



[DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.57.001](https://doi.org/10.35549/HR.2026.2026.57.001)

Original paper



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## **Dvina during the Reign of Ivan IV**

### **Abstract**

The article examines the distinctive society of the Dvina region, the northernmost periphery of Muscovy on the White Sea (Pomor'e), as reflected in a collection of over 200 underutilized charters. Dvina lacked gentry or boyars; its population consisted of peasants and clergy. Socially it still have some elements in common with Central Muscovy, although often with a local twist. For example, Dvina followed Central Muscovite usage of denying redemption in sales or donation charters although they did not need to, but never authorized anyone to exercise the right of redemption. Families engaged in collective businesses, but without the dominance of brother-with-brother co-ownership. Evidence of Dvina resident identity is meager, but at least the word Dviniane for "Dvinians" existed. Particular attention is devoted to the role of secretaries, who, in addition to physically writing charters, also served as witnesses, a phenomenon that occurs very rarely in Central Muscovy but stands out here and certainly merits further study in Central Muscovy. This pattern sheds light both upon Muscovite documentary practice, a secretary could no witness a charter he wrote, society, peasants must have enjoyed close rela-


tions with secretaries to afford them the opportunity to produce over three-quarters of the documents which have identified writers.

**Keywords:**

Dvina; Pomor'e; Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible); Secretaries; Witnesses

**For citation:**

Charles J. Halperin. "Dvina during the Reign of Ivan IV" // The Historical Reporter. 2026. Vol. 57. P. 10–45. [DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.57.001](https://doi.org/10.35549/HR.2026.2026.57.001)



**I**n his classic study of the geography of sixteenth-century Russia, *Russia in the Sixteenth Century*, Mikhail Nikolae-vich Tikhomirov identified the salient social and economic characteristics of the far north Dvina, also called “By the Sea” (*Pomor’e*) referring to the White Sea. Compared to the rest of Muscovy socially Dvina lacked gentry (*deti boiarskie*, singular *syn boiarskii*), let alone boyars. “Black” peasants, who had no private owner and lived on government-owned land, and “household” (*Dvor*) peasants, who lived on land owned by the royal family, dominated the population. Salt-extraction and fishing, not agriculture, dominated the economy<sup>1</sup>. This article will explore additional similarities and dissimilarities between Dvina and central Muscovy on the basis of an apparently underutilized<sup>2</sup> collection of documents published in 1922, *Collection of Charters from the Economic College*, volume 1, *Charters*

<sup>1</sup> M.N. Tikhomirov, *Rossia v XVI stoletii* (Russia in the 16th century) / M, 1962. P. 227–40.

<sup>2</sup> I spot-checked to see if the secretaries (d'iaki) mentioned in these documents appear in S.B. Veselovskii, *D'iaki i pod'iachie XV–XVII vv.* (Secretaries and Under-secretaries of the 15th – 17th centuries) / M, 1975. They do not.

from the *Dvina District*<sup>3</sup>. This volume contains 640 documents, 206 of which (no. 72 – no. 277), date to the reign of Ivan IV. Only two documents (no. 126 and 138), were previously published, and these publications remain fairly inaccessible<sup>4</sup>.

My focus is on both the form of the documents and their contents. No article could do justice to all the fascinating issues raised by this source base, but I will at least introduce as many themes as possible in the hope of encouraging further study. Who physically wrote the documents and who witnessed them will receive special attention. The unique social composition of Dvina society had a side effect that distinguishes this body of sources from other document publications from Ivan's reign, the relatively common appearance of secretaries as witnesses to legal transactions, sometimes even two secretaries in one document. Elsewhere boyar and gentry primaries (who initiated the transaction) almost never utilized secretaries as witnesses, and never more than one per document<sup>5</sup>. Despite their role as witnesses and writers of documents, secretaries never appear as primaries. Dvina peasant primaries used secretaries not only to write the documents, but to witness and sign them too (although never in a document that they wrote). This unique Dvina documentary feature provides a new insight into Muscovite society during the reign of Ivan IV.

We begin by characterizing the source base as a whole.

## Dvina Documents

The chronology of the Dvina records reflects an interesting particularity. Table 1 shows the distribution of records per year<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Sbornik gramot kolegii ekonomii, tom 1: Gramoty Dvinskogo uezda (Collection of Charters of the College of Economy) / Vol. 1: Charters of the Dvina District). SPb, 1922.

<sup>4</sup> I will refer to documents in the text in parentheses (except in tables) by their document number in Sbornik gramot kolegii ekonomii, tom 1 (Collection of Charters of the College of Economy).

<sup>5</sup> This contrast should be taken very tentatively given the current state of research; see below.

<sup>6</sup> I have consistently dated documents that extended over multiple CE years to the latest year.

*Table 1: Dvina Documents by Year*

Year	Quantity	Document numbers
1534	3	no. 72–74
1535	2	no. 75–76
1536	0	
1537	3	no. 77–79
1538	3	no. 80–82
1539	3	no. 83–85
1540	4	no. 86–89
1541	5	no. 90–94
1542	2	no. 95–96
1543	9	no. 97–105
1544	2	no. 106–7
1545	3	no. 108–10
1546	3	no. 111–113
1547	4	no. 114–117
1548	2	no. 118–119
1549	7	no. 120–126
1550	6	no. 127–132
1551	3	no. 133–135
1553	3	no. 136–138
1554	4	no. 139–142
1555	2	no. 143–144
1556	7	no. 145–151
1557	3	no. 152–154
1558	2	no. 155–156
1559	1	no. 157
1560	2	no. 158–159
1561	2	no. 160–161
1562	3	no. 162–164
1563	1	no. 165
1564	2	no. 166–167

Year	Quantity	Document numbers
1565	1	no. 168
1566	2	no. 169–170
1567	3	no. 171–173
1568	2	no. 174–175
1569	2	no. 176–177
1570	4	no. 178–181
1571	9	no. 182–190
1572	4	no. 191–194
1573	5	no. 195–200
1574	3	no. 200–202
1575	7	no. 203–209
1576	7	no. 210–216
1577	4	no. 217–220
1578	4	no. 221–224
1579	3	no. 225–227
1580	7	no. 228–234
1581	18	no. 235–252
1582	14	no. 253–266
1583	9	no. 267–275
1584	2	no. 276–277

The evenness of the distribution of documents is notable; there is only one zero-document full year (I omit the partial year 1533) for the entirety of Ivan's reign. Even more intriguing is a major difference from nearly all document data bases in annual distribution. Elsewhere there is almost always a spurt in document production during the *oprichnina*, occasioned in large measure by the uncertainty of the times and reflected most of all in donations to monasteries and sales by fearful boyars and gentry<sup>7</sup>. While we shall see that these document types

<sup>7</sup> The *oprichnina*, the state-within-a-state with which Ivan launched mass terror against the Muscovite population, was created in 1565 and abolished in 1572.

still predominate in Dvina, the biggest spike in document production comes well after the *oprichnina*, during 1581–1582. These years produced the highest numbers of documents, 18 and 14, together containing 32 of the 206 records. Including 1583, with 9 records, these three years account for 41 of the 206 documents. Both positive and negative factors may explain this pattern. Negatively, although Dvina was included in the *oprichnina*, it lacked the gentry who initiated the sales and donations of estates that increased document production elsewhere. Positively, the increase in Dvina document generation might reflect economic development as a result of the White Sea trade increased by the English and Dutch in Khmologory that led to the creation of Arkhangel'sk; both cities were located in Dvina.

Table 2 shows the breakdown of documents by document type.

*Table 2: Type of Document*

Document Type	Quantity	Document Numbers
bill of sale	71	no. 74, 78, 82, 84, 86, 92, 93, 94, 98, 100, 101, 108, 110, 111, 116, 121, 123, 131, 132, 133, 134, 136, 148, 150, 159, 161, 164, 166, 192, 194, 195, 196, 200, 202, 205, 209, 210, 217, 218, 222, 225, 226, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 237, 239, 240, 233, 242, 243, 248, 249, 251, 256, 257, 260, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 269, 270, 271, 273, 274, 275, 277
court decision	1	no. 76
donation	67	no. 79, 83, 90, 102, 104, 105, 106, 107, 113, 114, 119, 120, 125, 127, 128, 130, 137, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 147, 149, 152, 153, 154, 157, 160, 163, 167, 168, 170, 172, 177, 179, 180, 181, 183, 184, 187, 188, 191, 193, 197, 198, 201, 203, 204, 206, 208, 212, 214, 229, 235, 236, 238, 244, 245, 247, 250, 252, 253, 258, 259, 272
extract <sup>8</sup>	3	no. 89, 103, 219
Ivan grant	10	no. 96, 97, 109, 221, 228, 254, 255, 262, 267, 276
memo	1	no. 155

<sup>8</sup> *otpis'*.

Document Type	Quantity	Document Numbers
mortgage <sup>9</sup>	4	no. 145, 176, 190, 227
mortgage <sup>10</sup>	2	no. 118, 178, 181
note <sup>11</sup>	1	no. 183
peaceful agreement <sup>12</sup>	1	no. 261
report <sup>13</sup>	1	no. 117
renunciation <sup>14</sup>	29	no. 72, 73, 75, 85, 87, 88, 95, 122, 124, 126, 129, 135, 146, 151, 158, 171, 173, 175, 182, 185, 186, 189, 199, 211, 213, 215, 216, 224, 246, 173
tax assessment <sup>15</sup>	2	no. 138, 165
testament	3	no. 80, 115, 162
transaction <sup>16</sup>	4	no. 77, 91, 99, 174

The documents issued by Ivan occasion no surprise, mostly responses to petitions by monasteries that officials had disregarded their fiscal immunities or that peasants had trespassed upon their territory. The predominance of donations and bills of sale is standard<sup>17</sup>. As in the central regions, donations stipulated that the donor could continue to live on the donated property until his death (no. 83, 137, 145, 163, 177, 204, 206). The significant number of renunciations might

<sup>9</sup> *vkladnaia*.

<sup>10</sup> *zakladnaia*; *vkladnaia* and *zakladnaia* may differ in point of view, the mortgagee and mortgager.

<sup>11</sup> *zapis'*.

<sup>12</sup> *mirovaia*, a voluntary agreement.

<sup>13</sup> *dokladnaia*.

<sup>14</sup> *otstupnaia*, a declaration renouncing responsibility for a property.

<sup>15</sup> *sotsnaia*.

<sup>16</sup> *del'naia*.

<sup>17</sup> Because there were no lords (gentry or boyars) over the peasants who owned patrimonies or held conditional land-grants, there are no obedience (*poslushnye*) charters from Dvina. There was no need to inform peasants of their new masters because they had no masters. See *Charles J. Halperin*. Obedience Charters during the Reign of Ivan IV // *Russian History*. V. 52, no. 1. 2024. P. 131–53.

be somewhat surprising. I had not seen that document type in much evidence, at least under that name, in documents from the central region. Renunciations could be of several types; I will mention one type below in discussing Dvina society.

Identifying individuals mentioned in the documents encounters the usual obstacles. Connecting nicknames to standard names is not always easy. Sometimes geographic terms can be confused with family names. Patronymics in the form of “Ivan the son of Ivan” (Ivan Ivanov syn) not infrequently omit the word “son”; one must then decide if “Ivanov” is an incomplete patronymic or if it is a family name. Identifying secretaries is complicated by the fact that the secretaries, peasants and clergy who wrote documents failed to identify every secretary as a secretary every time his name appeared. My principle was “once a secretary, always a secretary”, on the principle that it is more likely that the writer thought it unnecessary to repeat the secretary’s occupation than that a careless writer ascribed the status of secretary to someone who was not. I have spared the reader the tedium of explaining each and every resolution of these conundrums in the names of the witnesses and the “writers” of each document, and the application of the term “secretary” to writers.

### Dvina and Muscovy

Dvina was obviously geographically peripheral to Moscow, but it was not altogether isolated from the Muscovite government or Muscovite current events, as Ivan’s involvement in local affairs testifies. As mentioned, Dvina was incorporated into the *oprichnina* and did include the port-of-entry of English merchants. Unfortunately the only Dvina chronicle is late, of seventeenth-century provenance, and cannot shed any light on the reactions of the Dvina population to either<sup>18</sup>. This set of Dvina documents concentrates on private affairs. There is no indication

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<sup>18</sup> Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei [hereafter PSRL], tom 33: Kholmogorskaia letopis’. Dvinskoi letopisets (Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, v. 33 Kholmogory Chronicle. Dvina Chronicle) / L., 1977. P. 149–50.

here of the big events of Ivan's reign — the conquest of Kazan', the Livonian War, the *oprichnina*, or the installation of Symeon Bekbulatovich as grand prince. Perhaps we should not expect any. Prisoners-of-war from Livonia and Lithuania were sent to Kazan', not Dvina. Tatars, Muslim or converts, who entered Muscovite service after the conquests of Kazan' and Astrakhan' were granted agricultural and animal husbandry properties in the Novgorod region. We might have seen some reference to English merchants, who were there and active, but there are none. The lack of gentry to repress and hence of gentry allodial or conditional-land to reassign easily explains the absence of references to the *oprichnina* or even its side-effects<sup>19</sup>. Not everyone got the word after Ivan's coronation that he should now be referred to as "tsar and grand prince", not just "grand prince", but only three documents committed that disrespectful faux pax (no. 124, 129, 135), ranging from 1549 to 1551, a mistake also sometimes made in documents written closer to Moscow. How the Dvina documents compare to other Muscovite documents in terms of legal terminology and practice remains to be seen.

## Women

The place of women in Muscovy has been the subject of much very useful research, even if there is no consensus on whether women's rights were increasing or decreasing during Ivan's reign<sup>20</sup>. Women, as wives, widows, and daughters, could acquire land in Dvina via dowery, inheritance or sale, and could sell or donate land, sometimes in conjunction with their husbands, sometimes alone (no. 75, 98, 105, 107, 113, 186, 193, 202; this list is not comprehensive). However, lest anyone carelessly assume that in Muscovy only upper-class women had these rights, the Dvina documents show that lower-class women did so also. Three records colorfully illustrate the human dimension of such trans-

<sup>19</sup> Compare *Charles J. Halperin*. Contemporary Russian Perceptions of Ivan IV's *Oprichnina* // *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*. V. 18. No. 1. 2017. P. 95–124.

<sup>20</sup> *Charles J. Halperin*. Ivan the Terrible: Free to Reward and Free to Punish / Pittsburgh, 2019. P. 232–33.

actions: the husbands of two sisters dispose of their inherited property (no.160), a husband sells his wife's dowry property, originally provided by her aunt (no. 202, 205), and a man and his wife renounced a property whose previous owner was her first husband (no. 213).

## Redemption

The legal concept of *vykup*, “redeeming”, i.e. reversing, a donation or sale, was known in Dvina<sup>21</sup>. Many documents declare that their sales or donations were “without redemption”, meaning the donor or vendor renounced the right to change his mind. Like elsewhere in Muscovy, vendors after the issuance of the *Sudebnik* (Law Code) of 1550 continued gratuitously to deny the rights of sons and grandsons to redeem their sales, although the Law Code declared that sons and grandsons never had the right to do so. Sometimes, however, the legal language is less technical. Instead of invoking redemption, vendors and donors declare that they and specified relatives had “no further business” (*delo*) with the property at issue (for example, no. 141, 143, 151, 162, 203, and many more). In so doing they occasionally use the word *plemia*, literally “tribe”, which in the form *rod i plemia*, “clan and tribe”, is best translated as “kith and kin”. However, it is not at all clear what the term *plemia* meant in these documents (no. 140, 235, 252, 269). In addition, even after the *Sudebnik* forbade redemption of donations to monasteries, donors continued unnecessarily to revoke redemption for themselves or other relatives, again either explicitly by referring to redemption or indirectly by forbidding any subsequent “business” relevant to these properties (for example, no. 139, 140, 141, 143, and many more). The Dvina documents differ from the “normal” country-wide use of redemption, however, in that they never authorize redemption by anyone. Because no one could redeem a property, there was no need for any such document to set a redemption price. Moreover,

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<sup>21</sup> Charles J. Halperin. Redemption (выкуп) of Land in Muscovy during the Reign of Ivan IV // *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*. V. 24. No. 2. 2023. P. 721–52.

documents use the verbal form of redemption, *vykupati* (to redeem), to apply to paying off liens (including mortgages) on an estate as part of the process of clearing title to a property (no. 81, 133, 218, 226, 237, 257). I do not recall seeing the verb used that way elsewhere. Why no one thought to authorize redemption of property might have something to do with the way families joined together for business.

### Family Business

Of course relatives engaged in joint economic activities in Dvina, but there was a significant difference. In the Center, gentry families co-owned agricultural estates<sup>22</sup>, but in Dvina peasant relatives had “shares” in extractive enterprises. Consequently, perhaps, Dvina family businesses did not share the same proclivity toward one-generation, especially brother-and-brother, business associations. To be sure, Dvina relatives could also engage in joint enterprises, and it is notable that they specifically call attention to the family status of the individuals with whom they engaged. In a local context everyone already knew that Ivan Ivanov syn Fedorov and Fedor Ivanov syn Fedorov were brothers, which they were whether the document said they were or not, but in a number of documents the primary made sure to call everyone’s attention to the other related participant(s) in the transaction. For example, “Lo I, Ivan and I Ontoman sons of Aleksandrov, two brothers (*“Se iaz’ Ivan da iaz’ Ontoman Oleksandrovye deti, dva brata”*) (no. 135). In other cases a witness was identified as the uncle of two nephews (no. 135), the primary declared he had bought a property with his brother and witnesses included his nephew (no. 184), a man made a donation with his brother and “the son of his brother”, apparently, without saying so, his nephew (no. 187), two brothers of the primary were witnesses (no. 196), or one brother of the primary was witness and also signed (no. 233) or two brothers of the primary were witnesses and

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<sup>22</sup> Charles J. Halperin. The Family Business: Relatives and Property in Muscovy during the Reign of Ivan IV // Canadian-American Slavic Studies. V. 57. No. 1. 2023. P. 92–118.

both signed (no. 241), or three brothers of the primary were witnesses, two of whom signed (no. 242), or, last case, the witnesses included the primary's uncle (no. 277). Redundant family identification also reinforced the authenticity of the document, a point to which I will return.

## Wealth

Among the boyars and gentry wealth was unevenly distributed. Some boyars and gentry were virtually bankrupt, while others made very generous cash purchases of land and donations to monasteries<sup>23</sup>. On the whole financial transactions by Dvina peasants were extremely modest, frequently involving property worth considerably less than a ruble. Nevertheless, a dozen or so sales (out of 71) and a few real estate prices mentioned in donations involved respectable sums of money: 13½R (no. 253), 15R (no. 250, 252)<sup>24</sup>, 18R (no.171)<sup>25</sup>, 20R (no. 233), 25R (no. 166)<sup>26</sup>, 30R (no. 243, 248, 270), 32R, (no. 76), 50R (no. 204)<sup>27</sup>, 60R (no. 218), and three properties for 40R, 20R, 15R totaling 75R (no. 225).

In the northeast among the reasons gentry sometimes declined assignment of a conditional-landed estate was a reasoned economic argument that the estate was insufficient to support his economic needs<sup>28</sup>. Likewise Dvina peasants renounced properties, most often on the grounds that they could not meet the requirements of possession in terms of customs, taxes, and service obligations (no. 72, 73, 88, 95, 126, 128, 135, 161, 185, 186). Such an explanation might also have been used as an excuse for some other motive, such as a location distant from where the refusenik wanted to reside, but even in that case the claim of financial insufficiency was credible enough to serve as an excuse.

<sup>23</sup> *Charles J. Halperin. Lay Donations to the Trinity Sergius Monastery during the Reign of Ivan IV // Slavonic and East European Review. V. 95. No. 2. 2017. P. 271–92; idem. Lay Cash Land Purchases during the Reign of Ivan IV // Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas. V. 65. No. 2. 2017. P. 177–99.*

<sup>24</sup> No. 250 was a donation but the donor received money.

<sup>25</sup> The vendor kept 12R, but donated 6R.

<sup>26</sup> The vendor kept 20R but donated 5R.

<sup>27</sup> the mortgaged value of a donated property

<sup>28</sup> *Halperin. Obedience Charters during the Reign of Ivan IV. P. 143.*

## Friendly Transactions

Two documents record friendly transactions, a description of a document (*poliubovnaia gramota*), a “friendly charter”, or how the transaction was carried out, *poliubovno*, “in a friendly manner”, a practice I hope to study separately. First, the Nikola Korel’skii Monastery, a major player in Dvina, settled a dispute over fishing rights with peasants in a “peaceful” (*mirovaia*) charter that called itself a “friendly note” (*poliubovnaia zapis*). Each side committed to paying a penalty of 100R if it violated the agreement (no. 220), perhaps suggesting less-than-friendly mutual suspicion. Such an exaggerated penalty was less an economic disincentive — the peasants might not have been able to raise such a sum — than a sign of good faith. This inflated penalty fine also characterizes friendly agreements in central Muscovy. Second, a priest, with his wife and three children (I think two daughters and one son) exchanged property with the Archangel Monastery (no. 223). In that case no fine for violation was stipulated. The relative rarity of “friendly” transactions and their contents in Dvina perfectly match their occurrence elsewhere in Muscovy.

## Regional and Social Identity

How residents of Dvina saw themselves is revealed by the vocabulary they used, but before addressing that terminology we need to rectify an observation by Tikhomirov and fill a lacuna in our understanding of the evolution of Dvina society. After, as we have already seen, describing Dvina society as comprised of peasants, not gentry, Tikhomirov mentions in passing that peasants and *pomeschiki* (holders of conditional land grants, *pomest’e*) in Dvina saw the increase in monastic landowning as a threat<sup>29</sup>.

There were no conditional-land grants in Dvina, because there were no gentry cavalry living there who needed them for economic support. There is evidence of disputes between peasants and monas-

<sup>29</sup> Tikhomirov. *Rossia v XVI stoletii*. P. 238.

teries, as everywhere of course. Clearly Tikhimorov was just careless in his class-warfare obiter dictum.

The surviving evidence of this cache of documents also attests that there were no Dvina boyars either. However, there had been Dvina boyars. Dvina had been a colony of the Novgorodian empire. It rebelled against Novgorodian rule in 1397–1398. At that time Grand Prince Vasilii I tried to assert Muscovite control over the region by issuing an administrative ordinance (*ustavnaia gramota*), which was addressed inter alia to Dvina boyars whose fiscal, judicial and administrative rights and privileges were defined. In his commentary on the Dvina charter Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Zimin also alluded to another reference to Dvina boyars in 1448–1454 in an immunity charter to the Trinity-Sergius Monastery issued by Grand Prince Vasilii II guaranteeing tax-free transport of goods in Dvina<sup>30</sup>. The immunity charter suggests that Vasilii II pretended to exercise authority over Dvina, else he could not have issued it, but it could also reflect his self-image as protector of the Trinity-Sergius Monastery in territory technically or realistically outside his jurisdiction. At least we can be certain that Dvina boyars still existed then, either under Novgorod's sovereignty or retained by Moscow as a buffer against Novgorod. However, the Muscovite annexation of Novgorod in 1478 probably definitively resolved the matter. In all likelihood when Ivan III executed or deported the Novgorod boyars he dealt in comparable fashion with the Dvina boyars. If Moscow had controlled Dvina earlier, now it no longer needed Dvina boyars to contest Novgorod's authority. As a result by the reign of Ivan IV there were no native boyars in Dvina, and Moscow's control over it was a *fait accompli*. It may be suggestive that every money amount mentioned in the Dvina documents specifies Muscovite, as opposed to Novgorodian, coinage.

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<sup>30</sup> Pamiatniki russkogo prava, tom III: Pamiatniki russkogo prava perioda obrazovaniia russkogo tsentralizovannogo gosudarstva XIV–XV vv. (Monuments of Russian Law, v. 3: Monument of Russia Law of the Period of the Formation of the Russian Centralized State, 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. M, 1955. P. 162–64 (text), 185–97 (Commentary, here 186, citing Gramoty Velikogo Novgoroda i Pskova (Charters of Novgorod the Great and Pskov) / M.-L., 1949. No. 95. P. 151–52.

The sources discussed in this article provide little opportunity for residents to conceptualize the Dvina community as a whole. The term *dviniane* (Dvinians) does appear in some sources. The *Kholmogorskii letopisets* notes that Ivan IV sent the “best Dvinians” (*lutchie dvini-ane*) to inventory the abandoned English ships whose crews had died in winter<sup>31</sup>. One document identifies a witness as Roman Semenov syn Antonov, *Dvinianin* (no. 269) and another also refers to witness Roman Semenov syn as a *dvinianin* (no. 273), probably the same man. Ivan sent two charters “to the Dvina” (*na Dvinu*) (no. 255, 267). I take “Dvina” as a regional designation, rather than a city, still less likely a poetic allusion to the Dvina River, or rather, one of the Dvina rivers, the Northern Dvina. The second is addressed to Kholmogory governors (*namestniki*), who exercised Muscovite authority in the region.

Social identity is often defined negatively, by who we are not, or who is not “us”. A half dozen sources use the term *Moskvitin* in conjunction with persons who may very well have been Muscovite gentry of some sort, if this word is not just a family name. A Muscovite living outside Muscovy could, in theory, acquire the family name “Moskvin” or “Moskvitin”. Prokofei Ivanov syn Moskvin appears as a witness (no. 160). A vendor and monastic elder (*starets*) Filofei Vasil’ev syn Moskvin refers to his brother, who wrote the bill of sale, as Ivan Vasil’ev syn Moskvitin (no. 200). The text of a donation by Istoma Vasil’ev syn Bachiurin refers to him as “Istoma *Moskvitin*, *Dvinskoi perevedenets*” (Istoma the Muscovite, an immigrant to Dvina) (no. 214). In this case we know that *Moskvitin* was not the man’s family name. Finally, vendor Terentei Grigor’ev syn Kologrivov, the elder Trifon, selected relatives as witnesses (as discussed above), namely his brothers Semen “*Moskovskii zhilets*”, Fefilatei, and Stefan (no. 243). *Zhilets*, literally “inhabitant”, was a Muscovite court rank, held usually by a gentry-man. I infer that “Muscovite *zhilets*” applies only to Semen, not the other two brothers. We cannot exclude the possibility that the family was of Muscovite origin. A monk of non-Dvina origin in a Dvina monastery is not far-fetched. Certainly a man who was a Muscovite *zhilets* would be considered an outsider, but one of higher status than the run-of-

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<sup>31</sup> PSRL. T. 33. P. 138.

the-mill Dvina peasant or scribe. A donation charter mentions donor Stefan Frolov syn Vol'tsov, *koshiren* (from Kashira) *syn boiarskii* (no. 244), thus attesting to his outsider and gentry status. The only major participants in the Dvina documents identified as gentry were thus implicitly immigrants. This line of reasoning, while only suggestive, seems to confirm the conclusion that Dvinians, even if not so identified, were not outsiders or gentry.

### Monastic “Secretaries”

It is well-known that because Dvina did not produce grain, monks could not grow their own food. They had to buy food or starve. This necessitated letting monks handle money. To handle money they had to generate income, which meant engaging in real estate and other property relations. Monks could buy land (no. 78 and many more). They could even sell land, for example, to another monk (no. 273) or even become “bankers” and issue mortgages (no. 178 and more). Such business activity, however, did not necessarily entail actually writing legal transactions, that is, playing the role of secretary. Such an activity plays havoc with monastic identity. A monk who had been a secretary in his prior lay life could theoretically pull off composing and physically writing down a document, but it would still be extremely improper from the point of view of monastic exclusiveness. Fortunately for such moral considerations, a monk as the writer of a document happened only twice. A *krylashanin* (member of the monastery’s church choir?), elder Ioil Fedorov syn, wrote a testament for another elder (no. 80). It is odd for an elder to identify himself by his prior lay name. It should have been possible to bring in a secretary or a literate laymen to write the will. Monks, especially when serving as spiritual fathers (*dukhovnye ottsy*), would attend, even witness, testament composition, but for him to sit and take dictation is odd<sup>32</sup>. Perhaps this was an emergency situation. Another monk, also a *kryloshanin* and an

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<sup>32</sup> Charles J. Halperin, *Clergy in the Documentary Life of the Muscovite Laity // Ivan IV and Muscovy*. Bloomington, IN, 2020. P. 145–73.

elder (without the secular name), Feodosii, wrote a layman's donation charter (no. 114). No excuse for this incident springs to mind.

In the absence of gentry, let alone boyars, monasteries constituted the next-best-thing to the Dvina elite. They were major economic players. In these documents the Nikolo-Korel'skii Monastery, located 35 km from Kholmogory on the Northern Dvina River, figures in almost a hundred documents. I am unaware that its history has been studied<sup>33</sup>.

### Legal Consciousness

Peasants (and not only peasants, of course) during Ivan's reign in the Muscovite center could present oral testimony in two kinds of situations: grand jury proceedings of the anti-bandit (*guba*) institutions or settling boundary disputes by walking the ground and identifying the boundary markers, the role of "old-dwellers" (*starozhil'tsy*). Dvina peasants could participate in the former activity if anti-bandit institutions had been created in the north, which is not entirely clear. Ivan's immunity grant to the Antoniev-Siiskii Monastery, which is close to Kholmogory, addressed to the *Dvinskii namestniki* (Dvina governors), refers to "anti-banditry elders" (*gubnye starosty*) who dealt with bandits (no. 109). In the absence of gentry in Dvina one wonders who else had the skill at arms to perform the relevant security functions. Peasants could and did mark boundaries orally (for example no. 97). Most boundary disputes were resolved on the basis of an earlier cadastral survey, which in turn had been influenced by such oral advice from peasants. However, Dvina peasants were far from ignorant of the value of a paper trail, of written documentation.

One key element in any land transfer transaction, be it sale, donation, or exchange, was establishing the right of the vendor, donor, or exchangee to dispose of that property. The buyer, recipient, or other

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<sup>33</sup> I may just be ignorant of the relevant bibliography. However, it could easily be the case that the Nikolo-Korel'skii Monastery has been ignored because historians have paid considerable attention to two other monasteries in the north, the Kirilo-Beloozerskii and Solovetskii Monasteries, which had far more country-wide influence than the Nikolo-Korel'skii Monastery.

exchangee made sure to stipulate that any outstanding liens on that property were the fiscal responsibility of the vendor, donor, and first exchangee. Dvina peasants understood the relationship between legal documents and property ownership. In a bill of sale, donation charter, or exchange charter the vendor et al. often mention other bills of sales, mortgages, trial transcripts, or “legal documents” (*pravye gramoty*) (no. 79, 83, 94, 114, 120, 121, 126<sup>34</sup>, that corroborated legal ownership of a property. Or the vendor et al. would identify the current location / owner of said documents, which could be with a relative: (no. 128, 137, 161 [father], 173 [“my brother Ezekei” including immunity and judgment charters], 182 [two parchment charters with seals, a bill of sale and a mortgage], 197, 211, 216). This requirement might also be met by an explanations of why certain documents were not available. A testator wanted to leave no doubt that the properties he disposed of were properties he was entitled to dispose of. These included one left to him by his mother (*matka*) with bills of sale was included in the Tsar and Grand Prince’s cadastral surveys identified by its surveyors, Ivan Petrovich Zabolotskii and Dmitrii Ivanov syn Temirev and comrades. Unfortunately other documents had been stored in St Nicholas the Wonder-Worker Church, which burned down, causing their loss (no. 162). A bill of sale also cited this cadastre (no. 172). Finally, in a renunciation charter the primary carefully explained that he did not present the bill of sale for a property because it also pertained to other acquisitions; therefore he had to keep it (no. 246).

When in the nineteenth century Imperial Russia began creating a “modern” justice system there was much discussion over whether government and peasant conceptions of law and justice coincided. These Dvina documents suggest that peasants could and did adapt to the procedures and standards of government jurisprudence. Of course they had no choice if they wanted to maximize their prospects in dealing with the authorities, but the point is that they knew how to play by the government’s rules.

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<sup>34</sup> The plural suggests that here the term *pravaia gramota* does not mean “judgment charter”, the decision of a judge after a trial, which is still, however, quite possible.

## Secretaries: Witnesses, Signers, Writers

Appendix 1 lists everyone who wrote a charter, his social status, the number of charters he wrote, and their document number(s). Other than secretaries and clerics the documents do not identify the social status of the writer. In these cases by default I presume that they were peasants, and list that status in brackets.

Secretaries served in three functions in the Dvina documents: as witnesses, those who signed their names to the document, and writers, my term for those who physically wrote the charters. Whether the primary or the writer composed the charter cannot be determined, but most likely the primary indicated what he wanted the document to accomplish and the writer translated those desires into proper legal prose. It is intuitively plausible that the primary/primaries chose the witnesses. The appearance of relatives as witnesses suggests as much. It is also beyond suspicion that primary/primaries thought highly of the witnesses. In five documents the witnesses are described as “good people” (*dobrye liudi*) (no. 141, 157, 198, 206, 270). Witnesses were not legally compelled to sign the documents. In fact, there was no legal requirement anyone sign a document, and some have no signatures (no. 135, 181, 187, 188, 190, 191, 206, 214, 237, 238, 275). In one odd case a “Dmitrii” who was not named as a witness or participant in the transaction signed it (no. 222). Of course signatories were literate; they had to learn to read before they learned to write their names<sup>35</sup>. In some cases in the central Muscovy the primary himself (never a woman) wrote the document<sup>36</sup>. That occurred in the Dvina documents; the same primary wrote three documents himself (*sam*) (no. 250, 251, 252). Here my focus is on everyone who wrote a document for somebody else.

Secretaries are often identified as affiliated with a church, a monastery, a church in a monastery, a geographic location, or in one case,

<sup>35</sup> Charles J. Halperin. “Signatures and Signatories: Literacy and Documentation in Muscovy during the Reign of Ivan IV // *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*. V. 70. No. 1–2. 2022. P. 60–75.

<sup>36</sup> Charles J. Halperin. Three ‘Hands’ and Literacy in Muscovy During the Reign of Ivan IV: ‘I Affix My Hand,’ ‘By My Own Hand,’ and ‘My Man’s Hand’ // *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*. V. 51. No. 1. 2017. P. 29–63, here 36–56.

a political institution (the Customs Office, *tamozhnia*, no. 220). I have disregarded these appellations because they did not affect their activities as secretaries in these documents. Neither did the rather common designation of a secretary as a “*zemskaia d’iak*” (literally a “land’s” secretary, a secretary of the local government)<sup>37</sup>. Such secretaries were responsible for the records of the new local government institutions introduced under Ivan IV designated as the *zemskaia reforma*<sup>38</sup>. Zimin asserts that anti-bandit institutions were not set up in areas which had the new local-government reform, which Dvina supposedly had. This potential contradiction requires separate consideration<sup>39</sup>.

Appendix 1 identifies 86 different writers who wrote 191 documents. Of these, 56 were secretaries who wrote 156 documents; 28 were peasants who wrote 36 documents; and 2 were clergy who wrote 2 documents. Clearly secretaries dominated the document-production industry, but they did not monopolize it. All writers who produced double-digit documents were secretaries. Indeed all writers who wrote 6 or more documents were secretaries. 28 secretaries wrote more than one document whereas only 4 peasant-writers wrote more than one, and never more than five. 52 of the 86 writers wrote only one document; of these, 28 were secretaries, 22 were peasants, and 2 were clergy. Therefore, a relatively small group of six secretaries had a disproportionate influence on document production, producing 72, over a third, of the 194 documents. Among other things these statistics suggest that some secretaries were well-known in Dvina to the primaries who presumably hired secretaries to write their documents; these “popular” secretaries were kept busy. In modern terms these secretaries

<sup>37</sup> No. 106, 116, 117, 125, 136, 140, 141, 147, 148, 158, 166, 168, 178, 191, 196, 197, 198, 208209, 216, 230, 243, 248, 258, 261, 262, 273, 277. Sometimes more than one *zemskaia d’iak* appears in a document.

<sup>38</sup> *Pamiatniki russkogo prava*, tom. 4: *Pamiatniki prava perioda ukrepleniia russkogo tsentralizovannogo gosudarstva. XV–XVII vv.* (Monuments of Russian Law, v. 4: Monuments of the Period of the Strengthening of the Russian Centralized State, 15th – 17th centuries) / M., 1956. P. 188–97.

<sup>39</sup> A.A. Zimin, *Reformy Ivana Groznogo. Ocherki sotsial’no-ekonomicheskoi i politicheskoi istorii Rossii serediny XVI v.* (Reforms of Ivan the Terrible. Studies of the Social-Economic and Political History of Russia in the Middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century) / M., 1960. P. 401.

had good “word of mouth” on the quality of their services. Their reputations preceded them. I have not systematically cross-checked to see if any secretary wrote more than one document for a primary; at least, for the most prolific secretary-writer, Patrekeets Petrov syn, apparently did not. It is no surprise that one secretary, Petr (Petelka) Luk’ianov syn, was included among the “good people” who served as witnesses (no. 270), even though he appears only one other time as a witness (no. 269), without the compliment, and never wrote a document. In the first instance he also signed the document, in the second he did not.

Regardless of the visibility of “star” secretaries as writers, the number of peasant-writers remains significant. How they acquired the expertise to write a legal document competently remains unknown and unknowable. Certainly Dvina appears not to have had a labor shortage of secretaries. The number of one-off secretary and peasant writers suggests wide diffusion of not only functional literacy but of knowledge of bureaucratic legal paper formulae.

Secretaries did not confine themselves in Dvina to writing documents; they also, as the Petr (Petelka) Luk’ianov syn document cited above shows, could serve as witnesses, and in the process could, but did not have to, sign the document. I simply had not noticed a secretary-witness in documents from central Muscovy until it stared me in the face in Dvina. My initial reaction was that the Dvina pattern was unique, but a short exercise proved otherwise, as will be discussed below. Lack of study of secretary-witnesses in central Muscovy prevents formulating any definite confusions, but it would certainly appear that the practice was more common in Dvina than elsewhere. Why that might be so will also be addressed below

In no case did a secretary both serve as a witness and write the same document. In every one of the 24 records in which secretaries were witnesses, the document was written either by a different secretary or a peasant. Moreover, frequently these witness-secretaries wrote other documents, in which, of course, they did not serve as witnesses. There were 23 different primaries in these 24 records; only one primary initiated two documents. Thus our evidence is not distorted by a single secretary-loving peasant. Table 3 adumbrates information on the various roles of witness-secretaries in these documents.

*Table 3: Witness Secretaries, Writers, and Primary*

1.	no. 136	Primary: Ivan Andreianov syn	Witnessed and signed by secretary Pozdiak Ostaf'ev syn, who wrote 4 documents	Written by [peasant] Sen'ka Dement'ev syn
2.	no. 147	Primary: Petr Istoma Vasil'ev syn	Witnessed and signed by secretary Iakov Dmitreev syn, who did not write any documents	Written by secretary Pospelsko Vasiliev syn Solomin
3.	no. 158	Primary: Terentii Grigor'v syn Kologrivov	Witnessed and signed by secretary Iakov Vasil'ev syn Popov, who did not write any documents	Written by secretary Persha (Perfirii) Iakovlev syn Kartashev
4.	no. 167	Primary: Vasiliu Sukhan Alexandrov syn Amosov	Witnessed and signed by secretary Miron(ets) Klement'ev syn Popov, who wrote 14 documents	Written by secretary Semeik Ivanov syn
5.	no. 183	Primary: Semen Kirilov syn Orlov	Witnessed and signed by secretary Filip Ivanov syn, who did not write any documents	Written by secretary Budaets Mikhailov syn
6.	no. 180	Primary: Fedor Evseev syn Moshko	Witnessed and signed by secretary Per'firei (Persha) Iakovlev syn Kartashev, who wrote 3 documents	Written by secretary Budaets Mikhailov syn Zalomaev
7.	no. 194	Primaries: Ivan Mikhailov syn Kologrivov and Stefan Ivanov syn Kologrivov	Witnessed but not signed by secretary Olferei Sidorov syn, who wrote 3 documents	Written by [peasant] Mironko Kliment'ev syn
8.	no. 201	Primary: Averkii Mikhailov syn Kologrivov	Witnessed and signed by secretary Petrakei Petrov syn, who wrote 16 documents, and secretary Fedor Vasil'ev syn Popov, who wrote 2 documents	Written by secretary Budaets Mikhailov syn Zalomaev
9.	no. 202	Primaries: Guliai Sefanov syn Budaev and wife	Witnessed and signed by secretary Fedor Vasil'ev syn Popov, who wrote 2 documents	Written by secretary Petrakei (Patrekeets) Petrov syn
10.	no. 208	Primary: Stefan Martynov syn	Witnessed and signed by Per'firei Iakovlev syn Kartashev, who wrote 3 documents	Written by secretary Budaets Mikhailov syn Zalomaev

11.	no. 210	Primary: Vasilii Ivanov syn	Witnessed and signed by secretary Pozdei /Pozdiak Ostaf'ev syn, who wrote 4 documents	Written by [peasant] Epifanko Nechaev syn Paraskov'in
12.	no. 220	Primary: Nikolo-Korel'skii Monastery	Witnessed and signed by secretary Pozdiak Ostaf'ev syn, who wrote 4 documents and Customs ( <i>tamozhnyi</i> ) secretary Pentelei Ondreev syn, who wrote no documents	Written by secretary Iakush Dmitreev syn Sotskii
13.	no. 234	Primary: Iakov Ivanov syn Veprev	Witnessed and signed by Perfirei Iakovlev syn Kartashev, who wrote 3 documents	Written by secretary Patrikeets Petrov syn
14.	no. 240	Primary: Filatii and Semen Vasil'evye deti Kologrivovy	Witnessed and signed by secretary Mikula Isakov syn Kologrivov, who wrote no documents	Written by secretary Patrekeets Petrov syn
15.	no. 243	Primary: Terentii Grigor'ev syn Kologrivov	Witnessed and signed by secretary Mikula Ivanov syn Kologrivov, who wrote no documents, and secretary Perfirei Iakovlev syn Kartashev, who wrote 3 documents	Written by secretary Patrekeets Petrov syn
16.	no. 248	Primary: Ontsfior Vasil'ev syn	Witnessed and signed by secretary Levontei Fedotov syn, who wrote no documents	Written by secretary Fedko Vasil'ev syn Popov
17.	no. 256	Primary: Evdokim Filipov syn Diad'ka	Witnessed and signed by secretary Perfire Iakovlev syn Kartashev, who wrote 3 documents, and secretary Mikula Isakov syn Kologrivov, who wrote no documents	Written by secretary Patrekeets Petrov syn
18.	no. 261	Primary: elder Sergei of the Nikolo-Korel'skii Monastery	Witnessed and signed by secretary Perfirei Iakovlev syn Kartashev, who wrote 3 documents	Written by secretary Gavrylko Mikhailov syn
19.	no. 269	Primary: Terentei Zakharov syn and wife	Witnessed and signed by secretary Petr (Petelka) Luk'ianov syn, who wrote 1 document	Written by secretary Nikita Mironov syn

20.	no. 270	Primary: Aleksei Ivanov syn	Witnessed by secretary Petr (Petelka) Luk'ianov syn did not sign (versus Table 3, no. 19) and wrote 1 document	Written by secretary Nikita Mironov syn
21.	no. 271	Primary: Shestoi Filat'ev syn Proskurin	Witnessed and signed by secretary Mikula Isakov syn Kologrivov, who wrote no documents	Written by secretary Alesha Kirilov syn
22.	no. 272	Primary: Fedor Selianin Longinov syn Podstenkov	Witnessed and signed by secretary Patrekei Petrov syn, who wrote 16 documents	Written by secretary Alesha Kirilov
23.	no. 273	Primary: Solovetskii Monastery elder Efrosin	Witnessed and signed by secretary Nikita Mironov syn, who wrote 8 documents	Written by secretary Petelka Luk'ianov syn
24.	no. 277	Primary: Leontii Averkiev syn Kologrigov	Witnessed and signed by secretary Patrekei Petrov syn, who wrote 16 documents, and secretary Mikula Isakov syn Kologrivov, who wrote no documents	Written by secretary Alesha Kirilov syn Ofutin

In two instances a secretary witnessed but did not sign the document (Table 3 no. 8, Table 3 no. 20), demonstrating once again that it was not mandatory for a witness to sign a document, and proving conclusively, yet again, that the failure of a witness to sign a document is not evidence that said witness was illiterate. Of the 23 different primaries who presumably selected the witnesses, three (Table 3 no. 12, 18, 23) were monastic, so the secretaries' professional expertise was recognized both inside and outside of monastic walls. In addition, witnessing and signing a document was not a one-off experience for these secretaries, who did so multiple times. Fourteen secretaries witnessed and signed the document 27 times:

Fedor Ivanov syn Table 3, no. 5

Fedor Vasil'ev syn Popov Table 3, no. 8, 9

Iakov Dmitriev syn Table 3, no. 2

Iakov Vasil'ev syn Popov Table 3 no. 3

Levontii Table 3, no. 16

Mikula Isakov syn Kologrivov Table 3, no. 14, 15, 17, 21, 24

Mironets Kliment'ev syn Popov Table 3, no. 4

Nikita Mironov syn Table 3, no. 23

Oferii Sidorov syn Table 3, no. 7

Pentelei Ondreev syn Table 3, no. 12

Petr Luk'ianov syn Table 3, no. 19

Perferii Ivakovlev syn Kartashev Table 3, no. 6, 10, 13, 17, 18

Petrakii Petrov syn Table 3, no. 8, 22, 24

Pozdiak Ostaf'ev syn Table 3, no. 1, 11, 12

As monotonously repeated above, most of these same witness-secretaries also wrote documents, although three witness-secretaries (Table 3, no. 2, 3, 5) did not. I cross-checked the most prolific document-writer, Patrekeets Petrov syn, who witnessed three documents, to determine if he ever wrote a document for a client for whom he had served as a witness. He did not.

In terms of document form no one could witness and write the same document. Lest there be any confusion, secretary Persha Iakovlev syn Kartashev followed his self-identification as the writer of no. 258 by noting that it was signed by “the same” (*tot zhe*) Persha; he did not call himself a witness. The function of a witness was to serve as an objective observer who authenticated the document's accuracy. In some sense the witness vouchsafed the value of the document with his own reputation. No witness could objectively judge the credibility of a document he also wrote. The primary selected both witnesses and writer, but their status *via-à-vis* the document was quite different. The writers, especially the secretary-writers, were paid professionals. Writing document was their profession. Although there is no evidence on this point, I would presume that peasant-writers were also financially remunerated for writing a document. A witness who received payment from a primary risked losing his detachment. His judgment of the reliability of the document might be compromised. It is possible but very dubious that the primary paid a relatives to witness documents. Pursuing that thought, the secretaries who witnessed documents, in order to serve as true witnesses, must have worked *pro bono*. That might lead us to explain the unlikelihood that a writer, professional or amateur, witnessed a document involving someone who had hired him to write a different document. In theory this might damage the income

of the secretary who served as a witness, because that would eliminate a potential client. However, as Patrekeets Petrov syn's statistics show, perhaps the enhanced reputation of a secretary who had served as a witness was a boon to his business.

We can exclude one possible motive for peasant primaries not to select peasants and to select secretaries to serve as witnesses. Witnesses did not need to sign the charter registering the transaction they witnessed. Therefore the illiteracy of a peasant would no more prohibit selecting him as a witness than the literacy of a secretary would recommend him as a witness. In a similar vein, witnesses were expected to listen to a trial transcript read aloud and affirm that it was accurate. Obviously a witness did not need to be literate to perform this function.

A secretary witnessing a document that a peasant wrote (Table 3 no. 1, 7, 11) is almost conceptually unimaginable given present scholarship of peasants and secretaries in Muscovy, yet we have three impeccable cases in from Dvina. Whether this combination of roles ever occurred in central Muscovy remains an open question.

The social implications of secretary-witnesses are just as intriguing as those for document form. During Ivan's reign peasants were not yet serfs in Muscovy. In a traditional society like sixteenth-century Muscovy peasant status was also very largely inherited, not occupational. Peasants could engage in extractive industries, as they so often did in Dvina, or in artisan trades, or in commerce, as well as agriculture. Whatever their occupation, peasants were outranked by secretaries, whose class identity did derive from their occupation. A peasant primary might seek a secretary-witness because he would endow the document with increased credibility.

Applying this social-status logic to charters involving gentry, let alone boyars, would have the opposite affect: it would discourage gentry from utilizing secretary-witnesses. Gentry were nobles; in theory if not always in practice they inherited their social status. Gentry outranked secretaries socially; secretaries were not hereditary nobles. For a gentry-man to rely upon a secretary as a witness might be considered socially demeaning, even scandalous. Therefore we would not expect gentry to use secretaries as witnesses.

As usual in Muscovite history, however, as a conclusion without exceptions is a rare occurrence. Therefore we must make a small detour outside Dvina. I consulted an anthology of over 250 land transactions from central Muscovy looking for secretary-witnesses with non-peasant primaries. I found six; five of six had gentry primaries, and the sixth, which I will discuss first, was definitely not a peasant. Six cases in over 250 documents would qualify as a rarity.

Tsaritsa Mariia (as wife of tsarevich Semen Kasaevich, a converted Chingissid), daughter of Andrei Mikhail Kutuzov, donated to Iosifov Monastery two estates which had belonged to her father but were granted to tsaritsa Mariia's sister, also Mariia. I infer that sister Mariia had died and tsaritsa Mariia was carrying out her sister's testament or final wishes. The witnesses included several local officials: Volok *gorodovoi prikazshchik* (a city official) Fedor Obramov syn; *gubnaia starosta* (anti-brigandage elder) Ivan Nikitin syn Zarotskoi; Shania Nikitin syn Kliucharev, Volok *rozsył'shchik* (bailiff); and Yurii Mikhailov syn Kurov, *zemskii d'iak* (local government secretary). The charter was written by another Volok *zemskii d'iak*, Vas'ka Mikhailov syn Korenev<sup>40</sup>. Chingissids in Muscovite service, converted or not, occupied a separate and elevated social status; they stood outside the boundaries of Russian society. Therefore, tsaritsa Mariia's dignity could not be affected negatively by employing a secretary-witness.

Petr Ignat'ev syn is identified in one donation charter he wrote for a gentry wife<sup>41</sup> as a *gubnyi d'iak* (anti-brigandage secretary) but not identified as a secretary in another charter he witnessed in which a gentry man and wife made a donation<sup>42</sup>. According to the editors of these documents, he may be the same man as Iur'ev Petr Ignat'ev syn, a *gubnoi d'iak* witness to a gentry widow's donation<sup>43</sup>. Another gen-

<sup>40</sup> Akty feodal'nogo zemlevladieniia i khoziaistva, chast' II (Acts of Feudal Land-owning and Economy. Part II // M., 1956. 1571/1572. No. 355. P. 395–96.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 1567/1568, no. 323, 341. The wife is not presented as a widow; she acts with her daughter, without the participation of her husband. Therefore she donated property that was exclusively her own, probably a dowry, part of which she had already allocated to her daughter.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 1568/1569. No. 334, 352–53.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 1566/1567. No. 318, 336–37.

try widow made a donation with Volok *zemskii d'iak* Fedar Parfenov syn Papov as a witness<sup>44</sup>. Finally an exchange of property among the gentry Rzhevskii clan included among witnesses Andrei Iakovlev syn Shchelkalov, not identified as a secretary; he eventually rose to a very high political office as the tsar's secretary<sup>45</sup>.

Four of the six cases involve a single female primary, three gentry and one a higher-status Chingissid's wife. This may be nothing but coincidence. We can safely vouch two conclusions. First, secretary-witnesses were not absolutely exclusive to Dvina. Second, the phenomenon of secretary-witnesses merits further research in central Muscovy.

To return to Dvina, in Dvina peasants and secretaries were well-acquainted with each other. One might infer that they were belonged to, and felt they belonged to, a common community. There might be an even stronger social nexus. Mention has been made of secretary Mikula Isakov syn Kologrivov who witnessed and signed five documents (no. 240, 243, 256, 271, 277), but wrote none, although he was a vendor in a bill of sale (no. 239). Peasant Vasiuk Ivanov syn Kologrivov wrote one document (no. 214). Primary peasants in the Dvina data base include: Mikhail Ivanov syn Kologrivov and son Ivan (no. 110) or with son Ivan and additional sons Averkii, Feofilat Bolshakov and Mikhail (no. 116); Vasilii, Isaak and Terentii Grigor'evye deti Kologrivovy (no. 111); Mikhail Ivanov syn Kologrivov and son Ivan (no. 112); Grigorii Ivanov syn Kologrivov (no. 119); Ivan, Averkii, Fefilatii Bol'shak and Mikhail Mikhailovye deti Kologrivovy (no. 139); elder Gerasim Ivanov syn Kologrivov of the Nikolo-Korel'skii Monastery (no. 141); Semen Grigor'ev syn Kologrivov (no. 149); Terentii Grigor'ev syn Kologrivov (no. 158); Ivan Mikhailov syn Kologrivov (no.159); Ivan, Averkii, and Mikhail Mikhailovye deti Kologrivovy on behalf of their deceased brother Fefilatii Bol'shak the monk Feodorit (Mikhail Mikhailov syn Kologrivov signed the document) (no. 168); Ivan Mikhailov syn Kologrivov and Stefan Ivanov syn Kologrivov (no. 194); Fedoraia Mikhailova doch'

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 1576/1577. No. 364, 404–5.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 1559/1560. No. 28, 289.

Kologrivova (no. 195, and with her husband Guliai Stefanov syn Budaev, no. 202, 205); Vasilii Ivanov syn Iakovlev Kologrivov (no. 196); Averkii Mikhailov syn Kologrivov (201); Ivan Mikhailov syn Kologrivov with sons Stepan and Vasilii (no. 203); Semen Grigor'ev syn Kologrivov and sons Ivan and Fedor Semenovye deti Kologrivovy (no. 231); Iakov Koka Ivanov syn Kologrivov (no. 232); Fefilatii and Semen Vasil'evye deti Kologrivovy (no. 240, witnessed and signed by secretary Mikula Ivanov syn Kologrivov, although a different secretary wrote it); Iakov Vasil'ev syn Kologrivov (no. 241); Leontii Ivanov syn Iakovlev Kologrivov, in which the witnesses were his brothers Vasilii, Ivan and Moisei Ivanovye deti Iakovlevy Kologrivovy, which Leontii and witnesses Vasiuk (Vasilii)<sup>46</sup> and Ivanko (Ivan) signed, (no. 242); Terentei Grigor'ev syn Kologrivov (see above no. 158, later the elder Trifon) and son Ivan, witnessed by Terentei's brothers Semen the Moscow *zhilets*, Fefilatei and Stefan and Ivan Mikhailovye deti Kologrivovy, which *zemskii* secretary Mikula Ivanov syn Kologrivov witnessed and signed but did not write (no. 243); and Leontii Averkiev syn Kologrivov (no. 277). A donation charter identifies the donated estate as having been purchased from Terentei Kologrivov and his son Ivan, Semen Kologrivov and his sons, and Levontei Kologrivov (no. 244). As over two dozen documents attest, the multi-generational family of the Kologrivovs was very active in Dvina, even if everyone named "Kologrivov" did not belong to it. Some of its members were literate and signed documents, one member achieved status in Moscow, and two became monks at the Nikolo-Korel'skii Monastery. The Kologrivov family certainly knew Mikula Ivanov syn Kologrivov; they invited him to witness two of their transactions. Yet despite these two golden opportunities to do so, the Kologrivovs never mentioned a kinship relationship to the secretary. There is no evidence that Mikula was related to his numerous family namesakes. In theory we could hardly exclude that possibility; a family whose members could sign their names, and which includ-

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<sup>46</sup> It is possible that the peasant Vasiuk Ivanov syn Kologrivov who wrote one document (no. 214) is the witness Vasiuk Ivanov syn Iakovlev Kologrivov (no. 242).

ed a Moscow gentry-man and monks, could easily have generated a local-government secretary. A kinship relationship between even one secretary and the Dvina peasantry would certainly facilitate the kinds of cooperation between peasants and secretary-witnesses described in this article, if we had the required evidence.

Without such corroboration, therefore, the existence of a professional relationship between Dvina peasants and secretaries constitutes the best explanation of witness-secretaries.

## Conclusion

Dvina was located on Muscovy's periphery. Although the territory was incorporated into the *oprichnina*, its document production does not conform to the usual Central Muscovite pattern of an *oprichnina* spike. Dvina was distinguished politically, socially and economically from the Muscovite heartland by the absence of boyars and gentry. On the other hand, monasteries here as elsewhere played prominent role. One would not expect Dvina institutions to correspond exactly to their Muscovite prototypes. The rich evidence of over 200 Dvina documents from Ivan IV's reign reveals similarities and differences that reflect Dvina's unique features, but often in unexpected ways. Three are some intriguing phraseological idiosyncracies that remain to be explained by specialists on documentary forms. Peasant women had pretty much the same property rights in Dvina as boyar and gentry women had in Central Muscovy. Dvina property transactions, sales and donations, allude to the same redemption procedures as in the Central Muscovy, except that Dvina documents never define anyone as having the right to redeem a purchase or donation. Families were just as much businesses in Dvina as in Central Muscovy but single-generation enterprises among brothers did not figure nearly as prominently. Dvina had the new form of local-government, but may have lacked anti-banditry institutions. Boyars and gentry in Central Muscovy understood the importance of written documentation in establishing ownership in legal transactions, but the residents of Dvina were almost obsessive about doing so. The practice of friendly trans-

actions also found its way to the North. Therefore, Dvina society and economy do reflect Central Muscovy's society and economy.

The greater involvement of northern monks in economic life outside the walls of their monasteries, in businesses to raise the money necessary to buy food, was already known from multiple studies of the Kirillo-Belozero and Solovetskii Monasteries. However, I don't think I have never seen a charter written by a monk. Even though rare, and quite plausibly treatable as outliers, the two such charters from Dvina should encourage a thorough examination of this issue in Central Muscovy.

The functional importance of secretaries in Central Muscovy is not in question. True, the diversity and size of the Dvina secretarial cohort are greater than one might expect, and lay writers of charters have already been highlighted in Central Muscovy. But the role of secretaries as witnesses in Dvina has little parallel in Central Muscovy. It can best be understood within the context of the social superiority of boyars and gentry over secretaries in Central Muscovy contrasted to the social inferiority of peasants to secretaries in Dvina. However, there are exceptions to this contrast which cannot be resolved without additional research on secretary-witnesses in Muscovy as a whole.

The archive of Dvina documents thus raises new questions about document production and the social interaction of secretaries which should be addressed by further research on Central Muscovy.

### **APPENDIX 1: Who Wrote the Documents**

#### **Count – Social Status – Name – Document no.**

15 – secretary – Patrekeets Petrov syn – no. 196, 267, 191, 192, 197, 202, 205, 231, 239, 233, 242, 243, 256, 234

14 – secretary – Mironoets Kliment'ev syn Popov – no. 74, 84, 105, 113, 120, 127, 128, 130, 137, 141, 142, 152, 170, 194

9 – secretary – Ivashko Mikhailov syn – no. 199, 207, 219, 223, 227, 173, 174, 175, 246

8 – secretary – Nikitka Mironov syn – no. 259, 260, 263, 264, 265, 266, 269, 270

- 7 – secretary – Epifanets Nechaiev syn Parakov'in – no. 156, 163, 198, 210, 218, 232, 233
- 6 – secretary – Nasonets Mikhailov syn – no. 87, 89, 117, 157, 160, 226
- 6 – secretary – Fed'ko Nikitin syn Kukolnik – no. 209, 212, 213, 216, 217, 230
- 6 – secretary – Ivanko Fedorov syn – no. 102, 140, 107, 119, 139, 146
- 5 – secretary – Budaet Mikhailov syn Zalomaev – no. 178, 180, 190, 201, 208
- 5 – secretary – Semeik Ivanov syn – no. 167, 176, 177, 181, 186
- 5 – [peasant] – Terentii Iur'ev syn – no. 122, 124, 129, 135, 143
- 4 – secretary – Pozdiak Ostaf'ev syn – no. 108, 125, 150, 188
- 3 – secretary – Alesha Kirilov – no. 271, 272, 277
- 3 – secretary – Davyd Mikhailov syn – no. 86, 91, 94
- 3 – secretary – Gavrilko Mikhailov syn – no. 255, 257, 261
- 3 – secretary – Iakush Vasil'ev syn Telov – no. 164, 166, 168
- 3 – secretary – Ivan Grigor'ev syn – no. 99, 115, 118
- 3 – [peasant] – Kozemka Ivanov syn<sup>47</sup> no. 250, 251, 252,
- 3 – [peasant] – Matfei Ovdokimov syn Ul'ianov no. 110, 111, 112
- 3 – secretary – Olferko Sidorov syn – no. 185, 193, 215
- 3 – secretary – Persha Iakovlev syn Kartashev – no. 158, 159, 258
- 3 – [peasant] – Vasiuk Iakovlev syn Solom – no. 85, 95, 101
- 2 – secretary – Elka Ogafanov syn Kurenskii – no. 121, 123
- 2 – secretary – Fed'ko Vasil'ev syn Popov – no. 248, 249
- 2 – secretary – Grishka Vasil'ev syn – no. 131, 132
- 2 – secretary – Iakush Dmitriev syn Sotskii – no. 148, 220
- 2 – secretary – Iakush Grigor'ev syn – no. 83, 144
- 2 – secretary – Iuka Ivanov syn – no. 72, 82
- 2 – secretary – Mitrokha Grigor'ev syn – no. 184, 253
- 2 – [peasant] – Ofonia Vasil'ev syn Strakhov – no. 171, 172
- 2 – secretary – Senka Ivanov syn – no. 79, 116
- 2 – secretary – Stepanets Ivanov syn D'iakonov – no. 183, 211
- 2 – secretary – Sukhanets Alekseev syn Popov – no. 238, 224

<sup>47</sup> – In this case the primary in the transaction.

- 1 – [peasant] – Aleksandr Volkh Vlasaev syn – no. 92  
 1 – secretary – Alesha Ivanov syn D'iakonov – no. 189  
 1 – [peasant] – Andriushka Nikitin syn – no. 275  
 1 – [peasant] – Anton Nikitin syn – no. 81  
 1 – [peasant] – Antsiforko Nikiforov syn Obriadin – no. 106  
 1 – secretary – Artamon Panteleev syn – no. 98  
 1 – [peasant] – Bogdan Iosifov syn Iiudin – no. 247  
 1 – secretary – Epifanets Evlampiev syn Parakov'in – no. 149  
 1 – secretary – Epsukh Timofei syn Popov – no. 100  
 1 – secretary – Fodorets Vasiliev syn – no. 195  
 1 – monk – Feodosii – no. 114  
 1 – secretary – Flia Ivanov syn D'iakonov – no. 187  
 1 – secretary – Gavriilo Semenov syn – no. 77  
 1 – [peasant] – Iakim Romanov syn – no. 133  
 1 – secretary – Iakub Grigor'ev syn – no. 78  
 1 – [peasant] – Iakun Dmitriev syn – no. 93  
 1 – secretary – Iakut Grigor'ev syn – no. 104  
 1 – monk – Ioil Fedorov syn – no. 80  
 1 – [peasant] – Ivan Andreev syn Omosov – no. 245  
 1 – secretary – Ivan Fedorov syn – no. 106  
 1 – secretary – Ivan Mikhailov syn – no. 109  
 1 – [peasant] – Ivan Vasiliev syn Moskvitin – no. 200  
 1 – secretary – Ivashko Lukin syn D'iakov – no. 182  
 1 – secretary – Ivashko Patrekeev syn Zubov – no. 274  
 1 – secretary – Kondratets Mikhailov syn Popov – no. 162  
 1 – secretary – Konush Mikhailov syn Popov – no. 154  
 1 – [peasant] – Matka Fedorov syn Shchabron – no. 169  
 1 – secretary – Patrekeets Petrov syn – no. 240  
 1 – [peasant] – Misha Grigor'ev syn Siktsev – no. 73  
 1 – [peasant] – Mita Shiraiev syn – no. 134  
 1 – [peasant] – Nikita Esipov syn – no. 204  
 1 – secretary – Nikitka Semenov syn – no. 161  
 1 – secretary – Ofonia Stepanov syn – no. 126  
 1 – secretary – Olesha Vasil'ev syn – no. 151  
 1 – secretary – Ondrushka Gigor'ev syn – no. 90  
 1 – [peasant] – Ostachko Grigor'ev syn D'iakonov – no. 88

- 1 – secretary – Pania Larionov syn – no. 229
- 1 – [peasant] – Pania Petrov syn – no. 179
- 1 – secretary – Parfenko Mikhailov syn – no. 237
- 1 – [peasant] – Perka Ivanov syn – no. 222
- 1 – secretary – Petelka Luk'ianov syn Ofutin – no. 273
- 1 – secretary – Pospelko Vasil'ev syn Solomin – no. 147
- 1 – [peasant] – Semeik Evstafiev syn – no. 235
- 1 – secretary – Semeika Sumorokov syn – no. 262
- 1 – [peasant] – Sen'ka Dement'ev syn – no. 136
- 1 – [peasant] – Skuratko Grigor'ev syn – no. 225
- 1 – secretary – Stefanets Antonov syn – no. 145
- 1 – secretary – Timofei Fedorov syn – no. 154
- 1 – [peasant] – Timoshka Ignat'ev syn – no. 244
- 1 – secretary – Vasilii – no. 75
- 1 – [peasant] – Vasiuk Ivanov syn Kologrivov – no. 214
- 1 – [peasant] – Vas'ka Nazar'ev syn – no. 236
- 1 – [peasant] – Vaska Titov syn – no. 153

The length of a secretary's "career" cannot be determined reliably. For the most prolific secretaries, here are the extracted dates in Dvina documents<sup>48</sup>:

- Patrekeets Petrov syn – 1573–1580
- Mironoets Kliment'ev syn Popov – 1534–1572
- Ivashko Mikhailov syn – 1573–1581
- Nikitka Mironov syn – 1582–1583
- Epifanets Nechaiev syn Parakov'in – 1558–1580
- Nasonets Mikhailov syn – 1540–1579
- Fed'ko Nikitin syn Kukolnik – 1576–1580
- Ivanko Fedorov syn – 1543–1556

### Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

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<sup>48</sup> I have not taken into account the possibility that Dvina secretaries were professionally active outside Dvina.



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DOI 0000-0002-6667-0555

Received  
10.12.2025

Revised  
15.01.2026

Accepted  
10.02.2026