

The Latukhin Book of Royal Degrees: *history of the united State of Russia*

We have already written (#3, 2010) about the Tomsk find – the discovery of the oldest copy of “The Book of Degrees of Royal Genealogy.” Written in 1563, at the time of Ivan the Terrible, the book was the first attempt to present a general view of the history of the Kingdom of Muscovia within its then boundaries.

More than a hundred years later, in 1678, a literary milestone was produced whose principal structure copied that of “The Book of Royal Degrees”: the account of events was based on the “degrees” – rules of the Russian great princes and tsars. At the same time, the new book noticeably expanded the chronological and geographical borders of national history. The author of the book was a clergyman, poet, historian and music scholar Tikhon Makarievsky, archimandrite of the Makariev Zheltovodsky Monastery near Nizhny Novgorod.

In the early 19th century, the work of archimandrite Tikhon was given to the famous Russian historiographer N. M. Karamzin by the merchant Latukhin from Balakhna, the person after whom the book is named. Though “The Latukhin Book of Royal Degrees” was widely used by historians and in the late 19th century the question of its complete publication was raised, the text of the great work remained unpublished.

In 2011, Academician N. N. Pokrovsky (Institute of History, Siberian Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences, Novosibirsk) and Doctor of History A. V. Sirenov (Saint Petersburg State University) prepared the first edition of this outstanding corpus of Russian history written on 1268 large sheets (recto and verso)

Opening *The Latukhin Book of Degrees* are Verses, written in the acrostic form. Archimandrite Tikhon’s treatise on musical history, well-known at the time, was also preceded by Verses. These are examples of baroque culture, widely spread in Russia at that time. Below is the cover of the Nizhny Novgorod copy of *The Latukhin Book of Royal Degrees*.

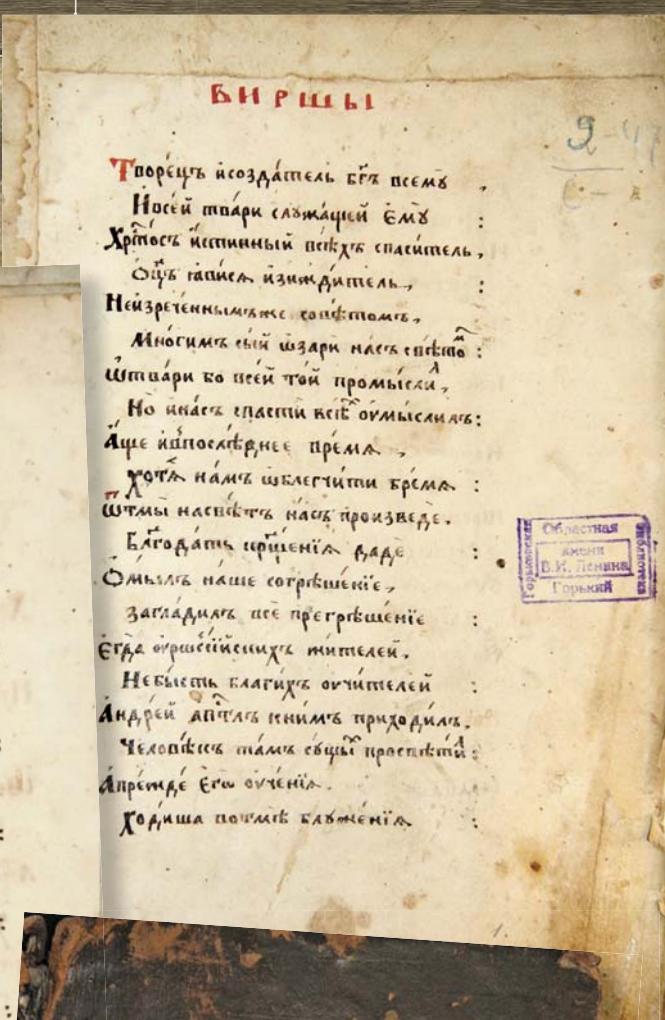
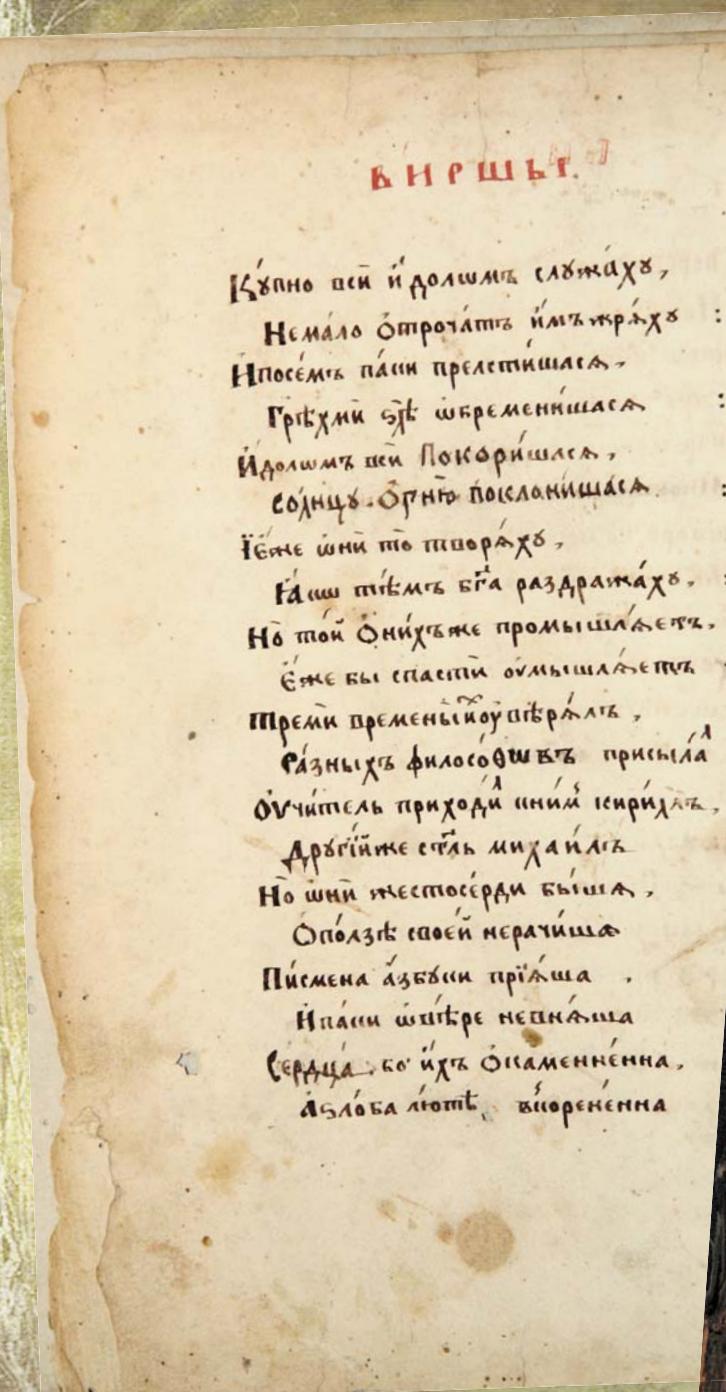
Nizhny Novgorod State Oblast Universal Academic Library named after V. I. Lenin

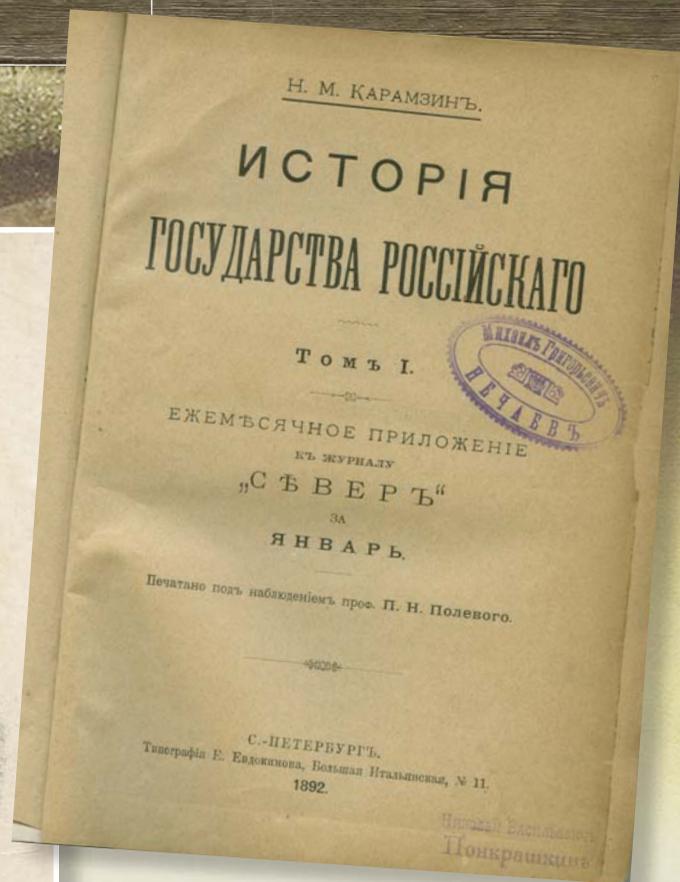


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Key words: Russian history (9—17 cc.), Ivan the Terrible, the Time of Trouble, Ukraine, Kazan khanate, Siberia, the historiography of 9—17 cc., Tikhon Zheltovodsky

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N. M. Karamzin is a well-known Russian historian and historiographer, the author of *The History of the State of Russia*, one of the first general works on the history of Russia. His description of the events that occurred in the 16th—17th cc., especially during the Time of Trouble, drew heavily on *The Latukhin Book of Degrees*. From: (Karamzin, 1892)



A view of the Makarievsky Zheltovodsky Monastery. Engraving by A. Ukhtomsky, drawing by M. Vorobiev. 1816. Nizhny Novgorod State Open-Air Museum of History and Architecture

The authorship and the time of creation of *The Latukhin Book of Royal Degrees* and of its Nizhny Novgorod copy are unambiguously indicated in the book itself. It opens with Verses written in the acrostic form: “Monk Tikhon began this book Deo favente, wrote it easily, received sufficient wages for it, took it to the Zheltovodsk Monastery in the year seven thousand one hundred and eighty seven in the month of November...” (1678)

Archimandrite Tikhon must have been born in Nizhny Novgorod; it is difficult to say why he headed his beloved monastery only for two years but his departure did not mean the end of his career and varied activities. Immediately after leaving the Zheltovodsk Monastery, he was appointed the archimandrite of the New Jerusalem Resurrection Monastery but, having hardly taken this new position, on January 19, 1680 was designated as cellarer at the Savvo-Storozhevsky Monastery. This cloister enjoyed special favor of the young tsar Feodor Alekseyevich and of the patriarchal court. Tikhon served as purser with the last Patriarch Adrian, and was then his executor. His

proximity to the top clerical and secular authorities could not but influence the prevailing tendencies observed in *The Latukhin Book of Degrees*. Another strong impact came from important realities of the time, primarily, successful completion of the main stage of Great Russians’ struggle for reunification with the two other Eastern-Slavic peoples, Ukrainians and Byelorussians.

When writing his work, archimandrite Tikhon kept to the structure of *The Book of Degrees*, based on the rules of Russian sovereigns (“degrees”), but he heavily edited the 16th-century text proceeding from the new view of the past events and, above all, he added new sections to describe the gloomy years of Ivan the Terrible’s rule, the murder of the head of the Russian Church Philip Kolychev, defeat inflicted by the tsar on Great (Velikiy) Novgorod, the end of the Rurik dynasty, the beginning disintegration of the country at the Time of Troubles and Russia’s revival, and the rule of the first Romanov and of his son Tsar Aleksey Mikhailovich.

A most important innovation was the inclusion in national history of the facts on the past of the territories that

had joined the State of Russia quite recently: the Kazan Khanate, Siberia and the old Slavic lands of Ukraine and Byelorussia, for which Russia had fought hard wars with Lithuania and Poland for several centuries.

In 1902, a meticulous researcher of *The Latukhin Book of Degrees*, P. G. Vasenko made a successful attempt at dividing it into three voluminous parts: the first comprised the chapters corresponding chronologically to *The Book of Degrees* (until late August 1560); the second gave an account of the events of the end of rule of Ivan the Terrible, from the memorable chapter “On the change of the Tsar’s temper” to the end of the Time of Troubles; and the third part contained stories of the rules of the first two Romanovs (some later copies of the book go as far as the rule of Peter II).

For many years it was the second part of the book that attracted most attention on the part of historians. N. M. Karamzin paid attention to a string of unknown texts dwelling on the events that occurred in the 16th and 17th cc., especially at the Time of Troubles. The scholars used them in his *History of the State of Russia*, thus familiar-

izing the society of his day with many facts and opinions of the Zheltovodsk archimandrite. As noted long ago, A. S. Pushkin based his drama *Boris Godunov*, to a great extent, upon these texts by Karamzin, dating back to archimandrite Tikhon’s work.

Considering them original and having no earlier sources, Karamzin actively introduced them for scholarly work. However, S. F. Platonov and his followers revealed the sources of the overwhelming majority of the texts from *The Latukhin Book of Degrees* (Platonov, 1913). These are *The New Chronicler*, *Avraamiy Palitsyn’s Story*, the second edition of *The Chronograph*, *The Tale of how Boris Godunov Crookedly Took Possession of the Tsar Throne in Moscow...*, and *The Story and Tale of the Events that Happened in the Reigning Town of Moscow and of Unfrocked Monk Grishka Otrepiev...* In wide chronological frames, the book also used Savva Yesipov’s chronicle *On Siberia and on Taking over Siberia* together with its continuation in the *Siberian Chronicle* as well as some proceedings from Nizhny Novgorod, Astrakhan and Nogai.



On the right – patriarch Hermogenes refuses the Poles to sign the charter on recognizing the Polish Prince Wladislaw. Artist P. Chistyakov. 1860. Canvas, oil.
Research Museum of the Russian academy of Sciences (St Petersburg)

entire world,” and so it was, adds Tikhon, according to his prophesy, with God’s grace’ (sheet 830 verso and 831).

Indeed, Anastasia’s death in 1560 was a great blow to the tsar though it would be an exaggeration to attribute the change in his policy to this private tragedy. Nevertheless, this explanation became widely spread after Ivan IV died, and *The Latukhin Book* expresses it quite strongly: “After her death a great storm broke out in the tsar’s virtuous silence, and his wise mind changed to furious temper. And he began to destroy many of his relatives and dignitaries. As it was said in the Parables, ‘Lust changes placable mind.’” (sheet 822 verso).

The author of *the Latukhin Book of Degrees* could not overlook the event that led to the demise of the ancient Rurik dynasty and that, in the author’s opinion, was the main reason for the Time of Troubles – the murder (in 1581) by Ivan the Terrible of “his elder son tsarevich Ioann, full of wisdom and virtue,” whom his father tore off from the branch of life like a strong wind tears off an unripe cluster” (sheet 823 reverse and 824).

After these lines comes the first mention in the book of Boris Godunov, who “dared to enter the tsar’s privy chambers” to ask after the heavily injured Tsarevich Ioann. For this, the tsar flew into rage and tortured him and inflicted a great many injuries on him.” Later, he regretted his deed and having found out that Boris was treated by the merchant of Great Perm “called Stroganov,” “ordered to style this merchant higher than a guest merchant.” And from that time the Sroganovs became court nobility” (sheet 825 verso). In the above story, the only historically correct fact is the murder by the tsar of his heir, but historians might be interested in the author’s attempt to give reasons for the

“Sapega began to approach the monastery, digging many tunnels and throwing burning cannon balls but no one can withstand God,” this is how *The Latukhin Book of Degrees* (sheet 1000) pictures the siege of the Trinity Monastery of St. Sergius.

This 19th-century lithograph depicts one of the most dramatic episodes of the heroic defense of the monastery – the heavy attack by the Polish on 13 October 1608

Sergiev Posad State Open-Air Museum of History and Art

remarkable promotion of the Stroganovs, who are known to have fitted out Yermak’s expedition to Siberia. Another thing worthy of note is that this story about Godunov’s noble behavior contradicts Tikhon’s general tendency to rebuke this character sternly as an adversary of the Romanovs.

Towards the end of the account of the tsar, originally wise and later insane and furious, Tikhon inserts three well-known tales of the 16th c., narrating the wrong-doing of Ivan the Terrible: the first letter of Andrei Kurbsky to the tsar, the Life of Metropolitan Philipp Kolychev and the terrifyingly realistic *The Tale of the Tsar’s Nizhny Novgorod Campaign* (Chapters 56–58). At the same time, the author pays some respect to Rurikovich. For instance, preceding Kurbsky’s accusatory words addressed to the tsar with “leprotic conscience one cannot find even with irreligious peoples,” is the title “On the betrayal of Prince Andrey Kurbsky,” which is substantively right.

With great solemnity Tikhon Makarievsky begins his story about the last tsar of the Rurik dynasty – Feodor Ioannovich, a gentle and god-fearing ruler. “Of righteous



root good and virtuous shoot, wise in God, pious Tsarevich and Great Prince Feodor Ioannovich of all Russia,” writes Tikhon in the “degree” dedicated to Feodor Ioannovich (sheets 865–917). A tenth of the story comes not from a narrative but from a documentary source, of both religious and secular nature, *The Coronation Rite of Feodor Ioannovich* (sheets 866–872 verso). The solemn and deliberate account of the magnificent spectacle that took place in the Kremlin’s churches and chambers contrasts sharply with the emotionally horrible scenes of the previous “degree” about the harsh reprisals carried out against the citizens of Velikiy Novgorod by Ivan the Terrible.

Time of Troubles

The gravest events for the country of the Time of Troubles (1598–1613) were described by archimandrite Tikhon mainly on the basis of the *Avraamiy Palitsyn’ Story*, an active participant of the 16-month defense of the Trinity and St. Sergius Monastery, besieged by detachments of Polish war lords Sapega and Lisovsky. The vigorous cellarer

played an important role during the decisive combat for Moscow against Hetman Jan Karol Chodkiewicz. It was he who managed to bridge the gap between the leaders of the Second Militia Pozharsky and Minin, and the remains of the First Militia, Cossacks of Trubetskoy. At the time of the decisive battle for Moscow, his heartfelt sermon brought out patriotic feelings in the Cossacks, and they decided to help liberate Moscow.

Later, Patistyn tried to persuade the Cossacks to continue the siege of the Kremlin and of the Belyi Gorod (White City) until they were finally defeated. When the Cossacks required their wages to be paid immediately, *Avraamiy* took a gold plate from the monastery and brought it in two horse-drawn carts to the camp of besiegers near Moscow. Ashamed of their behavior, the Cossacks returned everything to the monastery and carried on the siege of the Kremlin.

The author of *The Latukhin Book of Degrees* tells an amazingly vivid and detailed story of how devastated Russia was during the Time of Troubles, how close it was to the brink of a precipice, and how much military force it took to move it away from that precipice. After Moscow had

ON PEACEFUL SLAVS AND BELLIGERENT MUSLIMS

The author of *The Latukhin Book of Degrees* pays a tribute to the mythological fables, so typical of the 17th-century historians, concerning explanations of various ethnonyms, names of regions and towns, etc.

This refers in particular to stories, borrowed from *Synopsis* and other sources, about the word “Rosseyany” originating from “rosseyany” (in Russian, “scattered over a huge area”); Slavs being named “in memory of the glory (in Russian, “slava” stands for “glory”) of Slavic people, as well because of their origin from “princes Sloven and Rus” (sheet

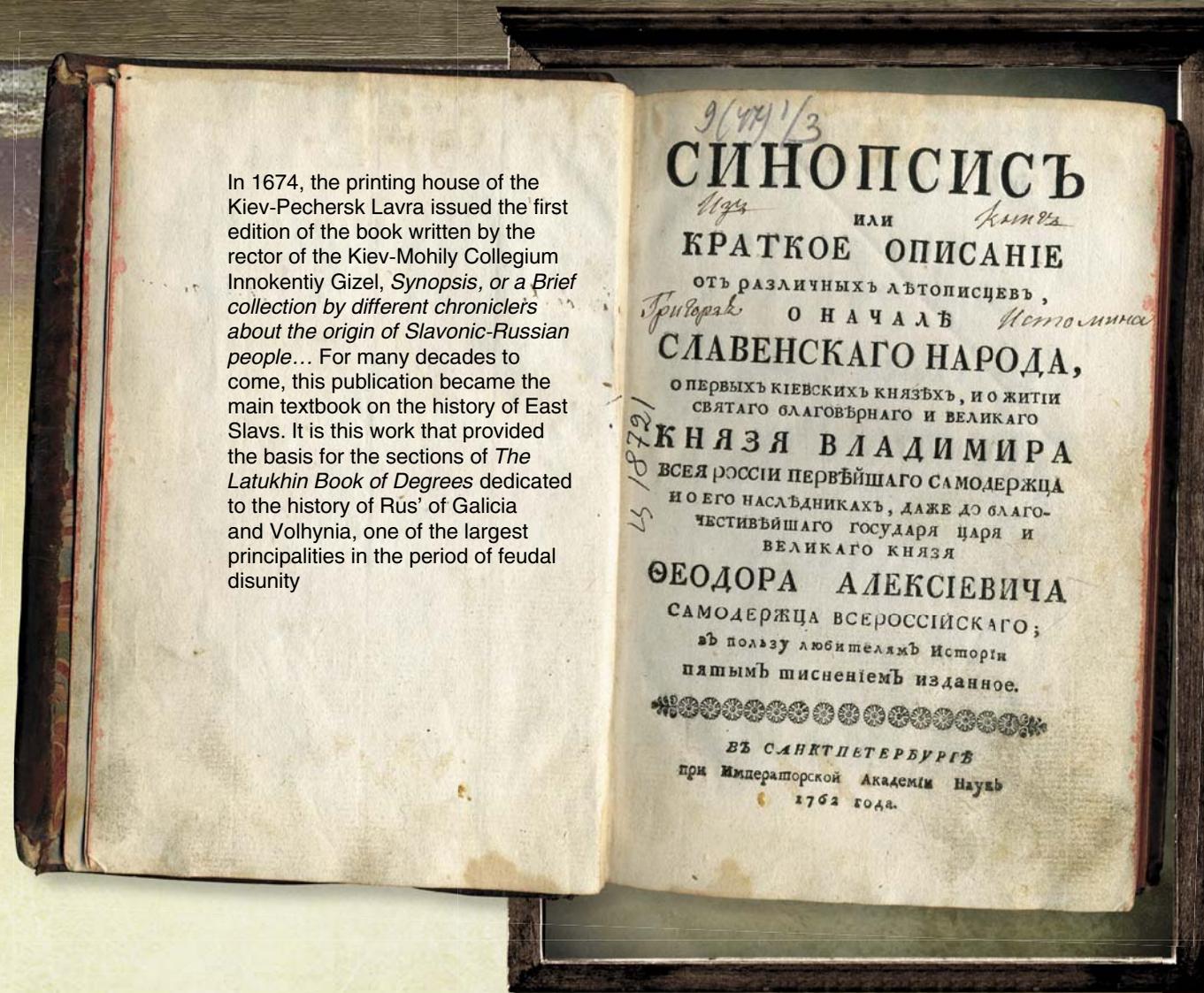
14); the Sarmatians coming from Asarmat or from Sarmof, great great son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem.” According to archimandrite Tikhon, the name of the town of Moscow derives from the name of Noah’s grandson Mosoch (sheets 18 verso—19 verso), and the name of Astrakhan from the ancient Slavonic Tmutarakan: “In Astrakhan, previously called Tmutarakan, Prince Mstislav, son of equal to the apostles sovereign Vladimir, erected a church in the name of Holy Mother” (sheet 796).

The following is the mythological, allegedly Old Testament, explanation of the Slav’s peaceful nature and Muslim belligerence: the latter “were severe towards us because their ancestors, Ishmael and proud Esau, blessed them to fend for themselves with their weapons. And we are humble as we come from our ancestor Jacob, and therefore we cannot withstand them properly but humble ourselves in front of them, like Jacob in front of Esau. We can only defeat them by virtue of God’s blessed cross, this is our victory in battles over our enemies, Ishmael’s descendants” (sheets 734 verso—735)

The author of *The Latukhin Book of Degrees* pays a special tribute to Prince Daniel of Galicia, a talented warlord and politician of Galicia-Volhynia, who managed to restore the unity of the principality, founded towns and supported the development of crafts. His rule marked the golden age of southern Rus’. Counting on the support of the western neighbors against the Golden Horde troops, in 1254 Daniel accepted the title of the “king of Rus” from the Roman Curia. In 2001, the year of 800th anniversary of Daniel of Galicia, a monument to the founder of the city of Lvov was erected on one of the oldest of its squares – an equestrian statue with the inscription “King Danilo” on the pedestal (sculptors V. Yarich and R. Romanovich, architect Ya. Churilik)

been liberated, for a number of years the bleeding Russia deterred attacks of invaders trying to get to the capital and continuing the plunder of Russian towns. It was only the togetherness of citizens, the tenacious perseverance of Russian warriors and the passionate appeal of the Church that let the country survive.

Generally, the Zheltovodsky archimandrite writes continuously about the role of the Church in Russian history and the importance of the Orthodox moral code for the people. His book includes the Lives of 120 Russian saints, from Saint Princes Olga and Vladimir, elders of the Kiev-Pechersk Monastery to St Sergius of Radonezh and men of faith who lived in the 17th century. Tikhon recounts in great detail the deed of martyr Patriarch Hermogenes, who



In 1674, the printing house of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra issued the first edition of the book written by the rector of the Kiev-Mohily Collegium Innokentiy Gizel, *Synopsis, or a Brief collection by different chroniclers about the origin of Slavonic-Russian people...* For many decades to come, this publication became the main textbook on the history of East Slavs. It is this work that provided the basis for the sections of *The Latukhin Book of Degrees* dedicated to the history of Rus’ of Galicia and Volhynia, one of the largest principalities in the period of feudal disunity

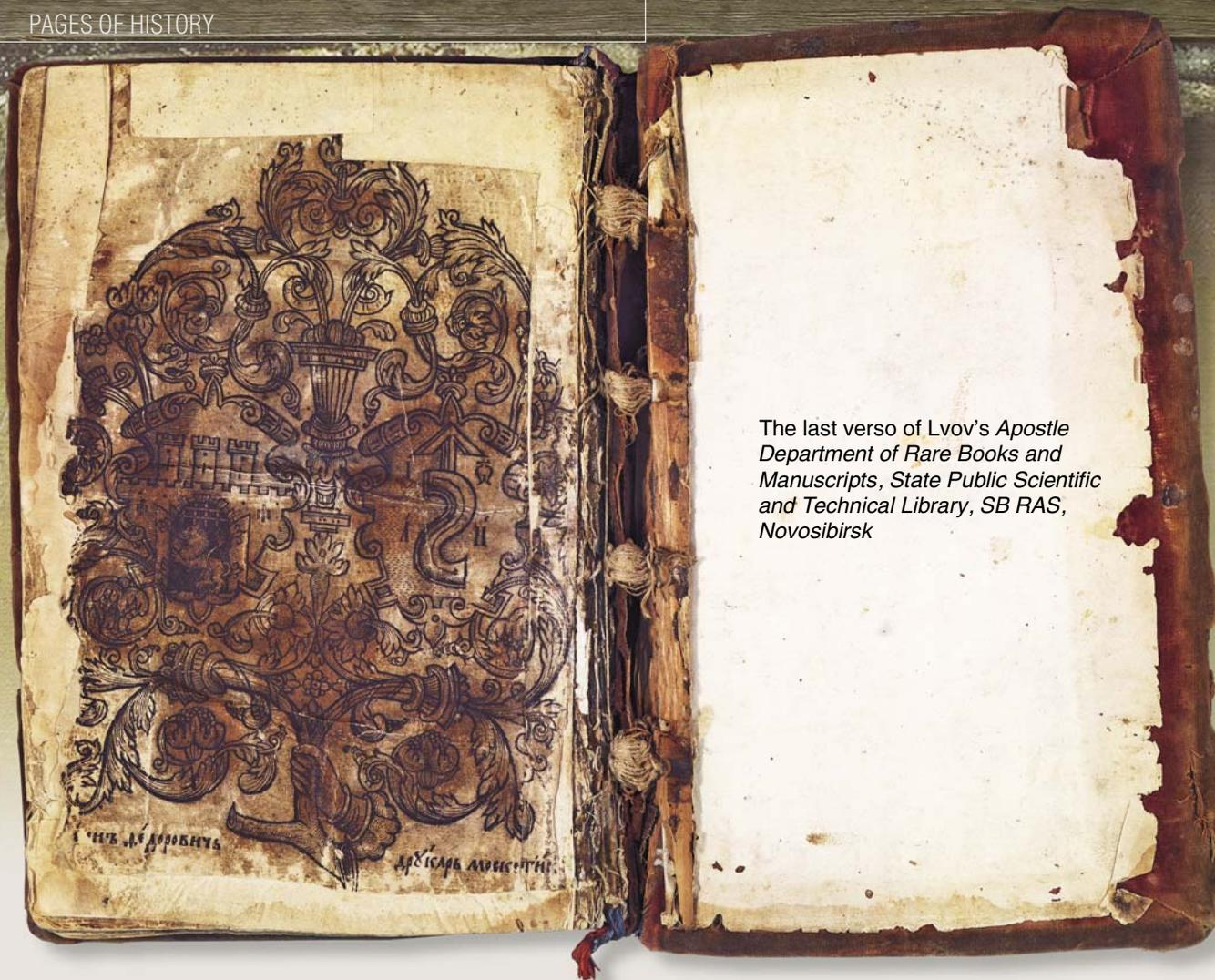
gave his life for active action against Polish invaders, for his refusal to approve putting the Polish prince Władysław on the Russian throne and for his fervent appeal to the citizens of Russian towns to unite and liberate the capital and the entire country.

Zemsky sobor (Assembly of the Land) that marked the end of the Time of Troubles met in January 1613 to elect a new tsar to the throne. Tikhon stresses its estate-representative nature and wide participation of various groups of the population: “From all the towns of the Russian Land people came to the eminent reigning city of Moscow: princes and boyars, merchants and trading people, hetmans and cossacks, chiefs and soldiers of different ranks – all handed in signed proposals on electing the tsar” (sheet 1092). The Makarievsky archimandrite gives a picture of serene unanimity of all congregations of the Assembly, casting a veil over the disputes about the candidates to the throne. According to him, all of the signed proposals had just one name, that of Mikhail Feodorovich Romanov.

Reunification of East Slavs

Crucially important for incorporating western lands into the State of Russia were the following events that occurred in the 17th c.: the Russian-Polish war of 1648–1654, the Treaty of Pereyaslavl of 1654 and the Truce of Andrusovo of 1667, according to which Russia secured the whole of the Left-bank Ukraine and the capital town of Kiev.

It should be noted that the struggle for the western lands was a heavy financial burden for Russia. Voluminous archives of the *Sibirsky prikaz* (a governmental establishment of the 17th–18th cc. Russia in charge of administrative, judicial, financial, economic and other issues throughout Siberia) contain quite a few documents of that time, statements of expenses and receipts concerning the Ukrainian matters. It was the Siberian “currency,” sables, which became the most important finance source for both military campaigns and the subsequent peaceful activities intended to maintain the administrative order at the recovered lands.



The last verso of Lvov's *Apostle*
 Department of Rare Books and
 Manuscripts, State Public Scientific
 and Technical Library, SB RAS,
 Novosibirsk

The statesman and warlord of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania G. A. Chodkiewich (died on 12 November 1572) – representative of a well-known noble family, who advocated the principality's independence, was against its union with Poland into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Rzeczpospolita Polska) and supported Cyrillic Orthodox book-printing. In 1568, he set up a printing house in his estate Zabłudovo, where, after leaving Moscow, the printing pioneers Ivan Fedorov and Petr Mstislavets continued their activities. In 1570 Chodkiewich, under duress of Catholic priests, stopped supporting them, and I. Fedorov moved to Lvov, where he founded his own printing house. In 1574, he printed the second edition of *Apostle* there. As is known, the first edition, published ten years before that in Moscow, opened up the era of book printing in Russia; the Lvov edition began the history of Ukrainian printed books. In memory of the support Hetman Chodkiewich once gave him, Fedorov placed the Hetman's coat-of-arms on the verso of the first page of the Lvov *Apostle*

On the verso of the first page of *Apostle*, published by Ivan Fedorov in Lvov in 1574, is the coat-of-arms of hetman Chodkiewich (on the right), and concluding the book is a complex heraldic composition that unites the town arms of Lvov and the publishing mark of Ivan Fedorov (on the left). The lower part of the composition has an inscription "Ioann Fedorovich – Moscow book printer" Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts, State Public Scientific and Technical Library, SB RAS, Novosibirsk

In the 17th c., when the Time of Troubles was over, the cultural links between Moscovia and the Ukrainian orthodox elite strengthened, gaining a new property. The struggle of Kiev's academic clergy against imposing Union and Catholicism by the Lithuanian-Polish authorities commanded the sympathy of the Russians. As early as the 1640s, polemical works of Ukrainian Orthodox Christians were reprinted and enjoyed great popularity. Even before that, the Russian capital was influenced by Ukrainian school education and scholarly educational centers like





The page spread of Ivan Fedorov's *Lvov Apostle* with an engraving of evangelist Luke and the beginning of the text (Acts 1: 1—6). Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts, State Public Scientific and Technical Library, SB RAS, Novosibirsk

Kiev-Mohyla Collegium (later Academy), which put an emphasis not only on rhetoric and poetry writing but also on Aristotle's logic.

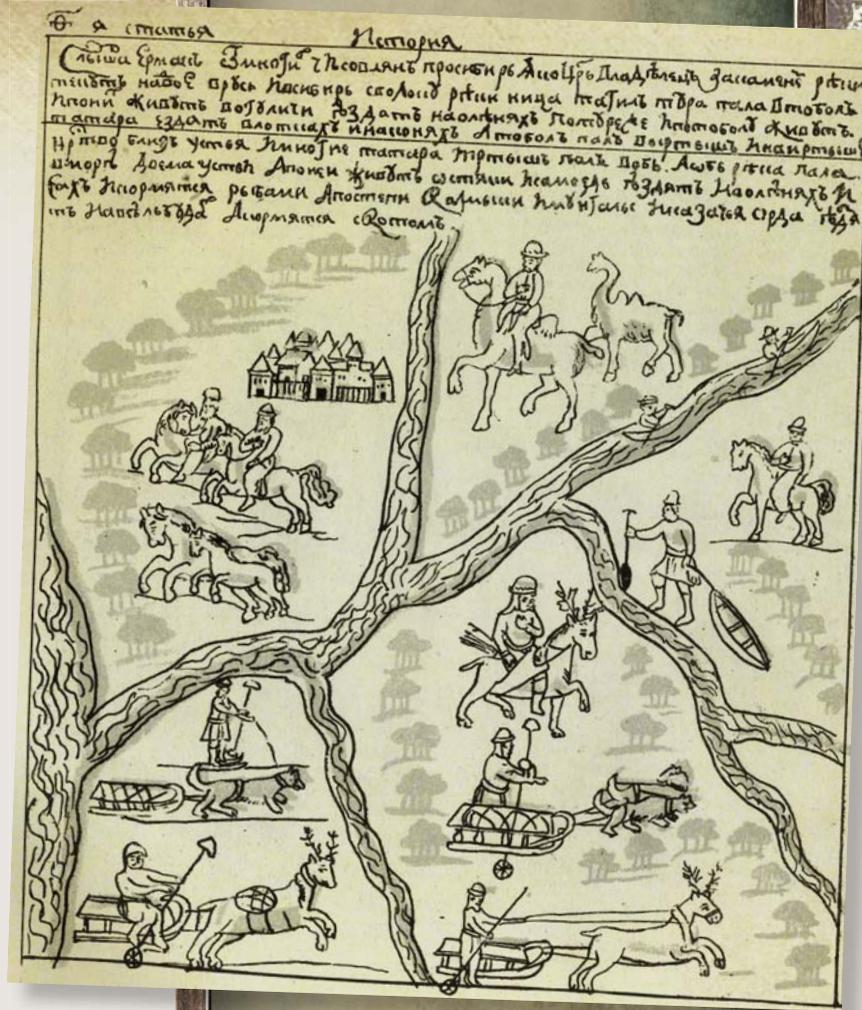
In 1671 the Rector of this collegium Innokentiy Gizel wrote *Synopsis*, dedicated to the history of East Slavs and dwelling on the unity of Great Russia and Little Russia. The book became very popular and enjoyed many editions. It was this work that archimandrite Tikhon took as a basis of *The Latukhin Book of Degrees'* sections dedicated to the history of the Principality of Galicia-Volhynia, the joint struggle of East Slavs against the Tatar-Mongol oppression, and succinct but exact data on Kiev rulers within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. For instance, on sheet 796 archiman-

For the author of *The Latukhin Book of Degrees*, the main source of information about pre-Russian Siberia, its history and geography, as well as about Siberia joining Russia was the manuscript *On Siberia and on Taking Over Siberia*, written in 1636 by the clerk (djak) of the archbishop of Tobolsk

Savva Yesipov. Analogous data but supplied with illustrations were contained in another Siberian manuscript, the *Kungur chronicle*, written in the late 16th c. by a participant of Yermak's campaign. Dwelling on the Siberian rivers, peoples living along them and their means of transport is the 9th section of the *Kungur Chronicle*. As it was common for Old Russian maps, the South was depicted on the top and the North, at the bottom. History was related in a characteristic folk style: «Yermak heard from many inhabitants of the Chusovaya River area about Siberia, whose lord is the tsar, that behind the Urals the rivers flow in two directions, to Rus' and to Siberia: the rivers Nitsa, Tagil and Tura fall into the Tobol, and the people living along them are the Mansi (Vogul), who travel by deer; along the Tura and the Tobol live the Tatars, who go by boat and on horse.

The Tobol falls into the Irtysh; and close to its estuary many Tatars live; and the Irtysh feeds into the Ob, and the Ob flows into the sea through two estuaries, and living along it are the Khanty (Ostiaky) and the Samoyeds, who travel by deer and dog and feed on fish; and in the steppes of Kalmykia live the Mongols and the Cossack horde, who ride camels and feed on cattle.

From: (*Brief Siberian Chronicle (Kungur)*, 2003)



drite Tikhon thought it appropriate to place the following statement: “In the same year (1555) Kiev’s governor was Grigoriy Aleksandrovich Chodkiewich.”

Nor did the author neglect the heated topic of struggle between Moscow and Lithuania for East Slav lands, using data contained in both Russian Chronicles and *The Book of Degrees* and in the brief texts of *Synopsis*. Curiously, unrestrained praise for the “tsars of Vladimir, Moscow

and all Russia” agrees well with similar praise sung to the “tsars of Galicia and all Russia.” The author does not even make an attempt at explaining this controversial information, leaving this uneasy work for the future generations of historians.

Notably Tikhon Makarievsky pays homage to the famous ruler Daniel of Galicia (died in 1264), Prince of Volhynia and Galicia and the first king of Rus’. There is an embarrassment for the 17th-century Orthodox author though: Daniel has received his royal title on behalf of the Roman Pope. In excuse, Tikhon writes that the king cannot be reproached for this because “he has strengthened the Orthodox Belief and preserved it to his last day.”

Heading east

Continuing the important geopolitical topic brought up in *The Latukhin Book of Degrees* is the story of Russia’s advance eastward, including to Siberia.

Dwelling on the rule of Ivan IV, archimandrite Tikhon relates the history of Kazan and Astrakhan Tatars, annexing their lands to Russia, and gives a detailed account of the main Siberian chronicle written in 1636 by Savva Yesipov, a clerk (*djak*) of Tobolsk archbishop, about pre-Russian Siberia, its history, geography and its annexation to Russia. In the following chapters the story of Yermak’s campaign proceeds to the account of establishing Tobolsk by governor D. Chulkov and setting up other Siberian towns, i.e. the beginning of systematic development of the trans-Urals lands. In this way, the all-Russia work integrating the main paths of national history included Russian and aboriginal Siberia.

Of great interest is the reconsideration of a few important events of Great Russia’s history under the influence of the famous *Story of the Khanate of Kazan*. The unknown author of *The Kazan Story*, Russian by origin, lived in Kazan from 1532 for twenty years as a captive turned to the Muslim faith, and only when Kazan was attacked by Russians in 1551, he left the town, returned to Orthodoxy and joined the troops of Ivan the Terrible. Long before that, he had had an opportunity to go back to Rus’ but ignored it for some reason. Some historians believe that he performed secret service at the Kazan court. Whatever the case, he managed to collect an impressive corpus of local sources narrating the Tatar history over 300 years and to offer it to Russian readers. Even though his attitude is pro-Moscow, he narrated quite a few versions and facts contradicting the account of events found in Russian chronicles and in *The Book of Degrees*.

Here is just one example. At the very height of the internal war for the Moscow throne that broke out in the

second quarter of the 15th c. between Grand Prince Vasily II, grandson of Dmitry Donskoi, and princes of Galich of Mersk, the latter received decisive help from the Tatar khan Ulu-Mukhamed, the famed founder of the Khanate of Kazan. As a result of a Tatar raid, Vasily II was captured and blinded. Naturally, all the Russian sources written at the time of Vasily, who eventually won, and at the time of his descendants characterized negatively both the Russian enemies of the Grand Prince and their Tatar allies. The author of *The Kazan Story*, however, lays the blame not on the Tatar khan, in the first place, though he calls him a “wicked snake,” but on the Moscow Grand Prince and his counsel. When Ulu-Mukhamed abjectly pleaded with Vasily II not to breach the peace treaty concluded between them before and not to attack the insignificant Tatar forces under the town Belev, Vasily ignored his pleas and sent a big army against him. On that occasion, God was not on the side of the Russians, despite their tenfold superior manpower. *The Kazan Story*, and archimandrite Tikhon along with it, attributes this sad outcome for the Russians to the fact that Vasily II violated the oath sworn by him to the Tatar khan at the threshold of an Orthodox church and enforced by addressing the single god of Orthodox and Muslim believers: “And if I do evil to you, as you suppose, offending your love to me, when you fed me like a beggarly suppliant, let *your* God who is *my* God kill me, in Him I believe” (italicized by us – N.P.).

In the years when *The Latukhin Book of Degrees* was written, quite a few large Muslim peoples had joined the Russian crown. Looking almost two hundred years back, archimandrite Tikhon unambiguously states, “The submission and humility of the pagan tsar overcame the power of Grand Prince for he shouldn’t have violated the oath he had administered to the pagans.”

The 85th section of the Kungur Chronicle reports about how the tsar Ivan the Terrible received news of Siberia joining his state and how he awarded the Cossacks for it: “Then we went to the Moscow Tsardom to the pious tsar and grand prince and our sovereign Ivan Vasilievich of all Russia and handed him the note and the tribute. When the sovereign heard that the Siberian Tsardom had been taken, its tsar defeated, and its people, the Tatars, the Mansi and the Khanty brought under the tsars’s rule, and tribute collected and sent together with chieftains and others, he rejoiced and glorified God and sent great gifts to Yermak, two suits of armor and a vessel and his own fur coat. The chieftains, after having been treated, soon returned to Yermak with a deed of gift and a merit scroll, by the same road they had taken on the way to Moscow”.
From: (*Brief Siberian Chronicle (Kungur)*, 2003)

