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SOPHIA – THE PERSONIFICATION OF DIVINE WISDOM IN THE CULTURE OF NOVGOROD THE GREAT FROM 13TH TO 15TH CENTURY*

Sophia – the personification of Divine Wisdom – was surrounded by special esteem and inspired a devoted following in the area of Novgorod the Great. *Hagia Sophia*, erected in the middle of the 11th century was without doubt the most important temple in the city on the Volkhov River. Furthermore, the chronicles of Northern Rus' show that with the escalation of republican trends in Novgorod the Great, the cathedral dedicated to the Wisdom of God took on an additional meaning: it became an ideological city center, a symbol of its sovereignty and political independence¹.

It should be noted that – according to the historiographical sources appearing in the environment under consideration – in the square in front of the temple of *Hagia Sophia* was held the so-called *veche* – in theory, the supreme authority of the Republic on the Volkhov River². For example, in the oldest chronicle of Novgorod in the year 6798 AM (1291 AD) it is said: **Новгородци же съзвониша вѣче у святыни Софьи и у святого Николы**³. The Cathedral Square is, in this case, one of two pla-

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¹ Д.С. ЛИХАЧЕВ, *Новгород Великий. Очерк истории культуры Новгорода XI–XVII вв.*, Москва 1959, p. 9, 18, 25; ИДЕМ, *Novgorod. Art Treasures and Architectural Monuments 11th–18th Centuries. Architecture. Frescoes. Archeological Artefacts. Minor Arts. Icons. Illuminated MSS*, Leningrad 1984, p. 5, 11; М.Н. ГРОМОВ, *Образ сакральной Премудрости*, [in:] М.Н. ГРОМОВ, В.В. МИЛЬКОВ, *Идейные течения древнерусской мысли*, Санкт-Петербург 2001, p. 59; Г. КОЛПАКОВА, *Искусство Древней Руси. Домонгольский период*, Санкт-Петербург 2007, p. 59–60; О.В. КУЗЬМИНА, *Республика Святой Софии*, Москва 2008, p. 82; В. ТУЛУПОВ, *Русь Новгородская*, Москва 2009, p. 82, 85, 154.

² Д.С. ЛИХАЧЕВ, *Новгород Великий...*, p. 14–15; О.В. КУЗЬМИНА, *op. cit.*, p. 82; В. ТУЛУПОВ, *op. cit.*, p. 54, 86. It is worth noting the fact that according to Klaus Zernack, a researcher of the Novgorod *veche*, this type of assembly, which took place even in the 12th century in Kiev (e.g. in 1113 and 1147), was also held in front of the *Hagia Sophia* cathedral. К. ZERNACK, *Die burgstädtischen Volksversammlungen bei den Ost- und Westslaven. Studien zur verfassungs-geschichtlichen Bedeutung des Veče*, Wiesbaden 1967, p. 76–77.

³ *Новгородская первая летопись старшего и младшего изводов*, AM 6798, ed. М.Н. ТИХОМИРОВ, Москва – Ленинград 1950 (setera: *Нов. пер. лет.*), p. 326.

ces for the meeting. However, it is worth bearing in mind that the quoted passage comes from a description of socio-political unrest in Novgorod, when, after the sudden deposition of the incumbent *posadnik* (one of the most important officials of the Republic) and the assassination of a citizen of Novgorod, the citizens of the city gathered at a *veche* in full armor (сидошася в доспѣхъ)⁴. However, the mention of a *veche* convened a few years later is much clearer in meaning: созвоинише вѣче у святѣи Софѣи (6807 AM/1299 AD)⁵.

A description of an interesting situation can be found in the oldest chronicle of Novgorod in the year 6850 AM (1342 AD). When Luka Valfromeyevich, the son of the former *posadnik*, was killed, his son Ontsifor and brother Matvei convened a *veche* in the Cathedral Square. Their political opponent, the incumbent *posadnik* Fedor, who they accused of having a hand in Luka's death, organized a separate meeting in another place⁶: Онцифоръ с Матфѣемъ созвоини вѣце у святѣи Софѣи, а Федоръ и Ондръшко другое созвоиниша на Ярославли дворѣ⁷. In the description of the events in 6896 AM (1388 AD) the square in front of the *Hagia Sophia* temple was the only place in the city where the *veche* was held: звоинише вѣце у святѣи Софѣи⁸. From the above review of sources, a basic conclusion can be drawn: even if it was not the only location where, according to tradition, meetings of the citizens of Novgorod the Great were held, the Cathedral Square may be regarded as a very important place in the Republic⁹.

Interestingly, in the chronicles of Northern Rus' from the middle of the 12th century, another interesting element appeared: the seat of the Archbishop of Novgorod began to be considered as the Court or the House of *Sophia*. The Archbishop of Novgorod was – according to many researchers – one of the most politically influential persons of the Republic, responsible not only for religious issues, but also for economic and financial matters (care of the treasury and the

⁴ К. ZERNACK, *op. cit.*, p. 174; В.Л. Янин, *Очерки истории средневекового Новгорода*, Москва 2008, p. 95.

⁵ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6807, p. 330.

⁶ О.В. Кузьмина, *op. cit.*, p. 153; В.Л. Янин, *Очерки истории...*, p. 137.

⁷ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6850, p. 356.

⁸ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6896, p. 382. В.Л. Янин, *Очерки истории...*, p. 140.

⁹ However, Klaus Zernack believes that throughout the life of the Republic of Novgorod there was not a single official place where *veche* should be held. Moreover, the dates and frequency of convening assemblies were not determined. Over time, the custom of organizing *veche* at Yaroslav's Court was established (К. ZERNACK, *op. cit.*, p. 183). The contemporary literature usually includes four places where Novgorod's *veche* could have been held: a courtyard of the *Hagia Sophia* cathedral, the region of Yaroslav's Court, the area of Forty Martyrs Church and the square in front of the temple of Sts. Boris and Gleb. The most important *veche* of the republic was at first held at Yaroslav's Court. Then the participants went to the areas of *Hagia Sophia* cathedral. There is also a hypothesis that sometimes two *veche* might have been held at the same time in Novgorod the Great, one in each of the main areas of the city – in the square in front of the *Hagia Sophia* temple (for the so-called 'Sophia side' of the city) and at Yaroslav's Court (for the so-called 'Market side'). Д.В. ПЕЖЕМСКИЙ, *Археологический облик «вечевых» площадей Великого Новгорода*, [in:] *Споры о новгородском вече. Междисциплинарный диалог. Материалы «круглого стола»*. Европейский университет в Санкт-Петербурге. 20 IX 2010 г., ed. М.М. КРОМ, Санкт-Петербург 2012, p. 168, 174, 177–182.

management of the estates of Novgorod)¹⁰: поручивше ему епископю въ дворѣ святыя Софѣя (6664 AM/1156 AD)¹¹; възведеша владыку Ялексея в дом святыя Софѣя, на свои архиепископскыи степенъ (6883 AM/1375 AD)¹²; пришлаша владыка в домъ святыя Софѣя (6884 AM/1376 AD)¹³; в дому святѣи Софѣи (6896 AM/1388 AD)¹⁴; възведеша Самсона честно в дом святѣи Софѣи (6923 AM/1415 AD)¹⁵; възведеша игумена Феодосиа честно в домъ святѣи Софѣи (6929 AM/1421 AD)¹⁶.

At this point it is also worth mentioning that Novgorod's archbishops, starting from the second half of the 12th century, were chosen – somewhat contrary to the ecclesiastical tradition of the Eastern Church – in a rather unusual way¹⁷. Typically, Novgorod's citizens gathered at a *veche* and chose three candidates for the throne of the archbishop¹⁸. Following this, especially when there was a lack of unanimity among the deliberators, the patroness of the cathedral temple of the city, *Sophia*, was asked to make a final decision concerning the selection. To ascertain the will of God's Wisdom, the names of all the candidates for the position of archbishop were written on specially prepared lots (*жребия*), which were then placed on the altar of the *Hagia Sophia* cathedral. After a solemn liturgy, a blind man came to the cathedral and drew the lots (later this was usually done by a priest). The archbishop was the candidate whose lot remained on the altar as the last one¹⁹. This practice is confirmed many times in the chronicles. As an example, the descriptions of events from 6867 AM (1359 AD) and 6896 AM (1388 AD) are presented here:

¹⁰ Н.Г. ПОРФИРИДОВ, *Древний Новгород. Очерки из истории русской культуры XI–XV вв.*, Москва 1947, р. 179; *Грамоты Великого Новгорода и Пскова*, ed. С.Н. ВАЛК, Москва – Ленинград 1949, р. 13, 16, 17, 25, 28, 241–242; Г.П. ФЕДОТОВ, *Республика Святой Софии*, НПр 11/12, 1950, р. 30; Д.С. ЛИХАЧЕВ, *Новгород Великий...*, р. 14; К. ZERNACK, *op. cit.*, р. 182; J. LEUSCHNER, *Novgorod. Untersuchungen zu einigen Fragen seiner Verfassungs- und Bevölkerungsstruktur*, Berlin 1980, р. 127; Д. ЛІКНАСНОВ, *Novgorod. Art Treasures...*, р. 10; Э.А. ГОРДИЕНКО, *Владычная палата новгородского кремля*, Ленинград 1991, р. 13, 60–61; E. SMIRNOVA, *Fonti della Sapienza. Le miniature di Novgorod del XV secolo*, Milano 1996, р. 14; А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *Софийский патронат по Новгородской первой летописи*, ННЗ.ИА 11, 1997, р. 210; М.Н. ГРОМОВ, *op. cit.*, р. 59; G. FEDOTOW, *Święci Rusi (X–XVII w.)*, trans. H. RAPROCKI, Bydgoszcz 2002, р. 103; А. ДЕУНЕКА, *The Ackland Sophia: Contextualizing, Interpreting, and “Containing” Wisdom*, Chapel Hill 2007, р. 29; Г.П. РАЙКОВ, *Софийский собор Великого Новгорода*, Санкт-Петербург 2007, р. 99; В. ТУЛУПОВ, *op. cit.*, р. 84, 88–89, 91–94.

¹¹ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6664, р. 216.

¹² *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6883, р. 373.

¹³ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6884, р. 374.

¹⁴ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6896, р. 381.

¹⁵ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6923, р. 405.

¹⁶ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6929, р. 414.

¹⁷ А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, р. 209.

¹⁸ Г.П. ФЕДОТОВ, *Республика Святой Софии...*, р. 30; Д.С. ЛИХАЧЕВ, *Новгород Великий...*, р. 24; К. ZERNACK, *op. cit.*, р. 151; J. LEUSCHNER, *op. cit.*, р. 125; А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, р. 209; G. FEDOTOW, *Święci Rusi...*, s. 103; В. ТУЛУПОВ, *op. cit.*, р. 90.

¹⁹ К. ZERNACK, *op. cit.*, р. 151; J. LEUSCHNER, *op. cit.*, р. 125; О.В. КУЗЬМИНА, *op. cit.*, р. 136; В.Л. ЯНИН, *Очерки истории...*, р. 54; В. ТУЛУПОВ, *op. cit.*, р. 90; С. ФРАНКЛИН, *Письменность, общество и культура в Древней Руси (ок. 950–1300 гг.)*, Санкт-Петербург 2010, р. 458.

6867 AM/1359 AD: много же гадавшѣ посадникъ и тысячкон и весь Новгород, игүмени и поповѣ, и не изволиша себѣ от человекъ избраиия сътворити, нъ изволиша себѣ от Бога прияти извѣщение и уповати на милость его, кого Богъ въсхощеть и святая Софѣя, того знаменаетъ, и избраша три мѹжи: Алексѣя чернца, ключника дому святыя Софѣя, и Саву, игүмена Онтонова монастыря, и Ивана, попа святыя Барвары, и положиша три жребиа на престолѣ въ святѣи Софѣи, ѹтвердивше себѣ слово: егѹже въсхощеть Богъ и святая Софѣя, премүдрость божиа, своему престолу слүжебника имѣти, того жребии да оставит на престолѣ своем. И избра Богъ, святая Софѣя святителя имѣти мѹжа добра, разумна и о всемъ расмотрелива Алексиа чернца, и остави жребии его на престолѣ своемъ.²⁰

6896 AM/1388 AD: мнгого же гадавѣ посадникъ и тысячкон и весь Новгород, игүмены и поповѣ, и не изволиша себѣ от человекъ избраиия, нъ изволиша себѣ от Бога прияти извѣщение и уповати на милость его. И избраша три мѹжи: Иоанна игүмена святого Спаса с Хүтина, Парфѣнна игүмена святого Благовѣщениа, Яфанашиа игүмена святого Рожества, и положиша три жребии на престолѣ въ святѣи Софѣи, ѹтвердивше тако: егѹже въсхощеть Богъ и святая Софѣя своему престолу слүжебника, того жребии остави на престолѣ своемъ. И начаша иерѣи своромѣ обѣдню пѣти, а новгородци сташа вѣцѣмъ ѹ святѣи Софѣи, и сконцанѣ святѣи слүжебѣ вынесе протопопъ Изманло жеребей Яфанасьевъ, потомъ Порфѣниевъ, и избра Богъ и святая Софѣя и престолъ божиа мѹжа добра, тиха, смирена Иоана, игүмена святого Спаса, и стави жеребей его на престолѣ своемъ.²¹

In the above-quoted passages, attention is paid to one important detail: regardless of the “democratic” procedures described in the chronicle concerning the

²⁰ Нов. пер. лет., AM 6867, p. 365. *And having deliberated much, the posadnik and the tysyatski, and all Novgorod and the igumens and priests decided not to make choice of any man for themselves but decided to take advice from God and to trust to his mercy, whomever God and St. Sophia should choose, him let him point out. And they selected three men: Olexei, monk and almoner of the House of St. Sophia, Sava, igumen of the Ontonov monastery, and Ivan, a priest of St. Barbara; and they placed three lots on the altar in St. Sophia, declaring: “Whomsoever God and St. Sophia, the Wisdom of God may desire, to have as servant at his altar, his lot will he leave on His altar”. And God and St. Sophia chose for high priest of St. Sophia and as shepherd of his speaking sheep the good, intelligent and all-discriminating monk Olexei, and left his lot on His altar. The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016–1471, AM 6867, ed. C. RAYMOND BEAZLEY, A.A. ШАКМАТОВ, London 1914 (cetera: *The Chronicle of Novgorod*), p. 147.*

²¹ Нов. пер. лет., AM 6896, p. 381–382. *And after much deliberation the posadnik and the tysyatski and all Novgorod, and the igumens and the would not make a choice for themselves from men, but decided to receive advice from God, and to trust in His mercy, and selected three men: Ioan, igumen of St. Saviour from Khutin, Parfeni, igumen of the Holy Annunciation, and Afanasi, igumen of the Holy Nativity, and they placed three lots on the altar in St. Sophia, resolving thus: “Whomever God and St. Sophia shall desire to serve at Their altar, his lot will they leave on Their altar”. And the priests began to sing the midday service, and the men of Novgorod held a veche at St. Sophia, and at the end of the service the arch-priest Ismaelo brought out the lot of Afanasi, then that of Parfeni; and God and St. Sophia and God’s altar chose the good, humble and meek Ioan, igumen of St. Saviour, leaving his lot on their altar. The Chronicle of Novgorod, AM 6896, p. 162.*

appointment of the Archbishop of Novgorod, the final selection was made by the patroness of the cathedral temple of the city on the Volkhov River: the Wisdom of God. Therefore, it seems that in the eyes of the medieval citizens of Novgorod the Great, she was considered, in her way, a separate entity, able to make independent decisions and affect the fate of the Republic. A trace of this way of thinking can be found both in the *itinerary* of Dobryna Jadrejkovič, the future Archbishop Anthony of Novgorod, who traveled to Constantinople at the beginning of the 13th-century²², and also in the chronicles of Novgorod. In the chronicles, however, we can usually find the established formula, subject to only slight modification, containing the belief that *Sophia* – the personified Wisdom of God – is the guardian of the city on the Volkhov River, and constantly implores the Creator for grace and blessings for her charges²³. Important events in the history of the Republic took place – according to the medieval citizens of Novgorod – thanks to the direct intervention of God and *Sophia*, or were just a kind of epiphany of their strength, will or mercy: **Божью помощью и святыя Софѣя** (6724 AM/1216 AD; 6733 AM/1225 AD; 6741 AM/1233 AD; 6750 AM/1242 AD)²⁴; **Божиею силою и помощю святыя Софѣя** (6724 AM/1216 AD)²⁵; **силою святыя Софѣя** (6809 AM/1301 AD)²⁶; **милостию святѣи Софѣи** (6892 AM/1384 AD)²⁷; **Божью же милостью и святыя Софѣя**

²² **Божиягъ милосерднѣягъ і помощю святыя Софѣи, иже глаголется Премудрость, Присносущное Слово, приидоуагъ во Царьградъ. (...) Уже насть хрѣстианъ посѣтилъ Богъ милостию своею і молитвами пречистыя Богородицы і святѣи Софѣи, Премудрости Божии. Книга Паломникъ. Сказание местъ Святыхъ во Царьградѣ Антонія Архїепископа Новгородскаго в 1204 году**, ed. Хр. М. ЛОПАРЕВ, Санкт-Петербург 1899, p. 1, 14. G.P. МАЈЕСКА, *The Image of the Chalke Savior in Saint Sophia*, Bsl 32, 1971, p. 284; ИДЕМ, *St. Sophia in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries. The Russian Travelers on the Relics*, DOP 27, 1973, p. 72, 80; ИДЕМ, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the 14th and 15th centuries*, Washington 1984, p. 3, 7; ИДЕМ, *Russian Pilgrims in Constantinople*, DOP 56, 2002, p. 93. In modern literature, archbishop Anthony is sometimes attributed with making the representation of the personified Wisdom of God in Novgorodian chronicles more common as a protector and patroness of Novgorod the Great. А.А. ГИППИУС, *Архїепископ Антоний и новгородский культ Софии*, [in:] *В поисках утраченной Византии. Культура средневекового Новгорода и Древней Руси как источник для синхронно-стадиальной реконструкции византийской цивилизации IX–XV вв.*, ed. Д.Е. АФИНОГЕНОВ, А.Е. МУСИН, Е.В. ТОРОПОВА, Санкт-Петербург – Великий Новгород 2007, p. 20; ЕАДЕМ, *Соперничество городских концов как фактор культурной истории Новгорода XII–XIII вв.*, [in:] *Споры о новгородском вече...*, p. 130.

²³ А.М. АММАНН, *Darstellung und Deutung der Sophia im vorpetrinischen Russland*, OCP 4, 1938, p. 133; Г.П. ФЕДОТОВ, *Республика Святой Софии...*, p. 30; ИДЕМ, *The Russian Religious Mind*, vol. II, *The Middle Ages. The 13th to the 15th centuries*, Cambridge 1966, p. 176–177; Т.А. СИДОРОВА, *Волотовская фреска „Премудрость созда себе дом” и ее отношение к новгородской ереси стригольников в XIV в.*, ТОДЛ 26, 1971, p. 218; А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 210; С.Ј. НАЛПЕРИН, *Novgorod and the „Novgorodian land”*, SMR 40, 1999, p. 353, 361; А. ДЕУНЕКА, *op. cit.*, p. 28; Г. КОЛПАКОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 60; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *София Премудрость Божия. Проблемы и перспективы религиозно-философского и искусствоведческого осмысления*, ГРЦР 44–45, 2008, p. 259; О.В. КУЗЬМИНА, *op. cit.*, p. 53; В. ТУЛУПОВ, *op. cit.*, p. 85, 88.

²⁴ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6724, 6733, 6741, 6750, p. 64, 72, 256, 269, 282, 296. А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

²⁵ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6724, p. 56.

²⁶ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6809, p. 91, 331. А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

²⁷ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6892, p. 379.

(6898 AM/1390 AD)²⁸. Sometimes, as in the case of the inscription in the year 6856 AM (1348 AD), we also find in the chronicle traces of the conviction of intercession by the personified Wisdom of God before the throne of the Creator, in order to ensure his favor for the citizens of the Republic: *милостью Божью и святѣи Софѣи заступлениемъ, и молитвами пресвятыя владычица Богородица наша*²⁹.

The references to *Sophia*, which appear very frequently in the narration of the chronicles of Novgorod, often go beyond the usual pattern. Even a glance at the analyzed source material makes it possible to propose another thesis: the personified Wisdom seems to be a being who is constantly present in the lives of medieval Novgorod's citizens, intervening both in their personal lives and actions and being of paramount importance for the Republic. And so, in the description of the events of the year 6701 AM (1194 AD) her figure is seen as an arbitrator who has to judge the validity of the death sentence issued to one of the citizens of the city, Yakovets Prokshinitis (*вратѣ, судит ти Богъ и святая Софѣя*)³⁰. She also appears several times (e.g. in the year 6726 AM/1219 AD and 6728 AM/1220 AD) in the context of events of a very religious nature: her purpose is to provide protection for Novgorod's citizens against the temptations of Satan, contributing to the growth of their piety and the development of the cult of the Holy Cross (the Exaltation of the Holy Cross was solemnly celebrated in Novgorod's *Hagia Sophia* cathedral)³¹.

In the chronicle's relations of the events of the 13th century, *Sophia* is presented as a defender of the Republic, guarding its political independence and assisting Novgorodians in the fight against external threat. For example, in 6742 AM/1234 AD, in a battle with Lithuanian troops, the balance was tipped in favor of the Russian troops by *God and the Holy Cross and the Holy Sophia, the Mighty Wisdom of God*³²: *поможѣ Богъ и крестъ честныи и святая Софѣя, Премудрость Божия*³³. The brilliant military superiority of Alexander Nevsky in 6748 AM/1240 AD was also engendered – according to the authors of the chronicle of Novgorod – by the help of God and *Sophia* and also by the intercessory prayers of the Mother of God and the saints³⁴. The power of the Creator, God's Wisdom and the Holy Cross was to support the troops of the Republic several times in the 13th century: in 6764 AM/1256 AD, 6770 AM/1262 AD and 6776 AM/1269 AD³⁵.

According to the chronicle, *Sophia* – the personified Wisdom of God – also protected Novgorod the Great in 6835 AM /1327 AD against the invasion of the

²⁸ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6898, p. 384.

²⁹ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6856, p. 361. А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

³⁰ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6701, p. 233. According to А.А. ГИППИУС, *Архиепископ Антоний...*, p. 20).

³¹ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6726, 6728, p. 59, 60, 260, 262. А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

³² *The Chronicle of Novgorod*, AM 6742, p. 80.

³³ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6742, p. 73, 284. А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 207; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

³⁴ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6748, p. 77, 294. А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 207; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

³⁵ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6764, 6770, 6776, p. 81, 83, 87, 308–309, 312, 317. А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

Tatar forces that had conquered Tver and devastated huge stretches of Russian lands³⁶: *прииде рать татарская множество много, и взяша ТФѣрь и Кашинъ и Новоторьскую волость и просто ркуше всю землю Рускую и положиша ю пусту, токмо Новѣград ѹблюде Богъ и святая Софѣя*³⁷. The patroness of the Republic on the Volkhov River also intervened in defense of ‘her house’ during the conflict with Lithuania in 6889 AM/1381 AD: *заступи Богъ и святая Софѣя свои домъ, и отъидоша, города не вземше*³⁸. A few years later (6892 AM/1384 AM) she kept Novgorodians from civil war: *ѹблюде Богъ и святая Софѣя от ѹсоевныя рати*³⁹.

An interesting phenomenon can also be seen in the oldest chronicle of Novgorod in the year 6841 AM (1333 AD). In the description of the administrative and cultural activity of the Archbishop Vasili, an anonymous author of the chronicle quoted a thanksgiving prayer, prepared for the archbishop: *дан емѹ, Господи Боже, святая Софѣя, в сии вѣкъ и в бѹдѹщии отпущение грѣховъ с дѣтми его, с новгородци*⁴⁰. It is not difficult to note that the Wisdom of God – even in this passage – seems to be a separate entity, having – along with the Creator – the power to accede to the requests of worshippers.

In the context of the examples mentioned above, the spreading practice of relating the figure of the personified Wisdom of God within a military sphere, which began to be more common in Novgorod the Great in the 13th century, should not be surprising. In the chronicles of Northern Rus’, there is a number of passages that make it possible to assume that the citizens of the city on the Volkhov River, while taking military action in defense of their homeland, went to war with the name of *Sophia* on their lips. Moreover, giving one’s life for the Republic and its patroness was considered an act to be admired and followed, a way of showing the purest civic virtues⁴¹. One of the earliest mentions of the analyzed custom can be found in the oldest chronicle of Novgorod in the description of the conflict between Novgorod and the Grand Prince of Vladimir, Yuri Vsevolodovich, in 6732 AM/1224 AD. Assisted by an army of other Russian rulers, he demanded the most significant Novgorodians surrender, threatening that otherwise *he will make his horse drink the water of the Volkhov River*. His ultimatum was rejected, however: the citizens of the Republic announced that they would rather die for St. *Sophia* and the *posadniki* than betray their fellows: *хотѣша ѹмрети за святѹю Софѣю о посадники Иоанкѣ о Дмитровици*⁴².

³⁶ Т.А. СИДОРОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 217; А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 208; С.Ј. HALPERIN, *op. cit.*, p. 353; О.В. КУЗЬМИНА, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

³⁷ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6835, p. 98, 341.

³⁸ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6889, p. 378.

³⁹ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6892, p. 379. А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

⁴⁰ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6841, p. 345.

⁴¹ Д.С. ЛИХАЧЕВ, *Новгород Великий...*, p. 9, 25; А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 207; С.Ј. HALPERIN, *op. cit.*, p. 362; А. ДЕУНЕКА, *op. cit.*, p. 28; Г. КОЛПАКОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 60; О.В. КУЗЬМИНА, *op. cit.*, p. 54; В. ТУЛУПОВ, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁴² *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6732, p. 64, 268. Д. ФЕННЕЛ, *Кризис средневековой Руси 1200–1304*, Москва

A similar theme appears in the accounts of the events ten years later. The Novgorodians who died in the above-mentioned battle with Lithuanian troops in 6742 AM/1234 AD are characterized by the authors of the chronicle as local martyrs to the faith, who never hesitated to shed their blood in defense of *Sophia* and Christianity: *покои Господи дѹша ихъ въ царствии небесномѣ, проливъшихъ крови своя за святѹю Софѣю и за кровь крестиянскѹю*⁴³. The citizens of Novgorod the Great declared their willingness to die for the patroness of their city during the Tatar invasion in 6767 AM/1259 AD: *умремѣ честно за святѹю Софѣю и за домы церковныя*⁴⁴. In 6776 AM/1268 AD in a battle with the forces of the Teutonic Knights, which involved huge losses, many citizens of the Republic were again forced – according to information in the chronicle of Novgorod – to shed blood in defense of the independence of their homeland and save the honor of God’s Wisdom: *главами покывающе за святѹю Софѣю [...] кровь свою пролияша за святѹю Софѣю, живот свои отдавшѣ честно*⁴⁵.

In the year 6809 AM (1301 AD), there is a passage that shows that the figure of personified Wisdom was invoked by Novgorodians not only on the occasion of defensive actions aimed at repelling an external threat, but also during a military campaign of the Republic. The traditional formula (*главы своя положиша за святѹю Софѣю*) appears in a description of the siege and capture by the troops of Novgorod of a castle built by the Swedes (most probably the future Schlüsselburg fortress)⁴⁶.

The latest references, including the phrase interesting to us, can be found – of course – in the account of events of the Republic’s struggles with the troops of the Moscow princes, who wanted to gradually reduce the sovereignty of Novgorod. For example, in 6906 AM/1398 AD the citizens of the city on the Volkhov River, raising in revolt against the expansionist tendencies of Prince Vasili I, declared openly that they would prefer to die in defense of *Sophia* and their Lord Novgorod the Great than endure harm and humiliation from the Moscow authorities: *свои головы положиши за святѹю Софѣю и за своего господина за великий Новѣгород [...] лучши, братие, нам изомрети за святѹю Софѣю, нежели въ обидѣ быти от своего князя великаго*⁴⁷.

Among the passages on *Sophia* – the personified Wisdom of God – scattered in the chronicles of Novgorod, special attention should be paid – due to their ideological significance – to two passages relating to events from the 13th century. In the year 6723 AM (1216 AD), there is a quote about Mstislav Mstislavich, who held the office of Prince of Novgorod in the years 1210–1215 AD and 1216–1218 AD, which proves the fact that at that time, *Sophia* and the cathedral dedicated to her constituted an undeniable symbol of independence and political identity

1989, p. 109; А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 207; В.Л. ЯНИН, *Очерки истории...*, p. 67.

⁴³ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6742, p. 73, 284.

⁴⁴ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6767, p. 82, 310. А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

⁴⁵ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6776, p. 87, 317–318.

⁴⁶ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6809, p. 91, 331. Т.А. СИДОРОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

⁴⁷ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6906, p. 391–392.

of Novgorod the Great. Encouraging the citizens who gathered in a *veche* to take military action against his political competitor, Yaroslav Vsevolodovich, who resided then in Torzhok⁴⁸, he said – according to the authors of the chronicle – the following very significant words: **НЕ БУДЕТ НОВЫИ ТОРГЪ НАД НОВЫИГОРОДОМЪ, НИ НОВЪГОРОД ПОД ТОРЖЬКОМЪ, НЪ ГДѢ СВЯТАЯ СОФІЯ, И ТУ И НОВЪГОРОД; А ВЪ МНОЗѢ БОГЪ, И В МАЛѢ БОГЪ И ПРАВДА**⁴⁹.

A statement of a Novgorodian, Lazar Moisievič, cited by the authors of the chronicle in the context of the events of the year 6778 AM (1270 AD), seems to be important. Interestingly, it appears – like many of the above-mentioned passages relating to the figure of the personified Wisdom of God – in the description of a dispute of the Republic with the prince who was trying to impose his rule. This time the course of events can be reconstructed as follows: the ruler of Tver and the Grand Prince Yaroslav Yaroslavich, who also ruled for a few years in Novgorod, in an attempt to place the city on the Volkhov River under his command, asked the Golden Horde for help. When the military intervention of the Tatars under the leadership of Mengü-Temir failed to force Novgorod to surrender, Yaroslav Yaroslavich tried to peacefully settle his relations with the Republic⁵⁰. The legation sent by the Novgorodians, however, refused to submit to his authority, arguing the will of the *veche* in the following way: **КНЯЖЕ, СДУМАЛЪ ЕСИ НА СВЯТЮЮ СОФІЮ; И ТЫ ПОИДИ, ДАЖЬ ИЗОМРЕМЪ ЧЕСТНО ЗА СВЯТЮЮ СОФІЮ; У НАС КНЯЗЯ НѢТУ, НЪ БОГЪ И ПРАВДА И СВЯТАЯ СОФІЯ, А ТЕБЕ НЕ ХОЩЕМЪ**⁵¹. The above passage shows in a general and clear way the nature of the political system of Novgorod the Great: the citizens of the Republic seem to fully and consciously reject monarchical power, putting emphasis on the fact that their sovereign and guardian can only be God or *Sophia* – the personified Wisdom of God.

At this point, however, a doubt appears: some researchers are willing to say that the references to *Sophia* in the chronicles of Northern Rus' are related not to the hypostatic form of the Wisdom of God, but to the cathedral dedicated to her. In the literature one can even come across a thesis that the issue under discussion is essentially a reflection of a wide phenomenon, typical of Old Russian culture, meaning the perception of a particular temple as a kind of symbol, a visible sign of

⁴⁸ А.М. АММАНН, *op. cit.*, p. 133; Д.С. ЛИХАЧЕВ, *Новгород Великий...*, p. 46; Г.Р. ФЕДОТОВ, *The Russian Religious Mind...*, II, p. 176; К. ЗЕРНАСК, *op. cit.*, p. 157–158; Т.А. СИДОРОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 217; Д. ФЕННЕЛ, *op. cit.*, p. 86, 94; А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 206; Г. КОЛПАКОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 60, 84; В. ТУЛУПОВ, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁴⁹ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6723, p. 254. *Novi-torg shall not be Novgorod, nor shall Novgorod be Torzhok. But where St. Sophia is there is Novgorod. God is in the many, but God and justice are also in the few. The Chronicle of Novgorod*, AM 6723, p. 55.

⁵⁰ К. ЗЕРНАСК, *op. cit.*, p. 170–171; Д. ФЕННЕЛ, *op. cit.*, p. 171–172; В.Л. ЯНИН, *Очерки истории...*, p. 91–92.

⁵¹ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6778, p. 320–321. *Knyaz, thou has taken counsel against St. Sophia; come on, that we may die honourably for St. Sophia. We have no Knyaz, but God and the truth and St. Sophia; and we do not want thee. The Chronicle of Novgorod*, AM 6778, p. 105.

being, that it was dedicated to⁵². For example: in the oldest chronicle of Novgorod in the year 6807 AM (1299 AD) it can be read that Dovmont, Prince of Pskov, suffered acutely because of *St. Sophia and the Holy Trinity* (много пострадавъ за святую Софию и за святую Троицу)⁵³. Some researchers think that the terms appearing in the quoted phrase should be understood as terms for specific churches, not the Wisdom of God and the Holy Trinity as spiritual beings⁵⁴. However, attention should be paid to the fact that the message of the chronicle is quite ambiguous at this point, and does not allow final conclusions to be drawn. Another part of the chronicle of Novgorod, which refers to the events of 6746 AM/1239 AD, seems much more distinct in its meaning. There is an unequivocal ascertainment that it was not the personified Wisdom of God that protected Novgorod against external threat, but the cathedral dedicated to her: Новъ же градъ заступи Богъ и святая и великая соборная и апостольская церковь святая Софиѧ⁵⁵. It should be noted, however, that this type of record is rare in the analyzed sources. There are expressions which prevail and can be interpreted in two ways (*St. Sophia* as a cathedral and as a separate spiritual being). What is more, reading about God's Wisdom protecting the Republic against the invasion of the enemy army or selecting the Archbishop of Novgorod, there are no doubts as to what (or rather – whom) the creator of the chronicle had in mind in this case.

Additional comparative material is also provided by normative sources which originated in the Novgorod environment. However, one should strongly stress here that, contrary to an opinion that is well established in the literature on the subject⁵⁶, the figure of *Sophia* – God's Wisdom appears relatively rarely in the documents of the Republic. References to this figure are, nevertheless, interesting enough to devote a few sentences to them.

Most likely, the oldest document from Novgorod containing the element under our consideration would be the so-called *Ustav* of Vsevolod – a compilation of legal texts based on the famous *Ustav* of Prince Vladimir I Svyatoslavich. The compilation is currently dated to the 13th century and attributed by some experts in the subject (e.g. V.L. Yanin) to Vsevolod Mstislavich, who reigned in Novgorod the Great between 1219 AD and 1221 AD⁵⁷. In the introductory part of this source, in a description of levies established by Prince Vladimir I Svyatoslavich on behalf of the so-called Church of the Tithes he had erected in Kiev, we encounter a statement that these tributes are due, in fact, to the Savior, the Mother of God, and

⁵² А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 211; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

⁵³ *Нов. пер. лет.*, АМ 6807, p. 330. А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

⁵⁴ С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

⁵⁵ *Нов. пер. лет.*, АМ 6746, p. 289. А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 211; В.Л. ЯНИН, *Очерки истории...*, p. 74.

⁵⁶ Г.П. ФЕДОТОВ, *Республика Святой Софии...*, p. 28; ИДЕМ, *The Russian Religious Mind...*, II, p. 191; С. , *op. cit.*, p. 261; О.В. КУЗЬМИНА, *op. cit.*, p. 3; В. ТУЛУПОВ, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

⁵⁷ Я.Н. ЩАПОВ, *Княжеские уставы и церковь в Древней Руси XI–XIV вв.*, Москва 1972, p. 165–177; *Российское законодательство X–XX вв.*, ed. О.И. ЧИСТЯКОВ, vol. I, *Законодательство Древней Руси*, ed. В.Т. ПАШУТО, Москва 1984, p. 249, 254.

St. *Sophia* (святому Спасу и пречистей его матери и премудрости Божии святей Софии)⁵⁸. Therefore, it is easy to see that *Sophia* is presented here as an independent being, almost equal in rank to the Son of God and his Mother.

The figure of the personified Wisdom of God also appears in the text of a trade and diplomatic contract between the authorities of Novgorod the Great and Lübeck in 1301 AD. Interestingly, in this document *Sophia* is mentioned – besides God and the Prince of Novgorod – as the owner of lands governed by the Republic: *lant des almechtigen Godes unde der hilgen Sophie unde des groten koninges van Nowarden*⁵⁹. In the 15th century, the name of *Sophia* was evoked sporadically in invocations of documents issued by the archbishops of Novgorod or the authorities of the Republic on the Volkhov River. For example, an act by Archbishop Feofil, dated to 1473–1474 AD, begins with the words: милостию Божию и святых Софи⁶⁰. A much more elaborate formula precedes the text of an agreement between Novgorod and the Bishop of Yurev, signed on 13th January 1474 AD. Here, the personified Wisdom of God is mentioned along with the Creator and the Holy Trinity: милостью Божьею, стояниемъ святых Софи промудрости Божии, и стояниемъ святых живоначальных Троица⁶¹.

A thesis assuming that the citizens of Novgorod the Great perceived *Sophia* – the personified Wisdom of God – as an autonomous spiritual being, almost independent from God Himself and therefore able to play the role of a patroness, a protector of the Republic, and a depository of supreme political power⁶², is also corroborated by the surviving numismatic material from the area of Northern Rus'. In light of the current state of research, it is unquestionable that in around 1420 AD, the city on the Volkhov River began to produce its own coins⁶³. Moreover,

⁵⁸ Устав великого князя Всеволода о церковных судах, и о людех, и о мерах торговых, [in:] *Российское законодательство X–XX вв.*, р. 250.

⁵⁹ Грамота Новгорода Любеку о торговле и присылке послов для переговоров по поводу захвата невского пути Швецией, [in:] *Грамоты Великого Новгорода и Пскова*..., 33, р. 62–63. The reference under discussion may refer both to the personified Wisdom and the cathedral dedicated to her, which, after all, used to own vast land estates in the area of the Novgorod Republic.

⁶⁰ Вкладная новгородского архиепископа Феофила Вяжицкому монастырю на церковь св. Николы в Шунге, [in:] *Грамоты Великого Новгорода и Пскова*..., 315, р. 305. С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *op. cit.*, р. 261.

⁶¹ Договорная грамота Великого Новгорода и Пскова с епископом юрьевским о перемирии на 30 лет, [in:] *Грамоты Великого Новгорода и Пскова*..., 78, р. 133. Perhaps the terms used in the quote under analysis should be understood as the names of churches rather than specific spiritual beings. This would somewhat explain the theological contradiction, resulting, in the source under discussion, from the evocation of God and the Holy Trinity as two separate beings. С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *op. cit.*, р. 261.

⁶² Г.П. ФЕДОТОВ, *Республика Святой Софии*..., р. 28; ИДЕМ, *The Russian Religious Mind*..., II, р. 191; А.С. ХОРОШЕВ, *op. cit.*, р. 209; С.Ж. НАЛПЕРИН, *op. cit.*, р. 347, 353, 361–362; О.В. КУЗЬМИНА, *op. cit.*, р. 53; В. ТУЛУПОВ, *op. cit.*, р. 61, 84–85, 88.

⁶³ В.Н. ЛАЗАРЕВ, *Мозаики Софии Киевской*, Москва 1960, р. 20; Т.А. СИДОРОВА, *op. cit.*, р. 218; Р. ВАЛСАРЕК, *The Image of Sophia in Medieval Russian Iconography and its Sources*, Bsl 60, 1999, р. 606, 610; С.Ж. НАЛПЕРИН, *op. cit.*, р. 347; А. ДЕУНЕКА, *op. cit.*, р. 29; О.В. КУЗЬМИНА, *op. cit.*,

the numismatic items that have survived until our age allow us to claim that Novgorod's iconographic program would differ from the images traditionally put on Russian metal money of the late Middle Ages. The 15th century citizens of Novgorod dared to adorn the reverse of the coins they minted with a quite enigmatic composition (the obverse, most likely, usually bore the inscription: **ВѢЛИКОГО НОВГОРОДА**)⁶⁴. Two figures were shown on the artifact under discussion: one of them, depicted enthroned, with an open crown on her head, seems to accept homage from the other one kneeling before her. On the basis of a detailed iconographical analysis of the image, V.L. Yanin, an expert in the history and culture of medieval Novgorod (as well as many other scholars following him), is inclined to think that the reverse of the Republic's coins bore a depiction of *Sophia* – the personified Wisdom of God – shown with angel wings, in emperor's gowns and with an insignia of monarchical power (as on *Sophia*-icons made in Novgorod workshops since the 15th century). The portrait of the protector of the city on the Volkhov River was usually accompanied by a depiction of a *posadnik* receiving a symbol of supreme power in the Republic (possibly a shield, a belt or a seal) from the hands of his heavenly superior⁶⁵.

Sometimes, we find another image on the reverse of Novgorod coins: a depiction of a woman's head with long hair pinned up around her face. However, one should pay attention to the fact that the temples of this figure are adorned by an open crown, strikingly similar to the one appearing on iconic depictions of *Sophia* enthroned, characteristic of the art of the Novgorodian area in the late Middle Ages⁶⁶. Such artifacts would corroborate the thesis that the figure depicted on the coins of the Republic on the Volkhov River was its divine protector – the personified Wisdom of God.

The uniqueness of the compositions discussed above in the context of the entirety of depictions characteristic of Russian metal money of the late Middle Ages prompts a question about the genesis of the iconographic program of Novgorod coins. V.L. Yanin, having compared the analyzed artifacts with relics of West European numismatics, drew some surprising conclusions. First of all, he emphasized the fact that there is a large similarity between the scheme under consideration

р. 54; В.Л. ЯНИН, *Очерки истории...*, р. 168, 231, 250; ИДЕМ, *Денежновесовые системы домонгольской Руси и очерки истории денежной системы средневекового Новгорода*, Москва 2009, р. 186; А. MUSIN, *Russian Medieval Culture as an „Area of Preservation” of the Byzantine Civilization*, [in:] *Towards Rewriting? New Approaches to Byzantine Archaeology and Art. Proceedings of the Symposium on Byzantine Art and Archaeology. Cracow, September 8–10, 2008*, ed. P.Ł. GROTOWSKI, S. SKRZYNIARZ, Warsaw 2010 [= SB.SBPA, 8], р. 34.

⁶⁴ С.Ј. HALPERIN, *op. cit.*, р. 347; В.Л. ЯНИН, *Денежновесовые системы...*, р. 186; В. ТУЛУПОВ, *op. cit.*, р. 106.

⁶⁵ Т.А. СИДОРОВА, *op. cit.*, р. 218; Р. VALCAREK, *op. cit.*, р. 606, 610; С.Ј. HALPERIN, *op. cit.*, р. 362; А. ДЕУНЕКА, *op. cit.*, р. 29; О.В. КУЗЬМИНА, *op. cit.*, р. 54; В.Л. ЯНИН, *Очерки истории...*, р. 167–168, 231, 250; ИДЕМ, *Денежновесовые системы...*, р. 149, 186–189; В. ТУЛУПОВ, *op. cit.*, р. 106.

⁶⁶ А. MUSIN, *op. cit.*, р. 34.

and an image appearing on the reverse of Venetian coins and seals from the 13th to the 18th century. Like the relics from Novgorod, we find them bearing a depiction of two figures: a kneeling doge receiving the insignia of power from the patron saint of the Republic, St. Mark, standing in front of him⁶⁷.

The fact that some elements of the Venetian system of the self-presentation of power was adopted in Novgorod seems to be substantiated by the similarity of the sociopolitical system of both merchant republics. The matter, however, is complicated by the fact that contacts between Novgorod and Venice are scarcely ever documented in sources. The chronicles of Northern Rus' mention the city of St. Mark only incidentally, e.g. in the year 6712 AM (1204 AD), in a description of the conquest of Constantinople during the IV Crusade: *Дужь слепын от Маркова острова Венедикъ*⁶⁸. Admittedly, archeological excavations confirm the presence of items of Italian origin in the territory of Novgorod the Great⁶⁹, although they do not allow us to unambiguously determine how, in what circumstances, and in which period these relics reached the city on the Volkhov River.

Y.L. Shchapova, researching imports of Venetian glass discovered in the territory under consideration, advanced an interesting hypothesis assuming that under emperor Charles IV of Luxembourg, the trade route connecting Northern Italy with the Flemish city of Bruges had increased in significance. The products of Venetian craft, having reached North European markets, were to be sold further in many Hanseatic cities, including Lübeck⁷⁰. If we take into consideration the close contact between Novgorod the Great and the Hanseatic League, the penetration of Venetian goods (and possibly coins as well) into the area of the Russian Republic will occur to us as a quite likely fact.

In the context of the sources analyzed above (historiographical, normative and numismatic), another issue is absolutely unquestionable: the image of *Sophia* – the personified Wisdom of God – occupied a prominent place in the spiritual and political culture of Novgorod the Great. Most probably during the 13th century, the area under discussion saw the emergence of a belief that the patroness of the city cathedral might be regarded as a kind of divine protector of the Republic, a guardian or guarantor of its sovereignty and political independence. Simultaneously, as stressed by Georgi Fedotov⁷¹, a characteristic feature of Novgorod thought is that there remains a lack of unambiguous clarification as to who – from a theological viewpoint – the hypostatic Wisdom is. Having excluded the identification

⁶⁷ О.В. Кузьмина, *op. cit.*, p. 54; В.Л. Янин, *Очерки истории...*, p. 168, 231, 250; ИДЕМ, *Денежновесовые системы...*, p. 188–189.

⁶⁸ *Нов. пер. лет.*, AM 6712, p. 49, 245.

⁶⁹ В.Л. Янин, *Денежновесовые системы...*, p. 190.

⁷⁰ Ю.Л. Щапова, *Новый взгляд на две новгородские находки (Венецианское стекло в Новгороде)*, [in:] *История и культура древнерусского города*, ed. Г.А. ФЕДОРОВ–ДАВЫДОВ, Москва 1989, p. 84–86.

⁷¹ G.P. ФЕДОРОВ, *The Russian Religious Mind...*, II, p. 191.

of *Sophia* with the Son of God, the incarnated *Logos*, so typical of the patristic and Byzantine tradition⁷², it seems that the medieval Russians had no need to search for a deeper philosophical substantiation of their beliefs and imaginations.

Abstract. The idea of *Sophia* – the personified Wisdom of God served as a symbol of independence and identity of the republic in the political culture of Novgorod the Great. In Old Russian chronicles and other narrative sources which can be connected with Novgorod, one may find statements showing that – in the eyes of the Novgorodians themselves – Wisdom was not only one of the main attributes of God, but also a separate character, a kind of divine being, who could be interpreted as patronesses and supernatural protector of the city-state. Construction of the temple of *Hagia Sophia* in Novgorod is usually dated to 1045–1050. In the source material one can find information that Novgorodian *Sophia* church was undoubtedly the most significant and important monument in the city. The theme of Wisdom of God is also a very prominent topic in Novgorodian historiography and literature. Moreover, the feminine personification of God's Wisdom can also be found on the coins, emitted by the city-state from 1420.

Keywords: *Sophia*, Divine Wisdom, Novgorod the Great, political ideology, Old Russian literature

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⁷² A.M. AMMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 120; J. MEYENDORFF, *L'icographie de la Sagesse Divine dans la tradition byzantine*, CAr 10, 1959, p. 260–262; IDEM, *Wisdom–Sophia: Contrasting Approaches to a Complex Theme*, DOP 41, 1987, p. 391–392; С.Н. ТРУБЕЦКОЙ, *О святой Софии, Премудрости Божией*, ВФ 9, 1995, p. 123; M. SZRAM, *Chrystus – Mądrość Boża według Orygenesusa*, Lublin 1997; L. MISIARCZYK, *Midraszyczne korzenie chrystologicznej interpretacji Prz 8, 22 w „Dialogu” Justyna Męczennika*, CT 70, 2000, p. 93–107; S. STRĘKOWSKI, *Sofiologia św. Grzegorza z Nyssy. Elementy teologii trynitarniej i antropologii w „Homiliach” do „Pieśni nad Pieśniami”*, Kraków 2006; Н.Н. БАХАРЕВА, *Образ Премудрости из Притч Соломоновых в восточно-христианской экзегетике*, ВНУ 1/6, 2007, p. 123–128; Г. ФЛОРОВСКИЙ, *Византийские Отцы V–VIII вв.*, Москва 2007; С. ЗОЛОТАРЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 232–240; Е.Б. ГРОМОВА, *„Премудрость созда себе дом...” в богословской и изобразительной традиции XIV в.*, [in:] *Сербско-русские литературные и культурные связи XIV–XX вв.*, ed. Л.К. ГАВРЮШИНА, Санкт-Петербург 2009, p. 9–12; Z. BRZOWSKA, *Sofia Mądrość Boża – przymiot, energia czy odrębna osoba Boska w teologii Kościoła wschodniego (do XV w.)*, Hy 20, 2013, p. 1–21.