

Contents

List of Illustrations and Maps	xi
Acknowledgements	xiii
Abbreviations	xv
Glossaries	xviii
Notes on Spelling and Terminology	xxix
Introduction	1
Novgorod the Great and its Place in Rus' History	
The City's Geography, Administration, and Political Institutions	
Organization of the Study	
Methodology and Sources	
Historiographic Issues	
Chapter One: The Bishop in Theory	31
Introduction	
The Origin of Episcopal Theory	
Biblical Sources	
Apostolic Sources	
Patristic Sources	
Ecumenical Councils and Local Synods of the East	
The View of the Bishop in the Rus' Church and the Eparchy	
Chapter Two: The Archbishops and the Rus' Church	47
Introduction	
The Title of Archbishop in the Orthodox Church	

The Archbishops and the Metropolitans	
Luka, Nifont, and the Defense of Canon	
Law and Tradition	
From the Disputed Archiepiscopate (1210-	
1229) to the Death of Vasilii Kalika	
Worsening Archiepiscopal-Metropolitan Rela-	
tions after 1352	
Metropolitan Kiprian and Novgorod	
Novgorod's Absence from Momentous Church	
Events	
Novgorod within the Rus' Church	
Conclusion	
Chapter Three: The Archeparchy	77
Defenders of Orthodoxy: Paganism	
Defenders of Orthodoxy: The Catholic Crusades	
Defenders of Orthodoxy: Heresy	
Episcopal Prerogatives	
Church Consecrations	
Teaching and Preaching	
The Sacraments	
Administration of the Archeparchy	
Pastoral Visits	
The Parish Structure in the Fifths	
Relations with Pskov	
The Ecclesiastical Courts	
The Monasteries	
Conclusion	
	127
Chapter Four: Election	
Absence of a Background	
Ecclesiastical Election	
Episcopal Election in the Orthodox Churches	
The Pool of Candidates and the Role of the	
Monasteries in Elections	
The Evolution of Episcopal Election and the	
Origin of Election by Lot	

The Consecration of the Archbishop-elect	
Conclusion	
Chapter Five: Politics	159
Introduction	
The Bishop in Politics: Divergent Catholic and Orthodox Viewpoints	
The Western Episcopate: Princes and Warriors	
The Eastern Episcopate	
The Archbishops' Unique Position in Politics	
The Archbishop as Ambassador	
The Archbishop as Domestic Peacemaker	
The Archbishop as Civil and Military Builder	
The Detinets	
Around the City of Novgorod	
Beyond Novgorod	
The Archbishop in Novgorod's Civil Administra- tion	
Conclusion	
Chapter Six: The Economics of the House of Holy Wisdom	193
Introduction: Novgorod's Importance in the Economic Life of Rus'	
The Archbishops' Fabled Wealth	
The Archiepiscopal Administration	
Expenses	
Personnel	
Sources of Income	
Princely Charters	
Land	
Fines and Court Fees	
Other Sources of Income	
Conclusion	

Chapter Seven: The Archbishops and Rus' Culture	225
Introduction	
Religion and Novgorodian Culture	
I. Archiepiscopal Cultural Patronage	
A. Architecture	
1. The Cathedral of Holy Wisdom	
2. Church Patronage	
3. Cross-cultural Ties	
B. Literary and Artistic Patronage	
1. The Archbishops' Scriptorium	
2. The Archbishops and the Novgorodian Chron- icles	
3. Icons and the Decorative Arts	
II. The Archbishops as Cultural Subjects	
A. The Archbishops' Sainly Cults	
B. The Archbishops in Legend	
Conclusion	
Conclusion	275
Appendix	282
Notes	287
Works Cited	404
Index	467

Introduction



1. Upper register of the Mid-15th c. Novgorodian Battle with the Suzdali-ans icon, here depicting Archbishop Il'ia/Joann presiding over the procession with the Icon of the Virgin of the Sign from the Trading Side of the city across the Volkhov River towards the Cathedral (Sophia) Side in 1169/70.

A history of the medieval Novgorodian archiepiscopal office needed to be written for several reasons. The episcopal office is a key one in the church, the most important institution in the medieval world, and the bishops and archbishops of Novgorod one of the most significant churchmen in the Rus' church, with some scholars even contending that the office was second only to the metropolitanate in importance. A history of the office advances our understanding of the Eastern episcopate and Eastern Christianity as it formed and grew in the Eastern Europe context. It reveals how bishops related to one another within the ecclesiastical metropolis (province) and across the broader Orthodox Church, how they interacted with other institutions outside the church, like the princes or the city authorities, how they related to the Western Christian and pagan communities around them, and clarifies the important contributions they made to religious and secular culture, including to the arts, architecture, hagiography, and historiography.

Greater understanding of the office also adds to our knowledge of Novgorod the Great's place in the history of Rus' and later Russia. The city was one of the key political, religious and ecclesiastical, cultural, economic, and commercial centers of Rus', the "Father of Rus' cities" just as Kyiv was the "Mother of Rus' cities,"¹ so that a better understanding of the office of archbishop, who was also as a key figure in the political, judicial, social, and economic life of the city, and of Rus' more broadly, seems natural and indispensable to a fuller understanding of the history of the city, of Rus', of Eastern Slavdom, and of the Eastern church.

The available evidence points to the Novgorodian archbishops being, perhaps, the preeminent patrons of the arts, architecture, chronicle-writing and the copying of important religious texts and other documents in Rus', including saints' lives and even folklore. As such, they were vital figures in the transmission of the history, culture, and faith of Rus' and later of Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia.

After the fall of Novgorod to Moscow, the Novgorodian bishops continued to play important roles in Muscovite, Imperial, and Soviet church history, so an understanding of where the office came from makes sense. In 1492 (7000 A. M.), when the Orthodox Church thought the world would end, Archbishop Genadii (r. 1485-1504) commissioned the calculation of the date for Easter for the next thousand years. In 1499, he commissioned the first complete edition of the Bible in Slavic.² Metropolitan Makarii, who crowned Ivan IV tsar in 1547 and was one of his chief advisers early in his reign, had been archbishop of Novgorod (r.1526-1542). In Novgorod he commissioned the first editions of the *Velikie Minei Chet'i* and the *Stepennaia Kniga*,³ two of the most important literary works of that period, and instrumental texts in Russian proto-nationalism. Patriarch Nikon, whose reforms in the 1650s led to the Old Believers' schism, had been metropolitan of Novgorod (r.1649-1652). Novgorodian Archbishop Iov (r.1698-1716) consecrated the Cathedral of Peter and Paul in St. Petersburg, the first church in St. Petersburg and the burial place of the Russian emperors. Feofan (Prokopovich) helped Peter the Great establish the Holy Governing Synod and write the "Spiritual Regulations" that governed the imperial church and afterward was made archbishop of Novgorod (r.1725-1736). When he wrote the "Spiritual Regulations," he was

archimandrite of the Khutyn Monastery and assistant to Novgorodian Archbishop Feodosii III (r.1720-1725).⁴ Archbishop Dimitrii (r.1757-1767) crowned Catherine II (r.1762-1796) and served as her spiritual adviser. Archbishop and later Metropolitan Arsenii II (r.1910-1933) was a candidate for the office of patriarch when it was reestablished in 1917.

In the Soviet period, Metropolitan Aleksei of Leningrad and Novgorod was one of the church leaders who met with Stalin in 1943 and oversaw the re-legalization of the church and its revival in the later Stalinist era. As archbishop of Khutyn (r.1926-1932) and metropolitan of Staraja Russa (r.1932-1933), he managed the Novgorodian eparchy during Metropolitan Arsenii's exile to Central Asia. He was then metropolitan of Novgorod for two months in 1933, then metropolitan of Leningrad from 1933 to 1943, and then metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod from 1943 to 1945 when the sees were merged (he famously remained in Leningrad during the Blockade rather than be evacuated). He served as patriarchal locum tenens (*patriarshii mestobliustitel'*), or acting head of the Russian Orthodox Church, upon the death of Patriarch Sergei on May 15, 1944 until he himself was elected patriarch on February 2, 1945.⁵ Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod Nikodim (r. 1967-1978) was the Patriarchal Exarch in Western Europe; Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod Antonii (r.1978-1986) was an important figure in the church's relations with the outside world in the later Soviet period. Finally, Patriarch, Aleksei II (r. 1990-2008), was metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod (1986-1990) before his election as patriarch.⁶ Many of these Imperial and Soviet era prelates were, admittedly absent from Novgorod, residing instead in St. Petersburg/Leningrad, with their ties to Novgorod rather nominal, although, for others, their time in Novgorod or their ties to the city and the archiepiscopal office were formative in their later personalities and policies.

This study focuses on the period from the establishment of the archiepiscopal office in 1165, because this that truly set the office apart from the other bishops in Rus'. It will, however, touch on the bishops prior to 1165 and the role they played in establishing the church and the Novgorodian eparchy in the almost two centuries before the establishment of the archiepiscopate. The study

ends with the Muscovite Conquest of Novgorod in 1478 and the deposition of Archbishop Feofil (r.1470-1480), because these events are thought to have fundamentally changed the nature of the office, though there will be some discussion of archbishops and metropolitans of Novgorod after 1478, contrasting the office before and after 1478 or extrapolating how the earlier archbishops may have acted based on evidence or sources from after the Muscovite conquest.

Novgorod the Great and its Place in Russian History

Before laying out the organization and methodology of this study, a brief sketch of Novgorod the Great, its geography, its political and social structure, and its place in Rus', will help to set the archiepiscopal office in a clearer socio-political and spatial context. A survey of the traditional historiographical view of Novgorod and its archbishops also provides a historiographic context, and lays out the main theories and viewpoints that have dominated the scholarship for much of the last two centuries – and are still found in many general histories even today – and which have to be engaged in order to come to a fuller understanding of the office.

Novgorod is the other great urban center in Rus', known to scholars, but perhaps much less familiar to the broader public.⁷ Kyiv was preeminent from the first organized state system as early as the tenth century up to the Mongol Invasion in the mid-thirteenth century. Moscow dominated the period from the end of the Golden Horde's power in the 1480s to the establishment of the Russian empire in 1700. And since Nikolai Karamzin's *Istoriia gosudarstva rossiiskogo*, published in twelve volumes between 1816 and 1829, set the tone of Russian historiography (or perhaps it was Vasilii Tatishchev's more questionable *Istoriia Rossiiskaia*), there has been a tendency to view much of Rus' and Appanage history in terms of the eventual, inevitable (or even proper) unification or "gathering of the Rus' lands" under Moscow's legitimate authority.⁸ The Russian Empire is essentially Muscovy continued, which in their view was merely the continuation of Kyivan Rus' shifted to the northeast, to Vladimir-on-Kliazma, to Moscow (and eventually to St. Petersburg.) This, of course, is overly-simplistic and ignores the "appanage" principalities of Tver', Smolensk, Riazan, Novgorod and oth-

ers, none of which necessarily thought unification under Moscow was all that legitimate, inevitable, or good. It also ignores western and southern Rus' which eventually became Ukraine and Belarus'. Today, both Kyiv and Moscow are huge, vibrant, modern cities and capitals of their countries. Novgorod the Great is not (nor, might I add, are Smolensk, Tver', Vladimir, Suzdal', or other former princely seats). Novgorod is a relatively small provincial city of about 200,000 people with about fifty lovely medieval churches scattered among drab Soviet-era buildings. The city and oblast gained some notoriety for their considerable economic growth in the 1990s, but in many ways, it seems history has long ago passed it by.

Novgorod was one of the largest cities in medieval North-eastern Europe, although medieval population figures are, of course, quite speculative and imprecise, so that the city's true population is, and probably will forever remain, unknown. Soviet academician and historian Mikhail Tikhomirov based his estimates on the sizes of armies mentioned in the chronicles, or of the number of victims of various plagues, conflagrations, or famines, but ultimately concluded that "It is practically impossible to determine the size of the population of towns in Medieval Rus'."⁹ In the Kyivan period, Novgorod was surpassed in size and importance in Rus' only by Kyiv, and it was eclipsed by Moscow only at the end of the medieval period. Between the relative decline of Kyiv in the late twelfth century (and most certainly by the time of its sack by the Mongols in 1240) and the rise of Moscow in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Rus' fragmented politically into several states known, inaccurately, as "appanage principalities," though they were not appanages in the medieval western sense of that word, but rather independent states.¹⁰ It was during this period, when no one city held sway over all of what had been the Kyivan Rus' state, that Novgorod flourished and gained political independence. Since it never dominated Rus' politically, as did Kyiv, or as Moscow later did, Novgorod never gave its name to a historic period. However, from 1240 into the fifteenth centuries, it was the largest and most significant city in Rus', important politically, as Olga Sevastyanova put it, as "a stepping stone to power in Rus'" and "an object of rivalry" between the grand princes of Vladimir and Lithuania.¹¹ It controlled, albeit loosely, a territory stretching from the border with

Livonia (modern-day Estonia and Latvia) to the Ural Mountains, and from the Barents Sea south to the Volga River, making it one of the largest states in medieval Europe.¹²

Culturally, too, Novgorodian art, architecture, and literature were preeminent during this period, profoundly influencing Rus' and subsequent Muscovite and Russian culture. Novgorod was so important as a center for the arts in the medieval period, that Mikhail Tikhomirov concluded that "In the history of Rus' culture, Novgorod holds a place equal to that of Kyiv;"¹³ Nikolai Dejevsky called the city "the most consistent and prolific center of culture in medieval Russia;"¹⁴ and Viktor Bernadskii asserted that Novgorod's contribution to Russian art was on par with Florence's contribution to Italian art.¹⁵

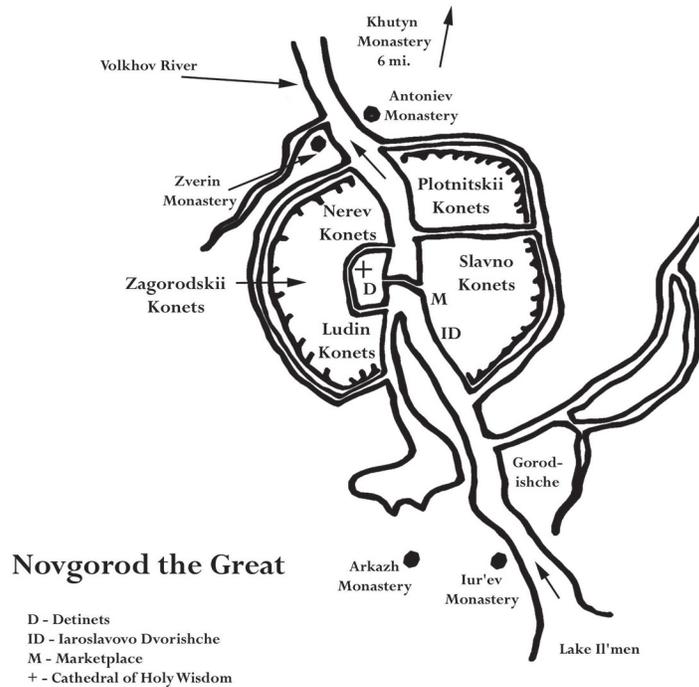
Commercially, the city was the heart of the fur trade in Northern Rus' and the vast wealth from furs and other commodities sold in the market in Novgorod made the city an important source of tribute for the Golden Horde, the western portion of the Mongol Empire established in the 1240s and lasting into the fifteenth century. It made the princes of Moscow wealthy, since it was they who gathered the *dan'* or tribute for the khans in Sarai and, according to some scholars, may have skimmed as much as 6/7ths off the top for themselves.¹⁶ The archbishops and the local boiars gained from this trade, and then lost out when the Hanseatic League cut silver to Novgorod and closed its merchant enclave (Peterhof) in the city for several years (1388-1392; 1443-1448). By the middle of the fifteenth century, trade shifted to Reval and Dorpat. The Muscovite grand princes also began to seize fur-bearing lands along the Dvina in the fifteenth century.¹⁷ The city declined further under Muscovite rule, the wealth from the fur trade going to the grand prince and his boiars. Ivan IV "the Terrible" (r. 1533-1584) brutally attacked the city in 1571 and it was later surpassed by Arkhangelsk as the main western entrepôt into Muscovy.¹⁸ It was finally eclipsed economically, commercially, and ecclesiastically in northwestern Russia by the founding of St. Petersburg in 1703.

Novgorod's economic importance was key to its political and cultural significance, and stems from its geographic location in northwestern Rus' close to Scandinavia and the Baltic. It stands astride the Volkhov River, 150 miles south of where that river de-

bouches into Lake Ladoga, and a mile and a half north of where it flows out of Lake Il'men. The ermine, sable, black marmot, silver fox, and gray squirrel furs – sought-after luxury items in Europe and the Middle East – were brought to Novgorod from the forests that stretched to the northeast of the city along the shores of Lake Ladoga and Lake Onega all the way to the eastern coast of the White Sea and on to the Urals.¹⁹ Other commodities included timber, wax, honey, and walrus tusks (called “fish teeth” in the sources), but fur was always the principal commodity. Sergei Platonov noted the city’s importance as “the main trading point along the route ‘from the Varangians to the Greeks,’” that is, from Scandinavia to Constantinople.²⁰ From Scandinavia, traders traveled across the Gulf of Finland and up the Neva River to Lake Ladoga, then along the southern shore of the lake to the mouth of the Volkhov River and up the river to Novgorod. From there they traveled across Lake Il'men, up the Lovat or other rivers and then over short portages to the Western Dvina River and further south to the upper reaches of the Dnieper River. They then traveled south (around several cataracts) to the river’s mouth, then along the west coast of the Black Sea to Constantinople. Other trade routes passed eastward down the Volga to the Caspian Sea and on to Persia, or westward from Novgorod, through Pskov, and on to the German cities of Livonia or into Lithuania and Poland. From there they linked up with the cities of northern Germany (which later formed the Hanseatic League). Novgorod’s prime location meant that the city was one of the key entrepôts between Rus’ and Western Europe throughout the medieval period. The Lithuanian specialist S. C. Rowell summed up the city’s commercial importance when he called Novgorod not only “the dominant economic and political power” in Northwestern Rus’, but also “the most important trading post in Northern Europe.”²¹

The City’s Geography, Administration, and Political Institutions

Despite its importance to the political, commercial, ecclesiastical, and cultural life of Kyivan and, particularly Appanage, Rus’, medieval Novgorod remains an enigmatic place. Geographically, of course, it is much better understood than it is socially, economically,



or politically. Much remains unknown, and probably unknowable due to the lack of substantial source material from the medieval period and the laconic nature of the sources that are available. But it is still possible to sketch the basic outlines of Novgorod's geography and major institutions, and thereby provide not only a feel for the physical space in which the archbishops lived and worked, but also construct a basic framework of their social, political, cultural and religious environment as well.

Novgorod is bisected by the Volkhov River into sides (*stora*): the Sofia Side on the left or west bank of the river, named for the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom (*Sviataia Sofia* in Russian), and the Market or Trade Side on the opposite bank. In the medieval period a wooden bridge connected the two sides, stretching from the *Detinets* or kremlin, the fortified center of the city in which the cathedral and archbishop's palace stood, across to the market on

the right bank.²² Administratively, the city was divided into five boroughs or “ends” (*kontsy* - sing., *konets*): the Zagorodskii (“Beyond the Fortress”), Nerevskii (Nerev), and the Liudin, also called the Goncharskii or “Potters”, *kontsy* on the Sofia Side; and the Plotnitskii (“Carpenters”), and the Slavienskii (“Slavno” or “Slovene”) *kontsy* on the Market Side. While some scholars have argued that this organization into five *kontsy* occurred only in the 1470s, at the very end of the period under study, others assert that the city originated as three separate settlements which became the Nerev, Liudin, and Slavno *kontsy*, with the Plotnitskii *konets* forming in 1168 and the Zagorodskii in the 1260s.²³

The traditional scholarship contends that each *konets* held its own *veche* (pl *vecha*) or public assembly and that a city-wide *veche* was also convened either in front of the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom, or at Iaroslav’s Courtyard (*Iaroslavovo Dvorishche*) near the Church of St. Nicholas in the Marketplace,²⁴ or sometimes in both places at once. The *veche* or *vecha* then elected the city officials. Starting in the early twelfth century, the *veche* of each *konets* elected a single *posadnik* (pl. *posadniki*; i.e., mayor, so-called because they were originally placed – *posadi* – by the Kyivan grand prince). It also elected an elder (*starosta*) for the *konets*. The city-wide *veche* elected a *tysiatskii* (pl. *tysiatskie*; i.e., thousand-man) beginning in the late twelfth century. He was originally head of the city militia but evolved into a judicial and commercial official over the centuries. Other officials tied to the city’s administration, courts, merchant associations, or who performed functions in the outlying regions and districts of the Novgorodian Land, were apparently either elected by the *veche* or appointed by the higher magistrates, but much remains uncertain as to the actual constitution of the state.²⁵

Originally, there was only one *posadnik* and one *tysiatskii*, but over the course of the centuries the number increased, so that by 1359 there were six *posadniki*, one representing each of the five *kontsy* or boroughs of the city and one acting as “*stepennyi posadnik*,” the senior mayor or mayor of all Novgorod. By 1417, there were twenty-four *posadniki*, and by 1463, there were thirty-six, as well as several *tysiatskie*.²⁶ Former *posadniki* and *tysiatskie* continued to hold influence even after their term of office ended. They and their clans formed the *boiarstvo*, the city’s nobility or aristocracy, or

what was sometimes referred to in the chronicles and other sources as “the lords.” Some scholars have also written of a “Council of Lords” (*sovet gospod*) being established after reforms in the first quarter of the fifteenth century. The current and former *posadniki*, *tysiatskie* and other town notables made up this council that ran the city. But there is very little in the primary sources to indicate such an institutionalization of the aristocracy in Novgorod ever existed. In fact, the “lords” appear to have been more institutionalized in Pskov than they were in Novgorod, although no formal “Council of Lords” is mentioned in sources from either city.²⁷ Indeed, while there is some evidence supporting that *vecha* were convened by the different *kontsy*, and there were multiple *posadniki* and *tysiatskie* created during the course of the Middle Ages, particularly following Posadnik Ontsifor Lukich's reforms in the 1350s, the city's exact political constitution is confused, and the neat and tidy organization and institutions found in the traditional historiography probably never existed. Furthermore, how the various *posadniki*, *tysiatskie*, and other town officials interacted with each other, with other officials and with the *vecha*, or how the offices of prince or, more importantly for our purposes, that of archbishop, fit into Novgorod's constitutional framework, is uncertain.

Dejevsky may have called Novgorod “the most important Riurikid seat after the grand principedom in Kyiv itself,”²⁸ but Novgorod was never the patrimony of a single princely dynasty. Prior to 1136, the grand prince in Kyiv placed a prince in Novgorod, often a son or other close relative, to administer the city on his behalf. The grand princes of Vladimir (almost always the grand princes of Moscow after 1317), was almost always titular prince of Novgorod after the first quarter of the thirteenth century. But from the late eleventh to the late thirteenth century, Novgorod could at times elect or dismiss its princes. Perhaps the *veche* did this, perhaps it was the *sovet gospod*, but the sources do not really tell us. The city usually chose the most powerful prince in Rus', or asked him to send a son or other close relative,²⁹ but after the second quarter of the twelfth century the princely office in Novgorod was a somewhat precarious one relative to the other princes in Rus'. Although individual princes usually held the office for only around a year at a time, the grand princes in Kyiv and Vladimir, and the princes

of Chernihiv, Smolensk, and Halych, dominated the office. It was a lucrative one given the city's commercial wealth, so the princes fought over it and the Novgorodians played one off against another as best they could. This resulted in a somewhat elective princely office that kept a single hereditary dynasty from taking control in Novgorod, but the city never really shook off princely rule.³⁰ The city did establish *de facto* independence or autonomy, but really only in the early fourteenth century, so that by the last quarter of the 1300s it had come to see itself as "His Majesty Lord Novgorod the Great" (*Gospodin Gosudar' Velikii Novgorod*). The city itself was sovereign rather than having any sovereign prince or other ruler over it. This nomenclature not only served to distinguish Novgorod the Great from Nizhnii (or Lower) Novgorod on the Volga, but also to equate it with the Grand Prince (*Velikii Kniaz'* compared to *Velikii Novgorod*).³¹ Independence lasted only until the end of the fifteenth century when, after a series of defeats by Muscovite armies, the local government fell to Grand Prince Ivan III "the Great" (r. 1462-1505) in early 1478. He had been the city's prince since 1462, as had his ancestors for more than 150 years, but he established direct Muscovite rule in the city only in 1478, ending Novgorod's unique political organization.

The archbishop took his place among the prince (or after the fourteenth century, the prince's *namestnik* (pl. *namestniki*), or lieutenant, and the local officials and the *vecha*, in governing the city. Some scholars have called him the head of state, but this term is anachronistic and problematic. There is no indication he was ever formally recognized as such by the Novgorodians, nor did he act alone in a civil capacity except in the rarest of instances.³² Rather, the archbishop, the several *posadniki* and *tysiatskie*, and other members of the *boiarstvo* seem to have formed a collective leadership, although determining the specific purview of the archbishops within this collective is likely impossible. In part, the purpose of this study is to come to a clearer understanding of their place within the city elite and the roles it allowed them to play in the city's economic, political, and cultural life, and in the wider history of Rus'.

It must be stated, and will be reiterated, that the paucity and brevity of the sources likely make an understanding of the precise roles the archbishops played (politically as well as economical-

ly and ecclesiastically) extremely difficult if not impossible. Often what we have are later copies of documents found in sixteenth or seventeenth century *sborniki* (collections) now housed in archives or libraries in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The distance in time between these copies and the events they record, or how correctly or truthfully the copyists or compilers of these *sborniki* understood or recorded the originals they are purportedly based on, call their accuracy into question. Additionally, the chronicles and other sources were sometimes edited, if not by the chroniclers at the time, then later by the grand princely administration to paint the grand princes in a positive light and, subsequently, to paint independent Novgorod as treasonous, disorganized, irreligious or heretical ("Latin"), immoderate or unrestrained. Add to this the fact that the earliest Novgorodian chronicles were often written in an overly-concise style, as if in code; John Fennell wrote how events are "briefly and unsatisfactorily described by the sources," and of "the singular reticence of the chroniclers, who, as is often the case, appear to be deliberately concealing information."³³ What Roy Fletcher observed of the Chronicle of Ireland is also true of the Novgorodian chronicles: "With very rare exceptions, the annalists reserve judgement; they do not indicate the cause for events and do not make causal connections between different events;³⁴ or, as Timofei Guimon put it, they "prefer simply to describe events."³⁵ This may be due, at times, to the fact that the chroniclers were writing about events across town and assumed the reader (and not necessarily a large readership) was already aware of what had happened and which Church of the Transfiguration was being referenced. All this has led scholars to broadly differing interpretations of events.³⁶

Besides the degree of institutionalization of the *veche* and its role in electing the city's officials, there has been a long-standing debate as to its democratic or oligarchic nature. Eighteenth and nineteenth century historians and writers, including Aleksandr Radishchev and Mikhail Lermontov, as well as Vasilii Kliuchevskii, saw Novgorod as a democratic city-state ruled by the *veche*, and some twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholars maintained this general viewpoint.³⁷ It played well among those who opposed tsarist autocracy and clung to the idea that Russia was not foreordained to autocratic, arbitrary rule or lacked any history of popular gover-

nance, or who saw the people (*narod*) as communal and democratic at heart. In this way, the *veche* moved from history to political ideal, myth, and even verse. Thus, Lermontov wrote in 1832:

Hail, sacred cradle of the warrior Slavs!
 Arrived from foreign lands, I gaze
 With rapture at the gloomy walls
 Through which the centuries of change
 Passed harmlessly; where the *veche* bell
 Alone did serve the cause of freedom,
 And then the end of freedom tolled,
 And many a proud soul with it did fall...
 Oh, tell me, Novgorod, are they no more?
 Is not your Volkhov what it was before?³⁸

More recent scholarship rejects this romanticized, democratic view since democracy as we think of it is a modern development. It instead sees Novgorod as run by an oligarchy of land-owning families who controlled the office of mayor (*posadnichestvo*) and other secular offices, a governmental system not unlike the city-states of medieval Germany, Flanders and Northern Italy.³⁹ In this interpretation, either the *veche* was made up of the city elite or, if it included the common people, it was convened in order to give them a sense of participation in the government, or perhaps to build consensus, but was firmly controlled if not manipulated by the oligarchs.⁴⁰

Novgorod's constitution and its oligarchic or democratic nature are beyond the scope of this study. I believe that the city was run by the elite with the common people having some say in matters through popular acclamation or sometimes raucous and violent demonstrations, but believe the sources are simply too scarce, laconic, or contradictory for historians to ever achieve any consensus on Novgorod's precise political make-up. This limits our ability to fully understand the archiepiscopal office, especially its political roles. If the city was democratic, then a bishop, even one elected by the *veche*, seems out of place. And if he did have a place at the political table or exercised political power in a democracy, it would be very different from that wielded by a bishop in an oligarchic

city. And if he was respected and honored – influential rather than wielding true political power – his roles in the city’s political, social, legal, economic, and cultural life would be different as well.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized thematically rather than chronologically in order to better focus on the various roles of the archbishops. It draws together as many of the available primary and secondary sources as possible to offer as complete a picture as possible of the archbishops, their office, and their importance to the history of Rus’ and of the Russian church. But it also seeks to place Novgorod within its wider framework, in relation to Moscow, Kyiv, and the rest of Rus’, and to compare archbishops with other episcopal sees in the Catholic and Orthodox lands around it, wherever possible, so as to show the unique aspects of the office, how it developed, and what it contributed to history and culture.

Thematically, it begins broadly before focusing in on the particular; moving from wider Christendom and narrowing to the church in Rus’ and then the local church in Novgorod, and in so doing to look at the roles exercised by archbishops in terms of Christian, Orthodox, Rus’, and Novgorodian ecclesiastical tradition, politics, economics, and culture. With this in mind, Chapter One looks at the theoretical understanding of the bishop in the Orthodox world in order to provide a conceptual framework for what the office should or was expected to be within the church and wider society. While theory often did not translate into practice – Rus’ and later Russia was not a terribly theoretical in their religious mindsets – the institutional church and the laity often judged their bishops based on an idealized image of the bishop or what was demanded or allowed of him in biblical texts and canon law. The next two chapters look at the archbishop’s ecclesiastical roles, since it was his position in the church that formed the basis of his historical activity. Chapter Two looks at the archbishop’s place in the Rus’ church, while Chapter Three deals with his position as head of the Novgorodian archeparchy. Chapter Four looks at the very unique electoral process as it developed in Novgorod from the late twelfth to the late fifteenth centuries and significant insofar as it was by

this process that the men who became archbishop usually entered history. Through election they went from being obscure monks or hegumens – a few were mentioned in the chronicles prior to their episcopates – to being significant historical figures and city magnates. Chapter Five looks at the archbishops' political activity as part of the city's elite and how unique this power was not just in the Rus' church, but throughout the Orthodox world, although it must be kept in mind that Novgorod's bishops never attained the political power of many Catholic bishops nor were they, as some might contend, Novgorod's head of state. Chapter Six looks at the economic aspects of the office and the administration the archbishops supervised. This administration not only oversaw the religious or ceremonial aspects of the Novgorodian archeparchy, but also gathered in and oversaw the archbishops' enormous wealth, which in turn financed the archiepiscopal administration and allowed the archbishops to carry out all their other political, ecclesiastical, and cultural roles. Chapter Seven lays out the archbishop's cultural influence, among the most significant aspects of the office. Art historians have certainly recognized the archbishops as cultural patrons for a long time, but the extent and importance of their patronage has not been given proper emphasis in the previous scholarship. Furthermore, their patronage of the arts and of chronicle-writings is how they have lived on in the collective memory.

Methodology and Sources

This study relies on a great number of sources, and I have sought out primary sources – chronicles, princely charters, law codes, treaties, letters, ecclesiastical documents, icons, saints' lives, service books, legends, and tales – and have focused on material as close as possible in time and space to the events under study with the assumption that such sources are less corrupted by later additions or editing, the clouding of memories, or misunderstanding due to changes in meaning over time, or by cultural differences. Whenever possible, multiple sources have been consulted in researching particular events, to “triangulate” what took place and cancel out local inaccuracies, individual bias, mistakes, or gaps in information that might be found when relying on only a single source (though mul-

tiple sources sometimes give multiple interpretations that confuse rather than clarify). Reference to less historically-reliable sources such as icons, saints' lives, legends, and tales is understandably contentious. Many historians dismiss them as completely inaccurate or nearly worthless as historical sources. But I include them because they still provide useful information: the common perception of the archbishops and their office, or perhaps the image they or the church wished to convey, as well as their cultural importance. These sources have been used in conjunction with more-reliable, or at least more accepted, historic sources to ground the book in empirical evidence as much as possible.

Most of the primary sources for the period under study have been published in the last two centuries, but while researching the sixteenth century archbishops on a Fulbright Senior Scholar grant in 2006-2007, I came across documents in archives, libraries, and museums in Russia that, while often from after 1478 or copied out centuries later, shed light on the period under study or tell us how the Muscovite-appointed archbishops of Novgorod viewed their pre-Muscovite predecessors, and sometimes continued to invoke them or carry out their policies. The *Biblioteka Novgorodskogo Sofiiskogo sobora* (the Library of Holy Wisdom) now in the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg, has some volumes of which date back to the archiepiscopate of Moisei (r.1325-1330; 1352-1359). This collection was most useful in discussing the archbishops' patronage of the arts and culture and their promotion of the saintly cults of their predecessors in office, but archival documents have been used throughout the study to clarify some material in the published versions.

The basic primary sources are the chronicles gathered in the *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* (The Complete Collection of Rus' Chronicles) or published separately. The most important single chronicle is the *Novgorodian First Chronicle*,⁴¹ although the *Novgorodian Fourth Chronicle*⁴² and the *Sofia First Chronicle*⁴³ are also significant. These three are the oldest and most complete of the Novgorodian chronicles, compiled under the auspices of the archbishops themselves.⁴⁴ The *Novgorodian Second Chronicle*,⁴⁵ and *Novgorodian Third Chronicle*,⁴⁶ are utilized less often since they are much abbreviated and often repeat what is found in the *Novgorodian First Chron-*

icle or *Novgorodian Fourth Chronicle*. Despite shortcomings, all the Novgorodian chronicles provide an enormous amount of valuable information. The *Pskov First and Second Chronicles* give the history of the second most important city in the Novgorodian archeparchy and shed light on the archbishops' relationship with that city, which becomes particularly interesting after Pskov gained political independence from Novgorod in the fourteenth century.⁴⁷ Beyond Novgorodian and Pskov chronicles, the *Lavrentian Chronicle*,⁴⁸ *Hypatian Chronicle*,⁴⁹ and the *Moskovskii letopisnyi svod kontsa XV veka* describe events in the rest of Rus',⁵⁰ though they, understandably, have less material on Novgorod and the archbishops. Other annals tell us about other regions and provide a useful comparison with events and institutions in Novgorod.⁵¹ The *Letopisnyi sbornik, imenuemyi Patriarsheiu ili Nikonovskoi letopis'iu*,⁵² commonly called the *Nikon Chronicle*, is less reliable. It is a sixteenth century compilation of earlier chronicles heavily edited to give a pro-Muscovite slant to events. It can still provide useful information if carefully read, although wherever possible, I have referred to the earlier chronicles from which the *Nikon Chronicle* were drawn, such as the *Moskovskii letopisnii svod* and the *Sofia First Chronicle*.

Primary source documents published in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries include the *Gramoty Velikogo Novgoroda i Pskova* (The Charters of Novgorod the Great and Pskov)⁵³ and the *Novgorodskie pistsovyie knigi*, the land registers or cadastres drawn up in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries on the orders of the grand prince of Moscow. While these date from just after the period under study, they provide significant information on episcopal and ecclesiastical (mainly monastic) landholdings during the later part of this study and show how the situation changed with Novgorod's loss of independence, as well as information on parish structures and church personnel not available from other sources.⁵⁴

Many documents of the Rus' church have also been published in a number of publications, including volume six of the *Ruskaia istoricheskie biblioteka*,⁵⁵ the first volumes of the *Akty istoricheskie*⁵⁶ and the *Dopolneniia k Aktam istoricheskim*,⁵⁷ the *Ruskii feodal'nyi arkhiv*,⁵⁸ and, most recently, *Documentary Sources on the History of the Rus' Metropolitanate: The Fourteenth to the Early Sixteenth Centuries*.⁵⁹ In addition, the *Kormchaia kniga* or "Pilot's Book"

and other church documents, most notably those edited by Vladimir Beneshevich,⁶⁰ have been consulted, as have biblical and patristic writings, the documents of the first seven ecumenical councils and several important local councils (which make up a significant part of the *Kormchie Knigi*), as well as other material found in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* and *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* series and Jacques-Paul Migne's awesome collection of documents.⁶¹ Taken together, these provide insights into the religious and ecclesiastical world in which the archbishops and the archeparchy of Novgorod flourished and the theory of the bishop in the Orthodox world. The correspondence of the patriarchs of Constantinople also offers details about the relations between Novgorod, the metropolitans, and the patriarchs, although what survives only covers the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁶² Rus' law codes and other princely statutes have also been consulted, since they provided the legal basis for the church and the archbishops and their activities. These have been published in both Russian and, in some cases, in English, in several editions.⁶³

A number of Western documents also shed light on the archbishops, particularly their relations with the West, and offer a comparison between the Catholic and Orthodox episcopate. Most notable among these are documents from the Livonian cities,⁶⁴ the Teutonic Knights,⁶⁵ the cities of northern Germany and the Hanseatic League,⁶⁶ and the chancellery of the grand princes of Lithuania.⁶⁷

The archbishops themselves left relatively few documents beyond the chronicles, which, admittedly, were written at their behest and do not necessarily reveal their individual personalities. Bishop Luka Zhidiata left the *Sermon to the Brethren*, given to a group of monks at an unknown time and place. Although he lived prior to the establishment of the archiepiscopate, his sermon is discussed as an example of homiletic works by the prelates of Novgorod and compared to the works of later archbishops.⁶⁸ Archbishop Nifont left answers to a series of questions posed by members of the clergy, known as the *Voproshanie Kirika* (The Questions of Kirik).⁶⁹ Archbishop Il'ia left two sets of rules: one, sent in a letter to an unnamed Bishop of Bilhorod, was on the administration of the sacraments by the white clergy; the other addressed how monks should live.⁷⁰

Archbishop Antonii wrote a famous description of Constantinople a few years before its sack in 1204.⁷¹ Archbishop Vasilii Kalika left a letter to Bishop Feodor of Tver' concerning the existence of the earthly paradise.⁷² These few sources give us some idea of the archbishops as preachers and writers.

Several archbishops are the subjects of saints' lives, legends, and folktales, particularly Archbishop Il'ia,⁷³ but also Evfimii II and Iona.⁷⁴ Others appear in the lives of other saints or as antagonists or supporting characters in the tales and legends of other protagonists. As noted above, these sources are of limited historical value, but can reveal common perceptions of how people understood the archbishops and their office at the time and sometimes show how the archbishops not only patronized the arts, but themselves became part of Novgorodian cultural life as venerated or fictionalized, mythical, or legendary figures. And since some of these were written by or at the behest of later archbishops, they can reveal the archbishops' thinking about their office, their predecessors (and how they wanted to portray them), the church, Novgorod, and the wider world in which they lived. These images influenced how people reacted to the real archbishops and may even have influenced how the archbishops were portrayed in more historically accurate sources; an archbishop who failed to live up to the ideal image painted in the legendary or hagiographic literature might suffer abuse at the hands of the Novgorodians, or chroniclers might use types or topoi from legends or the hagiographic literature to explain real events. Modern historians, again, dismiss accounts of miracles, omens, and prophecies as superstition, but the medieval Novgorodians believed in them, reacted to them, perhaps even expected them, and included them in the chronicles and liturgical books like the *Velikie Minei Chet'i*. Thus, while not everything in these legends, tales, or saint's lives (or even the chronicles) was factual or historically accurate, they may have been *real* and meaningful to the medieval Novgorodians and still tell us something of how the citizens of that foreign country that is The Past saw the world.

I have also made use of numerous secondary sources in undertaking this study. While not all can be discussed here, the most important merit mention. The numerous books and articles of Valentin Ianin, the dean of Novgorodian history and archaeology,

have been invaluable in studying the political and social life of the city in the medieval period, in particular his work on the *posadnichestvo* and the study of the seals of the metropolitans, archbishops, *posadniki*, and other officials.⁷⁵ Archaeological studies by Ianin and others are also important in understanding the material culture of Novgorod, and point out where the physical evidence fills in or even contradicts the written record.⁷⁶ Archaeology is key to uncovering important artifacts, including sphragistic evidence that deepens to our understanding of the political roles played by the archbishops and the *namestniki* and other officials in their administration. Archaeology is also important in uncovering the art and architecture of the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom as it looked in the medieval period, including artifacts (clothing, liturgical and household vessels, etc.) and in excavating the archbishops' tombs. It also useful in revealing the architectural significance of the churches and other structures the archbishops patronized. Birchbark documents, leather and wooden articles and other artifacts also bring us closer to the city in which the archbishops lived and new artifacts are being uncovered with each excavation, adding new information not available in the reinterpretation of old, published sources.

Other important secondary sources include expansive histories of the Russian Orthodox Church written by Evgenii Golubinskii,⁷⁷ Metropolitan Makarii (Bulgakov),⁷⁸ as well as shorter works by Anton Kartashev,⁷⁹ John Fennell (left incomplete at his death),⁸⁰ and others (several similarly named *History of the Russian Church*) as well as the biographies of the archbishops written in the late nineteenth century by Aleksandr Tomilin, Konstantin Zdravomislov and Pavel Tikhomirov.⁸¹ These ecclesiastical histories have been invaluable in placing the archbishops within the wider Russian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox community. They provide a solid overview of Russian ecclesiastical history although they often suffer from the same problem of some of the general histories in that they tend to be Moscow-centric and see early events in light of later Muscovite unification. The biographies have been most useful in providing a basic overview of the lives of the bishops, archbishops, and metropolitans of Novgorod, though they sometimes tend toward hagiography. Several post-Soviet studies of the Novgorodian church and the archbishops have been most infor-

mative, but they often focus on a limited aspect (politics, art, etc.) of the office, cover a short period,⁸² or, in one case, is a very good collection of essays, but an incomplete history of the archbishop and their archeparchy.⁸³ More general studies of Russian and north-eastern European history have helped place Novgorodian events into wider Russian and European history,⁸⁴ while more focused works on agricultural and economic history, art and architecture, literature, and Orthodox Christianity help place the archiepiscopal office in its Novgorodian, East Slavic, and wider Christian context.

Historiographic Issues

This historiographic review reveals that previous scholars have, by no means, ignored the archbishops of Novgorod. But a number of these scholarly works are either dated; cover a limited period, only touched on the archbishops secondarily while focusing on other topics such as Novgorod's political structure or relationship with Moscow, the wider church, interprincely competition, the socio-economic system, landownership, peasant resistance to the land-owning aristocracy, and so forth; or they focus on only one aspect of the archbishops, their land-ownership or economic roles, their political roles, or their alleged autocephalous tendencies, for example.

In other cases, earlier works, such as those by Tikhomirov and Zdravomislov, were thorough in their use of the chronicles and other sources, including published letters, charters, and saints' lives, and, thus, useful insofar as they went, but they are more narrative than analytic, and at times tended toward hagiography. This is an understandable inclination given that Tikhomirov was the archpriest of the Church of Our Lady of the Sign in Novgorod, but a more "scientific," empirical, or critical look at the office and how it changed over time is needed. Furthermore, older works, of course, fail to take into account more recent scholarship, the exciting archaeological discoveries since the Second World War, or new historical interpretations. A number of works are also unavailable or difficult to find in the United States and Western Europe.

As noted, earlier studies have pointed out the vast size of the Novgorodian archeparchy and the important place of the archbishops within the church hierarchy, but what do the sources really tell us about that role in the Rus' church, and their activities in their own archeparchy? Much of the ecclesiastical historiography – the aforementioned works of Golubinskii, Makarii, Kartashev, Fennell and others – tend to focus on the metropolitans and the church's close relationship with the grand princes of Moscow. Discussions of the ecclesiastical position of the archbishops of Novgorod have at times been relatively slight, or else emphasize conflict between the metropolitans and the Novgorodian archbishops, often seen through a Muscovite lens. That is, the archbishops' interactions with the grand princes and the metropolitans have been discussed but have often been seen in terms of his friendliness or hostility toward Moscow within the context of the Moscow-Tver' or Moscow-Lithuania rivalries. Or they have been viewed from the perspective of obedience or defiance toward legitimate ecclesiastical or princely authority. Anti-Kyivan or anti-Muscovite behavior has been seen where it might not have existed, and was deemed uncanonical, illegal, immoral, or even treasonous. Ecclesiastical histories have also tended to see the Novgorodian archiepiscopal office as only a small part of the wider Rus' church, as a member at a council or a party in a dispute over who was rightful metropolitan.⁸⁵ But what were the reasons the Novgorodians themselves (the archbishops and others – as revealed in the chronicles and other sources) gave for their opposition to the princes or metropolitans? Aleksandr Nikitskii's *Ocherk vnutrennei istorii tserkvi v Novgorode* and his work on the church in Pskov, focused more on the broader Novgorodian church than on the archbishops, and emphasized canonical propriety – what should have happened according to the law or ecclesiastical custom.⁸⁶ But what actually happened, and what motivated the archbishops and the city to act as they did, even in violation of the law or customs?

The archbishops' political roles, particularly their position among the "lords" in Novgorod, and their often-antagonistic relationship with Moscow, has been a major focus of earlier scholarship. But as noted, to call the archbishop the most powerful political figure in the city, the city's head of state, and the main

formulator of Novgorod's anti-Moscow foreign policy is weighted, judgmental, and anachronistic, probably saying more about modern concepts of institutionalized, post-Enlightenment government (separation of powers between different branches, à la Montesquieu), or modern notions of democracy, nationalism, church-state relations (separation of church and state), or even the powers of Western prince-bishops, than about what actually transpired in medieval Novgorod.⁸⁷ Marxist and Imperial Russian historians saw Novgorod, the church, and other aspects of Rus' history through the biases of their time or the limits of their theoretical or ideological approaches, the inevitability of Muscovite centralization or tsarist autocracy, Russian nationalism, how everything fit into Marx's stages of history, followed the alleged laws of history, or their emphasis on class conflict. These interpretations are understandable, but not very useful in clarifying the office in its medieval context. In going back to the sources, what do they tell us about the archbishops' political roles?

Because the archbishops were usually not the main focus of research, scholars have reached drastically different conclusions about them, which often are not supported by close reading of the evidence. Policies or actions that make perfect sense from the Novgorodian perspective or from the point of view of a Novgorodian archbishop, often seem obstreperous, apostate, or treasonous, when viewed from the standpoint of a grand prince or metropolitan. In some cases, scholars mention the archbishops in passing and a role or attribute gets assigned to them that is passed down in the historiography uncritically. For example, Edward Sokol, in writing about the *veche*, argued: "in the mid-twelfth century [the *veche*] began selecting the all-powerful archbishop, the nominal head of state."⁸⁸ He did not, however, elucidate on what made the archbishop "all-powerful," nor did he look at the actual process of election and how it changed over the centuries, or who said the archbishop was nominally head of state. Bernard Pares, in his general history of pre-Revolutionary Russia, was equally vague in his assessment of the archbishops, merely stating that they "came to have a strong local authority,"⁸⁹ but never explained what that meant.

Henrik Birnbaum wrote perhaps the most accessible and well-known series of essays on medieval Novgorod.⁹⁰ Although they are largely based on secondary sources and repeat previous assertions without necessarily assessing their accuracy, Birnbaum was more specific about the archbishops' political powers. In "presiding over the Council of Lords," the archbishop, he wrote, "may be considered the republic's formal head of the state," although he admitted that the *posadniki* and *tysiatskie* were really "the two most influential officials in Novgorod the Great."⁹¹ Birnbaum's conclusions were similar to those of Sergei Platonov more than half a century earlier: "in the administration of Novgorod, the bishop had a great role,"⁹² although he ultimately saw the *posadnik* as "the main executive power in Novgorod."⁹³

Aleksandr Khoroshev, writing in the late 1980s, concurred with Platonov's assessment, namely that independent Novgorod was run by an alliance between the archbishop and the boiars,⁹⁴ but did not look at how the archbishop was different from the others among the city's elite due to his ecclesiastical position. Khoroshev's work, furthermore, is from a decidedly Marxist viewpoint, which seems anachronistic since the end of the Cold War, and tends to suffer from the herculean efforts of Marxists to cram past events into Marx's oversimplistic stages of history or see every instance of peasant discontent as a proto-revolution or some aspect of class warfare.

Joel Raba wrote several studies in the 1970s on the Novgorodian church, including one that looked at Archbishop Evfimii II (r. 1429-1458),⁹⁵ and another on the church's role in Novgorodian foreign policy at the end of the fifteenth century. In this latter study, Raba argued that the office of archbishop was "the sole well-developed and stable Novgorodian institution,"⁹⁶ contending that the long tenures of the archbishops made their position more stable than those of the *posadniki* and *tysiatskie*. Thus, it was the archiepiscopal office, rather than the secular political offices, which came to represent long-term Novgorodian state interests. However, the greater longevity of the archiepiscopal office vis-à-vis the *posadnichestvo* or the office of *tysiatskii* may be more apparent than real. Ianin, in his study in the 1960s on the Novgorodian *posadniki*, has shown that, although they were elected annually, individual *posadniki* of-

ten held office for a decade or more and passed the office down to their sons or other close relatives, not unlike what occurred in elected mayoralties in Venice or other city-states to the West. Thus, the *posadnichestvo* was actually also a very stable office.⁹⁷ The longevity of archiepiscopal tenures certainly contributed to the importance of that office, but this was not exclusive to the archbishops, and their importance may also be explained by the central place held by the church in medieval Rus' and the archbishops' place in it, a supranational organization of preeminent authority at the time. It may also be explained by the increasing number of *posadniki* and *tysiatskie* in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that led to the diffusion of power among the *boiarstvo*, while the political power or influence of the archbishop remained in the hands of one man.

Other studies fail to recognize changes in the archiepiscopal office over time. Thus, Khoroshev and others have written of an alliance between the archbishops and the boiars that began in the early twelfth century and lasted to the end of Novgorod's independence, but do not discuss how this alliance changed over the course of these three and a half centuries or how the archbishops' political position waxed or waned.⁹⁸ Furthermore, the terminology of "alliance," or "union," (the word is the same in Russian) or of the archbishops' "siding with" the rest of the city elite implies that they were different from the other members of the aristocracy, and that they worked with them for different reasons. In some sense this is true, since the archbishops were the only churchmen among the elite and had ecclesiastical interests that the *boiarstvo* did not. But the archbishops also had many interests in common with the boiars. According to Ianin and others, the Novgorodian aristocracy (or oligarchy) was based on land-ownership, and the archbishops were among the greatest landowners in Novgorod at the end of Novgorodian independence. Thus, due to their wealth and convergent interests, the archbishops were not simply allied with the Novgorodian aristocracy, they were part of it.

In other instances, scholars have reached erroneous conclusions in enumerating the archbishops' political functions, particularly the archbishop's role as the city's executive power. For example, Vasilii Kliuchevskii asserted that the archbishop of Novgorod was "the permanent president of (the *Soviet gospod*),"⁹⁹ or Council

of Lords, which Birnbaum defined as “a delegated and executive organ of the *veche*.”¹⁰⁰ These scholars argue that the Council carried out the day-to-day duties of the government when the *veche* was not in session, and usually met in the archbishops’ “chambers” in the Palace of Facets.¹⁰¹ Indeed, Birnbaum contended that the archbishop, “by presiding over the Council of Lords... came to occupy first place in the secular hierarchy of the city.”¹⁰² G. P. Fedotov, too, saw the archbishop as “the president of the Council of Masters” (*Soviet gospod*), explaining: “In effect, he was the one who was ‘president’ of the republic, to draw a modern analogy... The archbishop stood above parties and expressed the unity of the republic.”¹⁰³ He noted that “immense wealth and even military force were concentrated in his hands. ‘The House of St. Sophia’ was the largest economic entity in Novgorod and ‘The Bishop’s Troops,’ were a notable part of her civil guard.”¹⁰⁴

Ianin gave a fuller account of archiepiscopal power, blurring the lines between what belonged to the archbishop and what belonged to the state:

Among the elected offices of Novgorod, the first place was held by the Novgorodian bishop. He was custodian of the Novgorodian state treasury and owner of extensive state lands, the primary part of which had been confiscated from lands owned by the prince, attached to the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom. To him belonged the right of the church courts and control over the merchant scales. Together with the boiar upper class, he took part in the foreign policy of the republic and in his court were compiled the Novgorodian chronicles. The Novgorodian bishop...having received in 1165 the status of archbishop, presided over the “Council of Lords” - the governmental organ of the boiar oligarchs. The political role of the archbishop was determined, first and foremost, on the basis of his being the greatest of the Novgorodian feudal (lords).¹⁰⁵

All these scholars touch on important aspects of the office: its extensive lands and immense wealth (sometimes used for state purposes), its role in Novgorod's domestic and foreign policy, its role in the ecclesiastical courts, weights and measures, chronicle writing, and so forth. And while the primary sources confirm that the archbishop was one of the city's important political figures, that the archiepiscopal administration held enormous landed wealth, and oversaw the ecclesiastical courts, there are several problems in the historiography. It too is based on modern assumptions of governmental organization, or even western ideas of medieval episcopal secular powers, something largely if not totally unknown in the Orthodox East.

Furthermore, the primary sources do not seem to support some of the conclusions reached on the "Council of Lords" being established as a public body after reforms in the first quarter of the fifteenth century.¹⁰⁶ To describe it as the "executive council" of the *veche* and argue it effectively ran the city until the conquest by Moscow in 1478 is to read far too much between the lines.¹⁰⁷ While the *Pskov Judicial Charter* and some chronicle entries speak of "the lords," it is a stretch to form these "lords" into an organized, political institution that controlled the *veche* and ran the city. Furthermore, there is some evidence for a more inclusive polity with real power exercised by a *veche* whose membership was not limited to the aristocracy. If this is the case, then it cannot be said with any certainty that the archbishops presided over the Council of Lords or that the council was the "executive organ" of the city.

Third, some evidence cited as proof of the archbishops' secular political powers does not really reveal political power at all. The archbishops or their judges did sit on the civil courts to be sure, but to cite supervision of the ecclesiastical courts, which dealt with ecclesiastical cases, not secular political matters, is no evidence of secular power. And these courts were in no way unique: church statutes issued by Vladimir and Iaroslav in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries grant such powers to the metropolitans and the bishops, citing Byzantine precedents to justify this grant, and similar ecclesiastical courts operated across the Christian world. Other claims are also problematic: the Council of Lords may not have existed, at least as a formal body, the bishop did not have a cavalry

unit, and the Palace of Facets was only built in the fifteenth century, toward the end of this period, so civil or court meetings held there may tell us little of what happened in earlier centuries. What, then, does the actual evidence tell us about the archbishops' political roles? And how did these roles develop and change over time?

Scholars have, likewise, looked at the archbishops' wealth and economic roles as the basis for their political power, but these discussions also have shortcomings. Some tend toward normative arguments as to the illegitimacy of this wealth, that churchmen should accept apostolic poverty or that the church ought to be merely a spiritual institution. Such works fail to comprehend the more-worldly aspects of the medieval church, nor do they try to understand the church as an important social and cultural or spiritual institution that very much created and directed medieval civilization. Consequently, they fail to place these economic aspects within the context of the archiepiscopal office, or even that this wealth may have been needed to finance the archeparchial administration and patronize arts and architecture, chronicle writing, and hagiography.

Thus, even in areas that have already been the topic of previous scholarship, there is considerable grounds for not only going back to look at the traditional primary sources, but also to incorporating new archaeological findings and new interpretations, in order to more fully understand the archbishops of Novgorod, the Rus' and Eastern Orthodox churches, and broader medieval Eastern European world. This study not only looks at areas already studied, such as Novgorod's political and economic history, but breaks new ground in areas that have been more overlooked, particularly the important contributions the archbishops made to Novgorodian and Russian art and culture. I also admit where the sources are too scant or unclear to draw firm conclusions as to specific roles played by the archbishops, and am sad to say this occurs all too frequently.

This discussion of problems in the historiography is in no way meant to disparage the efforts of previous scholars. This monograph owes a great deal to previous scholarship; problems in earlier scholarship are pointed out in an effort to correct and certainly not to dismiss earlier scholars or their works as being of little value. I do not believe I am rewriting the history of the Rus' church

or of Novgorod the Great. Rather, my hope is to come to what a colleague called “a near approximation of the truth” in spite of the biases and shortcomings that I bring to the work, and add in some small way to our understanding of the archiepiscopal office and the great city and church of which it was so much a part.