskov arose.

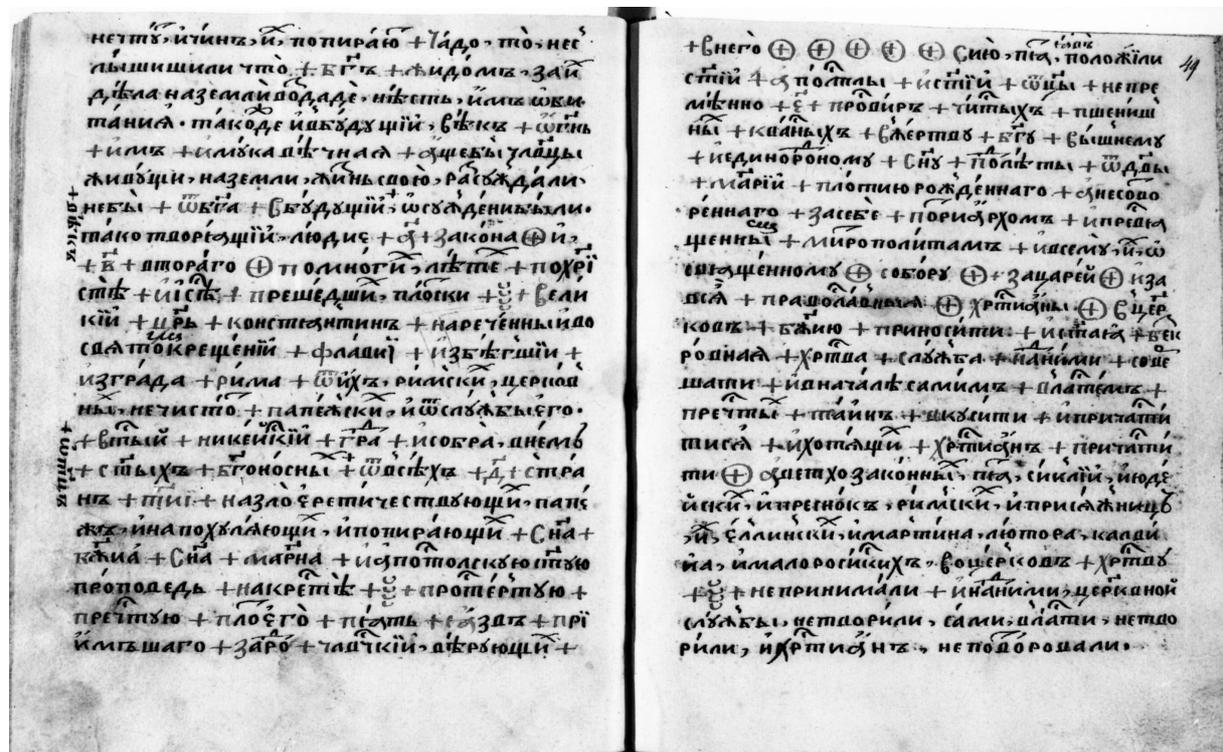


Fig. 1. A double-page of the manuscript (fol. 48^v – 49^r).

The *Pskov Chronicle* (fig. 1, above) with which we are here concerned is practically unknown in scholarly literature. It is not featured in the standard reference work *Slovar' knizhnikov i knizhnosti Drevnei Rusi* (Dictionary of Scribes and Written Tradition of Medieval Russia), Leningrad, 1987–, and is mentioned only in passing, along with other monuments of 'legendary' chronicle-writing, and without an archive reference number, by M. N. Tikhomirov in his preface to a reprint of the *Russian History* of V. N. Tatishchev (1686–1750).⁶

⁵ *Pskovskie letopisi*, ed. A. N. Nasonov, Moscow, 1955, vol. II, p. 73.

⁶ M. N. Tikhomirov, 'O russkikh istochnikakh 'Istorii Rossiyskoy' in V. N. Tatishchev, *Sobranie sochineniy*, Moscow, 1994, vol. I: 'Istoriya Rossiyskaya', pt. 1, p. 51.

More detailed information about the Chronicle can be found in several Russian publications by the authors of this article.⁷

A distinctive feature of the *Pskov Chronicle*, which is unique in Russian historical texts, is an attempt to link the narrative to astrology and geomancy. The Chronicle mentions ‘houses’: this term is used to denote long spans of time. It is based on the concept of house division in the horoscope and celestial bodies ruling major periods of time. The 20-year intervals between the conjunctions of the ‘Great Chronocrators’, Jupiter and Saturn, and multiples of this period, have been known in various traditions since antiquity. In the text below we deal with longer periods.

The text on fol. 6^v reads: ‘Between the Flood and the Confusion of Tongues [at Babel] 532 years elapsed, and the house is over’. In this case ‘house’ is taken to mean a calendrical and astronomical concept known as the Great Indiction, in Russian *Velikiy mirotvornyy krug* (Great Cycle of Creation), a period of 532 years based on the coincidence of the solar and lunar cycles. According to the Julian calendar, when the Great Indiction elapses the date and the week-day of Easter coincides with the Easter celebration 532 years earlier. The text on fol. 20^v reads: ‘And then the 10th house of blessing (or charity; the 10th house of the horoscope is called ‘*honores*’) from the second generation of the *rafli* houses ceased to exist’. This is a direct reference to the divinatory book called *Rafli* that is based on sophisticated mathematical calculations in divination, formally (artificially) linked to astrological theory.⁸ The 9th house mentioned on fol. 13^r is referred to as ‘the house of construction’ while the 9th house of the horoscope is called ‘*peregrinationes*’.

The Chronicle regularly displays a series of figures (called in Russian ‘*obrazy*’ or ‘*izrazy*’, i.e. images. in Slavic manuscripts) used in geomancy, a form of divination known in the Moslem, Byzantine and Western European traditions.⁹ Each figure is a stack of rows of elements representing odd and even numbers. In this Chronicle the pattern consists of dots and arcs (fig. 2, p. 4). The ‘names’ of identical figures in various languages can be seen in a comparative table (see Table. p. 5).¹⁰ The first evidence of geomancy in medieval Russia is a

⁷ A. A. Turilov, A. V. Chernetsov, ‘Kronik Pskovskiy’ v kontekste russkoy legendarnoy istoriografii 17 v.’, *Arkheologiya i istoriya Pskova i Pskovskoy zemli. Seminar im. Akademika V. V. Sedova: materialy 58 zasedaniya (17–19 aprelya 2012 g.)*, Moscow–Pskov, 2013, pp. 157–65; *idem*, ‘Pervonachal’noe osvoenie Podvin’ya i Pomor’ya po Pskovskomu Kroniku 1689 g.’, *Issledovaniya Arktiki v dokumentakh, pamyatnikakh i sobraniyakh. Materialy Pervoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii*, Moscow, Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 15 March 2016, pp. 194–201 (see website of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences <http://arran.ru/?q=ru/publication&guid=80699DFD-0CAC-41E4-BD34-1A18669194BF>); *idem*, ‘Deyaniya knyagini Ol’gi’, pp. 57–75; A. V. Chernetsov, ‘Kronik Pskovskiy’ 1689 g.: legendarnaya istoriografiya i astrologicheskaya doktrina’, *Fakty i znaki. Issledovaniya po semiotike istorii*, ed B. A. Uspenskiy and F. B. Uspenskiy, Moscow–St Petersburg: Nestor-Istoriya, 2014, vol. III. pp. 114–82.

⁸ A. A. Turilov, A. V. Chernetsov, ‘Otrechennaya kniga Rafli’, *Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoy literatury Instituta russkoy literatury (Pushkinskogo Doma) Akademii nauk SSSR*, Leningrad, 1985, vol. 40, pp. 260–344; see also: W. F. Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight. An Historical Survey of Magic and Divination in Russia*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999, pp. 338–56.

⁹ S. Skinner, *Terrestrial Astrology: Divination by Geomancy*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.

¹⁰ The comparative table is based on materials published by S. Skinner and the following publications: P. Tannery, *Le Rabolion (traités de géomancie arabes, grecs et latins)* in *Mémoires scientifiques*, Toulouse, Paris, 1920; Albukhazen Gali, *Geomantiya ili predskazanie sud’by*, Moscow, 1997. The Slavic section of the table was compiled by the authors of this article.

divinatory diagram drawn on the page margin of the *Radziwill Chronicle*¹¹ and dated to 1487 (as was the chronicle itself, which was written in the lands of Western Russia [Belorussia], most likely in Polotsk). The figures on the diagram are clustered so that they can be associated with the houses of the horoscope.

Сия книга + в началі + первоуинаго
мира + ... + по алфавитѣ + вонже
совори + а дама ⊕ по въ разѣ ⊕ мѣжа

1

оумьы рекѣ + ... + в арзогѣ +
ны горѣ ⊕ и ѿтѣ мѣстѣх по
ми + тепьри ми + дѣмы +
вѣтроуѣ + знаменѣ + нѣстѣ
ми + дѣмы + за пѣны ми +
тепьри ми + дѣмы + сожыны
+ ... + тепьри ми + дѣмы
+ до западѣ + до востокомѣ +
... + и до идоудѣ + сѣ прогнѣо + и до
сѣ + ... + и землѣ + вл'

2

вѣжѣ • великого князя рѣорика и великой кня
и ни • ѿлѣти, оумьы пѣны и пѣнѣхъ, и правѣца
сѣ + ... + и доудѣ той, кѣрѣ, до белоозѣрскихъ.

3

Fig. 2. Geomantic (astrological) figures in the text of the Chronicle. Example 1: the beginning of basic narration (fol. 3^v). Example 2: geomantic figures associated with winds (fol. 25^v). Example 3: geomantic figure used as prince's property mark associated with tax-collecting (fol. 23^v).

The geomantic figures in the text of the *Pskov Chronicle* are not arranged in the intricate compositions found in the *Radziwill Chronicle*. Nevertheless, the *Pskov Chronicle* reveals a connection to astrology and a concomitant fatalistic view of history, since it mentions astrological houses. The prophecy on the final destiny of the world, which is attached to the Chronicle, also has geomantic figures inserted in the text, and one of the headings includes the four elements and zodiacal constellations.

¹¹ A. V. Chernetsov, 'Ob odnom risunke Radzivillovskoy letopisi', *Sovetskaya arkheologiya*, 1977, no. 4.

figures	Language						
	Arabic	Hebraic	Sanskrit	Greek	Latin	Slavic	
						Russian 1579	Serbian 15 c.
⋮	طريق	דרך	rasta	τρίβος	via iter	путь	путь
⋮	جماعة	קהלה	log		populus congregatio	собор счастья пременение, путь	люди и събрание
⋮	اجتماع	חבור (קבוץ)	bhag	ἔνωσις ἐνωτιου (?)	conjunctio coadunatio	сонм снитие	сюзь
⋮	عقلة	בית הסהר	argala	φυλακή	carcer constrictus	знатьство (д. б. нятьство) темница	неулучение
⋮	النصرة الداخلة	כבוד נכנס	bhagi	εἰσοδος τῆς δόξης κράτος εἰσοδου	fortuna maior auxilium maius tutela intrans	честь вшедшая внидет честь	велиа Христа честь
⋮	النصرة الخارجة	נצח	sayhasta	ἔξοδος τῆς δόξης κράτος ἔξοδου	fortuna minor auxilium minus tutela exiens	вышедшая часть честь вышедшая	малаа честь
⋮	القبض الداخل	נצח וזו נכנס	bhava	εἰσοδος τῶν χρημάτων	acquisitio comprehensum intus	имение вшедшее вышедшее (д. б. вшедшее) имение	богатство и обретение имением и сокровишом
⋮	القبض الخارج	נצח — (הקצוץ)	nash	ἔξοδος τῶν χρημάτων	amissio comprehensum extra	имение вышедшее вышедшее имение	гибель
⋮	المحيان الاحيان	נשוא ראש	ananda	ἀνωφερές	laetitia ridens sanus barbatus	вышеглав подымание главы	улучение и радование
⋮	الكيس	שפל —	udash	κατωφερές καταστροφή	tristitia damnatus transversus	низоглав понижение главы	неулучение и печаль
⋮	نقى خد	בר הלחי	kumara	σπανός, ἦγγον ὁ φιλικος	puella mundus facie	юноша (д. б. юнота)	малаа брань
⋮	جذلة كزنج فرخ	הכלה	javan	ἀνιβος ἦγγον ὁ ἀρξενικός	puer flavus imberbis	воин вой юноша	благаа брань
⋮	بياض	הלבן	sita	λευκότης	albus candidus	белой бел	белое серебро
⋮	حمره	ה(ה)דום	lal	ἐρυθροτή; ἦγγον ὁ πόλεμος ροινικουόν	rubeus ruffus	червленной	являет же трудь телесни и пролитие крови
⋮	ראה فرخ التية الداخلة	הס נכנס	rahu	εἰσρχόμενον ἀνώφλιον ὀρθόν ῥοπαλιον	caput (draconis) limen intrans limen superius	глава смокова (!)	глава
⋮	العتبة الخارجة	נצח —	ketu	ἔξερχόμενον ἀνώφλιον πάγιον	cauda (draconis) limen exiens limen inferius	хвост хобот смокова(!)	опашь

Table. The ‘names’ of identical geomantic figures in various languages (after P. Tannery, S. Skinner and Albukhasen Gali; Slavic section was added by the authors). Please zoom or magnify page to show detail.

Some words or terms in the text of the Chronicle are accompanied by single geomantic figures. Quite frequently, apart from single figures, some figures appear in the text arranged in pairs and sometimes in groups. All the geomantic figures in the Chronicle are inserted in the lines of the text. In addition to the vertical orientation of the figures, which is common, sometimes figures are horizontally or diagonally arranged. The meaning of these modifications remains obscure; the manuscript text of the *Rafli* also contains some figures placed horizontally.

Soon after the analysis of the diagram from the Radziwiłł Chronicle was published, A. A. Turilov discovered a manuscript of a large treatise dedicated to this divination.¹² The text of the manuscript clarified for the first time that it was precisely this divination which was known as *rafli*. Though the title of the manuscript does not contain the word, it occurs repeatedly throughout the text.

The word *rafli* is not found in the early indexes of false books.¹³ It appears for the first time in the lists of prohibited books and practices included in two treatises of the 16th century, i.e. *Domostroy* (The Book of Domestic Order) and *Stoglav* (The Book of Hundred Chapters). The *Stoglav* is a collection of decisions of the Russian Church Council summoned by the young

¹² A. A. Turilov, A. V. Chernetsov, ‘Otrechennaya kniga Rafli’, pp. 290–342 (a complete publication of the text of this fortune-telling book).

¹³ A. I. Yatsimirskiy, *Bibliograficheskiy obzor apokrifov v yuzhnoslavianskoy i russkoy pis'mennosti*, vol. I, *Apokrif y vetkhozavetnye*, Petrograd, 1921, pp. 72, 73.

Tsar Ivan the Terrible in 1551, which condemned evil and heretical books such as ‘Rafli, Shestokryl (Six Wings), Crow-Cawing, Astronomy, Signs of the Zodiac, Almanac, Stargazer, Aristotle, Gates of Aristotle and other collections of heretical wisdom’.¹⁴ The manuscript of the *Rafli* is dated to the late 17th–early 18th century. It contains the largest divinatory text known in the Russian tradition. It is a modification of a translated text made by a Russian scribe, a native of Pskov, in 1579.

The geomantic figures in the Chronicle of 1689 are associated with various subjects. Several geomantic figures are linked to personal names. Mostly these are names of the forefathers from the Old Testament such as Adam (together with Eve), Seth, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methushael, Noah and Japheth. Similar signs are assigned to several legendary Russian princes such as Scyth, Sloven, Rus, Irmera (a princess, eponym of the Ilmen Lake). The geomantic figures are also associated with the names of historically known medieval Russian princes of later periods – these signs were used as property marks and seals related to tribute collecting.

The use of geomantic (essentially astrological and magical) figures as seals or property marks is of particular interest. Intriguingly, they are linked to the names of legendary Slavic princes such as Asan, Velikosan and Avengasan (fol. 11^v).¹⁵

Typical examples of geomantic figures used as seals and property marks are given below. For the sake of convenience, the places in the text where the figures are inserted are represented by an asterisk. The text on fol. 23^v reads: ‘... regulations and seal like this (*)’; the text on fol. 25^r reads: ‘He ... took the tribute from them and gave them his sign and regulations and seal (*)’; the text on fol. 26^r reads: ‘... regulations and seal (*), collected tributes and taxes from them, that Lop [Lapp, Sami] people’; the text on fol. 28^r reads: ‘... confirmed by their seals (*,*)’.

Some geomantic figures are linked to specific ethnic groups such as ‘the Great Slavs and the Russes (*)’ (fol. 8^v), ‘the people of the Fryagi [Fryazi – an Old Russian term for, usually, Franks or Italians] (*) ... and the tribes (*) of the Ishmaelites [i.e. Arabs]’ (fol. 60^v).

Of particular interest is the list of ethnonyms on fol. 18^r where a geomantic figure is assigned to the name of only one ethnic group (the Muroma, an extinct Volga Finnic tribe from the region of Murom). However, the very fact that sixteen numbers are assigned to these tribes (though their number in the list is larger) demonstrates that each geomantic figure was supposed to be associated with one number since there are sixteen geomantic figures derived from all possible combinations of the odd and even numbers.

What this means is that the legendary ‘elder Grand Prince’ Gostomysl gave his subjects their names, thereby acting like the biblical Adam and Noah. Crosses in this quotation are present in the manuscript (as a sort of punctuation mark):

‘Adam gave names to all beasts, animals and celestial birds’ (fol. 17^v–18^r).

‘In this same way the elder Grand Prince Gostomysl by his power has given names to his subjects and his family members as well as to wild animals and beasts and distributed all of them along with their clans across the length and the breadth of the

¹⁴ *Stoglav: tsarskie voprosy i sobornye otvety o mnogorazlichnykh tserkovnykh chinakh*, Moscow, 1890, pp. 182, 188.

¹⁵ The names of legendary Slavic princes. The name Asan corresponds to the kin name of the dynasty of Bulgarian kings (Asen). The name Avengasan is clearly of oriental origin – in Slavic texts ‘aven’ corresponds to the Semitic ‘ibn’ and ‘ben’. In the *Rafli* Avengasan is the name of a Persian astrologer.

earth. 1. Those who settled in the open fields were called Polyanians,¹⁶ later they were called Poles because of their pride¹⁷ + others were called Polochans on account of a river called Polota + 2 + the Mutyane¹⁸ + 3 + the Mazovians¹⁹ 4 – the Buzhians, who resided along the Bug River, 5 – the Dregovichians,²⁰ 6 – the Krivichians, that is the Smolyanians,²¹ 7 – the Chuds,²² who asked (fol. 18^v) his younger son Slaven [to become their ruler], 8 – the Merya, that is the people of Rostov,²³ 9 – the Drevlyanians,²⁴ 10 – the Muroma + (*) who were later called Muromian people, 11 – the Serbs, 12 – the Bulgars and the people of Balymer,²⁵ 13 – the Lopi,²⁶ 14 – the Mordva and the Cheremis,²⁷ 15 – the Permians, the Votyaks,²⁸ the Osleks,²⁹ the Bukharans, 16 – the Yakuts, the Bashkirs, that later were called the land of Siberia.’

The names of many rivers have geomantic figures attached to them. Since the rivers are numerous while the number of figures is restricted to 16, in many cases different rivers are marked by the same geomantic figures. The figure of a column of four dots (∴ the figure called in Latin '*via*', '*iter*' – route) is met with repeatedly. This actually reflects the main rôle of the river network in medieval Russia. The use of geomantic signs to denote points of the wind rose is rather curious (fig. 2, 2). Interestingly, these signs are hardly used to denote towns (Novgorod the Great (*), fol. 15^r is a rare case). At the same time, astrological and geomantic texts going back at least to the *Tetrabiblos* of Claudius Ptolemy (2nd century AD) often speak of ‘mundane’ astrology, the relationship between towns and countries and the celestial bodies. For example, the *Rafli* says: ‘The seventh planet Saturn <...> stands above [rules] the entire Russian Land and the Lithuanian Land, and Novgorod the Great, and Moscow and Lithuania.’ (fol. 68^r).³⁰ Saturn and Aquarius are the planet and zodiacal sign normally associated with Russia.

The text of the Chronicle demonstrates that astrology was perceived by the manuscript compiler as something permissible from the Christian point of view, as something that could even be used in the area of sacred concepts. The text on page 43 reads: ‘...begotten + not created (*) for our sake’, the text on fol. 44^r reads: ‘on the Cross (*) of our Lord Jesus Christ’; the text on fol. 45^r reads: ‘Our Lady that has received in her womb heavenly bread (+ * +), which means Christ the Saviour of human souls (* + *), which means *dora*.³¹’ Intriguingly, the

¹⁶ From the Russian word *pole* ‘a field’.

¹⁷ *Sic!* Cf. the Russian verb *polyakovat* ‘to ride out to battle or adventure’.

¹⁸ Muntenia is the eastern part of Wallachia.

¹⁹ An ethnic group from Mazovia in Poland. In our text the ethnonym Mazovshane which is also known in the *Primary Chronicle*, is derived from Pol. Mazowsze – the name of the land, while the corresponding Polish ethnonym is Mazury (sing. Mazur).

²⁰ An East Slav tribe from the region of Turov in Belarus.

²¹ From the town of Smolensk.

²² Imprecise Old Russian term for various Finnic peoples in the Baltic region and NW Russia, in particular Estonians; in the Chronicle the autochthonous population of the Pskov land.

²³ Rostov Velikiy, a town in Yaroslavl Oblast.

²⁴ A Slavic tribe living to the west of Kiev.

²⁵ A settlement in Tatarstan formerly inhabited by Volga Bulgars and Vikings.

²⁶ The Lapps, Sami.

²⁷ The Mari.

²⁸ The Udmurts.

²⁹ Probably the Ostyaks, the Khanty.

³⁰ Turilov, Chernetsov, ‘Otrechennaya kniga Rafli’, p. 321.

³¹ Gr. *antidoron*, the remains of consecrated bread from which portions are cut out for communion during the Divine Liturgy.

signs are included in this manuscript not only in the historical text, but also in the apocryphal eschatological book known as the *Vision of Daniel*. In this case divinatory signs are used for the intended purpose, i.e. soothsaying.

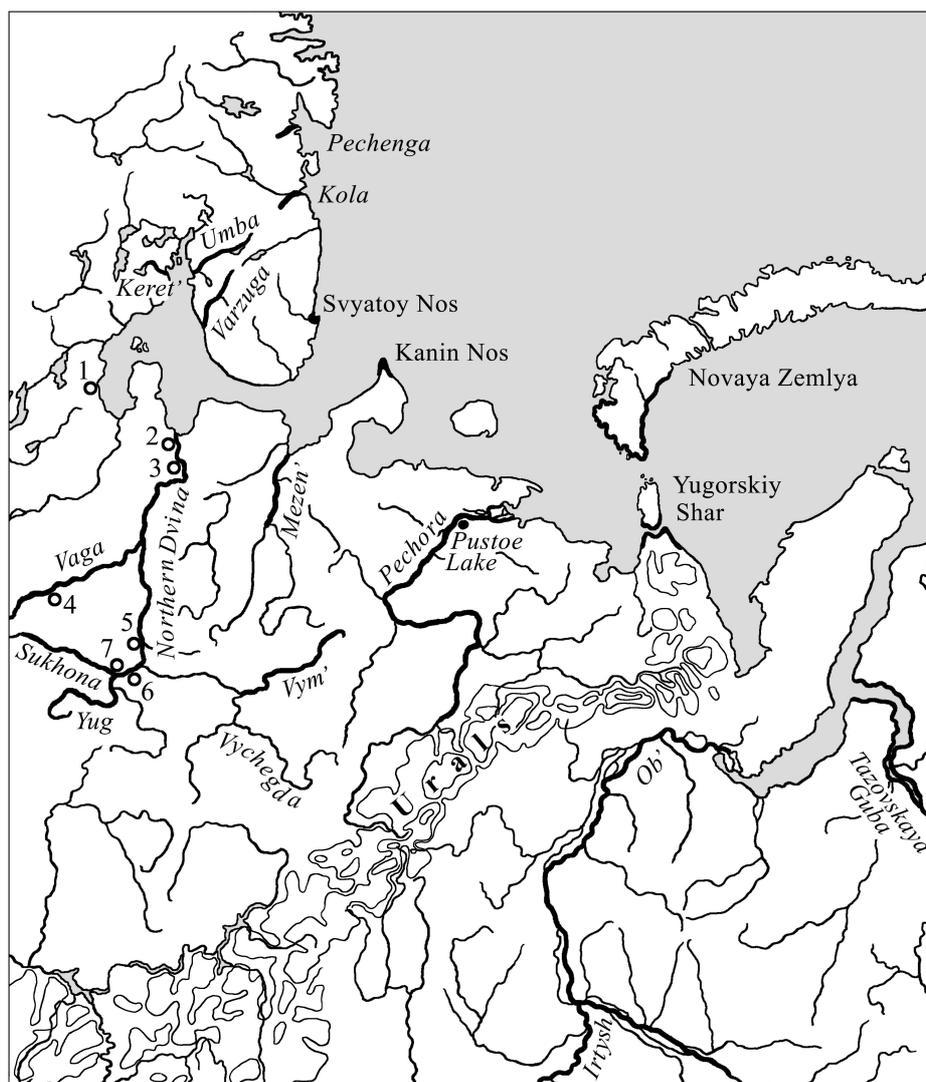
Adherents of astrology proclaimed this science a pinnacle of human wisdom. Penetration of the elements of this doctrine into a historical text is quite understandable, since astrologers justified reliability of their predictions by making references to historical precedents (examples of predictions allegedly fulfilled).

The Chronicle contains a considerable amount of information on the opening up of the vast expanses of the Russian north such as the Northern Dvina basin, the White Sea and the Arctic Ocean coastline (fol. 22^v–fol. 26^v of the manuscript; see maps 1 and 2). It is clear from the text that the exploration is supposed to have taken place in the time of Rurik and Olga (9th–10th century) – but contrary to the information contained in the earliest chronicles, in this text Rurik is presented as Olga’s first husband.

In the 12th-century *Russian Primary Chronicle* Olga is the wife of Igor, Rurik’s son. In the *Pskov Chronicle*, she is first described as Rurik’s wife, and subsequently as Igor’s wife, and to avoid the charge of incest, Igor is presented not as Rurik’s son, but as coming from the Czech kingdom and he is given the patronymic of Olgerdovich (Olegerdovich, cf. Lithuanian Algirdas, the historical Olgerd died in 1377).

The description of the navigation along northern routes is a first-person narrative that uses such expressions as ‘*poïdokh*’ (I went) and ‘by my ship ...’. These features of the text suggest that the Chronicle compiler probably used the travel notes of a seaman. It is worth mentioning specific Pomorian terms employed to describe the winds of the White Sea area (e.g. *letnik* (summer wind, S) and *poberezhnik* (coastal wind, NW) etc.). The historical context of the Chronicle narrative is untrustworthy, yet it contains quite detailed hydrographic information including many real toponyms, orientation points, and routes, and is of tremendous interest for comparative historical geography and textological studies.

It is hardly possible to present clearly the routes described in the Chronicle on the map. The order of toponyms met with in the text in some cases looks chaotic. But nevertheless the list of the toponyms demonstrates rather good and detailed knowledge. The travel of Lise is the most detailed. It includes mainly the western part of the coastal line, from Kanin Peninsula to Norway borders. The information concerning the Kola Peninsula and the White Sea is abundant and detailed. The Solovki islands and Grumant (Spitsbergen) are not mentioned in the text. The journey of Ukhto involves the vaster regions lying to the East; the information is rather general and less detailed. The information about the Vym’ and Ob’ rivers and their mouths is fictitious. Nevertheless Vym’ represented an important route for travel and colonization in the north-easterly direction (from Ustyug to the Pechora basin). In the mouth of this river a residence of the Perm’ (Komi-Zyryans’) bishops was situated. The text gives information about two compact groups of settlements on the Northern Dvina – localities of Kholmogory-Archangel (see also Map 2, p. 12), and the region of Ustyug the Great (the borders of Vologda and Archangel oblasts). The main direction of colonization – upstream along the Northern Dvina is certainly a historical mistake (in fact Slavic colonizers followed opposite direction).



Map 1. General map of the Russian North. Toponyms and localities met with in the text of the Chronicle are marked. 1 – Nyukhcha (settlement, harbour), 2 – Lisestrovo (now a part of Archangel on the left bank of the Northern Dvina River), 3 – Kholmogory and nearby toponyms, 4 – Shenkursk, 5 – Turovetskiy *pogost*, 6 – Votlzhemskoe fortified settlement, 7 – Ustyug the Great.

Historical and geographic information about the vast expanses of the Russian north is included in the earliest written sources, for example, the *Russian Primary Chronicle* (The Tale of Bygone Years), which contains stories recounted by Gyurata Rogovich (under the year 1096) about a voyage by his emissary to Pechora and Yugra (the region between the Pechora River and the Northern Urals).³² Lists of Novgorod the Great *volosts* (provinces) known from treaty charters between the Novgorod communal administration and princes are state legal documents of extreme importance. The earliest treaty which has survived in the original manuscript is dated 1264.³³ Of paramount importance for the historical geography of the Novgorod territory is the text of the treaty of 1323 between Novgorod the Great and Magnus Eriksson, King of Sweden, which describes the borders between the Novgorod and Swedish lands in detail. The medieval Russian text is extant in a copy made in the 17th century; the

³² *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisey*, Moscow, Izdatel'stvo vostochnoy literatury, 1962, vol. V, 1, pp. 234, 235.

³³ *Gramoty Velikogo Novgoroda i Pskova*, ed. S. N. Valk, Moscow–Leningrad, 1949, p. 9.

Latin text has survived in a manuscript of the 15th century.³⁴ Legendary information about voyages made by Novgorod seamen is contained in the famous ‘Letter of the Archbishop of Novgorod Vasily to the Archbishop of Tver Theodor about the Earthly Paradise’ (circa 1347). Among other subjects, scholars find descriptions of the Gulf Stream and Northern Lights in this letter.³⁵

The route ‘to Pechora, Yugra as far as the river of Ob’ was described by Sigismund von Herberstein in his commentary on Muscovite affairs (*Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii*, first edition, Vienna, 1549).³⁶ This was taken largely from Russian informants and texts – Herberstein could speak and read Russian – and is an important and fairly accurate source for the study of the history of Russian geographical knowledge.

A somewhat different route across the same area was described in the *Perm Itinerary*, which has survived in a copy made in the first decade of the 16th century.³⁷ A curious account of the hydrography of the Perm territory is given in the *Life of Stephen of Perm* written by Epiphanius the Wise.³⁸ Stephen of Perm was a famous missionary and the first bishop of Perm (d. 1396), and the *Life* was written soon after his death by Epiphanius who had known him personally.

The *Book of the Great Drawing* (a description of a basic map that has not survived), which is extant in the redaction of 1627, contains extensive information on northern areas in the European part of Russia.³⁹ Important additional materials are to be found in cadastral books of 16th–17th cent.⁴⁰ In 1701 the archbishop of Kholmogory, Afanasiy, wrote a ‘Description of three routes ... from the Pomorian countries to the Swedish Land’.⁴¹ Information from medieval Scandinavian sources on Viking voyages to the White Sea and Bjarmaland has been analyzed in special studies.⁴² Important information on the Russian north is also contained in a well-known book by the 16th-century Swedish bishop Olaus Magnus.⁴³ From 1553 onward, following the first voyage of Richard Chancellor to Archangel, accounts of English seamen and merchants, mostly those of the Muscovy Company, which soon established a trading post at St Nicholas on the White Sea near Archangel, became an important source of information

³⁴ *Sverges traktater med främmande magter jemte andra dit hörande handlingar, utgifne af O. S. Rydberg*, Delen I, Stockholm, 1877, pp. 442, 443; *Gramoty Velikogo Novgoroda i Pskova*, pp. 67, 68.

³⁵ *Pamyatniki literatury Drevney Rusi. 14 – seredina 15 v.*, Moscow, ‘Khudozhestvennaya literatura’. 1981, pp. 44, 46, notes on pp. 533, 534.

³⁶ English translation: *Notes upon Russia: Being a Translation of the earliest Account of that Country, entitled Rerum Moscoviticarum commentarii, by the Baron Sigismund von Herberstein, Ambassador from the Court of Germany to the Grand Prince Vasiley Ivanovich, in the years 1517 and 1526*, transl. and ed. with notes and introduction by R. H. Major, 2 vols (Hakluyt Society, 1st series, no. 10 & 12), London, 1851 and 1852, pp. 37–43.

³⁷ A. I. Pliguzov, *Tekst-kentavr o sibirskikh samoedakh*, Moscow, ‘Arkheograficheskiy tsentr’, 1993, pp. 24–7.

³⁸ *Zhitie svyatogo Stefana Permskogo, napisannoe Epifaniem Premudrym*, St Petersburg, Academy of Sciences Publishing House, 1897, p. 9.

³⁹ *Kniga Bol’shomu chertezhu*, ed. K. N. Serbina, Moscow–Leningrad, 1950; E. K. Ogorodnikov, ‘Murmanskiy i Terskiy bereg po knige Bol’shomu chertezhu’, *Zapiski Russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva po otd. etnografii*, St Petersburg, 1869, V, 2; *idem*, ‘Pribrezh’ya Ledovitogo i Belogo morey s ikh pritokami po knige Bol’shomu chertezhu’, *ibid.*, 1875.

⁴⁰ *Pistsovye knigi Russkogo Severa*, ed. N. P. Voskoboynikova et al. (Series ‘Katalog pistsovykh knig Russkogo gosudarstva. Dokumenty zemel’nogo kadastra i zemleustroystva 16–17 vv. RGADA F. 1209. Pomestnyy Prikaz), Moscow, ‘Pamyatniki istoricheskoy mysli’, 2001.

⁴¹ L. A. Dmitriev, ‘Novyy spisok “Opisaniya trekh putey” Afanasiya Kholmogorskogo’, *Arkheograficheskiy ezhegodnik za 1958 god*, Moscow, Academy of Sciences of the USSR Publishers, 1960, pp. 335–49.

⁴² K. Tiander, *Poездki skandinavov v Beloe more*, St Petersburg, 1906.

on the Russian north. Many of these early accounts were published by Richard Hakluyt in his book *The Principal Navigations, Voiages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London, 1589, revised edition 1600), supplemented later by volume III of Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (London, 1625).⁴⁴ However, the authors of this article have not managed to identify convincing parallels in the above mentioned written sources to the historical and hydrographic narrative in the *Pskov Chronicle*.

Dealing with the problems of historical geography and toponymics of the region in question the authors had in mind not only the works mentioned above, but also information and materials from publications by A. A. Kuratov and S. A. Sharov-Delone.⁴⁵ An important analysis of Russian cartography of the 17th century. may be found in a monograph by V. Kivelson.⁴⁶ A general historical survey of early Russian polar navigation is presented in the monograph by V. F. Starkov.⁴⁷ Some publications are devoted to critical analysis of the ambiguous information of certain studies devoted to the history of medieval Russian polar navigation.⁴⁸

The *Pskov Chronicle* contains another unique hydrographic note. This is a description of the Lake Chudskoe (Peipus See) basin, which apparently was perceived as a natural boundary of the Pskov lands (fols. 17^r, 18^v, 19^r). It is given in the text under the heading ‘Description of the Great Stream’ (i.e. the Velikaya River, fol. 18^v).

Information on Siberia included in the Chronicle is quite fragmentary. The land of Siberia is mentioned in fols. 11^r and 18^v. Among Siberian rivers, together with the Ob’ the Chronicle mentions ‘... white waters of the Irtysh River. This river is as white as milk’ (fol. 11^r). Among populations subordinated to the legendary Gostomysl, the text mentions the Yakuts and the Osleks (evidently the Ostyaks or Khanty, fol. 18^v).

⁴³ Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*, Rome, 1555; annotated English translation with historical introduction and original illustrations: Olaus Magnus, *A Description of the Northern Peoples*, ed. Peter Foote, transl. Peter Fisher and Humphrey Higgins (Hakluyt Society, 2nd series 182, 187, 188) vol. 1, 1996; vols 2 and 3, 1998; E. A. Savel’eva, *Olaus Magnus i ego ‘Istoriya severnykh narodov’*, Leningrad, ‘Nauka’, 1983.

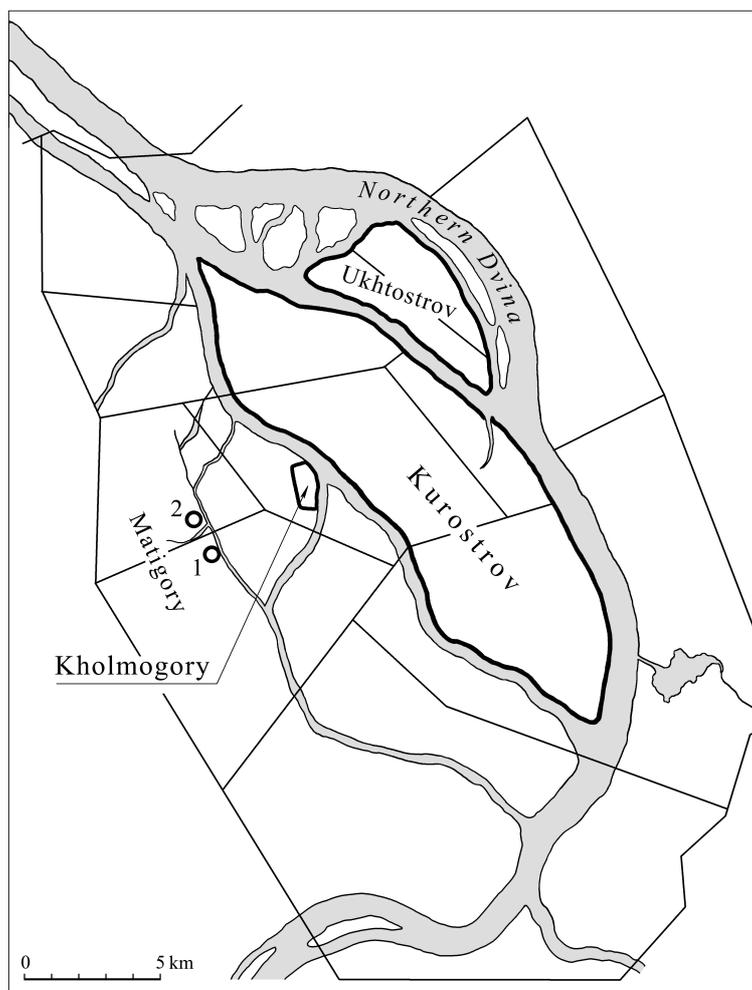
⁴⁴ Some of the early English accounts of Russia, e.g. those of Giles Fletcher, Jerome Horsey, and Anthony Jenkinson were published individually in annotated editions by the Hakluyt Society – see <http://www.hakluyt.com/hak-soc-bibliography.htm>. See also: *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-century English Voyagers*, ed. Lloyd E. Berry and Robert O. Crummey, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968; N. M. Rogozhin. *Proyeezhaya po Moskovii (Rossiya 16–17 vekov glazami diplomatov)*, Moscow, Mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya, 1991; M. Poe. *Foreign Descriptions of Muscovy: An Analytic Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources*, Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 1995.

⁴⁵ A. A. Kuratov, *Arkheologicheskie pamyatniki Arkhangel’skoy oblasti. Katalog*, Archangel’sk, 1978; S. A. Sharov-Delone, ‘K voprosu ob istoricheskom kontekste formirovaniya kul’tury Russkogo Severa’, in *Ikony Russkogo Severa: Dvinskaya zemlya, Onega, Kargopol’ye, Pomor’ye*. Moscow, 2005. pp. 33–47.

⁴⁶ V. Kivelson, *Cartographies of Tsardom: The Land and Its Meanings in Seventeenth-Century Russia*, Cornell University Press, 2006. See also a review of the published Russian translation of this monograph: E. Yu. Naumov ‘Karty Moskovii: golografiya ochevidnogo’ (review of V. Kivelson, *Kartografiya tsarstva: Zemlya i ee znacheniya v Rossii 17 veka*, tr. by N. Mishakova. Moscow, NLO Publishers, 2012), *Istoricheskii vestnik*, 2013, no. 6, pp. 296–309.

⁴⁷ V. F. Starkov, *Ocherki istorii osvoeniya Arktiki. Vol. II. Rossiya i Severo-vostochnyy prokhod*, Moscow, Nauchnyy mir, 2001.

⁴⁸ V. V. Mavrodin, *Protiv fal’sifikatsii istorii geograficheskikh issledovaniy // Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo geograficheskogo obshchestva*, Moscow–Leningrad, 1958, vol. LXC, pp. 82, 83, 90, 91; V. F. Kozlov, *Obmanutaya, no torzhestvuyushchaya Klio: Podlogi pis’mennykh istochnikov v rossiyskoy istorii v 20 v.*, Moscow, 2001, pp. 78–86. R. Medinskiy, *Problema ob’yektivnosti v osveshchenii yevropeytsami rossiyskoy istorii vtoroy poloviny 15–17 vv.*, Moscow, RGSU publishers, 2010.



Map 2. The vicinities of Kholmogory. Historical toponyms Kurostrov, Ukhtostrov and Matigory are shown. The map of local parishes dated 1890 is used. 1 – the church of the Resurrection of Our Lord in Upper Matigory. 2 – the church of SS. Boris and Gleb in Lower Matigory.

The text of the *Pskov Chronicle* presented below in the appendix is noted for its historical unreliability. At the same time it is a vivid and satisfactory reflection of the geographic knowledge of its time (the end of the 17th century).

To assess adequately the historical and geographical information the *Pskov Chronicle* contains one must examine it as a part of the entire body of data which reflects the educational and cultural background of its compiler. The manuscript containing the text of the Chronicle includes fragments of two more works. One of them is *The Description of the Distance between Some Towns and the Royal City of Moscow* written by A. A. Vinus (1647–1717)⁴⁹ (fol. 64^r–68^v). A. A. Vinus, a Russian of Dutch extraction who served as an interpreter in the Foreign Affairs Chancery (Posol'skiy Prikaz), wrote this text in 1667. It should be noted that the text of the Chronicle contains a phrase which was apparently influenced by the description by Vinus, namely: 'The distance between Prague, the capital of the Czech Kingdom and Wallachia, and Novgorod the Great is 2250 verstas [2475 km] travelling by sea[!].' (fol. 27^v).

⁴⁹ *Slovar' knizhnikov i knizhnosti Drevnei Rusi*, St Petersburg., 1992, vol. 3 (17th cent.). Part 1, s.v. Vinus (R. B. Tarkovskiy), pp. 175–81 and 2004, Vol. 3, part 4. Additions (bibliography). For biography see also K. Boterbloem, *Moderniser of Russia: Andrei Vinus, 1641–1716*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

The second text is an apocryphal text ‘The Vision of Daniel’ (fols. 58^v–63^r).⁵⁰ A fragment similar to the variant from the chronicle published here is a part of Nestor Iskander’s *The Tale on the Capture of Constantinople* (15th century).⁵¹

The Chronicle is definitely a compilation. The compiler states in the introduction that he ‘copied this chronicle ... from ancient chronicles’ (fol. 3^r). Analysis of the text confirms that this literary monument is indeed a compilation of different texts.

Three homilies of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Gennadius, in whose patriarchate Princess Olga was allegedly baptized, are inserted in the text of the Chronicle, contrary to actual chronology – Gennadius I died in 471 while Gennadius II (Scholarios) died in 1473 (fols. 43ⁱ–fol. 49^v). Christian doctrine is narrated with a focus on ritual practices and sophisticated symbolic interpretations. The text contains some anti-Catholic motifs.

The text published here which describes the opening up of Russian north should probably be regarded as one of the extraneous fragments interpolated into the main text of the Chronicle.

The Chronicle reflects beyond doubt the fact that its compiler was familiar with the basic elements of the Russian scholastic educational tradition. The Chronicle is entitled ‘This Book at the Beginning of the Primordial World According to the Alphabet’ (fol. 3^v). However, the text is not organized alphabetically, and it is clear that ‘according to the Alphabet’ in this case means ‘following the *Azbukovnik*’. *Azbukovniks* were the alphabetically arranged reference books of the time and indispensable sources of encyclopedic knowledge.⁵² The text on fol. 6^v, fol. 8^r and fol. 9^r is a didactic question and answer (catechetical) form of narrative. The word *tolk* (‘interpretation’, fols. 46^v, 60^r) is featured twice in the text of the manuscript (once in *The Vision of Daniel*). It is clear that the compiler of the text was familiar with teaching practices as well as commentarial traditions. The text of the Chronicle also includes a number of fictitious discourses, letters, agreements, and lamentations marked by some rhetorical features.

The compiler of the Chronicle, who was equally interested in history and geography, possessed substantial knowledge of both theology and occult tradition, and was also familiar with rhetorical techniques in writing and clearly influenced by scholastic education. He was definitely a member of the 17th-century Russian intellectual elite on the eve of the reforms of Peter I.

The authors of this article believe that further comparative and analytical study of the *Pskov Chronicle* of 1689, and the historical and geographic information it contains, may offer interesting prospects. The views of the Chronicle’s compiler may be described as ideologically conservative. It should be noted at the same time that the text is very firm about Russia’s historical rights to the Baltic coastline (fol. 19^r). ‘And any buildings in this land of ours and landing places for ships shall not be surrendered and abandoned’ (fol. 17^r). At the end of the 17th century such sentiments looked to the future, anticipating events of the reign of Peter the Great.

The text below is an excerpt from the *Pskov Chronicle* devoted to the opening up of Russian north (fol. 22^v–fol. 26^r).

⁵⁰ V. M. Istrin, *Otkrovenie Mefodiya Patarskogo i apokrificheskie videniya Daniila v vizantiyskoy i slavyano-russkoy literaturakh. Issledovanie i teksty*, Moscow, University Press, 1897.

⁵¹ *Pamyatniki literatury Drevney Rusi. Vtoraya polovina–seredina 15 v.*, Moscow, ‘Khudozhestvennaya literatura’, 1982, pp. 264–7; n. on p. 607.

⁵² A. P. Karpov, *Azbukovniki ili alfavitny inostrannykh rechei*, Kazan’, 1877.

Appendix

[Fol. 22^v] Grand Prince Rurik of the Prussian land⁵³ sent to the Pomor'e land,⁵⁴ to the hills and mountains⁵⁵ all over the coast of that cold great ocean-sea⁵⁶ for colonization, a mother with her children. The first son Kur, the second – Ukhto, the third – Lise, and the daughter – Gorka. And when that mother arrived at that Pomor'e land, she divided her possessions. She settled her eldest son on an island, [fol. 23^r] and [he] called that island after his name, Kurostrov.⁵⁷ Her middle son Ukhto she settled on another island, and that son called it after his name, Ukhostrov. She settled her youngest son Lise to the third island, and that Lis called that island after his name, Lisestrov. That mother herself departed to the coast of that river five miles⁵⁸ away, and settled on a mountain and called that mountain after her name, Matigory Bol'shie. She gave her daughter another mountain, and her daughter called that mountain after her name Matigory Men'shie.⁵⁹ And that colonizer of that country and judge Kur went upstream along that river. And he discovered a population of people, and subjected five hundred *verevki*⁶⁰ to himself. One *verevka* included three householders living there. And he gave an order to raise⁶¹ fortified towns among them. The first one had the name Turovets, the second the name Votlozhenets.⁶² And he imposed all tributes on them, and established the power of Grand Prince Rurik and Grand Princess Olga Izborskovna,⁶³ their regulations and seal like this [geomantic figure *albus* ∴]. This Kur went upstream along this river and reached the Sukhona River [fol. 23^v] and the Yug River which falls into this Sukhona. Both fall into that stream, and flow downstream to the estuary of these rivers. This colonizer Kur discovered

⁵³ The *Russian Primary Chronicle* says that Rurik was a Varangian (Scandinavian). In accordance with a later legendary tradition (*The Tale of the Princes of Vladimir* – a key early 16th-century Muscovite treatise associated with the famous doctrine of ‘Moscow – the third Rome’) he is said to have come from Prussia, and among his ancestors there were supposedly relatives of the Roman emperors. The *Pskov Chronicle* accepts this version, but it totally misses its political and patriotic importance. Its text maintains a version stating that Rurik and Olga (and also Igor) died childless. If this is so the supposed ancient imperial lineage of Rurik could not have been used to support the pretensions of later Russian princes and tsars.

⁵⁴ Pomor'ye – originally a common noun meaning sea shore, coast. As a toponym it means the coastline of the White Sea and Arctic Ocean. Cf. Pol. Pomorze (etymologically identical, cf. Germ. Pommern, Eng. Pomerania), the southern shore of the Baltic.

⁵⁵ The locality in question has neither hills nor mountains. The influence of the local toponym Kholmogory (this sounds like Russian *kholm*, which means a hill, and *gory* – mountains) is quite evident in the text. The toponym has been known since the end of the 14th century, originally as Kolmogory.

⁵⁶ The White Sea and adjacent sea areas.

⁵⁷ The island is situated in the lower Northern Dvina, near Kholmogory (see Map 2).

⁵⁸ ‘5 *poprishch*’ in the text. This word can have several meanings in Old Russian; it may translate the Greek μίλιον = Roman mile of 1000 paces, and it can mean ‘a day’s journey’.

⁵⁹ The toponyms Matigory, Kurostrov, Liseostrov (Lisich Island) and Ukhostrov have been known since the end of the 14th century.

⁶⁰ Cf. the medieval Old Russian word *verv*’ which denotes a rural community in the Code of Laws of Kiev Rus’ known as the *Russkaya Pravda*. For a comparable usage we note that the Biblical king David ‘measured them [the captive Moabites] with a line’ (Samuel II, 8, 2). *Verv*’/*verevka* later became the name of a measure of land for taxation purposes. From the following text it becomes clear that *verevka*, which more commonly meant string or rope, is identical to *obzha*, which is a regular fiscal unit. *Obzha* literally meant a shaft of a wooden plough.

⁶¹ From the Russian verb *izsyapat*’ (to pour, to fill) is used; it is clear that the text deals with earthen fortifications (ramparts).

⁶² The Turovetskiy *pogost* and Votlzhenskoe fortified settlement are situated near Velikiy Ustyug in the Archangel oblast’ (Kotlasskiy rayon).

⁶³ Olga’s patronymic is not mentioned in the earliest chronicles.

a lot of people and ordered them to raise a fortified town, and called it Ustyug Velikiy. And he gave them a seal and regulations of Grand Prince Rurik and Grand Princess Olga Izborskovna [geomantic figure *fortuna maior* ∴]. And various tributes were taken from them. He called that stream the [Northern] Dvina River that flows down to the ocean-sea by three mouths, its length is five hundred miles. That very colonizer Kur went along the left-hand side of the river bank from town of Ustyug and reached the Vaga River, and into that Vaga River many other rivers fall, and he discovered around them a numerous population of people, and organized along those rivers five hundred *obzhas* of tax-paying people, subjugated them, and took from them various sort of tributes. On the Vaga River he ordered the construction of the fortified town of Shenkursk. The population [was organized so that] three householders made up one *obzha*. The power and seal and regulations of Grand Prince Rurik and of Grand Princess Olga are like this [geomantic figure *albus* ∴]. And that Kur reached Beloozero [fol. 24^r] lands and returned back to his mother and to his people to Kurostrov. And he ordered the construction of a fortified town in the upper settlement and called it Kholmogory. And having collected various tributes and taxes from all inhabitants of that country, and collected twelve thousand [unit of payment not specified in the text],⁶⁴ sent it every year to Novgorod the Great to Grand Prince Rurik and to Grand Princess Olga Izborskovna.

Another son of that same mother, Ukhto by name, went along the southern coast of that ocean-sea, and reached the Mezen' River and the Pustoozero Lake. And he discovered there a numerous population of people and their sea trades, observed places where they hunted and killed beasts, the great beast walrus and *lystsy*⁶⁵ and white whales and *vorvani*⁶⁶. There were also fishing-grounds in the sea islands, larger and minor. That very Ukhto had subjugated all that people of that land to himself, [fol. 24^v] and took various tributes from them. He went along the coast of that great sea and reached the Pechora River. And he observed and subjugated the people living there and their trades, hunting-grounds and fishing-grounds and pearl-giving rivers, marks and stations, and took various tributes for Grand Prince Rurik and of Grand Princess Olga Izborskovna, [gave them] regulations and power and seal of Grand Prince Rurik and of Grand Princess Olga Izborskovna [geomantic figure *albus* ∴]. That same Ukhto went along the coast of that great sea and reached Novaya Zemlya and icy schist(?) mountains and impassable stone mountains and to the strait of that great ocean-sea⁶⁷ and to the great rivers, to the Vym' River and to the Ob' River, those two rivers flow together in one place⁶⁸ called Tasovo Sea⁶⁹ in that country. That Ukhto subjugated all that people in that

⁶⁴ The unit of payment is not specified but in this period, in particular in the far north and among rural communities, the most likely form of currency in such a quantity would have been furs. Payment of tribute or tax in furs (*yasak*) continued in some parts of the Russian Empire until the 19th century. The quantity stated is fictional. On the fur trade in medieval Russia see Janet Martin, *Treasure from the Land of Darkness: the Fur Trade and its Significance for Medieval Russia*, Cambridge, 1986.

⁶⁵ Not identified. Perhaps related to *lysany*, '3-year-old seal' (*Slovar' russkogo yazyka XI–XVII vv.*, vol. 8, Moscow 1981, s.v. *lysan'*).

⁶⁶ The commonest meaning of *vorvan'* is 'blubber or skin of marine mammals', but another earlier meaning is probably 'seal' (see *Slovar' russkogo yazyka XI–XVII vv.*, s.v. *vorvan'*: 1. (a kind of sea mammal) 'we saw many large *vorvani* walking on the earth' (*Alexander Romance*, 15th c.). Harp seals are common in this region.

⁶⁷ Most probably this is Yugorskiy Shar, the strait separating the mainland and Vaygach island. This strait played important role in arctic navigation to the east.

⁶⁸ Fictitious geography. The Ob' enters the Kara Sea; the Vym' is a tributary of the Vychegda, which enters the Northern Dvina.

⁶⁹ Probably this is Tazovskaya Guba, a bay adjacent to the mouth of the Taz River located near the estuary of the Ob' River.

country to Grand Prince Rurik and to Grand [fol. 25^r] Princess Olga Izborskovna, and took various tributes and gave them regulations and power and a seal [geomantic figure *conjunctio* ☿]. He himself returned back to his mother and brothers, to Kholmogory, like previous Slavic-Russian princes, Lakh and Lakhern⁷⁰ to their town of Slavensk the Great. And he reached his people, Ukhtostov, his brothers Kurostrov and Lisestrov and all his taxes and prince's tribute of fifteen thousands [unit of payment not specified in the text] gave to his mother and brothers, glorifying the gods Sadtsa and Volna.⁷¹

The youngest son of that mother Lise went on his ship, following the order of his mother, through that same ocean-sea following indications of shining in the sky of the Sun and the Moon, and of other stars during his night journey and following in the daytime the winds of the Terskaya coast and reached the mark⁷² and population of people and vicinities in Nyukhcha, Nenekhcha,⁷³ Pil'skaya Guba,⁷⁴ [fol. 25^v] the Umba River, the Varzoga River and the Keret' River, the mica mountains and went from there by four eastern [celestial] houses of winds, by celestial marks, four western houses, four southern houses, four northern houses up to the West.⁷⁵

He went to the east and in a northern direction and reached waters flowing in the opposite direction, and also a land. Sailing to the right-hand side through the great sea-ocean for five days and five nights I⁷⁶ saw no land, no marks, but only water and sky and celestial stars. For three days I saw the shining of the Moon and the Sun, light and brightness. I went to southern side using the *poberezhnik* NW wind to the left-hand side and reached the mark of land of Svyatoy Nos.⁷⁷ I went by my ship to the right-hand side along Terskaya [fol. 26^r] coast and reached the mark of land called Kanin Nos.⁷⁸ And after that there was a great sea⁷⁹ [Barents Sea], and no ice, only water and sky. And I went by my ship five days and saw the mark of land and population of people and the Pechenga River, and the mouth of the Kola River and their trading places and fishing-grounds and stations. That Lise had observed them and subjugated them to Grand Prince Rurik and of Grand Princess Olga Izborskovna, [gave them their] regulations and seal [geomantic figure *aquisitio* ☿], collected tributes and taxes from

⁷⁰ Legendary Scythian princes. As the legend says, the last prince was killed near Constantinople and in commemoration of the event this suburb received the name of Blachernae, where later a famous church was built. The image of the slain Prince Lakhern can be seen in the miniature in the multi-volume *Illustrated Chronicle* commissioned by Ivan the Terrible (*Litsevoy letopisny svod*) (Chronograph Volume, Russian National Library (St Petersburg), F IV 151, fol. 968^v).

⁷¹ Unique theonyms present only in this manuscript, according to which the pagan Slavs were monotheists.

⁷² Russian '*znak zemli*' 'sign of land' is here probably not a physical marker or structure but 'indication, evidence' ('I reached the place from which land (coast) might be seen').

⁷³ We could not identify this toponym.

⁷⁴ Guba Pilskaya or Pil'skaya Bay is not shown in the map. It is near the mouth of the Umba River (a little to the NW).

⁷⁵ This suggests a wind rose of sixteen points as was normal in most of Europe before the compass rose came into use. This is supported two paragraphs later where four named winds are given 'and 12 other winds'. The complete table of 32 wind directions used in Russian is given in Dal's dictionary, *Tolkovyy slovar' zhivogo velikoruskogo yazyka*, 2nd edn, St Petersburg and Moscow, 1881, s.v. *kompas* – it includes the White Sea equivalents which reveal that there were eight basic White Sea wind names, with the half and quarter winds indicated by extra words.

⁷⁶ We can see here in the Russian text the use of first-person forms.

⁷⁷ Cape Svyatoy Nos, a headland in the Kola Peninsula, located between the Barents Sea and the White Sea.

⁷⁸ Cape Kanin Nos, a headland on the Kanin Peninsula.

⁷⁹ The Barents Sea.

that Lop people.⁸⁰ To the both sides of that great sea-ocean to the *siver* North and to the *polunoshchnik* [midnight wind] North-East of the winds that great sea has no end.

After that, that Lise turned back and went by his ship following marks of three winds: 1 – *sever* N. 2 – *polunoshchnik* NE. 3 – *letnik* S. 4 – *poberezhnik* NW, and 12 other winds and I went by my ship 12 [fol. 26^v] days and 12 nights of fine weather, reached Kholmogory and Matigory Major and Minor, and [the islands of] his brothers Kurostrov, Kur’ya, Ukhtostrov and his population at Lisestrov; the town of upper settlement and lower settlement.⁸¹ <...>⁸² Having taken tribute and supervised the subjugation of the whole Pomor’ye land from the north to the west and to the *polunoshchie* NE of the winds all the tributes from the people were taken, twelve thousand [*unit of payment not specified in the text*], and supervised payment in future, and until the death of Grand Prince Rurik, and after his death to Grand Princess Olga Izborskovna that was transported to Novgorod the Great.

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⁸⁰ Lapps, Sami

⁸¹ There is no town of Lisestrov in the text above; only Kur is characterized as a founder of towns. Probably the town here, with a developed topography including two suburbs (*posady*) and a specific ‘clay’ locality, must be Kholmogory.

⁸² Some obscure descriptions of topography of the settlement are omitted in the translation.