

The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016–1471

translated by Robert Michell and Nevill Forbes

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Novgorod First Chronicle (Younger Redaction) version (late fifteenth century)

at Dubrovna, a village in the Toropets district, and there he fought with the accursed and godless [Lithuanians]. And there God [helped them] and the Holy Cross and the Holy Sophia, the Mighty Wisdom of God, helped *Knyaz* Yaroslav and the men of Novgorod over the pagans, and they took from them 300 of their horses with their goods and they fled into the woods, having thrown down their arms and shields and lances and everything from themselves; and others fell here dead. And of the men of Novgorod they killed there ten men: Feda Yakunovich the *Tysyatski*, Gavriilo the shield-maker, Negutin from Lubyanita, Nezhila the silversmith, Gostilets of Kusma-Demyan Street, Fedor Uma of the *Knyaz's* household, a townsman, and three other men. And may God grant peace to their souls in the kingdom of Heaven, who spilt their blood for St. Sophia and for Christian blood.

A.D. 1235. A.M. 6743. The accursed and all-destroying devil, who from the beginning wished no good to the human race, raised discord among the Russian *Knyazes*, that men might not dwell in peace; for this reason too the evil one rejoices in the shedding of Christian blood. *Knyaz* Volodimir Rurikovich with the men of Kiev, and Danilo Romanovich with the men of Galich went against Mikhail Vsevolodich the Red, to Chernigov, and Izyaslav fled to the Polovets people, and laid much waste around Chernigov, and burnt villages. And Mikhail came out from Chernigov and having devastated much around Chernigov went away again. And Mikhail having practised deceit on Danilo killed many of the men of Galich, even without number, and Danilo barely escaped. And Volodimir having come back again, he sat in Kiev. And not even thus was there enough of evil, but Izyaslav with the pagan Polovets people in great strength, and Mikhail with the men of Chernigov came to Kiev, and took Kiev. And the Polovets men having taken Volodimir and his *Knyaginya* led them away to their own country, and did much harm to the people at Kiev. And Mikhail took his seat in Galich, and Izyaslav in Kiev. And then again the Polovets men let Volodimir and his wife go for ransom, and the *Knyazes* took ransom from the *Nemtsy*.

A.D. 1236. A.M. 6744. *Knyaz* Yaroslav went from Novgorod to [take] the throne in Kiev, taking with him some of the best men of Novgorod: Sudimir of Slavno, Yakim Vlunkovich, and Kosta Vyacheslavich, also 100 men from Novi-

torg. He set his son Olexander in Novgorod and having arrived in Kiev he took his seat on the throne, and having kept the men of Novgorod and of Novi-torg for one week and having bestowed gifts on them he let them go; and they all returned well. Alexa
N.
(1236)

The same year the godless Tartars having come, they captured all the Bolgar Land¹ and took their great city, and they slew all, both wives and children.

A.D. 1237. A.M. 6745. There was a sign in the sun on August 3, the Day of the commemoration of the Holy Fathers Dalmat, Faust, and Isak, at mid-day. The sign was of this kind: there was a darkness on the western side of the sun; it became like a moon of five nights; and on the eastern side it was light, then again on the eastern side there was darkness, like a moon of five nights, while on the western side it was light; and thus it became full again.

The same year the *Nemtsy* came in great strength from beyond the sea to Riga and all united there; both the men of Riga and all the Chud Land, and the men of Pleskov from themselves sent a help of 200 men, and they went against the godless Lithuanians; and thus for our sins they were defeated by the godless pagans,² and each tenth man came back to his home.

The same year a Metropolitan by name Esif, a Greek, came to Kiev from Nikeya.

A.D. 1238. A.M. 6746. The wife of Semen Borisovich made a monastery at the Church of St. Paul.

That same year foreigners³ called Tartars came in countless numbers, like locusts, into the land of Ryazan, and on first coming they halted at the river Nukhla, and took it, and halted in camp there. And thence they sent their emissaries to the *Knyazes* of Ryazan, a sorceress and two men with her, demanding from them one-tenth of everything: of men and *Knyazes* and horses—of everything one-tenth. And the *Knyazes* of Ryazan, Gyurgi,⁴ Ingvor's brother, Oleg, Roman Ingvovovich, and those of Murom and Pronsk, without letting them into their towns, went out to meet them to Voronazh. And the *Knyazes* said to them: "Only when none of us remain then all will be yours." And thence they let them go to Yuri⁴ in Volodimir, and thence they let the Tartars at

¹ Bulgaria on the Volga, the present Kazan, etc.

² Lithuanians.

³ *Inoplemennitsi*.

⁴ George.

Voronazh go back to the Nukhla. And the *Knyazes* of Ryazan sent to Yuri of Volodimir asking for help, or himself to come. But Yuri neither went himself nor listened to the request of the *Knyazes* of Ryazan, but he himself wished to make war separately. But it was too late to oppose the wrath of God, as was said of old by God, to Joshua the son of Nun, when leading them to the promised land, then he said: "I shall before you send upon them perplexity, and thunder, and fear, and trembling." Thus also did God before these men take from us our strength and put into us perplexity and thunder and dread and trembling for our sins. And then the pagan foreigners surrounded Ryazan and fenced it in with a stockade.¹ And *Knyaz* Yuri of Ryazan, shut himself in the town with his people, but *Knyaz* Roman Ingorovich began to fight against them with his own men. Then *Knyaz* Yuri of Volodimir sent Yeremei as *Voyevoda* with a patrol and joined Roman; and the Tartars surrounded them at Kolomno, and they fought hard and drove them to the ramparts. And there they killed Roman and Yeremei and many fell here with the *Knyaz* and with Yeremei. And the men of Moscow ran away having seen nothing. And the Tartars took the town on December 21, and they had advanced against it on the 16th of the same month. They likewise killed the *Knyaz* and *Knyaginya*, and men, women, and children, monks, nuns and priests, some by fire, some by the sword, and violated nuns, priests' wives, good women and girls in the presence of their mothers and sisters. But God saved the Bishop, for he had departed the same moment when the troops invested the town. And who, brethren, would not lament over this, among those of us left alive when they suffered this bitter and violent death? And we, indeed, having seen it, were terrified and wept with sighing day and night over our sins, while we sigh every day and night, taking thought for our possessions and for the hatred of brothers.

But let us return to what lies before us. The pagan and godless Tartars, then, having taken Ryazan, went to Volodimir, a host of shedders of Christian blood. And *Knyaz* Yuri went out from Volodimir and fled to Yaroslavl, while his son Vsevolod with his mother and the *Vladyka*, and the whole of the province shut themselves in Volodimir. And the lawless Ismaelites approached the town and surrounded the town in force, and fenced it all round with a fence.² And it was in the morning *Knyaz* Vsevolod and *Vladyka* Mitrofan saw that the town

¹ *Ostrog*.

² *Tyn*.

must be taken, and entered the Church of the Holy Mother of God and were all shorn into the monastic order and into the *schema*,¹ the *Knyaz* and the *Knyaginya*, their daughter and daughter-in-law, and good men and women, by *Vladyka* Mitrofan. And when the lawless ones had already come near and set up battering rams,² and took the town and fired it on Friday before Sexagesima Sunday, the *Knyaz* and *Knyaginya* and *Vladyka*, seeing that the town was on fire and that the people were already perishing, some by fire and others by the sword, took refuge in the Church of the Holy Mother of God and shut themselves in the Sacristy. The pagans breaking down the doors, piled up wood and set fire to the sacred church; and slew all, thus they perished, giving up their souls to God. Others went in pursuit of *Knyaz* Yuri to Yaroslavl. And *Knyaz* Yuri sent out Dorozh to scout with 3,000 men; and Dorozh came running, and said: "They have already surrounded us, *Knyaz*." And the *Knyaz* began to muster his forces about him, and behold, the Tartars came up suddenly, and the *Knyaz*, without having been able to do anything, fled. And it happened when he reached the river Sit they overtook him and there he ended his life. And God knows how he died; for some say much about him. And Rostov and Suzhdal went each its own way. And the accursed ones having come thence took Moscow, Pereyasavl, Yurev,³ Dmitrov, *Volok*,⁴ and Tver; there also they killed the son of Yaroslav. And thence the lawless ones came and invested Torzhok on the festival of the first Sunday in Lent. They fenced it all round with a fence as they had taken other towns, and here the accursed ones fought with battering rams for two weeks. And the people in the town were exhausted and from Novgorod there was no help for them; but already every man began to be in perplexity and terror. And so the pagans took the town, and slew all from the male sex even to the female, all the priests and the monks, and all stripped and reviled gave up their souls to the Lord in a bitter and a wretched death, on March 5, the day of the commemoration of the holy Martyr Nikon, on Wednesday in Easter week. And there, too, were killed Ivanko the *Posadnik* of Novi-torg, Yakim Vlnkovich, Gleb Borisovich, and Mikhailo Moisieich. And the accursed godless ones then pushed on from Torzhok by the road of Seregeri right up to Ignati's

¹ cf. p. 34.

² *Porok*.

³ Yurev Polski, N.E. of Moscow.

⁴ *Volok Lamsk*.

cross, cutting down everybody like grass, to within 100 *versts*¹ of Novgorod. God, however, and the great and sacred apostolic cathedral Church of St. Sophia, and St. Kyuril,² and the prayers of the holy and orthodox *Vladyka*, of the faithful *Knyazes*, and of the very reverend monks of the hierarchical *Veche*, protected Novgorod. And who, brothers, fathers, and children, seeing this, God's infliction on the whole Russian Land, does not lament? God let the pagans on us for our sins. God brings foreigners on to the land in his wrath, and thus crushed by them they³ will be reminded of God. And internecine war comes from the prompting of the devil: for God does not wish evil amongst men, but good; but the devil rejoices at wicked murder and bloodshed. And any land which has sinned God punishes with death or famine, or with infliction of pagans, or with drought, or with heavy rain, or with other punishment, to see whether we will repent and live as God bids; for He tells us by the prophet: "Turn to me with your whole heart, with fasting and weeping." And if we do so we shall be forgiven of all our sins. But we always turn to evil, like swine ever wallowing in the filth of sin, and thus we remain; and for this we receive every kind of punishment from God; and the invasion of armed men, too, we accept at God's command; as punishment for our sins.

A.D. 1239. A.M. 6747. *Knyaz* Olexander,⁴ son of Yaroslav, married in Novgorod, he took the daughter of Bryacheslav of Polotsk; and was wedded at Toropets and the feast was held both in Novgorod and in Toropets.

In the same year *Knyaz* Alexander⁴ with the men of Novgorod built⁵ a town⁶ by the Shelon [river].

A.D. 1240. A.M. 6748. The *Svei*⁷ came in great strength with the Murman, Sum, and Yem people in very many ships. The *Svei* came with their *Knyaz* and with their bishops, and halted in the Neva at the mouth of the Izhera, wishing to take possession of Ladoga, or in one word, of Novgorod, and of the whole Novgorod province. But again the most kind and merciful God, lover of men, preserved and protected us from the foreigners since they laboured in vain without the command of God. For the news came to Novgorod that the *Svei* were going towards Ladoga, and *Knyaz*

¹ About 66 miles.

² Cyril.

³ sc. the Russian people.

⁴ Oleksandr, Aleksandr.

⁵ *Srubi*—cut, because made of wood.

⁶ Fort. ⁷ Swedes.

Olexander with the men of Novgorod and of Ladoga did not delay at all; he went against them and defeated them by the power of St. Sophia and the prayers of our Sovereign Lady the Holy Mother of God and eternally Virgin Mary on the 15th day of July, the Commemoration Day of Saints Kyurik and Ulita, and the Day of the *Veche* of the 630 Holy Fathers of Khalkidon.¹ And there was a great slaughter of *Svei*. Their *Voyevoda*, by name Spiridon, was killed, and some thought that their bishop was also killed there; and a very great number of them fell. And having loaded two vessels² with their best men got away first to sea; and the rest of them having dug a pit they threw into it without number; and many others were wounded; and the same night without waiting for the light of Monday they went away in shame. And of the men of Novgorod and Ladoga there fell there Kostyantyn Lugotinits, Gyuryata Pineshchinich, Namest, Drochilo son of Nezdilo the tanner, twenty men in all with the men of Ladoga, or less, God knows. And *Knyaz* Alexander with the men of Novgorod and of Ladoga all came back in health to their own country, preserved by God and St. Sophia, and through the prayers of all the saints.

The same year the *Nemtsy*³ with the men of Medvezhya [Golova], of Yurev, and of Velyad⁴ with *Knyaz* Yaroslav Volodimirich took Izborsk. And the news came to Pleskov that the *Nemtsy* had taken Izborsk and all the men of Pleskov went out and fought with them and the *Nemtsy* beat them. And there they killed the *Voyevoda* Gavriilo Gorislavich, and pursuing the men of Pleskov, killed many of them and others they caught with their hands. And having driven them up under the town, they burned the whole place, and there was much damage, churches, honourable ikons, books and Gospels were burnt, and they devastated many villages around Pleskov. And they stayed near the town a week, but they did not take the town. But the children of good men they took as hostages, and went away and so they were without peace. For the men of Pleskov had made treachery with the *Nemtsy*, and Tverdilo Ivankovich with others had got them to come and himself began to rule in Pleskov with the *Nemtsy*, ravaging the Novgorod villages. And some of the people of Pleskov fled to Novgorod with their wives and children.

¹ i.e. The Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451.

² *Korabl*.

³ cf. p. 34.

⁴ Fellin.

In the winter in the same year *Knyaz* Olexander went out from Novgorod with his mother and his wife and all his court, to his father in Pereyasavl, having quarrelled with the men of Novgorod.

The same winter the *Nemtsy* came against the Vod people with the Chud people, and ravaged them, and laid tribute upon them, and made a fort in the village¹ of Koporya. Nor was this the only evil: but they also took Tesov and pushed to within thirty *versts* of Novgorod, attacking merchants, and hitherwards to Luga and up to [the village of] Sablya.

And the men of Novgorod sent to Yaroslav for a *Knyaz*, and he gave them his son Andrei. And then the men of Novgorod having taken counsel sent the *Vladyka* with others again for Olexander; and the Lithuanians, *Nemtsy* and the Chud people invaded the Novgorod district and seized all the horses and cattle about Luga, and in the villages it was impossible for any one to plough and nothing to do it with, till Yaroslav sent his son Alexander again.

A.D. 1241. A.M. 6749. *Knyaz* Olexander came to Novgorod, and the men of Novgorod rejoiced. The same year *Knyaz* Olexander went with the men of Novgorod, and of Ladoga, and with the Korel and Izhera people against the town of Koporya, against the *Nemtsy*²; and took the town and brought some *Nemtsy* to Novgorod and let others go free; but the Vod and Chud traitors he hanged.

A.D. 1242. A.M. 6750. *Knyaz* Olexander with the men of Novgorod and with his brother Andrei and the men of the Lower country went [in the winter in great strength against the land of the Chud people, against the *Nemtsy*, that they might not boast, saying: "We will humble the Sloven race under us," for Pskov was already taken, and its *Tiuns* in prison]. And *Knyaz* Olexander occupied all the roads right up to Pleskov; and he cleared Pleskov, seized the *Nemtsy* and Chud men, and having bound them in chains, sent them to be imprisoned in Novgorod, and himself went against the Chud people. And when they came to their land, he let loose his whole force to provide for themselves. And Domash Tverdislavich and Kerbet were scouring [the country] and the *Nemtsy* and Chud men met them by a bridge; and they fought there, and there they killed Domash, brother of the *Posadnik*, an honest man, and others with him, and others again they took with their

¹ Pogost.

² cf. p. 34.

hands, and others escaped to the troops of the *Knyaz*. And the *Knyaz* turned back to the lake and the *Nemtsy* and Chud men went after them. Seeing this, *Knyaz* Olexander and all the men of Novgorod drew up their forces by Lake Chud at Uzmen by the Raven's rock¹; and the *Nemtsy* and Chud men rode at them driving themselves like a wedge through their army; and there was a great slaughter of *Nemtsy* and Chud men. And God and St. Sophia and the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb, for whose sake the men of Novgorod shed their blood, by the great prayers of those Saints, God helped *Knyaz* Alexander. And the *Nemtsy* fell there and the Chud men gave shoulder, and pursuing them fought with them on the ice, seven *versts* short of the Subol shore.² And there fell of the Chud men a countless number; and of the *Nemtsy* 400, and fifty they took with their hands and brought to Novgorod. And they fought on April 5, on a Saturday, the Commemoration Day of the Holy Martyr Feodul,³ to the glory of the Holy Mother of God. The same year the *Nemtsy* sent with greeting, in the absence of the *Knyaz*: "The land of the Vod people, of Luga, Pleskov, and Loty-gola, which we invaded with the sword, from all this we withdraw, and those of your men whom we have taken we will exchange, we will let go yours, and you let go ours." And they let go the Pleskov hostages, and made peace.

The same year *Knyaz* Yaroslav Vsevolodich summoned by the Tartar *Tsar* Baty, went to him to the Horde.

A.D. 1243. A.M. 6751. God's servant Varlaam, in the world Vyacheslav Prokshinich, died at Khutin in the monastery of the Holy Redeemer, on May 4; and he was buried on the morrow the fifth, St. Irena's Day, by *Vladyka* Spiridon and *Igumen* Sidor in the presence of *Knyaz* Olexander. On the 18th of the same month, the Day of the Holy Martyr Alexander, there appeared a sign in the monastery Church of St. Ioan in Pleskov, from the image of the Holy Redeemer over the tomb of the *Knyaginya* of Yaroslav Volodimirovich, who was killed by her stepson at Medvezhya Golova; there came ointment from the ikon for twelve days, it filled four wax cups as into a glass vessel, and they brought two to Novgorod to be blessed and they kept two in Pleskov. But, O Lord, Glory to Thee, who gavest us Thy unworthy and sinful servants such a blessing! In Thee, we hope, O Lord Almighty, who loving mankind dost

¹ *Vroni Kamen*.

² Of Lake Chud.

Theodoulos.

look with Thy abundant mercy upon us poor ones. The same year on August 16 died God's servant, Stefan Tverdislavich, grandson of Mikhail, *Posadnik* of Novgorod, on Sunday at 1 o'clock of the night, and he was buried on Monday the 17th, the Day of SS. Paul and Uliana, in the porch of St. Sophia where lie *Vladykas* Arkadi and Marturi, having been *Posadnik* thirteen years less three months.

A.D. 1244. A.M. 6752. The *Knyaginya* of Yaroslav died, having been shorn in the monastery of St. George; and there she was laid by the side of her son Fedor, on May 4, the Day of St. Irina; her name was called Efrosinia.

A.D. 1245. A.M. 6753. [*Tsar* Baty killed *Knyaz* Mikhail of Chernigov and his *Voyevoda* Fedor in the Horde on September 18. And the killing of them was like this. There was an invasion of pagan Tartars into the Russian Land; and these¹ shut themselves in the towns. And envoys came from *Tsar* Baty to Mikhail, who then held Kiev; and he, seeing their words of deceit, ordered them to be killed and himself fled with his family to Hungary²; and some fled to distant parts; and others hid in caves and forests, and few of them stayed behind; and these after some time settled in the towns; and they counted their number and began to levy tribute upon them. And *Knyaz* Mikhail having heard this, he brought back the people who had fled on all sides to strange lands, and they came to their own land. And the Tartars began to summon them with insistence to go to Baty, saying to them: "It is not meet for you to live in the land of the *Khan* and of Baty without doing homage to them." And many having gone bowed. And Baty had this custom of the *Khan's*: If any one came to do obeisance, he would not order him to be brought before him, but wizards used to be ordered to bring them through fire and make them bow to a bush and to fire; and whatever anyone brought with him for the *Tsar*, the wizards used to take some of everything and throw it into the fire, and then they used to let them go before the *Tsar* with their gifts. And many *Knyazes* with their *Boyars* passed through the fire, and bowed to the bush, their idols, for the glory of this world, and each asked of them power and they used to give it them without dispute, that they might deceive them with the glory of this world. And the most reverend *Knyaz* Mikhail being then in Chernigov, and seeing many deceived by the glory of this

¹ sc. Mikhail and Fedor—Michael and Theodore.

² Ugrj.

world, God sent grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit upon him; He put into his heart to go before *Tsar* Baty and to denounce his deceit with which he deceived Christians. And he came to his spiritual father and told him saying: "I wish to go to *Tsar* Baty." His spiritual father answered him: "Many having gone have done the will of the pagan *Tsar* Baty, deceived by the glory of this world; went through the fire and bowed to the sun and to the bush, and destroyed their souls and bodies. And thou, my son, Mikhail, if thou wilt go, do not thus, as the others; go not through the fire; bow not to their idols, nor eat their food, nor take their drink between thy lips; but confess the Christian faith, for it becometh not Christians to bow to any thing, but only to our Lord Jesus Christ." And Mikhail and his *Voyevoda* said to him: "By thy prayer, father, as God wills so be it; I would like to pour out my blood for Christ and for the Christian faith." His *Voyevoda* Fedor spoke likewise. Their spiritual father said to them: "You two will be fresh holy martyrs in the present generation for the confirmation of faithful people, if you do thus." Mikhail and Fedor his *Voyevoda* promised to do thus and were blessed by their spiritual father. Then their father gave them the holy communion for the journey, calling it pre-sanctified and having blessed them, dismissed them and said to them: "May God give strength to you and may God for whom you are eager to suffer send you help." Then Mikhail came to his house, and took from his goods what he needed. And going through many lands they yet reached *Tsar* Baty. And they told Baty: "The Russian *Veliki Knyaz* Mikhail has come to bow to thee." And *Tsar* Baty ordered them to bring his wizards; and the wizards having come before the *Tsar*, the *Tsar* said to them: "As it is according to our custom, do to *Knyaz* Mikhail, and then bring him before me." And they having gone to Mikhail, saying to him: "The *Tsar* Baty summons thee." And he having taken his *Voyevoda* Fedor, went with him, and having reached the place where fire was laid on both sides, many pagans were going through the fire, and were bowing to the sun and to the idols. And the wizards led Mikhail and his *Voyevoda* Fedor through the fire. Mikhail said to them: "It does not become Christians to go through fire and to bow to the idols, to which these bow; such is the Christian religion, not to bow to any thing nor to idols, but to bow to the Trinity: to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." And Mikhail said to his *Voyevoda* Fedor: "Better it is for us not to bow to the things to which these bow." And they having left them at

the place to which they had been brought, went to tell *Tsar* Baty: "Mikhail the *Veliki Knyaz* does not listen to thy command, does not go through the fire and does not bow to thy gods: he says, it does not become Christians to go through the fire, nor do they bow to things, neither to the sun nor to idols, but they bow to the Father who made all things, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." And *Tsar* Baty grew very angry, he sent one of his nobles,¹ his steward² named Eldega, and he said: "Why hast thou made nought of my command, and hast not bowed to my gods? but from this moment choose for thyself life or death; if thou keepest my command thou shalt both live and shalt receive all thy principedom, but if thou wilt not go through the fire, nor bow to the bush and to the idols then thou shalt die by a cruel death." Then Mikhail answered: "To thee, *Tsar*, I bow, since God hath granted thee the sovereignty³ of this world, but to the things to which these bow I shall not bow." And Eldega, the *Tsar's* steward, said to him: "Mikhail, beware: thou art dead." And Mikhail answered him: "Indeed, I wish to suffer for Christ and to shed my blood for the true faith." Then said Boris, *Knyaz* of Rostov, to Mikhail with much weeping: "My lord father, do the *Tsar's* will." Then likewise the *Boyars* of Boris also said: "We will all receive public penance for thee with all our power." Then Mikhail answered: "Brothers, I do not wish to call myself a Christian by name only and to do the work of the pagans; but on the contrary I believe in Christ the only God." When Mikhail had said this, his *Voyevoda* Fedor began to think in himself saying: "What if Mikhail should grow weak by the prayer of these men, remembering the love of his wife and the caresses of his children?" Then remembering the words of his spiritual father, Fedor said to Mikhail: "Dost thou remember the word of our spiritual father which he taught us from the holy gospels? The Lord said: 'he that desireth to save his soul shall destroy it, and he that destroyeth his soul shall save it.' And again, he said: 'what shall it profit a man if he receive the sovereignty of all this world and lose his soul? and what will he get in exchange for his soul? for whosoever shall suffer shame for me and for my words and shall confess me before men, I too will confess him before my Father which is in Heaven, and whosoever shall deny me before men I also will deny him before my Father who is in Heaven!'" And Mikhail and Fedor

¹ *Velmozha*.

² *Stolnik*.

³ *Tsarstvo*.

saying this, they began to pray them urgently, that they would listen to them. And Mikhail said to them: "I will not listen to you, nor will I destroy my soul." Then taking off his mantle Mikhail threw it to them, saying to them: "Receive the glory of this world if you desire it." And Eldega having heard that they were unable to persuade him, then went to inform the *Tsar* of what Mikhail had said; for there was a quantity of Christians and pagans in that place, and they were listening to what Mikhail answered to the *Tsar*. Then the blessed Mikhail and Fedor began to sing, and having finished singing they took holy communion, the body and blood of Christ, which their father had given them who had blessed them for this to suffer for Christ. And those who stood by said: "Mikhail, the executioners are coming from the *Tsar* to kill you; bow, and you will live." And Mikhail and Fedor answered as with one mouth: "We will not bow, and will not listen to you, for the sake of the glory of this world," and began to sing: "Thy martyrs, O Lord, did not deny Thee, nor did they turn away from Thy commandments, but rather suffered for Thy sake, O Christ, and endured many tortures and received perfect crowns in heaven," and so forth. And then the executioners having arrived, and having jumped off their horses, they seized Mikhail, they stretched him out and holding his arms, began to strike him with their hands over the heart, and threw him prone on to the ground and struck him with their heels. And when he had been overpowered a certain man who had been a Christian and then become pagan having denied the Christian faith, and become a pagan transgressor of the law, named Doman, this man cut off the head of the holy *Veliki Knyaz* Mikhail, and hurled it away. And at that minute they said to Fedor: "Bow thou to our gods and thou wilt receive the whole *Knyazdom*¹ of thy *Knyaz*." And Fedor said to them: "I do not desire the *Knyazdom* and do not bow to your gods; but I wish to suffer for Christ like my *Knyaz*." Then again they began to torture Fedor as before they had Mikhail, and then they cut off his honoured head too. Thus, these men thanking the Lord suffered for Christ, and gave over their holy souls to the Lord into the hands of God, new holy martyrs. And their holy bodies were thrown to the dogs to eat, but on the contrary the holy bodies having lain many days were by the grace of God preserved and in no way injured. And our merciful God the Lord who loves mankind glorifying His holy and obedient servants who had suffered for Him and for the Orthodox faith, a pillar of fire

¹ *Knyazhenie*—sovereignty.

appeared from earth to heaven over their honourable bodies, shining with exceeding bright rays for the confirmation of Christians and for the conviction of the faithless who leave God and bow to things, and for the terrifying of the pagans. And their holy and honourable bodies were saved by some God-fearing Christians. The killing of them was on the 20th day of September; through whose prayers and through the supplication of these sufferers of pain and martyrs, Mikhail and Fedor, we shall be worthy to find mercy and remission of our sins at the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, in this and in the future life, together with the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, now and for ever and ever, Amen.]

The Lithuanians made ravages about Torzhok and Bezhitsy, and the men of Novi-torg with *Knyaz* Yaroslav Volodimirovich chased and fought them; and they took the horses from the men of Novi-torg, and beat the men themselves and went away with their plunder. And Yavid and Erbet with the men of Tver and of Dmitrov, and Yaroslav with the men of Novi-torg, pursued them and beat them near Toropets, and the sons of their *Knyaz* took refuge in Toropets.

The next morning Olexander came up with men of Novgorod and took away all the plunder, and slew more than eight of their *Knyaz's* sons. And from there the men of Novgorod turned back; but the *Knyaz* pursued them¹ with his own court² and defeated them near [the village of] Zizech, and did not let a single man go, and there he killed the rest of the *Knyaz's* sons. And he himself took his own son from Vitebsk and went with a small company and met another force at lake Vosvyat; and there God helped him, and he destroyed those two and himself returned well and his company also.

A.D. 1246. A.M. 6754. [*Knyaz* Yaroslav Vsevolodits died in the Horde of the Khan.] *Knyaz* Olexander went to the Tartars.

A.D. 1247. A.M. 6755. God's slave Kostyantyn Vyacheslavich, whose monastic name was Ankyudin, died, and was honourably laid in [the Church of] Saint Saviour at Khutin.

A.D. 1248. A.M. 6756.

¹ sc. the Lithuanians.

² *Dvor*.

A.D. 1249. A.M. 6757. Spiridon, *Vladyka* of Novgorod, died, and was honourably laid in St. Sophia.

A.D. 1250. A.M. 6758. *Knyaz* Olexander returned from the Horde, and there was great joy in Novgorod.

A.D. 1251. A.M. 6759. The Metropolitan Kyuril and the Bishop of Rostov, also named Kyuril, came to Novgorod, and established Dalmat as *Vladyka* of Novgorod.

[At this time also Nevruil came against the land of Suzdal, against *Knyaz* Andrei; and *Knyaz* Andrei Yaroslavich fled beyond sea to the land of the *Svet*, and they killed him.]

Heavy rains came the same year and took away all the ploughed fields and crops and hay; and the water carried away the large bridge over the Volkhov, and in the autumn a frost struck the crops, but a remnant was preserved. For the Lord God sends down on us for our sins at one time famine at another war and all other kinds of punishment; but, oh! His mercy is great! And He is patient with us, awaiting repentance, as He Himself said: "I desire not the death of a sinner, but his conversion to life," and He leaves us remnants for our revival.

A.D. 1252. A.M. 6760. Slavno was burnt down from St. Ilya¹ up to Nutna Street.

A.D. 1253. A.M. 6761. The Lithuanians ravaged the district of Novgorod and went off with captives, and the men of Novgorod with *Knyaz* Vasili overtook them at Toropets; and so Christian blood was avenged on them. And they defeated them and took back the captives from them, and returned well to Novgorod. The same year the *Nemtsy* came to Pleskov and burned the town², but the men of Pleskov killed many of them. And the men of Novgorod went out to them in arms from Novgorod, and they ran away; and the men of Novgorod having come to Novgorod, and having armed and prepared themselves, went beyond the Narova and laid waste their district; and the Korel people also did much harm to their districts. And the same year they went with the men of Pleskov to ravage them, and they put out a force against them; and the men of Novgorod with the men of Pleskov defeated them by the power of the honourable cross; for they began it against themselves, the accursed transgressors of right; and they sent to

¹ Elias.

² *Posad*.

Pleskov and to Novgorod desiring peace on all the terms laid down by Novgorod and Pleskov. And so they made peace.

In the winter of the same year *Knyaz* Yaroslav Yaroslavich fled from out of the Low Country, and they set him in Pleskov.

A.D. 1254. A.M. 6762. It was well with the Christians.

anich
A.D. 1255. A.M. 6763. The men of Novgorod led out Yaroslav Yaroslavich from Pleskov and set him on the throne, and they drove out Vasili. And having heard this, Vasili's father, Olexander, went with an armed force against Novgorod; and Olexander as he was going along with a large force, and with the men of Novi-torg, Ratishka met him with treacherous information: "Advance, *Knyaz*, thy brother Yaroslav has fled." And the men of Novgorod put a force in the quarter [of the church] of the Nativity of Christ; and those who were a-foot, took up a position opposite the *Gorodishche* beyond St. Ilya's; and at a *Veche* at St. Nicholas' the lesser men said: "Brothers, lo, how the *Knyaz* says: "'surrender me my enemies.'" And the lesser men kissed the cross how that all should stand in life or death for the rights of Novgorod, for their patrimony. And among the greater men there was an evil counsel, how to overcome the lesser and to bring in the *Knyaz* on their own terms. And Mikhalko hastened out of the town to St. Georgi's how he might with his force strike our side and crush the people. And Anani having learned of this, wishing him well, sent Yakun secretly after him. And the common people having learned of this, went in chase of him, and tried to get into his house; and Anani prevented them: "Brothers, if you are going to kill him, kill me first." For he did not know that they had counselled an evil thought about him to seize him himself and to give the *Posadnik*-ship to Mikhalko. And the *Knyaz* sent Boris to the *Veche*: "Deliver *Posadnik* Anani to me; or if you do not, I am not your *Knyaz*, and shall come against the town in arms." And the men of Novgorod sent to the *Knyaz* the *Vladyka* and Klim the *Tsyatski*: "Come, *Knyaz*, to thy throne, and listen not to evil-doers, but forgive thy anger to Anani and to all the men of Novgorod." And the *Knyaz* did not listen to the request of the *Vladyka* and Klim. And the men of Novgorod said: "Brothers, inasmuch as our *Knyaz* has thus taken counsel with our transgressors of the Cross,¹ they have God and St. Sophia; but the *Knyaz* is without sin." And the whole force stood three days for its rights, and on the

¹ sc. of the oath.

fourth day the *Knyaz* sent saying thus: "If Anani is deprived of the *Posadnik*-ship I will forgive you my anger." And Anani was deprived of the *Posadnik*-ship, and they took peace on all the terms of Novgorod. And the *Knyaz* entered the town and *Vladyka* Dalmat met him at Prikupovich's Court with all the hierarchy, and with the crosses; and all were filled with joy, and the evil-doers were covered with darkness; because it was joy for Christians, and perdition for the devil, for that there was not great shedding of Christian blood. And *Knyaz* Olexander took his seat on his throne. And the same year they gave the *Posadnik*-ship to Mikhalko Stepanovich.

A.D. 1256. A.M. 6764. There came *Svei* and the Yem and Sum people, and Didman with his province, and a quantity of armed men, and they began to make a town on the Narova. And the *Knyaz* was not then in Novgorod, and the men of Novgorod sent to the Low Country to the *Knyaz* for armed men, and themselves sent throughout their province, thus gathering armed men. And they, accursed ones, having heard, fled beyond the sea.

Knyaz Olexander arrived in the winter of the same year, and the Metropolitan with him; and the *Knyaz* took the road together with the Metropolitan, and the men of Novgorod did not know where he was going, some thought that he was going against the Chud people. And having reached Koporya, Olexander went against the Yem people; but the Metropolitan returned to Novgorod, and many other men of Novgorod turned back from Koporya. And the *Knyaz* went with his own force and with the men of Novgorod. And the road was bad, so that they saw neither day nor night, and it was perdition to many of those on foot, but God spared the men of Novgorod. And he came to the Yem land; some they killed, and others they captured. And the men of Novgorod with *Knyaz* Olexander returned all well. And then the *Knyaz* went to the Low Country, he took with him the Novgorod envoys, Eleuferi and Mikhail Pinishchinich, and set his son Vasili on the throne.

A.D. 1257. A.M. 6765. Evil news came from Russia, that the Tartars desired the *tamga*¹ and tithe on Novgorod; and the people were agitated the whole year. And at Lady-day *Posadnik* Anani died, and in the winter the men of Novgorod killed *Posadnik* Mikhalko. If any one does good to another, then good would come of it; but digging a pit under another, he falls into it himself.

¹ A Customs-tax: properly, a seal on merchandise.

Alexa
1255-

The same winter Tartar envoys came with Olexander, and Vasili fled to Pleskov; and the envoys began to ask the tithe and the *tamga* and the men of Novgorod did not agree to this, and gave presents to the *Tsar*, and let the envoys go with peace.

And *Knyaz* Olexander drove his son out of Pleskov and sent him to the Low Country, and punished Alexander and his company. He cut off the noses of some, and took out the eyes of others, of those who had led Vasili to evil; for evil every man shall perish evilly!

The same winter they killed Misha. The same winter they gave the *Posadnik*-ship to Mikhail Fedorovich, having brought him out of Ladoga, and they gave the post of *Tsyatski* to Zhirokha.

A.D. 1258. A.M. 6766. The Lithuanians with the men of Polotsk came to Smolensk and took [the town of] Voishchina by assault. The same autumn the Lithuanians came to Torzhok, and the men of Novi-torg issued out. For our sins the Lithuanians ambushed them; some they killed, others they took with their hands, and others barely escaped; and there was much evil in Torzhok. The same winter the Tartars took the whole Lithuanian land, and killed the people.

A.D. 1259. A.M. 6767. There was a sign in the moon; such as no sign had ever been. The same winter Mikhail Pineschinich came from the Low Country with a false mission, saying thus: "If you do not number yourselves for tribute there is already a force in the Low Country." And the men of Novgorod did number themselves for tribute. The same winter the accursed raw-eating Tartars, Berkai and Kasachik, came with their wives, and many others, and there was a great tumult in Novgorod, and they did much evil in the province, taking contribution for the accursed Tartars. And the accursed ones began to fear death; they said to Olexander: "Give us guards, lest they kill us." And the *Knyaz* ordered the son of the *Posadnik* and all the sons of the *Boyars* to protect them by night. The Tartars said: "Give us your numbers for tribute or we will run away."¹ And the common people would not give their numbers for tribute but said: "Let us die honourably for St. Sophia and for the angelic houses."² Then the people were divided: who was good stood by St. Sophia and by the True Faith; and they made opposition; the greater men bade the lesser be counted for tribute. And the accursed ones wanted to

¹ Presumably "and return in greater strength."

² sc. churches.

escape, driven by the Holy Spirit, and they devised an evil counsel how to strike at the town at the other side, and the others at this side by the lake; and Christ's power evidently forbade them, and they durst not. And becoming frightened they began to crowd to one point to St. Sophia, saying: "Let us lay our heads by St. Sophia." And it was on the morrow, the *Knyaz* rode down from the *Gorodishche* and the accursed Tartars with him, and by the counsel of the evil they numbered themselves for tribute; for the *Boyars* thought it would be easy for themselves, but fall hard on the lesser men. And the accursed ones began to ride through the streets, writing down the Christian houses; because for our sins God has brought wild beasts out of the desert to eat the flesh of the strong, and to drink the blood of *Boyars*. And having numbered them for tribute and taken it, the accursed ones went away, and *Knyaz* Olexander followed them, having set his son Dmitri on the throne. Dmitri

The same year, on the eve of Boris Day, there was a great frost throughout the province; but the Lord did not wish to leave this place of St. Sophia waste. He turned away His wrath from us and looked down on us with the eye of His mercy, pointing us to repentance; but we sinners return like dogs to our vomit, unmindful of God's punishments which come upon us for our sins. 1259-12

A.D. 1260. A.M. 6768. There was quiet all the year.

A.D. 1261. A.M. 6769. *Vladyka* Dalmat of Novgorod covered the whole roof of St. Sophia with lead. The same year, on November 8, the Feast of St. Michael, the Church of St. Vasili and thirty big houses were burnt down, and on the morrow the Church of St. Dmitri in Slavkov Street was burnt down, and fifty big houses.

A.D. 1262. A.M. 6770. The men of Novgorod built the town afresh, and took peace with the Lithuanians. The same year the Church of the Holy Martyrs, Boris and Gleb, was burnt down from thunder; and it was very large and beautiful. In the autumn of the same year the men of Novgorod with *Knyaz* Dmitri Alexandrovich went in large force to Yurev. And at the same time *Knyaz* Kostyantyn, brother-in-law of Alexander, was there, and Yaroslav, Alexander's brother, with their own men, also *Knyaz* Tovtvil of Polotsk with 500 men of Polotsk and of the Lithuanians, and of the Novgorod force a countless number, God alone knows. The town of Yurev was strong, of three walls, and a quan-

tity of people in it of all kinds; and they had constructed strong defences, but the power of the Holy Cross and of St. Sophia always overthrows those who are wrong. And so this town, its strength was for nothing, but by the aid of God it was taken by single assault, and many of the people of that town were killed, others were taken alive, and others were burnt by fire, and their wives and children; and they took countless booty and captives, and they shot many good men from the town, and they killed Peter Myasnikovich-And *Knyaz* Dmitri with all the men of Novgorod returned to Novgorod with much booty. The same year the monk Vasili built the Church of St. Vasili; but God knows whether he did this with his own [means] or with those of Boris Gavshinich; but the Lord grant them both remission of their sins, and St. Vasili. The same year *Knyaz* Olexander went to the Tartars; and Berka kept him, not letting him back to Russia; and he wintered with the Tartars and fell ill.

A.D. 1263. A.M. 6771. *Knyaz* Olexander came back from the Tartars in very bad health, in the autumn; and he came to Gorodets¹ [monastery] and was shorn on November 14, the day of the holy Apostle Philip; and he died the same night and they took him to Volodimir and laid him in the monastery of the Nativity by the Church of the Holy Mother of God. And the Bishops and *Igumens* having come together with the Metropolitan *Kyuril* and all the hierarchy and monks and with all the people of Suzdal, they buried him honourably on the 23rd of the same month, Friday, the Day of St. Amfilokhi. Grant him, O merciful Lord, to see Thy face in the future age, for he laboured for Novgorod and for all the Russian land.

The same year there was a tumult amongst the Lithuanians, God sending down his wrath upon them; they rose themselves against themselves and the *Veliki Knyaz* Mindovg² was killed by his own relatives, who conspired without anybody's knowledge. The same year the murderers of Mindovg having quarrelled over his goods they killed the good *Knyaz* Tovtivil of Polotsk, and put the *Boyars* of Polotsk in chains and called on the people of Polotsk to kill Tovtivil's son, too; and he escaped to Novgorod with his men. Then the Lithuanians set their own *Knyaz* in Polotsk; and let go the men of Polotsk whom they had taken with their *Knyaz* and took peace.

¹ sc. Radilov, on the Volga.

² Mindvog, Grand Prince of Lithuania, 1247-63.

A.D. 1264. A.M. 6772. The men of Novgorod having taken counsel with *Posadnik* Mikhail drove out *Knyaz* Dmitri Alexandrovich, because the *Knyaz* was still young. And they sent to Tver the son of the *Posadnik* and the better *Boyars* for Yaroslav the brother of Alexander.

A.D. 1265. A.M. 6773. They set *Knyaz* Yaroslav Yaroslavich on the throne in Novgorod on January 27. *Yaroslav*

The same year there was a great tumult amongst the Lithuanians by God's infliction on them, for our Lord God could not bear to look upon the unrighteous and pagan seeing them shedding Christian blood like water and others scattered by them over strange lands; then the Lord will repay them according to their works. *Knyaz* Mindovg of Lithuania had a son named Voishelg; him the Lord chose as champion of the true faith; for having gone to Mount Sinai, away from his father and his kindred, and from his pagan faith, he acknowledged the true Christian religion, and was baptized in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, and studied the sacred books, and was shorn into the monastic order on the Holy Mount; and having remained there three years, he went to his own country to his father. And his father being a pagan tried to persuade him to renounce the Christian faith and the monastic order, and to take up his rule. But he, armed with the power of the Cross, would not even listen to his father's persuasion and feared not his threats, but having gone away from his father built himself a monastery among Christians and remained there, glorifying the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. But after the murder of his father, though undesirous to do so, but God inflicting him on them, the pagan Lithuanians, for the Christian blood, laid it in his heart, and he taking off from him his gown, vowed himself to God for three years, when he should resume his gown, and did not leave the monastic order. He gathered about him his father's soldiers and friends, and having prayed to the honourable Cross, he went against the pagan Lithuanians and defeated them, and stayed in their country all the year. Then the Lord repaid the accursed ones according to their works; for he took the whole of their country captive by force of arms, and there was joy everywhere throughout the Christian land. Then about 300 Lithuanians escaped into Pleskov with their wives and children, and *Knyaz* Svyatoslav with the priests and people of Pleskov baptized them; and the men of Novgorod wanted to slay them, but *Knyaz* Yaroslav would not give them up, and they were not slain. 1265-12