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The Mention of Voronezh in the Accounts of Batu Khan’s Invasion

Abstract

The present study offers a perspective on the problem of identifying the status of the chronicle-mentioned Voronezh (“chronicle Voronezh”), based on a textological analysis of chronicle sources and employing a statistical method. In particular, the chronicle texts are examined with regard to the use of prepositions in different contexts referring to specific geographical objects. The initial premise is the hypothesis that additional arguments in favor of identifying the chronicle Voronezh may be derived from the contextual use of prepositions in relation to other cities, fortresses, and settlements mentioned in the Novgorod First Chronicle. The study is grounded in the proposition that a correlation may be established between the nature of a geographical object and the preposition used to denote it.

Proceeding from the postulate that comparative statistical analysis possesses genuine scholarly potential for resolving the issue of the chronicle Voronezh, the authors establish that the two most frequently used prepositions referring to inhabited localities (“в” and

“на”) occur in the chronicle with geographical objects of this type (cities, fortresses, etc.) thirteen and two times more often, respectively, than with rivers. Given that the Novgorodian chronicler or editor employs standard prepositions typically associated with cities when referring to Voronezh, the authors conclude that identifying the chronicle Voronezh as a city (possibly a fortress) is justified.

Quantitative data on the use of prepositions provide an objective basis for determining the status of geographical objects mentioned in the chronicles. It is important to note that the proposed method does not preclude the necessity of a comprehensive approach to the study of the chronicle Voronezh, including archaeological research, cartographic analysis, and comparison with other written sources.

The proposed approach opens new prospects for the study of toponymy and the historical geography of medieval Rus'. Statistical analysis of prepositional constructions may be successfully applied to other chronicle codices and documentary materials, thereby refining the localization and status of various settlements and natural features.

Keywords:

Russian chronicle writing; Voronezh; The Voronezh River; Mongol conquest; Textual analysis

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Russian chronicle writing constitutes a body of evidence on the history of Ancient Rus' and the period of dependence of the Russian principalities on the khans of the Jochid Ulus/Ulus of Jochi (the Golden Horde). At the same time, it is often exclusively the Russian chronicles that preserve layers of information reflecting reports of a unique (singular) nature concerning various processes and phenomena in the development of Eastern European communities during the period under consideration.

Among such singular pieces of evidence are the first mentions of settlements — towns — and, in particular, Voronezh, whose name appears twice in Russian chronicles: first under the year 1177 and then in the account of Batu's invasion of Rus' under 1237.

The problem of the first mentions of settlements (towns) in Russian chronicles is directly connected with identifying the stages of the historical process in a given region. The question of the functioning of the "chronicle" Voronezh remains a matter of debate in historical scholarship. Thus, in his work *The Chronicle Voronezh: History of Its Study: A Collection of Materials and Research*, the Voronezh local historian and professor of the Department of Russian History at the Faculty of History of Voronezh State University, G.N. Mokshin, notes that more than four hundred scholarly publications addressed this issue between 1771 and 2022¹.

The essence of the problem may be defined as follows: in the corpus of Russian chronicles under the years 1177 and 1237, there are two references to a geographical object called Vorone-

¹ Летописный Воронеж: история изучения: сборник материалов и исследований. Воронеж, 2022. С. 5. (hereafter — Летописный Воронеж...); Мокшин Г.Н. «Летописный Воронеж» XII-XIII вв.: итоги и перспективы изучения // Донецкие чтения 2024: образование, наука, инновации, культура и вызовы современности. Материалы IX Международной научной конференции. Донецк, 2024. С. 130–132.

zh, whose name appears in various forms (Вороножь, Воронажь, Воронаж, Воронежъ, Воронежь, Вороняжь, etc.). This makes it difficult to determine precisely the nature of the object indicated in the texts. The first reference is associated with Prince Yaropolk Rostislavich's attempt to hide in the vicinity of this place (or in the place itself) after his defeat on the Koloksha River; the second relates to the first military clash between the forces of the Ryazan Principality and the Mongol-Tatars during Batu's invasion.

In determining the meaning that the authors of the chronicle texts invested in the concept of Voronezh, two major approaches can be distinguished: one insists on understanding the object as a town, while the other considers that the object was something else. Supporters of the first approach can, in turn, be divided into apologists for the existence of the town and skeptics who, while continuing to speak of Voronezh as a town (or settlement in general), deny the validity of the theory that it existed at the time of the chronicle references.

Among the apologists are M.M. Shcherbatov, V.N. Tatishchev, E.A. Bolkhovitinov, M.I. Slavinsky, M.P. Pogodin, M.M. Skia-da, S.E. Zverev, I.S. Abramov, M.N. Tikhomirov, V.P. Zagorovsky, A.D. Pryakhin, A.R. Berenov, and N.S. Sapelkin. Their argumentation is based on trust in the chronicle texts, linguistic research, and a positive interpretation of fragmentary archaeological data².

Among the skeptics, it is necessary to mention N.M. Karamzin, S.M. Solovyov, M.A. Germanov, P.P. Semyonov, S.N. Vvedensky, A.N. Moskalenko, A.V. Kozhemyakin, E.A. and Yu.E. Pulver, A.O. Amelkin, A.Z. Vinnikov, and A.N. Akinshin. This current emerged in opposition to the group of apologists due to doubts about the legitimacy of trusting the chronicle texts. Their position is reinforced by the absence in the vicinity of Voronezh of any significant archaeological finds that might attest to the

² Летописный Воронеж... С. 5.

existence of a large urban settlement in the twelfth–thirteenth centuries³.

The second approach generally proposes that the chronicle-mentioned Voronezh be understood as a river, a forest (or forests), or a large natural-geographical region. Such theories were advanced by N.I. Nadezhdin and K.A. Nevolin, D.I. Ilovaisky, N.P. Barsov, G.M. Veselovsky, A.N. Nasonov, A.L. Mongait, A.Z. Vinnikov (in his joint works with A.T. Sinyuk), P.A. Popov, A.V. Kozhemyakin in his later works, M.V. Tsybin, S.I. Andreev, and A.D. Mayorova. Their position is essentially super-skeptical, based on a broad distrust of all available evidence. It should be added that the above-mentioned concepts and groups rely on the same body of source material.

A certain summation of scholarly reflection was presented in P.A. Popov's monograph *Voronezh: An Ancient Word and Ancient Cities, as well as Ancient Forests and Ancient Rivers of Russia*, published in 2016. The researcher substantiates the view that the chronicles refer neither to a river nor to a town, but to a natural-geographical region (for example, forests), a concept he further expands into that of a natural-historical region⁴.

Undoubtedly, the resolution of the problem of the existence of the “chronicle town” of Voronezh directly depends on the texts of the sources that preserve accounts of the events.

At the same time, about fifteen written monuments transmitting chronicle information, according to G.N. Mokshin, reproduce the texts of the Laurentian and Hypatian Chronicles (Codices), and only the Nikon Chronicle provides some additional details⁵. The latter, as a source, is disputed among Russian scholars, and the most substantiated view appears to be that of B.M. Kloss, who

³ Ibid. С. 5–6.

⁴ Попов П. А. Воронеж: древнее слово и древние города. Воронеж, 2016. С. 9–17, 126–127.

⁵ Летописный Воронеж... С. 14.

argues that a significant portion of its unique additional evidence is the product of sixteenth-century political mystifications aimed at strengthening the grand-princely authority⁶.

Under these conditions of limited informational material, the interpretation of each word — including prepositions — acquires special significance. However, according to G.N. Mokshin, “the absence in the texts of clarification such as ‘town’ or ‘river’, as well as the possibility of using the word ‘Voronezh’ with the preposition ‘он’ or without any preposition at all, speaks in favor of the idea that the chronicler had in mind a natural-historical region”. The author further explains: “Although the version involving a *volost* is gaining popularity, in our view it is less well-founded. No one needs to prove the existence in the twelfth century of a river named ‘Voronezh’. But the presence here of a *volost* center remains a big question, although it has already generated a considerable body of literature⁷”.

Nevertheless, in the opinion of the authors of the present article, the internal regularity of chronicle texts in their selection of prepositions accompanying geographical objects may help clarify the status of such an object and, in particular, that of Voronezh.

Observations of the texts show that, to denote human interaction with rivers, the chronicles most often use the prepositions ‘на’, ‘по’, and ‘в’, the latter always meaning the placement of some object into the waters of a river or its extraction from them — that is, used in the sense of “into”. In none of the examined chronicles is there anything placed “into” Voronezh; however, the preposition ‘в’ is consistently used with it, with the exception of one

⁶ Клосс Б. М. Никоновский свод и русские летописи XVI–XVII вв. М., 1980. С. 186–189.

⁷ Мокшин Г.Н. Первое упоминание слова «Воронеж» в древнерусских летописях под 1177 годом: к спорам о предлоге // История государства через историю провинции: проблемы и перспективы развития. Материалы Всероссийской научно-практической конференции. Курск, 2024. С. 154.

instance in the Novgorod First Chronicle. Thus, judging by the identified patterns, the term in the chronicles does not denote a river.

This circumstance, with new argumentation, confirms P.A. Popov's view that the entries under 1177 and 1237 in the chronicles do not refer specifically to the Voronezh River⁸.

In his work *On Ancient Voronezh and the Word 'Voronezh'*, V.P. Zagorovsky presented a survey of chronicle reports concerning Voronezh⁹. However, the researcher did not set as his task a comparison of chronicle accounts with one another in relation to the specific features of chronicle traditions.

It should be noted that each chronicle or chronicle compilation, by the time of its final redaction, represents a complete and coherent work with its own ideological design, composition, and content subordinated to that design. For this reason, the appearance or absence of particular reports in chronicle monuments cannot be accidental (except in rare cases of mechanical compilation of heterogeneous texts). In this connection, the correlation of chronicle evidence about Voronezh – both within individual chronicle monuments and in comparison across different chronicle compilations – acquires research significance.

It has been established that the chronicle monuments preserving references to Voronezh in connection with the events of 1177 include¹⁰: the Laurentian Chronicle (“Бжавши в Вороножь”;

⁸ Кузнецов Е.С. Летописные свидетельства о реке Воронеж: особенности упоминаний // Актуальные вопросы общества, науки и образования: сборник статей XXIII Международной научно-практической конференции. Пенза, 2025. С. 105.

⁹ Мокшин Г.Н. В.П. Загоровский как исследователь вопроса о древнем Воронеже // Вестник Воронежского государственного университета. Серия: История. Политология. Социология. 2025. № 1. С. 69–74.

¹⁰ Загоровский В.П. О древнем Воронеже и слове «Воронеж». Изд. 2-е, исправ. и доп. Воронеж: Изд-во ВГУ, 1977. 104 с.

parchment copy of 1377¹¹), the Hypatian Chronicle (“Ѡхавше Воронажъ”; Hypatian copy of the first quarter of the fifteenth century¹²), the Radziwiłł Chronicle (“И ехавше в Воронажъ”; manuscript of the late fifteenth century¹³); the Simeon Chronicle (“Ѡхаше въ Воронежъ”; sixteenth-century copy¹⁴), and the Resurrection Chronicle (“и шедшее въ Воронежъ”; copies of the second half of the sixteenth century¹⁵).

Accounts mentioning Voronezh only in connection with Batu's invasion in 1237 are preserved in the following documents: the Novgorod First Chronicle, senior recension (parchment Synodal copy of the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries: “выѠхаша противу имъ на Воронажъ”¹⁶) and junior recension (Commission copy of the mid-fifteenth century: “выидоша противу имъ в Воронажъ”¹⁷); the Novgorod Fourth Chronicle¹⁸ (fifteenth century: “выѠхаша противу имъ в Воронажъ”¹⁹); the Sofia First Chronicle (fifteenth century: “и сѠхаша противу имъ в Вороняжъ”²⁰); the Vologda-Perm Chronicle (late fifteenth–first half of the sixteenth century: “и сѠхаша противу имъ въ Вороняжъ”²¹); the Novgorod Chronicle according to the P.P. Dubrovsky Copy (sixteenth century: “ВыѠхаша противу имъ в Воронажъ”²²); as well as

¹¹ Полное собрание русских летописей (hereafter — ПСРА). Т. I: Laurentian Chronicle. М., 1997. Стб. 385.

¹² ПСРА. Т. II: Hypatian Chronicle. М., 1998. Стб. 606.

¹³ ПСРА. Т. XXXVIII. С. 146.

¹⁴ ПСРА. Т. XVIII. Radziwiłł Chronicle. Л., Наука. 1989. С. 25.

¹⁵ ПСРА. Т. VII: Resurrection Chronicle. СПб., 1856; М., 2001. С. 94.

¹⁶ Novgorod First Chronicle of the Senior and Junior Recensions (НПА). М.; Л., 1950. С. 74.

¹⁷ НПА. С. 286.

¹⁸ The list is given in the chronology of manuscript copies.

¹⁹ ПСРА. Т. IV. Ч. 1: Novgorod Fourth Chronicle. М., 2000. С. 215.

²⁰ ПСРА. Т. V. Вып. 1. Л., 1925. С. 211.

²¹ ПСРА. Т. XXVI: Vologda-Perm Chronicle. М.; Л., 1959. С. 71.

²² ПСРА. Т. XLIII: Novgorod Chronicle (according to the P. P. Dubrovsky Copy). М.: Языки славянской культуры, 2004. С. 90.

in the Belarusian-Lithuanian chronicle tradition, for example in the Suprasl copy (first half of the sixteenth century: “выехавшее пртивоу имъ во Воронѣже”²³).

The chronicle monuments in which both references to Voronezh are preserved include: the Yermolin Chronicle (1177: “и шедше въ Вороножь, и изымаша его, ведоша въ Володимерь”²⁴; 1237: “и выидоша противу ихъ в Вороножь”²⁵; chronicle of the late fifteenth century), the Nikon Chronicle Compilation (1177: “отбѣжа бо князь Ярополкъ Ростиславичъ въ Вороножь, и тамо прехожаше отъ града во градъ, от многие печали и скорби не вѣдый себя камо сядѣти. И тако шедшее въ Вороножь, изымаша его, и ведоша въ Володимерь”²⁶; 1237: “И тако начяша совокуплятися, и выидоша противу ихъ въ Вороножь, хотяху брань створити съ ними тамо”; in the Tolstoy sory: “не пустячи ихъ къ городу, выидоша противу имъ въ Вороножь”²⁷ – the largest monument of sixteenth-century Russian chronicle writing); the Lviv Chronicle (1177: “И ѣхаше въ Воронижь, яша его, и посадиша въ Володимери въ порубѣ ко прочимъ”²⁸; 1237: “выидоша противу их в Вороножь”²⁹; sixteenth-century chronicle), the Moscow Chronicle Compilation (1177: “И шедшее въ Вороножь яша его сами и приведоша въ Володимерь и всадиша его къ прочим князем в порубѣ”³⁰; 1237: “выидоша противу их в Вороножь”³¹; sixteenth-century manuscript), and the Kholmogory Chronicle (1177: “Рязанцы

²³ ПСРА. Т. XVII: West Russian Chronicles. М., 2008. С. 17.

²⁴ ПСРА. Т. XXIII: Yermolin Chronicle. М., 2004. С. 52.

²⁵ ПСРА. Т. XXIII. С. 74.

²⁶ ПСРА. Т. X: Nikon Chronicle. М., 1965; 2000. С. 5.

²⁷ ПСРА. Т. X. С. 105.

²⁸ ПСРА. Т. XX: Lviv Chronicle. СПб., 1910. Ч. 1. С. 133.

²⁹ ПСРА. Т. XX. Ч. 1. С. 156.

³⁰ ПСРА. Т. XXV: Moscow Chronicle Compilation of the Late 15th Century М.; Л. 1949. С. 89.

³¹ ПСРА. Т. XXV. С. 126.

же, здумавше, реша: ‘Братья наша погибла в чюжем князи’. И ехаша в Воронеж, яша его, посадиша в Володимире в погреб”³²; 1237: “Князь же резанский Юрье Ингваревичь брат его Александр муромские князи и пронские, хотяще брань створити, и выидоша противу их в Воронеж”³³; copy of the late sixteenth century).

Thus, we see that the earliest chronicle monuments – the Laurentian and Hypatian Chronicles – preserved a reference to Voronezh only under the year 1177. The chronicle tradition of Northeastern Rus’, deriving from the protograph of the Laurentian Chronicle, retained this testimony down to the later chronicle writing in the form of the Resurrection Chronicle.

The mention of Voronezh under 1237 in connection with Batu’s invasion is preserved mainly in monuments of Novgorodian origin. The exceptions are the Vologda-Perm and Suprasl Chronicles. However, the section of these manuscripts relevant to our inquiry was influenced by Novgorodian chronicle writing³⁴, which does not allow them to be excluded from the general corpus of monuments. Moreover, there are solid grounds for believing that the Novgorod First Chronicle (which served as the basis for subsequent Novgorodian chronicle writing) preserved a narrative of Ryazan origin, close to *The Tale of the Destruction of Ryazan by Batu*, but not containing the anachronisms that abound in the latter text³⁵.

³² ПСРА. Т. XXXIII: Kholmogory Chronicle. Л., 1977. С. 54.

³³ ПСРА. Т. XXXIII. С. 66.

³⁴ Лурье Я. С. Летопись Вологодско-Пермская // Словарь книжников и книжности Древней Руси / <http://lib.pushkinskiydom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4277> (30. 07. 2017. 15:55); Лурье Я. С. Летописи белорусско-литовские (западнорусские) // Словарь книжников и книжности Древней Руси / <http://lib.pushkinskiydom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4269> (30. 07. 2017. 16:00)

³⁵ Лихачев Д. С. Повесть о разорении Рязани // Словарь книжников и книжности Древней Руси / <http://lib.pushkinskiydom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4840> (30. 07. 2017. 15:50)

Voronezh is mentioned twice (under 1177 and 1237) in the late all-Russian compilations (from the late fifteenth century onward). In each of these, there are no textual variations in the use of the word “Voronezh”, which indicates a unified redaction of the relevant chronicle entries. Accordingly, we may state with full justification that the editors of these compilations understood the “Voronezh” mentioned in both instances to refer to the same geographical object — for authors of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there was no distinction between the “Voronezh” mentioned in 1177 and the one mentioned in 1237, sixty years apart. At the same time, in the largest monument of sixteenth-century Russian chronicle writing — the Nikon Chronicle Compilation — Voronezh was regarded as an extensive territory within which one could move from town to town³⁶.

The earliest references to Voronezh must be recognized in the parchment Synodal copy of the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries of the Novgorod First Chronicle (senior recension), in the form “выѣхаша противу имѣ на Ворожажъ”³⁷ (in connection with the events of 1237), and in the parchment copy of 1377 of the Laurentian Chronicle, in the form “ѣхавши в Вороножъ”³⁸ (in connection with the events of 1177).

Thus, the first mention of Voronezh is associated with the invasion of the Mongol-Tatar forces led by Batu and is presented in the Novgorod First Chronicle (senior recension) as follows:

“В лѣто 6746 [1238] ... В то лѣто придоша иноплемьници, глаголемии Татарове, на землю Рязаньскую, множество бещисла, акы пружи; и первое пришедше и стаха о Нузлѣ, и

³⁶ Селезнев Ю. В. Первое и второе упоминание Воронежа: обзор летописных известий // «Воронеж — форпост Российского государства» (к 840-летию первого упоминания г. Воронежа в русском летописании): материалы всероссийской научной конференции. Воронеж, 2017. С. 5–6.

³⁷ НПА. С. 74.

³⁸ ПСРА. Т. I. Стб. 385.

взяша ю, и сташа станомъ ту. И оттолѣ послаша послы своя, жену чародѣицю и два мужа с нею, къ княземъ рязаньскимъ, просяче у нихъ десятины во всемъ: и в людехъ, и въ князехъ, и въ конихъ, во всякомъ десятое. Князи же Рязаньстии Гюрги, Инъгворовъ братъ, Олегъ, Романъ Инъгоровичъ, и Муромьскыи и Проньскыи, не въпустяче къ градомъ, выѣхаша противу имъ на Воронажъ. И рекоша имъ князи: «олна насъ всѣхъ не будетъ, тоже все то ваше будетъ». И оттолѣ пустиша ихъ къ Юрью въ Володимирь, и оттолѣ пустиша о Нухлѣ Татары въ Воронажи. Послаша же рязаньстии князи къ Юрью Володимирьскому, просяче помочи, или самому поити. Юрьи же самъ не поиде, ни послуша князи рязаньскихъ молбы, но самъ хотѣ особъ брань створити. Но уже бяше божию гнѣву не противитися, яко речено бысть дрѣвле Исусу Наугину богомъ; егда веде я на землю обѣтованую, тогда рече: азъ пошлю на ня преже васъ недоумѣние, и грозу, и страхъ, и трепеть. Такоже и преже сихъ отъя господь у насъ силу, а недоумѣние, и грозу, и страхъ, и трепеть вложи в нас за грѣхы наш.»³⁹

In the account of the appearance of Batu's hordes at the borders of the Ryazan Principality, "Воронеж/Воронаж" is mentioned twice: once with the preposition 'на' and once with the preposition 'в'.

Observation of the use of the preposition 'на' in the text of the Novgorod First Chronicle (senior recension) shows that, as an indication of direction in relation to rivers, it is used thirty times⁴⁰.

The indication of direction toward a town is expressed with the preposition 'на' seventy-three times. References to such towns as Torzhok appear twenty-two times⁴¹ in the chronicle text; Luki

³⁹ НПА. С. 74-75.

⁴⁰ Ibid. С. 17, 19, 27, 30, 32, 35-36, 50, 55-56, 62, 64, 73, 75, 80-81, 85-86, 94, 96-97, 100.

⁴¹ Ibid. С. 27, 30, 35-37, 42, 52, 54, 57, 60, 64, 68, 70-71.

–nine times⁴²; Novgorod – eight times⁴³; Suzdal – four times⁴⁴; Pskov (Pleskov) – four times⁴⁵; Moscow – three times⁴⁶; Riga – three times⁴⁷; Kiev – twice⁴⁸; Ryazan – twice⁴⁹; Yaroslavl – twice⁵⁰. The chronicle also contains the directional form “to the town of Копорье” (“на городъ Копорью”)⁵¹.

Thus, within the framework of indicating direction toward a geographical object, the preposition ‘на’ is predominantly used in reference to an inhabited locality, as a rule, a town. Consequently, the author or editor of the senior recension of the Novgorod First Chronicle most likely had in mind a town in his first mention of “Воронеж/Воронаж”.

Further, with regard to the geographical object called “Воронеж/Воронаж”, the author of the Novgorod First Chronicle uses the preposition ‘в’ (“in/to”). The standard context for the use of this preposition is the entry of a certain actor – usually a prince or official – into an inhabited locality. In total, the chronicle text contains 236 such cases, the significant majority of which – 131 instances – refer to Novgorod⁵². Other frequently mentioned locations include: Pskov – 20 times⁵³; Tver⁵⁴

⁴² Ibid.C. 27, 32, 39, 43–44, 52.

⁴³ Ibid.C. 32, 82, 88–89, 99.

⁴⁴ Ibid.C. 23, 27, 35.

⁴⁵ Ibid.C. 25, 40, 66, 85.

⁴⁶ Ibid.C. 96–98.

⁴⁷ Ibid.C. 66–67.

⁴⁸ Ibid.C. 25, 28.

⁴⁹ Ibid. C. 71, 96.

⁵⁰ Ibid.C. 75.

⁵¹ Ibid.C. 78.

⁵² Ibid.C. 16, 19, 21, 23, 25, 30, 32–45, 49–58, 60–61, 64–66, 69–74, 77–100.

⁵³ Ibid.C. 23, 29, 65–66, 71–72, 77, 79–80, 82, 85, 87, 94, 97–98, 100.

⁵⁴ Ibid.C. 55, 84, 89, 92, 94, 96, 98.

and Torzhok ⁵⁵– 8 times each; Pereyaslavl — 7 times⁵⁶; Ladoga⁵⁷ and Chernigov ⁵⁸– 6 times each; Galich — 5 times⁵⁹; Kiev⁶⁰, Medvezhya Golova⁶¹, and Toropets ⁶²– 4 times each. Frequent references to political centers close to Novgorod and to towns in general — Pskov, Tver, Torzhok, Ladoga, Medvezhya Golova, Toropets — are unsurprising, whereas the relatively frequent mentions of foreign capitals — Pereiaslavl, Chernigov, and Kiev, in precisely that order of frequency — are more noteworthy.

All other instances of the use of this preposition are isolated (settlements mentioned up to three times): Bern⁶³, Bogolyubovo⁶⁴, Bryn⁶⁵, Vladimir⁶⁶, Koporye⁶⁷, Korelsky Gorod⁶⁸, Lyuderev⁶⁹, Opoka⁷⁰, Orekhov⁷¹, Peremyshl⁷², Pechory⁷³, Polotsk⁷⁴, Radilov⁷⁵,

⁵⁵ Ibid.C. 39, 55, 68, 82, 92, 95–96, 99.

⁵⁶ Ibid.C. 56, 70–72, 78, 96.

⁵⁷ Ibid.C. 29–31, 65, 98.

⁵⁸ Ibid.C. 67–71.

⁵⁹ Ibid.C. 53, 59, 62, 74.

⁶⁰ Ibid.C. 53, 74.

⁶¹ Ibid.C. 72–73, 79.

⁶² Ibid.C. 52, 77, 79.

⁶³ Ibid. C. 48.

⁶⁴ Ibid.C. 34.

⁶⁵ Ibid.C. 68.

⁶⁶ Ibid.C. 56, 74, 84.

⁶⁷ Ibid.C. 78.

⁶⁸ Ibid.C. 94.

⁶⁹ Ibid.C. 95.

⁷⁰ Ibid.C. 99.

⁷¹ Ibid.C. 100.

⁷² Ibid.C. 60.

⁷³ Ibid.C. 38

⁷⁴ Ibid.C. 77, 84.

⁷⁵ Ibid.C. 56.

Riga⁷⁶, Rome⁷⁷, Rusa⁷⁸, Smolensk⁷⁹, Tesva⁸⁰, Chalcedon (Khalkidon)⁸¹, Khodynitsy⁸², Khoruzhka⁸³, Tsargrad (Constantinople)⁸⁴, and Yuryev⁸⁵.

It should be particularly noted that in various passages of the senior recension of the Novgorod First Chronicle there are narrative episodes in which different prepositions relating to towns are used within a single sentence. Thus, under the year 1211 we read: “посла князь Мстислав Дмитра Якуниця на Лукы съ новгородци города ставить, а самъ идее на Тържъкъ блюсть волости, исъ Търожку идее въ Торопъчъ, исъТоропца идее на Лукы и съняся съ новгородъци; а лучяномъ да || князя Володимира Пльсковъскаго»⁸⁶. A little later, in 1228, the source contains the following information: «К Колываню есте ходивъше<...> а сами поидосте в Новъгородъ, <...> а у Кеси тако же, а у Медвѣже головѣ тако же»⁸⁷ и «прияти суть послѣ новгородъстиив Смоленскѣ, бѣ бо тогда в Брыну || с сыномъ, и поиде в борзѣх на Тържъкъ, и приде на върбницю в Тържъкъ”.⁸⁸

These details are all the more significant because Voronezh is mentioned in precisely the same form in the chronicle under 1237: “не въпустяче къ градомъ, выѣхаша противу имъ на Воронажъ» and «къ Юрю въВолодимиръ, и оттолѣ пустиша

⁷⁶ Ibid.C. 74.

⁷⁷ Ibid.C. 46.

⁷⁸ Ibid.C. 43–44, 89.

⁷⁹ Ibid.C. 31, 60, 67.

⁸⁰ Ibid.C. 72.

⁸¹ Ibid.C. 77, 92.

⁸² Ibid.C. 51.

⁸³ Ibid.C. 39.

⁸⁴ Ibid.C. 46.

⁸⁵ Ibid.C. 61, 73.

⁸⁶ Ibid. C. 52.

⁸⁷ Ibid. C. 66.

⁸⁸ Ibid. C. 67–68.

о Нухлѣ Татары въ Ворожажи”.⁸⁹ Here we see that in the entries for 1211 and 1228, specific towns are named — this fact may serve as a basis for the theory that the entry for 1237 likewise refers to a specific town, Voronezh. In total, aside from the cases mentioned above, the chronicle contains only eight more references of the same format, which gives grounds to regard the identified tendency, and the theory based upon it, as at least plausible.

Thus, an analysis of the chronicle account of Batu's invasion of Rus mentioning “Voronezh” makes it possible to suppose that the compiler or editor of the senior recension of the Novgorod First Chronicle understood the named object to be an inhabited locality, most likely a town.

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Conflict of interests

The authors declare no relevant conflict of interests.

⁸⁹ Ibid. C. 74.



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