ИСТОРИЧЕСКІЙ ВѢСТНИКЪ

ISSUE ON GENERAL HISTORY

ISSN PRINT 2306-4978
ISSN ONLINE 2411-1511

VOLUME 60

2026

The Historical Repporter
is published under the patronage
of the Russian Historical Society



ИСТОРИЧЕСКІЙ ВѢСТНИКЪ

THE HISTORICAL REPORTER

ISSUE ON GENERAL HISTORY

VOLUME 60
[207]

Publishing: "Runivers"

August 2026

Typesetting by the editorial board.
Design by Yu.V. Filimonov.
Unfixed price.

Editorial address: 15A Leninsky Prospekt, Moscow, 119071, Russia

Tel.: +7 (495) 737-76-32, fax: +7 (495) 730-61-76. E-mail: info@runivers.ru

The journal is registered with the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor). Mass media registration certificate PI No. FS77-51055 of September 3, 2012.

Languages: English. Included in the List of Peer-Reviewed Scientific Publications of the Higher Attestation Commission (VAK) of the Russian Federation. Publishes articles in two scientific specialties according to the VAK nomenclature: 5.6.1. Russian History; 5.6.2. World History.

The journal's materials are available on the Russian Science Citation Index platform, Google Scholar, Cyberleninka, www.historicalreporter.ru

© ANO «Runivers», 2026

The views of the editorial board may not coincide with those of the authors.

Printed in full accordance with the quality of the provided original layout at «Sam Poligrafist» LLC printing house, Onebook.ru publishing house.
Address: 42/5 Volgogradsky Prospekt, Moscow, 129090, Russia.
E-mail: info@onebook.ru. Website: www.onebook.ru

The journal is published with the support of «NIKOKHIM» LLC.

THE HISTORICAL REPORTER

Editorial Administrative Committee

Alexey E. Titkov
Editor-in-Chief, C.Sc. (History)

Dmitry R. Zhantiev
Deputy Editor-in-Chief, C.Sc. (History)

Igor Ya. Keremetskiy
Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Art Editor

Todd Lefko
Editor of the English Version

Elizaveta A. Radzievskaya
Academic Secretary

Elena A. Eremeeva
Executive Secretary

Tatyana I. Malyarenko
Proofreader

Editorial Board

Efim I. Pivovar
Chairman of the Editorial Board of the Historical Reporter, D. Sc. (History), Scientific Director of Russian State University for the Humanities, Professor, Academician of Russian Academy of Sciences, Vice-Chairman of the State Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles

Mikhail V. Baranov
C.Sc. (Philosophy), President of ANO «Runivers»

Sergei P. Brun
General Director of Novgorod State Museums

Ruslan G. Gagkuev
D.Sc. (History),Chairman of the Russian Historical Society Board, Executive Director of the Russian History Foundation

Wendy Z. Goldman
Ph.D., Paul Mellon Distinguished Professor of History at Carnegie Mellon University, History Department

Anton A. Gorskiy
D.Sc. (History), Professor, Deputy Director of Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Russian History

Irina A. Hormach
D.Sc. (History), Senior Research Scientist of Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Russian History

Vladimir V. Hutarev-Garnishevsky
C.Sc. (History), Associate Professor at the Moscow State Institute of Culture

Sergey V. Deviatov
D.Sc. (History), Adviser to the Director of Federal Protective Service of Russia, Head of Russian History in 20–21 cc. Department at Lomonosov Moscow State University, Historical Faculty

Salavat M. Iskhakov
D.Sc. (History), Vice-Chairman of the Section «History of Social Reforms, Movements and Revolutions» of the Scientific Council of the Russian Academy Sciences on the Fundamental Issues of Russian and Foreign History

Georgy Kantor
D.Phil. (Ancient History), St. John's College, University of Oxford

Svetlana A. Kirillina
D.Sc. (History), Professor, Head of the Department of Middle and Near East History, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University

Taras Y. Kobishchanov
C.Sc. (History), Associate Professor at the Department of Middle and Near East History, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University

Aleksey Yu. Konev
C.Sc. (History), Leading Researcher at the Institute of the Problems of Northern Development, subdivision of Federal Research Center Tyumen Scientific Center of Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Tyumen Scientific Center SB RAS)

Evgeny M. Kopot'
Senior Lecturer, Institute of History and Politics, Moscow Pedagogical State University (MPGU)

Igor V. Kurukin
D.Sc. (History), Professor at the Russian State University for the Humanities Institute for History and Archives, Medieval and Modern History Department

Grigoriy N. Lanskoy
D.Sc.(History), professor of the department of Foreign Regional Studies at the faculty of International Relations, Politology and Foreign Regional Studies of Russian State University for the Humanities

Gail D. Lenhoff
Ph.D., Professor at University of California Los Angeles, History Department

Alexander V. Marey
Ph.D. in Theory and History of Law and the State (L.D.), Senior Research Scientist of Higher School of Economics, Center of Fundamental Sociology

Faustino Martínez Martínez
Associate Professor of Complutense University of Madrid, History of Law and Institutions Department

Stepan V. Orlov
C.Sc. (Economics), Associate Professor, Head of the Department of the History of Social Movements and Political Parties at Lomonosov Moscow State University, Historical Faculty

Vladimir V. Orlov
D.Sc. (History), Professor, Department of Middle and Near East Studies, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University

Daniel Panateri
D.Sc. (History), Lecturer at the University of Buenos Aires, History of Law

Dmitry I. Petin
C.Sc.(History), Associate Professor at the Department of History, Philosophy and Social Communications, Omsk State Techniacal University

Petr E. Podalko
Ph.D. (Language & Culture St.), Professor, International Communication Dept., School International Politics, Economics & Communication, Aoyama Gakuin University

Alexandra L. Safronova
D.Sc. (History), Professor, Head of the Department of South Asian History at the Institute of Asian and African Studies Lomonosov Moscow State University

Andrey A. Schelchkov
D.Sc. (History), Chief Researcher at Russian Academy of Science, Word History Institute

Pavel V. Shlykov
Ph.D. (History), Associate Professor, Institute of Asian and African Studies Lomonosov Moscow State University

Alexey E. Titkov
C.Sc. (History), Editor-in-Chief of the Historical Reporter

Arutyun A. Ulunyan
D.Sc. (History), Chief Researcher at Russian Academy of Science, Word History Institute

Dmitry R. Zhantiev
C.Sc. (History), Associate Professor of Middle and Near East History, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University

Editorial

Our journal is celebrating another anniversary: we are pleased to present to our readers the sixtieth issue of *Historical Reporter*. It seems that it was only recently that we marked the publication of our fiftieth issue, and yet ten new issues have already appeared. Our hard-working team has every reason to be proud as we continue to faithfully serve Russian scholarship.

The sixtieth issue is devoted to general historical topics, with the section on Russian history traditionally occupying the largest part of the volume. It opens with an article by A.P. Bogdanov, which examines the reform of the coronation ceremony of Russian tsars in 1676–1682. His thorough and in-depth studies of documentary and palaeographic sources have led the author to reconsider a number of established views in historical scholarship and to clarify who, and on the basis of which literary sources, established at the highest level of government the concept of Russia as a sacred state. The article by I.S. Khimich and S.I. Tsembalyuk is devoted to counterfeiting in Tyumen from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century, when the city became one of the key centres for the sale and distribution of counterfeit coins in Siberia. The article makes a significant contribution to the study of the region's economic history, legal history, and the everyday life of the city's population in the pre-revolutionary period.

The works by K.V. Vanicheva, Yu.P. Orlova, and J.A. Safronova constitute a separate section and address various aspects of theological education in Tsarist Russia, relations between the bureaucratic apparatus and ecclesiastical authorities, and the legal history of the clergy. Thus, K.V. Vanicheva's article examines a rather unexpected subject: a legal dispute over ownership of the Andronikov Icon of the Mother of God between the clergy of the Trinity Cathedral in St. Petersburg and a private owner. Interesting details from the life of the Romanov dynasty are reflected in the article by D.O. Yastrebov. They concern the mechanisms governing the guardianship of Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich from 1874 to 1881. The scandal caused by the Grand Duke's actions not only brought about a moral shock within the Imperial family but also confronted it with the need to establish bureaucratic procedures for dealing with this unprecedented incident. At the same time, rules had to be developed governing the life that Nikolai Konstantinovich was to lead.

The section concludes with an article by E.M. Magomedova and E.M. Ozdamirova devoted to Caucasian studies, in particular the historical geography of the feudal domains of Dagestan. It examines the history of relations between the Tabasaran Maisumate and neighbouring domains of Dagestan and Transcaucasia in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The *General History* section opens with an article by A.A. Voytenko devoted to the study of the anonymous *Encomium to St. Mark*. This interesting work

makes it possible to gain a better understanding of the history of the creation of certain medieval rhetorical and hagiographical writings.

The next article in the section, by G.V. Shebaldina, addresses what may broadly be described as the "woman question". It examines the role of women in the political life of eighteenth-century Sweden, when women from the aristocracy began to occupy an increasingly significant and prominent position in the cultural and socio-political spheres.

The article by G.Sh. Pilavov is also devoted to European history. It argues for the need to move away from a panegyric attitude towards the intellectual legacy of French Enlightenment thinkers and to subject their works to critical re-evaluation. Taking as an example the ideological confrontation between the French Enlightenment, represented by Denis Diderot, and the Jesuit order, the author draws attention to the obvious bias displayed by the renowned writer and philosopher in his article on Jesuits in the famous *Encyclopédie*. The article also points to the lack of a scholarly approach and, more generally, to the article's failure to meet the standards expected of an encyclopaedic entry.

The article by M.M. Yakushev addresses a subject frequently discussed in the pages of our publication: relations between the Russian and Ottoman Empires. This time, the subject of research is the activities of dragomans and secretaries serving in the Russian Mission in Constantinople in the eighteenth century.

The final article in the section, by V.M. Akhmedov, examines the socio-political aspects of Arab-Iranian relations. We consider this study highly relevant, since the historical features of the formation of Arab-Iranian relations continue to influence interaction between Iran and the Arab states to this day. The article's novelty lies in the fact that some earlier approaches and methods have not always been capable of providing an adequate explanation of the policies pursued by these states.

The issue concludes with the *Source* section, which features A.V. Ganin's study of the case of K.I. Zhikhor, a tsarist colonel and Soviet military specialist, and the Military Intelligence Section of the All-Russian General Staff (1918). Many of the archival materials used by the author are being introduced into scholarly circulation for the first time.

The editorial board continues its work on the next issue, thanks our authors for the materials they have submitted, and looks forward to receiving further interesting contributions.

A.E. Titkov
Editor-in-Chief The Historical Reporter

Contents

RUSSIAN HISTORY

Andrey P. Bogdanov. The Reform of the Coronation Rite of Russian Tsars, 1676–1682, in Light of Archaeographic Discoveries 10

Ivan S. Khimich, Svetlana I. Tsembalyuk. Counterfeiting in Tyumen from the Seventeenth to the Early Twentieth Century ... 52

Ksenia V. Vanicheva. «The Case of Insulting a Sacred Object»: Disputes over Church Property in the Post-Reform Courts, 1870s–1880s..... 94

Yulia P. Orlova. The Autonomy of Theological Seminaries under the Supervision of the Educational Committee of the Holy Synod: The Clash of Two Bureaucratic Cultures during the 1867 Reform of Theological Education..... 114

Julia A. Safronova. Regulating Restrictions on the Reading of Books by Students of Orthodox Theological Seminaries in the First Years after the 1867 Reform of Theological Education 140

Daniil O. Yastrebov. Guardianship of Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich: Between Familialism and Bureaucratisation, 1874–1881..... 164

Elmira M. Magomedova, Eliza M. Ozdamirova. From the History of Relations between the Tabasaran Maisumate and the Neighbouring Domains of Dagestan and Transcaucasia in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century 186

WORLD HISTORY

Anton A. Voytenko. The Encomium to the Apostle and Evangelist Mark in Metropolitan Macarius's Great Menaion Reader 200

Galina V. Shebaldina. Women and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Sweden 222

Georgy Sh. Pilavov. Diderot versus the Jesuits: the Presumption of Guilt 240

Mikhail M. Yakushev. «The Keys to the Sultan's Court»: Russian Dragomans and Secretaries in Constantinople in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century 274

Vladimir M. Akhmedov. The Historical Legacy of Arab-Iranian Relations: Socio-Political Aspects 288

SOURCES

Andrey V. Ganin. «I Cannot Achieve Not Only Release, but Even Simple Justice...». The Case of K.I. Zhikhor and the Military Agent Section of the All-Russian General Staff of the Armed Forces. 1918 318

DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.013
Original paper

Andrey P. Bogdanov

Institute of Russian History Russian Academy of Sciences
Moscow, Russian Federation
E-mail: bogdanovap@mail.ru

The Reform of the Coronation Rite of Russian Tsars, 1676–1682, in Light of Archaeographic Discoveries

Abstract

Archaeography is often perceived as a science pursued for its own sake, an activity of archivists largely invisible to the outside world. Its appeal is accessible only to a narrow circle of specialists. Its practical value is more apparent, but even here one must understand the intricacies of the archaeographer's work in order to appreciate how a particular publication can be used in specific research. This article demonstrates why it is important to examine the archaeographer's methods and working practices. First, it shows how a misconception concerning the origins and development of the Russian concept of statehood from the late fifteenth to the late seventeenth century – the period when the ideological foundations of autocracy were taking shape – arose from a misunderstanding of E.V. Barsov's archaeographic approach. In 1883, Barsov appeared to establish a general view of the Byzantine origins of the coronation rites of Russian tsars. Second, the article corrects our own previous misconception concerning the authorship and, consequently, the motives behind the

© Andrey P. Bogdanov, 2026

reform of the tsars' coronation rite at the end of the seventeenth century, which subsequently became the foundation for a complex of ideas concerning sovereign power incorporated into the coronations of Russian emperors up to Nicholas II. Archaeographic considerations, as well as evidence unrelated directly to the coronation rites themselves, prompted a reconsideration of the conclusion that the reform of the 1676 coronation rite had been initiated by the reformers Tsar Feodor Alexeevich and Chancellor A.S. Matveev. Even the clear indication that the new ideas introduced into Feodor Alexeevich's 1676 coronation rite were developed further in the 1682 coronation rite of Ivan and Peter – at a time when neither the reforming tsar nor the chancellor was still alive – did not initially lead us to attribute the initiative of bringing the Russian rite into conformity with the Byzantine tradition to the decidedly conservative Patriarch Joachim. This conclusion was compelled by the manuscript tradition of the *Russian Chronograph*, to which scholars have not turned for 150 years, since the time of A.N. Popov. The description and study of manuscripts dispersed among various repositories, carried out by generations of archaeographers, provided the basis for determining by whom, and on what literary foundations, the idea of Russia as a sacred state was established at the highest level of government.

Keywords:
Russian tsarist coronation; *Russian Chronograph*; Tsar Feodor Alexeevich; Chancellor Matveev; Patriarch Joachim; Pseudo-Kodinos

For citation:
*Andrey P. Bogdanov***.** The Reform of the Coronation Rite of Russian Tsars, 1676–1682, in Light of Archaeographic Discoveries. The Historical Reporter. 2026. Vol. 60. P. 10–51. DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.013

It is naïve to assume that reliable history is written through the flights of thought of great historians. In Russia, all of them, including the conservative moralist N.M. Karamzin and the liberal conceptualist V.O. Klyuchevsky, were first and foremost outstanding archaeographers. In the West, archaeography as a specialised field is absent, but is successfully replaced by a broader understanding of paleography, codicology, and bibliography. Anatole France, the librarian for the French Senate, excelled in the latter, which to a considerable extent ensured the success of his *Penguin Island*, with its satire of historians who "rewrite one another" – a mockery as barbed as the invectives of the later Annales school. Western Europeans have surpassed us in their ability to laugh at colleagues who rely on the research of others instead of finding, describing, and comparing archival sources. We, for our part, have the ability to laugh at ourselves, proceeding from an understanding of what a scholar assumes and what the continuously emerging new sources actually tell us. Both abilities will have to be demonstrated in this article.

It was already known in the eighteenth century, when N.I. Novikov undertook their publication in the *Ancient Russian Bibliotheca*, that the ceremonial rites of the sovereigns' coronations were among the most important sources revealing the formation of the Russian concept of statehood from the late fifteenth to the late seventeenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century, these mutually dependent written monuments had been well published, but until our turn-of-the-century study they were not examined together as a process in the development of a single text[1]. The continuation of our work demonstrated that not only the grand-princely and tsarist coronation rites, beginning with the first coronation – that of Ivan III's grandson Dmitry on 4 February 1498 – but also the imperial rites based upon them, up to the coronation of Nicholas II on 14 May 1896, possess a unique degree of comparability[2]. Beginning with the coronation of Ivan IV by Metropolitan Macarius on 16 January

[1] Here and below, we refer to our definitive monographs so as not to make our colleagues search for our articles published over the past 50 years. *Богданов А.П.* Царь-реформатор Федор Алексеевич: старший брат Петра I. М., 2018. С. 294–352.

[2] *Богданов А.П.* Венчание русских государей и традиция Империи Ромеев // Россия XXI. 2024. № 1. С. 18–51.



The *Book of the Election and Coronation of Tsar and Grand Prince Mikhail Fedorovich* in 1613 is the only surviving *chinovnaia kniga* (ceremonial book) from the seventeenth-century coronations, although documents of the Posolsky Prikaz record the production of such books by the gold-letter scribes of the Armoury Chamber shortly after the coronations of 1645, 1676, and 1682. Ironically, it is precisely this book that is not authentic: it is a kind of model for coronation books, produced on the orders of Chancellor Matveev in the 1670s.

1547, they were "constructed" on the basis of their predecessors, with gradual changes motivated by the development of ideas about the state and about the meaning, foundations, and significance of tsarist authority.

Textual problems in this sequence are minimal. Some difficulties had to be overcome in determining the original recensions of the rites for Dmitry the Grandson and Ivan IV. But with the Expanded Recension of Ivan IV's rite, produced in the early 1560s in the Posolsky Prikaz, and the coronation rite of Feodor Ioannovich of 31 May 1584 based upon it, we possess an almost uninterrupted series of original copies: only the rite of False Dmitry, dated 30 July 1505, is missing, and it can be reconstructed from the coronation rite of Marina Mnishek of 8 May 1606[3]. The abolition of the Posolsky Prikaz in 1720 introduced a certain degree of confusion into this process. The coronation of Catherine I on 7 May 1724 was prepared with little regard for tradition. Peter II, however, was crowned on 25 February 1728 according to the model of

[3] *Богданов А.П.* Царь-реформатор. С. 296–306.

the coronation rite of Ivan and Peter Alexeevich of 25 June 1682, and thereafter the tradition was not interrupted[4], except that the official coronation rites were not brought together in a single sequence in the state archive[5], but were immediately published, with the sole exceptions of the rites of Paul I and Alexander I.

Having compared the well-published archival texts of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, we acquired the right to be ironic about colleagues who, for a century and a half, based their judgements about the evolution of state ideology on E.V. Barsov's 1883 publication, tellingly entitled *Old Russian Monuments of the Sacred Coronation of Tsars in Connection with Their Greek Originals*[6]. After all, this outstanding archaeographer had not set himself the task of tracing the history of the text of the coronation rites! Barsov concentrated on publishing manuscripts that had not previously been introduced into scholarly circulation and constituted only a small part of the archaeographical tradition, without mentioning published rites and recensions, confident that everyone knew them from the *Ancient Russian Bibliotheca*, the *Collection of State Charters and Treaties*, the *Acts of the Archaeographic Expedition*, and the *Supplements to the Acts of History*. He himself did not once reproduce editions that had already been published.

Modern scholarship has overcome this characteristic late-nineteenth-century conception of erudition by requiring scholars to indicate how a publication relates to all previous editions. It should be remembered that colleagues may fail even to recognise texts published in the *Complete Collection of Laws* and the *Collection of State Acts and Treaties*, or may regard the provisions of Chapter One, Article One of the *Sobornoe Ulozhenie* of 1649 as the product of malicious intent in 1681, not to mention the text of the *Stoglav*[7]. The fact that Barsov's book came to be perceived not as one stage in the development of archaeographical

---

4 *Богданов А.П.* Венчание русских государей. С. 18–51.

5 РГАДА. Ф. 135. Отд. IV. Рубр. I.

6 *Барсов Е.В.* Древне-русские памятники священного венчания царей на царство в связи с греческими их оригиналами: С историческим очерком чинов царского венчания в связи с развитием идеи царя на Руси. М., 1883. [4], II, XXXVI, 160 с.

7 *Богданов А.П.* Диспут о Привилегии Московской Академии XVII века // Клио: Журнал для ученых. 2016. № 5. С. 60–76.

scholarship but as a solution to the question of the Byzantine origin of the Russian coronation rite is not his fault, but that of his epigones, who regarded his work as a comprehensive synthesis.

Barsov presented the first coronation rite in Russian history – that of Dmitry the Grandson upon his accession to the grand-princely throne – from the Synodal copy he had discovered (the Formulary Recension), while the rite of Ivan the Terrible was presented from the previously unpublished Vakhrameev and Posolsky copies (the Expanded Recension). He then had to omit the most important, though already well-published, texts: the coronation of Feodor Ioannovich, a decisive stage in the development of the rite, as well as the rites of Boris Godunov, Marina Mnishek, Vasily Shuisky, and Mikhail Fedorovich. For the seventeenth century, all the rites had in fact already been published, but Barsov discovered previously unknown chancery "lists" of the principal events of the coronation of Alexei Mikhailovich (with "cancellations" relating to the coronation of Ivan and Peter) and of Feodor Alexeevich. Both "lists" were inferior to the rites on which they were based. They had been created in the course of the Posolsky Prikaz's "rite-builders'" deliberations about the organisation of the coronation of Ivan and Peter Alexeevich and lacked the semantic component: the speeches of the patriarch and the tsar setting out the new foundations of tsarist authority. Their sole advantage was that they had not previously been published.

Barsov then "leapt over" the coronation of Catherine I in the Kremlin, the rite of which was known from an official publication. He did, however, discover and publish an extract from the coronation rite of the thirteen-year-old Emperor Peter II, preserved in a manuscript produced in the same year, 1728, at the Yaroslavl Archbishop's House. It reflected contemporary thinking about the Byzantine roots of the Russian coronation ceremony and included two sources whose publication opened Barsov's book: the treatise of Pseudo-Kodinos on the Byzantine rite of imperial coronation and an extract from the *Journey* (to Constantinople) of the hierodeacon Ignatius of Smolensk, containing his observations of such a coronation[8]. Both were known to scholarship, but the publication of their texts from the newly discovered Yaroslavl copy was a worthy contribution.

[8] *Барсов Е.В.* Древне-русские памятники. С. 1–24.

The first and, to this day, principal source on the later rite of the Basileus's coronation consisted of the sections on the coronation ceremony in Pseudo-Kodinos' treatise *On Offices* of the Constantinople court, dating from the 1350s–1360s. In Western Europe, the treatise had been published since the late sixteenth century and was falsely attributed to the Constantinopolitan kouropalates George Kodinos, supposedly deceased in 1450 on the eve of the city's fall, who was believed to have described the final stage in the development of imperial ceremonial, which European monarchs were expected to emulate. In the Russian coronation rites, however, Barsov detected the influence of this treatise only from the rite of Feodor Alexeevich of 1676, which, in his conclusion, represented "the greatest completeness of the Greek ceremonial order"[9].

Today we know of two further detailed descriptions of the Byzantine coronation ceremony of the basileus: the *History of the Romans* by the commissioner of Pseudo-Kodinos' treatise, Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos, written after his abdication in 1354–1364, and the Florentine manuscript discovered and published in 1913 by Kh.M. Loparev, which transmits the Constantinopolitan coronation rite in its form of the 1360s[10]. But the source used by the Duma *dyak* (clerk) of the Posolsky Prikaz, G.K. Bogdanov, when he "constructed" the coronation rite of Feodor Alexeevich on 18 June 1676, was specifically the 1648 edition of Pseudo-Kodinos' treatise, with the Greek and Latin texts printed in parallel[11].

In the Florentine manuscript, after the main text, the names of Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos and his wife Helena, who were crowned in 1392, were inserted in an unskilled hand[12]. A description of their coronation has survived in the *Journey* of the hierodeacon Ignatius of Smolensk (to Constantinople in 1389–1393). It broadly corresponds to the picture of the coronation ceremony found in Byzantine sources, is known in numerous copies, and has been published repeatedly since the time of

---

9 *Барсов Е.В.* Древне-русские памятники. С. XXVIII.

10 *Поляковская М.А.* Поздневизантийский чин коронования василевса // Византийский временник. Т. 68 (93). М., 2009. С. 5–24.

11 *Богданов А.П.* Псевдо-Кодин и таинство венчания русских царей // Каптеревские чтения – 22. М., 2024. С. 110–141.

12 *Лопарев Х.М.* К чину царского коронования в Византии // Сборник статей в честь Димитрия Фомича Кобеко от его сослуживцев по Имп. Публичной библиотеке. СПб., 1913. С. 1–11.



Tsar Feodor Alexeevich. *Parsuna* (portrait) by court icon painter Bogdan Saltanov, commissioned by Tsarevna Sophia Alekseevna in 1685.
State Historical Museum, on display

V.N. Tatishchev. When publishing the newly discovered Yaroslavl copy, Barsov wisely refrained from commenting on its similarity to the Russian coronation rites because, first, in Ignatius's account the basileus conducts the entire coronation ceremony in the sanctuary together with the clergy, whereas in Russia the sovereign was regarded as a secular person until the coronation of Feodor Alexeevich in 1676; and, most importantly, the basileus is crowned together with the empress. In Russia, such an experience before 1724 was unique and scandalous: False Dmitry I, having styled himself Caesar, crowned Marina Mnishek without having converted her to Orthodoxy.

It thus appeared that the connection between the Russian coronation rites and their "Greek originals" could be discerned only from 1676 onward. In the rites preceding this date, it was emphasised that the sovereign was crowned of his own will and according to the native "custom of old": "By God's will, from our forefathers, the great princes, this has been our custom down to the present: the great princes of old gave the great principality to their first-born sons". The assertion that this "custom of old" went back to the time of Vladimir Monomakh appeared only in the sixteenth century, in a later recension of the rite for Dmitry the Grandson. Barsov, working before A.A. Shakhmatov developed his conception of

textual history, was even puzzled as to where N.I. Novikov had obtained the reference to Monomakh's coronation in 1114 when publishing his copy of the rite in the *Ancient Russian Bibliotheca*. He remarked ironically that the attempt to trace the coronation rite of the grand princes back to the rite of the "Greek tsars" in the time of Monomakh or even, as "some scholars" believed, to Vladimir the Saint, was refuted by the impossibility that the Roman emperors and the Greek Church could have approved the coronation of the ancient Russian princes according to the model of the basileis, or that the Russian metropolitan could have replaced the patriarch in the ceremony[13].

We have been able to confirm Barsov's view through a direct source[14], but this does not diminish the boldness with which, in a publication timed to coincide with the coronation of Alexander III, the archaeographer refuted the official conception that the coronation of Russian autocrats according to the Byzantine model had begun with Vladimir Monomakh — a conception voiced at the coronation of 1883 and in the historical essay accompanying it[15], and traceable, astonishingly enough, to the Expanded Recension of the rite of Ivan the Terrible from 1560. Moreover, he did so speculatively, on the basis of a historical understanding of the nature of grand-princely authority, "over which ... there could not have been performed ... that rite of coronation which embodied an already established and broad state ideology of the Tsar and which, according to Greek laws, could be performed only by the Patriarch of the Great Church"[16].

According to Barsov, the Greek model could have been used in Russia only after the fall of Byzantium in 1453. And, as it seemed, the archaeographer found its direct influence on the Russian rites beginning with the coronation of Dmitry the Grandson in the form of a body of Greek texts, which he published from the *Euchologion* (in Goar's edition), together with their Russian translation in a *Trebnik* based on the *Slavonic parchment manuscript of the fourteenth century*[17]. The 'four-

---

13 *Барсов Е.В.* Древне-русские памятники. С. XI–XIII.

14 *Богданов А.П.* Е.В. Барсов в поиске имперских корней коронации российских государей // Российская история. 2025. № 1. С. 98–108. С. 104.

15 Венчание русских государей на царство начиная с царя Михаила Федоровича до Императора Александра III. СПб., 1883. С. 1–2.

16 *Барсов Е.В.* Древне-русские памятники. С. XII–XIII.

17 Ibid. С. 25–31.

teenth century' in the edition looks like a typographical error, but it was repeated twice[18], so it was probably an archaeographical misconception contradicting Barsov's own conception. Otherwise, why would the texts he called the *Ancient Rite of the Coronation of Tsars* have been translated in Russia long before the physical fall of Constantinople into Turkish hands and even before the moral fall of the Greeks through the Union of Florence?

Indeed, the manuscript containing these texts[19], carefully described in 1868 by A.V. Gorsky[20], dates from a century later. In an article published posthumously in 1882, the Rector of the Moscow Theological Academy and distinguished archaeographer emphasised the significance of the prayers translated from Greek for the coronation of the tsar ("O Lord our God, King of kings and Lord of lords" and "To Thee, the only King of ages"), which had been used in Russian coronation rites since the coronation of Dmitry the Grandson[21]. Yet he did not mention the homily placed alongside them in the coronation rites, which Barsov regarded as a "purely Russian feature", in which "the voice of the Church itself, breathing sacred solemnity", was heard[22]. Why Gorsky passed over this text was explained with considerable sarcasm by Kh.M. Loparev, who pointed out that Barsov had mistaken for an original composition excerpts from the *Testament of Basil, King of the Greeks*, which had been popular in Russia since the late fourteenth century and had been published many times by 1883[23].

Thus, of the Byzantine legacy, only two prayers for the coronation of the tsar from the Greek *Euchologion* were actually incorporated into the Russian rites of the fifteenth through the first half of the seventeenth century. They had been translated into Russian in a *Trebnik* in advance,

---

18 Ibid. C. I, 25, 116.

19 ГИМ. Синодальное собр. № 501/468.

20 *Горский А.В., Невоструев К.И.* Описание славянских рукописей Московской Синодальной библиотеки. Отд. III. Книги богослужебные. Ч. I. М., 1869. С. 146–147.

21 *Горский А.В.* О священнодействии венчания и помазания царей на царство // Прибавления к изданию творений св. отцев в русском переводе. Ч. 29. Кн. 1. М., 1882. С. 117–151.

22 *Барсов Е.В.* Древне-русские памятники. С. XXIX–XXXI.

23 *Лопарев Х.М.* О чине венчания русских царей // Журнал Министерства народного просвещения. СПб., 1887. Ч. 253. С. 312–319.

but only after the fall of Constantinople. In other words, arguments about the "Greek originals" of the Russian coronation rite before the reform of 1676 are nothing more than fabrications[24]. Church materials concerning the coronation of the basileus, unknown to Barsov and brought to Moscow by Greeks in December 1560 at the tsar's request, were not used in the Expanded Recension of the rite of Ivan IV. They lay gathering dust in the archives until the first half of the 1640s, when they were beautifully copied into a manuscript of the *Posolsky Prikaz,* together with the *Tale of the Seven Liberal Arts* and the coronation rite of Feodor Ioannovich, which was produced in preparation for the coronation of Alexei Mikhailovich[25]. Yet they were not used in the preparation of the substantive coronation rite for his coronation on 28 September 1645[26].

Nevertheless, Barsov was right to entitle his book *Monuments of the Coronation of Tsars in Connection with Their Greek Originals*. For while initially only two prayers were used in Russia, attesting to the enduring Greek-Russian tradition of the Orthodox Church, beginning with the coronation of Feodor Alexeevich in 1676, the rites of the tsars and emperors were *indeed* remodelled according to the Greek rite, taken from Pseudo-Kodinos.

Drawing on the brief "lists" he had published alongside the complete and already published coronation rites of 1645, 1676 and 1682, Barsov described with remarkable accuracy the changes in the traditional Russian ceremony between the coronation of 1645 on the one hand[27] and those of 1676 and 1682 on the other. He clearly demonstrated that, as a result of the reform of 1676, the sacred nature of the autocrat's authority came to the fore in place of its dynastic foundations. "After the speech",

---

[24] *Богданов А.П.* Венчание русских государей. С. 34–35.

[25] РГАДА. Ф. 357. Саровское собр. № 30(294). 4°. 459 л.

[26] Versions of the rite: РГАДА. Ф. 135. Государственное древлехранилище хартий и рукописей. Отд. IV. Руб. 1. № 12. Л. 1–290 (три списка). Books of official records drawn up following the ceremony: Ibid. № 10. Л. 1–67; № 11. Л. 1–48. Coronation file: РГАДА. Ф. 156. Исторические и церемониальные дела. Оп. 1. № 95.

[27] Having compared all the extant rites of the coronation of Dmitry the Grandson in all their recensions, we demonstrated that the coronation of 1645 indeed represented the culmination of the development of the tradition of dynastic antiquity, incorporating and multiplying all the achievements of state thought accumulated within it and within the rite of Filaret Nikitich's installation as patriarch on 22 June 1619. See: *Богданов А.П.* Царь-реформатор. С. 301–302.

the archaeographer wrote, "in which the sovereign expressed his desire to be crowned, the Patriarch asked him: How do you believe and confess the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? And the sovereign solemnly recited the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. In addition to the aforementioned insignia of royal dignity, a royal vestment was placed upon him, following the example of the Greek tsars. The anointing began after the patriarch and all the bishops had received Communion, but before the deacons had done so. Moreover, whereas under all the previous tsars the Holy Gifts were administered after their anointing not within the sanctuary but before the Royal Doors, where the anointing itself took place, now the tsar, following the example of the Greek tsars, was led into the sanctuary directly through the Royal Doors, where he received the Body and Blood of Christ, like the priests"[28].

The full text of the coronation rite of Feodor Alexeevich[29] also reveals a radical change in the semantic content of the dialogue between the tsar and the patriarch, whose speeches were omitted from the "lists" published by Barsov. Yet it was precisely this dialogue between secular and ecclesiastical authority that had originally, from the late fifteenth century onward, formulated their symphony in legitimising the authority of the grand sovereign[30]. Not only did the patriarch, rather than the sovereign as before, assume the leading role in the ceremony from 1676 onward. More importantly, Tsar Feodor Alexeevich was crowned "according to the tradition of the holy Eastern Church" and only secondarily "according to the custom of the ancient tsars and grand princes of Russia". This new formula of coronation was repeated three times during the coronation of 1676 and five times during the coronation of Ivan and Peter in 1682[31]. The idea of the sacred nature of the Russian state, which the Russian national anthem continues to affirm to this day, decisively prevailed over the conviction in the uniqueness of its own "custom of old",

---

28 *Барсов Е.В.* Древне-русские памятники. С. XXVIII–XXIX.

29 РГАДА. Ф. 135. Отд. IV. Рубр. I. № 15. Л. 1–161. Published in: *Богданов А.П.* Царь-реформатор. С. 458–486.

30 We established this immediately after comparing all the rites of the 15th–17th centuries: *Богданов А.П.* Чины венчания российских царей // Культура средневековой Москвы. М., 1995. С. 211–224.

31 РГАДА. Ф. 135. Отд. IV. Рубр. I. № 19. Л. 1–123; Полное собрание законов Российской империи, с 1649 г. Серия 1. СПб.: Тип. II Отделения Собственной Е.И.В. канцелярии, 1830. Т. II. № 391. С. 412–439.



Tsar Feodor Alexeevich. *Parsuna (portrait) by court icon painter Bogdan Saltanov, commissioned by Tsarevna Sophia Alekseevna in 1685. State Historical Museum, on display.*

although no one abandoned any of the previous dynastic foundations of tsarist authority accumulated in the coronation rite of Alexei Mikhailovich in 1645[32].

We confidently attributed authorship of this radical and successful reform, which for two centuries determined the entire ideological and ceremonial trajectory of the coronations of Russia's autocrats, to Tsar-Reformer Feodor Alexeevich, the initiator and implementer of radical transformations in state and church administration, military affairs, taxation, finance, and culture (1676–1682)[33]. Naturally, the Tsar almost never acted alone, except when preparing strictly secret, personalised decrees[34], known only to himself and the person carrying them out. He relied on advisers in the Boyar Duma and on officials in the considerably expanded central state apparatus, who prepared

[32] *Богданов А.П.* Идеи русской публицистики: между царством и империей. М.; Берлин: Директ-Медиа, 2018. 482 с. С. 22–48.

[33] These transformations and their rationale are the subject of an extensive monograph: *Богданов А.П.* Царь-реформатор.

[34] *Богданов А.П.* Читаем политический документ: указ царя Федора Алексеевича о разрушении Чигирина // Источниковедческая компаративистика и историческое построение. Тезисы докладов и сообщений XV научной конференции. В честь Ольги Михайловны Медушевской. М., 2003. С. 61–66.

detailed memoranda on particularly important matters at his request. The sovereign responded to initiatives put forward by outstanding assistants: the boyars, Princes Yu.A. Dolgorukov, who oversaw the army's transition to a 'regular' system (1679–1680), and V.V. Golitsyn, who carried out especially important and secret assignments and completed his senior colleague's military-district reform by assigning young members of the Sovereign's Court to army ranks and abolishing mestnichestvo (1681–1682); or General G.I. Kosagov, whose plan and map for the Izium Abatis Line the Tsar personally examined and approved despite opposition from prominent figures (1680). In any event, the hand of the young tsar lay firmly on the helm of government: his will is evident in all the reforms, which remained consistent despite changes in the composition of administrators, advisers and 'close representatives'. The historiographical notion of a 'weak and sickly' young man on the throne does not square with the actual image of a lover of horse racing and archery, capable of acting against the collective will of the Boyar Duma, something even his father had not dared to do[35]. The Tsar was also responsible for introducing a motivational element into public decrees, explaining the 'common good' served by the measures he adopted – the predecessors of Peter the Great's celebrated *ponezhe* ('because').

The young tsar's persistence is evident in the documented process of radical transformations which, by their very nature, were bound to encounter resistance from some members of the elite and consequently extended over a number of years. This applies not only to the introduction of compulsory military service for the nobility, including the Moscow nobility; the reform of ranks, with the establishment of new grades; and the transition from land-based to household taxation and redistribution of the tax burden, all of which required appeals to representatives of the *zemstvo* and the estates. If the introduction of a uniform working schedule for the central offices was possible soon after Feodor Alexeevich ascended the throne, and the reform of official dress in 1681 proceeded without friction, the tripling of the central state apparatus, establishment of a permanent government, formation of a hierarchy of departments, and

[35] *Талина Г.В.* Царь Алексей Михайлович: личность, мыслитель, государственный деятель. М., 1996.

elevation of their status proved long and difficult. So much so that many of the Tsar's initiatives were completed only under his younger brother Peter, in the eighteenth century, and even then with enormous difficulty. And the great struggle for comprehensive land surveying that Feodor Alexeevich waged from 1677 to 1682 was not won even by the Father of the Fatherland (the victory eventually fell to Catherine the Great).

More often than not, when comparing the Tsar-Reformer's successive decrees on the same issue in different years, we cannot determine what obstacles a particular reform encountered, who delayed it, or who opposed it. Feodor Alexeevich's arguments concerning 'the common good' are invariably positive; he never named his opponents. This was true even when scoundrels, violating the ban on duelling, brazenly fought with swords beneath the windows of the Kremlin Palace, which the Tsar had transformed at considerable effort into a paradise garden. Only occasionally can we infer from later accounts, corroborated by the removal of the guilty parties from office, who was obstructing the reforms. For example, some were against the rebuilding of Moscow from wood into stone, which the Tsar carried out with the help of interest-free (or even non-performing) loans to property owners.

Only one rock against which his efforts crashed with a deafening roar stands out clearly and visibly in the documents. It was the Consecrated Council of bishops headed by Patriarch Joachim (Savelov) of Moscow and All Russia. Having assumed the patriarchal see under Alexei Mikhailovich and Chancellor A.S. Matveev in 1674, by the time Feodor Alexeevich ascended the throne in 1676, His Holiness had the church hierarchy firmly in his hands, ruthlessly rooting out dissent and severely punishing any bishop who dared to behave 'out of keeping with the rank' of a subordinate to the 'higher ecclesiastical authority'[36].

It was Joachim who, ostensibly sheltering behind the decisions of the Consecrated Council, spectacularly derailed the diocesan reform of 1681, which was necessary for the ecclesiastical unification and Christian enlightenment of Russia. The Patriarch greeted the Tsar's plans for the education and higher learning Russia so desperately needed – from vocational schools for orphans to the uncensored Upper Printing House and the Moscow Academy open to all estates – with outright hostility.

[36] *Богданов А.П.* Русские патриархи. М., 2022. С. 589–840.

And when the Tsar sought to bring the church hierarchy into conformity with the state structure of a great power, the Patriarch stood like a wall against him. The carefully developed plan devised by the Tsar called for replacing the existing system of 17 dioceses (1 patriarchate, 9 metropolitanates, 6 archbishoprics and 1 bishopric) with a system of 83 dioceses covering the entire country (a patriarchate, 12 metropolitanates with 70 archbishoprics and bishoprics subordinate to them). Even this was insufficient to provide proper pastoral care for Russia's nearly two hundred districts (*uyezds*), but it could have served as the foundation for the subsequent development of church administration. All the documents have survived in which the Consecrated Council successively told the Tsar 'no' to each of his attempts at compromise. Even its agreement to establish 11 new dioceses was never implemented, so the sovereign, with his customary persistence, began establishing them himself, though not according to the planned system of strict hierarchy[37].

The studies the author conducted at the end of the twentieth century showed that just as Tsar Feodor Alexeevich was a greatly underrated reformer, Patriarch Joachim was an outstanding defender of 'antiquity', and an exceptionally active one at that. The description of his activities exceeded in volume everything that had to be said about the ideas and deeds of any of his predecessors, from Job through Nikon. Both the books on the Tsar-Reformer and *Russian Patriarchs*, with its extensive study of Patriarch Joachim[38], were repeatedly revised and republished and have long since become classics. We cite the latest editions because our assessment of the roles of the Tsar and the Patriarch in the reform of the sovereigns' coronation rite in 1676 remained unchanged. The reform had to be attributed to the reformer; the conservative could only have consented to it – and that in itself was a considerable achievement for His Holiness, who disapproved of or even rejected a substantial portion of the young Tsar's initiatives.

'There are no grounds for suspecting', we assured the reader, 'that the Patriarch personally participated in composing the new coronation rite. Its development was carried out in the Posolsky Prikaz, whose senior

---

[37] *Богданов А.П.* Царь-реформатор. С. 356–364; Ibid. Русские патриархи. С. 671–677.

[38] *Богданов А.П.* Русские патриархи. С. 589–840.



Patriarch Joachim. *Parsuna* (portrait) by court icon painter Karp Zolotarev, an outstanding artist who succeeded in capturing the Patriarch's character. *1678. Tobolsk Historical and Architectural Museum-Reserve*

scribes served as *chinostroiteli* ("rite-builders", that is, they developed the ceremonial order and supervised its observance during the ceremony) for the coronations of all the first Romanovs. Feodor Alexeevich himself took a direct and highly energetic part in preparing the coronation ... Yet without Joachim's approval the reform of the coronation rite under Feodor would evidently not have taken place, and still less could it have developed further at the coronation of Ivan and Peter amid the Moscow uprising and the divided rule of the summer of 1682 ... In his confrontations with the already established Tsar-Reformer, the Patriarch stood like a wall, immovable not only in ecclesiastical but also in secular affairs. All the more capable, then, was he of flatly refusing a young man who had only just entered his "mature years" at the beginning of June 1676. Joachim did not refuse; moreover, he assumed the leading role in the solemn demonstration of the innovations and responsibility for violating "antiquity". Consequently, Feodor's coronation rite also reflected the Patriarch's view"[39].

It is precisely this logical conclusion that the archaeological discoveries now compel us to reconsider. The initiator of the reform of the coronation rite – which gave the Patriarch the leading place in the

[39] Ibid. C. 632–633.

ceremony instead of the Tsar and was based on an unprecedented integration of the Byzantine model into established Russian practice, namely the treatise of Pseudo-Kodinos in its 1648 Greek-Latin edition[40] – turns out to have been Joachim, while Feodor Alexeevich was the one who agreed with him, recognising the importance of proclaiming Great Russia a sacred realm. In retrospect, we can understand our mistake: we had denied the reforming energy of conservatives, an energy evident in the tireless labours of the Patriarch's adviser, the outstanding Greekophile Euthymius Chudovsky[41]. An equally creative, though less radical, Greekophile who did not demand the Hellenisation of the Russian language or the 'abolition' of Latin learning (of which he was the greatest expert) was Joachim's friend, Archimandrite Ignatius Rimsky-Korsakov of the Novospassky Monastery, author of numerous remarkable works, including *Genealogy*, the first scholarly monograph in Russia[42].

The decisive argument for revising our assessment of the respective roles of the Tsar and the Patriarch in the reform of the coronation rite in 1676, confirmed and consolidated in 1682, was a deeper understanding of Joachim's historical views. The idea of the sanctity of the Great Russian realm, the legitimate and sole heir to the pious Greek Tsardom, was formulated in the *Russian Chronograph*[43]. The idea that Great Russia – so named precisely in the *Russian Chronograph*[44] – inherited the sanctity of the Tsardom had already been declared in the first recension, created by Dositheus Toporkov, a monk of the Joseph-Volokolamsk Monastery, in 1516–1522, and carried down to the fall of Byzantium in 1453. It was then developed and substantiated in the seventeenth-century recensions: the second, which carried the narrative down to 1613, and the third, to

---

40 *Богданов А.П.* Псевдо-Кодин. С. 111.

41 *Богданов А.П.* «Грекофилы» и «латинствующие» XVII в.: тексты в контексте // Genesis: исторические исследования. 2021. № 4. С. 1–46.

42 *Богданов А.П.* От летописания к исследованию: Русские историки последней четверти XVII века. 2-е изд., испр. и доп. М.; Берлин, 2020. С. 44–262.

43 On the place of this monument in the development of the Russian historical conception of the eleventh–seventeenth centuries, see: *Богданов А.П.* «Прения с греками о вере» 1650 г.: Отношения Русской и Греческой церквей в XI–XVII вв. М., 2020. С. 233–406.

44 The *Chronograph* served as the basis for the Zemsky Sobor's adoption in 1612 of the name *Great Russia* for the state: *Богданов А.П.* Хронограф Русский в XVII веке // Словесность и история. 2025. № 1. С. 149–176, 151–152.



Beginning of the New Patriarchal Chronograph, brought up to 1696.
Russian State Library. V.M. Undolsky Collection, no. 726, Л. 17.

1617[45]. All three recensions of the *Russian Chronograph*, with their variants and *razryady (classes/categories/groupings, sing. razryad. — Ed.)*, were studied, and their Russian articles and chronicle continuations were published by the outstanding archaeographer A.N. Popov as early as the 1860s[46].

Later archaeographers invariably noted the presence of recensions of the *Russian Chronograph* within major chronicle compilations, compilations and miscellanies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, where they usually occupied a prominent place at the beginning. Yet they did not delve into the meaning of these chronographic texts, apart

[45] *Богданов А.П.* Русская хронографическая концепция до 1660-х гг. // Герменевтика древнерусской литературы. Сборник 24. М., 2025. С. 549–589.

[46] *Попов А.Н.* Обзор хронографов русской редакции. Вып. 1–2. М., 1866–1869; Ibid. Изборник славянских и русских сочинений и статей, внесенных в хронографы русской редакции. М., 1869.

from studies of the origins, composition and sources of the first recension[47]. We proceeded in much the same way during our half-century of research into seventeenth-century chronicle writing. We can therefore explain the motives of colleagues for whom the *Russian Chronograph* was of little interest as a source of historical information. Its accounts of ancient times are derivative. The original chronicle-like continuation of the second recension, covering the period from the late fifteenth to the early seventeenth century, was superseded by richer and more detailed chronicles, as well as by authorial histories of the Time of Troubles, on which the text from the 1580s onward in the third recension was based. The chronicle continuations found in individual manuscripts of the *Russian Chronograph* in the seventeenth century are rare, and almost all are short and concise. We established the reasons for this only after turning to the study of the monument's extensive archaeographical tradition in the seventeenth century, the labour involved in which required serious motivation.

That motivation arose when N.V. Belov, studying the Undolsky Codex no. 726[48], established that the *only* substantial chronicle continuation of the *Russian Chronograph* from the 'rebellious century', published by Popov[49], was a recension of the *Chronicler of 1619—1691* discovered and published by V.I. Buganov[50]. This crucial source on the Moscow uprising of 1682, produced by the scribes of Patriarch Joachim, was by then known in the recensions of 1691 and 1690[51]. It always had the *Russian Chronograph* at its beginning; this fact simply failed to attract attention. Moreover, the Chudov Monastery monk Bogolep Adamov had at his disposal a codex without the *Chronicler of 1619—1691*, which prompted him in 1688, after drastically abridging the earlier text, to write an original chronicle continuation of his own *Chronographer*[52]. The chronographic

47 *Творогов О.В.* Древнерусские хронографы. Л., 1975.

48 РГБ. Ф. 310. Собр. В.М. Ундольского. № 726.

49 *Попов А.Н.* Изборник. С. 246–257.

50 РНБ. Ф. 717. Соловецкое собр. № 878/988. Полное собрание русских летописей. Т. 31. Летописцы последней четверти XVII в. М., 1968 (hereinafter ПСРЛ. Т. 31). С. 180–205.

51 РГБ. Ф. 199. Собр. П.Н. Никифорова. № 69. *Богданов А.П.* Общерусское летописание. С. 429–433, 807–816.

52 *Богданов А.П.* Общерусское летописание. С. 443–450, 861–871.

recension of the *Chronicler* represented by the Undolsky Codex extends to 1696[53]. Textual comparison of all its copies made it possible to reliably distinguish recensions up to 1682 and 1686, in addition to those already known[54]. This disproved our earlier assumption that Joachim, while generously patronising chroniclers, nevertheless preferred their work not to touch upon current political events after the uprising of 1682[55], with the exception of the gratifying-to-him submission of the Metropolitanate of Kiev to the Moscow Patriarchate, which brought to completion both our 1686 chronographic compilation and the patriarchal *Chronicler* of 1686[56].

The establishment of the chronographic recension enabled us to understand how deeply the creators of the *Chronicler of 1619—1691* analysed, in 1682 and 1686, the history of popular uprisings in Russia after the Time of Troubles, together with the history of wars and diplomatic relations, an overview of which was provided by their colleagues in the *Chronicler of 1686*. The original and true ending of the *protograph* of the *Chronicler of 1619—1691* was the catastrophe of 1682, when the rebels, 'ignorant commoners', held power in the capital for several months, intending to establish permanently the parity of influence between the *sluzhilye po priboru* ('service men by recruitment') and the nobility, thereby altering the social foundations of the state and encroaching upon authority over the Church, where not only the patriarch but almost all the hierarchs were of noble origin (as, incidentally, were almost all the chroniclers[57]).

It was easy to observe that the first recension of the *Russian Chronograph* ended with a catastrophe – the fall of Constantinople – and with emergence from that catastrophe in the form of a prophecy of the rise of a new sacred realm, 'our Russian land'[58]. The enormous chronological

---

53 Ibid. C. 548–560, 842–860.

54 *Богданов А.П., Белов Н.В.* Хронограф Русский III редакции из 182 глав. Часть 2. Хронографическая редакция патриаршего летописца 1619–1691 гг. // Словесность и история. СПб., 2022. № 1. С. 45–91.

55 *Богданов А.П.* Русские патриархи. С. 637–656.

56 *Богданов А.П.* Общерусское летописание. С. 352–412.

57 *Богданов А.П.* Историческое самосознание дворянства в период реформ // Проблемы российской истории. Вып. 2. Магнитогорск, 2003. С. 28–53.

58 Полное собрание русских летописей. Т. 22. Ч. 1. Хронограф редакции 1512 года. СПб., 1911. 580 с. С. 578.

gap beginning in 1453 remained unfilled for almost a hundred years after Dositheus, until the second recension, continued by an unknown genius in 1617 to the coronation of Mikhail Fedorovich and the end of the catastrophe of the Time of Troubles, established the conception of Great Russia's place in contemporary history as the spiritual centre of the world. The third recension, carrying the text only slightly further, to the actual conclusion of the Time of Troubles with the Truce of Deulino, restored to the *Chronograph* its original form as a vivid literary work in which every article that appeared to be 'chronicle-like', beginning with the words 'in the year of' such-and-such, was in fact a novel (as in the accounts of Troy and Alexander the Great), a tale, or a novella conveying a moral lesson to the reader[59].

The significance of social and political catastrophe and the fortunate emergence from it as the ending of each recension of the *Russian Chronograph* required confirmation through a study of its manuscript tradition. First and foremost, this applied to the third recension, whose text, in the chronographic manuscript combined with the *Chronicler of 1619–1691*, reveals structural features[60]. Were these changes in the classical text the result of the reflections of Patriarch Joachim's scribes, who were creating a new *Russian Chronograph* for their own times? Or did they borrow a text composed by someone else as the basis for continuing the *Chronograph* with the *Chronicler* to 1682 (and subsequently to 1686 and beyond)? Popov's work offered no answer, particularly since some of the 25 copies of the third recension of the *Chronograph* that he discovered belonged to private collections and were subsequently lost. Even taking these losses into account, a new archaeographical search produced 50 copies[61], enabling us to reconstruct the history and social functions of the monument in greater detail and clarity than is possible for most historical works of the seventeenth century[62].

The attitude of scribes and readers towards the *Russian Chronograph* as a completed and perfect literary monument determined the

---

59 *Богданов А.П.* Русская хронографическая концепция до 1660-х гг. С. 549–589.

60 *Богданов А.П.* Общерусское летописание. С. 238–247, 818–841.

61 *Богданов А.П.* Рукописная традиция Русского Хронографа III редакции (продолжение изысканий А.Н. Попова) // Quaestio Rossica. Вып. 11. 2023. № 1. С. 291–308.

62 *Богданов А.П.* Общерусское летописание. С. 476–525.

extraordinary stability of its text, beginning with its structure. This was noted by the first Russian scholarly historian, A.Ya. Lyzlov, who cited the chapters of the *Russian Chronograph* with the same confidence with which he cited the pages of the many Western European editions he used[63]. And he was right, because seventeenth-century scribes considered it unthinkable to alter the structure of the *Russian Chronograph*, even when adding texts they particularly liked, such as the *Tale of the Capture of Azov by the Don Cossacks*, to the supplementary material. Even continuing the *Chronograph* with new chronicle articles – something that would seemingly have been quite natural in the decades following the Time of Troubles – was regarded as an exceptionally bold undertaking and remained extremely rare until Joachim's patriarchate (1674–1690)[64].

Consequently, the radical restructuring of the *Russian Chronograph* in the chronographic compilation of Undolsky no. 726, from the traditional 169 chapters[65] to 182[66], encompassing the entire text rather than merely its chronicle continuation from 1619 to 1696[67], was a deliberate act by the scribes to create a new recension of the *Russian Chronograph*. It was not a fourth recension, continuing Popov's numbering, but at least a sixth, since, having established the exceptionally high stability of the monument's text, we could not avoid studying deviations from this rule in the seventeenth century.

---

63 *Андрей Лызлов.* Скифская история / Издание и исследование А.П. Богданова. М., 2023. С. 653–659.

64 *Богданов А.П., Белов Н.В.* Хронограф Русский III редакции из 182 глав. Часть 1. Хронограф патриаршего скриптория 1680-х гг. // Словесность и история. СПб., 2021. № 3. С. 73–122.

65 Only 8 of the 47 manuscripts of the *Russian Chronograph* of the third recension that we have studied contain an additional chapter 170, since they have been brought down, through brief chronicle entries, to the beginning of the reign of Alexei Mikhailovich: *Богданов А.П.* Общерусское летописание. С. 539.

66 It was surpassed only by the *Fochtov Chronograph* of the third class of the third recension, whose compilers managed to bring the text to an end with the deeds of Prince D.M. Pozharsky in Chapter 186, instead of the usual Chapter 168, and, in the Undolsky codex, Chapter 178: РГБ. Ф. 256. Собр. Н.П. Румянцева № 457. The Tikhonravov codex, also created in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, has one fewer chapter (177): РГБ. Ф. 299. Собр. Н.С. Тихонравова. № 436.

67 A complete comparison of the traditional table of contents with the new one was published in: *Богданов А.П.* Общерусское летописание. С. 818–838.

By 1 September 1650, Archbishop Pachomius of Astrakhan, having decided that altering the generally accepted text was more difficult than writing a new *Chronograph*, simply did the latter within a single year[68]. Pachomius's *Chronograph* is a new and highly personal work and cannot be included in the manuscript tradition of the *Russian Chronograph*, although it was used by patriarchal scribes for several pointed judgements and for borrowing the *Chronicler of F.F. Volkonsky* in the chronographic compilation with the *Chronicler of 1686*[69].

Two creative recensions of the *Russian Chronograph*, supplemented with an enormous quantity of material drawn from various sources, were discovered by B.M. Kloss, who rightly identified them not as the fourth and fifth recensions, continuing Popov's numbering, but as authorial works: the *Chronograph of Arseny Sukhanov* and the *Patriarchal Chronicle Compilation of the 1670s*[70].

The outstanding seventeenth-century archaeographer Arseny Sukhanov, treasurer of the Trinity Monastery and head of the Print Yard, substantially supplemented and reworked the first *razryad* of the third recension of the *Russian Chronograph* in 1661–1663[71]. After the accession of His Holiness on 26 July 1674, the Patriarch's scribes took Sukhanov's *Chronograph* and the Trinity Miscellany of the 1640s as their basis and began work on an even richer text, supplementing it from the *Nikon Chronicle* and other sources. In addition to the *protograph*, to which, as Kloss[72] demonstrated, the patriarchal scribes repeatedly returned, they created two manuscripts of the new *Chronograph*[73] by the early 1680s, changing its customary format – which we have established for the seventeenth century as the ordinary sheet folded in half (*in folio*, 2°)[74] – to the enormous 'Alexandrian sheet' (1°). This work, interrupted in the 1680s, probably because of efforts

---

68 *Богданов А.П.* Хронограф Русский в XVII веке. С. 161.

69 *Савинов М.А.* О Хронографе Пахомия и Летописце 1686 г. // Летописи и хроники. Новые исследования. М.; СПб., 2008. С. 280–289.

70 *Клосс Б.М.* Никоновский свод и русские летописи XVI–XVII веков. М., 1980. С. 274–295.

71 РНБ. F.XVII.17. 2°.

72 *Клосс Б.М.* Никоновский свод и русские летописи. С. 280–291.

73 Кодексы 1674–1678 гг.: РГАДА. Ф. 181. Собр. МГАМИД. № 351/800; РГБ. Ф. 556. Собр. Вифанской духовной семинарии. № 34. Т. 1–2.

74 *Богданов А.П.* Общерусское летописание. С. 506–515.

to create the *Chronograph* with chronicle continuations to 1682, 1686 and 1690, was resumed in the 1690s under Patriarch Adrian, when two more equally large codices were produced[75], their scribes once again consulting older copies[76]. This work did not achieve popularity. In the following century, the five copies (counting the *protograph*) were joined by another three (two of which have survived[77]), whereas the *Russian Chronograph*, third *razryad* of the third recension, which appeared in the same 1670s, is known from 15 copies dating from the seventeenth century alone[78], although its content was considerably simpler.

The experiment with the 182-chapter *Chronograph*, born of the upheaval of the Moscow uprising of 1682, was somewhat more successful. Belov and I were able to establish, on firm evidence, a stemma of seven copies dating from 1682–1696[79] for the continuation of the chronicle, four of which have survived[80], but to these should be added the *Rumyantsev Chronograph* of the last quarter of the seventeenth century, without a continuation[81], written and divided into chapters exactly like the Undolsky codex[82]. Work on the enormous patriarchal compilation with the *Chronicler* of 1686, so brilliant that L.V. Cherepnin mistook it for a work of the Posolsky Prikaz[83], also included a recension of the *Russian Chronograph*[84], combined with another of the most popular monuments of the seventeenth century, the *Book of Royal Degrees*. This chronographic compilation by Joachim's scribes was also copied under

---

75 Кодексы 1690-х гг.: РНБ. Собр. М. П. Погодина. № 1404[6]; РНБ. F.IV.236.

76 *Клосс Б.М.* Никоновский свод и русские летописи. С. 291–293.

77 Ibid. С. 293–295.

78 *Богданов А.П.* Рукописная традиция Русского Хронографа. С. 291–308.

79 *Богданов А.П.* Общерусское летописание. С. 581.

80 РНБ. Ф. 717. Соловецкое собр. № 878/988; РГБ. Ф. 310. Собр. В.М. Ундольского. № 726; РГБ. Ф. 199. Собр. П.Н. Никифорова. № 69; РНБ. Ф. 536. Собр. ОЛДП. F.476. Л. 304 об. – 305 об. (фрагмент Хронографической редакции Летописца 1619–1691 гг.).

81 РГБ. Ф. 256. Собр. Н.П. Румянцева. № 457.

82 *Богданов А.П.* Общерусское летописание. С. 539–541, 818–838.

83 *Черепнин Л.В.* «Смута» и историография XVII века (из истории древнерусского летописания) // Исторические записки. М.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1945. Т. 14. С. 81–128. С. 116–119.

84 РГБ. Ф. 256. Собр. Н.П. Румянцева. № 413.

Adrian[85]. Of the eleven manuscripts established textologically, six have survived[86].

Moreover, it was precisely on the basis of the third recension of the *Chronograph* that the remarkable *Mazurin Chronicler*[87] was created by the end of 1682 by the patriarchal scribe Sidor Snazin, who had moved to Moscow from Veliky Novgorod and set out to prove, with the help of a Novgorodian legend[88], that Rus was not only holier but also older than all the kingdoms of the world[89]. *The Legend of Sloven and Rus* used by Snazin had been incorporated by Arseny Sukhanov into the text of his 1661–1663 *Chronograph* and became part of the third *razryad* of the third recension, which Popov was inclined to attribute to Joachim's scribes, as having been created in the second half of the 1670s. Yet, despite our wish to "embellish" Joachim's record of service with this extremely popular monument, doubts are raised by manuscripts resembling this *razryad* that can be dated to an earlier period[90].

Thus, in its seventeenth-century recensions, the *Russian Chronograph* was the fundamental basis for the historical works of Patriarch Joachim's scribes, who persistently sought to improve it and bring it up to date, extending world history – which after 1453 had become above all the history of Russia – to the new Time of Troubles of the Moscow uprising of 1682, and subsequently to the incorporation into Moscow of the metropolitanate of Kiev "and all Rus", confirmed by the Eternal Peace of 1686. Joachim's death and the accession of Adrian to the patriarchal see in 1690, followed by Peter I's capture of Azov in 1696, were the next "finishing" dates for chronographic compilations under the new patriarch. This corresponded to the official state position that the major events of contemporary Russian history had universal significance, as

---

85 *Богданов А.П.* Общерусское летописание. С. 352–412.

86 РГАДА. Ф. 181. Собр. МГАМИД. № 20/25; РГБ. Ф. 256. Собр. Н.П. Румянцева № 413 и 364; ГИМ. Синодальное собр. № 153; РНБ. F.XVII.16; ИРЛИ. Древлехранилище. Колл. М.Ф. Першина. № 12.

87 Published by V.I. Koretsky: ПСРЛ. Т. 31. С. 11–179.

88 *Богданов А.П.* Русь от Новгорода, Новгород от Ноя: новгородский вклад в общерусское летописание XVII в. // Novogardia. Международный журнал по истории и исторической географии Средневековой Руси. 2019. № 2. С. 252–279.

89 *Богданов А.П.* От летописания к исследованию. С. 270–351.

90 *Богданов А.П.* Общерусское летописание. С. 493, and others.

had been emphasised at the coronation of Alexei Mikhailovich in 1645 and reinforced at the coronation of his son in 1676[91]. But what meaning did the *Russian Chronograph* have for the scribes and for Joachim personally, when, as we have established[92], he exercised control over everyone and everything within the sphere of his supreme ecclesiastical authority?

A discovery made long before the interest in the *Russian Chronograph* that arose after Belov's breakthrough helped to answer this question. In the appendix to a *Chronograph* of the second recension[93], which at the time had not attracted our attention, we found as early as the last century the autograph of the most striking Old Believer pamphlet of the seventeenth century, Arseny Sukhanov's *Disputations with the Greeks on the Faith*, in two of the author's earliest recensions, written by him in Moldavia and Wallachia during those very disputations with the Greeks in the summer of 1650[94]. The recension submitted by Arseny to the Posolsky Prikaz, which enabled S.A. Belokurov to prove that this extraordinarily compelling work had not been attributed to Sukhanov by the leaders of the Schism and had not been created in the enlightened eighteenth century[95], turned out to be the third recension, revised by the author on the basis of the second.

It took considerable time to publish all the authorial recensions and study monographically the process by which the work was created. It turned out not to be a piece of polemical writing, as it entered Russian literary culture, but rather the ecclesiastical part of Sukhanov's report on yet another embassy. It was vivid and persuasive, but no more dramatic than his intelligence reports and his description of the struggle against the machinations of Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky in the political section of the report. Yes, Sukhanov left no stone unturned in demolishing the conviction of the

---

91 *Богданов А.П.* Царь-реформатор. С. 306–307.

92 *Богданов А.П.* Русские патриархи. С. 589–840.

93 РГАДА. Ф. 181. Собр. МГАМИД. № 659/1171.

94 *Богданов А.П.* Автограф «Прений с греками о вере» Арсения Суханова // Источниковедение отечественной истории. Сборник статей за 1989 г. М., 1989. С. 175–205.

95 *Белокуров С.А.* Арсений Суханов. Исследование. Ч. I. Биография Арсения Суханова // ЧОИДР. 1891. Кн. I. С. I–IV, 1–328; кн. II. С. 329–440, I–CLX, I–V. отд. изд.: М., 1891; Ч. II. Сочинения Арсения Суханова. Вып. первый // ЧОИДР. 1894. Кн. II. С. I–LXXXVI, 1–284, отд. изд.: М., 1894.

Greeks of the Orthodox East that they had been and remained "teachers of the faith" for Rus. Arseny proved with facts in hand that Saint Vladimir had received the faith as an inheritance from the Roman popes, who had been first among the patriarchs before falling into heresy, while the Greeks had subsequently lost the true faith and, with it, their kingdom, since the only reliable guarantor of the true faith is an Orthodox tsar. There is only one such ruler in the world: in Rus, which has been glorified by its saints, gathered holy relics from throughout the world, and where the Church flourishes under the protection of the sovereign rather than languishing in bondage to the Turks, as in the Orthodox East. But all this was said and written by a diplomat for the purpose of saving the Greek hierarchs, who, through pride and ignorance, had violated the first and strictest article of the *Sobornoye Ulozhenie* of 1649 by insulting Russian Orthodoxy through their actions – by burning books printed in Moscow and issued by the *sovereign's* Print Yard *with the blessing* of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus, on the charge of heresy, namely the propagation of the two-finger sign of the cross. To admit their mistake and repent: that was all Sukhanov sought from the Greeks, so that their action would not be recognised in Russia as the gravest of crimes[96].

In seeking the origins of the conception of the primacy of the Russian autocratic tsardom in the Orthodox world, which the Russian diplomat expounded so richly and eloquently, it was necessary to examine the development of the entire concept of state power in Russian writings of the eleventh to seventeenth centuries[97]. It was impossible to avoid the *Russian Chronograph*, with its system of recensions, although it had initially been touched upon only in general terms. Yet only after a specialised study of the *Chronograph*'s manuscript tradition in the seventeenth century did it become clear that there was no need to look far. That is, one did need to look closely in order to understand where everything in the *Chronograph* had come from. But to understand the sources of Sukhanov's ideas, a single manuscript was sufficient: the very *Chronograph* to which he attached his ecclesiastical report, later known as the *Disputations*. In the 1640s, after becoming the steward of the Epiphany Monastery, a metochion of the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius

[96] *Богданов А.П.* «Прения». С. 211–232.
[97] Ibid. С. 233–406.

near the Print Yard in Moscow, Arseny commissioned a group of monastic scribes to copy this *Chronograph*. He personally supervised the scribes, corrected their errors, wrote the table of contents, inserted omitted headings, and added several pages of supplementary material. Judging from the fact that he wrote the first recension of the future *Disputations* in a beautiful book hand and on full-sheet paper (2°), as in the *Chronograph*, rather than on a chancery roll, and completed the second recension while still on his journey, inserting the quires into this codex, the codex may have travelled with him, while the author's copy of the report was originally intended as an appendix to the *Chronograph*. Sukhanov submitted a scribal copy in chancery cursive to the Posolsky Prikaz[98].

It follows that, instead of speculating about the meaning that the *Russian Chronograph* held for its diligent copyists and readers, it was enough to read the conclusions that Sukhanov himself drew from its text. Indeed, in his ecclesiastical report, which we now perceive as a summary of the *Chronograph*, he began as far back as the Kingdom of Israel, which had also perished in order to make way for the future sacred Russian tsardom. This is understandable if one turns to the *Chronograph*, but unnecessary within Sukhanov's own depiction of the succession of the world centres of Orthodoxy: Rome, Constantinople, and Moscow. How widely this interpretation of the *Chronograph* was accepted is demonstrated by the colophon to the Russian saints' calendar[99], written shortly afterwards, in the early 1650s, by Sukhanov's associate and his predecessor as cellarer of the Trinity Lavra, Simon Azaryin. As we have recently shown[100], this outstanding writer and publicist formulated the chronographic conception of the transfer of the centre of world Orthodoxy to the Russian tsardom even more clearly and uncompromisingly.

Unlike Simon, who was sent into exile after coming into conflict with the new Patriarch Nikon, who had suddenly decided to rely on

---

98 Ibid. C. 124–125, 143–146.

99 РГБ. Ф. 173. Собр. Московской духовной академии. № 201. Л. 338–340.

100 *Богданов А.П.* «Летописец выбором» по списку Симона Азарьина: Краткий летописец в литературно-публицистической жизни середины XVII в. // Герменевтика древнерусской литературы. Сб. 21. М., 2022. С. 7–73. С. 25–26.

the "Greek teachers", the experienced diplomat Arseny reasoned quite properly: "for among us the head of Orthodoxy is the Orthodox tsar" – and whatever he approved was therefore pious[101]. After his further adventures in the Orthodox East, he consequently found his way into the preface to the Nikonian *Service Book* of 1655 and its subsequent editions as an outstanding scholar who had acquired great treasures of ancient Greek book learning, which were supposedly to become the foundation of Nikon's reforms[102]. It was through Sukhanov that the treasures of historical learning preserved at the Trinity Lavra, including the *Trinity Chronographic Miscellany* of the 1640s[103], reached Patriarch Joachim's scribes after 1674.

His Holiness could hardly fail to welcome the chronographic idea of the world primacy of Russian Orthodoxy, and he was also comfortable with the idea of the sacredness of the Russian tsardom, especially since it made it possible, by drawing on the Greek treatise of Pseudo-Kodinos, to take the first place at the coronation, rather than the second place after the tsar, lawfully and in accordance with ancient tradition. But the idea, present both in the *Chronograph* from its very first recension and in Sukhanov's work, that the Orthodox Greeks had lost their piety after losing their kingdom could not suit Joachim politically. The Patriarch was by no means a Nikonian. When, in 1681, the now adult Tsar Feodor Alexeevich decided to recall Nikon from exile, Nikon having been deprived of his rank by the Great Council of 1666–1667 with the participation of the Eastern patriarchs, Joachim was so strongly opposed that even after Nikon had been recalled by the Tsar's will and died on the way, the Patriarch forbade him to be commemorated[104]. Yet His Holiness could neither permit Nikon's reforms to be challenged by denigrating the Greeks nor provide weapons to the Old Believers, against whom he was waging a determined struggle.

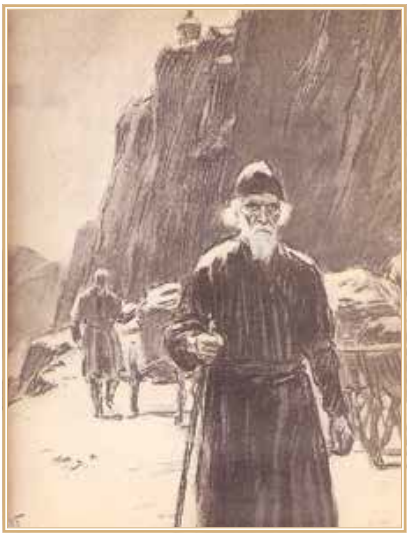
---

[101] РГАДА. Ф. 52. Сношения России с Грецией. Оп. 1. Стб. 7157/1649 г. № 8. Л. 64–65; РГАДА. Ф. 181. Собр. МГАМИД. № 659. Л. 356.

[102] The assertion was false: the books and manuscripts acquired by Sukhanov were not used in Nikon's reforms, but this praise from Epiphany Slavinetsky saved the author of many honest works from disgrace: *Богданов А.П.* «Прения». С. 31–40.

[103] *Клосс Б.М.* Никоновский свод и русские летописи. С. 274–280.

[104] *Богданов А.П.* Русские патриархи. С. 670–671.



Arseny Sukhanov's final journey to the Orthodox East in search of manuscripts. *Artist: O.I. Grosse. Book illustration of the early 1960s.*

It is possible that the chronographic work of Joachim's scribes in the 1670s failed to satisfy readers because, through narratives and explicit statements, they affirmed that the Greeks had preserved their piety even after the loss of their kingdom[105]. Joachim's scribes also reproduced the *Chronograph* of Pseudo-Dorotheos of Monemvasia, translated by Arseny the Greek at the Print Yard in 1665[106], immediately after Sukhanov's departure from it. This *Chronograph* continued the history after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 with articles on the Republic of Venice and the Eastern patriarchs, who were supposedly pious even in the absence of an Orthodox tsar. In the 1680s, when Venice was an ally of Russia, these scribes copied a miscellany containing a translation of the *Chronograph* of Pseudo-Dorotheos and the *Brief Chronicler from Adam*, compiled by the Chudov Monastery monk Roman Pospelov on the basis of the first *razryad* of the third recension of the *Chronograph*[107]. They also produced four finely executed codices

[105] *Клосс Б.М.* Никоновский свод и русские летописи. С. 283.

[106] Indications of this in the manuscript copies: БАН. 16.12.14. Л. 3 (in the title); БАН. 17.4.15. Л. 1 (1692 recension); ГИМ. Синодальное собр. № 343. Л. 5–6; Ibid. № 399; РГБ. Ф. 228. Собр. Д.В. Пискарева. № 170. Л. 1; РГБ. Ф. 138. Костромская областная библиотека им. Н.К. Крупской. № 184.

[107] See the manuscript copies: РГБ. Ф. 218. Собр. Отдела рукописей. № 753; Ibid. Пост. 1973 г. № 20; РНБ. Ф. 536. Собр. ОЛДП. F.476. Cf. eighteenth-century

of the *Chronograph* of Pseudo-Dorotheos without additions[108]. None of these works could displace the popularity of the *Russian Chronograph*. Nor did the question of whether somewhere some Greeks were pious or not particularly concern readers, since the centre of Orthodoxy was unquestionably in Russia.

The idea that Moscow was the centre of the world was shared by Patriarch Joachim and his chroniclers, as well as by the authors of the brief chronicles popular among the people[109]. Unfortunately, Tsar Feodor Alexeevich, by virtue of his outlook and official responsibilities, did not share it. The *Historical Instruction*[110], written in his name – which would have been impossible without the Tsar's will – declared all Russian "tales and chronicles" obsolete and called for the creation of a new printed history of Russia on a scholarly basis, grounded in the doctrine of the succession of the "four monarchies"[111]. We can infer what was meant by recalling this concept, well known in Europe, and examine it more closely by considering the extensive publishing activity of the Posolsky Prikaz under Chancellor Matveev[112]. The *Chrysmologion, that is, a Book ... concerning the Four Monarchies of the Universe*, commissioned from N.G. Spathari and P.V. Dolgovo in 1672–1673 and repeatedly revised[113], concluded its history not with the Orthodox autocrats of Russia but with Leopold, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (1670). The book *Vasiliologion, or an Enumeration and*

---

copies from other manuscripts: РГАДА. Ф. 181. Собр. МГАМИД. № 2/2 (with a note stating that the protograph was written by Roman Pospelov, a monk of the Chudov Monastery); РГБ. Ф. 178. Музейное собр. № 1256. I.

108 БАН. 16.12.14; Архангельское собр. С.133 и С.134; РНБ. Ф. 536. Собр. ОЛДП. F.476.

109 *Богданов А.П.* Теория «Москва – центр мира» в державной концепции и у кратких летописцев XVII века // Европейские сравнительно-исторические исследования. Вып. 2. География и политика. М.: Наука, 2006. С. 91–111.

110 Published in: *Замысловский Е.Е.* Царствование Федора Алексеевича. Ч. 1. Введение. Обзор источников. СПб., 1871. Приложение IV. С. XXXV–XLII.

111 *Богданов А.П.* Царь-реформатор. С. 80–83.

112 *Кудрявцев И.М.* «Издательская» деятельность Посольского приказа. (К истории русской рукописной книги во второй половине XVII века) // Книга. Исследования и материалы. М., 1963. Сб. 8. С. 179–244.

113 РНБ. Ф. 885. Эрмитажное собр. № 27 (presentation copy); РГБ. Ф. 256. Собр. Н.П. Румянцева. № 465; РГБ. Ф. 178. Музейное собр. № 2615; РГБ. Ф. 173.I. Собр. МДА. № 25; ГИМ. Синодальное собр. № 192; и др.



Boyar Artamon Sergeevich Matveev, posthumous portrait by Johannes Vollevens the Elder, reflecting the contemporary image of the Chancellor as a Westerniser. *1700. State Historical Museum*

Description of All the Tsars, was written by the same authors on Matveev's orders in 1674. It provided descriptions of the monarchs of the world from Nebuchadnezzar to Theodosius the Great, alongside those of the Russian autocrats from Vladimir Monomakh to Alexei Mikhailovich[114]. It is evident that neither Tsar Feodor Alexeevich nor A.S. Matveev – whom the sovereign, contrary to the tradition of immediately replacing the chancellor upon a new tsar's accession, retained in office until the coronation and even for some time afterwards – viewed Russia's place in the world in quite the same way as the admirers of the *Chronograph*.

At the same time, the Tsar was familiar with the *Russian Chronograph*, if only through its text in the *Illustrated Chronicle*, which he ordered to be assembled, restored, completed, and rebound[115]. He simply did not regard it as an exemplary book, unlike Joachim. For their part, the patriarchal scribes saw no conceptual danger to the *Russian Chronograph* in Matveev's "editions". Without hesitation, they entered the *Vasiliologion* in the appendix to their Chronographic compilation with

[114] Presentation copies: РГАДА. Ф. 135. Отд. IV. Руб. 1. № 44; БАН. Архангельское собр. С. 129.

[115] *Богданов А.П., Пентковский А.М.* Сведения о бытовании Книги Царственной («Лицевого свода») в XVII в. // Исследования по источниковедению истории СССР XIII–XVIII вв.: ежегодник Отд. источниковедения дооктябрьского периода. М., 1983. С. 61–95.

the *Chronicle* of 1686[116]. Extracts from the 1679/80 recension of the *Chrysmologion* were placed by the cellarer of the Novospassky Monastery, Trifillius, together with the brethren, at the turn of the 1680s and 1690s, in a codex containing the first *razryad* of the third recension of the *Chronograph*[117]. And the Chudov hieromonk Bogolep Adamov, author of the *Chronographets*, based on the patriarchal *Chronographic Compilation* of the 1680s, made extracts around 1692 from his complete copy of the *Chrysmologion*[118] and entered them into a monastic miscellany[119].

Knowledge of Western ideas about the sacredness of authority and the transmission of the Roman imperium did not prevent our scribes from believing in the truth of the *Russian Chronograph*. Conversely, the pious young tsar and the experienced Westernising chancellor, knowing that the coronation rite of the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation derived from Byzantine ecclesiastical rather than Roman secular heritage[120], did not object to the idea that the coronation of an Orthodox sovereign according to the Byzantine model would be still more correct. The sole organiser of the 1676 coronation who was convinced of the validity of the ideas of the *Russian Chronograph* was Patriarch Joachim. These ideas were also shared by his circle, in particular the Chudov archimandrite and future Patriarch Adrian, who had a splendid copy of the third recension of the *Russian Chronograph* made for himself[121]. In addition to members of the clergy, copies of this *Chronograph* were owned in the last quarter of the seventeenth century by boyars, nobles, and clerks, not to mention merchants and commoners[122].

The "ceremonial architects" of the coronations, who supervised the drafting of the ceremonial script and its execution during the ceremony,

---

116 РГБ. Ф. 256. Собр. Н.П. Румянцева. № 413. С. 1–78.

117 БАН. Успенское собр. № 191. 4°. 683 л. Л. 671–683.

118 ГИМ. Собр. А.С. Уварова. № 1325 (408).

119 РГБ. Ф. 218. Собр. Отдела рукописей. № 65.I. Л. 77–86 об. History of the codex: *Богданов А.П.* Келейный сборник епископа Великоустюжского и Тотемского Боголепа Адамова // Исторический журнал: научные исследования. 2021. № 2. С. 130–147.

120 *Поляковская М.А.* Поздневизантийский чин. С. 5–24.

121 РНБ. Ф. 588. Собр. М.П. Погодина. № 1447.

122 *Богданов А.П.* Рукописная традиция Русского Хронографа. С. 291–308.

had been clerks of the Posolsky Prikaz since the late sixteenth century. On 18 June 1676, the rite was "constructed", standing "opposite the sovereign", by Grigory Karpov, son of Bogdanov, a *dumny dyak* (Duma clerk) of the Posolsky Prikaz; on 25 June 1682, by the *dumny dyak* Yemelyan Ignatyevich Ukraintsev[123]. The former headed the administration of the Posolsky Prikaz from 22 February 1671, when A.S. Matveev replaced the exiled chancellor A.L. Ordin-Nashchokin as chancellor; the latter rose to prominence in May 1682, when the rebellious streltsy and soldiers executed Matveev and the *dumny dyak* L.I. Ivanov, and the unfortunate office of chancellor was assumed by V.V. Golitsyn[124]. Judging from the circumstances of their service in one case and the correspondence in the other, both dyaks enjoyed the confidence of their superiors, but their work was supervised down to the smallest detail by the tsar personally or, in 1682, by Tsarevna Sophia[125].

When Ivan and Peter Alexeevich were to be crowned in June 1682, only one of the organisers of the previous coronation was still alive: Patriarch Joachim. Sophia had not participated in the 1676 ceremony, while Golitsyn had been far removed from it: at the time he had been hurriedly dispatched to capture Chigirin[126]. Ukraintsev, who was already serving in the Posolsky Prikaz, had likewise not participated in preparing the coronation rite of 1676. Between 17 May and 25 June 1682, he and Golitsyn were struck by the differences between the coronation rite of Feodor Alexeevich and the coronation of his father, Alexei Mikhailovich. In drawing up the coronation rite for Ivan and Peter, as was customary, on the basis of Feodor's preceding rite, they wanted to establish precisely what the reform of 1682 had involved. The result was a copy of the 1645 rite marked with the "cancellations" of 1682[127], and a "list" of the acts prescribed by the

---

[123] *Богданов А.П.* At the end of his reign, Feodor Alexeevich ordered that ***dumnye dyaki*** (Duma clerks) be addressed respectfully, with the patronymic suffix "-vich".

[124] *Богоявленский С.К.* Московский приказный аппарат и делопроизводство XVI–XVII веков. М., 2006. С. 133, 221, 296; *Веселовский С.Б.* Дьяки и подьячие XV–XVII вв. М., 1975. С. 56–57, 531.

[125] Восстание в Москве 1682 г. Сб. документов / Сост. Н.Г. Савич. М., 1976. С. 60–69.

[126] *Богданов А.П.* Царь-реформатор. С. 152–153.

[127] РГАДА. Ф. 135. Отд. IV. Руб. I. № 13. 16 л., список XVIII в.; published in: *Барсов Е.В.* Древне-русские памятники. С. 91–97.

rite of Feodor Alexeevich, published by Barsov[128]. These documents supplemented the already rich body of materials relating to the coronation of Alexei Mikhailovich. As a result of their deliberations, the reform of 1676, which had given Patriarch Joachim precedence in the ceremony, was reinforced at the 1682 coronation. In particular, the new formulation, introduced in comparison with 1645, that the tsars were crowned "according to the tradition of the holy Eastern Church" and only secondarily "according to the custom of the ancient Russian tsars and grand princes" was repeated not three times, as in 1676, but five times[129].

The participation of the patriarch and his offices in the documentary work on the coronation rites was traditionally not recorded, even when the "ceremonial architect", Grigory Vasilyev, son of Lvov, a *dumny dyak* of the Posolsky Prikaz, inserted into the 1645 rite of Alexei Mikhailovich a prayer for the enthronement of the Russian sovereign over the Universe from the rite for the consecration of Filaret Nikitich Romanov as Patriarch on 22 June 1619[130]. This time, however, thanks to the archaeographical work of N.G. Savich, we were fortunate. Almost immediately after the coronation of Ivan and Peter on 25 June 1682, no later than 30 June, Golitsyn wrote to Ukraintsev: "Yemelyan Ignatyevich, greetings! ...Order that work begin on the Book of the Rite of the royal coronation and consult with the Patriarchal Prikaz, so that the scribes may begin writing. And the previous Book of the Rite of the coronation of the blessed memory of the great sovereign, Tsar and Grand Prince Feodor Alexeevich, Autocrat of All Great, Little and White Russia, is in the chambers of the great sovereign, Tsar and Grand Prince Peter Alexeevich, Autocrat of All Great, Little and White Russia. And inform Rodion Matveevich, so that he may hand it over to you from the chambers"[131].

This letter directly connects the royal palace and the patriarchal chambers in the conduct of the coronation, as might have been expected. Boyar Rodion Matveevich Streshnev had played an important role in the coronation of Feodor Alexeevich in 1676: he had carried the Tsar's crown into the Dormition Cathedral and held it on a gold dish before

---

[128] Published in: *Барсов Е.В.* Древне-русские памятники. С. 98–106.

[129] *Богданов А.П.* Царь-реформатор. С. 348.

[130] Ibid. С. 301–302.

[131] РГАДА. Ф. 159. Приказные дела новой разборки. Св. 1682 г. № 949. Л. 4. Published in: Восстание в Москве 1682 г. С. 67.

the anointing[132]. At the 1682 coronation, he supervised the actions of the ten-year-old Tsar Peter as his *dyadka* (tutor). It is therefore unsurprising that he had the 1676 *Book of Rites*. The Patriarchal Prikaz was headed by the *Duma nobleman* and patriarchal boyar Ivan Feodorovich Lyzlov[133], father of the historian A.I. Lyzlov. It was necessary to "consult" him before the Posolsky Prikaz scribes began preparing the fair copy of the official book recording the 1682 coronation, so that the final text could be approved by Patriarch Joachim[134].

The matter did not end there. During the turbulent events of the Moscow uprising, when a substantial portion of the officials, from boyars to scribes and court servants, fled the capital, and even such a master of administration as the *dumny dyak* of the Razryadny Prikaz F.L. Shaklovity[135] could not locate the necessary people and documents, it proved impossible to produce the *Book of Rites* discussed in the letter. Work resumed on 31 March 1683, when the Posolsky Prikaz sent an inquiry to the new head of the Patriarchal Prikaz, the *Duma nobleman* and patriarchal boyar Mikhail Ivanovich Glebov, requesting the text of "what ecclesiastical rite and how entire ceremony was to be performed". Such matters were always decided by the patriarch; it was simply not proper for either clerks or the chancellor himself to write to him personally. Angered that the Posolsky Prikaz could not locate the draft original of Ivan and Peter's coronation rite, Joachim on 2 April "did not order that a reply be sent to the Posolsky Prikaz in response to that memorandum". His Holiness was right to be strict: the Posolsky Prikaz found the original[136], engaged illuminators, and produced a splendid illuminated manuscript in Alexandrian format[137].

---

[132] *Богданов А.П.* Царь-реформатор. С. 463–464, 478.

[133] *Богоявленский С.К.* Московский приказный аппарат. С. 117.

[134] The alternative interpretation that the patriarchal junior clerks were supposed to do the writing is impossible, because all official documents of the Ambassadorial Chancery were written exclusively by its own scribes, in a distinctive writing style.

[135] *Богданов А.П.* Рождение Хованщины // Историческое обозрение. М., 2022. Вып. 23. С. 13–53.

[136] РГАДА. Ф. 135. Отд. IV. Рубр. I. № 19. Л. 1–123.

[137] Дело Посольского приказа о написании Чиновной книги коронации Ивана и Петра: РГАДА. Ф. 135. Отд. IV. Рубр. I. № 21. Л. 1–13; Published in: *Барсов Е.В.* Древне-русские памятники. С. 142–144.



Boyar, court voivode, and chancellor V.V. Golitsyn.
Engraved portrait. Artist A. Tarasevich. 1687 or 1689.

Thus, Patriarch Joachim was not only aware of the new coronation rite, which could not have been conducted without him playing the leading role, but also, through his administration, controlled the coronation documents of 1682. There is no comparable evidence for the 1676 coronation, but it is noteworthy that the treatise of Pseudo-Kodinos, without which the reform of the coronation rite according to the Byzantine model could not have taken place, is not found in the Posolsky Prikaz. It has survived in Russian translation only in a manuscript of the Spaso-Yaroslavsky Monastery dating from 1728[138]. The translation would not have been difficult: the 1648 edition, like the earlier editions dating back to the late sixteenth century, was bilingual, in Greek and Latin[139]. The Posolsky Prikaz had excellent Latin translators, while Greek was mastered exceptionally well by people close to the Patriarch, including Euthymius of Chudov and Ignatius Korsakov, whom Joachim sent in March 1676 to restore the Solovetsky Monastery after its destruction in January, and subsequently appointed archimandrite of the Spaso-Yaroslavsky Monastery, whose library later contained the translation of Pseudo-Kodinos. It was Ignatius, who, being exceptionally well versed in Latin, demonstrated in his *Genealogy*

[138] Published in: *Барсов Е.В.* Древне-русские памятники. С. 1–18.
[139] On the 1596, 1625, and 1648 editions: *Богданов А.П.* Псевло-Кодин. С. 111.

an extraordinarily broad familiarity with scholarly Western European publications; in 1677, Tsar Feodor Alexeevich ordered that his family be called the Rimsky (= Roman. – *Ed.*)-Korsakovs[140].

But this is already speculation. The important point is that, in light of the new understanding of the significance of the *Russian Chronograph* in shaping the concept of the sacredness of the Russian Orthodox tsardom, and of Joachim's scribes' enormous work on the *Chronograph*, Golitsyn's indication of the participation of the Patriarchal Prikaz in preparing the coronation rite acquires considerable significance. Patriarch Joachim played the decisive role in reforming the coronation rites of 1676 and 1682, from which all subsequent coronation rites of the Russian emperors developed, together with the conviction that "Russia is our sacred realm". His leading role in reforming the coronation rite of the Russian tsars could have been inferred from the fact that the "tradition of the holy Eastern Church" and the patriarch himself first came to the forefront. But logic is poorly suited to explaining the conduct and assessing the motives of prominent historical figures. Only the study of manuscripts can provide convincing evidence.

Conclusions

The reform of the coronation rite of the Russian sovereigns in 1676, confirmed at the coronation of 1682, was undertaken on the initiative of Patriarch Joachim. Claiming first place in the most solemn and significant state ceremony, a position previously occupied by the sovereign, His Holiness relied on the arguments of his scholarly associates, chroniclers, and Hellenophiles, and implemented the *Russian Chronograph*'s conception of the Russian Orthodox autocratic tsardom with the aid of Pseudo-Kodinos's treatise on the coronation rite of the basileus of the Romans in the mid-fourteenth century. The secular authorities may be credited with approving and formalising the new coronation rite, which was constructed for the first time in Russia according to the Byzantine model and officially established the recognition of Russia as a sacred kingdom. The misconceptions involved in assessing the work

[140] *Богданов А.П.* От летописания к исследованию. С. 44–262.

of E.V. Barsov, who discovered the reform of 1676 but was unable to trace the entire tradition of the coronation of the grand prince and the tsars from 1498 back to its Byzantine origins, as well as the decisive role attributed to the reforming Tsar Feodor Alexeevich in transforming the rite in 1676, were overcome through archaeographical research. This discipline, devoted to locating, describing, and publishing manuscripts, helped clarify the significance of Barsov's work on the coronation rites and of the seventeenth-century scribes' work on the *Russian Chronograph*, as well as the work of the tsar's and Chancellor A.S. Matveev's associates on historical writings based on the concept of the "four monarchies". The unpredictable turns taken by our research over nearly half a century as manuscripts were discovered and studied demonstrate the futility of preconceived assumptions and allow us to view the prospects for further scholarly inquiry with optimism.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

References

1. Bogdanov A.P. "Grecophiles" and "Latinizers" of the 17th century: texts in context // *Genesis: Historical Research*. 2021; 4: 1–46. (in Russ.)
2. Bogdanov A.P. "The Chronicler by Choice" according to the list of Simon Azaryin: A Brief Chronicler in the Literary and Publicistic Life of the Mid-17th Century // *Hermeneutics of Old Russian Literature*. Moscow: IMLI RAS, 2022;21:7–73. (in Russ.) https://doi.org/10.22455/HORL.1607-6192-2022-21-7-73.
3. Bogdanov A.P. E.V. Barsov in search of the imperial roots of the coronation of Russian sovereigns // *Russian history*. 2025;1:98–108. (in Russ.) https://doi.org/10.31857/S2949124X25010074.
4. Bogdanov A.P. *Ideas of Russian journalism: between the kingdom and the empire*. Moscow; Berlin: Direct-Media; 2018. 482 p. (in Russ.) https://doi.org/10.23681/495201.

5. Bogdanov A.P. *From Chronicle to Research: Russian Historians of the Last Quarter of the 17th Century*. 2nd ed., corrected and supplemented. Moscow; Berlin: Direct-Media; 2020. 642 p. (in Russ.) https://doi.org/10.23681|573484.
6. Bogdanov A.P. Manuscript tradition of the Russian Chronograph of the 3rd edition (continuation of the research of A.N. Popov // *Quaestio Rossica*. 2023; (11) 1: 291–308. (in Russ.) https://doi.org/10.15826/qr.2023.1.790.
7. Bogdanov A.P. Russian chronographic concept before the 1660s // *Hermeneutics of Old Russian Literature*. Moscow: IMLI RAS, 2025;24:549–589. (in Russ.) https://doi.org/10.22455/HORL.1607-6192-2025-24-549-589.
8. Bogdanov A.P. Russian Chronograph in the 17th century // *Literature and history*. 2025;1:149–176. (in Russ.) https://doi.org/10.31860/2712-7591-2025-1-149-176.
9. Bogdanov A.P., Belov N.V. Russian Chronograph of the 3rd edition of 182 chapters. Part 1. Chronograph of the patriarchal scriptorium of the 1680s // *Literature and History*. IRLI RAS. St. Petersburg: Pushkin House; 2021; 3: 73–122. (in Russ.) https://doi.org/10.31860/2712-7591-2021-3-73-122.
10. Bogdanov A.P., Belov N.V. Russian Chronograph of the 3rd edition of 182 chapters. Part 2. Chronographic edition of the patriarchal chronicler of 1619–1691 // *Literature and History*. IRLI RAS. St. Petersburg: Pushkin House; 2022;1:45–91. (in Russ.) https://doi.org/10.31860/2712-7591-2022-1-45-91.
11. Bogoyavlensky S.K. *Moscow administrative apparatus and office work of the 16th-17th centuries*. Moscow: Languages of Slavic culture; 2006. 608 p.
12. Veselovsky S.B. *Clerks and sub-clerks of the 15th–17th centuries*. Moscow: Nauka; 1975. 608 p. (in Russ.)
13. *The Moscow Uprising of 1682. Collection of documents* / Comp. N.G. Savich. Moscow: Nauka; 1976. 348 p.
14. Kloss B.M. *Nikonovsky arch and Russian chronicles of the 16th–17th centuries*. M.: Nauka; 1980. 312 p. pp. 274–295. (in Russ.)
15. Polyakovskaya M.A. Late Byzantine rite of coronation of the basileus // *Byzantine timeline*. Moscow: Nauka; 2009;(68)93:5–24. (in Russ.)

16. Savinov M.A. About the Chronograph of Pachomius and the Chronicler of 1686 // *Chronicles and Chronicles. New research.* M.; St. Petersburg: Alliance-Arkheo, 2008. pp. 280–289. (in Russ.)
17. Talina G.V. *Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich: personality, thinker, statesman.* Moscow: Magistr; 1996. 143 p. (in Russ.)
18. Tvorogov O.V. *Old Russian chronographs.* L.: Nauka; 1975. 320 p. (in Russ.)

Andrey P. Bogdanov
D.Sc. (History),
Leading Research Fellow Institute of Russian History Russian Academy of Sciences,
ORCID: 0000-0002-4593-6051

Received 14.12.2025
Revised 14.01.2026
Accepted 16.02.2026

DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.001
Original paper

[1]Ivan S. Khimich, [2]Svetlana I. Tsembalyuk

Institute of the Problems of Northern Development,
subdivision of Federal Research Center Tyumen Scientific Center
of Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences
(Tyumen Scientific Center SB RAS), Tyumen, Russian Federation
E-mail: [1]mywan@rambler.ru, [2]svetac80@mail.ru

Counterfeiting in Tyumen from the Seventeenth to the Early Twentieth Century

Abstract

The article examines the phenomenon of money counterfeiting in Tyumen from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century, when the city became one of the key centres for the sale and circulation of counterfeit coins in Siberia. Drawing on investigative and court records, the article examines the legislative measures adopted in the Russian Empire against counterfeiters and distributors of counterfeit money. It traces the evolution of Russian imperial legislation, from the harsh measures of the *Sobornoye Ulozhenie* of 1649 and the decrees of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich to the provisions of the 1845 *Code of Criminal and Correctional Punishments* and the *New Criminal Code* of 1903. Particular attention is paid to the transformation of legal terminology, from the term "money-makers/masters" to the established term "counterfeiters". The article analyses the social composition of the offenders, ranging from *streltsy* and *posad* townspeople in the seventeenth century to exiled peasants and petty townspeople

© Ivan S. Khimich, Svetlana I. Tsembalyuk, 2026

in the early twentieth century. It identifies the channels through which counterfeit money was circulated, including trade in livestock and goods, debt repayment, and the payment of state taxes, and identifies local centres of counterfeit circulation in Tyumen, including Yamskaya Sloboda and the Trading Row, as well as their connections with metallurgical production in the Urals and Siberia. Specific criminal cases – involving the *streltsy* Ignaty Cherepashkov in 1699, the group led by Dorofei Veselkov in 1721, and Dmitry Fefilov and Sidor Cherepashkov in the 1740s – are used to demonstrate how criminal networks operated. The article also examines the tools and materials used for counterfeiting, including copper, tin, silver, and, more rarely, lead and crushed glass, as well as the technologies employed in the production of counterfeit coins. A separate section addresses methodological difficulties arising from the fragmentary nature and loss of archival documents, including losses caused by fires and the deliberate destruction of records in 1919, as well as discrepancies between archival inventories and the actual contents of archival collections. The findings demonstrate the existence of a stable and organised network of counterfeiters in Tyumen that adapted to changing legal and economic conditions. The article makes a significant contribution to the study of the economic history of Siberia, the history of law, and the everyday life of the population of Tyumen during the imperial period.

Keywords:
Counterfeiting; Counterfeit coins; Money-maker/master/craftsman; Thieves' money; Copper and tin coins; Tyumen; Siberia

For citation:
Ivan S. Khimich, Svetlana I. Tsembalyuk. Counterfeiting in Tyumen from the Seventeenth to the Early Twentieth Century. The Historical Reporter. 2026. Vol. 60. P. 52–93. 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.001

Counterfeiting of currency has throughout history posed a serious threat to any state, capable of undermining its economic and socio-political stability both under the influence of external factors (the importation of counterfeit currency from abroad) and as a result of internal processes (the circulation of counterfeit money among the population). The consequences of such a phenomenon could be catastrophic: currency devaluation, growing social discontent, mass unrest, disturbances, and even coups d'état. Individuals caught manufacturing or distributing counterfeit coins were referred to in official and everyday sources as "counterfeiters" ("false coiners") while the crime itself was known as "counterfeiting".

The modern concept of counterfeiting emerged as a result of the gradual evolution of legislative terminology, which developed throughout the seventeenth to early twentieth centuries under the influence of changing legal norms, criminal practice, and socio-economic conditions.

The *Sobornoye Ulozhenie* (Law Code) of 1649 confined the definition of counterfeiting to the general heading "money craftsmen who begin to make counterfeit coins"[1]. The personal decree of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, *On the Cutting Off of the Left Hand* (1672), brought money-makers and monetary counterfeiters together under the general term "thief"[2], which was synonymous with "unlawful". The *Military Articles* (1715) removed "money craftsmen" from legislative usage and replaced the word "money" with "coins", adding the qualification "of false and fraudulent quality" as part of a violation of the military oath[3]. The *Code of Penalties* (1845) defined counterfeiters as makers of "counterfeit" and "false" money, distinguishing them in criminal provisions according to the classification of the offense[4]. The *New Criminal Code* (1903) continued the tradition of distinguishing counterfeiters according to the method by which

---

1 Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. I. 1649–1675 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 7.

2 Ibid. С. 876.

3 Russian legislation of the 10th–20th centuries. В 9 т. Т. 4. Законодательство периода становления Абсолютизма / *А.Г. Маньков*. М.: Юридическая литература, 1986. С. 363–364.

4 Code of criminal and correctional penalties. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1845. С. 260.

the finished coin was produced, classifying it as either "counterfeit" or "altered"[5].

Before writing the article, the authors examined extensive archival material, including old and new archival inventories; the periodical press of Tyumen and Tobolsk Governorate was also reviewed.

Documents from the seventeenth century concerning the activities of money craftsmen in the territory of Tyumen are not found in the original inventories of the records of the Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery, petitions, investigation records, or interrogations. The exception is an investigative case from 1699 discovered in the inventories of the archival collection of the Tyumen Voivodeship Office (*Collection of I.Ya. Slovtsov*)[6]. Eighteenth-century documents are extensively represented by investigative cases and materials concerning counterfeiters in the archival funds of the Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery, the Tyumen Chancellery of Judicial Affairs, the Tyumen District Court, and the Tobolsk Ecclesiastical Consistory. The remaining materials are represented in the original registers of cases only by brief descriptions. Nineteenth-century documents are often likewise represented by brief descriptions in the original registers of cases held in the archival funds of the Tyumen City Police and the Tyumen District Court; complete criminal cases are rare. The press of Tobolsk Governorate often did not publicize hearings of criminal cases concerning counterfeiters because such proceedings were conducted in secrecy. During the presence of Kolchak's army in Tyumen (1919), many criminal cases of the former Tyumen District Court (1856–1897) were written off and destroyed. This was recorded in an accompanying sheet and a final note by the acting archivist V. Anosov and the chief clerk Tarasov: "Cases, files, correspondence, and books covered by this inventory, from No. 1 through No. 9315 inclusive, marked with red ink, are subject to destruction without seeking permission from the Ministry of Justice. Correct"[7]. Twentieth-century documents are represented in the archival funds of the Tyumen Branch of the Tobolsk Governorate Gendarmerie Administration and the Tobolsk District Court; investigative proceedings concerning counterfeiting were only rarely reported in the *Siberian Commercial Gazette*.

---

5 New criminal code. СПб.: Книжный магазин В.П. Анисимова, 1903. С. 138–141.

6 РС НИА СПБ ИИ РАН. Ф. 187. Оп. 1. Д. 1083.

7 ГАТО. Ф. И-183. Оп. 2. Д. 406. Л. 1, 396.

The collection of archival documents revealed a number of problems: the absence of criminal and investigative cases due to their physical loss (seizures, fires, uprisings, mold, and rodents); the absence of such cases because only brief summaries (*fabulae*) were preserved in the registers of chanceries and courts; the fragmentary preservation of archival documents, with disrupted causal connections and materials scattered across other archival files; the small number of surviving criminal and investigative cases; discrepancies between the titles of archival files and the actual contents of the documents; and the interpretation of decree titles in accordance with the historical context in which the *Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire* was compiled and published. Thus, a decree concerning *money masters* and *thieves' money* was paraphrased as one concerning counterfeiters and counterfeit coins.

The social composition of counterfeiters detained in the territory of Tyumen varied according to the historical period: in the seventeenth century, they included foot streltsy and posad people (*meshchane*/town dwellers/petty bourgeoisie); in the eighteenth century, residents, Cossack children, prisoners, peasants, retired soldiers, posad people, *raznochintsy* (commoners), Yamskaya Sloboda drivers, and, more rarely, merchants; in the nineteenth century, prisoners, peasants, *meshchane*, retired rank-and-file soldiers, exiled settlers, and exiled peasants; and in the early twentieth century, peasants, *meshchane*, retired non-commissioned officers, exiled peasants, and exiled *meshchane*.

Throughout the seventeenth to early twentieth centuries, the majority of counterfeiters originated from Tyumen and Tyumen Uyezd or from neighboring uyezds of Tobolsk Governorate. Only rarely did they come from neighboring governorates (Perm and Vyatka) or towns such as Olonets.

The archival documents of the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries do not reveal the specializations of counterfeiters, limiting themselves to lists of tools discovered during searches (blacksmithing, silversmithing, and smelting equipment). We may hypothesize that the organized criminal group was structured as follows: manufacturer (unknown); distributor (little known); buyer (known); victim (widely known).

The materials most commonly used to manufacture counterfeit (thieves') money were copper, tin, and silver. Lead and powdered crystal were used more rarely. Based on indirect archival evidence, we may

assume that materials for counterfeiting were obtained through the purchase and theft of metal objects from the local population (tin dishes[8], copper kettles[9], bells[10,11], and silver[12]). Correspondence between the Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery and smelting works in the Urals (Alapaevsk and Yekaterinburg) and Siberia (Nerchinsk and Kolyvano-Voskresensk) concerning the movement of metal through Tyumen contains no information about criminal incidents involving the theft of raw metal by members of the population[13,14,15].

Tools used to manufacture counterfeit (thieves') money in the territory of Tyumen are described in detail in investigative documents dating from the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries and included the following: scissors for cutting silver, an iron hammer (1708)[16]; an anvil, hammers, tongs, a vise, pointed pliers, and scales (1717)[17]; bellows, an iron mold, and an iron hammer (1721, 1722)[18]; a birchwood mold for melting and stamping money (1742, 1744)[19,20]; an iron mold for producing money (1900, 1910)[21,22]. Tools seized during searches of money craftsmen (counterfeiters) and their accomplices, together with finished counterfeit (thieves') money, were sent to the Berg Collegium (in Moscow and St. Petersburg) for destruction.

The denominations most frequently counterfeited were kopecks (1721)[23], twenty-kopeck coins (1883)[24], and Siberian ten-kopeck coins

---

8 ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 2466. Л. 1.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid. Д. 1729. Л. 1–1 об.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid. Д. 3585.
14 Ibid. Д. 3561.
15 Ibid. Д. 3557.
16 Ibid. Д. 1729. Л. 1–1 об.
17 Ibid. Д. 4368. Л. 1 об., 2.
18 Ibid. Д. 1650. Л. 8, 25, 40 об.
19 Ibid. Д. 4374. Л. 35.
20 Ibid. Д. 4375. Л. 9 об.
21 ГАТО. Ф. И-239. Оп. 1. Д. 100. Л. 70.
22 Сибирская торговая газета. 1900. 23 дек. (№ 282.) С. 2.
23 ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 1650. Л. 8.
24 Ibid. Ф. И-183. Оп. 2. Д. 364. Л. 10 об.

(1771)[25]. Less frequently counterfeited were *altynniki* (three-kopeck coins) (1720)[26], *grivenniks* (ten-kopeck coins) (1785,1883)[27,28], roubles, half-rubles (1722)[29], and five-kopeck coins (1744)[30].

A distinctive feature of counterfeiting in the city of Tyumen, Tyumen Uyezd, and Tobolsk Governorate was the frequent purchase by members of the population of ready-made counterfeit (thieves') money from counterfeiters (money craftsmen/masters), with the intention of subsequently putting it into circulation "among the people" at low prices. This can be explained by the absence of natural deposits of ore (copper, tin, lead, and silver) within Tobolsk Governorate, with the exception of the Urals and the Altai Mountains. Counterfeit money was circulated in the following ways: through the purchase and sale of cattle, horses, and hay from peasants and residents of nearby villages and settlements; through debt payments and the provision of loans; through the sale and purchase of goods from trading rows and stalls; through the payment of compulsory state taxes; and through payment for excise goods (state-produced wine and vodka).

In the eighteenth century, the principal hub for the circulation of counterfeit money was the provincial city of Tobolsk, the center for the collection and dispatch of the state treasury to the Siberian Chancellery. This is supported by information contained in investigative cases involving the money masters Veselkov[31] and Ryabov[32]. Particularly noteworthy is an official correspondence document between Irkutsk voivode Larion Sinyavin and clerk Vasily Yurotsky and the Great Sovereign Peter Alexeevich, addressed to the Chancellery of the Siberian Governorate (1711). The document specifically distinguishes among the silver money being sent those that had not been declared and those defective to varying degrees (poor-quality, smooth, and one-sided coins). Danila Nikitin, a commissioner of the Siberian Chancellery, issued an order to the Siberian governor, Prince Matvey Petrovich Gagarin, proposing that poor-quality

25 ГА в г. Тобольске. Ф. И-156. Оп. 2. Д. 2677. Л. 2.
26 ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 4368. Л. 5 об.
27 ГА в г. Тобольске. Ф. И-152. Оп. 37. Д. 800. Л. 46.
28 Ibid. Ф. И-10. Оп. 1. Д. 3217. Л. 1.
29 ГАТО. Ф. И-167. Оп. 1. Д. 2. Л. 10 об.
30 Ibid. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 4361. Л. 1.
31 Ibid. Д. 1650.
32 Ibid. Ф. И-167. Оп. 1. Д. 2.

money be exchanged for good silver coins, "and those poor coins, seventy-three roubles and ten altyns, be given to the Siberians"[33] (Fig. 1).

The Siberian governor's response is unknown and most likely perished in the Tobolsk fire of 1788. It may be assumed that the exchange constituted a policy aimed at removing counterfeit (thieves') money from the economic circulation of the Russian state and transferring it to the territory of the Siberian Governorate. No similar information has been found among the reports and charters of the Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery.

The Russian state could not remain indifferent to the growth of counterfeiting. Throughout the seventeenth to early twentieth centuries, legislative measures were introduced and investigative actions undertaken to combat the circulation of counterfeit (thieves') money among the population. Depending on foreign-policy circumstances, legislative measures concerning the state's own currency were sometimes compelled to ease restrictions on counterfeiters as a means of ensuring the continuous reissuance of genuine currency.

A sovereign charter issued by Tsar Vasily Shuisky to Tobolsk (1609) prohibited the use of copper money in trade within Siberia[34] as a measure intended to promote the introduction of new currency during the Time of Troubles[35]. A charter issued by Prince W ads aw IV Vaza (1610) brought the minting of copper money to an end[36].

By the end of the Time of Troubles, the monetary system of the Russian state had been severely disrupted. It became necessary to recoin silver money struck to a four-ruble standard into coins struck to a three-ruble standard using foreign metal. Money craftsmen, taking advantage of the difference between the rouble standards, saw an opportunity to produce high-quality counterfeit silver coins in exchange for the new silver[37] currency. This created the threat of a new Trouble period.

The Zemsky Sobor adopted the *Sobornoye Ulozhenie* (1649). The new code of laws of the Russian state introduced a separate Chapter Five concerning money craftsmen, consisting of two articles divided according to

---

33 РС НИА СПБ ИИ РАН. Ф. 168. Оп. 1. Д. 420. Л. 1–1 об.

34 РГАДА. Ф. 199. Оп. 1. П. 133. Ч. 3. Д. 254.

35 Ibid. Д. 255.

36 Ibid. Д. 264.

37 Legislative acts of the Russian state from the second half of the sixteenth to the first half of the seventeenth century / *Н.Е. Носова.* Л.: Наука, 1987. С. 139.

professional specialization: money craftsmen (Article 1) and gold- and silversmiths (Article 2). Money craftsmen were subject to the death penalty for causing losses to the state through various offenses, including the manufacture of copper and tin money and the addition of base metals to silver (copper, tin, and lead)[38].

A charter issued by Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich to the Tyumen voivode Ivan Timofeevich Shadrin (1657) ordered that, in order to prevent the use of copper money in Siberia, the salaries of Tyumen service people were to be paid in imported silver coins and *efimki*[39]. The Siberian towns received charters (1657) describing the denominations of the new silver money and stipulating that it was to circulate freely alongside copper money throughout the Russian state, while large denominations (*efimki* and *chetvertiny*) were prohibited in trade, except for small-scale transactions. Customs duties were thereafter to be paid in the new currency[40]. Copper money (*efimki*, *altyny* (*altyns*), *groshi*, and kopecks) was strictly prohibited in urban trade (the charters do not mention villages or settlements), but was subsequently permitted again (1659)[41].

The Siberian Chancellery repeatedly prohibited the circulation of copper money in trade. The Tobolsk Voivode Ivan Andreevich Khilkov was instructed to combat merchants from Novgorod, Yaroslavl, and Veliky Ustyug who purchased goods with copper money instead of silver (1662)[42]. At the request of the Siberian towns, an order was issued requiring goods to be sold only for silver and gold money (1662)[43]. The Verkhoturye Voivode Ivan Bogdanovich Kamynin was instructed not to allow merchants entering Siberian towns to exchange copper money for silver

---

38 Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. I. 1649–1675 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 7.

39 *Гурьянова Н.С.* Актовые источники по истории России и Сибири XVI–XVIII веков в фондах Г.Ф. Миллера. Описи копийных книг. Т. 1. Опись Тюменской архивы. Кн. 1 / *Н.С. Гурьянова, Н.Н. Покровский*. Новосибирск: Сибирский хронограф, 1993. С. 144.

40 Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. I. 1649–1675 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 421–422.

41 РС НИА СПБ ИИ РАН. Ф. 28. Оп. 1. Д. 785. Л. 3–4.

42 РГАДА. Ф. 214. Оп. 3. Д. 604.

43 РГАДА. Ф. 214. Оп. 3. Д. 618.

without purchasing goods and, upon their return from Siberia, to confiscate both the goods and the silver money (1662)[44].

The personal decrees of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, *On the Destruction of Copper Money in Moscow and Other Towns and the Introduction of Silver Currency* (1663)[45], *On the Collection of Customs Duties and All Other Revenues in Silver Money* (1663)[46], and *On the Prohibition against Anyone Keeping Copper Money* (1663)[47], informed the population of the Russian state that copper money was being withdrawn from circulation and that a period would be established for disposing of copper money from the second half of the year at the rate of one copper rouble to two silver coins. After the expiration of the term, copper money would no longer be accepted into the sovereign's treasury and would instead be transferred to contractors for the remelting into copper objects. A charter issued by Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich to the Tyumen Voivode Mikhail Danilovich Pavlov (1663) ordered that the salaries of Tyumen service people were not to be paid in copper money, but only in silver[48].

It may be assumed that the legislative measures of the seventeenth century had an underlying economic rationale: the absence of domestic deposits of silver and copper was compensated for by the acquisition and recoinage of foreign currency; the regulation by the Russian state of the circulation of copper money in Siberia's commercial turnover; efforts to prevent the importation of copper money into Siberia; and attempts, beginning in the second half of the seventeenth century, to prospect for silver and copper ores in the Urals and Eastern Siberia[49,50]. A surge in domestic silver and copper production would have created a crisis for the recoinage of foreign currency and could have facilitated the emergence of large-scale counterfeiting.

---

44 РС НИА СПБ ИИ РАН. Ф. 28. Оп. 1. Д. 979. Л. 8–16.

45 Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. I. 1649–1675 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 578.

46 Ibid. С. 578–579.

47 Ibid. С. 580.

48 *Гурьянова Н.С.* Актовые источники по истории России и Сибири XVI–XVIII веков в фондах Г.Ф. Миллера. Описи копийных книг. Т. 1. Опись Тюменской архивы. Книга 1 / *Н.С. Гурьянова, Н.Н. Покровский*. Новосибирск: Сибирский хронограф, 1993. С. 146.

49 РС НИА СПБ ИИ РАН. Ф. 187. Оп. 1. Д. 419.

50 РС НИА СПБ ИИ РАН. Ф. 28. Оп. 1. Д. 1356. Л. 8.

To prevent the repeated appearance of copper and tin money as a result of the activities of money craftsmen in the Russian state, Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich issued the decree *On Exile to Siberia for Permanent Settlement* (1663)[51]. Upon the first established instance of the offense, this decree ordered counterfeiters to be exiled with their families to Siberia for agricultural labor. If the offense was repeated in Siberia, the offender was to be sentenced to death, with the guarantors required to pay a monetary penalty; the fate of the executed person's family was not addressed.

The early history of counterfeiting in Tyumen is documented by the only seventeenth-century criminal case discovered: *The Case of the Counterfeiting of Silver Money from Copper by the Tyumen Streltsy Ignaty Cherepashkov and Luka Serebrenik* (1699), comprising 33 *stolbtsy* [archival columns][52]. The case contains the following documents: interrogation statements of the Tyumen foot streltsy Alexei Mikhailovich Voloshnikov, Ignaty Cherepashkov, Dementy Voroshilov, Luka Fedorov Serebrenik, and the Tyumen posad man Ivan Fedorov Reshetnikov; a draft report by the Tyumen Voivode Tit Vasilyevich Raevsky to the Tobolsk voivodes, Princes Mikhail Yakovlevich and Pyotr Mikhailovich Cherkassky; inventories of the households and possessions of Ignaty Cherepashkov, Luka Fedorov Serebrenik, and other individuals.

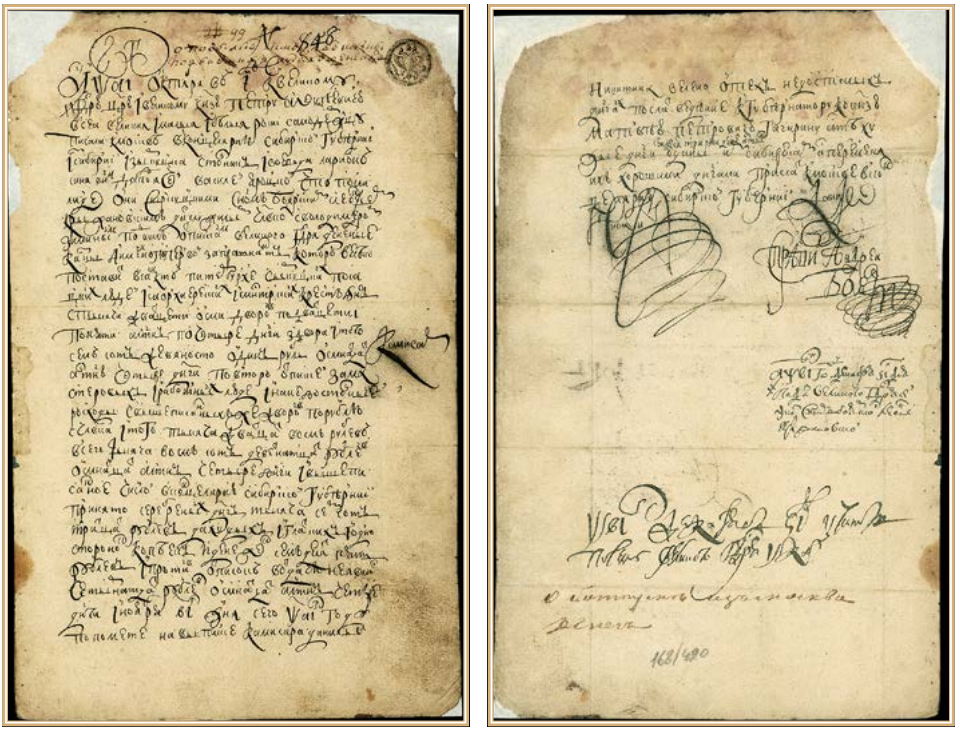
At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the prohibition on copper money was abolished by the personal decree of Sovereign Peter Alexeevich, *On the Minting of Copper Denezhki, Polushki, and Half-Polushki* (1700)[53]. In order to supplement the shortage of small-denomination money for retail trade and the collection of duties in the towns, prohibitions were introduced against various forms of counterfeit money (leather money, tokens, and cast and hammered copper money). Cut silver kopecks, which had been used for the convenience of retail trade, were withdrawn and sent to the Prikaz of the Grand Treasury (Moscow) to be

---

[51] Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. I. 1649–1675 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 583.

[52] РС НИА СПБ ИИ РАН. Ф. 187. Оп. 1. Д. 1083.

[53] Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. IV. 1700–1712 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 19–20.



Copy of an order (instruction) from Danila Nikitin, Commissioner of the Siberian Chancery, to Prince Matvei Petrovich Gagarin, Governor of Siberia, fol. 1, 1711. *Scientific and Historical Archive of the St. Petersburg Institute of History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Russian Section, Collection (Fond) of the Irkutsk Voivodeship Chancellery (НИА СПбИИ РАН. Ф.168.Оп.1.Д.420.Л.1-1об.)*

exchanged for newly minted stamped copper money. The Siberian towns were likewise required to surrender cut silver money[54].

To circulate counterfeit copper money among the population on a large scale, money craftsmen used an inferior grade of green copper, which created problems for the mint. The personal decree of Sovereign Peter Alexeevich, *On Rewarding Informers Regarding Makers of Counterfeit Copper Coin and Punishing Those Who Conceal Them* (1711)[55], obliged members of the population to bring people in for interrogation if counterfeit copper money was discovered during purchases or sales, with the aim of identifying the money craftsmen. If such individuals were discovered, the population was instructed to report them to the Chancellery of the Governing Senate

54 РС НИА СПБ ИИ РАН. Ф. 168. Оп. 1. Д. 140.

55 Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. IV. 1700–1712 / *М.М. Сперанский.* СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 741–742.

without fear, in return for a reward and the sovereign's favor. Those who concealed money craftsmen were punished in the same manner as the makers themselves. The specific form of punishment was not stated.

The Senate decrees *On the Obligation of Commissioners to Report to Governors Those Accused of Making Counterfeit Coin and to Send Such Persons to Moscow for Investigation at the Mints* (1712)[56], *On the Free Circulation of Money of the Old Die* (1712)[57], and *On the Purchase of Copper at a Fixed Price for the Minting of Copper Money* (1712)[58] ordered that counterfeit money be identified at the mints; that commissioners report to governors, before sending to Moscow those who had been accused; that defective and counterfeit money be separated from silver and copper money when collecting duties in the governorates; that those responsible for producing defective coin be subjected to severe torture without mercy; and that fixed prices be established for the purchase of copper from townspeople for delivery to the mint: red shipbuilding copper (7 roubles, 8 *altyns*, and 2 *dengas*), cauldron copper (7 roubles), and foam copper (6 roubles and 50 kopecks). The purchase of copper by merchant stalls was prohibited.

The personal decree of Sovereign Peter Alexeevich, *On Prohibiting Foreigners from Importing Russian Copper and Small Silver Money* (1714)[59], established supervision over the transportation of silver money into the Russian state in order to combat small-denomination coins lacking mint marks and produced by hammer striking. Foreigners were permitted to purchase goods only with their own currency, and the export of silver scrap abroad was prohibited.

The first evidence of counterfeiters detained in Tyumen is recorded in the inventory of cases of the Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery (1712–1714): a report from Tyumen to Tobolsk concerning the dispatch of Moses (Moisey) Antonov, a resident of the town of Olonets, who possessed counterfeit copper and lead money (1712)[60]; and the bringing of the innkeeper Semyon Reshetnikov, the beer tax farmer Osip Kolmogorov, and

---

[56] Ibid. C. 848.

[57] Ibid. C. 847.

[58] Ibid. C. 867.

[59] Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. V. 1713–1719 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 95–96.

[60] ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 1796. Л. 34.

a service man concerning the Yamskaya Sloboda driver Leonty Lupindin, who possessed counterfeit copper money, together with interrogation statements (1714)[61].

The *Military Articles* (1715), in Article 199 of Chapter 22, *On False Oaths and Similar Offenses*[62], established measures against makers of counterfeit coin, providing for execution by burning, as well as deprivation of honor and property. This article identified three methods of producing counterfeit ("false") coin: the use of another person's counterfeit die, the improper addition of ore or metal, and reducing the weight of the coin.

In 1715, the commandant of the Tyumen Prikaz Office, Dmitry Borisovich Zubov, examined a letter from the Tyumen posad man and customs official Melenty Obramov, together with the copper money he had brought and the widow Akilina Fedorova Barabanshchikova whom he had brought before the authorities. Melenty Obramov reported that he had noticed a suspicious purchase by Akilina Fedorova Barabanshchikova in the Trading Row from a resident of a settlement: a pud of flour for ten *dengas* per pud. He approached the seller, examined the money he had received, and identified it as "copper"; the female buyer was detained. Upon examining the copper money, the commandant established that it was counterfeit. Akilina Barabanshchikova's interrogation revealed that she had obtained the copper money in the room of the house of the bailiff Ivan Kolov. Because the surviving text is interrupted, the substantive continuation of Akilina Barabanshchikova's interrogation is lost; it might have identified the probable distributor or maker of the copper money[63].

In 1717, an investigation was conducted in Tyumen in the case known as "The Sovereign's Word and Deed" (="state crime". – *Ed.*). Gerasim Polubabin was interrogated, and the Tyumen resident Afanasy Starchikov was questioned. The interrogation statement records conversations among Tyumen residents Afanasy Starchikov, Ivan Polbabin, and Alexei Cherepanov at the tavern, in the presence of the beer seller Dmitry Kolmogorov, concerning the distribution of counterfeit tin money to a retired soldier, Ivan Rudakov, for the purpose of purchasing

---

61 Ibid. Л. 63 об.

62 Russian legislation of the 10th–20th centuries. В 9 т. Т. 4. Законодательство периода становления Абсолютизма / *А.Г. Маньков.* М.: Юридическая литература, 1986. С. 363–364.

63 ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 4301. Л. 1.



Counterfeit coins from excavations in Tyumen (2024). Polushka, 1768.
From open sources

cattle in villages of Tyumen Uyezd. However, the distributor was caught. Gerasim Polubabin refused to identify the place where Ivan Rudakov had been captured, did not disclose what goods had been purchased with the counterfeit money, and knew nothing of any state criminal case involving Afanasy Starchikov. The interrogation statements record mutual denials by the accuser and the accused: Alexei Cherepanov stated that Afanasy Starchikov possessed two money bags for purchasing linen and exchanging money in the Trading Row. He did not know the name of the linen seller or whether Afanasy Starchikov had distributed counterfeit tin money. The opening text naming the government authority and the final verdict are absent from the investigative case[64].

In 1717, Tyumen commandant Ivan Vasilyevich Voronetsky and commissioner Semyon Prasolov, acting on the denunciation of the silversmith Danila Kuropoltsev, sent the assistant clerk of the Tyumen Prikaz Office, Osip Barashkov, together with service people and neighbours, to search the households of retired soldiers Alexei Kiselev and Grigory Palapezhentsov for counterfeit money and tools used in money-making. Their possessions were then sealed pending the issuance of an order. Nothing was found during the search except a set of tools belonging to Alexei Kiselev: silversmithing equipment, an anvil, two hammers, one and a half pairs of copper molds, tongs, a vise, scissors, twelve pairs of pointed pliers, twelve files, iron molds, and one and a half pounds of unrefined copper in pieces[65]. Tyumen commandant Ivan Voronetsky and commissioner Semyon Prasolov

[64] Ibid. Д. 4258. Л. 1 об. – 4.
[65] Ibid. Д. 4368. Л. 1–2 об.



Counterfeit coins from excavations in Tyumen (2024). Polushka, 1759.
From open sources

submitted a petition to the Siberian governor, Prince Matvey Petrovich Gagarin, reporting that they had received his order, transmitted by the Tobolsk boyar son Alexei Shaposhnikov, to send the apprehended peasant Ivan Patrin and the silversmith Danila Kuropoltsev, together with the accused persons and the investigative case [to Tobolsk], on charges of purchasing counterfeit money[66]. The Siberian Governorate Chancellery reported back to the Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery that it had received Danila Kuropoltsev and fifteen accused persons together with copper money[67]. The opening portion of the interrogation statement of the peasant Ivan Patrin and the verdict in the investigative case have not been found.

The inventory of cases of the Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery (1719) contains two investigative cases that have not survived to the present day: an unfinished case, consisting of two sheets of the interrogation statements of the prisoner Ivan Dedyshev, who threw tin money through the bars, as reported in a formal appearance by the assistant clerk Ivan Belyaev; and the testimony and interrogation statement of the Tyumen service man Kozma Ognev, who had obtained counterfeit copper money from an unknown source and brought it to the Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery[68].

In 1720, the peasant Pyotr Titov Tolmenin of Maslyanskaya Sloboda submitted a petition with counterfeit money to the Tyumen commandant Larion Gavrilovich Vorontsov. He wrote that in the village of Zubareva, Tyumen Uyezd, in the presence of fellow peasants Nikifor Tabarsky and

66 Ibid. Л. 3 об.
67 ГАТО. Ф. И-181. Оп. 1. Д. 16. Л. 41 об.
68 ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 1798. Л. 19.

Averky Popov, he had sold eight puds of wheat flour to a local resident, Dorofey Cherepanov, for 15 *altyns* and 4 *dengas*, at a price of 7 kopecks per pud. Without leaving his own house, the buyer paid him in counterfeit money without counting it. The victim, Pyotr Tolmenin, requested that Dorofey Cherepanov be located and interrogated. The detained driver, Dorofey Cherepanov, stated that he had paid eighteen *altyns* and four *dengas* in silver in his own house for eight puds of flour, without witnesses. He had received the money from an unknown soldier in payment for the sale of his own horse; the soldier had subsequently departed for Moscow. The text of the investigative document ends at this point, and it is unknown how the case against the driver Dorofey Cherepanov concluded[69].

In 1721, the Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery investigated a major case involving a group of persons accused of manufacturing and distributing counterfeit copper money, concealing offenders, failing to report them, and making false accusations. The proceedings were initiated on the basis of a personal decree sent from Tobolsk ordering the arrest and exile of Dorofey Veselkov, a Tyumen Cossack son who had been accused of denouncing individuals in a case concerning the discovery of counterfeit copper money in Tobolsk. Dorofey Veselkov was detained and placed under guard, but a Tyumen military servant, Stepan Kudryashev, persuaded the Tyumen boyar son Gavriil Chyurilov to release the prisoner "in chains" to the bathhouse of the military servant Ivan Kolov Sr., where his wife, Akilina Fedorova Dorofeeva, was waiting with their belongings and a horse. This is a notable coincidence with an earlier interrogation case[70], in which the house of the bailiff Ivan Kolov and the widow Akilina Fedorova Barabanshchikova, who had come to obtain counterfeit money, also appear. Upon arrival, they took the horse and went to sell it to a Swedish prisoner in Zatyumenka, where they disappeared in an unknown direction[71]. Following the actual escape from Tyumen of Dorofey Veselkov and Stepan Kudryashev, the relatives and acquaintances of the fugitives were arrested at the petition of the Swedish prisoner Sven Okuntsov[72]: the Tyumen Cossack son Trofim

---

69 Ibid. Д. 4368. Л. 5–5 об.

70 Ibid. Д. 4301. Л. 1.

71 Ibid. Д. 1650. Л. 21–22.

72 According to the *Revision List of the City of Tyumen* (1709–1721), the Swedish soldier Sven Okonson resided in his own household in the Znamensky parish. ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 2034. Л. 220 об.

Veselkov and his sister Marya Lukina; the driver Osip Mikhailov Kalinin; the ploughland peasant Vasily Fedorov Svikha; the peasant Astafey Krylov; Maria Savina, sister of Terenty Ryshkov, and his mother Irina Yakovleva; his daughter-in-law Maria Maksima and his sister Fedosya Mikhailova; Domna Maksimova, wife of Pavel Shulev; and the retired soldier Danilo Rychkov. They were accused of assisting the escape, harboring fugitives, and self-incrimination[73]. The Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery ordered the military servants Ivan Kolov and Yegor Chemyakin to search for the fugitives Stepan Kudryashev and Dorofey Veselkov in the Karmaki area, but without success[74]. A rent-paying peasant from the village of Kulakova, Sergei Nikiforov Tomilov, told the Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery that his fellow villager Pavel Vasilyev Kiselev had come to the tavern and told him that he had seen the fugitive military servant Stepan Kudryashev near Balairskaya village together with Antip Zaborsky, a ploughland peasant from the village of Zaborskaya in the Krasnoslobodsk fortress[75]. By order of the Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery, the Tyumen boyar son Alexei Nikitin set out with service people for the Fetkovsky Works (known as the Nevyansk Works since 1702)[76] in order to capture the fugitives Stepan Kudryashev and Dorofey Veselkov. Only Stepan Kudryashev was detained, together with his accomplices: mounted Cossack Sofron Godenov Pushnikov and his son Nikifor and daughter Maria; Cossack sons Grigory Yeliseev Koksharov and Fedor Osipov Kulpin; freemen Ivan Kharitonov Kulikov and Stepan Cherny with his wife Avdotya Denisova; and the driver Sava Puteninov with his wife Alena Ivanova. The search uncovered the following evidence: counterfeit money-making equipment, thirteen kopeck dies, six small graving tools with gridded surfaces, silver money, three copper rods, a copper box, two molds, bellows, and an anvil[77]. According to another inventory, the evidence consisted of eleven kopeck dies, two graving tools with gridded surfaces, nineteen *altyns* in counterfeit copper money, three copper rods, a copper box, two molds, bellows, and an anvil[78]. Interrogations and examinations were conducted. Through

[73] ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 1674. Л. 1 об.
[74] Ibid. Д. 1650. Л. 22 об.–23.
[75] Ibid. Л. 24.
[76] РГАДА. Ф. 271. Оп. 1. Д. 634. Л. 557.
[77] ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 1650. Л. 24 об. – 25.
[78] Ibid. Л. 8.

the self-incriminating statements of those brought before the authorities, it was established that counterfeit copper money had been produced in a forest near the village of Uspenskoye in Tyumen Uyezd[79] and was subsequently moved to the village of Maltsova, to the house of the Cossack son Fedor Osipov Kulpin[80]. The statements also indicated that the principal figures in the case had departed across the Pyshma River toward the Ostrovnye Yurts, to the house of the freeman Stepan Cherny, in the direction of the Bashkir settlements[81]. The Tyumen Chancellery of Judicial Affairs sentenced the money craftsmen Dorofey Veselkov and Terenty Ryshkov in absentia to imprisonment. Dorofey Veselkov's property was inventoried and sold, while the relatives of those sentenced were arrested pending their actual apprehension. Those accused of harbouring fugitives, providing assistance, and failing to report the offenses were flogged with the knout, fined half a rouble each, and released on surety[82]. The document on the basis of which the Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery was able to trace the fugitives to the Fetkovsky (Nevyansk) ironworks is unknown. The individuals involved in the investigative case – Dorofey Veselkov, Terenty Ryshkov, Afanasy Vlasov, and Pavel Shulev – most likely remained at the Ural ironworks. The petition of the Swedish prisoner Sven Okuntsov has not been found among the investigative records.

The Imperial Decree of Peter Alexeevich, *On the Minting of Small and Large Coins According to the Established Fineness and Standards* (1718)[83], discontinued the issuance of small-denomination coins throughout the Russian state, transferred coin production from striking to stamping, required silver coins (*grivennik*, *poltina*, and rouble) to be made exclusively of pure silver, introduced thin copper *polushki* to prevent their casting by counterfeiters, and established the use of edge lettering (*gurt*) on silver and copper coins.

In 1722, Ivan Avramov, Commissioner of the Krasnoslobodsk Zemstvo Office, informed Tyumen Voivode Alexander Dementyevich Isupov that

---

79 Ibid. Л. 25 об.

80 Ibid. Л. 29.

81 Ibid. Л. 28.

82 Ibid. Л. 39–50.

83 Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. V. 1713–1719 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 533.

he had received a petition from the office of the Krasnoslobodsk Ostrog, submitted in 1721 by peasants Konstantin Ivanov Mandrygin, Fadei Afanasiev Mandrygin, and Vasily Fedorov Menshikov. The petitioners stated that they had sold ten head of cattle to the Tyumen townsman Stepan Ryabov for 7 roubles, 26 *altyns*, and 4 *dengas*. They handed the money received from the purchaser over to the customs office of Krasnoslobodsk Ostrog to pay obligatory dues into the Imperial Treasury. In the presence of the nobleman Eftifei Zavyalov, the officials receiving the payment discovered that the petitioners possessed two roubles and three *poltinas* in counterfeit copper coins. The counterfeit money was sent to the Tyumen Office of Judicial Affairs for examination, where the fiscal Vasily Makarov and burgomaster Yakov Volskikh confirmed that the coins were counterfeit. The Tyumen townsman Stepan Loginov Ryabov was detained and brought to the Tyumen Zemstvo Town Hall for interrogation. The detainee confirmed that he had purchased ten head of cattle from peasants of Krasnoslobodsk Ostrog, clarifying that he had paid 12 roubles, 3 altyns, and 2 dengas. He claimed that he regarded the counterfeit copper coins presented to him – two roubles and three *poltinas* – as genuine silver coins, which he had borrowed from Matvei Ludanin, head of the Tyumen artillerymen[84]. The interrogation statements of Matvei Ludanin have not been found among the investigative materials[85]. To avoid further interrogation, Stepan Ryabov began accusing Ivan Avramov, commissioner of the Krasnoslobodsk Zemstvo Office, of a state crime, alleging that he had appropriated part of the funds collected from peasant households for the Tyumen Voivodeship Office. During interrogation, Ivan Avramov denied the accusation, since no appropriated funds were found in his possession[86]. For slandering a government official, Stepan Ryabov was interrogated again to determine the origin of the counterfeit money; however, the detainee evaded answering the question[87]. During a confrontation with the peasants of Krasnoslobodsk Ostrog, Stepan Ryabov, in the presence of fiscal Vasily Makarov, burgomaster Yakov Volskikh, the junior volost headman

[84] According to the *Census Book of the City of Tyumen* (eighteenth century), the head of the gunners, Matvei Ludanin, died in 1724: ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 532. Л. 6 об.

[85] ГАТО. Ф. И-181. Оп. 1. Д. 4. Л. 13–14 об.

[86] ГАТО. Ф. И-167. Оп. 1. Д. 2. Л. 6.

[87] Ibid. Л. 10 об.

Dmitry Kuznetsov, and the soldier Osip Shishkin, again claimed knowledge of an unspecified state crime, which he wished to report to the Siberian governor, Prince Alexei Mikhailovich Cherkassky. The Tyumen Office of Judicial Affairs requested permission from Tyumen Voivode Alexander Dementyevich Isupov to send Stepan Ryabov under guard to Tobolsk for a personal interrogation by the voivode. No marginal notes by Tyumen Voivode Alexander Dementyevich Isupov authorizing Stepan Ryabov to travel under guard to Tobolsk have been found among the investigative materials relating to any state crime[88]. In 1724, Stepan Ryabov became a defendant in a criminal case concerning the distribution of counterfeit coins in Tyumen. The burgomasters of the Tyumen Zemstvo Town Hall conducted an interrogation during which the accused Stepan Ryabov gave a detailed account of the origin of the counterfeit money. In 1722, he had gone to Tobolsk for local work to visit his kinsman, the Tobolsk townsman Gerasim Fedoseev Ryabov, who offered him counterfeit copper coins — two roubles and four *poltinas* — for distribution among the settlements in order to purchase livestock, on the condition that the money be returned if no purchases were made. Stepan asked Gerasim about the origin of the counterfeit copper coins, and Gerasim identified the Tobolsk townsman Ivan Sorogin, without providing further details. Without suspecting anything, Stepan Ryabov distributed the counterfeit copper coins he had received from Gerasim Ryabov in 1722 among the peasants of Krasnoslobodsk Ostrog in payment for cattle. In 1723, after being detained in Tyumen with counterfeit copper coins, Stepan Ryabov immediately went to Shadrinskaya Sloboda to see Gerasim Ryabov and inform him of what had happened, without mentioning Gerasim during his interrogation. Gerasim Ryabov, unaware of the full circumstances surrounding Stepan Ryabov, went to Tobolsk to locate the Tyumen townsman Sila Galkin and send him to Tyumen to settle his debt obligations to Gerasim, without mentioning the counterfeit copper money. The settlement failed: Sila Galkin did not come to Tyumen, and Stepan Ryabov did not hand over the money intended for the settlement. Sila Galkin was detained and interrogated at the Tyumen Zemstvo Town Hall. He stated that he had gone to Tobolsk at Stepan Ryabov's instruction to secure Gerasim Ryabov's release, while remaining in Tyumen himself to settle the debt. Upon arriving in Tobolsk, he found

[88] ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 4259. Л. 1–1 об.

Gerasim and tried to persuade him to travel to Tyumen. Gerasim replied that he would come to Tyumen to settle his debts with Stepan after his own departure for Tyumen, and gave him seven *grivnas* he received from a hired contract. The final judgment of the Tyumen Zemstvo Town Hall concerning the accused Stepan Ryabov has not been found among the investigative materials[89]. In 1736, Stepan Ryabov again became a defendant in state crime proceedings, this time accused of making counterfeit money. The incident occurred at the Krasny Tavern in Tyumen, where Vasily Mikheev, a retired soldier of the Preobrazhensky Life Guards Regiment, beat Stepan Ryabov with a rifle stock for an unknown reason, saying: "I accuse him of a state crime, for he formerly made small coins". The subsequent criminal proceedings against Stepan Ryabov, however, remain unknown[90].

The Senate Decree *On the Destruction of Counterfeit Money Found in Circulation* (1722)[91] established supervision over money collectors in the provinces and districts (uyezds) to identify counterfeit silver and copper coins; defined the characteristics of counterfeit money – counterfeit silver coins struck with copper dies, in denominations of up to five altyns (15 kopecks), from a single die – and established the threshold for criminal liability: counterfeit money amounting to less than one *grivna* per rouble was to be confiscated without initiating an investigation. The decree also required information concerning counterfeit money to be publicly announced in order to inform the population and ordered that tools found together with counterfeit money be sent to the Berg Collegium.

The Imperial Decree of Peter the Great, *On Beheading* (1723)[92], expedited the execution of counterfeiters. A subsequent Imperial Decree, *On the Minting of New Five-Kopeck Coins* (1723)[93], introduced measures to protect coins against counterfeit casting through the use of fine engraving and high-quality dies. The Senate Decree *On the Strict Prohibition*

---

89 ГАТО. Ф. И-167. Оп. 1. Д. 2. Л. 10 об. – 11.

90 ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 4262. Л. 23.

91 Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. VI. 1720–1722 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 760–761.

92 Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. VII. 1723–1727 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 20.

93 Ibid. С. 87.

of Remelting Old Coins (1724)[94] prescribed exile to hard labour for those who remelted old coins for personal profit by selling the resulting metal to mints. The Senate Decree *On the Manufacture and Stamping of Rouble, Poltina, Half-Poltina, and Grivna Plates* (1726)[95] instructed Siberian factories to produce coins exclusively from pure red copper at a fixed price of 10 roubles per pud and with an eagle stamp as protection against counterfeiting.

In 1726, Colonel Dmitry Ugrimov of the Tyumen Voivodeship Office sent a promemoria to the Tyumen Office of Judicial Affairs together with a copy of the monetary case concerning Yegor Petrovykh, a peasant from Pokrovskaya Sloboda, who had been brought before the authorities by Grigory Kotelnikov, a Tyumen boyar son and road supervisor, after a skull(-shaped) container containing counterfeit tin and copper coins had been found in his possession. Persons connected with the counterfeit money – amounting to 5 roubles, 28 *altyns*, and 2 *dengas* – were brought in and interrogated over six sheets: the yamshchik (driver) Maksim Liskin, tavern keeper Dmitry Petoshkin, yamshchik Pantelei Shchukin, and the townsmen Fedor Metelev and Ivan Makrylkin. The opening portions of the interrogation statements and confrontations included in the monetary case have not been found[96]. According to a surviving fragment of the interrogation, Yegor Petrovykh, a peasant from Pokrovskaya Sloboda, stated that he had received 10 roubles in pure silver coins from the Tyumen resident Ivan Andreev Lepeshkin in payment for fish he had sold. He then went to count the money at the house of an unnamed factory stonemason, where he discovered 6 roubles in counterfeit tin coins. Fearing prosecution, he kept the counterfeit money in his possession without informing anyone and did not inquire about its origin from the purchaser, Ivan Lepeshkin. He denied having accepted or manufactured counterfeit money. For making false accusations against Maksim Liskin and others, the interrogated Yegor Petrovykh was subjected to torture[97]. The peasant Yegor Petrovykh's file stated that he lived in Zatyumenka, in Yamskaya Sloboda, lodging with the familiar mounted Cossack Ivan Chirkov and his son Yakov Chirkov,

[94] Ibid. C. 262.
[95] Ibid. C. 567.
[96] ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 4367. Л. 1–1 об.
[97] Ibid. Д. 3327. Л. 1.

who regularly travelled between Tyumen and Tobolsk. He traded in fish at the Yekaterinburg Works, dealing in small white pike, roach, perch, and salted ide, and kept twenty sledges without weight records at the house of the yamshchik Andrei Shchukin. Acting under instructions, the Tyumen Office of Judicial Affairs sent an elderly clerk, a fiscal, bailiffs, and witnesses to the house of the yamshchik Andrei Shchukin to inspect the fish loads and property, with a written undertaking under threat of liability. The judgment of the Tyumen Office of Judicial Affairs has not been found among the investigative materials[98]. The monetary case concerning the peasant Yegor Petrovykh of Pokrovskaya Sloboda, initially connected with the discovery of the skull container and counterfeit money, ultimately developed into a case concerning the inventory of twenty unregistered loads of fish found at the houses of Chirkov and Shchukin.

The large quantity of counterfeit money circulating alongside silver and copper coins of the Russian Empire during the first quarter of the eighteenth century contributed to the depletion of the State Treasury's resources and the emergence of public distrust.

The Imperial Decree of Peter II, *On the Punishment of Counterfeit Coin Makers, the Rewarding of Informers, and the Pardon of Those Who Voluntarily Confess Their Guilt* (1727)[99], established the voluntary surrender of monetary tools without fear of prosecution in the presence of a voivode, magistrate, or governor. It prescribed investigation upon direct suspicion and various forms of punishment: execution with a record sent to the Mint Office and the Supreme Privy Council; flogging and exile to mining works in Siberia; reporting to voivodes and governors if counterfeiters had been released; and confiscation of their property. The decree also established conditions under which mercy could be obtained through the surrender of the "counterfeiting ring" and defined the tasks of the Supreme Privy Council: a counterfeiter who voluntarily appeared was to be relieved of guilt on the condition of perpetual subsistence in distant Siberian towns, while a captured counterfeiter was not to be executed but instead exiled to remote Siberian towns.

---

98 Ibid. Л. 1–1 об.

99 Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. VII. 1723–1727 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 802–803.

The Senate Decree *On Sending Coiners from the Mint Office to the Provinces and Districts (uyezds)* (1730)[100] established supervision over money counters in every province and district by dispatching mint officials from the Mint Office to combat the acceptance of counterfeit copper kopecks into the State Treasury.

During the reign of Empress Anna Ioannovna, a series of Senate decrees was issued to address shortages of small change, thereby creating a shortage of metal for counterfeiters (1733)[101]; to combat the import of copper five-kopeck coins from abroad, ordering their confiscation and transfer to the mint and requiring detailed information about their source (1735)[102]; and to return counterfeit money to the population (1736)[103].

In 1738, dispatch officers of the Tyumen Voivodeship Office, Ivan Dvoryansky and Ivan Roskazov, brought before the authorities the Tyumen townsman Trifon Grigoriev Legostaev, who was caught in the Trading Row with counterfeit small-denomination tin coins while attempting to distribute them by extending loans to the commoner Yelesei Mineev and the yamshchik Fedor Bormotov, residents of the village of Zubareva in Tyumen Uyezd. Trifon Legostaev stated that he had purchased the counterfeit tin money for 10 roubles, having learned about it through acquaintances, from the peasant Ulyan Mineev in the village of Lyapikhina, Isetsk Uyezd, for 2 roubles. Legostaev had not asked Ulyan Mineev where the money came from or whether he had manufactured it himself. He distributed the counterfeit money by purchasing small goods from shops in Tobolsk and Kurgan, while selling part of it mixed with genuine currency to residents of nearby settlements and villages. He kept the remainder in Tyumen at the lodgings of the widow Paraskeva Posnikova, intending to distribute it later in the Trading Row. The Tyumen Voivodeship Office found Trifon Legostaev guilty and placed him under guard as a prisoner, under the seal of Her Imperial Majesty, and sent him to the

[100] Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. VIII. 1728–1732 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 285.

[101] Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. IX. 1733–1736 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 101–102.

[102] Ibid. С. 585–586.

[103] Ibid. С. 882–884.

Isetsk Provincial Office. The inventory of the property and belongings of the Tyumen townsman Trifon Legostaev has not been found among the investigative materials[104,105].

The Imperial Decree of Empress Elizabeth Petrovna *On Accepting Silver Coins with Clippings and Defects* (1742)[106] provided for combating discovered counterfeit coins by conducting investigations in provincial, district, and voivodeship offices.

In 1744, Vasily Eyaikov, a street constable from the village of Uspenskoye in Tyumen Uyezd, brought before the Tyumen Voivodeship Office a local resident, Sidor Cherepashkov, with twelve kopecks in counterfeit tin money[107]. The detainee Sidor Cherepashkov stated that he had received eleven kopecks from the Tyumen commoner Dmitry Fefilov in payment for tar he had sold, but because of poor eyesight he had not noticed that the coins were counterfeit. The Tyumen Voivodeship Office sent dispatch officers Ivan Dvoryansky and Fedor Bulygin to the village of Mesedova, to Dmitry Fefilov's house, to search for counterfeiters' tools and money, but nothing was found. Dmitry Fefilov denied having purchased tar from Sidor Cherepashkov with counterfeit money, citing the absence of any tools[108]. A confrontation between Sidor Cherepashkov and Dmitry Fefilov was arranged. Sidor Cherepashkov stated that in 1743 he had travelled to the fair at Irbit Sloboda, where he saw Dmitry Fefilov and his brother-in-law Fedot Kuroptev. Dmitry offered Sidor the opportunity to distribute 1 rouble and 50 kopecks in counterfeit money at the Irbit Fair, and Sidor agreed. He distributed the counterfeit money at the fair at a markup, making an additional 50 kopecks from it. After distributing the counterfeit money, he went to Fefilov's house to sell a horse for twenty counterfeit roubles. Fedot told Sidor that he had thrown some of the unsold counterfeit money into the Pyshma River. Sidor abandoned the sale of the horse, denied any involvement with counterfeit money, and returned home. In 1744, he again went to Fefilov's house to purchase fish. Dmitry offered Sidor 1 rouble and

---

104 Ibid. Д. 1675. Л. 11 об.

105 ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 4372. Л. 1–7.

106 Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. XI. 1740–1743 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 603.

107 ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 4375. Л. 3.

108 Ibid. Л. 3–3 об.

50 kopecks in counterfeit money for 60 kopecks. In the presence of Fefilov's wife, Maria Ivanova, he purchased 1 rouble and 40 kopecks in counterfeit money for 45 kopecks in silver, without counting the coins, leaving aside eleven kopecks. He tied the purchased money into a small bundle and returned home to the village of Uspenskoye, where he distributed it at the house of the resident Osip Shestakov. A local resident, Nikifor Yelkin, saw the counterfeit money in his possession and brought him before the street constable. After his arrest, he was taken to Tyumen with eleven kopecks; he had thrown the remainder of the counterfeit money away near a birch tree along the road[109]. Dmitry Fefilov stated that in 1743 he had come to the Irbit Fair together with Fedot Ivanov Kuroptev to sell soap. He denied that Sidor Cherepashkov had been in Irbit Sloboda and denied offering him counterfeit money for purchase or distribution. In 1744, he claimed, he had found counterfeit money while relieving himself under a hill beside the road to the Kalachinsky Yurts. He took the money to the village of Mesedova and buried it in his garden. In order to get rid of it, he offered Sidor Cherepashkov the entire amount for 20 kopecks. The Tyumen Voivodeship Office ordered dispatch officers Alexei Lobazerov and Arkhip Filyaev to go to the village of Mesedova to apprehend Fedot Kuroptev and search for counterfeit money, but they found nothing[110]. Alexei Strekalovsky, a guard corporal of the Tyumen Voivodeship Office, discovered a canvas pouch containing counterfeit tin coins worth 87 kopecks ten versts from Tyumen on the Karmatskaya Road near Talovoy Kolok. Pursuant to the Imperial Decree of 1722, Dmitry Fefilov and Sidor Cherepashkov were subjected to torture[111]. Under torture, Dmitry Fefilov stated that in 1739 he had melted tin in a small farmstead hut of his own and struck kopecks using a birch die, mixing them with silver coins at a ratio of five counterfeit kopecks per rouble, and distributed them among the population. By 1741, owing to the success of the operation, he had involved his brother-in-law Fedot Kuroptev in making counterfeit money for distribution at the Irbit Fair. Sidor Cherepashkov was paid 50 kopecks for distributing it. Under torture, Sidor Cherepashkov stated that in 1742 he had travelled with Yakov Kolmogorov, a rent-paying peasant from the village of Tugulymskaya, to the village

[109] Ibid. Л. 4–5.
[110] Ibid. Л. 5–6.
[111] Ibid. Л. 6–6 об.

of Luchinkina in the Tyumen administrative district, to the house of the commoner Ivan Vasilov, in order to sell leather. Ivan Vasilov purchased the leather from him for 1 rouble and 20 kopecks in counterfeit copper money, which was divided equally between Sidor and Yakov Kolmogorov. During the torture, Sidor recalled that earlier Ivan Vasilov had also paid him 1 rouble in counterfeit money for meat he had sold him[112]. The persons named under torture by Dmitry Fefilov and Sidor Cherepashkov were brought in for interrogation. The Tyumen commoner Fedot Kuroptev stated that in 1743 he had come to visit his brother-in-law Dmitry Fefilov, who showed him counterfeit money and admitted that he had manufactured it for the Irbit Fair. He denied giving counterfeit money to Sidor Cherepashkov or participating in its manufacture[113]. The Tyumen commoner Ivan Vasilov stated that he had not seen Fefilov or Kolmogorov in the village of Luchinkina, had not purchased leather or meat from them with counterfeit money, and did not manufacture counterfeit money because he lacked both the skills and the tools. Yakov Kolmogorov, a rent-paying peasant from the village of Tugulymskaya, stated that he had never been in the village of Luchinkina and did not know the commoner Ivan Vasilov[114]. Under torture by burning, Sidor Cherepashkov confessed that he had falsely accused Yakov Kolmogorov and Ivan Vasilov while in a state of unconsciousness. He stated that he had received 1 rouble and 50 kopecks in counterfeit money from Dmitry Fefilov for distribution at the Irbit Fair. Under torture by burning, Dmitry Fefilov completely retracted his own accusations and statements against Sidor Cherepashkov, claiming that he had made them in order to conceal a found handkerchief containing 1 rouble and 50 kopecks in counterfeit money, the origin of which he did not know[115]. In 1746, Tyumen Voivode and Collegiate Councillor Mikhail Lodygin, acting pursuant to the Imperial Decree, exempted Sidor Cherepashkov and Dmitry Fefilov from public punishment upon their providing formal surety bonds, in order to prevent similar trade in counterfeit money found in their possession. Fedot Kuroptev, Ivan Vasilov, and Yakov Kolmogorov were released from custody, while the counterfeit money brought by Vasily Evaikov, the street constable of the village

[112] Ibid. Л. 7–7 об.
[113] Ibid. Л. 7 об. – 8.
[114] Ibid. Л. 8–8 об.
[115] Ibid. Л. 9–10 об.

of Uspenskoye, was sent to the Berg Collegium[116]. It is noteworthy that the original sequence of folios in this investigative search case is fragmentary and disordered: the opening folio containing the interrogations of Vasilov, Fefilov, Kuroptev, and Cherepashkov bears number 33, while the final folio containing Mikhail Lodygin's judgment is numbered only 48; folio 3 of the present archival case was formerly numbered 38 and is dated 1746. The remaining 32 folios of the original investigative search case are unknown to us. A note accompanying the investigative case of the Shchipunov family states that a previously initiated secret case had existed against the Tyumen commoner Dmitry Fefilov, apparently because the suspects shared one geographical connection – the village of Mesedova (1744)[117].

After Dmitry Fefilov was released on surety, dispatch officers Ivan Dvoryansky and Fedor Bulygin reported to the Tyumen Voivodeship Office that in 1744 they had discovered the house of the Shchipunov family in the village of Mesedova, Tyumen Uyezd. It is unknown how they had followed the trail to the Shchipunovs, since the Shchipunovs do not appear in the surviving investigative case concerning Dmitry Fefilov[118]. It may be suggested that Dmitry Fefilov had given evidence against the Shchipunovs in the secret case that has not survived. The dispatch officers did not find Grigory Shchipunov, as he had left for the villages under the jurisdiction of Isetsk, but they did find a fugitive recruit, Kirill Shchipunov, and his brother Denis Shchipunov. During the search of the house, they found clay molds, a stone slab, a pot for melting metal, a tin rod, pieces of copper, and 40 kopecks in counterfeit tin money. No information concerning Grigory Shchipunov's arrest has been found in the investigative case[119].

The detained Shchipunovs were brought to the Tyumen Voivodeship Office for questioning and torture in order to establish their involvement in the manufacture of counterfeit tin money. Under questioning and torture, the Tyumen commoner Kirill Shchipunov stated that he had learned from his father, Grigory Shchipunov, how to cast counterfeit money in a birch die for distribution among the population (at a price of 1 rouble

[116] Ibid. Л. 3, 11–13 об.
[117] Ibid. Д. 4374. Л. 20.
[118] Ibid. Д. 4375.
[119] ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 4374. Л. 20–20 об.

10 kopecks). After being subjected to torture by burning, Kirill retracted his earlier statements, claiming that he had made them while in a state of unconsciousness, and again implicated his father in the manufacture of counterfeit money. Under torture and burning, the Tyumen commoner Denis Shchipunov implicated his father in the manufacture of counterfeit money, claiming that he had done so out of fear. Under torture and burning, the Tyumen commoner Grigory Shchipunov stated that he had learned to cast counterfeit ten-kopeck coins from the Tyumen commoner Maksim Dolgikh and his sons. Grigory did not know whether Maksim Dolgikh himself had learned to cast counterfeit money or whether he had personally demonstrated the process to Grigory[120]. The Tyumen commoner Maksim Dolgikh of the village of Tseposhnikova stated under questioning and torture that in 1729 he had not visited the Shchipunovs' house and had not brought counterfeit tin money there; he had not told Grigory Shchipunov about his own production activities and had not taught Grigory how to cast counterfeit money[121]. On the basis of the *Sobornoye Ulozhenie* (1649) and the decrees of Peter the Great (1717, 1722)[122], the Tyumen Voivodeship Office sentenced the Tyumen commoner Grigory Shchipunov to death. His sons Kirill and Denis Shchipunov, for fleeing service and failing to report the crime, were sentenced to public flogging with the formal provision of surety bonds. The counterfeit money was to be sent, together with an extract from the investigative search case, to the Siberian Provincial Office so that an Imperial Decree of Her Imperial Majesty could be requested[123]. The Siberian Provincial Office informed the Tyumen Voivodeship Office that it had received an Imperial Decree of Her Imperial Majesty releasing the Tyumen commoner Grigory Shchipunov from the death penalty and replacing it with exile, without corporal punishment, to the nearest Yekaterinburg Works under the jurisdiction of the Chancellery of the Chief Administration of the Siberian and Kazan Works. He was to be escorted by the Tyumen Cossack Fedor Knyazhev and the Tyumen serviceman Grigory Skorobogatov, in accordance with the prescribed instructions for the transportation of prisoners[124].

[120] Ibid. Л. 35–35 об.
[121] Ibid. Л. 21–21 об.
[122] Ibid. Л. 36–36 об.
[123] ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 4374. Л. 37–37 об.
[124] Ibid. Л. 28–28 об.

Senate Decree *On the Exchange in Siberia of Small Silver Coins under the Supervision of Governors and Voivodes, without Sending Assay Apprentices and Smelters for This Purpose* (1752)[125] prescribed the establishment of centres in Tobolsk and at the Yekaterinburg Works for the withdrawal of small silver kopecks from the surrounding towns for remelting, with a limit of up to 25,000 roubles. Counterfeit coins not subject to remelting were to be confiscated and placed in a special chest bearing the state seal, under the responsibility of the governor and voivodes. The Personal Decree of Her Imperial Majesty Catherine II *On the Circulation of the New Copper Coinage Made in Siberia at the Kolyvano-Voskresensk Works in All State and Private Collections and Payments* (1763)[126] provided for the circulation of Siberian coins of various denominations exclusively within the territory of the Siberian Governorate. In addition to addressing the problems of transporting finished coinage from the mints of Central Russia and promoting local industry, its principal aim was to combat the circulation of counterfeit coins of various denominations within the Siberian Governorate itself.

These measures did not guarantee that new counterfeit Siberian coinage would appear, particularly if the existing quantity was large.

Denis Ivanovich Chicherin, Governor of Siberia, General of the Leib Guard, and Prime Major, sent an order and authorization to the Tobolsk Ecclesiastical Consistory (1771) requiring that persons of any rank or status under its jurisdiction who were suspected of possessing counterfeit Siberian ten-kopeck coins be handed over to the Siberian Provincial Chancellery. Chicherin's order was justified by the fact that "a great number of counterfeit copper coins has now been found to have been made by criminals"[127].

In 1769, the Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery, acting on a report by the nobleman Andrei Reskin, initiated criminal proceedings against Vasily Fedorov Skilov, a peasant from the village of Pokrovskoye, after a counterfeit coin had been discovered. During interrogation, Vasily

---

[125] Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. XIII. 1749–1753 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 640–643.

[126] Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. XVI. 1762–1765 / М.М. Сперанский. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 445–446.

[127] ГА в г. Тобольске. Ф. И-156. Оп. 2. Д. 2677. Л. 2.

Skilov stated that he had received the coin from a fellow villager and commoner, Andrei Kartashev, who did not say where he had obtained it[128]. In secret, the sub-chancellor Churilov was sent to search the homes of Skilov and Kartashev for coin-making tools and counterfeit coins. The search revealed nothing except a stone mold for casting clasps and buttons[129]. The Tyumen commoner Andrei Kartashev denied using the stone mold for anything other than casting buttons and clasps, explaining that these were made for sale to local residents. He stated that he had received the counterfeit coin from an unknown merchant passing through to Tobolsk and had given it to the peasant Vasily Skilov in payment for hay, despite Vasily's stipulation that he be paid in silver rather than copper coins[130]. The Tyumen *posad* man Yakov Shuvalov told the Tyumen Magistrate that an unknown merchant had passed through Tyumen on his way to Tobolsk and had lodged at the home of the yamshchik Pyotr Galkin in Zatyumenka. Yakov Shuvalov received 22 roubles in silver coins from the unknown merchant for transporting baggage, without examining the coins. Of these, he gave three coins to Ivan Andreev Kartashev, while two were taken by the commoner Golykh; the remaining coins he gave directly to Andrei Kartashev[131]. The Tyumen boyar son Mikhail Reskin conducted an inquiry in the village of Pokrovskoye, obtaining the signatures of 20 residents. They stated that a woman named Avdotya Vorobyova had repeatedly borrowed Kartashev's mold for casting buttons and clasps, while there had been no suspicion against Andrei Kartashev himself[132]. In the case concerning Andrei Kartashev's denial of receiving and passing counterfeit coins, the Tyumen Voivodeship Chancellery, noting the absence of tools suitable for their manufacture, released him from custody and sent him home on surety under discreet secret surveillance, on the condition that if anyone exposed Andrei Kartashev as a counterfeiter, appropriate action would be taken[133].

The Personal Decree *On the Cessation of the Striking of Siberian Coinage at the Kolyvano-Voskresensk Works and the Production of Copper*

[128] ГАТО. Ф. И-47. Оп. 1. Д. 4529. Л. 16–17.
[129] Ibid. Л. 18–20 об.
[130] Ibid. Л. 22–23.
[131] Ibid. Л. 27–27 об., 36–36 об.
[132] Ibid. Л. 36 об.
[133] Ibid. Л. 37–37 об.

Money at Yekaterinburg under the Common State Coat of Arms (1781)[134] suspended the production of Siberian copper coinage for 1781 because of its widespread circulation throughout the Russian Empire. The principal purpose of the decree was to transfer the Kolyvano-Voskresensk and Yekaterinburg Works to the striking of state coinage, without extracting precious metals (gold and silver) from Kolyvan copper, at a price of 16 roubles per pud.

In 1786, the Tyumen Lower Zemstvo Court informed the Tyumen Town Magistrate that the office of the Pokhodyashin Uspensky Distillery had sent it a counterfeit *grivennik*, supposedly "of Kolyvan striking", which they had discovered in 1785 at the state-owned drinking house in the village of Zemlyanoye in the possession of the tavern manager Vikula Kolobov. The police officer of the Tyumen Lower Zemstvo Court, Captain Nikolai Kalinin, questioned persons possibly connected, albeit unknowingly, with the circulation of the counterfeit *grivennik*: the tavern managers Vikul Kolobov; Prokopy Yegorov Krivoshein, a Tyumen town dweller's son, and his mother Marfa Krivosheina; Ivan Kryukov (Markov), a peasant at the Uspensky Works, and his daughter; Danila Tyulyapkin, a peasant of the Gulyayevskaya Volost in the Irbit Uyezd; and Elena Petrova and Praskovya Ivanova, household women belonging to Second Lieutenant Alexei Cherkasov. It was established that the counterfeit *grivennik* had been received by the household woman Elena Petrova from an unknown Tatar in exchange for a cotton garment at the Uspensky Distillery, which he had called "Siberian". Elena Petrova did not know where the Tatar had come from. Police officer Kalinin informed the Tyumen Town Magistrate that those he had questioned had no doubts about the authenticity of the counterfeit *grivennik*. An inquiry was made to the Tyumen Town Magistrate to determine whether similar *grivenniks* appeared in earlier criminal cases. The response stated that there was a case against the Tyumen town dweller Alexei Krivoshein for manufacturing counterfeit *grivenniks*, although the year in which the case had been opened was not specified. The confiscated counterfeit *grivennik* was sent to the Tyumen Town Magistrate and attached as evidence to Alexei Krivoshein's case[135].

---

[134] Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. XXI. 1781—1783 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 133.

[135] ГАТО. Ф. И-10. Оп. 1. Д. 3217. Л. 2.

It is unknown when or how the investigation ended. The territorial identification of the town dweller Alexei Krivoshein, the town dweller's son Prokopy Yegorov Krivoshein, and his mother Marfa provides a starting point for determining the approximate location where the counterfeit *grivenniks* were manufactured and for establishing the existence of family ties. The Register of Townspeople of the Tyumen Police Administration (1785) identifies Alexei Krivoshein as the son of the Tyumen town dweller Yegor Vasilyev Krivoshein, a maker of soft leather footwear and the owner of a house in the 1st section, 2nd quarter, listed under No. 547. Yegor Vasilyev Krivoshein's household included his daughter-in-law Marfa Ivanova Krivosheina (née Voanova), but not her son Prokopy[136]. It may therefore be concluded that the family relationship recorded in the Register of Townspeople corresponds unequivocally to the Krivosheins questioned in the investigation. According to the quarter plan (1808)[137] and numbered plan (1804)[138] of the city of Tyumen, the household of the town dweller Yegor Vasilyev Krivoshein had not yet been marked. The Potaskuy quarter was repeatedly surveyed from 1799 onward[139]; therefore, the location of the house where counterfeit *grivenniks* of Kolyvan striking were manufactured is tentatively identified with the present-day odd-numbered side of Vanzetti Street, at the corner of house No. 30 on Sacco Street.

The Senate Decree *On the Free Circulation of Copper Coins of Siberian Striking in All Governorates* (1802)[140] sought to counter the reluctance to permit the circulation of Siberian copper coinage among the population in all towns and uyezds of the Russian Empire, placing it on an equal footing with current state coinage, with the subsequent aim of withdrawing it from circulation. The Senate Decree *On the Delivery of Counterfeit Coin to the Mint Department* (1809)[141] prescribed that counterfeit coins discovered by government offices, provincial administrations, and state

136 ГАТО. Ф. И-3. Оп. 1. Д. 282. Л. 68 об. – 69.

137 ТМПО. ОФ-29308.

138 Ibid. ОФ-29299.

139 Ibid. ОФ-29307.

140 Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. XXVII. 1802–1803 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 208.

141 Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. First Collection. T. XXX. 1808–1809 / *М.М. Сперанский*. СПб.: Типография II Отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1830. С. 892–893.

chambers be sent to the Mint Department in order to prevent their further circulation.

It is noteworthy that before the introduction of the *Code of Punishments* (1845), the Russian Empire actively developed legislative measures against counterfeiters, whereas after its introduction no further specific legislative measures were adopted until the enactment of the *New Criminal Code* (1903).

The secret registers of incoming and outgoing documents of the Tyumen Police Administration from the first half of the nineteenth century record documents relating to criminal cases concerning the discovery and manufacture of counterfeit coins by the inhabitants of Tyumen: the case of the town dweller Golovkova concerning a silver rouble that had been sent to the authorities (1811)[142]; the case of a counterfeit copper rouble found in the possession of the town dweller Nikonor Savateev and the priest's widow Kochengana (Kochenevna) (1811)[143]; the case of the settler Kopeikin, accused of manufacturing counterfeit coin and sentenced by the Tobolsk Provincial Court (1839)[144]; and the case of a counterfeit copper coin made in the form of a silver rouble, discovered while dealing with the disputed estate of the peasant Yakov Anikin (1839)[145].

The new code of laws of the Russian Empire, the *Code of Punishments* (1845), which replaced the *Sobornoye Ulozhenie* (1649) and remained in force until 1918, introduced, in Section VII, *On Crimes and Offenses against the Property and Revenues of the Treasury*, Chapter II, *On Violations of the Mint Statutes*, of Part One, *On Counterfeiting and Diminishing the Value of Coinage*, containing 14 articles intended to combat counterfeiting and specifying the applicable penalties[146]: counterfeiting Russian coinage from precious metals stolen from mining works (Arts. 588–589); counterfeiting foreign coinage (Art. 590); complicity in counterfeiting (Art. 591); failure to report the discovery of counterfeit coin (Art. 592); remelting state copper coinage (Art. 593); possession of tools and materials for manufacturing coin (Art. 594); knowingly importing Russian

142 ГАТО. Ф. И-3. Оп. 1. Д. 232. Л. 2.

143 Ibid. Л. 3 об. – 10.

144 Ibid. Д. 245. Л. 3 об., 7.

145 Ibid. Л. 3 об., 4 об. – 5, 10 об.

146 Code of criminal and correctional penalties. СПб.: Типография II отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества Канцелярии, 1845. С. 922.

coin from abroad (Art. 595); exporting old-strike copper coin abroad (Art. 596); importing counterfeit foreign coin (Art. 597); clipping coins (Art. 598); silver-plating and mercury-plating coins (Art. 599); putting knowingly counterfeit coin into circulation and transferring it to distributors (Art. 600); and ordering from abroad prohibited low-fineness foreign coinage (*billon,* representative/token coins) (Art. 601).A distinctive feature of the *Code* was that counterfeiters apprehended and convicted within the Russian Empire for failure to report counterfeit coin, clipping, or altering the colour of coins were exiled either to the confined territories of two governorates – Tomsk and Tobolsk (Arts. 592, 598–599)[147] – or to remote parts of Siberia (Art. 593)[148].

The inventories of criminal cases of the former Tyumen District Court from the second half of the nineteenth century record secret cases concerning counterfeit coins in Tyumen and Tyumen Uyezd, classified according to the nature of the offense: possession of counterfeit coin – Nekapov (1871)[149], the exiled peasant Moldanov (1876)[150], Grigoriev (1877)[151], the peasant Pichugin (1880)[152], the prisoner Nepomnyashchy (1880)[153], the peasant Gromov, Vatman (1882)[154], the peasant Vasechkin, Zhuravlev (1883)[155], retired private Chernykh, Tiunovka (1883)[156], the exile Triguba, Kozmin, Kravchenko (1884)[157], Gribanov, the peasant woman Kaigaradova (1885)[158], Lebedikhin (1886)[159], Stepan Nosyrev (1892)[160], Yarkmavtsev (1892)[161], Martynov (1892)[162], Zotnin, Snigirev,

147 Ibid. C. 257, 259.
148 Ibid. C. 258.
149 ГАТО. Ф. И-183. Оп. 2. Д. 406. Л. 385.
150 Ibid. Л. 386.
151 Ibid. Л. 388 об.
152 Ibid. Л. 389.
153 Ibid. Л. 389 об.
154 Ibid. Л. 391.
155 Ibid. Л. 392.
156 Ibid. Л. 392 об.
157 Ibid. Л. 394.
158 Ibid. Л. 395.
159 Ibid. Л. 386 об.
160 Ibid. Л. 99.
161 Ibid. Л. 99 об.
162 Ibid. Л. 116 об.

Ostapenko, Uteshev (1892)[163], and Andreychenkova (1899)[164]; passing counterfeit coin – the peasant Nikitin and Seryupin (Seryukov) (1883)[165], Lebedev (1883)[166], the settlers Prokhorov and Lipachev (1884)[167], Alexei Dimitriev and Yegor Deev (1893)[168], the peasant woman Yechina and the peasant Pochuchmev (1899)[169]; manufacturing counterfeit coin – Ivan Yegorov (1880)[170]; putting counterfeit coin into circulation – Korchomkin and Novoselov from the Bogoslovsk Works (1865)[171], Reshetnikova and Vyatkina(1880)[172]; discovery of counterfeit coin by an informant – Stefutin, 103 coins (1871)[173]; tools for manufacturing counterfeit coin – Lesupov (1878)[174]. Most of the criminal cases listed in the inventory have not survived.

In 1883, the Tyumen District Court, sitting in secret, heard the criminal case of Mikhail Vasilyev Vasechkin, a peasant from Troshkova village, Yelanskaya Volost, Tyumen Uyezd, who was accused of passing a counterfeit twenty-kopeck coin. The circumstances of the case were as follows: the peasant Mikhail Vasechkin bought half a *shtof* (1.23 litres) of vodka from the tavern manager Gorbatenko at a drinking establishment in the village of Antipina. After receiving payment, the manager discovered that one of the coins was a counterfeit twenty-kopeck piece and reported it to the village elder Ivan Osipov Antipin. Vasechkin's house was searched for counterfeit coins, tools, and metals, but nothing was found. The investigation established that the seller had no reliable evidence that Mikhail Vasechkin had actually paid with the counterfeit coin. The Tyumen District Court, finding insufficient evidence against the peasant Mikhail Vasechkin, dismissed the charge and released him from custody. The case

[163] Ibid. Л. 117, 118 об.
[164] Ibid. Л. 75.
[165] Ibid. Л. 392.
[166] Ibid. Л. 392 об.
[167] Ibid. Л. 394 об.
[168] Ibid. Л. 138.
[169] Ibid. Л. 66.
[170] Ibid. Л. 389 об.
[171] Ibid. Л. 384 об.
[172] Ibid. Л. 389 об.
[173] Ibid. Л. 385.
[174] Ibid. Л. 387.

has survived only in the lists of judgments of the Tyumen District Court concerning various criminal cases (1895)[175].

In 1897, a search was conducted in Zatyumenka, at No. 8 First Monastyrskaya Street (1907)[176], the home of the town dweller's widow Pelageya Ivanova, for evidence that Ivan Yegorov Merezhnikov, a peasant from Osinsky Uyezd of Perm Governorate, had been manufacturing counterfeit silver coins. Nothing was found except crushed crystal. The town dweller's son Alexander Ivanov initially became aware of Ivan Merezhnikov's counterfeiting activities, but subsequently they jointly organized the manufacture and distribution of counterfeit silver coins. It is unknown how the arrest ended or what sentence was imposed, since the Tyumen District Court's archival inventory contains no further information on the matter[177].

In 1900, at Mashkov's shop on Spasskaya Street, the Tyumen District Police Administration arrested Avdotya Vorontsova, a peasant woman from the Troitskaya Volost, while she was making a purchase with five counterfeit silver 20-kopeck coins. During interrogation, Avdotya stated that she had received the counterfeit money from an unknown woman in payment for carpets. The outcome of the case is unknown. However, owing to the frequent appearance of such counterfeit silver 20-kopeck coins in Tyumen, they were characterized by the following features: a light colour, low weight, coarse engraving, and a crude appearance[178].

In parallel with the *Code of Criminal and Correctional Penalties*, the *New Criminal Code* (1903)[179] was issued, containing Chapter 20, *On the Counterfeiting of Coins, Securities, and Tokens*. It introduced liability for counterfeiting Russian coinage from legally prescribed metal alloys, provided that the counterfeiting was not carried out on a significant scale (Art. 427-1); issuing or presenting counterfeit currency for payment, transferring, accepting, possessing, transporting, and exporting it abroad, as well as putting it into circulation (Art. 430); participation in

[175] ГАТО. Ф. И-183. Оп. 2. Д. 364. Л. 10 об. – 11.
[176] ГА в г. Тобольске. Ф. И-159. Оп. 1. Д. 234. Л. 141 об.
[177] Сибирская торговая газета. 1897. 30 июл. (№19). С. 2.
[178] Сибирская торговая газета. 1900. 12 февр. (№29). С. 3.
[179] New criminal code. СПб.: Книжный магазин В.П. Анисимова, 1903. С. 138–141.

a criminal association of accomplices (Art. 431-2); altering the fineness or weight of any coin with the acquisition of metal for this purpose (Art. 432); and possessing tools and materials intended for counterfeiting coins, with their confiscation (Art. 436). The terms of imprisonment imposed on counterfeiters were significantly reduced and were no longer restricted to the territories of the Tomsk and Tobolsk Governorates. After the abolition of the Tyumen District Court in 1897, the Tobolsk District Court began hearing criminal cases involving counterfeiters in Tyumen and Tyumen Uyezd. These cases were subsequently deposited in the corresponding archival funds of the Tobolsk branch of the State Archive of the Tyumen Region and arranged chronologically: the case against retired non-commissioned officer E.I. Yemelin from the village of Zhiryakova, Antropovskaya Volost, Tyumen Uyezd, and S.V. Kulomzin, an exiled townsman from Turinsk, for counterfeiting and distributing silver coins (1899–1901)[180]; the case against Tyumen townsman M.F. Koshkarov and peasant Ya.M. Yarmolin from Lipchinskaya Volost, Tyumen Uyezd, for counterfeiting and distributing counterfeit coins (1900–1903)[181]; the cases against exiled peasant D.S. Ayupov from Tavdinskaya Volost, Tyumen Uyezd, and peasant woman A.E. Chulina from Lopatinskaya Volost, Kurgan Uyezd, for counterfeiting and distributing silver coins (1905–1910)[182,183]; and the case against exiled peasant F. Serostanov (Serostanov) from Tara Uyezd and Tyumen Uyezd peasants Ivan and Pyotr Fugaev for counterfeiting and the illegal circulation of counterfeit silver coins (1912–1913)[184]. In 1910, the Tyumen Uyezd Police Officer submitted a report to the Assistant Head of the Tobolsk Provincial Gendarmerie Directorate concerning the seizure, in the village of Sozonovskoye, Tyumen Uyezd, from Leonty Anzhelov, a peasant from Sarapul Uyezd, Vyatka Governorate, of iron molds intended for counterfeiting silver rouble coins, as well as the identification of his accomplice, local peasant Silvester Maksimov. The verdict in the case has not been found[185].

---

[180] ГА в г. Тобольске. Ф. И-158. Оп. 3. Д. 627.
[181] Ibid. Д. 869.
[182] Ibid. Д. 2206.
[183] Ibid. Д. 1833.
[184] Ibid. Д. 3245.
[185] ГАТО. Ф. И-239. Оп. 1. Д. 100. Л. 70.

***

Despite the extremely limited archival base for the seventeenth century – represented by a single investigative case concerning counterfeiting in Tyumen (1699) – the legislation of the period, including the *Sobornoye Ulozhenie* of 1649 and the personal decrees of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, testifies to a growing crisis caused by the widespread circulation of copper money. These processes, which culminated in the Copper Riot of 1662, led to the temporary withdrawal of copper coinage from circulation and a transition to a silver-based monetary system. The replacement of the death penalty for "money masters" with lifelong exile to Siberia together with their families, introduced in the 1660s, ultimately contributed to the formation in the Siberian regions of an environment conducive to the development of counterfeiting, despite strict prohibitions on the import and use of copper coinage.

In the eighteenth century, archival sources record a significant increase in the number of investigative cases concerning the manufacture and distribution of "thieves' money" in Tyumen and Tyumen County. This became one of the reasons for recurring monetary reforms and the tightening of legislation governing monetary circulation. On the basis of the investigative materials, several key areas in the Siberian Governorate can provisionally be identified as centers of counterfeit-coin circulation: the Irbit and Shadrinsk slobodas, the village of Uspenskoye, the Isetsky Uyezd, as well as the cities of Tobolsk and Kurgan. In Tyumen, the principal sites of distribution were the Yamskaya Sloboda and the Trading Row. In addition, a distinct connection can be traced between local counterfeiters and the Urals, particularly the Fetkovsky (Nevyansk) Ironworks, where suspects concealed themselves and where, presumably, counterfeit money was manufactured. State policy continued to rely on the exile of convicted "money thieves" to Siberia; this, however, did not restrain the growth of criminal activity.

In the nineteenth century, the legal regulation of counterfeiting was codified in the *Code of Criminal and Correctional Penalties* (1845), which established Siberia, and particularly the Tobolsk and Tomsk Governorates, as permanent places of exile for convicts, with the stated aim of their "correction" and retraining. The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed a qualitative shift: the counterfeiting of silver coins,

rather than copper ones, came to the fore, as confirmed by both archival and judicial records. Finally, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the abolition of territorial restrictions on the residence of convicts led to a further expansion in both the geographical scope and scale of counterfeiting, including in Tyumen.

Thus, a comparison of archival data, legislative acts, and judicial practice from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century makes it possible to conclude that Tyumen had a stable, structured, and geographically expanding network of counterfeiting that adapted to the changing economic, legal, and administrative conditions of the Russian Empire.

Acknowledgements
This research was conducted as part of the state-funded assignment of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation (No. FWRZ-2026-0030).

Author contributions
Both authors contributed equally to the conceptualisation, source analysis, writing, and editing of the article.

Conflict of interests
The authors declares no relevant conflict of interests.

References

1. Act Sources on the History of Russia and Siberia in the 16th–18th Centuries in the Collections of G.F. Miller: Descriptions of Copy Books. Vol.1. Novosibirsk: Siberian Chronograph, 1993. 250 p. URL: https://search.rsl.ru/ru/record/01009790951?ysclid=mrhr34ec6h2338863 (In Russ.).
2. Guryanova N.S., Elert A.Kh., Rezun D.Ya. Act Sources on the History of Russia and Siberia in the 16th–18th Centuries in the Collections of G.F. Miller: Descriptions of Copy Books. Vol. 1: Description of the

Tyumen Archive. Book 1. Novosibirsk: Siberian Chronograph, 1993. P. 146. https://www.elibrary.ru/vwcjnr (In Russ.).
Nosova N.E., ed. Legislative Acts of the Russian state in the second half of the 16th – first half of the 17th century. Leningrad: Nauka, 1987. 266 p. URL: https://search.rsl.ru/ru/record/01001389195?ysclid=mrhrcu5odt536180100 (In Russ.).

3. Mankov A.G., ed. Russian Legislation of the 10th–20th Centuries: in 9 Vol. Vol. 4: Legislation of the Period of Formation of Absolutism. Moscow: Yuridicheskaya literatura = Legal Literature, 1986. P. 363–364. URL: https://archive.org/details/rossijskoezakonodatelstvoxxxvekovt433 (In Russ.).

Ivan S. Khimich
Research Fellow Institute of the Problems of Northern Development,
Federal Research Center "Tyumen Scientific Center of Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences",
SPIN-code: 6598-1619,
AuthorID: 1316246

Svetlana I. Tsembalyuk
Research Fellow Institute of the Problems of Northern Development,
Federal Research Center "Tyumen Scientific Center of Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences",
SPIN-code 9411-4735,
AuthorID: 524548

Received 24.11.2025
Revised 14.01.2026
Accepted 26.02.2026

DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.002
Original paper

Ksenia V. Vanicheva

European University at St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation
E-mail: kvanicheva@eu.spb.ru

"The Case of Insulting a Sacred Object": Disputes over Church Property in the Post-Reform Courts, 1870s–1880s

Abstract

The article analyses a court case concerning ownership of the Andronikov Icon of the Mother of God between the clergy of the Trinity Cathedral in St. Petersburg and a private owner, Collegiate Assessor M.A. Fedorov. The case is examined in the context of other high-profile trials involving members of the clergy in post-reform Russia, including the cases of Abbess Mitrofania and Hieromonk Nil (Nilus), which serve as a starting point for examining the position of the clergy within the new legal reality created by the Judicial Reform of 1864. Methodologically, the study follows the increasingly influential approach of the social history of law in contemporary historiography. The article draws on a broad range of archival sources from the collections of the Russian State Historical Archive and the Manuscript Department of the Russian State Library, including administrative records and numerous petitions submitted by the principal figure in the case, M.A. Fedorov. Particular attention is paid to the critical narrative constructed by Fedorov, a lawyer, in his writings concerning the legitimacy of the decisions of the reformed secular courts

© Ksenia V. Vanicheva, 2026

in matters relating to church property. The article demonstrates that the issues raised by Fedorov formed part of the broader public debate over the boundaries of the jurisdictions of secular and ecclesiastical courts, the admissibility of Orthodox clergy participating in public court proceedings in the post-reform period, and, more broadly, the consequences of the Judicial Reform of 1864. The article concludes that the materials of the case under examination make it possible to take a critical view of the existing historiography of the Church during the Synodal period and to identify a number of new questions within the legal history of the clergy.

Keywords:
Orthodox clergy; Judicial Reform of 1864; Court cases in the Russian Empire; Church property litigation; Andronikov Icon of the Mother of God; Trinity Cathedral in St. Petersburg

For citation
Ksenia V. Vanicheva. "The Case of Insulting a Sacred Object": Disputes over Church Property in the Post-Reform Courts, 1870s–1880s. The Historical Reporter. 2026. Vol. 60. P. 94–113. DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.002

Introduction

In the research literature, the problem of church property in the Russian Empire has generally been studied from a legal perspective[1]. Scholars have noted that the question of the legal regulation of church-property relations was a complex one, and the status of the Orthodox Church as a property owner remained unclear. This situation, together with divergent views of the

[1] Literature review on the subject: see: *Дорская А.А.* Правовой режим имущества религиозного назначения в России: история и современность. СПб., 2012. С. 4–15.



Andronikov Icon of the Mother of God.
From open sources

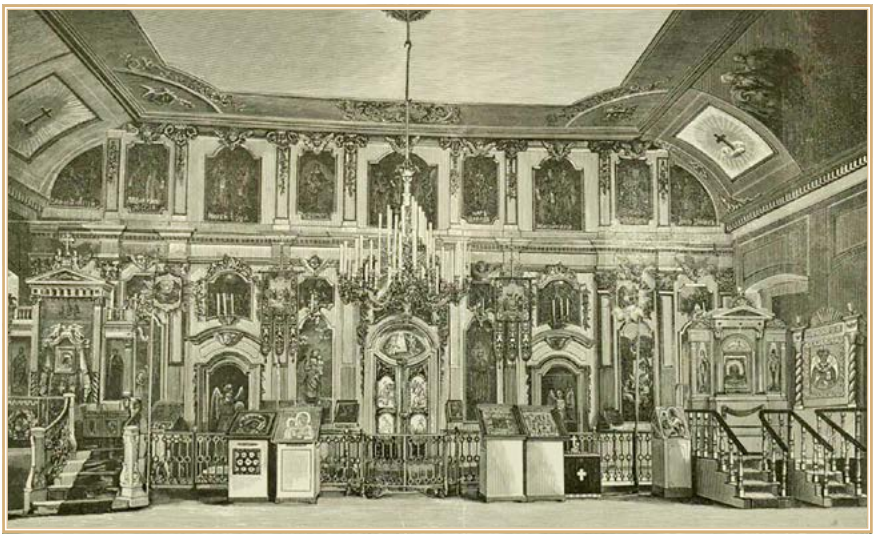
"proper" treatment of church property, often led to disputes. Thus, the historian E.A. Pravilova, in her monograph on the development of the idea of public property in the Russian Empire, examined a number of conflicts between Synodal officials, who were interested in the Church's monopoly over sacred property, and art historians seeking to preserve and turn church antiquities into museum objects[2]. Nevertheless, court cases concerning church property did not figure among the researcher's main concerns.

Historiography has traditionally devoted considerable attention to major public political trials in the Russian Empire[3], generally leaving in the shadows the equally high-profile cases of the post-reform period

---

[2] *Правилова Е.* Империя в поисках общего блага. Собственность в дореволюционной России. М., 2022.

[3] See: *Троицкий Н.А.* Царские суды против революционной России: Политические процессы, 1871–1880 гг. Саратов, 1976; *Медведь Н.Т.* Материалы политических судебных процессов в дореволюционной России как исторический источник по истории КПСС. Учебное пособие. М., 1973; *Сафронова Ю.А.* Русское общество в зеркале революционного террора. 1879–1881 годы. М., 2014. С. 94–108; *Борисова Т.Ю.* «Необходимая оборона общества»: язык суда над Засулич // Новое литературное обозрение. 2015. № 5(135). С. 101–118; *Рубцов А.А.* Антиправительственное движение 1860–1870-х годов и деятельность органов политического дознания в Российской империи (законодательные нормы и следственная практика). Дис. ... канд. ист. наук. СПб., 2023.



Iconostasis of the Trinity-Petrovsky Cathedral.
Lavras, Monasteries and Churches in Holy Rus'. St Petersburg Diocese

that concerned not revolutionary activity and terrorism, but non-violent commercial offences. In recent years, this gap has been substantially filled by the pioneering work of the historian S. Antonov. The culmination of this series of commercial trials was the case of the "Jacks of Hearts Club", analysed by Antonov[4]: the largest non-political trial involving a group of fraudsters from "respectable" society, accused of dozens of instances of fraud and forgery intended to appropriate other people's property[5].

The present article continues this historiographical trend and broadens our understanding of the functioning of the judicial system in situations where members of the clergy became defendants in public trials, with church property the subject of dispute. At the centre of attention is one such non-political court case: the dispute over ownership of the Andronikov Icon of the Mother of God between the clergy of the Trinity Cathedral in St. Petersburg and Collegiate Assessor Mikhail Fedorov. The case is noteworthy because, for the first time, a public secular court in the Russian Empire ruled that an icon should be transferred from a cathedral

4 *Antonov S.* Russian Capitalism on Trial: The Case of the Jacks of Hearts // Law and History Review. 2018. Vol. 36. No. 1. P. 35–76; *Антонов С.* Банкроты и ростовщики Российской империи: Долг, собственность и право во времена Толстого и Достоевского. М., 2022.

5 *Antonov S.* Russian Capitalism on Trial: The Case of the Jacks of Hearts // Law and History Review. 2018. Vol. 36. No. 1. P. 35–76.



Andronikos III Palaiologos. *14th-century miniature. From open sources*

into private hands, contrary to canon law, according to which church property was inalienable[6]. The highly publicised litigation not only drew public attention to the problem of the legal regulation of church property, but also called into question the very principles of the judicial reform of 1864. It is important that the central figure in the story, M.A. Fedorov, had a legal education, and that the narrative constructed in his writings reflected, on the one hand, a "secular" view of judicial proceedings and, on the other, focused attention on the key points of the debate over the legitimacy of the post-reform courts in cases affecting the interests of the Orthodox Church. Thus, the aim of this article is to analyse public perceptions of the participation of the clergy in legal proceedings and of the role of publicity in litigation involving members of the clergy.

According to tradition, the Andronikov Icon of the Mother of God was painted by the Evangelist Luke and belonged to the Byzantine Emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos, who donated it to the Monemvasia Monastery. In 1821, during the Greek uprising, the Monastery's abbot, Bishop

[6] Despite the prescriptions of canon law, in practice, as E. Pravilova notes, the Synod often turned a blind eye to the sale of objects intended for religious purposes, while the market in church property in the nineteenth century existed "almost without supervision". See: *Правилова Е.* Империя в поисках общего блага. Собственность в дореволюционной России. М., 2022. С. 294.



Great Church of the Winter Palace. *Artist E. Hau, 1866. From open sources*

Agapius, took the icon to Patras and bequeathed it to the Russian Consul General in Greece, I.N. Vlassopulo[7]. In 1839, the Consul's son Alexander Vlassopulo presented the icon to Emperor Nicholas I[8]. From then on, the icon was kept in the Great Church of the Winter Palace until 1868, when Vlassopulo, having been declared insolvent by a court, petitioned the Ministry of the Imperial Court either for payment of 25,000 roubles or for the return of the gift[9]. By imperial decision, the icon was to be returned to the petitioner's private ownership.

The ruined Vlassopulo, aware of the gravity of his situation, drew up a declaration transferring his property rights to his wife Seraphima and

7 For more on the history of the icon, see: Греческая Андроникова икона Божией Матери в истории Византии и России. СПб., 1999; Сказания о Казанской женской общежительной обители близ г. Вышнего Волочка Тверской епархии. Тверь: Тип. Губ. правл., 1890. С. 116–130, Приложения.

8 Российский государственный исторический архив (РГИА). Ф. 472. Оп. 13. Д. 1757. On the presentation to the Emperor by the son of State Councillor Vlassopulo of an icon of the Most Holy Mother of God painted by St. Luke the Evangelist.

9 РГИА. Ф. 472. Оп. 19 (237/1253). Д. 114. At the request of the foreigner Alexander Vlassopolo for compensation for the icon of the Mother of God, painted by the Evangelist Luke, which he presented in 1839 to the late Emperor Nicholas Pavlovich, or for its return.

went into hiding. His wife, in turn, assigned the rights to four bills of exchange and the icon to Mikhail Fedorov, one of the fifty-five creditors of her absconding husband. Thus, the icon, which remained in the sacristy of the Winter Palace, passed into Fedorov's ownership.

At the same time, two of Vlassopulo's creditors, having learned that he held rights to the icon, decided to sell it towards repayment of the fugitive debtor's 3,000-rouble debt. The Rector of the Trinity Cathedral, Archpriest A. Lavrovsky, appealed to the parishioners to raise the necessary sum to transfer the icon to the creditors. In 1868, the icon was moved to the Trinity Cathedral[10], where it remained until 1877, when, by a decision of the St. Petersburg Court Chamber, it passed into Fedorov's possession and was removed from the Cathedral. Throughout the 1870s, a succession of court proceedings initiated by the Rector of the Trinity Cathedral, A. Lavrovsky, continued. He appeared in these proceedings on behalf of the clergy and attempted to challenge Fedorov's ownership of the icon.

Fedorov himself described what had happened as a conflict between the judicial authorities and members of the parish clergy, who defended the canonical principle of the inalienability of church property: "From the collision in this case of two authorities, acting simultaneously under His Majesty's decrees, a riot and bloodshed in the very church would inevitably have resulted: on one side there would have been the bailiff, surrounded by troops summoned by him to his aid, and on the other [sic!], the clergy, inspired by the order of their Superior, and the parishioners, at whose expense, by subscription, the Sacred Object kept in the Winter Palace had been acquired in 1868 [...] The mercy of the Queen of Heaven and Earth prevented this bloodshed, but the fact of resistance to the judicial authority, acting under His Majesty's decree, nevertheless remains a fact"[11]. How accurate was Fedorov's assessment of the essence of the conflict, and was the case really no more than a contradiction between canon law and an "unlawful" decision by a secular court?

---

[10] The Bringing of an Ancient Greek Icon of the Mother of God to the Trinity Cathedral on Petersburg Side. СПб.: Тип. А.М. Котомина, 1875.

[11] Petition of M.A. Fedorov to Alexander III. 6 March 1885 // Отдел рукописей Российской государственной библиотеки (ОР РГБ). Ф. 262. Карт. 51. Д. 1. Л. 72–72 об.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, officials of the Senate and the Synod repeatedly confirmed the prohibition on selling icons – including any icon covers, which "had already become part of the Sacred Object"[12], – of insolvent debtors at public auction alongside other property[13]. Icons together with their adornments were to be handed over to the creditor with the consent of the debtor or his guarantors; if such consent could not be obtained, the icon was to be transferred to the parish to which the debtor belonged. Thus, neither the transfer of the icon into the ownership of the creditor Fedorov nor its transfer to the Trinity Cathedral contradicted established practice in the resolution of court cases. The conflict acquired particular intensity for several reasons: the events took place in the capital, directly involved the imperial family, and the post-reform public court brought them into the public eye.

It is necessary to examine more closely the biography of Mikhail Andreevich Fedorov, the central figure in this story. His endless stream of petitions to various authorities reveals not only the details but also the essence of the scandal that erupted. In 1848, Fedorov graduated from the Faculty of Law at St. Petersburg University and was recommended for a position as a rapporteur in the Consultation of the Minister of Justice. Since this vacancy was taken by one of Fedorov's university classmates, he entered the service of the Police Board. The modest salary could not satisfy an official who was obliged to support his elderly parents and their large family. Fedorov decided to devote himself to legal practice, in the course of which, according to his own account, he acquired a "legion of enemies", primarily among graduates of the Imperial School of Jurisprudence: "...for more than a decade, I was a victim and sufferer for speaking the truth, and it was chiefly through the good offices of the graduates of the School of Jurisprudence, who sought to obstruct my career"[14]; and: "...I was repeatedly compelled to lodge complaints about the improper actions of the Commercial Court and Civil Chambers, whose presidents

[12] Memorandum compiled from the file concerning the question of whether the vestments and other adornments from icons seized from debtors to satisfy private and state claims should be sold at public auction. // РГИА. Ф. 1330. Оп. 5. Д. 1031. Л. 6.

[13] See: РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 108. Д. 1488; РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 117. Д. 1823; РГИА. Ф. 1330. Оп. 5. Д. 1031; РГИА. Ф. 1330. Оп. 5. 1069, and others.

[14] Petition of M.A. Fedorov to Alexander III. 6 March 1885 // Отдел рукописей Российской государственной библиотеки (ОР РГБ). Ф. 262. Карт. 51. Д. 1. Л. 78 об.

and assistants were graduates of the School of Jurisprudence; these complaints were submitted to the Governing Senate, where the majority of the Chief Secretaries and Secretaries were their fellow graduates, bound to them by the closest friendship since childhood"[15]. The description of the suffering that had accompanied the lawyer's career throughout his life enabled him to present himself as a "martyr for ideas directed exclusively towards ensuring due respect for the law"[16].

Having become a party to the scandalous court case, Fedorov continued for more than fifteen years, until 1885, to submit emotional petitions to various government bodies, including the Ministry of Justice, the Senate and the Synod, as well as personally to members of the imperial family. As noted above, the icon had long been kept in the Winter Palace, and the participants in the case therefore attempted to secure the support of members of the imperial family through informal connections.

One of the themes in Fedorov's petitions was the restoration of legality allegedly trampled upon by the reformed courts, which had arrogated to themselves the right to issue public decisions concerning ownership of church property. The key concept both in Fedorov's writings and in other memoranda concerning the case was the "insult" inflicted upon the "Orthodox Sacred Object" by secular courts and even by members of the clergy themselves.

"But who are the judges?": the legitimacy of the reformed court

One of the principal questions to which Fedorov drew attention concerned the right of secular courts to adjudicate disputes over church property: "Is any court concerning holy icons possible other than the Court established according to the rules of the Holy Apostles?"[17] In his attacks on the reformed court, Fedorov focused on the composition of the St. Petersburg District Court, which, in his view, consisted of

[15] Petition of M.A. Fedorov to the St. Petersburg Judicial Chamber. 1 February 1872 // ОР РГБ. Ф. 262. Карт. 51. Д. 2. Л. 87 об.

[16] Petition of M.A. Fedorov to the St. Petersburg Judicial Chamber. 1 February 1872 // РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 154. Д. 554. Л. 30.

[17] Petition of M.A. Fedorov to Empress Maria Alexandrovna. 10 June 1871 // ОР РГБ. Ф. 262. Карт. 51. Д. 2. Л. 32 об.

Germans and Jews. Judges belonging to another confession and sitting, as the author put it, in a St. Petersburg "fashioned on a foreign model"[18] could not, he argued, issue a decision concerning an Orthodox icon based on inner conviction, as prescribed by the judicial reform: "Western ideas cannot be transplanted wholesale onto Russian soil. Recently, the judges of the St. Petersburg District Court, of foreign origin – Bulakh, **Boström** and Vollendorf – with the participation of the assistant prosecutor, the Jew Sieger, issued a judicial decision ordering that the Holy Icon of the Mother of God be removed from the the Trinity Cathedral and transferred to the Vlassopulo Bankruptcy Administration for the satisfaction of creditors. The competence of such a composition of the Court to resolve a matter of an Orthodox-religious nature is highly questionable. The publicity of the new Court gives extraordinary importance to the legal concept of holy icons. Unfortunately, the concept expressed by the court is not Russian and finds not a single letter of justification in our laws. It is a concept of Western civilisation, of Protestant and Catholic society, alien both to the purity of Orthodoxy and to Russian nationality"[19].

The critical remarks Fedorov directed at the St. Petersburg judges echoed the debates that had taken place in the pages of *Den'*, *Sovremennik* and *Otechestvennye Zapiski* on the eve of the judicial reform. An important point of criticism was the "pseudo-popular character" of the forthcoming reforms. Thus, according to the Slavophile I.S. Aksakov, it was impossible artificially to create in the Russian Empire a jury system and a bar association modelled on those of Germany and France[20]. Probably well acquainted with the substance of these pre-reform debates, the lawyer Fedorov reproduced the argument concerning the "pseudo-popular character" of the courts from newspaper publications, an approach encouraged by the very nature of the case involving an Orthodox icon.

---

[18] Letter from M.A. Fedorov to M.E. Popov, churchwarden of the Dormition Cathedral in Moscow. 18 April 1877 // ОР РГБ. Ф. 262. Карт. 51. Д. 2. Л. 54 об.

[19] Petition to His Imperial Highness the Heir Tsesarevich. 10 May 1871 // ОР РГБ. Ф. 262. Карт. 51. Д. 2. Л. 30–30 об.

[20] For more detail, see: *Борисова Т.Ю.* Когда велит совесть: культурные истоки судебной реформы 1864 года в России. М., 2025. С. 335–340; see also: *Ibid*. Накануне судебной реформы 1864 г.: проблематизация режимов темпоральности в развитии российского правосудия в 1860–1870-е гг. // Новое прошлое / The New Past. 2025. No 1. С. 73–88.



Church of the Holy Trinity on the Petersburg Side.
Photograph by A. Lorenz, 1865–1869. From open sources

Fedorov's criticism was directed not only against the courts but also against representatives of the Church who made use of the right, granted by the reform of 1864, to turn to a "swift, just, merciful and equal for all" court. It should be recalled that alongside the "secular" courts, the Russian Empire also had diocesan courts, under whose jurisdiction clergy and other church personnel fell. The authors of the judicial reform, of course, could not have contemplated abolishing the estate-based ecclesiastical courts of the clergy. With the introduction of the new judicial statutes, numerous difficulties arose concerning the boundaries of the jurisdiction of secular and ecclesiastical courts. Within the Synod, special committees were formed and debates were conducted in the press concerning the need to reform the diocesan courts; one of the issues under discussion was the publicity of proceedings involving members of the clergy[21]. Nevertheless, none of the proposals put forward by the Synodal reformers received broad support among the diocesan bishops, and the projects remained unimplemented.

The background to the icon litigation in Fedorov's writings consisted of two other judicial proceedings widely known to his contemporaries:

[21] On the projects for reforming the ecclesiastical courts, see: *Никитин А.В.* Церковный суд и православное духовенство в России (1864–1918 гг.). Дис. ... канд. ист. наук. СПб., 2021.

"The public trial of Hieromonk Nil (Nilus) of the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, which revealed shocking scenes, led, as was reported in the newspapers, to the whistling and hissing of the assembled crowd. The trial of Abbess Mitrofania (which was expected to be printed in several foreign languages), exposing the intrigues of an unworthy person who had concealed herself beneath a monastic mantle, did not fail to leave its mark on the further diminution of respect for persons of the clergy"[22]. Thus, for the clergy, hearings in courts open to the public entailed public exposure which, evidently, had a negative effect on their reputation.

The first of the two trials mentioned by Fedorov – the case of Hieromonk Nil in 1872 – came to the attention of F.M. Dostoevsky, who published an ironic and caustic note about it in the journal *Grazhdanin*. The writer's reprint of a newspaper report from *Russky Mir* revealed the scandalous details of Father Nil's complicated love affair, which ended with banknotes being stolen from his monastic cell. What astonished Dostoevsky in this story was the clergy's attraction to public trials, especially in cases that exposed unsightly and compromising details: "We have just read in the newspapers how one doctor discovered a new kind of 'litigation madness'; but Father Nil is healthy and, certainly, is not mad"[23].

The second trial mentioned by Fedorov concerned Abbess Mitrofania of the Vvedensky Vladychny Monastery in Serpukhov (in the world Baroness P.G. Rosen). The hearing took place in 1874 and attracted considerable public attention. According to the indictment, the defendant, using her connections at court, acted as a powerful patroness for wealthy benefactors of her monastery and petitioned influential persons on their behalf; at the same time, the abbess traded in decorations, forged bills of exchange, blackmailed and deceived her clientele[24].

---

[22] Petition of M.A. Fedorov to the Synod. 11 November 1874 // РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 205. Д. 431. Л. 32–32 об.

[23] История о. Нила // *Достоевский Ф.М.* Полное собрание сочинений. В 30 т. Том двадцать первый. Дневник писателя 1873. Статьи и заметки 1873–1878. Л.: АН СССР. Ин-т русской литературы (Пушкинский Дом), 1980. С. 148–153.

[24] For more on the case of Abbess Mitrofania, see: *Dahlke S., Templer B.* Old Russia in the Dock: The Trial against Mother Superior Mitrofaniia before the Moscow District Court (1874) // Cahiers du Monde russe. 2012. Vol. 53/1. P. 95–120.



Abbess Mitrofania. *Engraving, 1902. Artist I. I. Khelmitsky. From open sources*

Fedorov appealed to the members of the Synod as a "spiritual tribunal... to which the actions of Father Lavrovsky and Father Nil, the hieromonk of the Lavra of St Sergius, must be brought to attention – persons who, with astonishing boldness, under the cover of their clerical attire, are ready to appear in a public court in defence of the idea that they alone are supposedly worthy to be guardians of the Sacred Object, even if it was acquired by deceit"[25]. Like the protagonists of the two court cases described above – Hieromonk Nil and Abbess Mitrofania – the Rector of the Trinity Cathedral was prepared to make use of the publicity of the new court in a conflict which, in Fedorov's view, required "only a conscientious attitude towards it"[26].

The recipients of Fedorov's petitions, like newspaper readers, were expected to conclude that members of the clergy would undertake to participate in a public court proceeding only if they possessed "astonishing boldness" or even insolence. Both Dostoevsky's bitter irony and Fedorov's irritation reflected a persistent and understandable public perception that the participation of the clergy in a public secular court was awkward and impermissible.

[25] Petition of M.A. Fedorov to Metropolitan Isidore (Nikolsky). 16 September 1873 // РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 205. Д. 431. Л. 14.

[26] Appeal by M.A. Fedorov to the Imperial Confessor, Protopresbyter V.B. Bazhanov. 1 September 1873 // РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 205. Д. 431. Л. 10.

"But there is also God's judgement...": the icon litigation and the assassination of the Tsar

By the early 1880s, the rhetoric of legality had merged in Fedorov's writings with religious mysticism. The removal of the icon from the cathedral by an unlawful court decision, Fedorov believed, foretold the appearance of the Queen of the South, "who will judge men and then herself assume the title of Judge over a wicked and adulterous generation".

He wove the icon litigation into an exalted narrative about the "calamities" that had befallen the Russian Empire, culminating in the assassination of Alexander II: "it was claimed that the departure of the Lord's Sacred Object from the Cathedral to the Police House, immediately before the beginning of prayers for the Tsar, was an ill omen for the Sovereign, because **the Queen of Heaven had become angered by His Majesty's refusal in 1866 to retain this Sacred Object** [here and below, emphasis mine. — *K.V.*] ... Others maintained that the departure of the Sacred Object from the church inevitably foretold disastrous consequences for the whole of Russia ... Popular rumour was not slow to prove itself justified: from 1877 great calamities began for Russia, continuing to this day, and on 1 March 1881 the Tsar perished in terrible suffering in broad daylight, surrounded by his accompanying bodyguards; consequently, on 5 April 1881, the Decree of the Holy Synod appeared, informing the whole world of the terrible wrath of God that had visited Russia for its lawlessness"[27].

In describing the events of 1881, Fedorov drew on the rhetoric of sermons delivered by priests, but substituted his own meanings for their original ones. The position of the Orthodox Church on the assassination of the Emperor was expressed in numerous sermons centred on the image of Alexander II as a "passion-bearer" who, like Christ, had accepted a redemptive death for the sins of the people. Responsibility for the regicide was placed on Russian society, suffering from "diseases" and infected with unbelief, which had raised the terrorists through its bad example[28]... Borrowing from the preachers the image of the Emperor's martyrdom in

[27] Letter from M.A. Fedorov to E.N. Sivokhin. 27 July 1882 // ОР РГБ. Ф. 262. Карт. 51. Д. 1. Л. 3 об. — 4.

[28] *Сафронова Ю.А.* Русское общество в зеркале революционного террора, 1879—1881 годы. М., 2014. Гл. II.

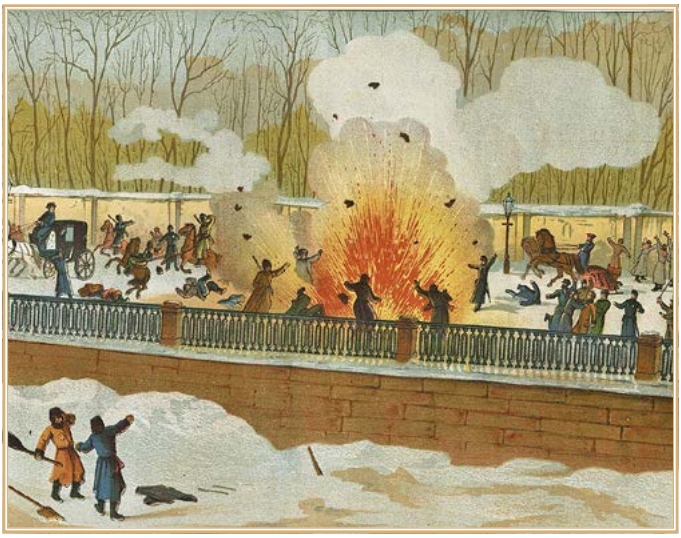


Illustration of the assassination attempt on Alexander II on 1 March 1881. Approved by censor. *From open sources*

"terrible suffering", Fedorov turned the sharp edge of his criticism not against Russian society as a whole – society whose flesh and blood, according to the sermons, were embodied in the regicides – but against the clergy themselves, whose children constituted a significant proportion of the revolutionary underground: "His [Father Domkinsky's, one of the persons involved in the court case. – *K.V.*] activity as a Priest – a servant at the Altar of the Lord – consisted in the most immoral acts, including, among other things, instilling in the young disobedience to the established authorities [underlined in the original. – *K.V.*], which must have disastrous consequences if we recall Karakozov, Rysakov and other such villains who attempted Regicide. Political trials revealed to society that **a significant percentage of revolutionaries seeking to destroy the State organism consists of children of the clergy**, but these trials have not yet provided evidence that the clergy themselves took an active part in such crimes, and now, in the person of Father Domkinsky, we have finally become aware of the sad fact that before the Altar **there officiate persons who are rearing new villains for us**"[29]. Thus, Fedorov turned the arguments of preachers denouncing the ills of Russian society into accusations against the Orthodox Church itself.

[29] Petition to Alexander III. 6 March 1885 // ОР РГБ. Ф. 262. Карт. 51. Д. 1. Л. 75–75 об.

It is evident that Fedorov's concern for the fate of the icon was not disinterested. By sending petitions to high-ranking individuals, he presumably hoped not only to obtain financial benefit from ownership of the icon but also to improve his career prospects by reminding them of his many years of devoted service. The first of these calculations was realised only in 1885, when the icon was purchased from Fedorov by the merchant E.N. Sivokhin and transferred to the Vyshnevolotsk Convent of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God[30].

Conclusion

Beginning in 1868, shortly after the opening of the reformed courts, the case of the Andronikov Icon of the Mother of God became a dispute over the very principles of judicial reform. Proceedings involving members of the clergy raised a number of problems: who was to adjudicate cases concerning the Orthodox clergy or determine the fate of "Orthodox Sacred Objects"? In the case described above, the composition of the court became the principal target of attack: it consisted of professional judges of non-Orthodox confessional backgrounds whose "inner conviction" might potentially have differed from Orthodox subjects' notions of morality and immorality.

The principal danger in cases involving members of the clergy was the publicity of the new court, with the attendant risk of publicly insulting clerical dignity or desecrating a revered relic when church property was at issue. The materials of the court case do not allow us to determine the position of the parish clergy in the conflict, but they do reveal the views of secular actors within the broader public debate over the participation of the clergy in public court proceedings. The rhetoric of "insult" employed in Mikhail Fedorov's petitions was characteristic of writings about court cases involving members of the clergy. In the eyes of contemporaries, their presence in court appeared awkward and unbecoming of their clerical status. Moreover, from this perspective, the clerical estate could not be regarded as an integral part of the new legal reality created by the judicial reform. The paradox was that this situation did

[30] Report of Archbishop Savva (Tikhomirov) of Tver and Kashin to the Synod // РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 166. Д. 1473. Л. 1–4.



Vyshnevolotsk Convent of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God.
Photograph, second half of the 19th—early 20th century. From open sources

not prevent members of the clergy from actively making use of both new forms of communication and the reformed courts[31].

The debate mentioned above is important in another respect as well: the critical view of contemporaries has left a noticeable imprint on historiography. Court proceedings involving the clergy, the legal practice of secular and ecclesiastical courts, strategies for defending members of the clergy, and a number of other issues have received virtually no scholarly attention. One gets the impression that these topics do not appear relevant within the framework of the history of the Church in the Synodal period. The clergy still largely lacks a legal history of its own, unlike other social groups in the Russian Empire, including the nobility, peasants and merchants[32].

---

[31] *Dahlke S., Templer B.* Old Russia in the Dock: The Trial against Mother Superior Mitrofaniia before the Moscow District Court (1874) // Cahiers du Monde russe. 2012. Vol. 53. No. 1. P. 95–120; *Ваничева К.* Тяжбы о бесчестье в пореформенном суде: «навигация» православного приходского духовенства в правовом пространстве Российской империи (1860–1880-е гг.) // Антропологический форум. 2025. No 65. С. 37–59.

[32] *Маррезе М.Л.* Бабье царство: дворянки и владение имуществом в России (1700–1861). М., 2009; *Burbank J.* Russian Peasants Go to Court: Legal Culture in the Countryside, 1905–1917. Bloomington; Indianapolis, 2004; *Антонов С.* Банкроты и ростовщики Российской империи: долг, собственность и право во времена Толстого и Достоевского. М., 2022; *Яковлева Т.Г.* Торговля по правилам и без: власть и торговцы в Енисейской губернии во второй половине XIX — начале XX века. СПб., 2021.

Despite the substantial lack of documents in the case materials that would reveal the position of the clergy in the dispute, the court case analysed here is significant because it allows us to identify a number of new research questions concerning the legal culture of the clerical estate. In particular, it remains to be studied to what extent the rhetoric of "insult", which permeated all statements concerning the trials, influenced the clergy's decision to make use of the reformed secular courts, and what role the publicity of court cases played in this respect.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

References

1. Antonov S. Bankrupts and Usurers of the Russian Empire: Debt, property and law in the time of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. Moscow: New Literary Review, 2022. 504 p. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674972599
2. Borisova T. Yu. "Necessary defense of society": The language of the trial of Zasulich // *New Literary Review*. 2015;5(135):101–118. https://www.elibrary.ru/vejjrj (in Russ.).
3. Borisova T.Yu. On the eve of the judicial reform of 1864: Problematization of temporality regimes in the development of Russian justice in the 1860s–70s. *Novoe Proshloe / The New Past*. 2025;(1):73–88. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.18522/2500-3224-2025- 1-73-88
4. Borisova T.Yu. *When conscience dictates: the cultural origins of the Judicial Reform of 1864 in Russia*. Moscow: New Literary Review, 2025. 584 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/yyafqg (in Russ.).
5. Vanicheva K. Lawsuits about Dishonour in the Post-Reform Court: The "Navigation" of the Orthodox Parish Clergy in the Legal Space of the Russian Empire (1860s–1880s) // *Antropologicheskij Forum*. 2025;(65):37–59. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.31250/1815-8870-2025-21-65-37-59

6. Pikul I.V., Smirnova N.S. The Greek Andronikov Icon of the Mother of God in the history of Byzantium and Russia. St. Petersburg: Pravoslav. fond V. Pikulya, 1999. 221 p. https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000200_000018_rc_720941/?ysclid=mrdvzxkawl783151370 (in Russ.).
7. Dorskaya A.A. The legal regime of religious property in Russia: history and modernity. St. Petersburg: Asterion, 2012. 224 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/uiizsp (in Russ.)
8. Marrese M.L. A Woman's Kingdom: noblewomen and the control of property in Russia, 1700–1861. Moscow: New Literary Review, 2009. 368 p. (in Russ.).
9. Nikitin A.V. The Church court and the Orthodox clergy in Russia (1864–1918): Diss. Cand. Hist. Sci. St. Petersburg: 2021. 224 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/lroqzh (in Russ.).
10. Pravilova E. Empire in search of the common good. Property in pre-revolutionary Russia. Moscow: New Literary Review, 2022. 560 p. (in Russ.).
11. Rubtsov A.A. The anti-government movement of the 1860s and 1870s and the activities of political inquiry bodies in the Russian Empire (legislative norms and investigative practice): Diss. Cand. Hist. Sci. St. Petersburg: 2023. 224 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/hapovf (in Russ.).
12. Safronova Yu.A. Russian society in the mirror of Revolutionary terror, 1879–1881. Moscow: New Literary Review, 2014. 376 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/zqzitv (in Russ.).
13. Troitskiy N.A. Tsarist courts against revolutionary Russia: Political processes, 1871–1880. Saratov: Saratov University Press, 1976. 408 p. https://search.rsl.ru/ru/record/01008417185?ysclid=mrdvgol7h664443124 (in Russ.).
14. Yakovleva T.G. Trading by rules and without: Government and merchants in the Yenisei province in the second half of the 19th – early 20th century. St. Petersburg: Publishing House of the European University in St. Petersburg, 2021. 462 p. (in Russ.).
15. Antonov S. Russian Capitalismon Trial: The case of the jacks of hearts // *Law and History Review*. 2018;36(1):35–76. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.1017/S0738248017000517
16. Burbank J. Russian Peasants Go to Court: Legal Culture in the Countryside, 1905–1917. Bloomington: Indiana university press, 2004. 374 p. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.2979/2870.0

17. Dahlke S., Templer B. Old Russia in the Dock: The Trial against Mother Superior Mitrofaniia before the Moscow District Court (1874) // *Cahiers du Monde Russe*. 2012;53(1):95–120. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.4000/monderusse.9368

Ksenia V. Vanicheva
graduate student European University at St. Petersburg,
ORCID: 0009-0000-0257-9202

Received 13.11.2025 Revised 15.01.2026 Accepted 16.02.2026

DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.003
Original paper

Yulia P. Orlova

European University at St. Petersburg
St. Petersburg, Russian Federation
E-mail: iorlova@eu.spb.ru

The Autonomy of Theological Seminaries under the Supervision of the Educational Committee of the Holy Synod: The Clash of Two Bureaucratic Cultures during the 1867 Reform of Theological Education

Abstract

The article examines the interaction between the governing boards of theological seminaries and officials of the Educational Committee of the Holy Synod during the 1867 Reform of Theological Education. Drawing on the journals of the Educational Committee, inspectors' reports, materials from the office of Chief Procurator D.A. Tolstoy, and administrative records of seminary governing boards, the article demonstrates that, by assigning seminary administrations the responsibility for independently developing instructions for educators and rules of conduct for students, the reformers sought to create a flexible system adapted to local conditions. In practice, however, this decentralisation resulted in a profound conflict in which not simply different levels of administration but fundamentally different bureaucratic cultures came into confrontation.

© Yulia P. Orlova, 2026

On the one hand, St. Petersburg sought to standardise practices, strengthen control, and introduce "positive" prescriptive regulations; on the other, seminary governing boards relied on a specific system of norms and decision-making grounded in the authority of Holy Scripture and on the conviction that education could not be subjected to formal regulation. This contradiction, combined with the governing boards' lack of preparedness for their new formal role in regulating theological education, ultimately led to a crisis in the administrative model. By the mid-1870s, the autonomy of theological schools had been substantially curtailed, and the Educational Committee returned to the practice of centralised regulation of the educational process. The study offers a new perspective on the mechanisms through which the Great Reforms were implemented at the local level and broadens the established historiographical understanding of church bureaucracy, which has traditionally been associated with officials of the Synod, diocesan administrations and diocesan bishops. The article demonstrates that the bureaucratic hierarchy also incorporated such local actors as the governing boards of theological seminaries, which had a direct impact on the course of the reforms.

Keywords:
Reform of Theological Education of 1867; Educational Committee; Theological seminaries; Inspections of theological educational institutions; Bureaucratic culture

For citation:
Yulia P. Orlova. The Autonomy of Theological Seminaries under the Supervision of the Educational Committee of the Holy Synod: The Clash of Two Bureaucratic Cultures during the 1867 Reform of Theological Education. The Historical Reporter. 2026. Vol. 60. P. 114–139. DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.003

The 1867 Reform of Theological Education was a large-scale experiment in introducing new bureaucratic practices into the system for administering the education of future clergy. In the course of the reforms, the place of seminaries within the structure of theological education changed substantially. Under the new statute, theological schools came under the direct authority of diocesan bishops, while consistories and assemblies of the clergy were excluded from the administration of education, thereby strengthening the autonomy of Orthodox seminaries[1]. The principal sphere of autonomy granted to seminary administrations was the management of the educational process. The 1867 Statute defined only the general rights and duties of students, instructors, and administrators. Drawing up specific regulations – instructions for inspectors and rules of conduct for seminarians – became an official responsibility of local governing boards[2]. This was intended to make it possible to adapt general provisions to the particular features of individual educational institutions associated with so-called "local conditions"[3].

The newly acquired rights and responsibilities of seminary administrations made them independent actors in the reform of theological seminaries. Predictably, interaction increased between St. Petersburg officials of the Holy Synod, most of whom came from the ecclesiastical administration, and members of seminary governing boards, the majority of whom belonged to the parish clergy. Although all decisions of the pedagogical and administrative assemblies of theological schools required the approval of the diocesan bishop, members of the governing boards, and even ordinary teachers, increasingly had to explain and defend their views on educational practices to inspectors of the Educational Committee and personally to the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod.

---

1 *Сухова Н.Ю.* Высшая духовная школа: проблемы и реформы. М., 2012. С. 172–173; *Римский С.В.* Российская церковь в эпоху Великих реформ (Церковные реформы в России 1860–1870-х годов). М., 1999. С. 317.

2 Journal of the Academic Committee under the Most Holy Synod, containing considerations on matters relating to the organization of the educational and disciplinary system in theological seminaries. 1871 год. СПб.: Синодальная типография, 1880. С. 20.

3 Российский государственный исторический архив (РГИА). Ф. 796. Оп. 150. Д. 884. Л. 18–18 об.

However, as early as the beginning of the 1870s, the autonomy of theological seminaries began to be curtailed. The governing boards' response to the innovations, as well as the content of the instructions they themselves drafted, failed to meet officials' expectations. Representatives of the highest ecclesiastical authorities became disillusioned with the attempt to introduce a bureaucratic innovation and returned to the idea of standardising the education of future pastors "from above"[4].

The era of the Great Reforms was generally characterised by administrative experiments in various spheres and government departments. Decentralisation and the expansion of the autonomy of local administrations were among the most prominent features of administrative policy in the 1860s, most often examined in connection with the reform of municipal and *zemstvo* self-government[5]. In the ecclesiastical administration, under the leadership of D.A. Tolstoy, the functions of the Holy Synod were likewise decentralised, with certain powers transferred to the dioceses[6]. Yet by the 1870s, experiments with autonomy began to be rolled back because local authorities sought to expand their powers and secure full participation in the political life of the empire[7].

The autonomy granted to theological educational institutions in 1867, by contrast, was restricted for the opposite reasons. As will be shown in greater detail below, seminary governing boards not only made no effort to expand their powers but used those already available to them with extreme reluctance. Why was this the case? How was

---

4 *Орлова Ю.П.* Ревизоры Учебного комитета при Св. Синоде как агенты реформы духовного образования 1867 года // Вестник ТвГУ. Серия «История». 2025. № 1 (73). С. 117.

5 *Lincoln W.B.* In the vanguard of reform: Russia's enlightened bureaucrats, 1825–1861. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1982. P. 199; *Жукова Л.А.* Земское самоуправление и бюрократия в России: конфликты и сотрудничество 1864–1917 гг. М., 1998. С. 9.

6 *Алексеева С.И.* Святейший Синод в системе высших и центральных государственных учреждений пореформенной России 1856–1904 гг. СПб.: Наука, 2006. С. 70.

7 *Барыкина И.Е.* Государственное управление России второй половины XIX века (особые формы и специальные институты). СПб.: Нестор-История, 2018. С. 75–76.



Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, Count Dmitry Andreevich Tolstoy. Late 1870s. *Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House), Russian Academy of Sciences*

the autonomy of seminary governing boards implemented in matters concerning the education of future pastors of the Church? What contradictions arose between the central administrative bodies and local seminary administrations? What positions did the parties take in discussions about regulating the spiritual and moral education of students? Answers to these questions will help not only to identify the conflict of interests between the two levels of administration of theological education but also to determine the key factors behind the failure of the experiment to expand seminary autonomy.

The concept of "church (or ecclesiastical) bureaucracy" is rarely used in the historiography and is associated primarily with officials of the Holy Synod and consistories, and less often with diocesan bishops[8]. Yet, as the leading historian of the Orthodox Church Gregory Freeze observes, in the 1860s the state actively sought to involve social groups that had previously not participated in administrative processes. In his

[8] See: *Алексеева С.И.* Op. cit. Although some historians insist on the "bureaucratization" of the clergy as a whole during the Synodal period. See: *Мангилева А.В.* В замкнутом круге бюрократизации и реформ приходской жизни / Диалог о книге: *А.Л. Беглов.* Православный приход на закате Российской империи: состояние, дискуссии, реформы // Российская история. 2024;(4):70–87. С. 74.

fundamental monograph, he urges scholars to listen carefully to the voices of these new actors in order to learn more about the conceptual problems encountered by reformers in their attempts to restructure the administrative infrastructure "from top to bottom"[9]. These actors included the administrations of theological schools, which had previously had little experience of interacting with other bureaucratic institutions. Studying them can shed light on the bureaucratic experiments of the 1860s and provide a better understanding of the specific ways in which reforms were implemented in the Russian Empire.

The system of administration of theological education after the 1867 Reform

From 1808 to 1867, theological education was administered through a centralised hierarchy. The system was based on the subordination of educational institutions at different levels, resembling what contemporaries described as an inconvenient "four-storey building"[10]. Until 1839, the system had been headed by the Commission of Theological Schools and subsequently by the Administration of Theological Education (ATD), which was responsible for drawing up curricula, appointing teachers, preparing draft reforms, and compiling reports[11]. Direct supervision of seminaries was exercised by theological academies. The academic authorities, represented by monastic clergy, were required regularly to inspect the schools under their jurisdiction and prepare reports on the state of their educational and disciplinary affairs for the ATD.

Upon taking office in 1865, D.A. Tolstoy distrusted the reports of the archimandrites and was dissatisfied with the hierarchical system

---

9 *Freeze G.L.* The Parish Clergy in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Crisis, Reform, Counter-Reform. Princeton, 1983. P. 193.

10 *Ферапонт (Широков)*, иером. Ревизии духовных школ до учебной реформы 1867 года // Богословский сборник Тамбовской духовной семинарии. 2022. № 4 (21). С. 83–94.

11 *Сухова Н.Ю.* История управления духовно-учебными заведениями в России. 1807–1967 гг. // Богословский сборник. № 13. М.: Издательство ПСТГУ, 2005. С. 226.

of subordination of theological educational institutions[12]. Although the Holy Synod formally retained exclusive authority over church policy, most routine decisions were henceforth made by secular officials working in the Chief Procurator's Chancellery and in the Educational Committee established in 1867 in place of the disbanded ATD. Tolstoy personally selected these officials from trusted individuals who had distinguished themselves in their previous positions[13].

The 1867 Statute of Theological Seminaries and Schools established a new system for administering educational institutions. Henceforth, theological schools were subordinated directly to the diocesan bishop, who was to supervise the actions of seminary authorities and submit annual reports on the state of the schools under his jurisdiction to the Educational Committee. At the same time, responsibility for inspecting theological seminaries was assigned to specially appointed members of the Educational Committee. At Tolstoy's suggestion, officials, as disinterested parties, were expected to assess the results of the schools' reforms under the new statute impartially and objectively, examine the educational regulations drafted by seminary governing boards, and, where necessary, make recommendations for correcting deficiencies[14].

Thus, with the establishment of the Educational Committee and the promulgation of the 1867 Statute of Theological Seminaries and Schools, both the structure and the social composition of the central administration of theological educational institutions changed. Inspector-archimandrites were replaced by inspector-officials, not all of whom had previously been connected with the ecclesiastical administration. They reported directly to the Chief Procurator and presented themselves as opponents of the outdated pedagogical traditions of the "old bursa (divinity school. – Ed.)"[15].

Changes in the central administration went hand in hand with administrative innovations at the local level. Under the new statute, key decisions concerning the duties of instructors, standards of conduct,

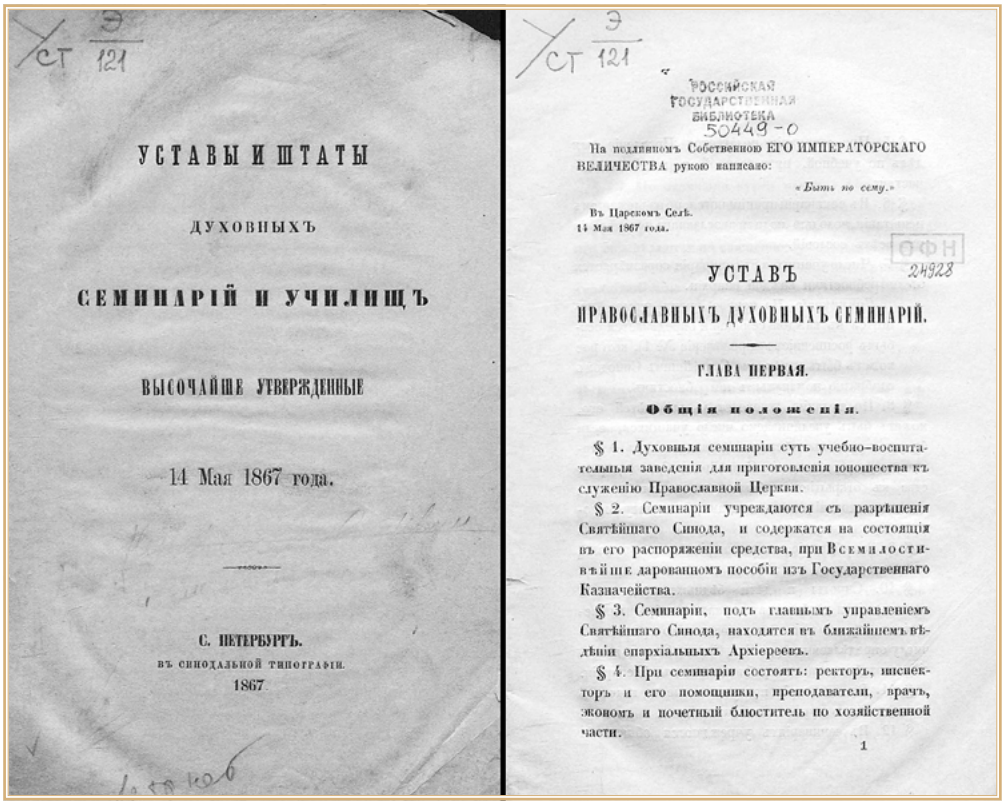
---

12 *Сухова Н.Ю.* Высшая духовная школа: проблемы и реформы. М.: Издательство ПСТГУ, 2012. С. 178.

13 *Freeze G.L.* Op. cit. P. 12.

14 Ibid. C. 12.

15 РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. 1867 г. Д. 27. Л. 89 об.



УСТАВЫ И ШТАТЫ

ДУХОВНЫХЪ

СЕМИНАРІЙ И УЧИЛИЩЪ

ВЫСОЧАЙШЕ УТВЕРЖДЕННЫЕ

14 Мая 1867 года.

С. ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ.
ВЪ СИНОДАЛЬНОЙ ТИПОГРАФІИ.
1867

На подлинномъ Собственною ЕГО ИМПЕРАТОРСКАГО ВЕЛИЧЕСТВА рукою написано:

«Быть по сему.»

Въ Царскомъ Селѣ.
14 Мая 1867 года.

УСТАВЪ

ПРАВОСЛАВНЫХЪ ДУХОВНЫХЪ СЕМИНАРІЙ.

ГЛАВА ПЕРВАЯ.

Общія положенія.

§ 1. Духовныя семинаріи суть учебно-воспитательныя заведенія для приготовленія юношества къ служенію Православной Церкви.

§ 2. Семинаріи учреждаются съ разрѣшенія Святѣйшаго Синода, и содержатся на состояніи въ его распоряженіи средства, при Всемилостивѣйше дарованномъ пособіи изъ Государственнаго Казначейства.

§ 3. Семинаріи, подъ главнымъ управленіемъ Святѣйшаго Синода, находятся въ ближайшемъ вѣдѣніи епархіальныхъ Архіереевъ.

§ 4. При семинаріи состоятъ: ректоръ, инспекторъ и его помощники, преподаватели, врачъ, экономъ и почетный блюститель по хозяйственной части.

1

Statute of Theological Seminaries, 1867.
From open sources

and the system of rewards and punishments for students were to be adopted at meetings of the pedagogical assembly of the governing board of a theological seminary, chaired by the rector, and subsequently approved by the local bishop. The pedagogical assembly consisted of seven teachers elected by the general assembly of the entire seminary staff, the inspector, and three invited members of the clergy. In the event of disagreements within the governing board, the final decision rested with the bishop[16].

From 1867, the rector was no longer appointed by directive from St. Petersburg[17], but was elected by the general assembly of the seminary teaching staff and subsequently approved by the local bishop[18]. Clerical members were elected from among serving clergy at diocesan

16 РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 150. Д. 884. Л. 4–4 об.
17 Statutes and staffing tables of theological seminaries... С. 8–10.
18 РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 150. Д. 884. Л. 4–4 об.

assemblies. Their task was to assess students' conduct impartially and to monitor the objectivity of teachers and members of the governing board[19].

This system of checks and balances at the local level was intended to prevent favouritism and abuse. In practice, however, clerical delegates were often unable to remain neutral. A striking illustration was provided by an incident at Tiflis Seminary. In 1873, several students caught reading and distributing prohibited literature were not expelled from the institution in due time, as required by law. An investigation revealed that some of those involved were children or close relatives of the clerical members of the governing board. Following the scandal, the compromised board members were removed from their positions[20].

Moreover, elected members of the clergy frequently avoided participating in the pedagogical assemblies of the seminaries to which they were assigned. Many lived far from the theological schools and combined membership of the governing boards with church services and the performance of religious rites. Since participation in the assemblies was not additionally remunerated, the absence of one or all three members because of work commitments or illness became a regular occurrence[21]. The attempt to involve practising pastors in the administration of education and training therefore failed, at least on the scale anticipated by the Holy Synod.

The inspector was regarded as the rector's deputy "in all areas of seminary administration". He too was elected by the general assembly from among current or former teachers and was required to hold a master's or candidate's degree from a theological academy. At the same time, all the principal responsibilities for organising the educational process were assigned to him. He was to monitor the students' moral condition, health, academic progress, and appearance; teach one of the theological subjects; and ensure "that teachers came to classes on time, treated

---

[19] Statutes and staffing tables of theological seminaries... C. 17. On the impartiality of members of the clergy, see: РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 150. Д. 884. Л. 4–4 об.

[20] РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. 1874 г. Д. 71. Л. 206–206 об.

[21] See: РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. 1878 г. Д. 22. 5 л.

students properly, and did not deviate from the approved curricula"[22]. Depending on the number of students, he was assisted by between one and three deputies.

To assist the inspector in educational work, in 1871 the Moscow Theological Seminary, with the approval of the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, launched an experiment involving additional supervisors recruited from among seminary graduates[23], but this practice never became widespread. It may be assumed that not every seminary could afford to allocate funds for additional full-time educators. Nor was the position necessarily prestigious for potential applicants. While an inspector could regard his appointment as a stepping stone to promotion[24], assistants and supervisors were recruited mainly from among young graduates of theological academies, seminary students, and former and current teachers who were in acute need of financial support and enjoyed little authority either among the teaching staff or among the students[25].

Another important innovation was that the rector of a seminary could henceforth be not only a member of the monastic clergy but also a parish priest who had obtained the necessary theological education and secured the support of the seminary corporation. Gregory Freeze argued that these changes were prompted, on the one hand, by growing tensions between the married and monastic clergy since the second quarter of the nineteenth century and, on the other, by the central authorities' desire to integrate the Church into the rapidly developing ministerial model of administration[26].

---

22 Statutes and staffing tables of theological seminaries... C. 8–10.

23 Современное обозрение // Христианское чтение. 1871. № 4. С. 759–762.

24 An inspector had good prospects of becoming the next rector of a theological seminary or, given favourable circumstances, an official in the ecclesiastical administration in St. Petersburg. Thus, members of the Educational Committee under the Synod, I.K. Zinchenko and S.V. Kersky, had previously served as inspectors (superintendents) of theological educational institutions. See: *Биографический словарь выпускников Киевской духовной академии.* 1819–1920-е гг. Т. 1. Киев, 2014. С. 535–536; *Полный православный богословский энциклопедический словарь*: В 2 т. Т. 2. СПб., 1913. Стб. 1259.

25 РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. 1876 г. Д. 8. 6 л.; Керский С.В. Преобразование духовно-учебных заведений Архангельской епархии (в 1870 г.). СПб., 1870. С. 20.

26 *Freeze G.L.* Op. cit. P. 13–15, 25.

The nature of seminary self-government: autonomy under supervision

The structural transformations were intended to provide the foundation for another important innovation: expanding the autonomy of local administrations of theological schools. As noted above, as a result of the 1867 Reform, seminary governing boards were required not only to develop independently the principles governing the education of future pastors but also to formalise them in official normative documents – instructions and rules of internal order. This practice was not introduced in all educational departments. Thus, following the reforms of the 1860s and 1870s, rules for pupils of gymnasia and progymnasia continued to be established centrally by the Ministry of Public Education[27].

The regulations of theological schools were, on the one hand, supposed to reflect the views of the parish clergy themselves on the education of clergy and, on the other, to meet the requirements of the new statute and the expectations of Synodal officials. If discrepancies were found, inspecting members of the Educational Committee had the right to return the documents for revision or even to amend them themselves[28].

Instructions for inspectors and seminarians became a focal point of disagreement between the two levels of ecclesiastical authority, and their content exposed an ideological divide between secular officials and ecclesiastical superiors. The first difficulties appeared as early as 1868. During an inspection of St. Petersburg Seminary, N.A. Sergievsky, Director of the Chief Procurator's Chancellery of the Holy Synod, discovered several provisions in the instructions and rules of conduct for students drawn up by the governing board that contradicted the new statute[29]. Although the official immediately pointed out the errors to the rector, the governing board did not hasten to correct them. Moreover, the unapproved regulations were first printed in the Seminary's

[27] Rules for pupils of gymnasia and progymnasia under the Ministry of Public Education. Казань, 1874. С. 3–23.

[28] РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. 1867 г. Д. 29; РГИА. Ф. 797. Оп. 49. Отд. I. Ст. 2. Д. 53а. Л. 52–55.

[29] РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. 1868 г. Д. 49. Л. 111–112.



Kursk Theological Seminary. *Postcard, early 1900s. National Electronic Library, Visual Documents*

commemorative booklet for the 1868/69 academic year and then republished without significant changes in 1873[30].

Apparently relying on the authority of St. Petersburg Seminary, other theological educational institutions began partially or wholly copying the content of the published regulations. Thus, the rules of conduct for students at Chernigov Seminary and the instructions for the inspector at Podolia and Kursk seminaries were copied in full from the corresponding documents of St. Petersburg Seminary[31].

The borrowing was not limited to published examples of seminary regulations. Synodal officials noted that seminary governing boards were copying wholesale into their instructions provisions of the 1867 Statute and Synodal decrees without adding their own pedagogical recommendations[32]. Thus, when the regulations of the same St. Peters-

[30] Commemorative Book of the St. Petersburg Theological Seminary. СПб., 1873.

[31] РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 150. Д. 884. Л. 20 об.; *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет о ревизии духовно-учебных заведений Черниговской епархии, произведенной с 3 мая по 4 июня 1870 г. СПб., 1870. С. 43; Ibid. Отчет о ревизии духовно-учебных заведений Подольской епархии (1871 года). С. 55; Ibid. Отчет о ревизии духовно-ученых заведений Курской епархии (1870 г.). СПб., 1871. С. 48.

[32] See: РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 17. Д. 171. Л. 64–65.

burg Seminary were reviewed in 1868, it was noted that the rules for students, "determining how pupils should conduct themselves during prayer and divine services, merely repeat the paragraphs of the Statute, but do not develop these paragraphs in detail, which was to be expected, since Chapter 11 of the Statute (paragraphs 145–155) defines only the general principles of education"[33].

The repeated copying of instructions indicates that seminary governing boards experienced difficulties interpreting the requirements of the Holy Synod and did not understand precisely what they were expected to formulate in these documents or how they were to formulate it in order to adapt the Synod's general principles to the needs of their own seminaries. This response may have been attributable to the novelty of the task assigned to them. The previous statute of 1814, although it contained a special section entitled "Moral Administration" devoted to the inspector's duties, did not prescribe specific educational practices. It instructed inspectors to act "in the spirit of paternal care" at their own discretion[34]. The lack of initiative in drafting regulations, in turn, increasingly frustrated Synodal inspectors, who became more convinced with each inspection that local governing boards were not ready for genuine autonomy.

Thus, the autonomy proclaimed in the reform had a number of limitations, both external – in the form of supervision by the central administration of theological education – and internal, resulting from self-censorship and the lack of experience in drafting official regulations. These two factors became visible driving forces behind the conflict between Synodal officials and seminary authorities over the regulation of the educational process in theological schools. Yet, as will be shown below, the contradictions between the two levels of theological educational authority were also rooted in deeper differences of values and worldview.

[33] РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 150. Д. 884. Л. 22 об.

[34] The project charter of the orthodox theological seminaries, approved by His Imperial Majesty on 30 August 1814. C. 964.

The clash of scholastic and bureaucratic languages: generalisation vs. codification

Despite the interdepartmental tendency towards standardising education, according to which secondary educational institutions were expected to focus on the personal development of students rather than on professional training[35], the educational process in seminaries remained aimed exclusively at forming future clergy. In accordance with this objective, the instructions drafted by seminary governing boards abounded in theological formulations. Thus, in the Lithuanian Seminary, requirements governing students' interactions with laypeople were formulated based on the New Testament Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans (13:7): "In their dealings and relations with outside persons, <...> pupils should be guided by one general rule: render unto all their due"[36].

During an inspection of Podolia Seminary in 1871, I.K. Zinchenko observed that one of the paragraphs of the students' rules of conduct took the form of a discussion "of the exalted nature of the pastoral calling, composed on the basis of passages from Holy Scripture". The rector who had edited the rules explained that "little attention was observed among the pupils to their future service" and that references to Scripture were intended to encourage them to focus on the high calling of the pastorate. The inspector, however, considered that "it is hardly possible to achieve this goal through such discussions in the form of rules"[37]. This brief polemic, recorded in the report, reflects the divergent views of Synodal officials and seminary administrations concerning the very approach to developing principles for the education of seminarians.

For seminary administrations, the obvious source of ideas about the pastoral ideal was Holy Scripture as the fundamental teaching on morality[38]. Yet theological texts, by their scholastic nature, did not contain

---

35 *Пирогов Н.И.* Вопросы жизни // Избранные педагогические сочинения. М., 1985. С. 36.

36 РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. 1867 г. Д. 27. Л. 89 об.

37 *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет о ревизии духовно-учебных заведений Подольской епархии (1871 года). СПб.: [б.и.], 1872. С. 56.

38 This was explicitly stated both in seminary regulations and in the curricula for theological subjects. See: РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. 1867 г. Д. 33. Л. 8–12 об.

a specific set of rules for approaching this ideal, let alone for instilling it in another person. The principal methods of moral improvement traditionally included prayer and so-called "Christian vigilance," combining self-reflection and self-discipline[39]. Compliance with these practices could hardly be checked, evaluated, or recorded on paper. This created another point of contention between Synodal officials and seminary governing boards.

The formulations of the inspectors' duties in the instructions were often general and declarative, reduced to such abstractions as "instilling the fear of God" or the need to act with "heartfelt piety" rather than through dry prescriptions[40]. St. Petersburg Seminary explicitly stated that education could not be formally regulated and should be based on practical experience[41]. This approach, however, contradicted the expectations of the Educational Committee, which sought clear lists of "direct and positive" duties from the seminaries rather than "the general character of official activity and relations with students"[42].

The rules for students, in turn, paradoxically combined excessive generality with excessive detail, at least in the view of Synodal officials. Thus, the regulations of Arkhangelsk Seminary combined such lengthy formulations in the form of advice as "It is useful for a young man to acquire in society the manners of proper interaction characteristic of well-bred people; but to avoid the liberties of frivolous people" with detailed, but for that very reason no more comprehensible, requirements "not to permit oneself rapid movements or immodest actions; when meeting clergy, the head of the city, and more prominent secular authorities, to show due respect"[43].

The bias towards excessive detail was particularly evident in the paragraphs concerning the religious duties and conduct of students: "Entering the church with due reverence, without noise or knocking, pupils are to take their appointed places...", "those putting on a stichарion for reading should make two prostrations (bows) before the

---

39 Ibid. Л. 10.

40 РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 149. Д. 150. Л. 2–3 об.

41 Commemorative Book ... С. 79.

42 РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 149. Д. 150. Л. 2–2 об.

43 *Пругавин А.* Внутренняя корреспонденция. 2 февраля 1872 г. // Новое время. 1872. № 40. С. 3.

Holy Altar, receive the rector's blessing, and then make a third prostration before the Holy Altar", "in general, all pupils are obliged to stand properly and reverently during divine service, with due attention to the service being performed, and to make the sign of the cross correctly"[44]. This practice shows that seminary governing boards, on the one hand, believed themselves to possess greater expertise specifically in religious education and church ritual and, on the other, consciously chose external regulation as a more accessible and formalizable method than developing instruments for deep spiritual and moral formation.

Such minute standardisation likewise failed to find favour with members of the Educational Committee. Thus, I.K. Zinchenko, who came from the clergy and had worked for several years as a seminary inspector, noted that the rules of Podolia Seminary were too detailed and strict in many respects. In his view, precise regulation of daily life was necessary at the beginning of the reform in order to correct the students. By the time of his inspection in 1871, however, the moral character of the seminarians had improved considerably. On this basis, the inspector recommended that the governing board revise and simplify some of the provisions concerning students' duties and punishments[45].

As a result, on the one hand, inspectors criticised the lack of specificity and excessive scholasticism of seminary rules. On the other, they urged seminaries not to go into excessive detail and to abandon the detailed regulation of students' everyday lives. Such contradictory requirements, often coming from one and the same official, probably puzzled seminary administrations. Between 1868 and 1884, they never succeeded in developing the bureaucratic language that would simultaneously express the principles of seminary education important to them and satisfy the expectations of the Educational Committee.

---

44 РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. 1867 г. Д. 27. Л. 87.

45 *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет о ревизии духовно-учебных заведений Подольской епархии (1871 года). С. 57.

Defining the norm through deviant behaviour vs. positive formulations

The orientation towards Holy Scripture as the principal normative source determined not only the scholastic character of the rules produced by the governing boards but also their focus on correcting deviations from the ideal rather than on positive personal formation. The principal concern of the rules for seminarians was discipline – following the daily routine, strict obedience to superiors, and the timely performance of religious exercises.

The conviction that discipline in itself would automatically instill in seminarians the qualities of a future pastor apparently became the central reason for the lack of specific positive recommendations for cultivating "good morals" It was assumed that "through obedience, the student's moral powers would imperceptibly develop and become strengthened; he would learn self-control and <...> gradually acquire a character founded upon the unshakable principles of Christianity and thus become capable, in time, of guiding Christians"[46].

Rather than establishing specific rules of conduct for students that would give concrete expression to biblical virtues, seminaries proceeded in the opposite direction, defining the norm through its violations. For example: "students must not assume improper or discourteous bodily postures"; "not, for example, wear a peaked cap at an angle, not look into the windows of houses they pass, and not stare at the faces of people they meet on the way"[47]. By formulating the rules in this manner, the governing boards were probably attempting to eliminate the negative image of the seminarian as a hooligan and boor that had become firmly established in public discourse[48]. The same widely circulated instruction of St. Petersburg Seminary prohibited "the so-called bursa spirit, swaggering, foolish boasting about roughness and ignorance, reaching the point of cynicism and disregard for propriety"[49].

---

46 РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. 1867 г. Д. 27. Л. 91.

47 Commemorative Book ... C. 36, 47.

48 *Манчестер Л.* Поповичи в миру. Духовенство, интеллигенция и становление современного самосознания в России. М.: НЛО, 2015. С. 203, 207.

49 Commemorative Book... C. 77.

Negative formulations of norms were also characteristic of instructions addressed to teachers and inspectors. For example, the regulations of the same St. Petersburg Seminary prohibited them from "yielding to flattering and obsequious interaction" with students[50]. The emphasis on this prohibition probably indicates that such behaviour had been commonplace in seminaries before the 1867 Reform.

A striking illustration of the imbalance between educational and repressive practices is provided by the instruction for the inspector of Simbirsk Seminary: seventeen of its points detailed mechanisms for supervising students, while only three concerned the development of new personal qualities in them. Significantly, even these few positive provisions mainly regulated religious practices: "5. He (the inspector. – Author's note) takes care that the students have proper reverence for everything sacred and do not permit themselves to treat the Holy Things carelessly or frivolously. 6. He encourages students to engage in pious exercises, such as daily reading of the Word of God". Only one of them described, in the most general terms, the universal virtues that were to be instilled in future pastors: "7. He teaches students truthfulness, honesty, the rules of propriety and generally accepted standards of courtesy; instills respect for superiors, friendliness, gentleness, and helpfulness towards equals and inferiors"[51].

Before the Reform, the principal positive measure of moral education was the compulsory participation of seminarians in religious practices, such as Bible reading at designated times. During the 1867 Reform, however, the Educational Committee resolved to exclude these educational measures from the daily routine[52]. The decision was justified by the argument that students acquired the necessary knowledge through specialised theological disciplines (Liturgics, Homiletics, and Practical Guidance for Rural Pastors), while additional compulsory exercises merely fostered "students' indifference towards religious practices"[53].

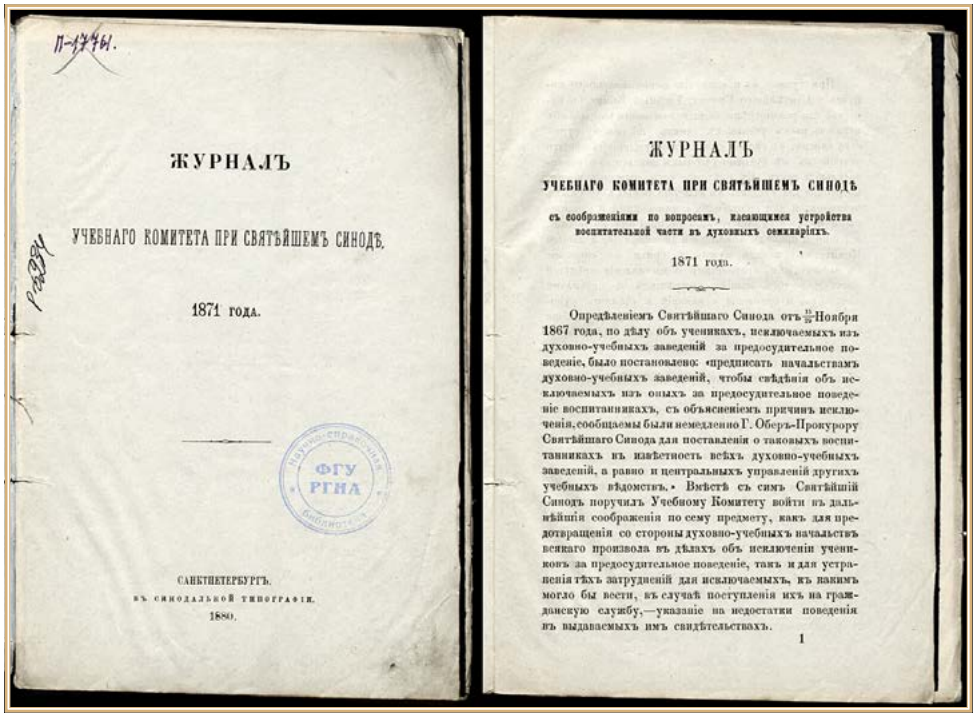
---

50 Ibid. C. 78.

51 РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 155. Д. 814. Л. 7 об.

52 Журнал Учебного комитета 1871 г. ... С. 92.

53 *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет о ревизии духовно-учебных заведений Курской епархии (1870 г.). С. 54.



ЖУРНАЛЪ

УЧЕБНАГО КОМИТЕТА ПРИ СВЯТѢЙШЕМЪ СИНОДѢ.

1871 года.

САНКТПЕТЕРБУРГЪ.
ВЪ СИНОДАЛЬНОЙ ТИПОГРАФІИ.
1880.

ЖУРНАЛЪ

УЧЕБНАГО КОМИТЕТА ПРИ СВЯТѢЙШЕМЪ СИНОДѢ

съ соображеніями по вопросамъ, касающимся устройства воспитательной части въ духовныхъ семинаріяхъ.

1871 года.

Journal of the Educational Committee under the Holy Synod, 1871.
Yeltsin Presidential Library (original: Russian State Historical Archive)

This requirement provoked disagreement even among Synodal officials. Thus, N.A. Sergievsky, Director of the Chancellery, supported the seminary authorities in their effort to preserve compulsory religious exercises[54]. At the same time, deprived of this traditional and readily comprehensible educational support, the seminary governing boards were unable to offer an adequate substitute, which became one of the reasons for the vacuum of concrete positive practices in the new instructions.

The central authorities, represented by the Educational Committee under the Holy Synod and the Chief Procurator personally, expected seminary governing boards to replace old mechanistic religious practices with new educational methods that would foster the development of an inner, conscious Christian morality among seminarians. Yet the administrations of theological schools, relying on biblical moral canons and on the images of the "old bursa" that were to be eradicated, often reduced education to external discipline, the elimination of specific

[54] РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 150. Д. 884. Л. 22 об.

violations, and the inculcation of formal piety. This contradiction was intensified by internal disagreements among Synodal officials, many of whom had themselves studied at seminaries and conveyed not a consolidated position of the Educational Committee but their own ideas about the proper principles and methods of regulating education[55].

It is also important that the Educational Committee under the Holy Synod issued no prescriptions or models of practice to guide seminary governing boards in maintaining "good morals". The new statute mentioned only two relatively concrete areas of educational work: the aesthetic and physical development of seminarians. Playing musical instruments, drawing, singing, reading useful literature, and "other similar exercises" were to "be not only permitted but even encouraged, provided that they were always strictly moral"[56]. Extracurricular activities were expected to free seminarians from idleness – the principal cause of the "coarseness of morals and tastes" that led to immoral conduct[57].

Yet here too, the views and decisions of Synodal officials and seminary governing boards remained contradictory and inconsistent. In 1867, the Holy Synod required seminary governing boards to develop concrete measures for the cultural development of students. By 1871, however, the most popular of these – amateur theatrical performances and concerts – had been prohibited as distractions from study and as encouraging "a propensity for frivolity and amusements"[58].

At the same time, governing boards were divided over the permissibility of various forms of aesthetic education for future priests. Thus, enthusiasm for amateur theatre in the early 1870s was supported at Samara Seminary[59]. In Vladimir, theological students were even permitted to attend public concerts and theatres if accompanied by an

---

55 *Орлова Ю.П.* Ревизоры Учебного комитета... С. 109.

56 Statutes and staffing tables of theological seminaries... С. 34.

57 Resolution of the seminary board on general measures for the preservation of good morals among students (continued)// Пермские епархиальные ведомости. Официальная часть. 1869. № 51. С. 635.

58 On the prohibition of concerts, theatrical performances, readings, and other public gatherings in theological educational institutions // Вологодские епархиальные ведомости. 1871. № 18. С. 372.

59 *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет о ревизии духовно-учебных заведений Самарской епархии: 1873 г. С. 24.

inspector[60]. By contrast, the internal regulations of St. Petersburg and Simbirsk seminaries strictly prohibited such entertainments as unworthy of their future calling[61].

The question of whether theatre was compatible with Christian morality was considered sufficiently controversial that it was even used as a topic for seminarians' examination essays. When students at Moscow Seminary were asked to write an essay on the subject, the majority considered theatre an acceptable pastime, although genres such as ballet were sharply criticised as "shameful spectacles" and "plagues hostile to Christianity"[62]. This diversity of opinion among the students reflected a broader ideological spectrum within the seminary administration itself, where conservative, moderate, and progressive views clashed over the role of secular culture in theological education.

The selection of books for extracurricular reading and the performance of secular and folk music in singing or instrumental instruction likewise generated considerable controversy. Educational Committee inspectors were surprised to discover that at some seminaries students were permitted to learn music only on "some noble instrument" such as the gusli, while the flute was strictly prohibited as "disturbing to neighbours and passers-by"[63]. Reading, by contrast, was scarcely controlled. As a result, students often read indiscriminately Gogol, Pushkin, Lermontov, and Koltsov, treatises on natural science, physics, and logic, and political and social journals, including revolutionary publications[64].

This approach was criticised by members of the Educational Committee, but the conceptual situation did not change. Unlike the Main Administration of Military Educational Institutions and the Ministry of Public Education, which detailed in their statutes the forms of extracurricular activity – including, for example, compulsory group reading and a prescribed number of hours that educators were to spend with

---

60 *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет о ревизии духовно-учебных заведений Владимирской епархии 1875 года. СПб., 1876. С. 11.

61 РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 149. Д. 150. Л. 8.

62 РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 17. Д. 104. Л. 161.

63 See: *Керский С.В.* Преобразование духовно-учебных заведений Кавказской епархии в 1871 году. СПб., 1871. С. 155.

64 Ibid. С. 129–133.

pupils in military gymnasia[65] – the Holy Synod limited itself to a general declaration, entrusting the development of methods of aesthetic education entirely to the seminaries. This policy did not succeed because no common understanding emerged at the local level of which forms of aesthetic education were permissible for the moral development of future clergy.

Certainly, the problem was partly a matter of inadequate funding, which made it impossible to purchase instruments and books, pay teachers of the arts, or build athletic rooms[66]. Yet, as an analysis of administrative records shows, ideological uncertainty proved more significant than financial difficulties. The Holy Synod relied on the autonomy of the governing boards, assuming that their views were uniform. In practice, however, approaches to education differed from one seminary to another. Attempts to standardise the educational process "from above" through circulars were ineffective, as demonstrated eloquently by cases in which prohibitions on theatrical performances were violated.

Conclusion

An analysis of the interaction between the central Synodal authorities and the governing boards of theological seminaries in the 1860s and 1870s reveals a profound systemic divide between them, rooted in fundamentally different ideological approaches to the education of future pastors. This divide resulted from several interrelated causes.

First, the seminaries proved unprepared for the autonomy granted to them, both because they lacked experience in independently developing regulations and because of insufficient personnel and financial resources. They were unable, within a short period, to create a unified normative language for regulating the educational process that would meet the expectations of the highest ecclesiastical authorities. At the same time, unlike university professors who, according to the study by

[65] Instructions for educators at the Petrovskaya Poltava Military Gymnasium: approved at a meeting of the Private Pedagogical Committee on 6 March 1875. Poltava. 1875. C. 1.

[66] See: *Керский С.В.* Преобразование духовно-учебных заведений Кавказской епархии в 1871 году. С. 156; РГИА. Ф. 797. Оп. 49. Отд. I. Ст. 2. Д. 6. Л. 55 об. – 56.

E.A. Vishlenkova and K.A. Ilyina, had already in the first half of the nineteenth century "regarded texts for the ministry as another exercise in rhetoric"[67], members of seminary governing boards rejected the bureaucratic system as alien to them and continued to communicate with the Holy Synod in the scholastic language familiar to them.

Second, a conflict arose between the parties over a fundamental difference in their views of how the education of future priests should be organised: the desire of the Chief Procurator and the Educational Committee under the Holy Synod for formalised control collided with the conviction of seminary governing boards that the educational process was by its very nature not amenable to rigid regulation. These circumstances generated passivity, the simulation of activity, or direct resistance, extending to the disregard of recommendations from Synodal officials and even the destruction of reports in seminary archives[68]. In 1872, D.A. Tolstoy personally complained to the head of the Tver Diocese that the local seminary's governing board "allows itself to be guided more by personal views than by the regulations to which it is subject"[69]. The divergence of views both among Synodal officials and among seminary governing boards, together with the influence of informal, personal, and corporate ties, aggravated the situation and hindered the creation of a system for administering education based on the rational-legal principle.

Thus, the experiment in introducing new bureaucratic practices into the training of future pastors revealed a conflict not simply between levels of administration but between different bureaucratic cultures. The policy of autonomy under supervision, within which seminary governing boards were delegated responsibility for developing instructions, fitted well within the broader framework of the Alexandrian reforms, under which local administrative bodies were expected to be "controlled and regulated, reconciling local interests

---

[67] *Вишленкова Е.А., Ильина К.А.* Наука управлять: господство через знание и реформа управления российским образованием в первой половине XIX в. // Ab Imperio. 2017. № 4. С. 71.

[68] Copy of the minutes of the pedagogical meeting concerning the case of Pyotr Marmarissov, a student of the Irkutsk Theological Seminary. 1868 // РГИА. Ф. 797. Оп. 37. Отд. I. Ст. 2. Д. 180. Л. 36–39.

[69] РГИА. Ф. 797. Оп. 42. Отд. I. Ст. 2. Д. 26. Л. 326–327.

with those of the state as a whole"[70]. In practice, however, this model encountered a specific challenge in the form of local seminary administrations which, unlike diocesan bishops, had historically been excluded from bureaucratic communication with the highest ecclesiastical authorities and adhered to their own distinctive system of norms and practices. This clash predetermined the failure of the experiment and the curtailment of autonomy. As early as 1875, the Educational Committee under the Holy Synod issued the *Collection of Resolutions of 1867—1874 Concerning the Organisation of Theological Seminaries and Schools*, which symbolically marked a return to the idea of regulating the educational process "from above"[71]. The conflict itself demonstrated a broader pattern characteristic of the period: attempts to create hybrid administrative models combining elements of self-government with strict supervision led to crises when local institutions were either unprepared or unwilling to operate according to bureaucratic rules imposed upon them.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

References

1. Alekseeva S.I. *The Holy Synod in the system of higher and central state institutions of post-Reform Russia*, 1856-1904. St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2006. 276 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/qucndf (in Russ.).
2. Barykina I.E. *State Administration of Russia in the second half of the 19th century: scientists and special institutes*. St. Petersburg: NestorHistory, 2018. 368 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/pokgop (in Russ.).

[70] *Ружицкая И.В.* Просвещенная бюрократия (1800—1860-е гг.). М.: Ин-т российской истории, 2009. С. 220.

[71] Collection of resolutions of the Most Holy Synod, 1867—1874, concerning the organisation of theological seminaries and schools, in accordance with the requirements of the theological school statutes approved by His Imperial Majesty on 14 May 1867. СПб.: Синодальная типография, 1875.

3. Vilenkova E.A., Ilina K.A. The Science of Governing: the state through Knowledge and government through the Management of Russian Education in the early 19th Century. *Ab Imperio*. 2017;(4):65-107. URL: https://abimperio.org/article/4261?lang=ru (in Russ.).
4. Zhukova L.A. *Zemstvo self-government and bureaucracy in Russia: conflicts and cooperation, 1864-1917*. Moscow: Chronograph, 1998. 179 p.
5. Mangileva A.V. In the vicious circle of bureaucratization and reform of parish life: a dialogue about the book by A.L. Beglov "The Orthodox Parish in the Decline of the Russian Empire: state, discussions, reforms". *Russian History*. 2024;(4):70–87. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.31857/S2949124X24040067
6. Manchester L. *Popovichi in the World: Clergy, Intelligentsia and the Formation of Modern Self-awareness in Russia*. Moscow: UFO, 2015. 448 p. URL: https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000199_000009_007959649/?ysclid=mrhk4iwo3153146220 (in Russ.).
7. Orlova Yu.P. Auditors of the Educational Committee at the Holy Synod as agents of the reform of spiritual education in 1867. *Bulletin of Tver State University. Series: History*. 2025;73(1):105–120. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.26456/vthistory/2025.1.105-120
8. Rimsky S.V. *The Russian Church in the Era of Great Reforms: Church Reforms in Russia in the 1860s and 1870s*. Moscow: Krutitsky patriarchal Compound, 1999. 568 p. URL: https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000200_000018_RU_NLR_bibl_75156/?ysclid=mrhk9d8g56691497879 (in Russ.).
9. Ruzhitskaya I.V. *The Enlightened bureaucracy (1800-1860s)*. Moscow: Institute of Russian History, 2009. 340 p. URL: https://iriran.ru/publications/3401?ysclid=mrhkayewuk92721397 (in Russ.).
10. Sukhova N.Yu. *Higher Theological School: problems and reforms*. Moscow: PSTGU Publishing House, 2012. 658 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/qvycht (in Russ.).
11. Sukhova N.Yu. History of management of spiritual educational institutions in Russia, 1807–1967. *Theological collection*. 2005;(13):206–235. URL: https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000202_000005_499954/?ysclid=mrhkhh9cpz429020156 (in Russ.).
12. Ferapont (P.F. Shirokov), Jerome. Revisions of theological schools before the educational reform of 1867. *Theological collection of the*

Tambov Theological Seminary. 2022;21(4):83–94. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.51216/ 2687072X_2022_4_83.

13. Freeze G.L. *The Parish Clergy in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Crisis, Reform, Counter-Reform.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983. 507 p. URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7zv0b4
14. Lincoln W.B. *In the vanguard of reform: Russia's enlightened bureaucrats*, 1825–1861. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1982. 297 p. URL: https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000200_000018_RU_INFOCOMM_322_NLR_5000158495/?ysclid=mrhktgyovd101065023

Yulia P. Orlova

postgraduate student,
Faculty of History European University at St. Petersburg,
ORCID: 0009-0003-1152-8943

Received 13.11.2025
Revised 22.01.2026
Accepted 16.02.2026

DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.004
Original paper

Julia A. Safronova

European University at St. Petersburg, St Petersburg, Russian Federation
E-mail: jsafronova@eu.spb.ru

Regulating Restrictions on the Reading of Books by Students of Orthodox Theological Seminaries in the First Years after the 1867 Reform of Theological Education

Abstract
The article examines the introduction of restrictions on the reading of anti-religious and anti-social literature by students of Orthodox theological seminaries following the 1867 Reform of Theological Education. The reform brought a rethinking of the system of governance of Orthodox theological seminaries both at the central level, where the Educational Committee of the Synod was established, and locally, as seminary governing boards were granted broad autonomy, including in matters of library acquisition and the organisation of extracurricular reading. The discovery of seminarians reading "harmful" literature in the very first year after the reform put the entire system to the test. The article demonstrates how, over the course of several years, the Educational Committee was forced to move from recommendations addressed to individual seminary governing boards to circular decrees and the introduction of mandatory *Rules Concerning the Acquisition of Books for Students' Libraries and the Procedure for Their Reading by Students* (1872). The article

© Julia A. Safronova, 2026

asks why seminary governing boards were unable to make effective use of the autonomy granted to them and why "prohibited literature" came to occupy an ambiguous position. The case of J.W. Draper's *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, which was deemed "harmful" by Synodal officials, is used to examine the variety of situations surrounding a particular book. The article demonstrates that members of seminary governing boards responsible for acquiring books generally placed orders based on titles without familiarising themselves with the contents. It was in this way that "harmful" new publications, such as Draper's book, first published in 1862, found their way into students' libraries. At the same time, teachers were capable of reflecting on the degree to which particular well-known works were undesirable for students to read, including articles by V.G. Belinsky and N.A. Dobrolyubov. Their assessments differed radically, ranging from including such works in the curriculum to removing them from circulation. Even the 1870 circular decree of the Synod prohibiting seminarians from reading works by literary critics failed to resolve the situation. Thus, the principle of broad autonomy for seminary governing boards established in the 1867 Charter inevitably proved problematic in practice. In the case of book restrictions, there was no consensus as to what could be considered "harmful" or "inconsistent with the aims of theological education", either among members of the Educational Committee or among teachers.

Keywords:
Orthodox Theological Seminary; 1867 Reform of Theological Education; Bureaucratic practices; Educational Committee of the Holy Synod; History of reading; Prohibited literature

For citation:
Julia A. Safronova. Regulating Restrictions on the Reading of Books by Students of Orthodox Theological Seminaries in the First Years after the 1867 Reform of Theological Education. The Historical Reporter. 2026. Vol. 60. P. 140–163. DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.004

In 1876, the revolutionary journal *Vperyod!*, published in London under the editorship of P.L. Lavrov, carried an anonymous correspondence from Vologda devoted to an audit of the local theological seminary by S.V. Kersky, a member of the Educational Committee of the Holy Synod. The immediate reason for the extraordinary audit in the autumn of 1875 was the political trial of two of its graduates, V.M. Dyakov and A.I. Siryakov[1]. Among other things, the anonymous correspondent described a comic episode in the course of the "persecution". One of the students told the auditor that he had read the book *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe* (1862) by the American philosopher J.W. Draper. The seminary inspector, E.L. Prozorovsky, then "rushed" into the classroom and announced: "...whoever is found with a prohibited book such as Draper's will be severely punished. The students asked him to tell them which books should be considered impermissible. The resourceful Prozorovsky replied: 'It is none of your business to know this; you simply must not read them!' <..> ...neither clever nor wise: do not read prohibited books, but do not even try to know which ones are prohibited!"[2]

The correspondent assumed that the inspector's refusal to identify the prohibited books was motivated by the belief that the seminarians would immediately begin reading precisely those works. In reality, the situation was considerably more complicated. E.L. Prozorovsky, however much he might have wished to do so, could not answer the question, since there simply was no Synod-approved list of books prohibited for seminarians to read. The inspector's sudden appearance in the classroom may indicate that he himself had first learned from the auditor that Draper's book was "impermissible" right before speaking with the students.

Despite the absence of an official list or criteria by which theological seminary instructors could determine which works were "harmful," officials of the Educational Committee systematically used the concept of "books inconsistent with the aims of theological education and upbringing"[3]. At the same time, some seminaries had instructions for inspectors, who were expected to prevent students from reading books "permeated

---

1 *Михайлов Б.Г.* Предвестники бури. Очерки о революционных народниках-вологжанах. Архангельск, 1977. 121 с.

2 Из Вологды // Вперед! 1876. № 31. Ст. 228.

3 РГИА. Ф. 797. Оп. 42. I отд. 2 стол. Д. 56. Л. 3 об.

by a spirit of denial of religious truths and preaching principles harmful to the public order"[4]. Finally, "the reading of books and works not permitted" sometimes appeared in students' codes of conduct alongside other "impermissible pursuits," such as "playing cards, singing indecent songs, smoking tobacco, and consuming intoxicating beverages"[5]. Explicitly formulated prohibitions on reading, however, were rather exceptional among the rules and instructions prepared by the pedagogical assemblies of theological seminaries. For example, the rules for students of the St. Petersburg Theological Seminary contained only § 22, which literally repeated § 135 of the 1867 Statute[6] and required students to read, on the recommendation of their instructors, books "having a close bearing on the subjects of study"[7]. Thus, there was undoubtedly a widespread conviction among members of the Educational Committee of the Holy Synod and teachers in the seminaries that certain books could be dangerous and that seminarians should be prohibited from reading them. In practice, however, both the introduction of such prohibitions and their implementation posed numerous difficulties. As will be demonstrated below, the very definition of a "harmful" work differed not only from one seminary to another but even among officials of the Synod.

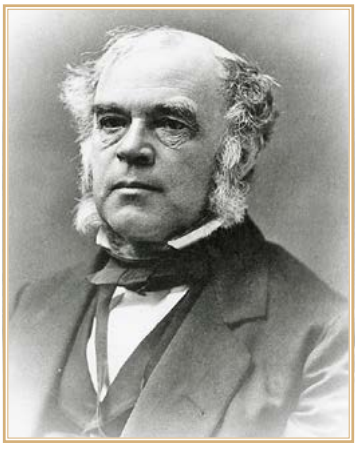
The prohibition of reading books that had been approved by the censorship authorities and were formally available to all subjects of the Russian Empire was not unique to the ecclesiastical administration and did not concern only students of educational institutions. In the 1870s, the status of a particular publication could be uncertain and could involve additional parameters: for whom and under what conditions was a book prohibited or permitted? For example, two publications recommended by the Educational Committee as manuals for liturgics – J.A. Martigny's *Dictionnaire des antiquités chrétiennes* (1865) and F.K. Schmidt's *Liturgik der christl. Katholischen Religion* (1840) – turned out not to have been approved for sale in Russia by the Foreign Censorship Committee, something of which the Synodal officials were unaware. A theological seminary

4 *Керский С.В.* Преобразование духовно-учебных заведений Орловской епархии в 1872 году. СПб., 1872. С. 52.

5 РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 17. Д. 45. Л. 109 об.

6 Statutes and staff regulations of theological seminaries and schools, most highly approved on 14 may 1867. СПб., 1867. С. 29.

7 Commemorative book of the St. Petersburg Theological Seminary. СПб., 1873. С. 37.



John William Draper.
From open sources

rector could acquire them on condition that he sign an undertaking not to transfer the books to third parties, which rendered the purchase of manuals for the institution's reference library essentially pointless[8].

Of course, it was common knowledge that there were publications expressly "prohibited from circulation and reprinting in Russia," whose reading and dissemination constituted a criminal offense. At the same time, the *Alphabetical Catalogue* of such literature, printed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1876, was not publicly available and contained only 423 works published from the 1800s through the first half of the 1870s[9]. Ordinary readers could rely only on the censor's approval, but even this did not guarantee that a publication was actually permitted. Thus, the literature of the Chaikovsky Circle was published with forged censorship endorsements[10]. In 1874, an investigation into the "going to the people" movement produced a *List of Those Books Which Propagandists Distribute among the People and Generally among Young People* (the "General Slezkin List"), which included six books that had passed preliminary censorship and three books of more than ten printer's sheets that did not require censorship approval.

---

8 *Керский С.В.* Преобразование духовно-учебных заведений Архангельской епархии (в 1870 г.). СПб, 1870. С. 48.

9 Alphabetical catalogue of books in the Russian language prohibited from circulation and reprinting in Russia. По 1 июня 1876. СПб., 1876.

10 For example, L.A. Tikhomirov's *Tale of the Four Brothers* was published under the cover title *A Happy Encounter, or Love of the Motherland*, with the false imprint "Permitted by the Censors. Moscow, 29 May 1875".

The list itself and the status of the publications included in it became a subject of dispute for several years between the Third Section of His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery and the Main Administration for Press Affairs. The problem was so acute that in 1875 even the prosecution authorities did not understand on what grounds people could be punished for distributing books that had been approved by the censors but were nevertheless deemed dangerous and routinely confiscated by the police[11]. N.I. Naumov's book *Strength Breaks Strength*, from the Slezkin List, was found by the gendarmes in A.I. Siryakov's apartment during the 1872/73 academic year, but the discovery had no consequences at the time[12].

Thus, uncertainty and a lack of precise information about the status of a particular publication were generally characteristic of the period under consideration. In the case of seminarians, however, violating a reading prohibition entailed punishment, ranging from "standing at the dining-room door" to expulsion with a record of "disapproved conduct" and a notation of "extreme unreliability" if the student demonstrated "incorrigibility," as happened successively to Shimanovsky, a student of the Kyiv Theological Seminary[13]. In 1871, the Educational Committee formulated eight categories of disciplinary violations requiring immediate expulsion from a theological seminary. In addition to drunkenness, theft, and proven sexual misconduct, they included "the dissemination, in any manner whatsoever, of teachings deemed harmful by existing laws, etc." and "an immoral and anti-religious tendency manifested in explicit statements and actions"[14]. In practice, these provisions were applied to the reading and discussion with fellow students of "harmful" books, as well as to the writing of compositions based on them. Having studied the reports submitted by seminaries to the Synod concerning expelled students between 1868 and 1876, Yu.P. Orlova established that such cases accounted for 13% of all expulsions[15].

---

11 РГИА. Ф. 776. Оп. 11. 1874. Д. 96. Л. 23–24 об.

12 РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 17. Д. 46. Л. 141.

13 РГИА. Ф. 797. Оп. 41. I отд. II стол. Д. 2. Л. 79–80.

14 Journal of the educational committee under the Holy Synod, with considerations on questions relating to the organization of the educational department in theological seminaries in 1871. СПб., 1873. С. 129.

15 *Орлова Ю.П.* Реформа духовного образования 1860–1870-х гг. и нравственный облик служителя церкви в представлениях членов семинарского сообщества // Новое прошлое. 2024. № 1. С. 53–54.



Nikolai Ivanovich Naumov.
From open sources

The aim of this article is to analyze the practices of controlling seminarians' reading and the logic behind the introduction of prohibitions under conditions of uncertainty. Behind the seemingly simple question of why the Educational Committee of the Holy Synod did not prepare a list of books prohibited for theological students, or at least instructions for their teachers defining the concept of "harmful" literature, lies a series of issues concerning the specific features of the 1867 reform of theological education and the bureaucratic practices employed in its implementation. It is necessary to examine precisely how a book came to be assigned the status of "harmful" and why that status was not self-evident to all participants in the educational process. As a point of departure, I will analyze the vicissitudes surrounding the circulation and use of J.W. Draper's *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe* as reflected in the reports of auditors of the Educational Committee of the Holy Synod. I will then discuss the fate of the circular prohibition issued by D.A. Tolstoy, the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, concerning the works of V.G. Belinsky and N.A. Dobrolyubov. Finally, the article will examine the *Rules Concerning the Acquisition of Books for the Student Libraries of Theological Seminaries and Schools and the Procedure for Their Reading by Students* of 1872, which likewise failed to prevent seminarians from reading prohibited books.

In 1867, as a result of the reform of theological education, the Educational Committee was established under the Synod, and for the first time its membership included full-time auditors[16]. In the very first year,

[16] See: *Ферапонт (Широков)*, (иером.) Система ревизий духовно-учебных заведений во 2-й пол. XIX – нач. XX в. // Христианское чтение. 2024. № 2. С. 253–260.

during an audit of the Kostroma Theological Seminary, I.A. Nenarokomov, Chief Secretary of the Synod, discovered that a second-year student had been reading Draper's work, the Russian translation of which had been published only a year earlier. In his audit report, I.A. Nenarokomov unequivocally described it as a book "...published without preliminary censorship and, as is well known, distinguished by a harmful tendency, particularly for theological students"[17]. From his point of view, the case was especially egregious because the seminarian had borrowed the book from the seminary's own student library.

It is important to clarify that the Synod did not exercise control over seminary libraries, which, moreover, were quite often supplemented by random donations. According to § 106 of the 1867 Statute, the selection of books for the reference library was the responsibility of the pedagogical assembly of the seminary board[18]. On March 24, 1870, by a Synodal resolution, the boards were advised to pay "special attention to the <..> tendency" of publications acquired for their libraries, but this qualification applied only to secular periodicals[19]. The Educational Committee itself included textbooks and manuals in course curricula that were mandatory for acquisition[20]. The Synod also regularly received petitions for permission to use particular books as teaching aids in theological educational institutions; when such petitions received a favorable resolution, circular decrees were distributed accordingly[21]. Thus, in the late 1860s and early 1870s, the Educational Committee, as an institution responsible for recommending literature for children's reading[22], was still in the process of formation and, even within institutions under its jurisdiction, regulated only textbooks.

---

17 *Ненарокомов И.А.* О ревизии Костромской семинарии и тамошнего духовного училища (в декабре 1867 г.). СПб., 1868. С. 10.

18 Statutes and staff regulations of theological seminaries. C. 21.

19 Collection of decrees of the Holy Synod for 1867–1874 concerning the organization of theological seminaries and schools, in accordance with the requirements of the theological-school statutes most highly approved on 14 may 1867. СПб., 1875. С. 105.

20 For example, in 1868, K. Petrov's *An Attempt at a Concise Outline of the Theory of Literature* was recommended for the Russian literature class. РГИА. Ф. 796. Оп. 149. Д. 388. Л. 50–58.

21 РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. Д. 80. Л. 46–47.

22 See: *Лучкина О.А.* Силуэты руководителей детского чтения: священник, министр, генерал и другие // Детские чтения. 2012. № 2. С. 117–121.



Dmitry Andreevich Tolstoy. *Artist I. N. Kramskoi.*
From open sources

According to § 144 of the Statute, a student library was not mandatory, but it could be established by a decision of the seminary board, which was also required to formulate rules governing its acquisition and operation, subject to approval by the diocesan bishop[23]. At the Kostroma Seminary, responsibility for acquiring books for the student library was assigned to one of the instructors, who was to compile a list of publications, have it approved by the board, and then, after receiving the bishop's approval, purchase the books. He compiled the list not on the recommendations of the teachers, "each according to his own subject," as envisaged by § 135 of the Statute, which regulated seminarians' reading, but "on the basis of booksellers' catalogues and advertisements published in newspapers"[24]. Apparently, neither the members of the board nor the Bishop of Kostroma, Ignatius (Bryanchaninov), unlike I.A. Nenarokomov, knew that Draper's book acquired for the student library was of a "harmful tendency". The St. Petersburg official wrote in his report: "...the students of the Kostroma Seminary, as far as their reading is concerned, are left more or less to themselves and to various unsafe contingencies"; otherwise, "Draper's book could not have appeared in the hands of a student". He demanded that it be removed from the student library and that the rules for purchasing books be revised so as to prevent the future

[23] Statutes and staff regulations of theological seminaries. C. 31.
[24] *Ненарокомов И.А.* О ревизии Костромской семинарии. С. 10.

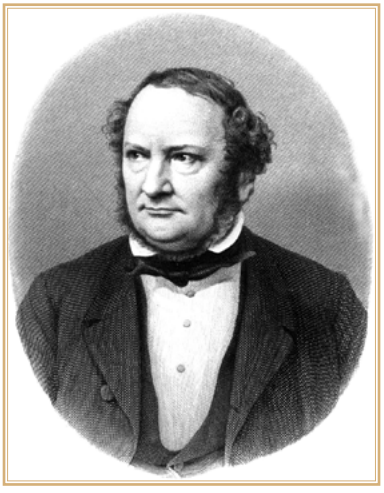


Bishop Ignatius Bryanchaninov.
From open sources

acquisition of works "whose content and soundness of tendency are unknown to the board"[25]. Since, during his inspection of the library, the auditors found no other "harmful" books, and among the secular journals, which likewise caused concern among members of the Educational Committee[26], the seminary subscribed only to the *Journal of the Ministry of Public Education* and "...another [journal] in the field of the natural sciences"[27], Draper's work had indeed entered the student library simply because the librarian who ordered it was unaware of its contents.

If the appearance of Draper's book at the Kostroma Seminary was accidental, in other seminaries it could have formed part of a deliberate strategy by teachers to acquire advanced literature at the height of the discussion and implementation of the reform of theological education. Thus, at the Tiflis Theological Seminary, a group of young teachers compiled a list of books for the student library that included a collected edition of the works of J.-J. Rousseau, Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, and two books by J.W. Draper – *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe* and *Thoughts on the Future Civil Policy of America* (1866). The inspector, future Rector, Archimandrite Valentin (Kuznetsov), who supported their acquisition and even donated the substantial sum of 200 rubles for this

[25] Ibid. C. 10–11.
[26] Ibid. C. 10–11.
[27] *Ненарокомов И.А.* О ревизии Костромской семинарии. С. 11.

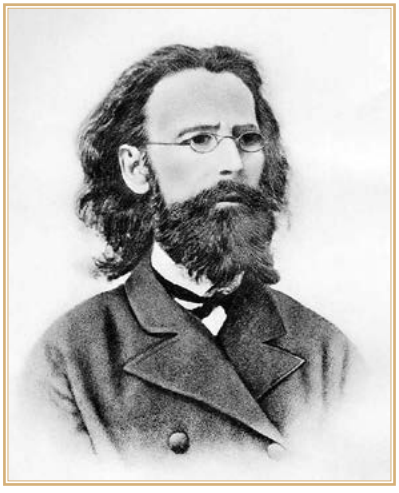


Georg Gottfried Gervinus.
From open sources

purpose, was, in the opinion of the auditor S.V. Kersky, like his colleague in Kostroma, "ordering books without having any idea of their contents or suitability"[28]. The other teachers, however, were perfectly aware of the "tendency" of the publications they had ordered. Some of these books, including Draper's works, were removed from the student library shortly before the arrival of the auditor I.K. Zinchenko in Tiflis in September 1872, although editions that apparently seemed less dangerous to the librarian remained there. Among the "considerable" number of books "inconsistent with the aims of theological education," the auditor named E. Pfeiffer's *Über das Genossenschaftswesen* (1866), A.P. Shchapov's *The Social and Pedagogical Conditions of the Intellectual Development of the Russian People* (1870), and G.G. Gervinus's *History of the Nineteenth Century from the Time of the Congress of Vienna*[29]. After the student library was purged in 1872, Tiflis seminarians began borrowing "prohibited books," including works by Draper, Darwin, and Chernyshevsky, from the city public library[30].

Between these two extreme cases of the circulation of Draper's work in Kostroma and Tiflis, several other examples of its presence among students of theological seminaries can be situated. In 1868, the same I.A. Nenarokomov found two books in the student library of the Ryazan Theological

[28] РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. Д. 71. Л. 139 об.
[29] Ibid. Л. 138 об.
[30] Ibid. Л. 134.



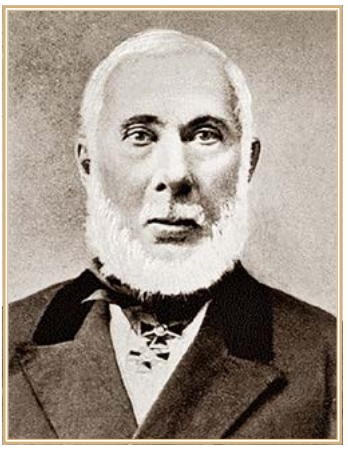
Afanasy Prokofievich Shchapov.
From open sources

Seminary that "positively cannot be tolerated" – namely, *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe* and W. Zimmermann's *Electromagnetism* (1862). In this case, his reference to the 1867 audit is particularly revealing: Draper's book was "already known to the Educational Committee from my report"[31]. The juxtaposition of the two publications finally makes it possible to identify the criterion that the auditor apparently used when assigning certain works to the category of "harmful" literature. Both books contained anti-clerical and anti-religious ideas; moreover, the latter prompted the well-known theologian D.F. Golubinsky to publish a pamphlet entitled *An Examination and Refutation of the False Opinion Concerning the Ark of the Covenant (Against Zimmermann's Book Electromagnetism)*[32].

That reading *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe* could indeed provoke anti-clerical sentiments among seminarians, or reinforce attitudes that had already developed, can be seen from the article *The Connection between the Beginning of European Civilization and Its Present Condition*, written by M. Kolchin, a student of the Arkhangelsk Theological Seminary, for the underground handwritten journal *Razvitie* in 1874. The article is essentially a brief summary of the opening chapters of Draper's book, although the author nowhere cited Draper; the source

[31] *Ненарокомов И.А.* О ревизии Рязанской семинарии и тамошних духовных училищ (в феврале и марте 1868 г.). СПб, 1868. С. 11.

[32] *Голубинский Д.Ф.* Разбор и опровержение ложного мнения о Кивоте Завета (Против книги Циммермана «Об электричестве и магнетизме»). М., 1862.



Dmitry Fedorovich Golubinsky.
From open sources

of the composition was nevertheless identified by the seminary inspector V.N. Shuisky[33].

Kolchin's article begins as a disjointed summary of the third and fourth chapters of the book, dealing with the development of religion beginning with India and Egypt, which the author described as the "starting point of European civilization"[34]. Kolchin used this material to compare Hinduism and Christianity: if modern man regards the dogmas of Hinduism and Buddhism as "invention, fantasy, <..> the product of contemplation of nature," then in 500 years "people of the distant future will laugh at our religious views"[35]. Clearly, the prediction of the degeneration of Christianity, as well as the radical claim by a third-year student that all progressive thinkers of the past, from Socrates to Erasmus, had been atheists, ran counter to the "aim of theological education".

Thus, the identification of Draper's book as "harmful" from the very first year of the audits was based on its potentially anti-religious content. The logic underlying I.A. Nenarokomov's assessment can be understood by examining another auditor, I.K. Zinchenko's analysis of the German educator K. Oppel's *The Ancient Wonderland of the Pyramids* (1868), which he ordered removed from the student library of the Vyatka Seminary in 1871. Although he recognized the work as one of the "best books

[33] РГИА. Ф. 797. Оп. 44. Д. 8. Л. 345 об.
[34] РИГА. Ф. 1410. Оп. 1. Д. 62. Л. 133.
[35] Ibid. Л. 134–134 об.

for reading," he judged its "tendency" to be "completely contrary to the tasks and aims of seminary education". What the auditor objected to specifically was the scientific explanation of the Ten Plagues of Egypt as natural phenomena caused by the climatic conditions of Egypt. The circumstances under which this book had been acquired for the students were analogous to those in which Draper's work had entered the Kostroma Seminary library: the inspector had recommended Oppel's book "on the basis of its title alone," and the board ordered it without "knowing its contents"[36]. The five years that had passed since the implementation of the 1867 reform had not changed the instructors' approach to ordering books. They still did not read themselves what they acquired for their students, relying instead on titles and booksellers' advertisements.

In the same year, 1871, I. K. Zinchenko discovered Draper's *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe* at the Kursk Theological Seminary. Judging by the records of books issued from the student library, more than half of the students had read "the works of Draper, Darwin, Belinsky, Owen, and others," which affected the "direction of consciousness": "In some theological student compositions <..> there is such an abundance of information on natural history that they could be called exercises in this latter subject". Surprisingly, in his report the auditor placed the responsibility entirely on the teachers: "It was from books, of course, and not from their instructors, that the students acquired <..> these views"[37].

I.K. Zinchenko's leniency was prompted by a precedent. As early as 1868, a student named Gorokhovtsev had established a fee-based library from his own books, which the inspector promptly discovered and closed. Significantly, some of the books – works by V.G. Belinsky and H.T. Buckle – were immediately transferred by the board to the reference library, while several others were handed over to the inspector for examination and a determination of "whether they contain articles not subject to being read by students"[38]. In addition to the journals *Sovremennik* and *Delo*, these included books entitled *Civil Marriage* and *Association of the*

[36] *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет по обозрению духовно-учебных заведений Вятской епархии (1871 г.). СПб., 1871. С. 36–37.

[37] *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет о ревизии духовно-учебных заведений Курской епархии (1870 г.). СПб., 1871. С. 36.

[38] Ibid. С. 40.



Robert Owen.
From open sources

Working Class[39], whose contents were evidently unknown to the teachers. In this case, the question was whether to leave the books with Gorokhovtsev if they proved harmless or to transfer them to the reference library until his graduation. Thus, the teachers of the Kursk Theological Seminary had demonstrated timely vigilance, distinguishing them from most of their colleagues, who continued to treat their students' reading with carelessness.

In his report, I.K. Zinchenko expressed a paradoxical thought: "the removal of books from the student library <..> cannot completely eliminate the harm caused to the seminary in educational and formative terms by the circulation of these books among the students"[40]. This comment was probably prompted by the fact that, by the time of the audit, members of the Educational Committee had already gained experience in removing books from seminary libraries and were able to assess the results.

In the spring of 1870, the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod used a circular decree for the first time to regulate the reading of particular authors in the reformed seminaries. On April 4, 1870, it was prohibited to use articles by V.G. Belinsky and N.A. Dobrolyubov in teaching the course

[39] In the first case, this may refer either to the novel *Civil Marriage*, published under the pseudonym N-y M-va (1867), or to a play by N.I. Chernyavsky (1867); in the second, to E. Pfeiffer's book *Über Genossenschaftswesen*, which was included in the list of books at the Tiflis Seminary.

[40] *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет о ревизии духовно-учебных заведений Курской епархии. С. 40.

in literature, and seminary boards were ordered to remove their works from the libraries[41]. The occasion was a discussion of the reports of diocesan bishops for the 1867/68 academic year, one of which stated that the critics' articles had been used by a teacher in literature classes[42]. Apparently, this was not an isolated case. In the 1868/69 academic year, when no official curriculum for the subject had yet been developed, the teacher of the history of Russian literature at the Podolia Seminary devoted an entire lesson to the study of Belinsky, placing him between N.V. Gogol and the Slavophiles[43]. In the same year, 1868, S.V. Kersky found collected works by Belinsky and Dobrolyubov, as well as D.I. Pisarev, in the student library of the Kharkov Seminary, but did not consider it necessary to comment on the matter in any way. This is particularly noteworthy because in 1867 the library, founded by students in 1862 and initially replenished and controlled exclusively by them, had been purged at the inspector's recommendation, and books "inconsistent with the aims of theological education" had been removed from it: D.H. Lewis's *The Physiology of Common Life*, as well as the journals *Sovremennik* and *Russkoye Slovo*[44]. Thus, at that point, neither the teachers nor the auditor regarded the reading of Belinsky and Dobrolyubov as problematic.

In the neighboring Kherson Diocese, S.V. Kersky recorded a more complicated situation in 1868: the student library contained works by V.G. Belinsky, but the inspector did not issue them to students because he did not consider them "harmless." "Certain works by Pushkin" were placed in the same category as Belinsky. Apparently, this policy provoked conflicts, as the inspector refused to issue students books recommended by their instructors if, in his view, they did not correspond to "the understanding of the students of the seminary (for example, works on the natural sciences) or to the liturgical seasons (for example, novels and stories during periods of fasting)". The auditor apparently regarded this as an abuse of authority and recommended that all disputed questions concerning the issuance of books be referred to the seminary board[45].

41 РГИА. Ф. 797. Оп. 40. Д. 37. Л. 2.

42 Ibid. Л. 1.

43 РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. Отчеты. Раздел 1. Д. 61. Л. 263 об.

44 *Керский С.В.* Преобразование духовно-учебных заведений Харьковской епархии (в 1868 году). СПб., 1868. С. 26–27.

45 Ibid. С. 43.

The problematic status of Belinsky's works was discussed in the same year by the board of the Astrakhan Seminary, which decided to transfer them from the student library to the reference library, together with the journal *Sovremennik*[46]. Thus, the recently published work by Draper, apparently little known to seminary instructors, did not raise questions among them, unlike the writings of the critic of the 1840s, whose appropriateness for student reading they were prepared to debate.

In 1869, auditor S.V. Kersky, who had previously paid no attention to Belinsky and Dobrolyubov, "recommended" that the rector of the Perm Seminary discuss with the board the question of the works by these authors that he had found in the student library: "whether such works can safely remain in circulation among the students"[47]. The change in his attitude toward the critics' articles was probably prompted by the discussion of audit reports within the Educational Committee, but it is worth noting how mildly the recommendation was phrased in this case. On S.V. Kersky's report, the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, D.A. Tolstoy, left an unequivocal comment: "There is nothing to discuss; simply order that they be transferred to the reference library and not issued to students"[48]. The Educational Committee was then left only to include this remark in the list of resolutions adopted on the results of the audit[49].

Apparently, even later the works of V.G. Belinsky did not seem as dangerous to members of the Educational Committee as they did to the Chief Procurator. For example, in 1874 the Educational Committee considered admitting K. Petrov's *Russian Historical Reader* (1873) for use in seminaries as a teaching aid. It contained three quotations from V.G. Belinsky and references to his works as commentary. The Educational Committee found "nothing particular" in the quotations and approved the reader[50]. It may therefore be assumed that D.A. Tolstoy's personal opinion played a decisive role in the circular prohibition of Belinsky

---

[46] *Ненарокомов И.А.* О ревизии Астраханской семинарии и тамошнего духовного училища (в феврале 1868 г.). СПб., 1868. С. 12.

[47] *Керский С.В.* Преобразование духовно-учебных заведений Пермской епархии (в 1869 г.). СПб., 1871. С. 53.

[48] РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. 1869. Д. 1. Л. 22.

[49] Ibid. Л. 31а.

[50] РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. Д. 80. Л. 60.

and Dobrolyubov, whereas Synodal officials generally preferred milder methods of regulating reading, leaving teachers the autonomy envisaged by the 1867 Statute.

The effectiveness of circular decrees was generally rather low, since they reached the seminaries with delays, often just gathering dust in the offices of diocesan bishops. Moreover, instructors at theological seminaries, already burdened with other duties, had little time to undertake a thorough review of their libraries. Thus, during the 1871 inspection of the Vyatka Seminary, I.K. Zinchenko investigated the suicide of a student in the middle division in December 1870. Although the doctor who conducted the autopsy concluded that the seminarian had taken his own life because of an "acute brain disorder," the auditor decided to examine the suicide victim's "intellectual" and "moral" life. For this purpose, he used the records of books issued from the student library, among which he found "books both empty and worthwhile, both consistent with the aims of education and instruction in theological educational institutions and inconsistent with them," including works by Belinsky[51]. It is noteworthy that almost a year after the circular decree of April 4, 1870, the collected works of the critic were still in the student library, so the auditor was forced to request their removal along with R. Owen's *A New View of Society; or, Essays on the Principle of the Formation of the Human Character*, P.K. Shchebalsky's *Readings from Russian History*, F.M. Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, and V. Hugo's *Les Misérables*[52]. Thus, the circular decree of the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod had remained unimplemented at the Vyatka Theological Seminary for a full year, but no punishment followed; the only measure taken was the auditor's demand that the catalogue of books in the student library finally be reviewed.

In 1872, Belinsky's works were still in the student library of the Orel Seminary, although the rector claimed that they were not issued to students[53]. The rector may well have been telling the truth in this case, but the seminarians themselves admitted to the auditor that they borrowed

---

[51] *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет по обозрению духовно-учебных заведений Вятской епархии (1871 г.). С. 62.

[52] Ibid. С. 37.

[53] *Керский С.В.* Преобразование духовно-учебных заведений Орловской епархии в 1872 году. С. 67.



Pyotr Karlovich Shchebalsky.
From open sources

Belinsky and Pisarev from the city's public libraries[54]. Most likely, as in the case of the Vologda seminarian who read Draper, they did not think that such an admission could harm them – that is, they were unaware of the prohibition on reading Belinsky.

The experience of prohibiting Belinsky's works by D.A. Tolstoy's circular decree demonstrates why combating undesirable literature through direct prohibitions was futile, as was compiling any list of books at the level of the Educational Committee. At the same time, the concern shown by some seminary boards about the status of Belinsky's works even before Tolstoy's decree demonstrates that control over reading was not always a weak point requiring intervention by auditors from the capital. Particularly revealing is the case of the Podolia Seminary, where in December 1867 the board discovered the existence of an "organization" consisting of four students engaged in distributing books "that shake the foundations of Church and society and divert the younger generation from serious preparation for future activity". They turned out to be "hardened activists" in the distribution of books on "geology, physiology, <..> the question of the position of women in society, and the natural and social sciences in general"[55]. The auditor learned all these details on the spot, since the rector's report to the Synod for the 1867/68 academic year

[54] Ibid. C. 52.

[55] *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет о ревизии духовно-учебных заведений Подольской епархии 1871 года. СПб., 1872. С. 4.

mentioned only that students "observed to have a penchant for reading harmful books" had been invited to submit petitions for dismissal[56]. Thus, as in many other cases, seminary boards preferred to conceal problematic situations, reporting the bare minimum of information to St. Petersburg and creating the impression that they had not noticed them at all.

At a time when auditors of the Educational Committee had to deal with "harmful" books virtually by hand, their reports could have served as guidelines for seminary boards and instructors. Printed versions of the reports, after being discussed by the Educational Committee, were circulated to seminaries and diocesan heads precisely for this purpose[57]. Although references to the reports do indeed occur in the records of seminary boards, there is insufficient evidence to assess the effectiveness of this measure. Thus, among the records of the Simbirsk Seminary board for 1870, I.K. Zinchenko found an order from the rector instructing members of the board to familiarize themselves with the reports, which had been sent to them for the first time that February, and to discuss what "could be applied" to the Simbirsk Seminary. As a result, none of the teachers prepared a written document summarizing the recommendations, and the meeting ended with a "verbal agreement of the assembly to follow the auditors' instructions in practice"[58]. In 1875, the report of auditor S.I. Miropolsky contained an irritated comment concerning persistent mistakes in the organization of written assignments: "The question of compositions <..> has long since been explained in detail and thoroughly in the auditors' reports. This means that our reports are either not read here, or they do not wish to take them into consideration and use them as guidance. But it is tiresome and wearisome to repeat the same thing over and over"[59]. This emotional exclamation could be applied to many other aspects of seminary life that auditors attempted to correct.

In the case of students' reading of undesirable literature and the lack of control over books on the part of instructors, the problem itself was

---

[56] РГИА. Ф. 802. Оп. 9. Отчеты. Раздел 1. Д. 61. Л. 16.

[57] See: *Орлова Ю.П.* Ревизоры Учебного комитета при Св. Синоде как агенты реформы духовного образования 1867 года // Вестник ТвГУ. Серия «История». 2025. № 1 (73). С. 111.

[58] *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет о ревизии духовно-учебных заведений Симбирской епархии в 1873 году. СПб., 1874. С. 4.

[59] *Миропольский С.И.* Отчет о ревизии духовно-учебных заведений Подольской епархии 1875 года. СПб., 1876. С. 12.

not identified by the auditors immediately. In fact, between 1867 and 1870, the auditing reports mention only Draper and Belinsky. The turning point came with I.K. Zinchenko's inspections in late 1870 and early 1871. In five of the six seminaries he visited – the Kursk, Chernigov, Vyatka, Kazan, and Podolia seminaries – problems were identified with the composition of the libraries and the "tendency" of the students. In his report on the Volhynia Seminary, the auditor even considered it necessary to state: "I did not find in the student library of the Volhynia Seminary any books in direct contradiction to the task of seminary education and upbringing, unless novels are counted as such"[60]. This contrasts sharply with the reports of S.I. Lebedev, who was inspecting nine other dioceses at the same time: only in his report on the Kaluga Seminary did he mention a purge of the student library undertaken by the teachers themselves. Of ten publications deemed "unsuitable" for seminarians to read, some were transferred to the reference library – D.G. Lewis's *History of Philosophy* and *The Physiology of Common Life* – while others were prohibited from being issued: P.K. Shchebalsky's *Readings from Russian History*, D.M. Shchepkin's *On the Sources and Forms of Russian Mythology* (1859–1861), and *Microcosm: Thoughts on the Natural and Microcosmus: an essay concerning man and his relation to the world* by Lotze (1867)[61].

In his latest report on the inspection of the Kazan Seminary, I.K. Zinchenko referred to his experience inspecting the Chernigov, Kursk, and Vyatka seminaries to conclude that the problem of "the purposeless, and sometimes harmful, reading by seminary students of books unrelated to their classwork" was widespread, and that instructors had no "full possibility" of eliminating it[62]. Zinchenko's observations produced two results. First, his colleagues on the Educational Committee began to monitor undesirable reading more closely, as comments concerning books appeared increasingly often in auditors' reports from this point onward. Second, in 1872 the Educational Committee deemed it necessary to develop mandatory *Rules Concerning the Acquisition of Books for*

---

60 *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет по обозрению духовно-учебных заведений Волынской епархии (1871 г.). СПб., 1872. С. 82.

61 *Лебедев С.И.* О ревизии Калужской семинарии и духовного училища (в декабре 1871 года). СПб., 1872. С. 7.

62 *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет о ревизии духовно-учебных заведений Казанской епархии 1871 года. СПб., 1872. С. 38.

Student Libraries and the Procedure for Their Reading by Students, thereby moving against the spirit of the 1867 Statute and intervening in an area that the seminaries themselves were supposed to control. Referring to the auditors' reports, the Educational Committee stated the problem explicitly: students "frequently read books that correspond neither to their age nor to their understanding, nor, in general, to the aims of theological education and upbringing," while teachers "do not pay due attention to this matter and sometimes order books for student libraries without first familiarizing themselves with their content and tendency." The boards were instructed to review the books in their student libraries, not to purchase books "whose contents are unknown to the administrative authorities and instructors," and to place students' visits to public libraries under the supervision of the inspectorate[63].

As with the 1870 circular decree, the implementation of these rules depended on the situation in each particular diocese. For example, at the Novgorod Seminary, the catalogues of the student library were reviewed immediately after the Synod's decree, but no "harmful" books were found there[64]. At the Kharkov Seminary in 1874, I. K. Zinchenko discovered that although the board had instructed the teachers as early as 1872 to "immediately review the books available in the student library <..>, nothing has yet been done by the instructors." The auditor found in the student library the journals *Delo*, *Sovremennik*, and *Vestnik Evropy*, "novels by Spielhagen published by *Delo*, Auerbach, as well as Schweizer's *Emma*"[65]. The degree to which the Synod's directives were actually implemented and the presence of "harmful" books in the library are, in both cases, logically correlated.

The analysis of the introduction of restrictions on the reading of certain literature by students of Orthodox theological seminaries reveals the bureaucratic processes within the ecclesiastical administration during the first years after the beginning of the reform of theological education. The principle of broad autonomy for seminary boards embodied in the 1867 Statute, under which they were expected to resolve independently

---

63 РГИА. Ф. 797. Оп. 42. I отд. 2 стол. Д. 56. Л. 3 об.

64 *Лебедев С.И.* О ревизии духовно-учебных заведений в Новгороде (в 1873 году). Отчет. СПб., 1874. С. 7.

65 *Зинченко И.К.* Отчет о ревизии духовно-учебных заведений Харьковской епархии (1874 г.). СПб., 1875. С. 17.

numerous issues concerning the internal life of their educational institutions, inevitably encountered difficulties in practice. Some teachers went too far in their pedagogical experiments, while others did not wish to exercise this autonomy at all, waiting instead for instructions from St. Petersburg. In the case of book prohibitions, there was no consistent understanding of what could be considered "harmful" or "inconsistent with the aims of theological education," even among members of the Educational Committee, let alone among teachers. If the anti-religious character of a particular work was not always easy for instructors to determine – especially since they lacked the time and opportunity to keep track of every new publication on the book market – then "anti-social" works of the late 1860s and early 1870s remained even further beyond their attention. It cannot be said that the problem was completely ignored by seminary boards. The situation in each educational institution depended on numerous factors, although the decisive factor was the position of the rector and board members concerning the control of students' reading. For its part, the Educational Committee, whose members did not immediately grasp the seriousness of the problem, employed various means to address it during the first years after the reform. The degree of direct intervention by the Synod through circular decrees increased as auditors repeatedly encountered the same "harmful" books and gradually lost faith in the autonomy of seminary boards or in printed reports as an effective form of governance in theological education. Even Synodal circular decrees could, for various reasons, be ignored locally. Thus, despite the severe punishments imposed on theological seminary students for reading prohibited books, this area continued to remain a sphere of uncertainty for both students and teachers, ultimately producing cases like the one described in the journal *Vperyod!*: neither the seminarians nor the inspectorate could have suspected that they were reading a "harmful" book.

Acknowledgements:
The research was supported by a grant from the Russian Science Foundation, No. 23-18-00520. https://rscf.ru/project/23-18-00520/

Conflict of interests
The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

References

1. Luchkina O.A. The Silhouettes of Children's Readings Advisors: A Cleric, A Minister, A General, and Others. *Detskie chteniya = Children's Readings*. 2012;2:115–135. https://www.elibrary.ru/uhbvpf (In Russ.).
2. Mikhailov B. G. *Harbingers of the Storm: Essays on Revolutionary Narodniks from the Vologda Region.* Arkhangelsk: SeveroZapadnoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo, 1977. 121 p. URL: https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000200_000018_rc_2325289/?ysclid=mrhp9hgt4i941768321 (In Russ.).
2. Orlova Yu.P. The Theological Education Reform of the 1860s–1870s and Moral Image of the Orthodox Clergy in the Seminary Community Members' Representations. *The New Past.* 2024;1:44–61. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.18522/25003224202414461
3. Orlova Yu.P. Auditors of the Educational Committee under the Holy Synod as Agents of the Reform of Theological Education of 1867. *Bulletin of Tver State University. Series: History*. 2025;73(1):105–120. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.26456/vthistory/2025.1.105–120
4. Ferapont (P.F. Shirokov), Jerome. Audit System at Theological Educational Institutions in the Second Half of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries. *Christian Reading.* 2024;2:253–260. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.47132/18145574_2024_2_253

Julia A. Safronova
C.Sc. (History),
Associate Professor Faculty of History European University at St. Petersburg,
SPIN-code: 6428-8640,
AuthorID: 917014,
ORCID: 0000-0003-3900-1994

Received 13.11.2025
Revised 15.02.2026
Accepted 16.03.2026

DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.005
Original paper

Daniil O. Yastrebov

European University at St. Petersburg
St. Petersburg, Russian Federation
E-mail: dyastrebov@eu.spb.ru

Guardianship of Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich: Between Familialism and Bureaucratisation, 1874–1881

Abstract

The article examines the mechanisms governing the guardianship of Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich from 1874 to 1881. From the moment the Grand Duke was declared mentally ill – as a consequence of his theft of his mother Grand Duchess Alexandra Iosifovna's diamonds – until his being sent to Tashkent for permanent residence, the imperial family and government officials were compelled to address the problem posed by this unprecedented scandal. Acting under extraordinary circumstances, officials themselves had to develop new rules, without precedent, governing Nikolai Konstantinovich's life. These ranged from instructions for the successive chief administrators – E.A. Ukhtomsky, K.K. Vitkovsky, and N.Ya. Rostovtsev – to procedures regulating interaction between Minister of the Imperial Court A.V. Adlerberg and the Third Section. Drawing on archival materials from the State Archive of the Russian Federation and the Russian State Historical Archive, the article analyses the complex system of guardianship administration that

© Daniil O. Yastrebov, 2026

emerged from the interaction of numerous factors and actors, ranging from Emperor Alexander II and Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich to gendarmes and court physicians. Two principles operated within this system: familialism and bureaucratisation, as well as formal and informal ties, which alternately intersected, complemented, and neutralised one another. Throughout the period under consideration, however, the influence of "pre-modern" administrative practices steadily declined, giving way to the formalisation and institutionalisation of supervision. Using this case as an example, the article demonstrates the specific ways and mechanisms through which grand-ducal households interacted with the imperial bureaucracy in the second half of the nineteenth century and traces the evolution of these mechanisms from purely personal arrangements towards more systematic forms of control.

Keywords:
Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich; Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich; Alexander II; informal networks; bureaucracy; House of Romanov

For citation:
Daniil O. Yastrebov. Guardianship of Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich: Between Familialism and Bureaucratisation, 1874–1881. The Historical Reporter. 2026. Vol. 59. P. 164–185 DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.005

I would like to express my gratitude to Julia A. Safronova. Under her supervision, I defended a Master's thesis at the European University at St. Petersburg in 2022–2024, which subsequently formed the basis for this article.

The corporation of grand dukes and the bureaucracy

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the number of representatives of the Romanov dynasty increased substantially. Whereas in the Nicholas I era the imperial family was limited to the emperor, his consort, and their sons, at the beginning of the new reign the Romanovs comprised several branches. At the same time, the imperial family remained the most closed "corporation" in the state. The American scholar A. Rieber identified the emergence of the institution of the grand dukes, which became incorporated into the administrative structure of the empire[1], as one of the distinguishing features of the era of the Great Reforms. The patrimonial character of autocratic rule gradually began to change, creating a complex configuration of interconnected structures and interacting actors.

Young grand dukes, raised in an atmosphere of permissiveness, occupied a "borderline" position within the social hierarchy. On the one hand, they were separated from the emperor, his wife, and their children. Being far removed from the throne by a long line of potential heirs, the grand dukes were compelled either to perform representative functions or to find a narrow sphere of activity for themselves. Traditional occupations considered appropriate for members of the imperial family were largely confined to the military sphere, which in practice meant the Navy or the Guards. While their fathers could still assist Alexander II in governing the empire, the numerous Konstantinovichi, Nikolaevichi, and Mikhailovichi were unable to find a suitable place for themselves within the imperial hierarchy. There were very few positions comparable, for example, to that of viceroy in the Caucasus or Poland, while competition among the different branches of the dynasty further exacerbated the situation.

On the other hand, young grand dukes were closely connected with the empire's high aristocracy, which lived according to its own rules and moral codes. As they grew older and found themselves unable to become part of the administrative elite, their way of life increasingly came to be shaped by the unwritten rules of high society. The further this integration

---

[1] *Рибер А.* Групповые интересы в борьбе вокруг Великих реформ // Великие реформы в России. 1857–1874 / Под ред. Л.Г. Захаровой, Б. Эклофа, Дж. Бушнелла. М.: Изд-во МГУ, 1992. С. 44.

progressed, the more scandalous the behaviour of the grand dukes became[2].

As a rule, such excesses involved violations of public morality: extramarital children, mistresses and morganatic wives, and suspicions of homosexuality. Although open discussion in society of intimate life beyond the marital bedroom was considered unacceptable[3], many details from the biographies of members of the imperial family became subjects of conversation and rumour.

Responsibility for resolving the problems that arose fell not only upon the emperor as the head of a vast family, but also upon a specialized institution – the Ministry of the Imperial Court, headed by Minister A.V. Adlerberg. The case that occurred in 1874 was unique among the scandals involving members of ruling dynasties. It was the first scandal in the history of the family that was not connected with a violation of moral norms but with a criminal offense; it occurred in the family of Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. In April 1874, the disappearance of the diamonds belonging to Grand Duchess Alexandra Iosifovna was discovered at the Marble Palace. It was established that her son, Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich, was implicated in the theft. The investigation was conducted under the recently introduced judicial statutes. The standardized procedure, which included investigation, inquiry, confrontation, and detention, was reproduced in this case as well. Thus, unlike "ordinary" violations of moral norms, the extraordinary nature of the situation was connected specifically with the status of the incident: a member of the House of Romanov had been involved in a criminal offense.

The case, however, soon ceased to be treated as a criminal matter, and six months later Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich was declared mentally ill and placed under guardianship. The medicalization of the deed made it possible to remove him from the scope of post-Reform criminal proceedings without, at the same time, disavowing the judicial reform itself. Although the question of criminal prosecution of a member of the dynasty had been resolved, another problem arose, connected with the grand duke's new status. The situation in which Nikolai Konstantinovich

---

2 *Долбилов М.Д.* Жизнь творимого романа: От авантекста к контексту «Анны Карениной». М.: Новое литературное обозрение, 2023. С. 17.

3 *Gay P.* The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud. Vol. 2: The tender passion. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986. P. 125–127.



Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich. 1860s.
From open sources

found himself proved unprecedented not only for high society and the imperial family, but also for the large body of officials connected with the imperial household, who now had to regulate the situation by familiar – or not entirely familiar – means.

Beginning in December 1874, Nikolai Konstantinovich was sent to various secluded places throughout the empire, where, however, he did not remain for long. The scandals that arose compelled the imperial family and officials to choose a new place of residence for him, but the one constant requirement was that it be far from the capital. In the autumn of 1881, the grand duke was sent to Tashkent, where he lived for the rest of his life. Under these circumstances, the officials no longer had to devise new measures of control.

This case has already been examined in the historiography, but historians have focused on individual periods of Nikolai Konstantinovich's life. a number of studies are descriptive in nature and contain inaccuracies in their reconstruction of events[4]. None of the earlier works ex-

[4] *Зимин И.П.* «Забытый» великий князь // Вопросы истории. 2002. № 10. С. 131–139; *Красюков Р.Г.* Великий князь Николай Константинович: Опыт биографии // Из глубины времен. Вып. 3. СПб.: Полторак, 1994. С. 106–123.

amined the complex system of interactions among the principal actors involved in the scandal.

Meanwhile, as this article will demonstrate, the case brought together two principles: "familialism" and "bureaucratization". By "familialism," I mean a set of mechanisms for regulating the everyday life and behaviour of members of the imperial family, based on premodern administrative practices that cannot, however, be reduced to the typological concept of "patrimonialism". "Familialism," in other words, was a means of resolving conflicts and their consequences within a narrow circle of relatives (members of the dynasty), associates, and trusted individuals. By "bureaucratization," I mean the process of introducing bureaucratic administration into the grand-ducal households, a process driven by the growing number of members of the House of Romanov, the extensive reform of the administrative system, and the increasingly important role of officials.

"Family matters": the monarch's will and the Third Section

The grand duke-related scandal was regarded as politically significant, yet at the same time it was a "family matter". The emperor viewed Nikolai Konstantinovich's act as a "dishonour to the entire family," in the words of E.M. Dolgorukova in one of her letters to the emperor[5]. The disgrace brought upon his nephew could also reflect upon the sovereign as the head of a large family. Conversely, the perception of Alexander as a poor family man could lead to his discrediting as a monarch[6].

Alexander II's pattern of behaviour throughout all seven years was dual and contradictory. He experienced what had happened to his nephew very painfully, regarding it as a family tragedy, yet at the same time most of the decisions had to be made by the imperial bureaucracy. D.A. Milyutin recorded in his diary: "Among other things, the sovereign was deeply distressed the other day by the unexpected, almost incredible

[5] E.M. Dolgorukova to Alexander II. 8 April 1874 // ГА РФ. Ф. 678. Оп. 2. Д. 166. Л. 33.

[6] *Wortman R.* The Russian Imperial Family as Symbol // Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule. Collected Articles. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013. P. 112.



Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich. 1873.
From open sources

discovery of a thief within the imperial family itself!"[7] According to his notes, the emperor's face showed "signs of an agitated state and even traces of tears"[8].

In a letter dated April 16 (six days after the person responsible for the theft had been discovered), Alexander II wrote to E.M. Dolgorukova that reaching a decision "concerning the fate of this dandy (*gandin*), and on the eve of my departure, is no easy matter"[9]. Alexander II carefully read the physicians' medical reports. The results of the very first examination only strengthened his conviction that his nephew was insane. On April 23, 1874, he informed Dolgorukova that the mood of Alexandra Iosifovna, Konstantin Nikolaevich, and himself had noticeably improved because the physicians had declared that Nikolai Konstantinovich was developing insanity, which had caused his act: "Although it is certainly sad when there is abnormality in the family, it is nevertheless preferable to seeing theft"[10]. Alexander finally became convinced that he was right

7 *Милютин Д.А.* Дневник генерал-фельдмаршала графа Дмитрия Алексеевича Милютина. 1873–1875. М.: РОССПЭН, 2008. С. 118.

8 Ibid.

9 E.M. Dolgorukova to Alexander II. 16 April 1874 // ГА РФ. Ф. 678. Оп. 2. Д. 74. Л. 42.

10 E.M. Dolgorukova to Alexander II. 23 April 1874 // Ibid. Л. 54–54 об.

on September 12, after reading a new medical report in which the psychiatrists who had examined the grand duke expressed complete certainty that he was insane[11].

In December 1874, Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich was declared mentally ill, and guardianship was established over both his person and his property. Under the laws of the Russian Empire, the guardian of a mentally ill person could be his closest relative, and this role was assigned to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. At the same time, because of Nikolai Konstantinovich's status, the situation lacked standardized mechanisms of guardianship. Nikolai Konstantinovich was exiled from the capital, and responsibility for his life was entrusted to a small staff of officials and physicians, the principal among them being the chief administrator. The grand duke was expected to live in seclusion far from the capital and undergo treatment for his "mental illness"[12]. Physicians and officials were required to send reports and medical bulletins to St. Petersburg in order to maintain continuous oversight of developments. These documents were received by Minister of the Imperial Court Adlerberg, who brought them to the monarch's attention[13].

The emperor received most of the information about his nephew's life from two sources. The first consisted of official reports and medical bulletins sent to the Minister of the Court. The second consisted of reports from the gendarmes.

The reports of the Third Section show that surveillance extended beyond Nikolai Konstantinovich himself. Officers of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes included in their reports information about everything that was taking place, including details concerning the conduct of the chief administrators, their assistants, and physicians. In one such report, dated May 5, 1875, the gendarme Grigory Kremenetsky gave an unfavourable assessment of Chief Administrator Ukhtomsky and his assistant, Major N. Bolshev: "As I have had occasion to observe from his treatment of the Grand Duke and from rumours, Prince Ukhtomsky and Bolshev have an

---

[11] Medical opinion on the health of Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich // Ibid. Ф. 664. Оп. 1. Д. 35. Л. 9.

[12] Draft instructions for Dr. Chekhov. 24 April 1875 // РГИА. Ф. 435. Оп. 1. Д. 5. Л. 221–228.

[13] A.V. Adlerberg to E.A. Ukhtomsky. 29 December 1874 // РГИА. Ф. 435. Оп. 1. Д. 6. Л. 56.

unfavourable influence on His Highness and do not correspond to the purpose for which they have been placed with him. The former, as rumour has it, having long harboured antipathy toward His Highness and now taking advantage of the authorianship (sic!) entrusted to him over the sick man, exaggerates any mistake made by the patient and makes accusations against him"[14].

In essence, the officers of the Third Section[15] became Alexander II's personal agents. This system enabled the emperor to monitor the situation surrounding the guardianship. Within the nuanced system of competing personal interests, the officers found themselves opposed to the trusted associates of Konstantin Nikolaevich, whom I will discuss below. Conflicts between the chief administrator and the gendarme sent to supervise him occurred quite frequently. In such cases, the emperor sided with the officials of his own chancellery.

Alexander II's position on matters concerning the grand duke remained contradictory throughout the seven years. P.A. Valuev left perhaps the most precise assessment of the situation, recording in his diary on March 2, 1876: "In the evening, a meeting at Count Adlerberg's concerning further measures with regard to Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich. The same *hiatus* (gap) between words and deeds. <..> Alongside this, I remain astonished by the faith placed in the practical significance and power of other forms of the written word. As though it had occurred to no one to recall and compare what had happened with what it had actually produced"[16]. The emperor, however, did not notice these contradictions, shifting the blame onto others. Nevertheless, it was precisely within the close circle of relatives and trusted physicians, including court physicians, that the decision was made to medicalize Nikolai Konstantinovich's act. This became the starting point for the bureaucratization of the entire administration of his guardianship. In his attempts to remain informed about the situation, the emperor relied on the Personal Chancellery established during his father's reign.

---

[14] Linguistic errors and inconsistencies in the proposals have been retained. Report by G. Kremenetsky, 5 May 1875 // ГА РФ. Ф. 109. Оп. 3а. Д. 2619. Л. 311–312.

[15] From August 1880: Department of State Police under the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

[16] Дневник П.А. Валуева министра внутренних дел. Т. II. 1865–1876 гг. М.: Изд-во Академии наук СССР, 1961. С. 344.

Chief administrator: a web of informal relations

A special position was created to supervise the grand duke, known as the "chief administrator". In European clinical psychiatry, a position of *chief superintendent* had existed since the 1830s, and it appears that the Russian title *glavny rasporyaditel* was simply a calque of this term. Although in England and the United States the position was usually held by a doctor, typically the head physician of a hospital, this was not an essential requirement, since the superintendent's principal functions were administrative. His duties included drafting documents, preparing reports, and maintaining communication with the administration. In the case under consideration, the position of chief administrator was successively assigned to men close to Nikolai Konstantinovich's family – career military officers who had no relevant experience: E.A. Ukhtomsky (December 9, 1874–June 4, 1875), K.K. Vitkovsky (June 5, 1875–May 14, 1877), and N.Ya. Rostovtsev (May 15, 1877–January 4, 1881).

It was precisely the chief administrators who became "agents" of Konstantin Nikolaevich's influence, as he, according to Milyutin's diary entry, sought to restore "his son's reputation and return him to his former official position"[17]. His personal connections with Ukhtomsky, Vitkovsky, and Rostovtsev enabled Konstantin Nikolaevich to influence not only the situation itself but also the way it appeared in the capital. Esper Alexeevich Ukhtomsky was a naval officer who had served for a long time as Konstantin Nikolaevich's aide-de-camp[18], so his appointment is hardly surprising. To deal with such a delicate matter as supervising Nikolai Konstantinovich, a person already admitted into the grand duke's family circle was required. On December 9, 1874, A.V. Adlerberg sent Ukhtomsky a confidential letter informing him that he was being assigned to Nikolai Konstantinovich "as a trusted person and administrator responsible for arranging His Highness's stay in Oreanda," at Konstantin Nikolaevich's palace in Crimea[19].

---

17 *Милютин Д.А.* Дневник. С. 190.

18 *Арсеньев Д.С.* Из записок адмирала Д.С. Арсеньева // Русский архив. 1910. № 11. С. 410.

19 A.V. Adlerberg to E.A. Ukhtomsky. 11 December 1874 // РГИА. Ф. 435. Оп. 1. Д. 5. Л. 187–187 об.

Already in the first paragraph of the instructions drawn up by the Minister of the Imperial Court, Ukhtomsky was described as "entrusted with a special imperial confidence"[20]. His appointment was approved by the emperor and Konstantin Nikolaevich, and had been agreed upon with Ukhtomsky himself.

Adlerberg's instructions vested the chief administrator with full authority necessary to supervise Nikolai Konstantinovich, who was required to comply unconditionally with all of Ukhtomsky's "orders and demands". The appointed physicians were likewise placed under the chief administrator's authority. At the institutional level, the local authorities were required to assist Ukhtomsky. The term "local authorities" encompassed both institutions subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and provincial gendarmerie administrations[21]. The authors of the instructions proceeded from general assumptions about the ways in which emerging difficulties and conflicts should be resolved.

The bureaucrats and members of the imperial family found themselves trapped in a difficult situation: Nikolai Konstantinovich, having been declared insane, was to be treated, yet his status required the development of special rules governing his confinement and movements throughout the country. In practice, this proved impossible. The instructions were vague and did not specify the concrete actions to be taken by the chief administrator and his subordinates, which subsequently created numerous problems for those involved in resolving the scandal. Although the new, more detailed instructions issued to Vitkovsky[22] and Rostovtsev[23] were considerably expanded, they still could not anticipate all the problematic situations that arose over the course of seven years.

The Minister of the Court demanded that the bureaucrats observe the instructions and physicians' recommendations consistently and precisely. Konstantin Nikolaevich's interference in the affairs of the chief administrators was not always coordinated with Adlerberg. By virtue of his position, Adlerberg could not prevent the grand duke from influencing the situation, since Konstantin Nikolaevich was officially the

---

20 Instructions for E.A. Ukhtomsky // РГИА. Ф. 435. Оп. 1. Д. 5. Л. 187 об.

21 E.A. Ukhtomsky to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. 20 April 1874 // Ibid. Л. 18 об.

22 Instructions for K.K. Vitkovsky // РГИА. Ф. 435. Оп. 1. Д. 8. Л. 156.

23 Instructions for N.Ya. Rostovtsev // РГИА. Ф. 435. Оп. 1. Д. 11. Л. 1–1 об.

guardian of the patient. For his part, the minister carried out his duties in accordance with the law, the instructions, and imperial decisions. Adlerberg served as the link between the emperor and the chief administrator. It was usually the latter whom he regarded as responsible for the scandals that arose[24]. Observing the situation from the centre, the minister did not know the actual state of affairs and demanded strict compliance with official duties from the bureaucrats, which frequently led to misunderstandings between the chief administrators and Adlerberg.

From the outset, Ukhtomsky communicated officially with Adlerberg and unofficially with Konstantin Nikolaevich. Although, as guardian, the latter had the right to receive information about his son's life, direct interaction between him and the chief administrator was not regulated. By informing Konstantin about developments without going through Adlerberg, Ukhtomsky could in this case have understood his actions as part of his duties as an aide-de-camp, since no official order had been issued removing him from the staff. The uncertainty surrounding Ukhtomsky's status created an additional source of tension within the hierarchical structure of administration. Thus, for example, when temporarily leaving his position, the chief administrator was required by the instructions to transfer his authority to the senior-ranking officer among those guarding the patient[25]. Ukhtomsky, however, asked Konstantin Nikolaevich for permission to violate this rule and appoint Captain 1st Rank Greve as acting administrator, explaining that Greve was "personally known to the General Admiral [Konstantin Nikolaevich. – *D.Ya.*]"[26]. Having secured the grand duke's support, Ukhtomsky bypassed the rules for his own convenience, provoking Adlerberg's anger.

The people supervising Nikolai Konstantinovich in Oreanda had not yet developed their own rules of conduct. In their daily supervision of him, they allowed him considerable freedom, including visits to public places and meetings with private individuals. The situation looked different from the center: Adlerberg and the emperor considered the

---

[24] A.V. Adlerberg to K.K. Vitkovsky. 21 September 1876 // ГА РФ. Ф. 664. Оп. 1. Д. 36. Л. 1–1 об.

[25] Instructions for E.A. Ukhtomsky // РГИА. Ф. 435. Оп. 1. Д. 5. Л. 188 об.

[26] E.A. Ukhtomsky to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. 3 March 1875 // Ibid. Л. 305 об. – 306.

patient's relatively unrestricted daily routine unacceptable. Their concerns were confirmed by the scandals caused by Nikolai Konstantinovich. Responsibility for all of this was placed on the chief administrator. It was precisely when Adlerberg was dissatisfied with him that Ukhtomsky attempted to make use of his relationship of trust with Konstantin Nikolaevich. In a lengthy letter to the grand duke dated February 4, 1875, Ukhtomsky wrote not only about the events that had taken place but also about his "feverish anxiety lest I make some mistake"[27]. Errors committed by the administrator could provoke the emperor's displeasure. Since Ukhtomsky interacted most frequently with Adlerberg, he hoped for "His Highness's protection" before the minister rather than before Alexander II[28]. At the same time, according to Ukhtomsky himself, his requests for protection were "timid," and he referred to Konstantin Nikolaevich as none other than his second father[29]. In one telegram to the grand duke, Ukhtomsky described his relations with the Minister of the Court, noting that he had "received a dressing-down from St. Petersburg for a harmful and irregular life"[30]. No written evidence of the grand duke's "intercession" has been found, but the tone of Adlerberg's later letters changed noticeably: there was no longer any room for expressions of dissatisfaction; instead, they were marked by pronounced indifference and coldness.

Ukhtomsky's requests to be relieved of his duties as chief administrator occupied a special place in the bureaucrats' correspondence. The position seemed to Ukhtomsky exhausting and demanding both physically and emotionally. Living far from his family and the capital, he was cut off from his accustomed life. Despite regular correspondence with the General Admiral, Ukhtomsky no longer participated in the life of the court or the naval administration, spending his time supervising the patient. On the other hand, the position provided him with a number of privileges, material benefits, and symbolic capital – the gratitude and

---

27 E.A. Ukhtomsky to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. 4 February 1875 // Ibid. Л. 269 об.

28 Ibid.

29 E.A. Ukhtomsky to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. 2 May 1875 // Ibid. Л. 398.

30 E.A. Ukhtomsky to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. 1 March 1875 // Ibid. Л. 297.

favor of the imperial family. He sought to secure his resignation both through Adlerberg[31] and through Konstantin Nikolaevich. Given that the final decision nevertheless rested with the emperor, Ukhtomsky regarded the grand duke as someone capable of influencing Alexander II. From 1875 onward, reports began to mention the poor health either of Ukhtomsky himself or of other persons surrounding Nikolai Konstantinovich. Although the climatic conditions of Yalta contributed to the deterioration of the health of some bureaucrats and officers, according to Ukhtomsky they did not complain that they were serving "my Father [i.e., Ukhtomsky's. — *D.Ya.*] and his Son"[32]. Konstantin Nikolaevich attempted to persuade his own aide-de-camp to continue performing his duties: "<..> you must remain chief administrator, because all the responsibility rests on you"[33]. For Ukhtomsky, the principal incentive was the prospect of material well-being and the grand duke's favor.

Konstantin Nikolaevich protected his aide-de-camp from Adlerberg's displeasure and, consequently, from the emperor's anger; in return, he received information about what was happening and personal loyalty expressed through the direct performance of the duties of chief administrator. When Ukhtomsky decided to relinquish his authority, Konstantin Nikolaevich did not object. Although Ukhtomsky failed to live up to the grand duke's expectations, he nevertheless remained among his close associates, and the question of his material well-being was resolved[34].

When selecting a new chief administrator, the principal requirement was personal loyalty to the imperial family. In a confidential telegram to Ukhtomsky, Konstantin Nikolaevich described the difficulty of finding a replacement: "<..> I have been racking my brains for about a month already..."[35] With the emperor's approval, K.K. Vitkovsky, the

---

[31] Report by E.A. Ukhtomsky. 2 May 1875 // Ibid. Л. 393 об.

[32] E.A. Ukhtomsky to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. 3 March 1875 // Ibid. Л. 299.

[33] Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich to E.A. Ukhtomsky. 6 May 1875 // РГИА. Ф. 435. Оп. 1. Д. 6. Л. 13.

[34] E.A. Ukhtomsky to E.E. Ukhtomsky, 4 June 1878 // РГИА. Ф. 1072. Оп. 2. Д. 489. Л. 3.

[35] Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich to E.A. Ukhtomsky. 6 May 1875 // РГИА. Ф. 435. Оп. 1. Д. 6. Л. 21.

mayor of Warsaw, was appointed to the position at the age of fifty-seven. Konstantin Nikolaevich had known him since his tenure as viceroy in Poland. An additional criterion in favour of his candidacy was his experience both as an administrator and as a courtier. "He has fully understood, even guessed, the requirements of the sovereign, of myself, and of the doctors, and I have every hope that he will succeed in carrying them out properly"[36]. Thus, Vitkovsky was an acceptable candidate for both Alexander II and Konstantin Nikolaevich.

Only a few days after the new administrator assumed office, Konstantin wrote to him in a personal letter: "I sincerely thank you for your letter and report, which confirm me in my conviction that I was not mistaken in appealing to your devotion to me"[37]. Despite the favour of the emperor and Konstantin Nikolaevich, Vitkovsky's immediate superior remained Adlerberg. In his first report to the minister, he noted that he had served "faithfully and truly" the imperial house and Russia for thirty-nine years[38], which enabled him to establish a relationship of trust with his immediate superior.

Although Vitkovsky was not Konstantin Nikolaevich's aide-de-camp, he too took advantage of the opportunity to derive benefits from informal communication with him. His requests concerned appointments in the civil service, which the grand duke could help facilitate[39]. Vitkovsky explained his letters by referring to the unlimited favours Konstantin Nikolaevich had shown him. As can be seen, the same formula of informal relations between the chief administrator and Konstantin that had emerged during the first year of the scandal was repeated. Each obtained something from the relationship: on the one hand, loyalty and information; on the other, the achievement of personal objectives.

It was understood that the official reports were read by the emperor, a fact known to all those involved, and therefore all official information passed through the administrator's internal censorship. In some cases,

---

36 Ibid. Л. 21 об.

37 K.K. Vitkovsky to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. 17 June 1875 // РГИА. Ф. 435. Оп. 1. Д. 8. Л. 29.

38 Report by K.K. Vitkovsky // Ibid. Л. 19.

39 K.K. Vitkovsky to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. 6 September 1875 // Ibid. Л. 101 об.; K.K. Vitkovsky to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich, 15 July and 9 August 1876 // Ibid. Л. 233, 260.

Vitkovsky attempted to circumvent this standardized bureaucratic procedure, seeking a protector in Adlerberg himself, though now against the emperor rather than against the Minister of the Court, as had been the case with Ukhtomsky. This strategy is particularly evident during the crisis at the end of 1875, when it was discovered that A.A. Demidova, one of Nikolai Konstantinovich's mistresses, had given birth to a child. In a lengthy letter to Konstantin Nikolaevich, Vitkovsky reported that "the matter had been settled without publicity," adding that the incident was not described in any of the reports, including the weekly medical report, except in a confidential letter to Adlerberg[40]. Balancing between the minister and the grand duke, Vitkovsky perceived the emperor as a particular threat to his position. Vitkovsky's informal confidential letters, addressed alternately to Adlerberg and Konstantin Nikolaevich, helped him "stay afloat," preserving the confidence and favour. Vitkovsky was dismissed at his own request on account of poor health and also because of the need to move the "high-ranking patient" to a new location – to Orenburg.

N.Ya. Rostovtsev was appointed as the new chief administrator. His selection was probably motivated by two considerations. First, the Rostovtsev family enjoyed the favour of the imperial family. It should be recalled that Nikolai Yakovlevich's father, Yakov Ivanovich Rostovtsev, was a trusted associate of Nicholas I after the events on Senate Square on December 14, 1825, when Rostovtsev "informed" on the conspirators. During the new reign, he was entrusted with chairing the Editorial Commissions in which the draft of the peasant reform was discussed. The second reason for Rostovtsev's appointment was his personal acquaintance with Nikolai Konstantinovich, which appears to have been the more important factor in this case. The appointment should be regarded as the result of lobbying by Konstantin Nikolaevich. The grand duke trusted the new chief administrator more than the emperor himself, who had been displeased by N.Ya. Rostovtsev's trip to London to visit A.I. Herzen, interpreting it as an act of opposition[41]. Although Konstantin Nikolaevich attempted once again to establish a relationship of trust

[40] K.K. Vitkovsky to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. 12 December 1875 // Ibid. Л. 144.

[41] *Богданович А.* Три последних самодержца. М.; Л.: Изд-во Л.Д. Френкель, 1924. С. 19.

with the chief administrator[42], primarily in order to influence the course of events, Alexander II's resistance and opinion proved much stronger.

Rostovtsev's position differed substantially from that of his predecessors. The grand duke was sent to Orenburg not simply to reside there but to serve under Governor-General N.A. Kryzhanovsky. a special set of instructions was drawn up for him, which in effect deprived Rostovtsev of some of his authority and, in certain situations, explicitly placed Kryzhanovsky above the administrator. Thus, if Rostovtsev made mistakes, the governor-general had the right to "explain them to him" and then report what had occurred to Adlerberg[43]. Rostovtsev was fully responsible only for the grand duke's domestic life, whereas Nikolai Konstantinovich's movements within the governorate, and his meetings with local society now had to be coordinated with the military administration[44].

By this time, the system of guardianship administration had changed substantially. Konstantin Nikolaevich's influence had become more tangible. On several occasions, his agents helped Rostovtsev resolve difficult conflicts. Thus, for example, P.N. Keppen, the grand duke's aide-de-camp, helped Nikolai Konstantinovich obtain permission to participate in a scientific expedition to Central Asia[45]. He acted as a mediator between the emperor, Kryzhanovsky, and Konstantin Nikolaevich. The substantial relaxation of the emperor's guardianship was a major success for the grand dukes and potentially the first step toward restoring Nikolai Konstantinovich's rights. The chief administrator himself was incapable of securing this outcome: he was too far away, and such requests fell outside the scope of his authority[46]. In any event, the number

---

[42] Evidence of the Grand Duke's preliminary meeting with Rostovtsev is provided by the latter's letter to Konstantin, which reads: "Your Imperial Highness knows what views I held when I went to Tivrovo, and you surely have no doubt, I am certain, that I shall stand by them". N.Ya. Rostovtsev to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. 16 May 1877 // РГИА. Ф. 435. Оп. 1. Д. 11. Л. 107 об.

[43] Instructions for N.A. Kryzhanovsky // Ibid. Л. 10 об.

[44] Ibid. Л. 9–11 об.

[45] Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. 23 June 1879 // Ibid. Л. 220.

[46] N.Ya. Rostovtsev to Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich. 3 July 1879 // Ibid. Л. 226.

of Konstantin Nikolaevich's "own people" increased, and they began handling both urgent matters, as Keppen did, and routine guardianship affairs: Konstantin Possiet, an aide-de-camp, was responsible for preparations for the relatives of the "high-ranking patient" to meet with him in Tver[47]. The chief administrator was no longer the sole conduit of the "august father's" will.

At the beginning of 1881, Rostovtsev lost his position. The reason for his dismissal was the emperor's dissatisfaction with the administrator's repeated mistakes. The emperor's position coincided with that of Konstantin Nikolaevich. Rostovtsev, who had long been the grand duke's trusted associate, lost this important resource. In a letter to Adlerberg, the grand duke urged the minister to replace the chief administrator immediately: "You told me verbally, my dear Alexander Vladimirovich, on New Year's Day itself, that the sovereign had agreed to recall Count Rostovtsev from Nikola and temporarily replace him with Keppen. That same day I informed Keppen of this. But to this day he cannot leave for Pustynka because, having no document in his hands, it is impossible for him simply to tell Rostovtsev verbally that he is dismissed and that he, Keppen, is replacing him. Meanwhile, there is no time to wait, and I told you in our last conversation <..> that I am afraid of every additional twenty-four hours that Rostovtsev remains with Nikola, because their relationship has become far too strained"[48]. Keppen, who by that time had already been informally involved in the administration of the guardianship, temporarily assumed the position. Rostovtsev, meanwhile, was left without a position and remained for a long time in a state of uncertainty. Until September 1881, when Nikolai Konstantinovich was finally settled in Tashkent, the functions of chief administrator were performed simultaneously by several people: gendarmes and officials of the court offices of Konstantin Nikolaevich and Alexandra Iosifovna.

The administrative practices centred on the chief administrator failed to develop into a separate institution; the personality of the individual appointed to the position remained decisive. From the outset,

---

47 K.N. Posiet to N.A. Somov. 31 December 1879 // ГАТО. Ф. 56. Оп. 1. Д. 8426. Л. 13.

48 Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich to A.V. Adlerberg. 4 January 1881 // РГИА. Ф. 1614. Оп. 1. Д. 308. Л. 5–6.

Konstantin Nikolaevich attempted to influence the course of the scandal, viewing it, like many other participants, not merely as an intra-family problem but also as a matter of political significance. This was precisely why he sought by every means to restore his son's reputation. Control was exercised in the manner familiar to the grand duke – by appointing a trusted associate to a key position. In all three cases, the chief administrator was the grand duke's "own man," which enabled him not only to remain informed about events but also to intervene in them. In exchange for their loyalty, Konstantin fulfilled the requests of his protégés. For Ukhtomsky, Vitkovsky, and Rostovtsev, serving as chief administrator became a genuine ordeal. At the same time, each received a generous reward for his efforts.

Under the conditions of the political crisis of 1881, most of the authority passed to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Konstantin Nikolaevich became preoccupied with other problems that directly affected him and the political course he pursued, and he ultimately lost his influence over the case. Although Adlerberg continued to issue orders concerning Nikolai Konstantinovich, real authority rested with the Ministry of Internal Affairs[49]. M.T. Loris-Melikov advocated the grand duke's transfer to Tashkent and was the first to approve the new instructions for the officials involved in carrying out this mission.

The principle of "familialism" gradually receded, and informal relations gave way to formalized practices of bureaucratic administration. This was due, not least, to the beginning of a new reign. Alexander III, who was cold toward both his uncle and his son, resolved the problem quickly and efficiently, unlike his father, who had spent seven unsuccessful years dealing with it. Nikolai Konstantinovich was sent to reside permanently in Tashkent under the supervision of the local authorities and police. Clearly, neither Konstantin Nikolaevich's extensive informal network nor his authority as a father could save the "high-ranking patient" from exile to the outskirts of the Russian Empire.

[49] A.V. Adlerberg to P.N. Keppen. 23 March 1881 // ГА РФ. Ф. 110. Оп. 9. Д. 836. Л. 1 об. – 2.

Conclusion

The "manual management" of virtually any issue that had been characteristic of Nicholas I became largely impossible in post-Reform Russia. Although Alexander II created the conditions for the autonomous operation of the bureaucratic apparatus and followed established administrative practices, he was nevertheless dissatisfied with the results of the bureaucrats' work. Intervening in the administration of the guardianship, the emperor regarded it as a family matter, while at the same time relying on his staff of officials and trusted associates. This created a field of uncertainty and tension that further aggravated the situation.

Konstantin Nikolaevich likewise operated within familiar patterns and strategies. He had failed to moderate the emperor's attitude toward his son and was therefore forced to resort to methods of influence that he had employed in previous decades. Paradoxically, although Konstantin Nikolaevich was the official guardian, he did not appear in the administrative records as a fully-fledged participant. At first glance, it might seem that he had chosen the role of a passive observer or a deceived and disappointed father. In reality, however, the grand duke's agents penetrated the structure of guardianship administration.

Within this configuration of competing interests and administrative practices, the chief administrator occupied a special position. At the same time, he was both an official and a trusted associate of the emperor and Konstantin Nikolaevich. In Ukhtomsky's case, he was almost a member of the family.

While Konstantin Nikolaevich's will was conveyed through his aides-de-camp and friends, the emperor could exercise his personal involvement through the gendarmes. The Third Section of His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery occupied an external position in relation to the guardianship. Gradually, the gendarmes were entrusted with the powers of many officials, including those of the chief administrator. Konstantin Nikolaevich thus lost the only effective means at his disposal for influencing the administration of the guardianship.

Although Alexander II attempted to act within the legal framework, he did not wish to base his decisions on "family councils," preferring to rely on officials not only from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but also from other government departments. Under these circumstances, their role

increased substantially. New methods of interaction with the grand-ducal households were required, and the system of guardianship administration was constantly being "reassembled," producing new configurations. It could take the form of a centralized system focused on St. Petersburg or a system based on the personal responsibility of governors. One thing remained constant: the intervention of outside forces and the emperor's unexpected and severe reaction to mistakes.

The principles of familialism and bureaucratization continually came into conflict and alternated with one another, mutually complementing and neutralizing each other.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

References

1. Dolbilov M.D. *The life of a novel being written: From the avantext to the context of «Anna Karenina».* Moscow: New Literary Review, 2023. 704 p. URL: https://libroroom.ru/upload/iblock/f1c/43l12cf4jk3e7bv2yzuh32t2esqqa6bg/20213.pdf?ysclid=mrhv91mz99608185686 (In Russ.).
2. Zimin I.P. The «Forgotten» Grand Duke. *Voprosy Istorii.* 2002;10:131–139. URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20140505161742/http://rex-history.ru/magazine/vi-gurnal/356-vi2002.html (In Russ.).
3. Krasyukov R.G. Grand Duke Nikolai Konstantinovich: An attempt at a Biography. In: Ostrovsky A.V. *From the Depths of Time.* Vol. 3. St. Petersburg: Poltorak, 1994. (In Russ.).
4. Milyutin D.A. *Diary of Field Marshal Count Dmitry Alekseevich Milyutin. 1873–1875.* Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008. URL: https://search.rsl.ru/ru/record/01004502013?ysclid=mrhvvd3na3695061269 (In Russ.).
5. Rieber A. Group Interests in the Struggle over the Great Reforms. In: Zakharova L.G., Eklof B., Bushnell J. *The Great Reforms in Russia.*

1857— 1874. Moscow: Moscow University Press, 1992. URL: https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000202_000006_876920/?ysclid=mrhvxuqpmf636603353 (In Russ.).

6. Yursky A.Yu. "Konstantinovites" in the Research Literature. *Tractus Aevorum: Evolution of Sociocultural and Political Spaces*. 2022;9(1):63—83. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.18413/2312-3044-2022-9-1-63-83
7. Gay P. *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud. Vol. 2: The Tender Passion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986. 498 p. https://doi.org/10.1177/004724418801800106
8. 8Wortman R. *The Russian Imperial Family as Symbol. In: Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule. Collected Articles*. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013. P. 112. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt21h4wbq

Daniil O. Yastrebov

graduate student Faculty of History European University
at St. Petersburg Bibliographer, 1st category Department
of Bibliography and Local History National Library of Russia,
ORCID: 0009-0001-0062-7909

Received 13.11.2025 Revised 21.01.2026 Accepted 19.02.2026

DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.006
Original paper

[1]Elmira M. Magomedova, [2]Eliza M. Ozdamirova

[1]Dagestan State Pedagogical University named after R. Gamzatov, Makhachkala, Russian Federation.
[2]Chechen State University named after A.A. Kadyrov, Grozny, Russian Federation.
E-mail: [1]elmira.magomedova.73@mail.ru, [2]eliza1976@mail.ru

From the History of Relations between the Tabasaran Maisumate and the Neighbouring Domains of Dagestan and Transcaucasia in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries

Abstract
The study of the historical geography of the feudal domains of Dagestan is one of the important areas of Caucasian studies, making it possible to reconstruct the complex political and socio-economic development of the region. During the period under consideration, the territory of the Maisumate was situated at the intersection of the domains inhabited by the peoples of Dagestan and Azerbaijan, which predetermined the multi-ethnic composition of its population, including Tabasarans, Lezgins, and Azerbaijanis. The boundaries of the domain were not static and changed under the influence of both internal conflicts and external pressure from the major powers of Iran, Turkey, and Russia.

© Elmira M. Magomedova, Eliza M. Ozdamirova, 2026

a key event affecting the administrative and political structure of the region was the earlier division of the unified Maisumate into two parts – the Maisumate proper and the Qadiate – which resulted in the formation of a distinctive system of dual authority. Despite this division, the Maisum, as ruler, retained the functions of supreme administrator, military commander, and judge, relying on the support of beks who governed individual appanages. An analysis of the historical evidence indicates that in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Tabasaran Maisumate was a typical feudal domain of Dagestan, characterised by a complex social structure and developed agrarian relations based on various forms of land ownership. This period was an important stage in the evolution of the Tabasaran Maisumate, when both the internal patterns of its socio-political development and the impact of external geopolitical factors became particularly evident.

Keywords:
Tabasaran Maisumate; Tabasaran; Southern Dagestan; feudal domains of Dagestan; political relations; Kaitag Utsmiate; Quba Khanate; Derbent Khanate; Dagestan and Transcaucasia; Russian–Tabasaran relations; eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries

For citation:
Elmira M. Magomedova, Eliza M. Ozdamirova. From the History of Relations between the Tabasaran Maisumate and the Neighbouring Domains of Dagestan and Transcaucasia in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries. The Historical Reporter. 2026. Vol. 60. P. 186–199. DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.006

Introduction

Historical scholarship recognises that one of the key factors determining the specific course of Dagestan's development was its political fragmentation, expressed in the existence of numerous independent feudal domains and unions of rural communities. In this regard, a comprehensive study of their socio-economic development and state and political structure is one of the priority tasks of Caucasian studies[1].

The article examines historical information concerning the Tabasaran Maisumate and determines its territorial boundaries during one of the most significant periods of its existence, namely the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This chronological period constitutes a coherent and completed stage in the history of this political formation, when both the internal patterns of its socio-economic development and the character of its relations with the outside world became particularly pronounced, ultimately leading to a change in the political status of the Maisumate and its entry into the sphere of influence of the Russian Empire.

The Tabasaran Maisumate was one of the distinctive feudal domains located in Dagestan and occupying an important strategic position at the junction of the historical, cultural, and political regions of the Eastern Caucasus. The geographical position of this domain predetermined the multi-ethnic composition of its population, which included, alongside Tabasarans, Lezgins, Azerbaijanis, and representatives of other ethnic groups, making the Maisumate a zone of active interethnic contacts and mutual influence. During the period under consideration, the Maisumate bordered a number of other political structures – the Kaitag Utsmiate, the Derbent Khanate, various unions of rural communities, and the domains of northern Azerbaijan – which placed it at the centre of a complex system of inter-political relations in the region[2].

---

1 *Агларов М.А.* Сельская община в Нагорном Дагестане в XVII – начале XIX в. Махачкала: Наука-Дагестан, 2014. 287 с.; *Алиев Б.Г., Умаханов М.С.К.* Историческая география Дагестана XVII – начала XIX в. Кн. 1. Махачкала: ИИАЭ ДНЦ РАН, 1999. 368 с.

2 Ibid; *Гасанов М.Р.* Очерки истории Табасарана. Махачкала: Дагучпедгиз, 1994. 252 с.

Despite the fact that the history of Dagestan has long attracted the attention of researchers, many feudal domains have remained insufficiently studied. This applies fully to the Tabasaran Maisumate, which has not yet been the subject of a specialised monographic study. At the same time, turning to the history of this domain is dictated not only by the need to fill existing gaps in historiography, but also by the need to reconstruct an integrated picture of the political and socio-economic development of the Dagestan region as a whole during the Late Middle Ages and the early modern period.

Within the framework of this study, a range of issues related to the historical geography of the Maisumate, the clarification of its territory and boundaries, is to be examined. These boundaries did not remain unchanged, but underwent a certain evolution under the influence of both internal factors and foreign-policy circumstances. Determining the boundaries of the domain is of fundamental importance for understanding the extent of the maisums' authority, the nature of their relations with neighbouring polities, and for reconstructing the system of landholding and settlement. No less important is an analysis of the historical information preserved in written sources concerning the origin and development of the Maisumate, the institution of maisum authority, and its evolution by the beginning of the eighteenth century.

It should also be taken into account that the administrative and political structure of the Tabasaran Maisumate had its own distinctive features, associated with the fact that, at an earlier period, the unified domain had split into two parts – the Maisumate proper and the domain of the qadis. This resulted in the formation of a distinctive system of coexistence between two rulers, with the Maisum retaining the functions of supreme administrator and military leader. Such an organisation of authority undoubtedly left its mark on all aspects of life in the domain and should be taken into account when characterising its political position[3].

Thus, the study of historical information concerning the Tabasaran Maisumate and the determination of its boundaries in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries constitute an important

[3] *Гасанов М.Р.* Очерки истории Табасарана ...

research task. Its resolution will make it possible not only to clarify individual facts of regional history, but also to provide the necessary basis for subsequent analysis of the socio-economic development, administrative structure, and foreign-policy position of this distinctive Dagestani domain during the final stage of its independent existence.

Materials and research methods

Throughout the period under consideration, the political map of Tabasaran and its constituent parts underwent substantial changes caused by both internal processes and the foreign-policy situation. According to the description by F.F. Simonovich, "compiled in 1796, the territory of the Maisumate extended from Mount Kokhma-Dag in the interfluve of the Bolshoy (Greater) Darbakh and Gurgeli. To the north, the domain bordered the lands of the Utsmi, the Terekeme, the Kaitags, and the Karakaitags; to the east, the Derbent domain; to the south, the Kura province; and to the west, the Kazikumukh domain, with the boundary with the latter, as well as with the Kurali people, running along inaccessible mountain ranges"[4; 5].

In determining the western boundaries of the Tabasaran Maisumate, its proximity to the Syurgin Union of Rural Communities is of key importance. Historical evidence indicates that until 1814 the magals of Agmergu and Agul-dere, and until 1820 the magal of Koshan-dere as well, which directly bordered Syurga, were part of the Tabasaran domains and were administered by the heirs of the local rulers – the Qadi and the Maisum. The subsequent submission of these magals to the authority of Surkhay Khan of Kazikumukh and Kura refutes the widespread assertion in the literature that by the end of the eighteenth century a significant part of the Tabasaran auls had been under the oppression of Lak feudal lords. a more accurate picture is provided by the testimony of the inhabitants of the Agul auls themselves, according to whom, under Kara-Maisum, the Koshan

---

4 *Алиев Б.Г., Умаханов М.С.К.* Op. cit.

5 *Рамазанов Х.Х., Шихсаидов А.Р.* Очерки истории Южного Дагестана. Махачкала: Типография Даг. ФАН СССР, 1964. 278 с.; *Алиев Б.Г., Умаханов М.С.К.* Op. cit.

magal belonged specifically to Southern Tabasaran. Documentary evidence shows that under Surkhay Khan this territory still retained its affiliation with Tabasaran, and only under Aslan Khan, after falling out with the maisum, did the local inhabitants voluntarily come under the authority of the ruler of Kura. The Akhmarlin magal met with a similar fate: originally belonging to the Tabasaran maisums, it subsequently, wishing to free itself from their oppression, came under the authority of Arslan Khan of Kura and, during Harun's administration, with his consent, once again returned to dependence on Ibrahim Bek, the administrator of Tabasaran[6].

Reference to archival materials makes it possible to specify considerably more precisely which auls were dependent on the maisums and formed part of their domain. According to the surviving documentary evidence, the Etek magal comprised the following settlements: Yangi-kent /Ruzhnik/, Mirza Abad, Burgankent, Tinit, Dzhahdig, Udzhuq, Khurakh, Dashlu Kent /Durtil/, Dzherakh, Gegnakh, Chulat, Ekendil, Kandyr /Genzir/, Khurtsik, Syrtych, Mekhti-kent, Varta, and Imam Kuli-kent. The Maisumate also included the auls of the magals of Dere-Kur-kent, Chilik, Nyutyukh, Ekendil, Zizik, Karchag, and Khulyug. Significantly, the statement by an author of the last quarter of the eighteenth century concerning seventy villages belonging to the Maisumate is corroborated by archival data relating to the Southern Tabasaran Naibate, which remained under the authority of the maisums until the establishment of Russian administration there in 1866[7].

It is important to emphasise that the list of auls given above by no means exhausts the actual number of settlements belonging to this political formation. a substantial argument in support of this is provided by the abundance of ruins of destroyed settlements located near present-day auls. Thus, near the village of Syrtych there are foundations of the destroyed village of Churu aul; near the aul of Khuryak, there are ruins of the village of Dzharakh; near the village of

---

6 *Берёзин И.Н.* Путешествие по Дагестану и Закавказью. Казань: Университетская типография, 1850. С. 75; *Берже А.* Прикаспийский край // Кавказский календарь на 1857 год. Тифлис, 1856. С. 314.

7 *Acts Collected by the Caucasian Archaeographic Commission.* Тифлис: Тип. главн. упр. наместн. Кавказа, 1866–1904. Т. 12. С. 3

Ruzhnik – K'alachdin aul; near the village of Burgankent – Yarsi aul; near the village of Tinit – Litnarin aul, Yarki aul, Sedirdin aul, Kyolachdin aul, and so forth[8].

These archaeological remains indicate that the density of construction and population of the territory was considerably higher in the past.

The origin of the names of certain auls is also of some interest, although not all of them can be convincingly etymologised. It has been established, for example, that the aul of Ruzhnik (*Rizh'nikk* in Tabasaran) was founded by people from the now-destroyed settlements of K'olabchi and Litnarin-aul. According to the traditions preserved by old residents, the aul of Tinit originated with settlers from Seidrin-aul, while Khulyug was founded by inhabitants of the aul of K'alukh. Local tradition associates the name Burgan-kent (Burgh'an-kent) with the name of a certain Amir Burgh'an. As for the aul of Mekhti-kent, Tabasarans call it Mechi-aul, while Khurcik is pronounced by them as Khurtsar (or Khurzar) and Khutsal. The etymology of the name of the village of Syrtych deserves particular attention. According to one version, the first part of the name derives from the toponym Syrt – the name of the mountain known in the historical literature as Karasyrt – while the ending "-ich" may be interpreted as indicating its location "at the foot/end of the mountain". The Tabasarans themselves, however, do not call this aul Syrtchar, but Sichar, which may perhaps derive from the words *sachi* or *sati*, meaning "those who gathered in one place". The date of the settlement's foundation, however, remains unknown[9].

The question of the population size of the Tabasaran Maisumate is particularly difficult because of the extreme scarcity of surviving materials. Medieval sources are limited to general references to the large population of Tabasaran and the high population density of its territory. More specific data appear only in sources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, according to which the total population of Tabasaran reached forty thousand people[10].

---

8 *Гасанов М.Р.* Очерки истории Табасарана...

9 Ibid.

10 *Берёзин И.Н.* Путешествие по Дагестану... С. 75; *Берже А.* Прикаспийский край ... С. 314.

To summarise the foregoing, it can be stated with confidence that in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Tabasaran Maisumate constituted a large, multi-ethnic feudal domain of Dagestan, possessing clearly defined boundaries and an extensive territory. It was characterised by numerous settlements and a comparatively high population density, with various ethnic groups living compactly in different parts of the Maisumate. The economic basis of the domain was agricultural production, including crop cultivation, animal husbandry, and horticulture, which determined the specific character of the economic utilisation of its territory and its settlement pattern.

Main occupations of the population of the Maisumate

Agriculture had been one of the principal occupations of the population of Dagestan since ancient times, and the Tabasaran Maisumate was no exception in this respect. During the period under consideration, a certain economic specialisation of different zones became apparent: the lowland and lower foothill areas increasingly focused on grain production, while the upper foothills and mountainous areas specialised in commercial livestock production, allowing their economy to be characterised as livestock-breeding and agricultural. Nevertheless, all households in the Maisumate without exception engaged in arable farming. Mountain peasants, even after becoming predominantly livestock breeders, sought to possess a plot of their own arable land, the possession of which symbolised a certain degree of family prosperity[11].

In characterising the agricultural potential of the region, I.G. Gerber[12] reported "that half of Tabasaran facing Derbent had good villages, fields, meadows, and fertile soil, whereas the inhabitants of the mountainous part possessed poor arable land". M.K. Kovalevsky and

[11] *Агларов М.А.* Сельская община в Нагорном Дагестане ...; *Гасанов М.Р.* Очерки истории Табасарана...

[12] *Гербер И.Г.* Описание стран и народов вдоль западного берега Каспийского моря. 1728 г. В: История, география и этнография Дагестана XVIII–XIX вв.: архивные материалы / под ред. М.О. Косвена, Х.М. Хашаева. Москва: Издательство восточной литературы, 1958. С. 62.

I.F. Blaramberg likewise testified that "the local inhabitants engage in arable farming, sowing Saracen millet, wheat, and barley, and also cultivate various kinds of fruit trees in their gardens"[13]. Among agricultural crops, wheat, barley, millet, rye, and spelt were the most widespread during the period under study. Later, maize also began to be cultivated in the Maisumate. It had entered Dagestan no earlier than the eighteenth century, as indicated by its Tabasaran name, which is associated with the hajj and literally means "wheat brought back from pilgrimage".

There were considerable differences in the relative importance of agriculture to the economies of the various zones of the Maisumate. The area of arable land in the lowland part was considerably larger than in the mountainous area. Moreover, the natural conditions of the highlands, particularly the deeper snow cover, favoured the cultivation there primarily of winter crops. Many travellers noted the shortage of arable land in the mountainous part of the Maisumate at the end of the eighteenth century, while S. Bronevsky later observed that most of the land in Tabasaran was rocky and infertile[14].

In addressing this question, it appears appropriate to employ the method of reverse forecasting, which makes it possible, on the basis of later nineteenth-century archival materials, to produce a probable scientifically grounded assessment of the state of arable land in the preceding period, since no substantial changes occurred in this respect compared with the eighteenth century. According to statistical data, the area of suitable arable land in seventeen auls of the Maisumate amounted to 3,048 desyatinas[15].

---

[13] *Ковалевский М.К., Бларамберг И.Ф.* Описание Дагестана. 1831 г. In: История, география и этнография Дагестана XVIII–XIX вв.: архивные материалы. М.: Издательство восточной литературы, 1958. С.307.

[14] *Броневский С.М.* Новейшие географические и исторические известия о Кавказе / собр. и пополн. С.М. Броневским. М.: Тип. С. Селивановского, 1823. Ч. 1. С.171.

[15] See: *Acts Collected by the Caucasian Archaeographic Commission* ...; *Гасанов М.Р.* Очерки истории Табасарана ...

Results and discussion

One of the most important means of increasing the area of arable land in the Maisumate was the construction of terraces, which had deep-rooted traditions in Dagestan and were an indicator of a high level of agricultural culture. Local inhabitants called the terraces "khutlin k'vasar". In some communities, where the terrain was relatively level, there were few terraces, and the land belonged to the category of rain-fed land suitable for arable farming[16].

The system of agriculture was universally based on fallowing. Farmers practised autumn ploughing, early fallow, and occupied fallow, with the amount of land left fallow directly dependent on the size of the landholding. Smallholders were forced to use occupied fallow, whereas those with more land left early or spring fallow, ploughing it several times: first in early spring, then in May, and a third time in June–July, before sowing winter wheat in the autumn.

The threshing process in the Maisumate had an established technology of its own. One or two oxen were harnessed to threshing boards, and in the course of this work, as the grain was winnowed with wooden shovels, seed grain was also selected. Peasants tried to select grain for future sowing from the leeward side of the pile that had formed, where the largest and heaviest grains were blown by the wind. Special three-pronged wooden forks were used to separate coarse straw from the threshed grain; wooden rakes were then used to clean the grain of chaff, after which a wooden shovel was used to gather it into a pile, while the remaining chaff was swept away with a broom. The grain was placed in sacks and taken home, where it underwent final cleaning by being winnowed with round wooden trays known as "tavak"[17].

---

16 *Агларов М.А.* Сельская община в Нагорном Дагестане ...; *Гасанов М.Р.* Очерки истории Табасарана...

17 Ibid.

Conclusions

Grain was milled in watermills, which were owned either privately by individuals or jointly by several owners. Permission to construct a new mill was issued by the village jamaat. Mill owners received payment for milling in kind – in grain: for threshing one large measure, one small measure of wheat was due[18].

The completion of harvesting and threshing by no means marked the end of agricultural work. After the harvest came the period of autumn sowing of winter crops, which took place in September. This was followed by the placing of manure on the fields. The manure had accumulated throughout the year in special storage facilities at each household. It was transported in wicker baskets made of brushwood, which were placed on carts drawn by a pair of oxen. Fertiliser was transported to areas inaccessible to carts in small baskets on donkeys or carried by women. Significantly, smallholders sold manure to communities with larger landholdings, indicating the development of elements of commodity-money relations even in this sphere[19].

The basis of agricultural production in the auls of the Maisumate was the cultivation of grain crops, above all wheat. The soil of the coastal fields, particularly in irrigated areas, was exceptionally fertile. As documentary sources note, wheat, barley, and millet produced the best yields in the region[20].

In summing up the examination of historical information concerning the Tabasaran Maisumate in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it should be noted that this period constituted an important stage in the evolution of this feudal domain, when both the internal patterns of its socio-political development and the impact of external geopolitical factors became clearly apparent. The territory of the Maisumate, situated at the junction of the domains of the peoples of Dagestan and Azerbaijan, represented a complex conglomeration of

---

18 *Гасанов М.Р.* Очерки истории Табасарана...

19 *Агларов М.А.* Сельская община в Нагорном Дагестане...; *Гасанов М.Р.* Очерки истории Табасарана...

20 *Гербер И.Г.* Описание стран и народов вдоль западного берега Каспийского моря... С. 60–120; *Ковалевский М.К., Бларамберг И.Ф.* Описание Дагестана... С. 306–312.

lands inhabited by a multi-ethnic population that included Tabasarans, Lezgins, and Azerbaijanis.

Authors' contributions

Both authors made equal contributions to the conceptualisation, source analysis, writing, and editing of the article.

Conflict of interests

The authors declares no relevant conflict of interests.

References

1. Aglarov M.A. *a rural community in Mountainous Dagestan in the 17th — early 19th centuries: a study of the relationship between forms of economy, social structures and ethnicity: monograph.* Makhachkala: Nauka-Dagestan, 2014. 287 p. URL: https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000199_000009_008005655/?ysclid=mrhzlltaqu353243835 (In Russ.).
2. *Acts collected by the Caucasian Archaeographic Commission.* Tiflis: Printing House of the Main Directorate of the Viceroy of the Caucasus, 1866–1904. Vol. 1–12.
3. Aliev B.G., Umakhanov M.S.K. *Historical Geography of Dagestan in the 17th — Early 19th Centuries. Book 1.* Makhachkala: Publishing House of the DSC RAS, 1999. 368 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/rzrtmj (In Russ.).
4. Aliev B.G. *Unions of Rural Communities of Dagestan in the 18th — First Half of the 19th Centuries.* Makhachkala: Publishing House of the DSC RAS, 1999 https://www.elibrary.ru/rzrbgd (In Russ.).
5. Berezin I.N. *a Journey through Dagestan and Transcaucasia.* Kazan: Printing House of Kazan University, 1850, p. 75. URL: https://elib.rgo.ru/handle/123456789/235417.
6. Berzhe A. «The Caspian Region». *Caucasian Calendar for 1857.* Tiflis: Printing House of the Main Directorate of the Viceroy of the Caucasus,

1856, p. 314. URL: rusneb.ru/catalog/000199_000009_003825044 (In Russ.)

7. Bronevsky, S.M. *The Latest Geographical and Historical News about the Caucasus*. Compiled and supplemented by S.M. Bronevsky. Moscow S. Selivanovsky's Printing House, 1823. Part 1, 362 p.; Part 2, 471 p. URL: elib.rgo.ru/handle/123456789/218809 (In Russian)
8. Gasanov M.R. *Essays on the History of Tabasaran*. Makhachkala: Daguchpedgiz, 1994. 252 p. URL: *https://search.rsl.ru/ru/record/01001696197?ysclid=mri0fwwlya314937568 (In Russ.)*.
9. Gerber I.G. Description of the Countries and Peoples along the Western Shore of the Caspian Sea. 1728. In: *History, Geography, and Ethnography of Dagestan in the 18th—19th Centuries: Archival Materials* / ed. by M.O. Kosven, H.M. Khashaev. Moscow: Eastern Literature Publishing House, 1958. P. 60—120 (In Russ.).
10. *From the History of the Law of the Peoples of Dagestan: Materials and Documents*. Compiled by A. S. Omarov; edited by G. D. Daniyalov. Makhachkala: Printing House of the Dagestan Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1968, 240 p. (In Russ.)
11. Piotrovsky B.B., ed. *History of the Peoples of the North Caucasus from Ancient Times to the 18th Century*. Moscow: Nauka, 1988. URL: https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000199_000009_001403477/ (In Russ.).
12. Kovalevsky M.K., Blaramberg I.F. Description of Dagestan. 1831. In: *History, Geography, and Ethnography of Dagestan in the 18th—19th Centuries: Archival Materials*. Moscow: Eastern Literature Publishing House, 1958. P. 306—312. URL: rusneb.ru/catalog/000199_000009_006207671/ (In Russ.).
13. Kovalevsky M.M. *Law and Custom in the Caucasus*. Moscow: Mamontov and Co. Printing House, 1890. Vol. 1. 290 p.; Vol. 2. 304 p. URL: rusneb.ru/catalog/000199_000009_007890508/ (In Russ.).
14. Ramazanov H.H., Shikhsaidov A.R. *Essays on the History of Southern Dagestan: Materials on the History of the Peoples of Dagestan from Ancient Times to the Early 20th Century*. Makhachkala: Printing House of the Dagestan FAN USSR, 1964. 278 p. URL: elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=22881010 (In Russ.).
15. Shikhsaidova R.S. Materials of the «Kizlyar Commandant» Collection as a Source for the Study of DagestanTranscaucasian Relations

in the 18th – Early 19th Centuries. In: *Source Studies of the Histories of PreSoviet Dagestan.* Makhachkala, 1987. P. 16–104 URL: https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000202_000006_914722/?ysclid=mri155eurs319627127 (In Russ.).

Elmira M. Magomedova
C.Sc. (History),
Associate Professor Dagestan
State Pedagogical University,
ORCID: 0009-0001-3993-4738,
SPIN-код: 4465-1957,
AuthorID: 525240

Eliza M. Ozdamirova
C.Sc. (History),
Associate Professor Department
of General History Faculty of History Kadyrov
Chechen State University,
ORCID: 0009-0006-8510-609,
SPIN-code: 6104-0311,
AuthorID: 815993

Received 31.03.2026
Revised 13.05.2026
Accepted 19.06.2026

DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.007
Original paper

Anton A. Voytenko

Center for Egyptological Studies Russian Academy of Sciences,
Moscow, Russian Federation
E-mail: voytenko@yandex.ru

The *Encomium* to the Apostle and Evangelist Mark in Metropolitan Macarius's *Great Menaion Reader*

Abstract

The article examines the anonymous *Encomium to Saint Mark* included in the "dossier" of Saint Mark in Metropolitan Macarius's *Great Menaion Reader* under 25 April (Julian calendar). Two Byzantine *encomia* dating from the ninth and tenth centuries have survived, authored by the Constantinopolitan deacon and chartophylax Procopius and by Niketas David Paphlagon. The Church Slavonic *Encomium* is not a translation of either of these works. The two Byzantine *encomia* provide sufficient comparative material for examining the distinctive features of the *Encomium*'s topoi. Its author was undoubtedly guided by Byzantine models and was familiar, probably indirectly, with the Byzantine tradition concerning Saint Mark, as evidenced by a number of shared plots and themes. At the same time, his metaphors and antitheses lack the refinement and complex connotations found in the Byzantine authors. Unlike the latter, the *Encomium* has a distinctly "catechetical" character and contains clear anti-heretical emphases. It also differs from the

© Anton A. Voytenko, 2026

two Byzantine *encomia* in genre, combining elements of martyrdom and panegyric and resembling the hagiographical homily, a genre widespread in Late Antiquity. The article hypothesises that the author of the *Encomium* may have been one of the representatives of the Tarnovo Literary School. One of the characteristic features of this school was precisely the composition of *encomia* combining elements of rhetorical and hagiographical texts. Another characteristic feature was its polemical engagement with heresies widespread in the Balkans, particularly Bogomilism. Further support for this hypothesis is provided by the author's familiarity with the works of Theophylact of Ohrid. Works by representatives of the Tarnovo Literary School most likely reached Rus' during the so-called Second South Slavic Influence, when contacts between Rus' and literary and ecclesiastical centres in the Balkans intensified considerably, and one of its representatives, Cyprian Tsamblak, became Metropolitan of Kiev (1389–1406).

Keywords:
Apostle and Evangelist Mark; Byzantine literature; Tarnovo Literary School; Second South Slavic Influence; Metropolitan Macarius's *Great Menaion Reader*; Slavic–Byzantine relations.

For citation:
Anton A. Voytenko. **T**he Encomium to the Apostle and Evangelist Mark in Metropolitan Macarius's Great Menaion Reader. The Historical Reporter. 2026. Vol. 60. P. 200–221. DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.007

The "dossier" of St. Mark included in Metropolitan Macarius's *Great Menaion Reader* under 25 April (Julian calendar) is fairly extensive. It opens with a brief version of the *Martyrdom* from the ordinary (prose) *Prologue*. This is followed by the *Homily for the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Mark*, based on a text by St. Clement of Ohrid[1], the *Encomium to St. Mark*[2], which will be discussed in this article, an extended *Martyrdom of St. Mark*, which is a Church Slavonic translation of one of the two known recensions of the Greek original (BHG 1036), the *Chapters* (i.e. table of contents) of the Gospel of Mark, the *Preface* to the Gospel of Mark, and the *Explanatory Gospel of Mark*[3]. The "dossier" concludes with a brief version of the *Martyrdom* from the verse *Prologue*.

Textual analysis shows that the *Encomium* in the *Great Menaion Reader* is not a translation of either of the two known Greek *encomia* to St. Mark[4], although it shares certain themes and motifs with them. a similar situation emerged from our study of the *Encomium to St. Onuphrius*[5]: here too, there is no Greek original. At the same time, *encomia* to St. Onuphrius are virtually absent from the Byzantine tradition. The

---

1 On the similarity between the Homily of St. Clement of Ohrid (essentially a formulary) and the text of the Homily in the *Great Menaion Reader*, see: *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Тетрадь III. Дни 22—30. М., 1915.* Стб. 947—948, прим. 3. A.A. Turilov notes that the Homily was included in the *Prologue*: *Турилов А.А. [Марк, апостол] Почитание у южных славян и на Руси // Православная энциклопедия.* Т. 43. М., 2016. С. 645. However, the text of the Homily in the *Great Menaion Reader* and St. Clement's "formulary" (*Homily for the Commemoration of an Apostle or Martyr*) still require comparative textual analysis.

2 "The Praise and Martyrdom of the Holy and All-Praised Apostle and Evangelist Mark". *Великие Минеи Четии. Стб. 950—957.*

3 See: Великие Минеи Четии. Стб. 963, прим. 4, 6. The Chapters, Preface, and Explanatory Gospel were not included in the publication of the April *Menaion*.

4 An encomium by Procopius, deacon and chartophylax, ninth century: PG. T. 100. Col. 1187—1200. An encomium by Niketas David Paphlagon, tenth century: *Combefis F. Bibliothecae Patrum graecorum auctarium novissimum. Pars 1. Paris, 1672. P. 429—435.*

5 *Войтенко А.А.* Церковнославянское Похвальное Слово св. Онуфрию Великому // Вестник МГПУ. Серия «Исторические науки». № 3 (23). М., 2016. С. 79—85; *Войтенко А.А.* Святой Онуфрий Великий в агиографической традиции (IV—XIV вв.). Дисс. на соискание уч. ст. д.и.н. М., 2017. С. 280—287.

so-called Discourse (Sermon) on Saint Onuphrius (BHG 1382), attributed to Philagathus of Cerami (and previously erroneously attributed to Theophanes Cerameus)[6], is in fact an exegetical sermon on the Sunday reading (Matt. 11:27)[7]. The first few paragraphs are devoted to St. Onuphrius only because the day on which the homily was delivered coincided with his feast day. They provide interesting evidence for the veneration of the saint in southern Italy during the period of the Norman conquest – but no more than that. The Byzantine homiletic tradition concerning St. Mark provides considerably more material for comparison.

Another circumstance must also be borne in mind. The image of St. Mark in the Orthodox, Catholic, and, as far as we know, most non-Chalcedonian traditions is of a "composite" nature. 25 April commemorates a disciple of the Apostle Peter, the Evangelist, one of the Seventy Apostles, as well as the Alexandrian martyr and founder of the Christian community in Egypt. Doubts as to whether the Evangelist, apostle, and martyr were one and the same person arose long ago. In 2020, a book by D. Furlong[8] was published, in which, following a thorough investigation, the author proposed that these three traditions had originally referred to three different individuals and only merged into one by the end of the fourth century. For our purposes, however, what matters is precisely how the traditions concerning the Evangelist, apostle, and martyr interact within the *Encomium*, as well as in what respects this configuration resembles and differs from the Byzantine *encomia* of the ninth and tenth centuries. Given that the Greek original of the *Encomium* is absent[9], a separate task of the study is to establish, at least hypothetically, the place and time of its composition.

In terms of genre, the *Encomium to St. Mark* differs both from the *Encomium to St. Onuphrius* and from the two Byzantine *encomia*. The sermon of the deacon Procopius, like the *Encomium to St. Onuphrius*, is

---

6 See: *Войтенко А.А.* Святой Онуфрий Великий. С. 33, 275–280.

7 Full title: Sermon on the words "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father" (Matt. 11:27), delivered on the Feast of St. Onuphrius.

8 *Furlong D. The John also Called Mark. Reception and Transformation in Christian Tradition. Tübingen, 2020.*

9 Cf. *Турилов А.А. [Марк, апостол]*. С. 645: "No earlier manuscript tradition has been identified or studied; South Slavic copies are unknown".



Two leaves of a Coptic manuscript
of the Gospel of Mark (Mark 6:45; 9:2). 6th–7th centuries.
From the manuscript collection of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts

an encomium in the strict sense: its primary purpose is the glorification of the saint, and all its rhetorical devices are directed towards accomplishing this task. The panegyric by Niketas David Paphlagon may be described as a philosophical encomium: in addition to glorification, the author devotes considerable space to argumentation and addresses in a highly unconventional manner the question of the equivalence in dignity between an apostle from the Seventy and Christ's first twelve disciples. The *Encomium to St. Mark*, by contrast, is more likely a combination of hagiography and encomium, as is clearly indicated by its original title, *Praise and Martyrdom*. This type of text was known and apparently quite popular as early as Late Antiquity. In modern scholarship it has been termed the "hagiographical sermon"[10]. St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, Jacob of Serugh, and Severus of Antioch[11] excelled in this genre. a hagiographical sermon generally contains considerably

[10] The term is S. Ashbrook Harvey's; see: The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies / Ed. by S. Ashbrook Harvey, D.G. Hunter. Oxford, 2008. P. 616.

[11] Ibid.

more biographical detail than an ordinary encomium, while retaining a number of rhetorical devices – metaphors, antitheses, rhetorical questions, exclamations, and so forth – that are not characteristic features of hagiographical narrative.

Unlike all the other homilies mentioned above, the *Encomium to St. Mark* has a distinctly catechetical and missionary (anti-heretical) character. On the one hand, there is a sense of imitation of Byzantine rhetoric; on the other, the rhetorical discourse is clearly pitched at a lower level. This becomes apparent from the very beginning of the text. The author of the *Encomium* prefaced his narrative with an extended discussion of bodily and spiritual "milk"[12], making it quite clear that his task was to offer "little words" to those "growing in understanding".

The metaphors found in the text correspond to the same paradigm. They are for the most part associated with nature and natural phenomena readily comprehensible to an unsophisticated audience, whereas a number of the metaphors employed by Byzantine authors are highly unconventional[13]. The author of the *Encomium* compares the spiritual eyes of St. Mark to the eyes of an eagle[14], or to the eagle itself, flying

[12] "Every offspring that has emerged and been born to behold the light of this world is first nourished with milk instead of solid food, and after being weaned it partakes of solid food, and thus reaches maturity. Understand likewise one who desires to attain to spiritual maturity of understanding. At first, therefore, he is nourished by simple words, and by the things contained in them, as by milk, because of his imperfect understanding. Growing in thought through these things, as through solid food, he comes to partake of perfect words, and greater understanding is granted to him in such things" (*Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 950*).

[13] Procopius compares St. Mark to a spiritual Nile watering the pastures of souls (*PG.* Vol. 100. Col. 1197), and his hands to the divine reed (κάλαμος) (ibid. Col. 1196). The saint spreads heavenly nets, catching people in them through preaching and miracles (ibid. Col. 1193), and does not slacken, pressing forward with the apostolic plough (ibid. Col. 1195). Niketas David compares St. Mark to a rock in the sea that can be harmed neither by the onslaught of the waves nor by the tides nor by the furious gusts of wind (*Combefis F. Bibliothecae Patrum graecorum. P. 433*).

[14] *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 951.* It should be noted that the eagle's sight is a metaphor expressing prophetic grace and clairvoyance, since the eagle has keen eyesight and is capable of looking at the sun without blinking. Clear parallels to this interpretation are found in Theophylact of Ohrid: "And that which is from Mark is likened to an eagle, because it

towards the "sun of the heavenly mystery"[15]. Entirely in keeping with the anti-heretical character of the sermon, St. Mark is here likened to a horse released into the pagan sea[16], to the sun drying up the mire of pagan unbelief[17], or to a flame burning unclean thorns[18]. St. Mark resembles the moon, giving light to those who have lost their way in the night of unbelief[19], while his Gospel is like thunder proclaiming the mystery "hidden before the ages"[20]. The metaphor of the eagle is particularly interesting: essentially, the author of the *Encomium* follows the Eastern tradition identifying St. Mark with this bird, whereas the better-known "Latin system" identifies him with the lion[21]. Another interesting feature is the intersection of these "natural" metaphors with

begins with prophecy, for the gift of prophecy is one of foresight, and the eagle has swift and far-reaching sight. For they say that the eagle is swift and rapid. And while it is impossible for any other animal to look upon the sun, the eagle sees it with unblinking eyes". *Феофилакт Болгарский.* Толкование на Евангелия Матфея и Марка. *Рукопись: РГБ. Ф. 228. № 67. XV–XVI в. Л. 224 об.* https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000199_000009_006550480/ *(accessed: 26.03.2026).*

15 *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель.* Стб. 957.

16 Ibid. Стб. 951.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid. Стб. 954.

19 Ibid. Стб. 951.

20 Ibid. Стб. 952–953.

21 The identification of St. Mark with the eagle is first found in St. Irenaeus of Lyons (*Adv. Haer.* III, 11:8): Luke – the taurus, Mark – the eagle, John – the lion, Matthew – the man. This version was followed by the churches of Asia Minor and, among Byzantine authors, by St. Anastasios of Sinai and Theophylact of Ohrid. The second version is thought to have emerged at the end of the second century and is first found in Victorinus of Pettau (230–303/4): Mark – the lion, Luke – the taurus, Matthew – the man, John – the eagle. This version became the most widespread in the West (it was followed, for example, by St. Jerome and Pope Gregory I), hence its designation as the "Latin system". There was also a third version: Matthew – the lion, Luke – the taurus, Mark – the man, John – the eagle. This was followed, for example, by Hippolytus of Rome and Blessed Augustine. However, it did not achieve wide circulation. Subsequently, the "Latin system" spread in the East and gradually displaced St. Irenaeus's version. The "Latin system" became established in the Russian Church, whereas the Old Believers continue to follow the more ancient tradition and still identify St. Mark with the eagle.

Byzantine tradition: Procopius likewise identifies St. Mark's preaching with peals of thunder and rays of sunlight[22].

Byzantine authors clearly tend towards complex, profound, and sometimes paradoxical antitheses. Speaking of St. Mark's sufferings, Procopius observes that the one who was a priest and offered sacrifice himself became a sacrifice and received what was due to the flock[23]. The one who had rescued many from the mouth of the devil was himself placed in chains[24]. Niketas David echoes this idea, asserting that the burning of St. Mark's body by the pagans was a sacred sacrifice to the One Whom he had loved[25], while the saint's flesh, torn apart by them, became the means by which he appeared before Christ as the victor in a contest[26]. By contrasting Mark with Moses, Niketas David draws a rather skilful distinction between law and grace, letter and spirit[27]. The author of the *Encomium* is clearly alien to such subtleties and instead tends to avoid antitheses. And where they do occur, they are fairly simple: the fleshly Mark conquered incorporeal powers, and for this reason is honoured by Christ and the angels[28].

The epithets employed by the author of the *Encomium* are fairly simple and lack the refinement that occasionally appears in Byzantine authors[29]. Nevertheless, he demonstrates knowledge of the commonplaces of Byzantine tradition. Thus, all three authors call Mark the son (or spiritual son) of the Apostle Peter[30], who in turn is called the first among the apostles or the keeper of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven[31]. All three texts emphasise the universal character of Mark's preaching: he spread the teaching of the Gospel to the ends of the earth, in both East and

22 PG. T. 100. Col. 1193.
23 PG. T. 100. Col. 1196.
24 PG. T. 100. Col. 1197.
25 *Combefis F. Bibliothecae Patrum graecorum. P. 434.*
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid. *P. 433–434.*
28 *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 955–956.*
29 Thus, Procopius calls God the incorruptible agonothete, i.e. the organiser and judge of contests. See: PG. T. 100. Col. 1196.
30 See: PG. T. 100. Col. 1189; *Combefis F. Bibliothecae Patrum graecorum. P. 431; Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 952.*
31 Ibid.

West[32], travelled with Peter throughout the world[33], and, like a radiant star, showed people the sun of divine salvation[34]. There is, however, a difference: unlike the Byzantine writers, the author of the *Encomium*, returning to the tradition of Mark as one of the Seventy Apostles, recalls that Mark was a companion not only of Peter but also of Paul[35].

The *chairetisms* deserve particular attention[36]. They also occur in Niketas David's encomium and are a characteristic feature of his panegyrics in honour of the apostles[37]. His chairetisms, however, are extended and constitute a natural part of the rhetorical text[38]. The chairetisms in the *encomia* to St. Mark and St. Onuphrius are of a different kind: they are quite brief – one sentence or even a phrase – and resemble liturgical texts more than anything else[39]. There are nevertheless some differences in the structure of the chairetisms in the two Church Slavonic texts under consideration. The *Encomium to St. Mark* contains twelve chairetisms (clearly corresponding to the number of the apostles), followed only by a brief prayerful invocation of the saint. In the *Encomium to St. Onuphrius*, there are four chairetisms, and they do not conclude the text, since they are followed by exclamations glorifying

---

32 PG. T. 100. Col. 1192.

33 *Combefis F. Bibliothecae Patrum graecorum. P. 431.*

34 *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 957.*

35 "But he is also shown to be the companion of Paul": *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 952.* This information is found in Theophylact of Ohrid: "but also Paul's companion". *Феофилакт Болгарский. Толкование на Евангелия Матфея и Марка. Л. 224.*

36 A *chairetism* is a sentence or phrase in a liturgical or rhetorical text addressed to the person being praised and beginning with the exclamation "Rejoice" (Greek χαῖρε).

37 See: *Каждан А.П.* История византийской литературы (850–1000 гг.). Эпоха византийского энциклопедизма. СПб., 2012. С. 105.

38 See: *Combefis F. Bibliothecae Patrum graecorum. P. 434–435.*

39 Let us give several examples: "Rejoice, depth of theology and height of the vision of God. Rejoice, tongue of theology, proclaiming the God-saving preaching. Rejoice, sun-like mind, pouring forth the light of the pious dogmas of the true faith" (*Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб.* 957). For comparison, here are the *chairetisms* from the *Akathist to the Holy Great Martyr Catherine*: "Rejoice, precious dwelling-place of holiness; rejoice, wondrous sign of God's Providence manifested in you. Rejoice, vessel of the Father's good pleasure; rejoice, fulfilment of Christ's sufferings" (Акафистник. М.: Даниловский благовестник, 1995. С. 496).

not only the principal hero but also the desert in which he lived his ascetic life, the cave where he dwelt, and the monk Paphnutius, who composed his hagiographical *Life*.

Unlike the two Byzantine *encomia*, the *Encomium to St. Mark* contains more biographical details about the saint, drawn not only from his *Martyrdom* but also from a whole range of other sources[40]. Before examining these in detail, however, one tendency that links the author of the *Encomium* with the Byzantine writers should be noted. All three are familiar, probably indirectly, with the so-called Aquileian legend[41], but know nothing of the Venetian one[42]. The biographical information in all three texts is arranged in accordance with the Aquileian legend:

---

[40] It is not entirely clear which *Martyrdom* the compiler of the *Encomium* used — the long version or one of the synaxarian (Prologue's) versions. The orthography and the character of the geographical regions mentioned in the account of the beginning of St. Mark's preaching in Egypt (Barbarikia, Pentapolis, Cyrenaica) indicate familiarity with the version found in the ordinary (non-verse) *Prologue*. "Barbarikia" represents a distorted rendering of the region of Marmarica; this distortion is already found in the Greek text of the *Synaxarium of the Great Church (Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e codice Sirmondiano / Ed. H. Delehaye. Bruxelles, 1902. Col. 627—630)*. In the long version of the *Martyrdom* included in the *Great Menaion Reader*, the name is rendered correctly (*Marmarikïa*), and the list of regions is different: Marmarikia, Amanikia, and Epentapolia (sic!): *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 958*. The description of St. Mark's appearance and character in the *Encomium* has parallels with his description in the version of the verse *Prologue*. Cf.: "he was exceedingly merciful and approachable, and beneficial to those who came to him" (*Encomium*); "he was exceedingly merciful and beneficial to those who came to him" (Verse *Prologue*). The description of St. Mark's appearance is absent from the Greek recensio "B" of the long *Martyrdom*, from which the Church Slavonic translation was made.

[41] This is the conventional designation for the Latin text stating that, before arriving in Alexandria, Mark preached together with Peter in Italy. According to the text, Mark founded a Christian community in Aquileia and chose a bishop for it, whom the Apostle Peter ordained in Rome. Another distinctive feature of the Aquileian legend is the claim that Peter sent Mark to preach in Egypt. The Aquileian legend is described in considerable detail in R. Lipsius's work (*Lipsius R.A. Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und Apostellegenden. Bd.2/2. Braunschweig, 1884. S. 346—351*).

[42] The account of how two Venetian merchants, Bono and Rustico, stole the relics of St. Mark from Alexandria and transported them to Venice. There is a critical edition of the Venetian legend based on twelve manuscripts: *Colombi E. Translatio Marci Evangelistae Venetias (BHL, 5283—5284) // Hagiographica 17 (2010). P. 73—129.*

Mark first preaches in Italy together with Peter, after which Peter sends him to Egypt[43]. Procopius states that Mark brought the Italian people (τὸ Ἰταλῶν γένος) under his authority, converted the western lands to the faith of Christ, and was subsequently appointed by Peter as high priest and pastor in Egypt[44]. Niketas David states that, at Peter's command and by his appointment, Mark went to Alexandria and founded the Church of Christ there[45]. The author of the *Encomium* likewise notes that Mark was with Peter in Rome, after which Peter ordained him and sent him to Egypt[46]. Procopius enthusiastically describes the relics of St. Mark in Alexandria, entirely confident that they had never been removed from there[47]. The compiler of the *Encomium* provides a more interesting detail: the relics of St. Mark rest in the city's cathedral (episcopal) church[48].

He also reports that Mark composed his Gospel ten years after Christ's Ascension[49]. This information is absent from the extant recensions of the *Martyrdom of St. Mark*, but it is found in Theophylact of Ohrid[50]. The author also states that St. Mark wrote the Gospel in Rome at the request of the Roman community while the Apostle Peter was away[51]. The underlying source of this account goes back to Clement of Alexandria; the information has been preserved in the *Ecclesiastical*

---

43 The long *Martyrdom* contains no information about Mark's acquaintance with Peter. According to this text, Mark preaches in Egypt by apostolic lot.

44 PG. T. 100. Col. 1192, 1193, 1196.

45 *Combefis F. Bibliothecae Patrum graecorum. P. 431.*

46 *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 952, 953.*

47 PG. T. 100. Col. 1197.

48 "At last, in Alexandria of Egypt, in the church, he is laid to rest, where bishops by succession continually dwelt". *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 955.*

49 *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 953.* The information that Peter sent Mark as bishop to Egypt after he had written his Gospel may have been taken by the author of the *Encomium* from Theophylact of Ohrid. See: *Феофилакт Болгарский. Толкование на Евангелия Матфея и Марка. Л. 224.*

50 *Феофилакт Болгарский.* Толкование на Евангелия Матфея и Марка. Л. 224. Cf. *Ткаченко А.А.* [Марк, апостол] Евангелие от Марка // Православная энциклопедия. М., 2016. Т. 43. С. 614.

51 "Peter, however, had to depart to another place for the sake of preaching the Gospel. The community of the faithful therefore besought great Mark not merely to preach without writing, but to set down in writing what concerned Christ's dispensation". *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 952.*



The Apostle and Evangelist Mark.
Miniature from a Sinai manuscript, Sin. Gr. 204, fol. 10.
From open sources

History by Eusebius of Caesarea. Most likely, however, the author of the *Encomium* borrowed this account from Theophylact of Ohrid as well[52]. The only feature distinguishing the version in the *Encomium* from the Clement–Eusebius–Theophylact tradition is the statement that the Gospel was composed while the Apostle Peter was away from Rome. In addition to the *Martyrdom of St. Mark* and the *Preface* to Theophylact of Ohrid's *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, the author drew on other sources that have not yet been identified. Thus, he reports that in Rome St. Mark baptised the townspeople "in the river", clothed them in white garments, and ordered them to go to "the great church"[53]. Another

[52] "Yet he lived with Peter for a long time and was with him in Rome. The faithful in Rome therefore asked him not only to preach but also to put into writing the things concerning Christ and his life. After much entreaty he finally wrote it down. Peter, however, learned from God that Mark had written the Gospel". *Феофилакт Болгарский.* Толкование на Евангелия Матфея и Марка. Л. 224.

[53] "He remained with Peter, however, and was with him in Rome for a long time. When he had baptised the numerous peoples there in the river and anointed them all with chrism, he nevertheless ordered them to go in white robes to the great church". *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 952.*



The Preaching of the Apostle Mark. *Ivory, ca. 6th—7th centuries. Louvre, Paris. From open sources*

piece of information is more interesting: in the Alexandrian community, St. Mark established for those "wishing to live a virginal life" a rule based on what the Apostle Peter had taught in Rome. He ordered them to cut their hair, wear black woolen garments and leather belts, live in a special place, and remain always in prayer in churches and houses[54]. Niketas David's encomium contains a reference to the fact that, during the torture of St. Mark, he was beaten with sticks and stones[55]. This detail is absent from the versions of the *Martyrdom of St. Mark* known at present[56]. The origin of this tradition is not yet known. It is interesting,

[54] "Those wishing to live in virginity were to arrange their way of life according to the example established by Peter, the chief Apostle, in Rome: he ordered them to shear their heads, to wear black cloth garments, to wear leather belts around their waists, to live in a separate place, and to remain continually in prayer in churches and houses". *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 954.*

[55] *Combefis F. Bibliothecae Patrum graecorum. P. 434.*

[56] A distant parallel is found in the so-called *Acts and Miracles of St. Mark*, where there is an indication that part of the crowd expressed a desire to stone him (*Halkin F. Actes inédits de saint Marc // Analecta Bollandiana. 87 (1969).*

however, that the author of the *Encomium* also mentions it, and with even more detail than the Byzantine author[57].

A characteristic feature of the *Encomium* is its anti-heretical character. Mark composed one of the four Gospels that remain unshaken by the storm of heresy[58]. The prayer of St. Mark, who stands before the heavenly throne, strengthens the faith of the consubstantial adherents and helps the holy Churches remain in the true doctrine, which cannot be shaken by the winds of "heretical babbling"[59]. It should be noted that the subject of heretics is entirely absent from the two Byzantine *encomia*. Connected with this is the author's "numerology". Several times he emphasises that the four Gospels constitute a complete whole, a kind of closed *pleroma*, comparable to four pillars upon which the purity of the faith rests[60].

This latter point probably accounts to a considerable extent for the difference between the presentation of St. Mark by the author of the *Encomium* under discussion and the one in the Byzantine *encomia*. The Byzantine authors place St. Mark's apostleship in the foreground, arranging his other dignities – Evangelist and martyr – in the form of a kind of hierarchical ladder. For the author of the *Encomium*, something else is more important: above all, he seeks to emphasise St. Mark's orthodoxy. Mark the apostle (missionary) and Mark the Evangelist

P. 368). It is impossible, however, to establish direct borrowing here. More likely, Niketas David Paphlagon, the author of the *Acts*, and the author of the *Encomium* drew in different ways on information from some tradition that has not survived.

57 "Having bound him, they dragged him along the ground, his body striking against stones, rocky ground, and wood, until he was torn apart. Each of them tortured him mercilessly in a beast-like manner: some with clubs, others with stones, pushing him with their hands and feet, and his blood stained the earth red". *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 955.*

58 *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 952.*

59 *Ibid. Стб. 956.*

60 Cf. "He writes the wise Gospel and adds to the universal Church the fourth pillar of heavenly theology, by which its four-cornered structure remains unshaken by the storm of heresy" (*Great Menaion Reader.* April. Col. 952); "He brought forth the fourth spring of the waters of divine theology and gave the whole assembly of the faithful to drink of the 'drink of eternal life'" (Ibid. Col. 953); "God willed that the fourfold writing of these things be fourfold in form" (Ibid. Col. 953).

strikes down the pagans and affirm the true foundations of the faith, which cannot be shaken by any false teaching[61].

We may now attempt to determine the time and place of composition of the *Encomium to St. Mark*. Our analysis of the theme of light in the *Encomium to St. Onuphrius* led us to conclude that this text could not have appeared in Rus′ before the fourteenth century, since it bears clear evidence of the influence of Hesychasm[62]. a comparison of the two *Encomia*, as well as of the two hagiographical "dossiers" (those of St. Onuphrius and St. Mark), allows us to formulate more well-grounded hypotheses. All the prototypes of the narrative texts in the "dossiers" of St. Mark and St. Onuphrius can readily be identified in the Byzantine tradition[63]. From this perspective, the absence of Greek prototypes for the two *Encomia* may indicate quite clearly that they were originally written in Church Slavonic.

On the basis of the analysis undertaken, it may be suggested that the authorship of the *Encomium to and Martyrdom of St. Mark* belongs to one of the representatives of the Tarnovo Literary School[64]. The possibility

---

61 See, in particular, the *chairetisms*: *Великие Минеи Четии. Апрель. Стб. 957.*

62 *Войтенко А.А.* Церковнославянское Похвальное Слово св. Онуфрию Великому. С. 84.

63 We have in mind the long *Life of St. Onuphrius* and its two synaxarian (Prologue's) versions, the long *Martyrdom of St. Mark* and its two synaxarian (Prologue's) versions. For more detail, see: *Войтенко А.А.* Греческие оригиналы кратких славянских житий св. Онуфрия: предварительные замечания // Византийский временник. Т. 71 (96). М., 2012. С. 92–101; *Войтенко А.А.* Краткие версии Мученичества св. Марка Александрийского в Великих Минеях Четьих митрополита Макария и их предполагаемые греческие оригиналы // Византийский временник. Т. 109. М., 2025. С. 214–224; *Войтенко А.А.* Святой Онуфрий Великий. С. 123–133. The sole exception is the *Homily for the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Mark*, whose prototype, as mentioned above, can be traced among the works of St. Clement of Ohrid. But this precisely demonstrates that the "dossiers" of Byzantine saints in the *Great Menaion Reader* could include not only translated texts but also original works in Church Slavonic.

64 This is the conventional name for the literary school that formed part of the Tarnovo School of Arts during the Second Bulgarian Empire. The so-called Second South Slavic Influence on Rus' is likewise associated with the activities of this school. The founder of the school is generally considered to have been Patriarch Euthymius of Tarnovo, or of Bulgaria. This school embodied what we once designated by the term "intellectual relay" (see: *Войтенко А.А. Почему христология сирийцев раскололась надвое?*

that the author of the *Encomium* came from Bulgaria may be indicated by his very good knowledge of the legacy of Theophylact of Ohrid. The overwhelming majority of the information that he could not have taken from the *Martyrdom of St. Mark* has clear parallels with the Preface to the *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark* by the Archbishop of Ohrid[65].

The general literary character of the *Encomium* accords well with the principal characteristic of the Tarnovo Literary School: imitation of Byzantine models. The author clearly knew Byzantine rhetorical techniques and even displayed a certain degree of pretentiousness, but this remains quite far from the sophistication and a certain refinement demonstrated by the *encomia* of the ninth- and tenth-century Byzantine authors that we have examined as points of comparison. Even the best "replica" always differs from the original.

The genre of the work itself may also point to the *Encomium*'s belonging to the tradition of the Tarnovo School. An encomium combining hagiographical elements and an encomium proper is yet another characteristic feature of the literary heritage of the "Tarnovo writers"[66].

Историко-культурный взгляд на проблему (в порядке дискуссии) // Восток (Oriens). 2023. № 4. С. 225). Its principal representatives (apart from Euthymius) were Gregory Tsamblak, Cyprian Tsamblak, Constantine the Philosopher (Constantine of Kostenets), Gregory the Calligrapher (Gregory the New), Dionysius the Wise, Joasaph of Vidin, Vladislav the Grammarian, and Demetrius Kantakouzenos.

65 1) the indication that Mark wrote his Gospel ten years after Christ's Ascension; 2) the designation of Mark as Peter's spiritual son; 3) the identification of the Evangelist Mark with the eagle (instead of the lion); 4) the writing of Mark's Gospel in Rome at the request of the Roman community; 5) the indication that Mark was a companion not only of the Apostle Peter but also of the Apostle Paul; 6) Peter's ordination of Mark and his dispatch to Alexandria to preach Christianity.

66 It is generally believed that the genre of the *encomium*, combining elements of a saint's life and a panegyric, was introduced by Euthymius of Tarnovo. At the same time, the dependence of this genre on Byzantine literature has been emphasised. It would be more appropriate, rather, to speak of Euthymius's revival of the Late Antique genre of the hagiographic homily, as mentioned above. In addition to Euthymius, *encomia* are known by Gregory Tsamblak (to Euthymius of Tarnovo, Cyprian Tsamblak, the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, the Apostles Peter and Paul, the Prophet Elijah, the Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessalonica, and the Great Martyr George), and Demetrius Kantakouzenos (to St. Nicholas the Wonderworker and the Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessalonica).

Its very function – the simultaneous presentation of information about a saint, drawing on additional non-hagiographical sources, and his glorification – likewise points to a distinctive feature of this school.

The anti-heretical character of the works of the Tarnovo School authors is well known and corresponded both to the confessional situation in the Balkans in their time and to strong the position of the Tarnovo Patriarchate. Their extremely hostile attitude towards Bogomilism, Barlaamism, Adamite teachings, and the heresy of the Judaizers is well known. The *Encomium to St. Mark* fits this paradigm perfectly[67]. Finally, the seemingly strange affinity of the *Encomium*'s chairetisms with liturgy rather than rhetoric may be explained by the close connection between the two in the literary heritage of the "Tarnovo writers"[68].

It seems to us that the *Encomium to St. Onuphrius* was likewise written by one of the representatives of the Tarnovo Literary School. The *encomia* to St. Onuphrius and St. Mark, however, most likely belong to two different authors. Although they share a number of general characteristics, the most important of which may be called imitation of Byzantine models, they also differ in several aspects. The *Encomium to St. Mark* corresponds more closely to the genre of the hagiographical sermon, whereas the *Encomium to St. Onuphrius* more closely resembles an encomium proper. The intended audiences of the two texts are different. The *Encomium to St. Mark* was most likely intended for laypeople, hence its "catechetical" and anti-heretical connotations, whereas the *Encomium to St. Onuphrius* was created primarily for monks. If the *Encomium to St. Mark* clearly manifests the anti-heretical orientation of the Tarnovo School, the *Encomium to St. Onuphrius* reflects another of its characteristic features: the influence of Hesychasm[69]. Finally,

---

[67] In this context, the author's emphasis in the *Encomium* on the four canonical Gospels as the foundations of true doctrine becomes clear. His hidden polemic with the Bogomils may be posited here, their principal doctrinal book being the so-called Secret Gospel of John.

[68] Thus, Cyprian Tsamblak composed both the *Life of Metropolitan Peter*, as well as a liturgical praise dedicated to him.

[69] On the influence of Hesychast ideas on the Tarnovo School, see, for example: *Петр (Пиголь), игумен.* Исихастская школа преподобного Феодосия Тырновского: https://pravoslavie.ru/orthodoxchurches/41670.htm?ysclid=mlwc3m3b6k270376224 [accessed: 15.04. 2026].



The Apostle and Evangelist Mark. *Fresco in the Church of the Dormition of the Virgin at the Gračanica Monastery, ca. 1320. From open sources*

although the chairetisms in the two *Encomia* are similar in terms of genre, their place within the structure of the texts differs somewhat.

It is not difficult to identify the circumstances that could have facilitated the appearance of works by the Tarnovo writers in Rus'. During the period of the so-called Second South Slavic Influence, ties between Rus' and ecclesiastical and literary centres in the Balkans grew considerably stronger, facilitating the transmission to Rus' of a substantial body of both the translated Byzantine and the original South Slavic literature[70]. Finally, works of the Tarnovo School could have reached Rus'

[70] Not all scholars are inclined to associate the so-called Second South Slavic Influence with the activities of the Tarnovo Literary School. Thus, V.D. Petrova writes: "The cultural and historical processes in Muscovite Rus' defined as the result of the 'Second South Slavic Influence' cannot in any way be connected with the activities of the Tarnovo School and the dissemination of its ideas, as is customary to interpret them" (*Петрова В.Д.* Тырновская школа и проблема «второго южнославянского влияния» // Вестник Нижегородского университета им. Н.И. Лобачевского. № 6(2). 2011. С. 511). It is not entirely clear what the author means by "cultural and historical processes in Muscovite Rus'" and their "result", considering that the article

through one of its well-known representatives, Cyprian Tsamblak, who became Metropolitan of Kiev (1389–1406).

The fact that manuscripts containing both *encomia* are absent from South Slavic manuscript collections (or have not yet been found there) does not preclude the possibility that some works by representatives of the Tarnovo School, often without attribution, may have survived in East Slavic, and particularly Russian, manuscripts, taking into account the complex circumstances prevailing in the Balkans throughout the Middle Ages and the early modern period[71]. The anonymous transmission of works by the Tarnovo School in the manuscript tradition is likewise nothing unusual[72].

If our hypothesis is correct, it opens up new possibilities for identifying and attributing anonymous *encomia* preserved in the *Great Menaion Reader* of Metropolitan Macarius, as well as in other Old Russian manuscript collections.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

is largely devoted to such a narrow and specific issue as book correction. It is difficult to deny that the overwhelming majority of Byzantine literature in Church Slavonic translations appeared in Rus' precisely during the period of the so-called Second South Slavic Influence. It is equally difficult to deny that the works of representatives of the Tarnovo Literary School appeared in Rus' at the same time. And if our hypothesis is correct that some works by the "Tarnovo writers" may have survived only in East Slavic manuscripts, and that some, if not all, of them subsequently entered the *Great Menaion Reader* of Metropolitan Macarius, often without attribution, then the influence of the Tarnovo School on Old Russian literary culture has yet to be properly appreciated.

71 In particular, the *Life of St. Romylos* by Gregory the New was published from a manuscript in the Imperial Public Library (now the National Library of Russia); see: *Монаха Григория Житие преподобного Ромила, по рукописи XVI в. Имп. Публ. б-ки собр. Гильфердинга, с прил. Службы преп. Ромилу по рукописи XVII в., Белград. нар. б-ки, сообщ. П.А. Сырку*. СПб., 1900.

72 In particular, several anonymous works have been attributed to Gregory Tsamblak: the *Homily to All Orthodox Christians*, the *Encomium to the Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessalonica*, and the *Preface to the Ladder*, see. *Турилов А.А.* Григорий Цамблак // Православная энциклопедия. Т. 12. М., 2006. С. 588.

References

1. Akathist's Collection. Moscow: Danilovsky Blagovestnik, 1995. 543 p. (in Shurch Slavonic)
2. *Great Menaion. April. Book III. Days 22—30*. Moscow: Synodalnaya tipografiya, 1915. 277 p. (in Shurch Slavonic)
3. Voytenko A.A. The Greek Originals of the Synaxarian Slavonic Lives of St. Onnophrius: Preliminary Notes. *Vizantijsky Vremennik*. 2012; 71 (96): 92—101. (in Russian)
4. Voytenko A.A. The Church Slavonic Eulogy of St. Onuphrius the Great. *Vestnik Moscow City University*. Series Historical Studies. 2016; 3 (23): 79—85. (in Russian)
5. Voytenko A.A. *Saint Onuphrius the Great in the Hagiographic Tradition (4th—14th Centuries)*. Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Historical Sciences. Moscow, 2017. 530 p. (in Russian)
6. Voytenko A.A. Why Did the Christology of the Syrians Split in Two? Historical and Cultural View (for discussion). *Vostok (Oriens)*. 2023; 4: 222—233. (in Russan)
7. Voytenko A.A. Slavonic Synaxarian Versions of the Martyrdom of St. Mark of Alexandria in the Great Menaion by Metropolitan Macarius and Their Supposed Greek Originals. *Vizantijsky Vremennik*. 2025; 109: 214—224. (in Russian)
8. Eusebius Pamphilus. *Church history* [translation from Greek by M.E. Sergeenko]. Moscow: Spaso-Preobrazhensky Valaam Monastery, 1993. 447 p. (in Russian)
9. Kazhdan A.A. *History of Byzantine Literature (850—1000)*. Saint-Petersburg: Aleteia, 2012. 376 p. (Transl. in Russian).
10. *The Life of the Venerable Romil by Monk Gregory, from a 16th-century manuscript in the Imperial Public Library, Hilferding Collection, with the appendix of the Service to the Venerable Romil from a 17th-century manuscript in the Belgrade National Library, reported by P.A. Syrko*. St. Petersburg: Society of Lovers of Ancient Writing, 1900. XXXIII, 54 p. (in Russian)

11. Peter (Pigol), abbot. *Hesychastic School of St. Theodosius of Tarnovo*: https://pravoslavie.ru/orthodoxchurches/41670.htm?ysclid=ml-wc3m3b6k270376224, date of access: 15.04. 2026 (in Russian).
12. Petrova V.D. The Tarnovo Literary School and the Problem of "The Second South Slavonic Influence". *Vestnik of Lobachevsky University of Nizhni Novgorod*. 2011; 6(2): 508–512. (in Russian)
13. Tkachenko A.A. [Mark, Apostle] The Gospel of Mark, in: *Orthodox Encyclopedia*. Vol. 43. Moscow: Church Research Center "Orthodox Encyclopedia", 2016. P. 607–628. (in Russian)
14. Turilov A.A. [Mark, Apostle] Veneration among the Southern Slavs and in Rus', in: *Orthodox Encyclopedia*. Vol. 43. Moscow: Church Research Center "Orthodox Encyclopedia", 2016. P. 645–646. (in Russian)
15. Turilov A.A. Gregory Tsamblak, in: *Orthodox Encyclopedia*. T. 12. Moscow: Church Research Center "Orthodox Encyclopedia", 2006. P. 583–592. (in Russan)
16. *Theophylact of Bulgaria. Commentary on the Gospels of Matthew and Mark*. Manuscript: Russian State Library. Collection 228. No. 67. 15th–16th centuries. https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000199_000009_006550480/ (date of access: 26.03.2026) (in Church Slavonic)
17. Ashbrook Harvey S., D.G. Hunter (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. XXVII, 1020 p.*
18. Colombi E. Translatio Marci Evangelistae Venetias (BHL, 5283–5284). *Hagiographica*. 2010; 17: 73–129. (in Italian)
19. Combefis F. *Bibliothecae Patrum graecorum auctarium novissimum. Pars 1*. Paris: Aegidii Hotot, 1672. 586 p. (in Latin)
20. Delehaye H. (ed.). *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e codice Sirmondiano*. Bruxelles: Apud Socios Bollandianos, 1902. 590 p. (in Latin)
21. Furlong D. *The John also Called Mark. Reception and Transformation in Christian Tradition*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020. 251 p.
22. Halkin F. *Actes inédits de saint Marc. Analecta Bollandiana*. 1969; 87: 343–371.
23. Lipsius R.A. *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und Apostellegenden*. Bd.2/2. Braunschweig, 1884. 433 p. (in German)

24. Procopii Diaconi et Chartophylacis Encomium in Sanctum Apostolum ac Evangelistam Marcum, in: *Patrologia Graeca*. T. 100. Parisiis, 1865. Col. 1187–1200. (in Latin)

Anton A. Voytenko
D.Sc. (History),
Leading Research Fellow Center for Egyptological
Studies Russian Academy of Sciences,
SPIN-code: 6601-8960,
AuthorID: 289756

Received 10.05.2026
Revised 15.06.2026
Accepted 17.07.2026

10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.008
Original paper

Galina V. Shebaldina

Humanities Archive Center Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, Russian Federation
E-mail: gshebaldina@yandex.ru

Women and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Sweden

Abstract

This article examines the women who surrounded men in positions of power – be they husbands, fathers, or brothers – during the "Age of Liberty" and the early decades following the complete restoration of royal rule. Eighteenth-century Swedish society, much like that of preceding centuries, preserved a patriarchal view of women, irrespective of their social standing, whether common or noble. Bearing sons, supporting men, and managing the household were regarded as their natural roles. Over time, however, the situation began to change: educated and energetic women from the upper classes increasingly emerged from the shadow of their husbands. At the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and, particularly, after the end of the Great Northern War, women's salons, both political and cultural in orientation – literary and artistic – began to flourish in Sweden, following the example of leading European states. The article focuses specifically on political salons headed by the wives of leading or otherwise prominent politicians of the kingdom. Practice demonstrated that women who were able to realise their ambitions and potential by using

© Galina V. Shebaldina, 2026

their marriages and family connections as a starting point achieved greater success in influencing politics and public opinion. Initially, they preferred to act as informal leaders of circles that regularly gathered in their homes; from the mid-eighteenth century, however, politically active aristocratic women no longer hesitated to publicly demonstrate their political positions, sympathies, and antipathies. How accessible was the political sphere to women? Were they independent actors, or was their activity determined by the will of men, with their functions limited to transmitting information to interested parties? Answers to these and other questions can significantly broaden our understanding of Swedish society during this period.

Keywords:
Sweden in the eighteenth century; women's political influence: favourites, mistresses, and spies; salon culture; party struggle between the Hats and the Caps; foreign interference in the domestic politics of Sweden during the Age of Liberty

For citation:
Galina V. Shebaldina. Women and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Sweden. The Historical Reporter. 2026. Vol. 60. P. 222–239. DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.008

Over the past several decades, the number of scholarly works devoted to the "woman question" has increased many times over, considerably expanding a field of research that had previously often been reduced to the study of the private lives of monarchs and other figures in positions of power, as well as the possible influence of favorites, mistresses, and simply lovers on the decisions they made.

In this brief overview, we shall turn our attention to the period in eighteenth-century Swedish history marked by the country's first experiment with parliamentary government[1]. We are referring to the so-called "Age of Liberty", founded on a substantial limitation of the monarch's absolute power by the Riksdag and the aristocratic Council of the Realm. We shall also consider the first decades following Gustav III's coup, when royal power was restored on an almost fully comprehensive basis.

Our focus is on women whose activities were connected, to varying degrees, in different forms and capacities, with the political sphere, and who became prominent not merely because of their birth or their influential husbands, parents, and other relatives, but also because they demonstrated qualities of their own: energy, determination, convictions, and other talents.

As is well known, women in early modern society did not enjoy the same opportunities as men, a fact reflected even in the principles of inheritance following the death of parents. In Sweden, for example, daughters were entitled to only half of what was inherited by sons, who also found it considerably easier to secure employment. At the same time, scholars note that even in earlier periods, women could, under various circumstances, acquire legal and property rights and opportunities. This applied above all to widows who had lost their husbands in wars. In this respect, the eighteenth century provides clear evidence of a growing number of cases in which women found themselves at the head of sometimes very large enterprises: farms, factories, and mines.

For women from impoverished noble families, another means of securing a livelihood was service at court. According to scholars, however, they acted in such positions primarily in the interests of their families, above all those of their male relatives, and only subsequently in their own interests. We have several vivid examples of this from the history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One such example is Emerentia von Düben, who was appointed to serve the young Princess Ulrika Eleonora, sister of Charles XII and wife of the future King Frederick I of Sweden, and who retained her position until the death of her charge. Naturally, this position contributed to the career advancement of her relatives, enabling

[1] *Bodensten E.* Korruption, utländsk påverkan och frihetstidens styrelseskick. En politisk historia // Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift. 2021. S. 335.

them to attain high positions in the state. It is believed that over time she acquired a degree of social and political influence that went well beyond the ordinary[2]. Another example is Anna Catharina von Bärfelt, a favorite of Hedwig Eleonora, the mother of Charles XI and grandmother of Charles XII. According to a report by the French minister de Campredon, she accepted rewards for assisting in the resolution of certain matters, but ultimately paid for this with financial ruin and years in prison.

Women who came from the narrow aristocratic elite, which had remained close to political power throughout the Middle Ages and the early modern period, were more confident in participating in decision-making on a wide range of issues. Throughout the eighteenth century, we can see women becoming increasingly independent not only in their choice of hats or dresses, but also in their interest in spheres that had seemingly been unfamiliar to them, such as economics and politics. At the same time, it is no longer sufficient to explain this development solely by the good education received by aristocratic women.

Women increasingly sought to distinguish themselves from the broader mass of society by asserting their abilities and achievements. Thus, of approximately 340 newspapers and journals founded between 1730 and 1809, around ten were intended specifically for a female readership, offering instructional and educational material. Although they were published in small print runs and their articles were almost always anonymous or written under pseudonyms, they nevertheless represented an important signal of changes taking place in society. Interestingly, all this coexisted with occasional reports of witchcraft trials being initiated in various parts of Sweden.

The changes taking place in society were clearly reflected in the fact that salon culture quickly and naturally became part of everyday life in Sweden, taking both political and non-political forms. In the latter case, salons gathered around prominent female writers and artists. The salon circle of Sophia Elisabet Brenner, a well-known writer and artist, is usually regarded as the first example of this kind. Some scholars consider her one of the pioneers of women's intellectual emancipation in Sweden. The term "protofeminism" has even been introduced to characterize her activities.

---

[2] Emerentia von Düben, www.skbl.se/sv/artikel/EmerentiavonDuben, *Svenskt kvinnobiografiskt lexicon* (entry by Charlotta Forss).



Ladies-in-waiting awaiting Queen Ulrika. *Artist J. Pasch.*
From open sources

Our attention, however, is focused specifically on political salons headed by the wives of leading or otherwise prominent politicians of the Swedish kingdom. Practice showed that the women who achieved the greatest success in influencing politics and public opinion were those who were able to realize their ambitions and potential by using their marriages and family connections as their starting point. At the same time, they did not always step out from behind their husbands or male relatives, preferring instead to act as informal leaders who played their own game in special settings – salons and circles, whose number grew rapidly during the second half of the seventeenth century and especially in the eighteenth century.

It turns out that such gatherings were about much more than handicrafts, card games, dancing, and listening to music. They also provided opportunities to establish and maintain connections with influential families and political groupings, to act as intermediaries between different forces, and thereby to acquire the potential to influence political decisions. The hostess herself played a key role in this process: it was she who set the tone of the gathering. Her ability to manage the atmosphere was shaped by a variety of factors, including psychological characteristics, the status of her family, and the broader political climate of the period.

Sources concerning the activities of women's salons in the eighteenth century are not abundant. As a rule, they consist of documents of a personal nature: diaries, correspondence, and memoirs, as well as the

correspondence of foreign diplomats, who were important participants in the social and political life of Stockholm during this period.

One of the earliest circles of this kind was the salon established for foreign ministers by Magdalena Stenbock, the wife of the prominent late-seventeenth-century politician, Privy Councillor and Chancellor, Count B.G. Oxenstierna. Foreign diplomats frequently visited their home in the capital and their country estate, where they engaged in frank discussions in which the countess herself actively participated. Contemporaries wrote that she sympathized with the Habsburgs and was hostile toward France, which had a definite influence on her husband's policies. The diplomats whom she supported eagerly made use of the information she supplied concerning Swedish policy and court news. There is even an insufficiently substantiated claim that she and her husband were "bought" by the Holy Roman Empire for 8,000 dalers.

With the beginning of the "Age of Liberty", discussion of the most pressing political issues extended beyond the narrow circle of state officials[3]. While men had the opportunity to debate matters in public squares, coffeehouses, and taverns, women remained confined, as before, within the walls of their homes. In such circumstances, establishing and maintaining a functioning salon was one of the few ways of addressing this problem. Using the limited sources and scholarship available to us, let us examine the activities of some of these women. As early as the mid-seventeenth century, the wives of prominent politicians were perceived not only as potential instruments for influencing their husbands, but also as independent sources of information, particularly given the considerable social activity of Swedish women, which was repeatedly noted, for example, by French and Imperial diplomats. This was also observed by the first postwar Russian minister to Sweden, Chamber Junker Count Mikhail Petrovich Bestuzhev, who arrived in Stockholm in 1722 and mentioned women's activity in his very first dispatches. In his report of March 28, 1722, describing his efforts "to

[3] Evidence of the growing involvement of society is the enormous amount of journalistic material, both legal and clandestine, that literally flooded Sweden // In particular, see: *Holm S.* In a city flooded with pamphlets': Foreign Diplomats Monitoring and Spreading the News in Eighteenth-Century Stockholm. Media and Mediation in the Eighteenth Century. https://doi.org/10.37852/oblu.209. Lund, 2023. P. 80.

reconcile" King Frederick and Duke Charles Frederick, he stated that, among other things, he had discussed the matter with the three highest-ranking figures. Yet he was astonished when, "on the third and fourth day, the whole city knew about it". Bestuzhev was convinced that "this was spread through their wives, since the ladies here, without exception, all belong to the Duke's party"[4].

The Russian minister also took note of the women's reaction when, following instructions from St. Petersburg, he had printed "a certain opinion" concerning the "case" of former Chamberlain Willem Mons and subsequently distributed several copies among "friends at court". Some ladies openly expressed their regret that "Mons's sister had been treated cruelly"[5]. Evidently, such an outspoken reaction made a particular impression on Bestuzhev, who continued to draw attention to similar incidents in his later dispatches.

It is well known that the leading politician during the first decades of the "Age of Liberty" was Count Arvid Horn. His role was so prominent that foreign governments described him as the foremost political figure in Sweden, whose authority and influence surpassed those of the Crown, and consequently accorded him particular attention. The Russian authorities were no exception, since relations with Sweden were important for establishing and maintaining the Russian Empire's new status in the region. The methods used to bring one politician or another over to one's interests had long been known and were employed by all countries: gifts, stipends, assistance in resolving pressing matters, such as land disputes, and opportunities for career advancement in service abroad. In Sweden, however, following the Great Northern War, material rewards, above all monetary ones, became particularly widespread, as was noted not only by foreign observers but also by the Swedes themselves. The situation was so serious that some historians and economists maintain that the corruption prevailing in the country at the time nearly led to the loss of the state's independence and certainly acquired a systemic character.

We shall not discuss here whether Chancellor Horn received such gifts from diplomats of various countries – the archival evidence on this point is quite definite – but shall simply take it as a given. What interests us is that

4 АВПРИ. Ф. 96. Оп. 1. 1722. № 6 от 28 марта. Л. 28 об.

5 АВПРИ. Ф. 96. Оп. 1. 1724. № 5 ч. 2 от 11 декабря. Л. 420–421 об.

his wife, Countess Margareta Gyllenstierna[6], was involved in this as well. In 1724, the Russian minister in Stockholm, Count Bestuzhev, proposed that she be presented with "good sables and furs, as well as fine Chinese goods for the chambers and fabrics" worth 2,000 rubles, which were intended for the Count himself. He justified the proposal by noting that "the aforementioned Count is very wealthy and uninterested in such things, and, being also a man of great ambition, he may perhaps take this gift as an affront"[7].

The Countess's name appears in Russian diplomatic dispatches in connection with the efforts of Ambassador Plenipotentiary Prince V.L. Dolgorukov to prevent Sweden from joining the Hanoverian Alliance. Having arrived in Stockholm late, he unsuccessfully sought an opportunity to meet Count Horn. According to the rules governing the Riksdag then in session, however, the Lord Marshal was not permitted to discuss affairs with foreign ministers. The Prince therefore chose an indirect approach: "to act through his wife or through outsiders". He had been given an example by the Imperial ambassador Count Freitag, who, after his arrival, was unable for some time to obtain an audience and therefore could not meet with the senators, but frequently visited their wives, while they visited his wife – in other words, "they dine with one another". As a result, the Prince was received by Countess Gyllenstierna at least twice. It is noteworthy that she was the "queen", while the wife of another prominent politician, Count M. J. De la Gardie, Hedvig Catharina, was the "vice-queen" of the sumptuous reception and ball for 500 people organized by Dolgorukov on December 15, 1726, on the occasion of Empress Catherine I's name day. He also requested that the Cabinet send, at her request, sables, "of which she has provided a list specifying the quantity and type", and believed that these "might well be given free of charge"[8].

By the beginning of the 1730s, Margareta Gyllenstierna, like her husband, had established herself as a supporter of an alliance with France. Some scholars draw attention to the fact that her name is mentioned repeatedly in the dispatches of the French minister Baron Charles-Louis de Biaudos de Casteja, who received some information

---

6 Until the end of the eighteenth century, aristocratic women in Sweden preferred to retain their family name after marriage.

7 АВПРИ. Ф. 96. Оп. 1. 1724. № 6 от 1 июня. Л. 106 об. – 107.

8 АВПРИ. Ф. 96. Оп. 1. 1726–1727. № 12 в Кабинет от 23 декабря 1726 г. Л. 11 об. – 12.

from her[9]. Taking into account his complaints about his wife's estrangement following his falling-out with Count Horn, we are inclined to believe that his knowledge stemmed from conversations in the Countess's salon, conducted in the presence of a large audience. The Swedish historian K. Sennefelt calls Countess Gyllenstierna the "hostess" of several dozen men who "courted her husband on his name day and birthday"[10].

Incidentally, the aforementioned fact that politicians were prohibited from taking certain actions during the Riksdag became another precondition for the involvement of women in high politics, a circumstance foreign ministers readily exploited. Among them, however, there was one who became so successful at this that he deserves separate attention.

We are referring to the French minister Baron Charles-Louis de Biaudos de Casteja. He carried out his diplomatic mission in Stockholm from 1727 to 1735 with such zeal and dedication that, largely thanks to him, Sweden restored its close ties with Paris and began pursuing a policy aligned with French interests. One of Casteja's most successful tactical methods, based on the practices of the Versailles court, was to make use of the potential of politically active women. His circle included several ladies of high society with whom he held long and frank conversations in their salons, at receptions, and at balls.

One of them was Countess Charlotta von Liewen (married name Bonde), who, like some members of her family, was initially a supporter of the Holstein party but fairly quickly shifted toward French interests. In his dispatches, Minister Casteja spoke highly of the information he received from her. Its source was the position held by her husband, Count Gustaf Bonde, whom the Russian Minister N.F. Golovin described in one of his reports as "a timid man". His career experienced a rapid rise in the late 1720s, when he became Vice-Chancellor, making him an even more attractive figure for foreign diplomats. The Russian authorities maintained contacts with him as well; in several reports, Golovin included him among the "well-disposed" senators who, for example, were rewarded by resolution of the Privy Council on the occasion of "the restoration of friendship and correspondence between Russia and

---

9 *Norrhem S.* Kvinnor vid maktens sida: 1632–1772. Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2007. S. 86.

10 *Sennefelt K.* Stockholmsliv. Riksdagsumgänge och identitetsformering under frihetstiden. Historisk Tidskrift 125: 3. 2005. S. 415.



Hedvig Catharina De la Gardie.
From open sources

Sweden, and Sweden's recognition of His Imperial Majesty's title of Emperor of All Russia"[11]. Incidentally, Bonde, like his superior Count Horn, requested that a reward of 1,000 ducats be presented to his wife, and even accompanied the Russian minister to the women's chambers himself, where the countess "accepted the money without any difficulty"[12].

Count Gustaf Bonde continued to maintain regular contacts with Russian ministers, first with Golovin and later with M.P. Bestuzhev-Ryumin. He was also among those who eventually began to express dissatisfaction with the excessively active and overbearing conduct of Minister Casteja and contributed to his expulsion from the country. This was partly why, following the victory of the pro-French forces at the Riksdag of 1738, he was among the six senators whom the Hats party decided to throw out of the Senate. Countess Charlotta von Liewen herself died in 1735, shortly before receiving a reward from Louis XV in the form of diamond earrings in gratitude for her services.

Perhaps the best-known lady in Casteja's circle, and one who frequently operated on the verge of scandal, was Countess Hedvig Catharina Lillie (married name De la Gardie), who, according to contemporaries, was one of those who influenced the formation of public opinion. Her activities were so remarkable that they deserve a closer examination.

[11] АВПРИ. Ф. 96. Оп. 1. 1728. № 4 от 5 июля. Л. 275–276 об.
[12] АВПРИ. Ф. 96. Оп. 1. 1730. № 6 от 21 августа. Л. 50 об.

Born into wealth and raised by an active and enterprising mother who devoted particular attention to the education of her only child, she was married at the age of sixteen. The De la Gardie family, into which Hedvig Catharina married, had maintained ties since the late sixteenth century with the country from which the family had originally come to Sweden. Over time, her pro-French sympathies only grew stronger, a tendency reflected in the activities of several political salons that she organized and supported[13]. Together with her husband, the countess staged theatrical performances and special Thursday evenings for that segment of Stockholm society which supported the Hats party. It is reliably known that she made generous financial contributions to the party fund, and after the death of Baron von Höpken, she and Count C. Gyllenstierna for a time became informal leaders of the Hats.

Her independent character and her amorous adventures – both real and alleged – were constantly under public scrutiny. The famous pamphleteer Olof von Dalin portrayed her in his journal as an example of the kind of woman one should not emulate. He described her harshly, using an allegory based on one of the vices: "Madam Sociable Lust" ("Mrs. Lusty Society")[14].

Her mother's vigorous approach to life was reflected in the fate of her daughter Eva, later Countess Ekeblad. She not only devoted herself to raising her children but also managed a vast estate with such dedication that,

---

[13] *Carlsson I.* Parti – partiväsen – partipolitiker 1731–43. Kring uppkomsten av våra första politiska partier. Stockholm Studie in History, 29. St. 1981. S. 195.

[14] In the third issue of his journal *Then Swanska Argus*, published in 1732, the 25-year-old O. Dalin addressed women with the following words: "Good day, Swedish ladies! It has been a long time since you were greeted in the press in this way. Our scholars seem to be negligent, since they either write things you do not understand or avoid you altogether, as though the saying were untrue that whoever is on good terms with you may do whatever he wishes. Your sex seems at times to rule and hold sway over the entire earthly globe, and your favour is the happiness of many, regardless of whether they deserve that happiness or not; therefore, I am so cunning that one of my first sheets is addressed to you. It is indeed fitting that such a noble sex should be the first to receive you, and I hope that you will receive me kindly. However, lest you disregard my great modesty, I shall tell you that I have come to you not as a flattering cavalier hoping to win your friendship through false modesty, sweet words, and pleasant flattery. Such fashionable embraces would be foreign to Argus! No, I come as a secret and insincere counsellor, to point out to you the path of virtue and teach you the beautiful, worthy, and decorous customs of your sex..." In this way, he skilfully depicted the gender dynamics at the top of Swedish society.



Henrika Juliana von Liewen. *Artist G. Lundberg.*
From open sources

for her practical experiments and discovery of the properties of starch, she was elected a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences at the age of twenty-four.

More independent of French policy in Sweden was the wife of Count Carl Gyllenborg, the wealthy English widow Sarah Derith (née Wright). Unlike the ladies mentioned above, she was of less distinguished birth but considerably more politically sophisticated. She supported her husband in 1717, when he, as Sweden's plenipotentiary representative, was arrested in London on charges of involvement in a Jacobite conspiracy. After accompanying him to Stockholm, she used all available resources to help the Count rise to the head of government. She maintained a salon that became a meeting place for politicians, industrialists, and figures from the worlds of culture and science, with the aim of supporting Swedish interests in England.

It is noteworthy that women seeking to become part of political processes were highly inventive in their choice of means, and simply wearing a rose on a special ribbon as a sign of opposition to Count Horn's policies was no longer sufficient. For example, they exploited vulnerable aspects of King Frederick I's private life associated with the lady-in-waiting Hedvig Taube. The young sixteen-year-old girl caught the eye of the fifty-four-year-old king and completely captivated him with her beauty, cheerful disposition, and sound judgment. In order to shield his interest from excessive attention, he approached Chancellor Count Arvid Horn

with a request that she be lodged in his household. According to Fryxell, however, Horn indignantly refused to participate in matchmaking, whereas the already familiar Countess De la Gardie and Baroness Höpken enthusiastically assumed the role of intermediaries between the lady-in-waiting, her parents – who, incidentally, approved of the union[15] – and the king. Somewhat later, the aforementioned Sarah Derith, together with her friends, learned of the birth of the first child of the king's official mistress and, by hastening to visit and congratulate Taube on her delivery, prevented a possible boycott of her. Given that the royal couple had no children while Taube bore several, Frederick gradually became increasingly dependent on the aforementioned individuals and factions. This, for example, played a role in supporting the Hats party's plans directed against A. Horn.

Following the unsuccessful attempt at revanche – the war of 1741–1743 – women's participation in political life became even more apparent. One well-known place where political questions continued to be discussed actively was the salon of the lady-in-waiting Henrika Juliana von Liewen. By the age of twenty, she had already demonstrated her support for the Hats party, while her family and personal connections enabled her to collect and skillfully use the information she obtained to further her interests. Having become a lady-in-waiting to the future King Adolf Frederick's bride, and later his wife, the Prussian Princess Louisa Ulrika, in 1748 she betrayed her confidence by passing information about a royal conspiracy to the ambassadors of France, Denmark, and Russia. The information concerned a royal plot aimed at strengthening the monarchy, and its disclosure resulted in the destruction of these plans. Yet her mind was occupied by more than intrigue: she also wrote political articles for the journal *An Honest Swede*, whose editorial office was located in her home. Von Liewen's services were recognized by the authorities, and she was granted a pension, which she retained even after the rival Caps party came to power.

It should be noted that the energetic wife of the future King Adolf Frederick, Louisa Ulrika, gathered around herself a considerable number of women with active and independent personalities. The famous painting *The Hen Picture*[16] by J. Pasch and H. Scheffel was created in

---

15 *Fryxel A.* Berättelser ur svenska historien St. 1903. S. 6.

16 There are several other titles: "Picturesque Hens"; "Ladies-in-Waiting Awaiting Queen Ulrika".



Eva Ekeblad.
From open sources

1747 and depicted six of the princess's ladies-in-waiting as birds with women's heads, with a rooster visible behind them. It was rumored that the commissioner had thereby been portrayed as well: Prime Minister Count C.G. Tessin, who had allegedly asked the artists to depict, in accordance with fashionable European conventions of the time, the women he had once spied upon in a bathhouse. The aforementioned H.J. von Liewen was one of them. The others depicted were Ernestine von Griesheim, Charlotta Sparre, Ulrika Strömfelt, Agneta Strömfelt, and Catharina Charlotta Taube.

A study of the biographies of these ladies-in-waiting shows that they were highly unconventional women. Countess Charlotta Sparre (married name von Fersen), for example, not only captivated European rulers with her beauty and grace and was known for her passion for ballet and theatrical performance, but also instilled in her daughters an independent view of the position of women in society. Countess Catharina Charlotta Taube (married name De la Gardie) was not only the sister of Frederick I's official mistress, but also the woman who came to the defense of twelve women accused of witchcraft. With her active support, smallpox inoculation was introduced in Sweden; she herself and her children underwent the procedure in 1756.

Many contemporaries spoke negatively of Countess Eva Helena Löwen (married name Ribbing), whose life resembled an adventure

novel. Her beauty and wit made her a desirable conversational partner for many politicians, including King Gustav III. Her heart, however, belonged to France[17] – or, more precisely, to the French ambassador, with whom she willingly shared political and court information, which became the basis for France granting her a very generous pension. The negative attitude of her contemporaries and later generations can partly be explained by the fact that her son, Adolf Ribbing, played a key role in the assassination of Gustav III.

French sources indicate that, by the late 1760s, Countess E.H. Löwen was listed among nine Swedes receiving secret pensions from France. Three women appeared on the list. In addition to the aforementioned countess, there was Countess Christina Sophia Bielke (married name Rudenschöld), who inherited the activist outlook of her grandmother and stepmother but, unlike her father, Count Ture Gabriel Bielke – one of the most trusted figures of the Russian authorities in Sweden during the first decades of the "Age of Liberty" – was a loyal supporter of the Hats party and France. In her salon, like Countess Löwen, she not only hosted card games but also conducted pro-French propaganda and agitation. The third woman on the list of "pensioners" was Baroness Gustava Duval, who, together with her husband, also did much for the Hats and France.

Although all three women worked in the same direction, the size of their pensions varied. Countess Löwen received the most – 12,000 dalers; Countess Bielke received 6,000, while Duval received only 1,000 dalers[18]. It is quite possible that this was related to the fact that the salons of the first two women were frequented by people of considerably higher rank and therefore required greater expenditure to maintain the standard of their receptions.

The outspoken political sympathies of the wives of high-ranking men, or of women who, by virtue of their official or personal position, were close to the sphere of high politics, often became grounds for suspicions of espionage. a striking example is the aforementioned Countess De la Gardie; in the second half of the eighteenth century, such cases became even more numerous. For example, Julie Eckerman, the mistress

[17] Her grandfather, Count Arvid Horn, whose career came to an end with the active involvement of the French, would certainly have been surprised.

[18] *Norrhen S.* (2007.) S. 193.



Eva Löwen. *Artist G. Lundberg.*
From open sources

of Count Carl Sparre, was suspected of having an affair with Müller, a secretary of the Russian embassy who supplied her with secret information, which she used at her own discretion.

Incidentally, several other politically active Swedish women were suspected of spying for Russia. In particular, according to the memoirs of the future King Charles XIII's wife, Duchess Hedwig Elisabeth Charlotte of Holstein-Gottorp, Countess Ulrika Eleonora von Düben (married name *Rålamb*) used her connections with Count Mörner to obtain secret information and transmit it to St. Petersburg. These suspicions were reinforced by her friendship with Countess Constance Wilhelmine de Saint-Priest, the wife of a French diplomat and a spy herself, through whom information was passed on, among others, to Catherine II's favorite, Count Platon Zubov.

It is worth mentioning that the future Swedish queen herself led a turbulent life filled with political and personal passions. Among other things, she was one of the authors of the conspiracy against Gustav III, and in 1776 became the "Grand Mistress" of one of Sweden's Masonic lodges. She also founded the salon known as the "Green Table," where noblewomen gathered around their sewing and discussed political issues. Some contemporaries suspected her of spying for France. Interestingly, the Wikipedia category "18th-Century Spies" lists 33 people, of whom 19 are women, including eight Swedish women.

This brief overview of the "extra-familial" activities of noble and high-ranking women in Sweden allows us to make several observations. Throughout the eighteenth century, there was a steady trend toward increasing female involvement in political and public life. Their activism was often transmitted across generations, while their practices of communication gradually moved beyond traditional salon culture and the narrow circle of favorites, acquiring features of politically engaged participation.

As in the preceding period, the principal figures, at least in the political salons, remained women belonging to the highest strata of Swedish society, while examples of women of more modest origins occupying such roles were exceptional. At the same time, the evidence presented above concerning those who dared to step beyond the boundaries of traditional female behavior provides grounds for at least two interesting conclusions.

First, it is impossible not to notice how thin the line was between politics "for love" and politics "for calculation", as well as between "noble patriotism" and "immoral espionage" in the interests of another country. Second, in most of the examples cited above, we encounter what contemporaries wrote about with condemnation and contempt and what today is more appropriately termed the "sexualization of women's political activity". How firmly these phenomena became established in Swedish public life remains a question for further historical inquiry.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

References

1. Bodensten E. Korruption, utländsk påverkan och frihetstidens styrelseskick: en politisk historia. Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift. 2021;123(2):333–364. URL: https://journals.lub.lu.se/st/article/view/23520/20850 (in Swe.).

2. Fryxel A. Berättelser ur svenska historien: till ungdomens tjenst. Stockholm; 1838–1879. Vol. 34. URL: https://archive.org/details/berttelserursv34fryxuoft/page/6/mode/2up (in Swe.).
3. Sennefelt K. Stockholmsliv: riksdagsumgänge och identitetsformering under frihetstiden. Historisk Tidskrift. 2005;125(3):399–420. URL: https://www.historisktidskrift.se/ht1/fulltext/2005-3/pdf/HT_2005-3_399-420_sennefelt.pdf (in Swe.).
4. Holm S. 'In a city flooded with pamphlets': foreign diplomats monitoring and spreading the news in eighteenthcentury Stockholm. In: Media and Mediation in the Eighteenth Century. Lund; 2023. p. 80. (in Swe.). https://doi.org/10.37852/oblu.209
5. Norrhem S. Kvinnor vid maktens sida: 1632–1772. Lund: Nordic Academic Press; 2007. p. 86. (in Swe.).
6. Carlsson I. Parti – partiväsen – partipolitiker 1731–43: kring uppkomsten av våra första politiska partier. Stockholm Studies in History. 1981;29:195. (in Swe.).

Galina V. Shebaldina
C.Sc. (History),
Research Fellow Humanities Archive Center
Russian State University for the Humanities,
SPIN-code: 1556-7026,
AuthorID: 479369,
OrcID 0000-0002-7612-1584

Received 07.12.2025
Revised 12.02.2026
Accepted 17.03.2026

DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.009
Original paper

Georgy Sh. Pilavov

Luhansk Voroshilov State Agricultural University, Luhansk, Russian Federation
E-mail: pilav29@mail.ru

Diderot versus the Jesuits: the Presumption of Guilt

Abstract
The article aims to critically examine the ideological confrontation between the French Enlightenment thinkers and the Society of Jesus. This confrontation was most clearly expressed in Denis Diderot's article *The Jesuits* in Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*, in which he levelled a number of accusations against the Society of Jesus. The article considers all the historical examples cited by the French thinker to demonstrate the allegedly criminal nature of the Jesuit order. The analysis reveals a discrepancy between Diderot's stated accusations against the Jesuits and the actual historical events. It demonstrates that the style of presentation is non-academic and polemical, failing to meet the standards expected of an encyclopaedic work. It is shown that a number of the crimes attributed to the Order are not supported by historical scholarship, including the accusations that the Jesuits participated in attempts on the lives of French monarchs; some are linked to political circumstances, such as the Order's activities in the context of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation;

© Georgy Sh. Pilavov, 2026

while certain claims are the product of Diderot's imagination, including his account of the so-called Mammillairs sect. Overall, the article demonstrates the extreme lack of objectivity and pronounced bias of Diderot's position, his failure to apply a scholarly approach to the issues under consideration, and a tendency to tailor the evidence to a predetermined conclusion. At the same time, some of the French thinker's statements not only contradict the findings of historical scholarship but also diverge from Diderot's own views as a representative of the French Enlightenment. Given that Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* constitutes a kind of ideological manifesto of the French Enlightenment, the article concludes that the time has come to move away from a purely eulogistic attitude towards the intellectual legacy of eighteenth-century French thinkers and to subject their works to critical reappraisal.

Keywords:
Enlightenment; Jesuits; *Encyclopédie*; Diderot

For citation:
Georgy Sh. Pilavov. Diderot versus the Jesuits: the Presumption of Guilt. The Historical Reporter. 2026. Vol. 60. P. 240–273. DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.009

The eighteenth century is known in human history as the Age of Enlightenment, a period that had an enormous impact on the development of our civilization. This phenomenon was expressed most vividly in France, where the Enlightenment movement encompassed the most pressing social, political, religious, and philosophical issues of the time.



Denis Diderot. *Artist Louis-Michel van Loo, 1767.*
From open sources

The thinkers and philosophers of the French Enlightenment, who succeeded in fundamentally altering not only the course of philosophical thought but also the entire course of human history, were not unanimous on every issue. Thus, the differences between the views of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire are well known; they eventually led to a conflict and a complete break between the two. Rousseau also came into conflict with Denis Diderot. Voltaire and Paul Thiry (Baron d'Holbach), as well as Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, likewise disagreed on a number of matters. Despite their broadly similar views on most philosophical and social issues, they differed on certain questions concerning social and religious matters.

There was, however, one subject on which the philosophes displayed a remarkable degree of unanimity. When discussing a certain community of like-minded individuals organized into a particular institutional structure, the Enlightenment thinkers showed little restraint in their language – both with regard to the organization itself and to its ordinary members. Voltaire denounced them vehemently, freely resorting to such epithets as "swindlers, bankrupts, criminals, regicides, and villains"[1]. Claude Adrien Helvétius called them "one of the most ruthless scourges of nations"[2]. Diderot devoted an exceptionally long article to them in the

[1] *Вольтер.* Бог и люди. В 2 т. Т. 2. М.: Академия наук СССР, 1961. С. 262.

[2] *Гельвеций К.А.* О человеке, его умственных способностях и его воспитании. М.: Государственное социально-экономическое издательство, 1938. С. 291.

Encyclopédie — longer than the articles on philosophers, religion, and fatherland combined. There, with an intensity of rhetoric unusual for him, he asserted that they "are the most odious defenders of tyranny"; that "there are no crimes that have not been committed ... no doctrines more depraved than those propagated by them"[3]. In *Pocket Theology*, d'Holbach, referring to a member of this organization, piles up insinuations in a manner reminiscent of the sensationalist press of our own time: he "behaves outrageously wherever he happens to lodge. With women, however, he is usually accommodating; boys do not get off so cheaply"[4].

The reader will already have guessed that this remarkable unanimity of indignation among the French philosophes was directed against the Jesuit order. The history of their confrontation has been described repeatedly, both in historical scholarship and in the history of philosophy. There is, however, a question which, in our view, has not received sufficient attention, including in contemporary historical and philosophical scholarship: how justified were the accusations made by French thinkers against the Jesuits? In the author's view, it is worthwhile to examine the factual material on which the philosophes based the conclusions set out above, analyzing the evidence they cited with the tools of modern scholarship.

The anti-Jesuit position was expressed most comprehensively by Diderot in the corresponding article in the *Encyclopédie*. What immediately attracts attention in this material is its decidedly non-encyclopedic manner of presentation, for example: "No, holy fathers! Neither gold nor influential connections could guarantee the survival of such a small organization as the Jesuit order"[5]. As has already been noted, however, "the authors of the *Encyclopédie* regarded it above all as an instrument through which a single 'correct' view of the social, religious, and political organization of the world could be shaped"[6]. The emotionally charged and rhetorical presentation of the material indicates that this motive prevailed in this case as well.

---

[3] Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 270, 274.

[4] *Гольбах П.* Карманное богословие. М.: Государственное издательство политической литературы, 1961. С. 85.

[5] Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 276.

[6] *Пилавов Г.Ш.* Энциклопедия Дидро и Д'Аламбера: контекстуально-критическое осмысление // История философии. 2024. Т. 29. № 1. С. 51.



Il Gesù. *The Jesuit order's mother church in Rome. From open sources*

For the purposes of our study, the most important point is the list of Jesuit "crimes" which the author presents with evident relish: "Since the establishment of the order, not a single year has passed without the Jesuits distinguishing themselves by some notorious atrocity"[7]. The subsequent list of the Jesuits' "sins", however, deserves closer examination than a mere enumeration. We shall analyze Diderot's list, drawing not only on works devoted specifically to the Jesuits but also on historical research more broadly.

"*In 1547, Bobadilla, one of Ignatius's companions, was expelled from Germany for publicly opposing the Augsburg Interim in print*"[8].

The decree of Emperor Charles V – the Augsburg Interim – was an attempt to find a compromise between Catholicism and the Reformation. As is often the case in such situations, it provoked dissatisfaction on both sides of the conflict. On the Protestant side, the Lutheran theologians Nikolaus Amsdorf and Matthias Flacius opposed the Augsburg Interim, considering its provisions unacceptable to the Reformation[9]. Bobadilla, by contrast, criticized it from the standpoint of the Roman Church for making concessions to the Protestants. As T. Campbell notes, he "was

7 Boguslavskiy V.M., ed. 1994. Philosophy in Diderot and D'Alembert's "Encyclopedia". Moscow: Nauka. P. 272.

8 Ibid.

9 *Hauschild W.-D.* Lehrbuch der Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte. Gütersloh, 2005. Bd. 2. P. 411.



Nicolás de Bobadilla. *Engraving by Philippe Galle, 16th century. From open sources*

particularly outspoken on this issue and, in a public address, had the imprudence to condemn imperial policy"[10]. As a result, by order of the emperor, he was forced to leave Germany.

It should be noted that Bobadilla clearly lacked tact and the ability to accept compromise solutions. Following the death of Ignatius Loyola, he "provoked a crisis in relations between the Society and Pope Paul IV"[11]. Nevertheless, there are no grounds for classifying his criticism of Charles V's actions as a "notorious atrocity".

"*In 1560, Gonçalo da Silveira was executed in Monomotapa as a spy for Portugal and the Jesuit order*"[12].

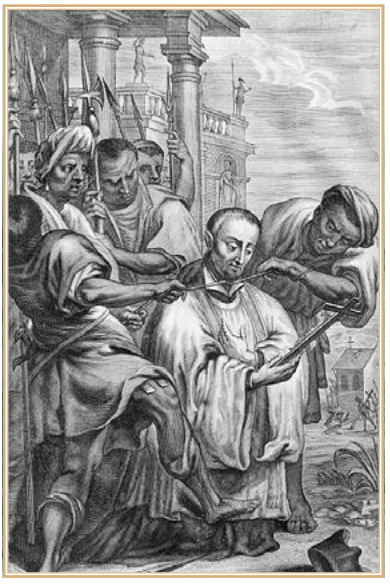
Gonçalo da Silveira was a missionary in Africa, in the territory of present-day Zimbabwe. His mission in Monomotapa was exclusively catechetical in character and was initially highly successful: he "baptized the ruler of the Mutapa state, Negomo Mupunzagutu, his mother, and prominent members of the aristocracy"[13]. These events, however, aroused the hostility of Arab merchants from Mozambique who had

[10] *Campbell T.J.* The Jesuits, 1534–1921. a History of the Society of Jesus from Its Foundation to the Present Time. New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 2013. P. 53.

[11] *O'Malley J.* The First Jesuits. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993. P. 32.

[12] Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 272.

[13] *Gundani P.* The 'just war' tradition in Zimbabwean historiography. Dis(entangling) the Gordian knot between religion and morality of war // Missionalia. 2019. 47(1). P. 74.



Казнь Гонсало да Сильвейры. Гравюра XVIII в.
Из открытых источников

arrived in Monomotapa and saw da Silveira's activities as a threat to their interests. As has been noted, "the Muslims convinced the Chief that Silveira was a spy – either for the Portuguese or for the Chief's brother Shepute, a claimant to the chieftainship"[14]. As a result, the missionary was killed.

There is no evidence indicating that the Portuguese Jesuit engaged in any form of espionage. Europeans did not penetrate the region in which Monomotapa was located until three centuries later. Gonçalo da Silveira himself was beatified in 1629. In recognition of his missionary work in Zimbabwe, a school and a hospital have been named after him.

"*In 1578, the Jesuits were expelled from Antwerp for refusing to recognize the Pacification of Ghent*"[15].

These events took place during the Dutch Revolt, which, in addition to the struggle for Dutch independence, was also a religious conflict. The background to the events surrounding the expulsion of the Jesuits was set out in the fundamental work of the Belgian medieval historian Henri Pirenne. He notes that the Jesuits "enthusiastically intervened in

[14] *Chadwick H.* Life of the venerable Gonçalo da Silveira of the Society of Jesus: pioneer missionary and proto-martyr of South Africa; from original sources. New York: Benziger, 1910. P. 90.

[15] Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 272.

the struggle against Calvinism"[16]. The consequences, naturally, were not long in coming: "the Calvinists regarded them as their most dangerous opponents, and therefore the enemies of Spanish rule and Catholicism immediately launched a fierce campaign against the order"[17]. Their refusal to recognize the Pacification of Ghent was used as a pretext "to expel them from all the towns where power was in the hands of the Orangist party. Their school and their church in Antwerp were handed over to the Calvinist community"[18]. Thus, the Jesuits were effectively persecuted for carrying out the very functions for which their order existed.

"*In 1581, the Jesuits Campion, Sherwin, and Briant were sentenced to death for taking part in a conspiracy against Elizabeth I of England. During the reign of this great sovereign, the Jesuits organized five attempts on her life*"[19].

Of these figures, the most significant is Edmund Campion, about whom a considerable body of literature has been written. It should be noted that in his youth he was a well-known Catholic priest in England whose sermons were extremely popular; he was called the "idol of Oxford" and the "second Cicero". After converting from Anglicanism to Catholicism and joining the Jesuit order in Rome, Campion returned to England and began preaching the Catholic faith, which was prohibited there. He was arrested, tortured, sentenced to death, and executed together with other Catholic priests[20]. The accusation that Campion intended to incite a rebellion and overthrow the queen was not supported by evidence; they were executed solely for religious reasons. All three were canonized in 1970. More than twenty educational institutions in England and other countries — including schools, colleges, and academies — have been named in honor of Edmund Campion.

As the strongly anti-Jesuit J. Huber wrote, Campion and his associates "began disseminating malicious, insulting pamphlets against Elizabeth"[21]. He was apparently referring to the booklet *Decem Rationes* (*Ten Reasons*), printed at an underground press. Yet its subject was exclusively

---

16 *Пиренн А.* Нидерландская революция. М.: Соцэкгиз, 1937. С. 450.

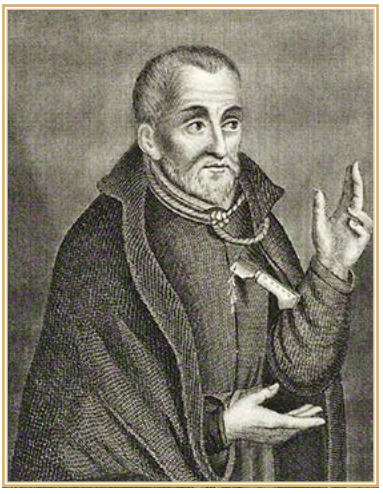
17 Ibid. С. 452.

18 Ibid.

19 Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 272.

20 *Simpson R.* Edmund Campion: a biography. London; Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate. 1867. P. 277.

21 *Губер Ж.* Иезуиты. СПб.: Изд-во Ф. Павленкова, 1898. С. 99.



Edmund Campion. *A 17th-century engraving. From open sources*

religious: the author compared Anglicanism with Catholicism, presenting arguments in favor of the latter on the basis of Scripture and the works of the Church Fathers.

"*In 1588, they inspired the League established in France against Henry III*"[22].

It would be strange to assume that the order could have remained neutral during the French Wars of Religion. The choice of sides in the confrontation involving Henry of Navarre (who at that time was a Huguenot; a king who held contradictory positions and was notorious for behavior considered scandalous even by the standards of his time) was obvious for the Catholic League.

"*In the same year, the Jesuit Molina published his pernicious speculations on the compatibility of divine grace and free will*"[23].

Diderot's attempt to pass moral judgment on Molinism, given his atheism, appears disingenuous. It is doubtful that he understood the nuances of Luis de Molina's doctrine, as Molina sought to reconcile the Augustinian doctrine of predestination and divine grace with the concept of free will.

It should be noted that Luis de Molina's *Concordia* provoked a considerable response in the theological world. Moreover, today one can

[22] Boguslavskiy V.M., ed. 1994. Philosophy in Diderot and D'Alembert's "Encyclopedia". Moscow: Nauka. P. 272.

[23] Ibid.



Luis de Molina. *An 18th-century engraving. From open sources*

speak of "a highly impressive renaissance of current philosophical interest in Molina"[24]. We need only mention the Oxford University volume *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) and the major study published by the international academic publisher Brill, *a Companion to Luis de Molina* (Leiden: Brill, 2014). a number of contemporary philosophers from various countries have published studies of Molina's intellectual legacy in these works, demonstrating the unjustified nature of Diderot's dismissive assessment of his work.

"*In 1593, the Jesuit Varade put a sword into Barrier's hand so that he could kill the best of kings*"[25].

Here and elsewhere, Diderot oversimplifies the background to the events that took place during the reign of Henry IV. The history of the attempts on his life was examined in detail in the book *The Assassination of Henry IV* by one of France's leading historians, Roland Mousnier.

Pierre Barrière discussed his plan to assassinate the king not only with the Jesuits but also with representatives of other religious orders – the Capuchins, Carmelites, and Dominicans – who likewise approved of his intention. The reason was that in 1593 "the king had not yet received papal absolution and, consequently, could still officially be regarded as

[24] *Иванов В.Л.* Луис де Молина, ОИ, и начала схоластической теологии Общества Иисуса. Предисловие к публикации перевода 52-й диспутации «Конкордии» // EINAI: Проблемы философии и теологии. 2014. Т. 3. № 1–2 (5–6).

[25] Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 272.



Châtel's Attempted Assassination of Henry IV. *Engraving, late 16th century. From open sources*

a heretic and an apostate", from which it followed that "the king was a tyrant-usurper and that it was permissible to attack his person"[26]. At the same time, as Roland Mousnier noted, "Henry IV said in 1603 that it was a Jesuit who exposed Barrière's intentions"[27]. Thus, the Jesuits played a role in Pierre Barrière's attempted assassination that was directly opposite to the one attributed to them by Diderot.

"In 1594, the Jesuits were expelled from France for complicity in the attempted regicide committed by Jean Châtel".

"In 1595, the Jesuit Guignard, caught inciting the murder of Henry IV, was executed on the Place de Grève".

The attempted assassination by Jean Châtel and the possible involvement of Jean Guignard as a representative of the Jesuit order have been examined in considerable detail in Mousnier's work: "Châtel constantly denied that the Jesuits of Paris were acquainted with his plan"[28]. In his view, there was no evidence whatsoever of a Jesuit conspiracy: "Nothing allows us to assert that Father Guignard inspired Châtel's attempt or knew anything about it"[29].

---

[26] *Мунье Р.* Убийство Генриха IV (14 мая 1610). СПб.: Евразия, 2008. С. 264.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid. С. 268.
[29] Ibid. С. 269.

As a result, the French historian reaches the following conclusions: "The trial against the Jesuits was conducted in violation of all the rules. No charges were brought against the Jesuits; they were not summoned before the court and were given no opportunity to defend themselves. It was obvious that they had neither directly inspired Châtel nor known of his plans. The Parlement of Paris exploited Châtel's attempt in order to conduct a tendentious trial against the Jesuits"[30]. Thus, what we are dealing with here is politically motivated persecution.

It should be noted that some historians support Diderot's version concerning the involvement of the Jesuits in Pierre Barrière's attempted assassination, while adding entirely fanciful details. Thus, Jules Michelet explains the fact that the Jesuits Jean Guignard and Guéret (Barrière's former teacher at the Jesuit school) declared their innocence by claiming that they "had received Loyola's permission to obey the commands of the order even to the point of mortal sin and, consequently, could calmly lie even *in articulo mortis*"[31].

"*In 1597, the* ***Congregatio de auxiliis*** *was convened to discuss the new Jesuit doctrine of grace, and Pope Clement VIII told them 'Quarrelsome men, you are sowing discord throughout the Church*"[32].

This refers to the pontiff's attempts to resolve the conflict between theologians belonging to the Jesuit and Dominican orders. Their debates concerned the extent of divine grace and its influence on free will in two different categories of people: sinners and those who had been saved. The situation was complicated by the fact that Clement VIII had no theological education, therefore the pope's knowledge of theology was quite limited[33]. Moreover, the conflict had a political dimension and was connected with the rivalry between Spain and France[34]. After prolonged discussions, it was decided not to issue a final verdict. Thus, the matter remained unresolved.

It is noteworthy that, in searching for arguments against the Jesuit order, Diderot did not hesitate to rely on the questionable authority of

---

30 Ibid. C. 271.

31 *Леруа М.* Миф об иезуитах: от Беранже до Мишле. М.: Языки славянской культуры, 2001. С. 163–164.

32 Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 272.

33 *Ковальский Я.В.* Папы и папство. М.: Политиздат, 1991. С. 192.

34 *Ранке Л.* Римские папы и их государство в XVI–XVII столетиях. В 2 т. СПб.: Типография М.А. Ефимова, 1869. С. 102.

Clement VIII, who was not only far from being a distinguished theologian but also remained in the memory of posterity as the man who "personally and directly directed the proceedings" in the case of Giordano Bruno[35].

"*In 1598, they incited a scoundrel, blessed him in the name of God, placed a dagger in his hand, promised him a heavenly crown, and sent him to kill Maurice of Nassau; for this crime they were expelled from Holland*"[36].

As for the attempt on the life of Maurice of Nassau, it should be noted that historical sources date it to 1595, when a certain Peter Panne attempted to kill him. As Pirenne reports, the Protestants regarded the Jesuits as "the instigators of the attempt on the life of Maurice of Nassau, carried out by Peter Panne"[37]. However, suspicion of the order led to even more fanciful accusations, such as claims that the Jesuits had planned a St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in the Belgian provinces[38].

The apocryphal account of the assassination attempt, which was accepted in anti-Jesuit circles, is presented by Theodor Griesinger: "In 1595 the Jesuits learned of an individual who, although he did not meet the required conditions, was nevertheless chosen for want of a better instrument. He was a cooper, or hoop-maker, in Ypres named Peter Panne, a poor man who could barely earn enough bread to keep his wife and child from starving"[39]. Various cloak-and-dagger details were added to this romantic narrative, including "two Jesuits in disguise" and a "four-sided dagger consecrated by the pious fathers"[40] that they supposedly gave to Panne. This version is riddled with contradictions. Thus, according to Guettée, "Panne confessed that he had bought a four-sided knife to carry out the crime he had planned"[41].

It is difficult to determine how much credence can be placed in the testimony of an unsuccessful would-be assassin, given the nature of the torture and executions practiced in Holland at the time (one need only recall the fate of Balthasar Gérard). The scholarly reliability of Griesinger's

---

35 *Рожицын В.С.* Джордано Бруно и инквизиция. М.: Изд-во Академии наук СССР, 1955. С. 341.

36 Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 272.

37 *Пиренн А.* Нидерландская революция. М.: Соцэкгиз, 1937. С. 457.

38 Ibid. С. 452.

39 *Гризингер Т.* Иезуиты. М.; СПб.: Изд-во М.О. Вольфа, 1868. Т. 1. С. 88.

40 Ibid. С. 89.

41 *Гетте В.* История иезуитов. М.: Русская печатня, 1912. Т. 1. Кн. 4–6. С. 12.

work is also questionable: in the absence of any references whatsoever, it is difficult to classify it as a historical study, while its one-sided presentation of the material makes it possible to characterize it as "pretentious and subjective"[42].

"*In 1604, the merciful Cardinal Federico Borromeo expelled them from the Breda College for crimes that made them deserving of being burned at the stake*"[43].

Federico Borromeo was a prominent churchman and a patron of the arts and sciences. However, his activities were connected exclusively with Italy. In 1601, he was appointed Archbishop of Milan and did not leave the city until his death, devoting himself to the construction of churches and to questions of education and culture. Thus, the possibility that he could have made decisions concerning the Jesuit order is doubtful. Moreover, Breda had already been captured by Maurice of Nassau's army in 1590, after which the existence of a branch of the Jesuit order there is at the very least questionable.

Here we once again encounter Diderot's characteristic superficial approach to the material he presents. He was apparently referring to Cardinal Carlo Borromeo, who was known for his reforms of Catholic religious orders. In this case, however, the date is problematic, since the cardinal had already died in 1584.

Johann Huber's description of Carlo Borromeo's conflict with the order boils down to the claim that the cardinal caught his confessor, the Jesuit Ribera, engaging in sodomy, after which he discovered that this sin was flourishing in the Milan College and disbanded it. Huber does not specify the date of this conflict, and his account contains a number of questionable points. In his view, Carlo Borromeo "began obstructing the activities of the Jesuits as soon as he noticed that they were trying to attract all talented people into their order, thereby depriving the secular clergy of its finest members"[44]. He then quotes one of the cardinal's letters, in which Borromeo accuses the order of "rejecting the most worthy novices while welcoming with open arms clever and unscrupulous

---

[42] *Максимов А.С.* Миссия иезуитов в России и восточная политика Рима (Отдельные богословские аспекты и методологические принципы) // Сретенский сборник. 2022. № 11–12. С. 274.

[43] Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 273.

[44] *Губер Ж.* Иезуиты. СПб.: Изд-во Ф. Павленкова, 1898. С. 133.

intriguers who possess neither piety nor virtue"[45]. The contradictory nature of these accusations is obvious.

"*In 1605, the Jesuits Oldcorne and Garnet, the instigators of the Gunpowder Plot, were sentenced to death*".

The role of the Jesuits in the Gunpowder Plot is examined in detail in the work of A. Fraser, which "summarizes the views on the Gunpowder Plot that have emerged to date"[46]. At the time, the Superior of the Jesuits in England was Henry Garnet, who not only was not an instigator of the plot but also attempted to prevent it. Having learned of the planned attempt at a coup and assassination, he did not warn the authorities because the information had been disclosed to him under the seal of confession. However, Garnet wrote to the Jesuit Superior General, Claudio Acquaviva, urging him to influence the conspirators and persuade them to abandon their plans[47]. Despite this, he was executed, and his alleged involvement in the plot was used by the English government to tighten anti-Catholic legislation. As has been noted, the English authorities "sought to leave a powerful and immediate emotional impression of the events associated with the Gunpowder Plot in the public mind, with guilt unquestionably falling upon the Catholics, rather than creating conditions for a meticulous investigation of all the circumstances of what had occurred"[48].

"*In 1606, the Venetian authorities were forced to expel the Jesuits from their territories for resisting the decrees of the Senate*"[49].

J. Huber provides a generally accurate description of the situation: "Pope Paul V came into conflict with the Republic; the Jesuits took his side, defended his claims, and refused to celebrate Mass in a country under papal interdict. The Venetian government expelled them and prohibited them from remaining in Venetian territory, even after it had reconciled

---

45 Ibid. C. 134.

46 *Ерохин В.Н.* К вопросу об обстоятельствах происхождения Порохового заговора английских католиков 1605 года // Сборник статей Международной научно-практической конференции, посвященной 80-летию Победы в Великой Отечественной войне, 110-летию Рязанского государственного университета имени С.А. Есенина. Рязань, 24–25 апреля 2025 года. Курск: Университетская книга, 2025. С. 124.

47 *Fraser A.* The Gunpowder Plot. Manila: Phoenix, 2002. P. 158–160.

48 *Ерохин В.Н.* Op. cit. C. 126.

49 Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 273.



Carlo Borromeo. *The artist Giovanni Ambrogio Figino. From open sources*

with the Pope"[50]. The Jesuits returned to Venice in 1656. This was a condition imposed by Pope Alexander VII for providing them with assistance in the struggle against the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the expulsion of the Jesuits from Venice was connected with the political circumstances of the time.

"*In 1610, Ravaillac assassinated Henry IV. The Jesuits were suspected of having incited the assassination. With the intention of inspiring terror in the hearts of monarchs, the Jesuit Mariana published in the same year, together with his* ***De rege et regis institutione (On the King and the Royal Institution)****, an apology for regicide*"[51].

It is unclear what motives could have prompted the Jesuits to assassinate the French king after the order had been permitted to return to France in 1604. As Mousnier noted, "Father Coton served at court as the king's confessor and confidant. He was highly successful among the courtiers both as a preacher and as a spiritual adviser. Students flocked to the Collège de Clermont. The king allowed the Jesuits to open other colleges, including the famous College de La Flèche, where Descartes studied"[52]. In his view, "Henry IV himself refuted point by point all the accusations leveled against the Jesuits. After all, it was a Jesuit who warned him of Barrière's attempted assassination; another Jesuit told Barrière that he

[50] *Губер Ж.* Иезуиты. СПб.: Изд-во Ф. Павленкова, 1898. С. 75.
[51] Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 273.
[52] *Мунье Р.* Убийство Генриха IV (14 мая 1610). СПб.: Евразия, 2008. С. 276.

would be damned if he dared to carry out the deed. Not a single Jesuit was involved in Châtel's attempt"[53].

As for the work of Juan de Mariana, it should be noted that "Father Coton called Juan de Mariana's book a 'bad book' and recalled that at 'our Provincial Congregation' in Paris in 1606, 'we recognized this pen as badly sharpened' and demanded of the Superior General of the order 'that those whose writings were harmful to the French crown should be punished and their books destroyed'"[54].

It should also be added that, according to contemporary scholars of the Spanish theologian's intellectual legacy, his writings reveal a pessimistic, neo-Augustinian view of human nature and society, which led him to avoid the Thomistic approach to the state and its rulers[55]. Thus, interpreting the Spanish Jesuit's work as an apology for regicide is a considerable oversimplification.

"*In 1618, the Jesuits were expelled from Bohemia as people who disturbed the public peace, incited subjects against the state authorities, poisoned minds with the harmful doctrine of the pope's infallibility and universal dominion, and sowed discord throughout the country. In 1619, they were expelled from Moravia for the same reasons*"[56].

Here Diderot refers to events connected with the anti-Habsburg Revolt in Bohemia of 1618–1620, which was directed "not only against the House of Habsburg, but also against the Jesuits. One of the first acts of the provisional government was the expulsion of the order and the confiscation of its property"[57]. Thus, once again, we are dealing with political events associated with the confrontation between Protestantism and Catholicism. T. Griesinger maintains that the war began with "the revolt of the Bohemian Protestants, who had long been incited to rebellion by Jesuit intrigues, as a result of which the rebels began by permanently expelling the Jesuits from Bohemia"; however, it is difficult to discern the logic behind this accusation[58].

---

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid. C. 68.

55 *Braun H.* Juan de Mariana and Early Modern Spanish Political Thought. Farnham: Ashgate, 2007. 214 p.

56 Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 273.

57 *Бемер Г.* История ордена иезуитов. М.: Ломоносовъ, 2012. С. 93.

58 *Гризингер Т.* Иезуиты. М.; СПб.: Изд-во М.О. Вольфа, 1868. Т. 1. С. 201.



François Ravaillac. *The artist Crispijn van de Passe the Elder, 17th century. From open sources*

"In 1631, their clique provoked unrest in Japan, and the entire empire was drenched in the blood of pagans and Christians"[59].

The Jesuits achieved considerable success in the Christianization of Japan at the end of the sixteenth century. Their policy was characterized by "non-interference in the country's internal affairs, respect for its customs and traditions, and adaptation to the local culture"[60]. However, after representatives of other orders arrived in Japan, the competition that arose among them had a negative impact on attitudes toward Christianity as a whole.

This became particularly apparent after Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Edo shogunate, came to power and made the destruction of Christianity in Japan one of his objectives. Moreover, "the Tokugawa shogunate accomplished this task through bloody persecution of missionaries and Japanese Christians and their complete expulsion from the country"[61]. In 1614, he prohibited the Christian faith in Japan, expelled all missionaries, and began executing those who refused to renounce Christ.

---

[59] Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 273.

[60] *Кужель Ю.Л.* Связи Японии с европейским католическим миром (конец XVI — начало XVII в.) // Ежегодник «Япония». 2019. Т. 48. С. 321.

[61] *Акиньшин А.* Феномен христианского мученичества в Японии в XVI—XVII вв. // Государство, религия, Церковь в России и за рубежом. 2022. Т. 40. № 1. С. 187.

The situation was further aggravated by the fact that Japanese Catholics "encountered new and dangerous enemies in the form of Dutch and English merchants, who sought to seize control of Japanese trade. These Calvinists and Anglicans did not hesitate to persuade the shogun to drown the Japanese Church in blood"[62]. The number of victims was enormous: in 1624 alone, approximately 30,000 people were subjected to execution.

A vivid example of Protestant influence on the Japanese authorities that contributed to the persecution of Catholics is the activity of the English navigator William Adams, who became an adviser to the shogun. As has been noted, the Englishman was a fervent Protestant who hated Catholics[63].

In 1614, the Jesuit Miguel de Carvalho, in his annual report addressed to Pope Paul V, expressed concern about the danger posed by William Adams and other Protestant merchants. He claimed that Adams and his companions had turned the shogun Ieyasu against the followers of Catholicism[64]. After being expelled, Carvalho illegally returned to Japan and was burned alive during the hecatombs of 1624.

Adams's Dutch colleague, Captain Jan Joosten, held a similar position. It should be noted that after Japan's complete rupture with Europe, the only Europeans granted the right to trade with Japan were Dutch merchants. This became possible thanks to the assistance the Dutch provided to the Japanese authorities in suppressing the Christian rebellion – the Shimabara Rebellion[65].

In addition, Japanese rulers were subjected to constant pressure from Buddhist leaders, who were dissatisfied with the decline in their own congregations as the number of followers of Christianity increased.

Thus, the Jesuits, like representatives of other Catholic orders, had already been expelled from Japan in 1614, whereas the massacre at Shimabara was carried out by the Japanese authorities in 1637 with Dutch

---

62 *Бемер Г.* История ордена иезуитов. М.: Ломоносовъ, 2012. С. 121.

63 *Bauer S.W.* The Story of the World. Charles-City: Peace Hill Press, 2004. Volume 3: Early Modern Times. P. 106.

64 *Milton G.* Samurai William: The Englishman Who Opened Japan. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. P. 268.

65 *Кудояров В.Н.* Японо-голландские отношения в эпоху Эдо (1603–1867) // Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. Востоковедение и африканистика. 2013. № 3. С. 58.

support. Yet here too Diderot attributes blame to the order, confusing both the dates and the substance of the events that actually took place.

"*In 1641, they fanned the flames of an absurd struggle against the Jansenists, disturbing the peace and ruining so many sincere and devout defenders of the faith*"[66].

The confrontation between the Jesuits and the Jansenists had a number of causes, a detailed analysis of which lies beyond the scope of our study. We shall merely note that the Jansenist movement was "not so much religious as political, since it was directed, among other things, against the highest-ranking hierarchs of the French Catholic Church, who were an integral part of France's political system"[67]. Thus, the Jesuits, who in many passages of Diderot's list are portrayed as disturbers of order and public peace, were in this case acting in the interests of the state, attempting to curb the destructive influence of the Jansenists.

"*In 1643, the authorities of Malta, outraged by the depravity and cruelty of the Jesuits, expelled them from the island*"[68].

The conflict between the Maltese and the Jesuits in 1643 had a background directly contrary to Diderot's claims. It was initiated by Jean-Paul Lascaris, Grand Master of the Order of Malta, who issued an order "prohibiting women from wearing masks during the last three days of Carnival and, more generally, restricting the presence of women at Carnival festivities"[69]. Outraged by this measure, the Maltese ransacked the Jesuit College, whose members they regarded as responsible for the decision. At the same time, "the sack of the building ended with a drinking spree at the expense of the wine supplies in the College cellars", after which the authorities were forced to comply with the rebels' principal demand and expel the Jesuits from the island[70]. As noted in contemporary scholarship, "the Maltese revolt against the Jesuits in

---

66 Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 273.

67 *Пилавов Г.Ш.* Блез Паскаль, янсенисты и иезуиты: экспликация противостояния // История философии. 2025. Т. 30. № 2. С. 28.

68 Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 273.

69 *Фадеева Т.М., Баттиджиг Э.* Рыцари, иезуиты, карнавал и инквизиция на Мальте в XVII в.: суть конфликта. Buttigig E. Knights, jesuits, carnival and the inquisition in XVII-century Malta // Historical J. N.Y., 2012. Vol. 55. September. P. 571–596 // Социальные и гуманитарные науки. Серия 5: История. 2013. № 3. С. 150.

70 Ibid.

1639 was a complex phenomenon reflecting the dynamics of relations between different Catholic confessional and national identities"[71].

It is noteworthy that among Diderot's accusations he cites the "depravity" of the Jesuits, whereas in reality they "sought to bring Carnival, as a setting for popular revelry and indecent behavior, under their control"[72].

"*In 1709, their base envy led to the destruction of Port-Royal, the opening of graves and the scattering of the bones of the dead, and the destruction of its sacred walls, whose stones now fall upon the heads of the Jesuits themselves*"[73].

In brief, the events that led to the destruction of Port-Royal can be summarized as follows: "In 1705, a papal bull condemning Jansenism was promulgated ... Three years later, in 1709, the Archbishop of Paris issued a decree of condemnation; by order of the king, on October 29, 1709, the abbey of Port-Royal-des-Champs was closed and destroyed, the nuns were dispersed, and the tombstones were demolished"[74].

There were, of course, specific reasons for the promulgation of the papal bull. First and foremost, we should note Louis XIV's negative attitude toward Jansenism, as it was observed that "the king feared the movement's spirit of resistance"[75]. At the same time, despite the condemnation of Jansenius's book in 1653, "Jansenism continued to live and operate in the provinces of the kingdom, and its death had been announced somewhat prematurely"[76].

The conflict intensified when, in 1701, a Jansenist petition concerning one of the disputed theological questions – the so-called "respectful silence" – received widespread support from doctors of the Sorbonne. The king appealed to the pope to condemn this proposition, which resulted in the bull *Vineam Domini Sabaoth*. It was after the nuns of Port-Royal refused to accept the bull that the royal decree abolishing the abbey was

---

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid. C. 149.

73 Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 273.

74 *Корниенко М.А.* Лингвофилософская традиция Пор-Рояля // Вестник Томского государственного университета. Культурология и искусствоведение. 2019. № 35. С. 34.

75 *Птифис Ж.-К.* Людовик XIV. Слава и испытания. СПб.: Евразия, 2008. С. 72–73.

76 Ibid. С. 317.



Jean-Paul (Giovanni Paolo) Lascaris di Ventimiglia e Castellar. (Grand Master of the Order of Malta). *Unknown artist, 17th century. From open sources*

promulgated[77]. As can be seen, the role of the Jesuits in these events was, at the very least, greatly exaggerated.

"*In 1713, they obtained from Rome the papal bull* ***Unigenitus****, which served as a pretext for countless evils, including eighty thousand royal warrants for the arrest of the most honest people in the state*"[78].

This accusation is closely connected with the question of Port-Royal, since the bull *Unigenitus* was likewise devoted to the condemnation of Jansenism. It condemned *Réflexions morales*, written by the Jansenist leader Pasquier Quesnel. As has been noted, the second edition of this book, published in 1693, "contained virtually all the errors of Jansenism"[79].

It should be noted that Diderot was not the only one to see the hand of the Jesuits behind the adoption of this papal bull. In his study of Jansenism, St. Tikhon wrote that "the Jesuits took advantage of the enormous influence which the Jesuit confessor of Louis XIV, La Chaise, a cunning and persistent man who ruthlessly persecuted everything hostile to the Jesuits, had over the king. Under his influence, Louis, who had dealt so harshly with Port-Royal, asked the pope at the end of 1711 to issue a bull against the *Réflexions*;

---

77 *Ott M.* "Vineam Domini". In Herbermann Charles (ed.). Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 15. New York: Robert Appleton Company. P. 445–446.

78 Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 273.

79 *Ott M.* "Unigenitus. In Herbermann", Charles (ed.). Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 15. New York: Robert Appleton Company. 1912. P. 128.

moreover, 'the true authors of this bull were the Jesuits Le Chaise and d'Aubenton'"[80]. Undoubtedly, La Chaise was an opponent of the Jansenists and had influence over Louis XIV. Yet how a Jesuit who had died in January 1709 could have influenced the king's decision at the end of 1711, let alone become a co-author of a bull issued in 1713, remains unclear.

We shall leave Diderot responsible for the figure of 80,000 people allegedly arrested on the basis of the papal bull.

"*In the same year, the Jesuit Jouvancy, in the history of the Society that he had written, dared to include the assassins of our kings among the martyrs; the authorities ordered the work to be burned*"[81].

This refers to the work of the French poet and historian Joseph de Jouvancy, which was condemned by two parliamentary decrees in 1715 because it gave favorable assessments of Jacques Clément and François Ravaillac – the assassins, respectively, of Henry III and Henry IV. In 1722, the work was also placed on the Index of Forbidden Books in Rome.

It should be noted that the tendency to praise assassins – regarded as tyrannicides – was quite popular among the French philosophes as well. The same names appear in Jean Meslier's famous *Testament*: "Where are the Jacques Clément and Ravaillacs of our France?" he asks[82]. Even more noteworthy is the fact that this and other passages by Meslier influenced Diderot himself, particularly his tyrannicide poem *Les Éleuthéromanes*. In the course of composing the poem, the French thinker modified its details several times, including replacing the historical figures mentioned in it. In one of the earlier versions, Jacques Clément and François Ravaillac were specifically named as fighters against tyranny[83]. In the final version, Diderot settled on the less provocative figures of Brutus and Scaevola[84].

Clearly, Jouvancy and Diderot had different, if not directly opposite, reasons for daring to approve the actions of the assassins of French monarchs; nevertheless, the very fact is worthy of attention.

---

[80] *Сухова Н.Ю.* Неопубликованная статья святителя Тихона (Беллавина) // Вестник Православного Свято-Тихоновского гуманитарного университета. Серия 2: История. История Русской Православной Церкви. 2015. № 6(67).

[81] Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 273.

[82] *Мелье Ж.* Завещание. В 3 т. Т. 3. М.: Изд-во Академии наук СССР, 1954. С. 352.

[83] *Dieckmann H.* The Abbé Jean Meslier and Diderot's "Eleuthéromanes". Harvard Library Bulletin VII (2). Spring 1953. P. 231.

[84] *Дидро Д.* Элевтероманы // Собрание сочинений. В 10 т. Т. 4. М.; Л.: Academia, 1937. С. 525.



Joseph de Jouvancy. *A 19th-century engraving based on a lifetime portrait by an unknown artist. From open sources*

"*In 1723, Peter the Great, for the protection of his person and the pacification of his state, expelled the Jesuits from his dominions*"[85].

As in many other cases, this expulsion of the Jesuits was connected with the political situation, in this instance the deterioration of relations between the Russian and German emperors in connection with the affair of Tsarevich Alexei. As a result, "considering the expulsion of the Russian ambassador from Vienna unlawful, Peter I responded to the German emperor with a declaration dated April 17, 1719, expelling from Russia all the Jesuits whom the emperor had so strongly patronized"[86]. Diderot's insinuation that the Jesuits posed a threat to the emperor's life (what kind of threat could it have been?) may once again be left without comment.

"*In 1728, the Jesuit Beruyer rewrote the history of Moses as a novel, putting frivolous and licentious speeches into the mouths of the patriarchs*"[87].

Joseph-Isaac Berruyer is known as the author of *Histoire du Peuple de Dieu* (*History of the People of God*, 1728). One part of this work did indeed "provoke a storm of indignation and heated controversy. The freedom

---

85 Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 273.

86 *Маракушина Е.В.* Историко-религиоведческий анализ деятельности ордена иезуитов в Санкт-Петербурге // Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. Серия 6. Философия, политология, социология, психология, право, международные отношения. 2007. № 3.

87 Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 273.

with which the author described certain facts was deemed inappropriate"[88]. The work was condemned both in France – by the Sorbonne and the Parlement of Paris – and by the Church, including the leadership of the Society of Jesus. It was subsequently placed on the Index of Forbidden Books by a bull of Benedict XIV.

The paradox of Diderot's accusation lies in the fact that he was himself an atheist and belonged to a group of anti-clerical French philosophes (one need only recall Voltaire's famous injunction, "Crush the infamous thing"). Moreover, according to the German philologist Manfred Naumann, he participated in the creation of the propagandistic anti-Christian work *Christianity Unveiled*, attributed to d'Holbach[89].

If we return to the substance of the accusation, the fact that the Society itself condemned Beruyer's work allows us to regard the matter as settled.

"*In 1730, the Jesuit Tournemine, in sermons delivered in one of the churches of Caen and addressed to Christians, expressed doubts as to whether the Gospel was Holy Scripture*"[90].

Even historians of philosophy with anti-religious views in the Soviet period recognized the absurdity of such accusations. Thus, K.Kh. Momdzhyan observed in this connection: "Of course, there can be no question of any heretical or 'blasphemous' statements by the Jesuits, although opponents of the Society of Jesus often advanced such accusations in order to discredit it"[91].

"*In 1731, the depraved and sacrilegious Jesuit Girard managed, through bribery and influence, to escape death at the stake*"[92].

The trial involving the Jesuit Jean-Baptiste Girard, who was accused of witchcraft and sexual misconduct, became – quite undeservedly – one of the most notorious trials in France during the first half of the eighteenth century. This was primarily because the Girard affair was exploited by the Jansenists in their struggle against the Society of Jesus[93]. The case gave rise

---

88 *Woods J.M.* "Isaac-Joseph Berruyer". In Herbermann Charles (ed.). Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 2. New York: Robert Appleton Company. 1907. P. 517.

89 Naumann M. Zur Publikationsgeschichte des "Christianisme dévoilé" // Neue Beiträge zur Literatur der Aufklärung. Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1964. P. 175.

90 Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 274.

91 Ibid. C. 670.

92 Ibid. C. 274.

93 *Duprat A.* Stéphane Lamotte, L'affaire Girard-Cadière. Justice, satire et religion au XVIIIe siècle. Préface de Joël Fouilleron. Aix-en-Provence, Presses de l'Université de Provence, 2016. 306 p. // Cahiers de la Méditerranée. 2016. № 93. P. 77.



Jacques Cl ment. *Unknown artist, 16th century.*
From open sources

to a vast number of pamphlets, including many published outside France. It was mentioned in Voltaire's *La Pucelle d'Orléans*, while Jean-Baptiste de Boyer, Marquis d'Argens, portrayed Girard as one of the characters in the famous erotic novel *Thér se philosophe*, under the name Dirrag (an anagram of Gerard). Although the trial of Jean-Baptiste Girard continues to be studied by historians to this day, it is hardly possible to establish the truth definitively. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the Girard affair had a negative impact on the reputation of the Society of Jesus, regardless of what actually happened in Toulouse in 1728–1730.

"*In 1743, the shameless Jesuit Benci founded a sect of Mammillairs in Italy*"[94].

Here it is appropriate to quote K.Kh. Momdzhyan once again, who succinctly noted in this connection that "no sect of Mammillairs exists"[95].

"*In 1745, the Jesuit Bishop prostituted the sacraments of Redemption and the Eucharist and threw the consecrated bread to dogs*"[96].

Here there is an error in the Russian translation of the *Encyclopédie*: the original gives the Jesuit's name as J. Pichon[97]. He is known for having published in 1745 the work *L' Esprit De Jésus-christ Et De L'eglise Sur La*

[94] Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 274.
[95] Ibid. С. 670.
[96] Ibid. С. 274.
[97] *Diderot D., Alembert J. d'*. Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers. 1776. Vol. 8. P. 423.

Fréquente Communion, in which he advocated frequent Communion and criticized Jansenist doctrines. His work was criticized not only by the Jansenists, "but also by clearly anti-Jansenist prelates, such as Languet, the biographer of St. Margaret Mary". As a result, in 1748 the author retracted his work[98]. Nevertheless, Pope Benedict XIV placed it on the Index of Forbidden Books.

As O. Andurand has noted, "at a time when doctrinal Jansenism seems to have died out, Pichon's treatise clearly demonstrates that frequent Communion remained a heated and controversial issue", while criticism of his work from different perspectives demonstrates the decline of the Society's influence during those years[99].

Diderot's own polemical fervor as an atheist regarding this theological question merely demonstrates his bias.

"*In 1755, the Jesuits of Paraguay led the inhabitants of the country, organized into military detachments, into battle against their legitimate sovereigns*"[100].

These events are known as the Guaraní War, in which the Jesuits – undoubtedly pursuing their own objectives as well – assisted the indigenous liberation movement against the Spanish and Portuguese colonizers, who had decided to abolish the Jesuit missions in Paraguay.

The assessment of the results of the Society's activities in Paraguay remains controversial among scholars. Only two points are beyond serious dispute. First, the Jesuits succeeded in building an effective economy. Second, it is evident that the indigenous population enjoyed greater rights there than in other Spanish and Portuguese colonial possessions, since "the Jesuits were distinguished from other colonizers from the outset by their generally humanistic approach to the indigenous population"[101]. This was to a considerable extent what prompted the Indians to attempt armed resistance against the Spanish and Portuguese forces.

---

98 *Гибер Ж.* Духовность Общества Иисуса. М.: Институт философии, теологии и истории св. Фомы, 2010. С. 425.

99 *Andurand O.* La Grande affaire. Les évêques de France face à l'Unigenitus. Paris-Rennes, Société d'histoire religieuse/Presses universitaires de Rennes, coll. Histoire. 2017. P. 151, 174.

100 Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 274.

101 *Ракуц Н.В.* Иезуитские миссии (редукции) Испанской Южной Америки в контексте проблемы симбиоза культур // Этнографическое обозрение. 2013. № 3. С. 104.



Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo. *The artist Francisco José Resende. From open sources*

Naturally, the effectiveness of the Jesuit project in Paraguay aroused opposition among various social groups. First, there were the large Spanish and Portuguese landowners of South America, whose attempts to enslave the indigenous population were obstructed by Jesuit policies toward the Indians. Second, other Catholic orders were envious of the Jesuits' successes and sought by every means to hinder their activities. Representatives of the Franciscan, Dominican, and Capuchin orders repeatedly appealed to Rome, complaining that the Jesuits were engaged in commercial activities while disregarding established ecclesiastical regulations. Finally, the Society's enemies in Europe – the philosophes, Jansenists, and others – were prepared to exploit the Paraguayan issue as part of an information war against the Jesuits.

The Guaraní resistance to the forces of European colonizers was a struggle for freedom – the very freedom whose defense the French philosophes proclaimed so passionately. At the same time, the Jesuits whom Diderot branded "the most despicable defenders of tyranny" stood on the side of the indigenous population. Diderot makes no attempt to address this contradiction.

It is also noteworthy that here Diderot takes the side of Spain and Portugal, toward whose sociopolitical realities the French philosophes were extremely hostile. They "repeatedly leveled the same accusations against these countries, asserting that they were ruled by obscurantism, ignorance, religious fanaticism, cruelty, arrogance, idleness, and a vicious form of

government"[102]. One might expect Diderot to side with the indigenous peoples who had risen against their oppressors. Yet the involvement of the Society of Jesus in the conflict demonstrated the flexibility of his convictions.

"*In 1757, a man living under the protection of the Society of Jesus — a man whom it had patronized and housed in various establishments of its own — attempted to assassinate our monarch, Louis XV*"[103].

Both during the investigation and in historical scholarship, a consensus emerged that Robert-François Damiens acted independently. Diderot's insinuation apparently stems from the fact that in the 1730s Damiens "served at the Jesuit college in Paris, which he left after getting married"[104]. It is hardly possible to construct an accusation on such flimsy grounds. The opponents of the Society of Jesus, however, advanced even more absurd evidence. Thus, Montglave and Chalat emphasized that Damiens had been born in Arras, a city "known for the influence which the sons of Ignatius exerted over the minds of its inhabitants"[105]. Arguments of this kind serve only to demonstrate the Jesuts' non-involvement in the event.

"*In 1758, the Portuguese king was killed. The plot was conceived and carried out by the Jesuits Malagrida, Matos, and Alexander. In 1759, this entire gang of religious assassins was expelled from the Portuguese dominions*"[106].

Once again, Diderot treats the facts with considerable freedom: the Portuguese king was merely wounded. The assassination attempt, known as the Távora affair, continues to raise numerous questions to this day, since the event was exploited by Portugal's de facto ruler, the Marquis of Pombal, to carry out repression against the nobility and the Society of Jesus. Interrogations were conducted under torture, while the executions were a spectacle of unprecedented brutality even by the standards of the time: "the accused had the bones of their arms and legs crushed with hammers and were then burned alive"[107]. Approximately 2,400 people

---

[102] Мир Просвещения. Исторический словарь / Под ред. В. Ферроне и Д. Роша. М.: Памятники исторической мысли, 2003. С. 426.

[103] Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 274.

[104] *Емельянова И.* Смерть как зрелище: казнь Дамьена // Исторический журнал History Illustrated. 2012. № 10.

[105] *Леруа М.* Миф об иезуитах: от Беранже до Мишле. М.: Языки славянской культуры, 2001. С. 164.

[106] Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 274.

[107] *Сарайва Ж.Э.* История Португалии. М.: Весь Мир, 2007. С. 232.

perished in the prisons. It should be noted that after Pombal's resignation, most of those convicted in the Távora affair were acquitted. H. Böhmer (in *Jesuits: An Historical Study*) acknowledged the negative aspects of Jesuit activity while simultaneously seeking to shield the order from unjustified criticism, wrote: "...the profound duplicity, infernal cunning, and bestial cruelty of his conduct are beyond justification. The cruelty of a predatory beast, which so often appears as one of the characteristic traits of great statesmen, was Pombal's defining characteristic"[108]. It is noteworthy that the Portuguese reformer is regarded as one of the prominent representatives of enlightened absolutism.

Naturally, as an enemy of the Jesuits, Pombal did not hesitate to implicate them in the Távora affair. By royal decree, the Jesuits were expelled from the country in 1759, and their property was confiscated. At the same time, Pombal took steps against prominent members of the Society of Jesus. Gabriel Malagrida – one of the most influential Jesuits in Portugal – and his associates were arrested. As noted in historical scholarship, "...during the subsequent investigation and trial, no convincing evidence was presented against him... Nevertheless, Malagrida was accused by the Inquisition of heresy, blasphemy, perjury, and prophecy, and was immediately imprisoned by that tribunal"[109]. Notably, in order to secure the desired verdict, Pombal appointed his own brother as Portugal's Grand Inquisitor. The elderly Jesuit lost his mind in prison, yet was nevertheless sentenced to death, strangled, and burned at the stake in an auto-da-fé in 1761[110].

Overall, the Távora affair bears all the hallmarks of fabrication, while there is no evidence whatsoever of Jesuit involvement – something even J. Huber, who held a strongly negative view of the Society, acknowledged[111].

"*In 1761, one of the Jesuits, having taken control of trade on the island of Martinique, completely ruined his clients. In France, demands were made for the trial of the unscrupulous bankrupt; the Society was held responsible for the damage inflicted on people by its representative, Father Lavalette*"[112].

---

[108] *Бемер Г.* История ордена иезуитов. М.: Ломоносовъ, 2012. С. 196.

[109] *Disney A.R.* a History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire. Cambridge University Press, 2009. Vol. 1. P. 302.

[110] Ibid. P. 303.

[111] Губер Ж. Иезуиты. СПб.: Изд-во Ф. Павленкова, 1898. С. 283.

[112] Философия в «Энциклопедии» Дидро и Даламбера. М.: Наука, 1994. С. 274.

In the conclusion of his article, Diderot appeals to the so-called "Lavalette affair", involving a bankrupt representative of the Society of Jesus. Without going into the details of this case, it should be noted that it was purely economic in nature and was exploited by the Society's enemies as a pretext for its suppression in France.

"What has been said proves", Diderot concludes, "that there are no crimes which the Jesuits have not committed during the two centuries of their existence"[113]. In our view, however, an analysis of Diderot's arguments demonstrates that there are no unscrupulous methods he did not employ in writing this *Encyclopédie* article – from outright falsehoods to omissions and unfounded yet suggestive insinuations. All the historical examples he cites were either interpreted in an extremely subjective manner, contradicted the facts, or were simply invented. Needless to say, the purpose of this study is in no way to "whitewash" the activities of the Society of Jesus. The analysis conducted here, however, demonstrates just how far Diderot's accusations against the Jesuits were from an impartial and scholarly approach. In the author's view, this provides yet another argument for abandoning the panegyrical treatment of the legacy of the French philosophes and subjecting it to critical reappraisal.

Conflict of interests
The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

References

1. Akinshin A. The phenomenon of Christian martyrdom in Japan in the XVI–XVII centuries. *State, religion, Church in Russia and abroad.* 2022;40(1):176–197. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.22394/2073-7203-2022-40-1-176-197
2. Boehmer H. *History of the Jesuit Order*. Moscow: Lomonosov; 2012. 216 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/ryrwop (in Russ.).

[113] Ibid.

3. Gibert J. *Spirituality of the Society of Jesus*. Moscow: Institute of Philosophy, Theology and History of St. Thomas; 2010. 680 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/quzfsf (In Russ.).
4. Yemeleanova I. Death as a spectacle: Damien's execution. *The historical magazine History Illustrated*. 2012;(10):64–79. URL: https://www.nbpublish.com/library_get_pdf.php?id=28904&ysclid=mric600qo8785461699 (In Russ.)
5. Erokhin V.N. On the question of the circumstances of the origin of the Gunpowder plot of the English Catholics in 1605. In: *Actual Problems of Studying and Teaching History and International Relations*. Kursk: University Book; 2025. pp. 123–128. https://www.elibrary.ru/gvwarr (in Russ.).
6. Ivanov V.L. Luis de Molina, O.I., and the Beginnings of the Scholastic Theology of the Society of Jesus. Preface to the publication of the translation of the 52nd debate of the Concordia. *EINAI: Problems of Philosophy and Theology*. 2014;3(1–2)(5–6):187–212. https://www.elibrary.ru/xbntml (in Russ.).
7. Kornienko M.A. Linguophilosophical tradition of Port Royal. *Bulletin of Tomsk State University. Cultural studies and art criticism*. 2019;(35):29–40. (In Russ.). https://doi.org/10.17223/22220836/35/3
8. Kudoyarov V.N. Japanese-Dutch relations in the Edo period (1603–1867). *Bulletin of St. Petersburg University. Oriental and African studies*. 2013;(3):54–61. https://www.elibrary.ru/piwmzo (In Russ.).
9. Kuzhel Yu. L. Japan's relations with the European Catholic world (late XVI – early XVII centuries). *Yearbook Japan*. 2019;48:321–343. (In Russ.). https://doi.org/10.24411/0235-8182-2019-10014
10. Leroy M. *Myth of the Jesuits: from Béranger to Michelet*. Moscow: Languages of Slavic Culture; 2001. 464 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/hsdtyx (In Russ.).
11. Maksimov A.S. Jesuit Mission in Russia and Rome's Eastern Policy (Selected theological aspects and methodological principles). *Sretensky Collection*. 2022;(11–12):271–296. https://www.elibrary.ru/ndtisf (In Russ.).
12. Marakushina E.V. Historical and religious studies analysis of the activities of the Jesuit Order in St. Petersburg. *Bulletin of St. Petersburg University. Series 6. Philosophy, political science, sociology,*

psychology, law, international relations. 2007;(3):269–277. https://www.elibrary.ru/rucavt (in Russ.).
13. Mounier R. *The Assassination of Henry IV (May 14, 1610)*. St. Petersburg: Eurasia; 2008. 416 p. URL: https://search.rsl.ru/ru/record/01004097036?ysclid=mrid3ukcra9447803 (In Russ.).
14. Pilavov G.Sh. Blaise Pascal, Jansenists and Jesuits: explication of opposition. *History of philosophy*. 2025;30(2):17–32. (In Russ.). https://doi.org/10.21146/2074-5869-2025-30-2-17-32
15. Pilavov G.Sh. Encyclopedia of Diderot and D'Alembert: contextual and critical understanding. *History of Philosophy*. 2024;29(1):43–57. (In Russ.). https://doi.org/10.21146/2074-5869-2024-29-1-43-57
16. Ptifis J.-K. *Louis XIV. Glory and trials*. St. Petersburg: Eurasia; 2008. 382 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/vrxpyt (In Russ.).
17. Rakuts N.V. Jesuit missions (reductions) of Spanish South America in the context of the problem of symbiosis of cultures. *Ethnographic review*. 2013;(3):102–116. https://www.elibrary.ru/rbrqnz (in Russ.).
18. Saraiva J.E. *The history of Portugal*. Moscow: Whole World Publ.; 2007. 384 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/qphoit (In Russ.).
19. Sukhova N.Y. Unpublished article by St. Tikhon (Bellavin). *Bulletin of the Orthodox St. Tikhon University for the Humanities. Series 2: The Story, The History of the Russian Orthodox Church*. 2015;6(67):97–122 (In Russ.). https://doi.org/10.15382/sturII201567.97-122
20. Fadeeva T.M., Buttigieg E. Knights, Jesuits, carnival and Inquisition in Malta in the 17th Century: the essence of the conflict. Buttigig E. Knights, jesuits, carnival and the inquisition in XVII-century Malta. Historical J. N.Y. 2012;55:571–596. *Social Sciences and Humanities. Russian and foreign literature. Series 5: The History*. 2013;(3):149–153. https://www.elibrary.ru/ravgel (in Russ.).
21. Boguslavskiy V.M., ed. *Philosophy in the "Encyclopedia" of Diderot and D'Alembert*. Moscow: Nauka; 1994. 720 p. URL: https://search.rsl.ru/ru/record/01001691541?ysclid=mridnkv58d161578793 (In Russ.).
22. Andurand O. La Grande affaire. Les évêques de France face à l'Unigenitus. Paris-Rennes: Société d'histoire religieuse. *Presses universitaires de Rennes, coll. Histoire*; 2017. 398 p. https://doi.org/10.4000/assr.44495
23. Bauer S.W. *The Story of the World*. Charles-City: Peace Hill Press; 2004. URL: https://archive.org/details/storyofworldtest0003baue

24. Braun H. *Juan de Mariana and Early Modern Spanish Political Thought.* London, 2007. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315590691
25. Campbell T.J. *The Jesuits, 1534—1921: a History of the Society of Jesus from Its Foundation to the Present Time.* New York, 2013. 798 p.
26. Disney A.R. *a History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2009. URL: https://assets.cambridge.org/97805218/43188/frontmatter/9780521843188_frontmatter.pdf
27. Duprat A. Stéphane Lamotte, L'affaire Girard Cadière. Justice, satire et religion au XVIIIe siècle. *Cahiers de la Méditerranée.* 2016;93:77—79 (In Fr.). https://doi.org/10.4000/cdlm.8500
28. Fraser A. *The Gunpowder Plot.* Manila: Phoenix; 2002. 410 p.
29. Gundani P. The "just war" tradition in Zimbabwean historiography. Dis(entangling) the Gordian knot between religion and morality of war. *Missionalia.* 2019;47(1):72—92. https://doi.org/10.7832/47-1-301
30. Hauschild W.-D. *Lehrbuch der Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte.* Gütersloh; 2005. Bd. 2. 978 S. (In Germ.)
31. Milton G. *Samurai William: The Englishman Who Opened Japan.* New York, 2003. 368 p.

Georgy Sh. Pilavov
C.Sc. (Philosophy),
Associate Professor Department of Philosophy,
History and Pedagogy Luhansk Voroshilov State
Agricultural University,
SPIN-code: 2240-8264,
AuthorID: 1177930,
ORCID: 0000-0001-6845-3282

Received 26.04.2026
Revised 06.06.2026
Accepted 26.06.2026

DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.010
Original paper

Mikhail M. Yakushev

Historical and Documentary Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation, E-mail: mmyakushev456@gmail.com

"The Keys to the Sultan's Court": Russian Dragomans and Secretaries in Constantinople in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century

Abstract

The article examines the activities of dragomans and secretaries who served in the Russian mission in Constantinople in the eighteenth century. Their principal efforts were aimed at advancing Russian interests in the Ottoman Empire and focused on diplomatic and intelligence objectives, protocol, translation and clerical functions, and matters of record-keeping and document management. Among the earliest dragomans and secretaries were Orthodox subjects of the Sultan who assisted ambassadors and envoys in carrying out their duties and facilitated communication with their counterparts from foreign states, official representatives of the Topkapı Palace, and the Sublime Porte. Dragomans and secretaries also assisted in collecting confidential documents and obtaining data from informants and agents concerning the

© Mikhail M. Yakushev, 2026

internal and foreign policies of the Ottoman Empire and its relations with foreign states.

Keywords:
Sublime Porte; Russian mission in Constantinople; ambassador; envoy; dragoman; secretary; N.V. Repnin; M.I. Golenishchev-Kutuzov

For citation:
Mikhail M. Yakushev. "The Keys to the Sultan's Court": Russian Dragomans and Secretaries in Constantinople in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century // The Historical Reporter. 2026. Vol. 60. P. 274–287. DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.010

Russia's foreign-policy activities in the Ottoman Empire were inextricably linked to the work of the Russian diplomatic mission. Under the Treaty of Constantinople of 1700, Russia acquired the right to maintain a permanent diplomatic representative in the Ottoman capital with the rank of envoy extraordinary. Of all Russian diplomatic missions, the mission on the Bosporus occupied a special position.

The structure of the Constantinople Mission provided for a head – a plenipotentiary ambassador, envoy, or resident – under whom there was an adviser or secretary, depending on the status of the host country. In terms of staffing and functional responsibilities, the personnel of all diplomatic missions were practically identical; only missions in the states of the East additionally employed dragomans – interpreters of local languages. Dragomans had a wide range of responsibilities. The first, or political, dragoman dealt with the most important matters in relations between Russia and the Porte, making him a significant figure for the head

of the Constantinople Mission. The first dragoman had an assistant who was responsible for dealing with Ottoman courts and police and for participating in the resolution of commercial and property matters. All other dragomans worked in less important areas of the Russian diplomatic mission at the Ottoman court. In embassies and missions, dragomans held the ranks of first, second, third, fourth, and even fifth dragoman, with corresponding salaries.

The names are known of an entire generation of interpreters who served in the Constantinople Mission during the first half of the eighteenth century and made a significant contribution to Russia's diplomatic and intelligence activities on the Bosporus: S. Lavretsky, D. Petrov, P. Kuchumov, S. Chizhinsky, A. Botvinkin, F. Konstantinov, M. Arsenyev, A. Pochaynov, P. Sofonov, P. Ratka, I. Suda, A. Vasilyev, S. Volkov, M. Tevkelev, G. Maltsov, F. Senyukov (Senyakov), I. Bakunin, K. Retkin, Ya. Pokhvisnev, P. Argamakov, as well as foreigners – Florio Beneveni, Gaspar Testa, Nikolai and Luka Barca, Anton and Andrei Marini – who were pioneers of Russia's corps of interpreters on the Bosporus[1]. In the second half of the eighteenth century, interpreters accompanying ceremonial embassies to Constantinople included S. Dementyev, P. Shchukin, D. Melnikov, S. Melnikov, G. Myshkin, I. Severin, S. Lashkarev (Loshkarev), I. Forsman, A. Palladoklis, G. Panaiodoros, and others[2]. Some of the aforementioned dragomans also performed the duties of secretaries.

The Constantinople Mission interacted with dragomans serving in various diplomatic missions in the Ottoman capital. The position of dragoman afforded its holder special privileges, while dragoman families were regarded as a distinct nobility[3]. Some families effectively monopolised dragoman posts, creating entire dynasties: Tarsia, Borisi, Bruti, Grillo, Navon, Piron, and others[4].

---

1 *Якушев М.М.* «Приятели ево работают великому государю в чем могут усердно». Иностранцы на русской службе в Царьграде в первой четверти XVIII века // Военно-исторический журнал. 2025. № 8. Август. С. 20–31.

2 The information is contained in 'Relations between Russia and Turkey' (Fond 89) of the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts and the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire.

3 *Testa M. de, Gautier A.* L'origine des dynasties de dragomans // Bulletin de l association des ansiens Eleves de L'inalco. 1992. Octobre. P. 7–12.

4 *Testa M. de, Gautier A.* Dragomans et diplomats Européens auprès de la Porte Ottomane. Istambul, 2003. P. 130.

Local dragomans were indispensable, since at that time most heads of diplomatic missions did not speak Ottoman Turkish and did not know how to conduct business at the Porte. Moreover, dragomans were not merely oral and written interpreters: they also performed protocol and courier duties and often acted as "liaisons" and "messengers"; some of them independently conducted negotiations, gathered important information, and offered valuable advice[5]. However, most heads of the Constantinople Mission had alternative channels of communication both with the Porte and with the Sultan's court, which were often used to check the dragomans' loyalty and the authenticity of the information they provided. The links in this chain were frequently embassy secretaries, physicians, and treasurers, as well as dragomans employed by the Admiralty, the Ottoman government, and the Sultan's palace.

As international relations developed, demand for dragomans increased, leading to the establishment within the dragomanate of a special school for interpreters, whose pupils later came to be known as student interpreters or junior dragomans.

Special embassies headed by envoys extraordinary and sent to Constantinople on specific diplomatic missions included among their large retinues numerous nobles and embassy officers, some of whom performed the duties of secretaries. Thus, in 1756, Envoy Extraordinary Prince S.P. Dolgorukov (1696–1761)[6] had an audience with the Sultan accompanied by his three sons: the Embassy Secretary Alexander (1721–1763), who held the imperial charter, the Embassy nobles Vladimir and Nikolai[7], as well as his nephew, the Embassy noble Vasily; at his audience with the Grand Vizier, he was accompanied by two sons. In 1760, Envoy Extraordinary Prince G.I. Shakhovskoy (1706–1774)[8] had audiences accompanied by his eldest son, Embassy Secretary Boris (1737–1813)[9], who carried the imperial charter. In 1763, Envoy Extraordinary Prince A.S. Dolgorukov

---

5 *Шихзаманова Т.Н.* Институт драгоманов в Османской империи – мост между Западом и Востоком // Иерусалимский православный семинар. Вып. 6. М., 2015. С. 61–64.

6 Son of Pyotr Mikhailovich Dolgorukov and Anna Ivanovna Buturlina, husband of Irina Petrovna Golitsyna.

7 S.P. Dolgorukov also had a son, Pyotr, and daughters Anna, Maria (the elder), Maria (the younger), and Anastasia.

8 Son of Ivan Perfilievich Shakhovskoi and Tatiana Fedorovna Korkodina, husband of Maria Illarionovna Koshkarova.

9 G.I. Shakhovskoi also had a son, Nikolai, and daughters Daria and Varvara.



Nobleman of the Embassy in Constantinople, Prince V. S. Dolgorukov.
From open sources

(1721–1763) attended his first audiences with the Sultan and the Vizier accompanied by his nephew Yakov Dolgorukov, an Ambassy noble and army ensign, who held the letter of credence. In 1756, Vladimir Dolgorukov performed the duties of secretary (carrying back the "vizier's letter") during his father Prince S.P. Dolgorukov's farewell audience with the Grand Vizier; in 1763, Yakov Dolgorukov performed secretarial duties (carrying back the "vizier's letter") during his uncle A.S. Dolgorukov's farewell audience with the Grand Vizier.

In the eighteenth century, the best-known dragomans serving in the Constantinople Mission were Italians, Frenchmen, and Greeks: Marini, Pisani, Timoni, Francini, Pini, Chirico, Fonton, Dandri, Buidi, and others.

European diplomats did not always know Eastern languages, the specifics of the local mentality, or the rules of conducting negotiations that could produce the desired results. Some maintained that only Turks could negotiate with Turks, possessing not only the language but also a similar way of thinking. Any document drawn up by the Turks contained numerous circumlocutions, subtleties, elaborate formulations, and veiled meanings, making it quite difficult both to translate the document and to understand the hidden meaning encoded in the message. During translation, dragomans often had to provide additional explanations on various matters, drawing, among other things, on their own knowledge and information obtained from other sources.

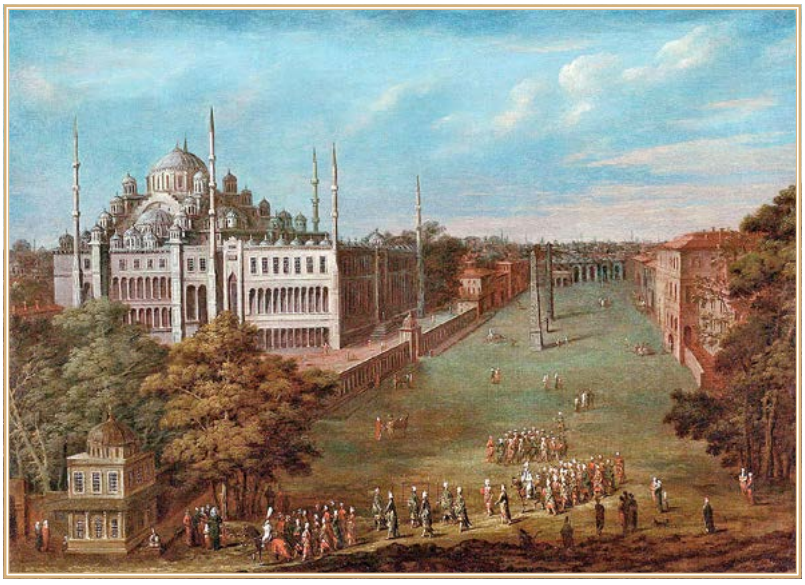
Advisers had consultative functions in addressing the most difficult and responsible tasks facing diplomats on the Bosporus. Secretaries assisted advisers and residents in the work of the Constantinople Mission: they recorded messages, composed and enciphered reports, dispatches, and memoranda, and supervised the local chancery. They were also entrusted with registering documents, issuing passports and handling deposits, as well as dealing with auxiliary tasks. In some cases, they performed courier and intelligence duties, for which they received additional remuneration. a separate place in the structure of the Russian diplomatic mission on the Bosporus was occupied by the residency and military intelligence, which maintained secret channels and agent networks throughout Constantinople and in almost every part of the Ottoman Empire.

In Constantinople, Russian embassy dragomans and secretaries performed an enormous volume of work. They negotiated with the Porte over visits by Russian residents, envoys extraordinary, and ambassadors to the Sultan, the Grand Vizier, and other members of the Ottoman cabinet; they delivered diplomatic notes and memoranda to a special Ottoman official – the Grand Dragoman of the Porte – who headed the entire translation service of the Ottoman government and prepared various decisions concerning the foreign-policy affairs of the Sultan's court. Russian interpreters needed to know Ottoman Turkish, the widely used Arabic language of the Ottoman Empire, as well as the principal languages of business correspondence in Constantinople – Italian and French. There were relatively few such specialists in Russia, particularly specialists in Eastern languages, and the Russian government therefore made efforts to train the necessary personnel.

The Constantinople Mission was not only a centre of diplomatic and translation activity but also a hub of intelligence operations. "The duties of a permanent diplomatic representative in Constantinople included establishing contacts and acquaintances among various strata of Ottoman society, creating a network of secret agents and 'informant friends', who were referred to in diplomatic correspondence as 'confidants', 'correspondents', and 'informers'[10], as well as 'observing and studying all spheres of life in the country to which he was accredited'"[11]. The heads

[10] *Якушев М.М.* Становление русской дипломатии и разведки на Босфоре в 1700–1720 гг. // Исторический вестник. 2023. № 46. С. 46–65.

[11] *Государева М.Ю.* Русская дипломатическая миссия в Стамбуле в 20–30 годы XVIII века // Вестник Рязанского университета имени С.А. Есенина. 2011. № 1 (30). С. 96.



Ceremonial procession in the centre of Constantinople. Early 18th century.
Artist J.-B. Vanmour, 18th century. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

of the Constantinople Mission carefully selected both regular diplomatic personnel and freelance or locally recruited employees. "The choice of a good secretary and butler is more important than that of all other servants. For an ambassador, a secretary must possess intelligence and reliability, so that instructions, numerical codes, letters, and embassy affairs remain secure. It is well known that attempts are made to bribe a secretary more often than an ambassador"[12]. Translators, secretaries, couriers, and copyists were sent to the Constantinople Mission from the College of Foreign Affairs.

In the Ottoman capital, in the mid-eighteenth century, a school for training interpreters operated under the Constantinople Mission. It had been established by Resident I.I. Neplyuev, and at different times between five and ten pupils studied languages there. Russian pupils studied Italian, Latin, and Turkish. The Resident recommended sending young pupils (aged 10–12), whose maintenance, including their education, would cost only 50 levkas a year (approximately 75 roubles). He argued that adult pupils would "eat a great deal of bread, while little benefit can be expected from them"[13]. By 1732, the staff of the Constantinople Mission had increased, particularly after the establishment of the school

[12] АВПРИ. Ф. 89. Оп. 89/1. 1733. Д. 9. Л. 120–121.
[13] Ibid. 1721. Д. 8. Л. 24 об.; Ibid. 1722. Д. 6. Ч. 1. Л. 48–56.

for interpreters, so that some of the personnel lived in the residence of Envoy Extraordinary I.A. Shcherbatov (1696–1761)[14], who had arrived in the Ottoman capital the previous year. I.I. Neplyuev was forced to rent a second house for himself and his assistant A.A. Veshnyakov, while the interpreters, pupils, and copyists remained in the former residence. In his report, the Envoy wrote of the unavoidable increase in expenses, justifying it as having been "driven to it by extreme necessity"[15].

It should be noted that the first students sent to Istanbul by the Academy of Sciences were four young noblemen who were to study Turkish and were assigned salaries[16].

These measures contributed to strengthening the corps of dragomans and secretaries at the Constantinople Mission, as well as to the development of diplomatic and intelligence activities in the Ottoman Empire. "Knowledge of the Turkish language was in great demand at that time not only in the Russian mission in Istanbul but also in St Petersburg – diplomatic missions from Turkey began arriving in Russia"[17]. The school played a significant role in organising the activities of the Constantinople Mission.

Ordinary letters and reports generally went directly to St. Petersburg, but there was a period when they were sent to Russia via the capitals of European states. Secret reports and dispatches, unlike ordinary ("public") correspondence, were enciphered. Important political and military information obtained from secret agents was encrypted using numerical codes[18]. The names of the informants themselves, who were called "correspondents", "confidants", and "informers", were also kept secret. The correspondence often specified the sums spent on bribing spies and other clandestine purposes. Among the secret correspondence sent to St. Petersburg were copies of letters "To the Turkish ministers from Persia, Transcaucasia, and Crimea", containing valuable information on political intentions, troop movements, and other matters[19].

---

[14] Son of Andrei Dmitrievich Shcherbatov, husband of Praskovia Ivanovna Streshneva, father of Natalia Ivanovna Shcherbatova.

[15] АВПРИ. Ф. 89. Оп. 89/1. 1732. Д. 7. Л. 339.

[16] Ibid. 1724. Д. 3. Л. 74; Ibid. Д. 4. Л. 78–78 об.

[17] *Государева М.Ю.* Русская дипломатическая миссия в Стамбуле. С. 97.

[18] *Якушев М.М.* Резиденты и секретные агенты России в Константинополе 1721–1751 гг. // Исторический вестник. 2025. № 52. С. 80–97.

[19] *Государева М.Ю.* Русская дипломатическая миссия в Стамбуле. С. 104.



Envoy in Constantinople, Prince I. A. Shcherbatov.
From open sources

Ordinary diplomatic correspondence contained detailed reports, memoranda, and letters describing public audiences, ceremonial visits, and so forth. It also included descriptions of other activities involving interaction with the governmental institutions of the Porte, registers of official expenditures, and personal petitions from employees of the Constantinople Mission. a separate category consisted of documentation recording the day-to-day work of the Mission.

A well-known interpreter of the Constantinople Mission was Nikolai Ivanovich Buidi (Buydiy), "a native Greek from Ioannina, who had for several years been usefully employed in various matters", whom A.A. Veshnyakov placed "in training in the interpreter's profession"[20]. Veshnyakov wrote of him: "one poor Greek has already been with the Mission for his ninth year; he is suitable for translating from Greek and Italian into Russian and from Russian, is of a very quiet disposition and has already been tested for loyalty... he has rendered considerable service; he is a native of Arta, Albania, and comes from a good and distinguished family there"[21]. In 1735, N. Buidi was robbed by the Ottomans, arrived in Constantinople, and "placed himself under the protection" of

[20] АВПРИ. Ф. 89. Оп. 89/1. 1752. Д. 7.
[21] Ibid. Ф. 89. Оп. 89/1. 1740. Д. 8. Л. 297.

the Russian resident, whom he accompanied to St. Petersburg in 1736. In 1739, he was accepted into service as a student of interpreting and sent to the Ottoman capital.

Another well-known interpreter was Alexander Pini (Piniy), the stepson of Andrei Marini, who was accepted into service in 1739 as a student of interpreting and "... was immediately dispatched to the Porte and, for his services, promoted to interpreter. He speaks Greek, Italian, and Turkish as a native... he studied diligently and with success"[22]. "He speaks Turkish perfectly; however, he is not yet able to read and write everything entirely on his own, although he has studied very diligently and for a considerable time, and knows more than many older interpreters, since Turkish writing, being defective, is extremely difficult to read. They write without vowels, and since the vowels are pronounced differently, it means that if someone has not read a particular word with a teacher, he may sometimes be unable to read it. Moreover, the language used in court and chancery documents differs completely from speech and ordinary language, and anyone wishing to write in the same manner must know Arabic and Persian, which also have different letters"[23].

Another prominent interpreter was Francisco Barut, "a native of Aleppo, with a mastery of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and many other Eastern languages, as well as Christian languages – Latin, Italian, and French; a man of limited intelligence in matters concerning other secular affairs and social intercourse, but extremely skilled in languages, especially Eastern ones, and therefore very useful for the study of languages and the training of interpreters"[24].

A total of 13 salaried people were attached to Russian Resident A.A. Veshnyakov in Constantinople: "among them, some are clearly already fit and worthy. Others are maintained in the hope and expectation that they will become so"[25].

In 1740, Russian resident in Constantinople A.A. Veshnyakov retained Semyon Mironovich Dementyev, a Cossack of the Poltava Regiment who had been released from Ottoman captivity, as a student at the Constantinople Mission. According to Veshnyakov, S. Dementyev

[22] Ibid. 1741. Д. 12. Л. 467–468.
[23] Ibid. 1743. Д. 5. Л. 307.
[24] Ibid. Л. 467–468.
[25] Ibid. Л. 309.



Resident in Constantinople, A. M. Obreskov.
From open sources

"speaks Turkish like a native, writes in an extraordinary hand, and reads fluently"[26]. In 1751, Russia's chargé d'affaires in Constantinople, A.M. Obreskov, reported the summons of the interpreters Dementyev and Rubinov to Moscow[27]. In 1754, S. Dementyev was appointed a dragoman. In 1756, Dementyev accompanied Envoy Extraordinary S.P. Dolgorukov from Constantinople to Kyiv, where the latter was travelling to congratulate the new Sultan on his accession to the throne. The purpose of the journey was "to meet his father, whom he had not seen since he fell into captivity, more than twenty years ago"[28].

In 1752, four interpreters worked in Constantinople: the Italians Alexander Pini (Piniy) and William Dandri (Dandriy), the Greek Nikolai Buidi (Buydiy), and the Russian Pyotr Shchukin, who had been appointed to the position through the patronage of the influential Chief Secretary of the College of Foreign Affairs, I.O. Pugovishnikov. Shchukin's father was a townsman living in Moscow's Meshchanskaya Sloboda. When his father went bankrupt, P. Shchukin entered the Slavic-Greek-Latin Spassky School Monastery, where he studied until 1732, when he transferred to

[26] Ibid.

[27] АВПРИ. Ф. 90. Оп. 90/1. 1751. Д. 337.

[28] Анисимов М.Ю. Российская дипломатия в Европе в середине XVIII в.: От Ахенского мира до Семилетней войны. М.: Товарищество научных изданий КМК, 2012 С. 75–78.

the Rhetoric School. At that time, the Synod received a request from the College of Foreign Affairs to send six of the best pupils there, "two each from the subjects of theology, philosophy, and rhetoric"; P. Shchukin was one of them. At the College of Foreign Affairs, he studied under the renowned Orientalist Professor Kerr, who taught six students from 1732 to 1737. In 1739, P. Shchukin was sent as a secretary to the Constantinople Mission and thereafter worked there, remaining a student but performing clerical duties. In 1751, he was appointed an interpreter of the Constantinople Mission.

The diplomatic correspondence mentions Ali Hodja, "a Turk in our service who teaches the languages and interpreters, as well as writing"[29]; "the Turkish-language teacher Hafiz Efendi[30], who is attached to our school and is usefully employed when necessary"; and a teacher of Turkish for Russian interpreters and pupils by the surname Barut.

A document from 1785 contains the names of students at the school for interpreters attached to the Constantinople Mission[31].

Heinrich (Genrikh) Godet: "has neither an inclination nor an aptitude for the Turkish language and gives no hope of becoming a dragoman, yet he may become a competent chancery clerk. He is employed for French and Italian correspondence with foreign ministers when necessary";

Stepan Lukyanov: sent to Sinop with Consul Forsman, "as he has shown the greatest progress in the Turkish language and can already be employed in place of a dragoman at consular posts";

Yakov Konyushenko: "studies Turkish diligently, willingly, and with great success, and understands this language better than his other fellow students. He is already employed by First Dragoman Pisani for correspondence and negotiations";

Ivan Levanda: "studies Turkish with exceptional diligence and success";

Alexander Levanda: "has made considerable progress in Turkish alongside with Yanovsky";

Brothers Nikolai Pisani and Matvey Pisani: "study Turkish successfully and conduct themselves commendably";

Ivan Vincenzo Gianni: "studies Turkish diligently".

---

29 Ibid. Л. 468.

30 АВПРИ. Ф. 89. Оп. 89/1. 1781. Д. 589. Л. 14 об.

31 Ibid. Оп. 89/8. 1785. Д. 649. Л. 78–79.

The list also includes Alexander Ochiyevsky, Mikhaila Demchensky, and Ivan Yanovsky[32].

Thus, the school for interpreters attached to the Constantinople Mission trained future personnel who, after completing their course, joined the staff of the diplomatic mission or filled vacancies for dragomans and secretaries at Russian consulates, and vice-consulates in the Middle East. Secretaries and dragomans performed important functions in the diplomatic mission on the Bosporus, carrying out numerous responsible assignments, including confidential and secret ones. They were not simply interpreters but key figures in the complex and tense negotiating process between the diplomatic representatives of the Russian and Ottoman Empires.

Residents, envoys extraordinary, and ambassadors at the Ottoman court, as well as Russian envoys extraordinary and plenipotentiary in Constantinople, performed not only diplomatic, protocol, and representational functions but also worked to set up an intelligence and counterintelligence network in the Ottoman Empire. Secretaries and dragomans were involved in this network; they also established constructive relations with foreign diplomats and working contacts with the vizierial and Sultan's courts, seeking to secure for the heads of the Constantinople Mission a position equal to that of the representatives of the Western European diplomatic corps on the Bosporus.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

References

1. Anisimov M. Yu. Rossiiskaia diplomatiia v Evrope v seredine XVIII veka: ot Akhenskogo mira do Semi-letnei voiny. Moscow: Tovarishchestvo nauchnykh izdanii KMK, 2012 ISBN 978-5-87317-845-2, pp. 75–78.

[32] Ibid.

2. Gosudareva M.Yu. Russian Diplomatic Mission in Istanbul in the 1720s–1730s. *Vestnik of Ryazan University named after S.A. Yesenin.* 2011;(1):96–106. https://www.elibrary.ru/nuzrzj (In Russ.).
3. Shikhzamanova T.N. The Institution of Dragomans in the Ottoman Empire – a Bridge between the West and the East. *Jerusalem Orthodox Seminar.* 2015;(6):61–64. https://www.elibrary.ru/ypdled (In Russ.).
4. Yakushev M.M. "...The buddies of his work for the great sovereign in what they can diligently". Foreigners in Russian Service in Tsargrad in the First Quarter of the XVIII Century. *Military Historical Journal.* 2025;(8):20–31. https://www.elibrary.ru/ymnnff (In Russ.).
5. Yakushev M.M. Residents and Secret Agents of Russia in Constantinople, 1721–1751. *Historical Reporter.* 2025;(52):80–97. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.35549/HR.2025.2025.52.001.
6. Yakushev M.M. The Formation of Russian Diplomacy and Intelligence on the Bosporus in 1700–1720. *Historical Reporter.* 2023;(46):46–65. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.35549/HR.2023.2023.46.001
7. Testa M. de, Gautier A. *Drogomans et diplomats Européens auprès de la Porte Ottomane.* Istanbul, 2003. P. 130.
8. Testa M. de, Gautier A. L'origine des dynasties de dragomans. *Bulletin de l'Association des Anciens Élèves de L'INALCO.* 1992;(7–12).

Mikhail M. Yakushev
C.Sc. (History),
Advisor (Historical and Documentary Department)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation,
Senior Research Fellow Institute of Oriental
Studies Russian Academy of Sciences,
SPIN-code: 8178-3806,
AuthorID: 875714

Received 13.03.2026
Revised 27.04.2026
Accepted 13.05.2026

DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.011
Original paper

[1]Vladimir M. Akhmedov, [2]Alexander V. Abrosimov

[1]Center for the Study of Common Problems of Contemporary East, Institute of Oriental Studies Russian Academy of Sciences, [2]Center forthe Study of the Near and Middle East of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences,Moscow, Russian Federation, E-mail: [1]shamyarabist@gmail.com; [2]mostaady@mail.ru

The Historical Legacy of Arab–Iranian Relations: Socio-Political Aspects

Abstract

The Iran–Israel war of 2025–2026 has altered the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East, highlighting the importance of Arab–Iranian relations for the development of contemporary Middle Eastern political processes. The relevance of the article lies in the fact that the historical legacy of Arab–Iranian relations has left an indelible mark on the development of contemporary Arab–Iranian ties. The historical features of the formation of Arab–Iranian relations continue to influence interaction between Iran and the Arab states. The events at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, with Iran playing an active role, transformed the structure of international relations and international security in the Middle East. The novelty of the study lies in the fact that some earlier approaches and methods have not always provided an adequate explanation of the policies of Iran and the Arab states. Many assessments characterised by a high degree of generalisation have

© Vladimir M. Akhmedov, Alexander V. Abrosimov, 2026

ceased to accurately reflect the actual state of affairs in the study of Arab–Iranian relations. The main aim of the article is to conduct an in-depth examination of the historical factors influencing Arab–Iranian relations in order to address existing gaps in previous research on the subject and provide a new perspective on the problems surrounding the formation of contemporary Arab–Iranian relations. The upper chronological limit of the study is the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, which fundamentally transformed Iran and the nature of its policy towards the Arab world. The theoretical and methodological framework of the study is based on the systemic principles, analysis and synthesis, and general historical methods, including the principle of historicism, the historical-systems approach, the historical-comparative method, and the method of periodisation. The article is particularly relevant given that Russia has consistently advocated the normalisation of Arab–Iranian relations as a condition for stabilising the political situation in the region. This fact provides a substantiated basis for viewing Moscow's new role in the Middle East as a unique stabilising factor in key areas of military and energy security, as well as in the political and economic affairs of the region.

Keywords:
Arab states; Iran; Russia; United States; Israel; Islamisation; Arabisation; Nationalism; International relations; Middle East

For citation:
Vladimir M. Akhmedov, Alexander V. Abrosimov. The Historical Legacy of Arab-Iranian Relations: Socio-Political Aspects. *The Historical Reporter*. 2026. Vol. 60. P. 288–317. DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.60.011

Introduction

The Middle East is rightly regarded as the cradle of world civilisations. The history of the Middle East began with the earliest human settlements and witnessed the rise and decline of some of the world's oldest cultures and civilisations, including the Sumerian, Egyptian and Mesopotamian. Several major pre-Islamic empires and Muslim states emerged in the Middle East, and modern nation-states were subsequently established. The region's rich and diverse world gave rise to the great empires of the Middle East: the Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian empires.

The geopolitical position of the Middle East placed it at the centre of world history and politics from ancient times. The Middle East became an arena for numerous wars and an object of foreign conquest. The region experienced the campaigns of Alexander the Great, Roman legionaries, the Crusaders, the Mongols, the Seljuks, the Ottomans and European colonial powers. From the third century AD onwards, the Middle East came under the rule of Byzantium and the Iranian Sasanian Empire, which waged continuous wars for dominance in the region. The Arab conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries AD brought these struggles to an end. As a result, virtually the entire territory of the Middle East came under Arab rule. The Arabs brought a new religion, Islam, to the peoples of the Middle East. It is no coincidence that the Middle East is regarded as the birthplace of the three great monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Subsequently, a substantial part of the region remained under the rule of the Ottoman Empire for centuries, and the Ottomans periodically fought the Iranian Safavid dynasty for influence in the Middle East. From the eighteenth century onwards, European powers intensified their penetration of the Middle East. European expansion led to the colonial subjugation of Middle Eastern states and to their territorial redistribution following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. After the Second World War, national liberation movements emerged in the Middle East, as a result of which many states in the region achieved political independence.

All the old and new empires, powers and states of the Middle East have contributed a vivid and distinctive chapter to the history of the region. They had their own unique historical trajectories and were created by different peoples and ethnic groups. Over time, sharp distinctions

between their traditions, cultures, beliefs and languages were blurred. Nevertheless, their most distinctive characteristics have survived to the present day and have contributed to the unique character and image of the modern Middle East.

The foregoing applies to the history of the Arabs and Persians, which has left a particular imprint on the nature of contemporary Arab-Iranian relations and Iran's policy in the Middle East. Arab-Iranian relations have been characterised by complexity and dynamism. Today, the study of the historical factors shaping Arab-Iranian relations and the causes of Arab-Iranian disagreements has acquired particular importance.

An overview of Arab-Iranian relations in the pre-Islamic period

Arab-Persian interaction dates back more than three thousand years. The first Arab-Persian contacts took place after the conquest of Babylon by the Achaemenid Empire in 540 BC. It was at this time that the Arabs became allies of the Persian Empire[1]. The Achaemenids sought to establish control over the Persian Gulf, which became an arena of Arab-Iranian interaction[2].

After Alexander the Great conquered Persia, Iran was ruled by the Greek Seleucid dynasty (305–240 BC). Cultural interaction between the various peoples of the empire increased. This cross-cultural process spread to different parts of Iran and affected the upper echelons of the Iranian aristocracy. The Seleucids sought to establish their dominance in the Persian Gulf in order to secure trade routes. Arab-Persian contacts continued despite a decline in the volume of trade. Arab-Iranian ties intensified with the establishment of the Parthian dynasty (247–224 BC). The Parthians prevented the Arabs from penetrating deep into their territory. Consequently, cultural interaction remained limited and took place through Arab settlements along the frontier. The rise to power of the Sasanian dynasty in Iran in 224 AD marked a new stage in the flourishing of the Persian Empire, which coincided with the decline of urban

1 *Bosworth C.E.* Arabs and Iran in the Pre-Islamic Period. Encyclopedia Iranica. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/arab-i (accessed 07.07.2025).

2 *Дьяконов И.М.* Ахеменидская держава. Гл. XVII. История Востока. Восток в древности. Т. I. М.: ИВ РАН, 2002. С. 290–311.

life among the Arabs. Increasing raids by Arab nomads posed one of the principal threats to Iran and its settled and urbanised population[3].

One of the important elements of the security strategy of the Persian Empire was the development of a policy of expelling Arabs who had established themselves in Iranian territory during the weakening of the Parthian Kingdom, as well as preventing raids by Arab nomads. The Persians forcibly drove the Arabs from the coast of the Persian Gulf into the interior of Arabia. Punitive expeditions against the Arabs in their own territory were prompted by Iran's growing concern over the security of trade routes in the Persian Gulf.

Later, the Sasanian rulers recognised an Arab confederation on the borders of the Persian Empire with a centre in Al-Hira. Arab inhabitants lived relatively well within the Sasanian Empire. Unlike Byzantium, the Persians granted greater autonomy to Arab settlements. As a result, the Arab population of the Persian Empire became its allies. Arab warriors guarded Iranian frontier territories[4].

Before the Arab conquest of Persia in 642 AD, Arab-Iranian relations were largely determined by the Arabs' attempts to penetrate Iranian territory and establish settlements there. The Persians sought to resist these attempts. Iran was concerned with extending the borders of the Persian Empire into Arabia. The result of this interaction was periodic conflict between Arabs and Persians. Iran did not seek to conquer all Arab lands or impose its religion (Zoroastrianism) and culture on the Arabs. Before the Arab conquests and the fall of the Sasanian Empire, the Arab threat to Iran was primarily limited to territorial raids. Peaceful relations between Arabs and Persians could not last indefinitely.

In the 620s, a conflict arose between the Persian emperors and the rulers of the Lakhmid state and a number of influential Arab tribes, including Banu Bakr. Persian intervention in Arab affairs aggravated the conflict. The Arab population of the Persian Empire sided with their fellow tribesmen and opened the way for the Islamic army during the Arab conquests.

---

[3] *Новосельцев А.П.* Государство Сасанидов. История Востока. Восток в Средние века. Т. II. Гл. I. М.: ИВ РАН, 2002. С. 23–34.

[4] *Заходер Б.Н.* История восточного средневековья (Халифат и Ближний Восток). Изд-во МГУ. М., 1944. С. 8–9, 13–14.

The Arab conquests coincided with a period of weakening of the Persian Empire as a result of prolonged wars with Byzantium and growing internal separatism among various socio-religious movements. The largest of these were the Mazdakite and Manichaean movements[5]. Some Persians who fought against the Arabs saw Islam as liberation from the oppressive hierarchical structure of Sasanian rule and therefore voluntarily embraced Islam.

The impact of the Arabisation and Islamisation of Iran on the nature of Arab-Iranian relations

One of the most important factors in Arab-Iranian relations was the Islamisation of Iran during the Arab conquests. The official Iranian view, and those who support it, holds that Iran voluntarily embraced Islam, recognising its supremacy over local religious doctrines. Its proponents emphasise the concepts of equality and justice in Islam, contrasting them with the complex administrative structure of the Sasanians. Others argue that the Arabs forcibly compelled Iran to embrace Islam, taking advantage of the circumstances that had developed.

The Islamisation of Iran fundamentally transformed the culture and self-identification of its population. Given the socially oriented nature of Islam, whose rules and principles regulated every aspect of individual and social life, the lives of Iranians underwent profound changes. This was reflected in art, architecture, painting and literature. Since Islam originated in the heart of Arabia and sanctified ancient Arab customs and traditions, and since Arabic is the language of the Qur'an, the Arabisation of conquered peoples inevitably accompanied their Islamisation. The Persians were no exception. The consequences of the Arabisation of Iran continue to be felt today, giving rise to heated debates in Iranian society over the Arabisation and Islamisation of Iran.

These changes resulted in a civilisational rupture in the development of Iranian society, its culture and its self-identification. a certain element of polarity emerged in the Iranian consciousness, consisting of two opposing foundations. One was rooted in the pre-Islamic cultural tradition.

5 Ibid.

The other developed on the basis of cultural transformations brought about by the Arab conquests. This dichotomy is particularly evident when the issue of self-identification becomes closely intertwined with the question of power. This duality affected Iran's foreign policy and its relations with the Arab countries. Iran's deep involvement in Arab politics became a reflection of the influence of Islam on the self-identification of Iranian society following the Islamic Revolution.

Iran was not completely Arabised and managed to preserve its language, culture and sense of national self-identification. Many pre-Islamic Iranian traditions and customs survived, as well as its cultural and spiritual values. As a result, Iran was able to exert a certain influence on the Arabs and contribute to the treasury of Islamic civilisation. Many Arab rulers adopted Iranian fiscal and administrative systems. Court etiquette and rules of conduct were also adopted by the Arabs[6]. Overall, Iran exerted a greater influence than Byzantium on the formation of systems of administrative and political governance among all Arab-Islamic dynasties. This was partly because the Arabs conquered individual Byzantine provinces but were unable to subdue its capital, Constantinople, whereas Iran was subjected to a total Arab conquest. Consequently, according to a number of Iranian historians, Islam became the principal heir to Sasanian cultural values. The Arabs carried Islam to other countries and, together with it, the legacy of the Sasanian Empire[7].

The consequences of the Arab conquests had a significant impact on Iran's relations with the Arab countries. Iranians continue to experience a historical trauma associated with the defeat of the Sasanian Empire, which was far more advanced in every respect than Arabia at the time of the emergence of Islam[8].

The nationalist and secularly oriented segment of Iranian society genuinely regrets what happened, whereas the clergy welcomes the Arab conquests that brought Islam to Iran. a number of Arab experts

---

6 *Бартольд В.В.* Работы по истории ислама и Арабского халифата. М., 1966. С. 174–188.

7 *Заходер Б.Н.* История восточного средневековья (Халифат и Ближний Восток). Изд-во МГУ. М., 1944. С. 8–9, 13–14.

8 *Al Zahed S.* Hatred of Arabs Deeply Rooted in Persians, Says Iranian Intellectual. Al Arabiya News. September 9, 2011. https://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/10/09/170927.html (accessed 02.01.2025).

describe these sentiments among Iranians as manifestations of "racism" and claims to "racial superiority". The resulting mutual distrust and suspicion are still sometimes expressed today in offensive language in the press and literature by some segments of the Arab and Iranian populations. Thus, Iranians resent the fact that Arabs call them *ajam*, meaning "silent", "speechless" or "illiterate". In fact, the word *ajam* in Arabic does have these meanings, but it is applied not only to Persians but also to other non-Arab peoples, foreigners, and those who do not know Arabic or have only a poor command of it. The term, however, is more characteristic of dialectal usage. Iranians are also offended by the fact that Arabs sometimes call them *Majus*, i.e. descendants of the "Magi" or "sorcerers", thereby implying their marginal position in the Islamic world.

Iranians resent the fact that Arabs apply an Arab essence to everything associated with Islam. Arabs accuse the Persians of exerting a negative influence on Islamic civilisation. They argue that the administrative practices introduced by the Persians from the Sasanian Empire undermined the original democratic spirit of Islam and transformed the structure of governance in the Caliphate along imperial lines. Other Arab clerics believe that the Persians deliberately introduced a number of "harmful" Zoroastrian principles into Islamic doctrine, thereby distorting the original meaning of the Qur'an and the faith in an attempt to undermine Islam. They also accuse Iranians of introducing unorthodox practices into Islam, such as Sufism[9].

With the spread of Shiism in Iran, ethnic and cultural contradictions between Arabs and Iranians intensified. Shiism became the dominant religion in Iran after the Safavid dynasty came to power in 1501[10]. However, even before the Safavids, other ruling dynasties had adopted certain Shiite practices. The Persians may have been more inclined towards Shiism as a means of distinguishing themselves from the Arabs, most of whom were Sunnis. Following the establishment of Safavid rule, Iran became one of the principal centres of Shiism[11]. The Safavids did much to develop Shiite

[9] *Al Bashir M.W.* Islamic Sufism: Origins, influences and rules. Kan Historical Periodicals 33. 2017. [In Arabic] https://platform.almanhal.com/Files/2/109110 (accessed 09.11.2024).

[10] *Заходер Б.Н.* История восточного средневековья (Халифат и Ближний Восток). М., 1944. С. 143–150.

[11] *Новосельцев А.П.* Государство Сефевидов в XVI – начале XVII в. История Востока. Восток на рубеже Средневековья и Нового времени XVI–XVIII вв. Т. III. Гл. 5. М.: ИВ РАН, 2000. С. 99–119.

shrines in Iraq, particularly in Karbala, Najaf and Samarra. As Iran became an alternative centre of Islam, rivalry between Iranians and Arabs intensified. The development of Shiism in Iran introduced a new dimension into Iran's interaction with Arabs and Turks in the form of sectarian hostility. Iran's desire to play an important role in the Islamic world while remaining religiously independent and autonomous could not but irritate the Arabs, who took pride in their unique role in Islam. Gradually, concepts such as "Arabism" and "Iranism", and Shiism and Sunnism, acquired an antagonistic character[12].

The role of nationalism in Arab-Iranian relations

After gaining national independence, the political systems of the Arab countries and Iran were dominated by secular and nationalist elements, which restrained the role of the sectarian factor. During this period, the role of religious factors in shaping Arab-Iranian relations diminished to some extent. Processes of reform and modernisation had a significant impact on the development of Arab-Iranian relations. By the 1920s, reform and modernisation had become actively debated among the so-called educated classes. It was representatives of this group who acted as a kind of driving force behind reform. The growth of nationalism as an accompanying product of modernisation in the Arab countries and Iran contributed to a deepening of their national and cultural rivalry and increased tensions in bilateral Arab-Iranian relations[13].

After the two world wars, religion, as the principal ideological instrument for governing the masses in the Arab countries of the Middle East, began to give way to nationalism, which at the turn of the 1950s was joined by secular ideas of socialism and communism. Modern forms of Arab and Iranian nationalism had many features in common. Nationalism was regarded as a defensive mechanism. Its defensive function was

---

[12] *Кулагина Л.М., Ахмедов В.М.* Основные направления политики ИРИ в арабских странах Ближнего Востока (1990-е — начало 2020-х гг.) М.: Институт востоковедения РАН, 2021. С. 210.

[13] *Кулагина Л.М.* Иран во второй половине XIX — начале XX в. Гл. 4. История Востока. Т. IV. Восток в Новое время (конец XVIII — начало XX в.). Кн. 2. М.: ИВ РАН, 2005. С. 70–83.

soon supplemented by an expansionist component. This applied both to pan-Arabism and Pan-Turkism, which sought to bring national minorities living in other countries back under a single national-state umbrella in the form of a federative or confederative state[14].

Iran was concerned about the rise of the Arab national movement, fearing Arab territorial claims and attempts to rename the Persian Gulf the Arabian Gulf. The Arabs laid claim to Khuzestan province, a number of islands in the Persian Gulf, and parts of the coastal areas of the Strait of Hormuz.

A number of independent Arab states faced a lack of historical experience in state-building. They sought self-determination through a struggle against the "foreign", the "other" and the "hostile". For many, Iran came to represent such a state[15]. The creation of a unified Arab nation-state was the dream of Arab nationalists. Although a single Arab state was never established, a sense of inter-Arab solidarity and collective action against the "other" was clearly felt. Over recent decades, numerous pan-Arab organisations and institutions have been established in the Arab countries. Iran was particularly concerned by the sense of collective Arab solidarity, which became especially apparent during the Iran-Iraq War.

The central concept of Iranian nationalism as a political ideology was that of the "Iranian lands" (*Iran-zamin*). Emphasis on the Persian character of Iranian nationalism could alienate national minorities from the authorities. Therefore, the authorities primarily emphasised "Iranism" as the basis of a unified Iranian nation. The Sasanian concept of *Eranshahr* (*Eran* = Iran) denoted the unity of land and empire[16].

The defensive nature of Iranian nationalism was manifested in Iran's relations with neighbouring states. Thus, during the rule of Reza Shah, the first shah of the Pahlavi dynasty (1926–1941), Iran made no territorial claims against its neighbours, whose territories were inhabited

---

[14] *Antonius G.* The Arab Awakening. The Story of the Arab National Movement. Safety Harbor, FI.: Simon Publications, 2001. P. 490.

[15] *Ayatollah Zanjani, Mohammad Tavakoli.* Usul-e Siyasat-e Khareji-ye Jomhuri-ye Eslami-ye Iran: Mabna-ye Unvan-e Diniyu (*Religious Principles as the Basis of the Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran*) // Majalla-ye Batruhj-e Kasli (Quarterly Research Journal). Tehran, 2012. Vol. 42. № 2. https://journals.ut.ac.ir/article_29898_0.html (accessed 12.08.2025).

[16] *Amanat A., Vejdani F.* Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in Historical Perspective. New York: Palgrave. McMillan, 2012. P. 292.



Reza Shah Pahlavi.
From open sources

by Persian-speaking populations, including Herat, which had been part of Iran until 1856. The disputed islands in the Persian Gulf may be considered an exception. Two of them, Greater and Lesser Tunbs, were transferred to Iran under an agreement with Britain whereby Iran relinquished its claims to Bahrain. The island of Abu Musa was placed under joint administrative control by the Emirate of Sharjah and Iran.

Iranian nationalism was "protective" in character. It opposed the threat of growing Arab and Turkish expansionism, which laid claim to parts of Iranian territory under the pretext of uniting Arab or Turkish lands. In practical terms, Iranian nationalism was primarily used as a foundation for political, economic and cultural reforms.

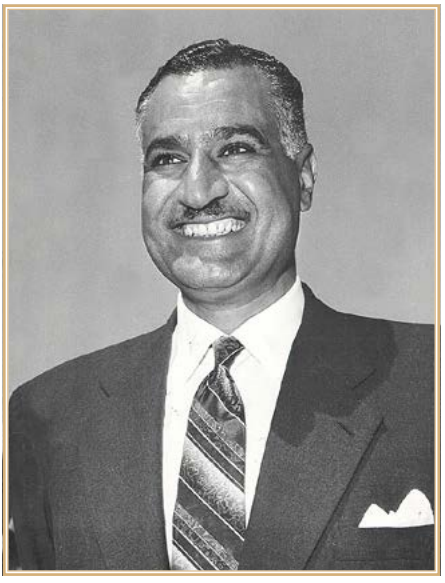
In the 1920s–1950s, a number of Iranian thinkers raised the issue of Pan-Iranism[17]. Pan-Iranism was intended to serve as a response to the growth of pan-Arab and Pan-Turkist sentiments in the region. It expressed Iran's desire to preserve its territorial integrity, which had been under constant threat during the first half of the twentieth century. Unlike the Arab countries, where pan-Arabism in the form of Ba'athism or Nasserism became state ideology, this did not occur in Iran. Differences

[17] *Федорова И.Е.* Элементы панираниз ма во внешней политике Ирана // Ислам на Ближнем и Среднем Востоке. 2015. № 9. С. 437–442.

between the Iranian and Arab national movements were partly related to Islam. For devout Iranian Muslims, it was difficult to make religiously offensive statements about Arabs. All Shiite imams were ethnically Arab. Moreover, many Iranians viewed themselves as followers of the Prophet Muhammad, which made them partly Arab. At the same time, Arabs were not concerned with such considerations. Many did not regard Iranians as true Muslims at all. At the same time, Islam often conflicted with Iranian nationalism. This dichotomy intensified in the 1960s, coinciding with processes of reform and modernisation, and reached its peak following the Islamic Revolution of 1978–1979.

The Iranian clergy opposed the national movement in Iran. The clergy believed that nationalists placed the identity, culture and loyalty of the Iranian nation at the centre, rather than Shiite Islam, which had served as the basis for the formation of the identity and culture of the Iranian nation since the Safavid dynasty. They rejected the nationalists' view that the Arab conquests and Islamisation of Iran had harmed the country, arguing instead that the Arab conquests had liberated Iranians from the oppressive Sasanian hierarchical system of governance. From their perspective, before the Arab conquests Iran had existed in a state of *jahiliyyah* (ignorance).

In fact, anti-nationalist ideas became the foundation of the ideology of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1978–1979. Even after the Islamic Revolution, clerics systematically attacked nationalists and pre-Islamic traditions. Interestingly, left-wing forces in Iran also opposed the nationalists. They contributed to the development of subnational traditions and promoted ethnic and linguistic particularism while condemning the imperial traditions of the Persians. This approach differed fundamentally from the practices of the Arab national movement, in which leftists and socialists became ardent supporters of pan-Arabism. In Iran, the ruling regime and clergy viewed Iran as a cultural and historical construct of Shiite Islam competing with orthodox Islam. In the Arab countries, Islam and ethnic nationalism reinforced one another. In Iran, by contrast, there was a dichotomy between nationalism and Islam. It gave Iranian foreign policy a dual and contradictory character. This became particularly apparent after attempts were made to put into practice the idea of exporting the Islamic Revolution to the Arab countries of the Middle



Gamal Abdel Nasser.
From open sources

East. The policy of exporting the Islamic Revolution provoked Arab opposition and led to a deterioration in Arab-Iranian relations[18].

Despite the clergy's attacks on Iran as a national, cultural and historical construct, Iranian nationalism retained a strong position. Iranian national symbolism survived and remains in existence to this day. Over the past three decades, particularly after the Iran-Iraq War, even clerics have been forced to recognise nationalism as a useful instrument in the struggle against Iran's opponents. At the same time, most Arab countries viewed Iran's claims to an "Islamic mission" with distrust, harboured suspicions regarding Iranian nationalism, and feared its political ambitions. Iran's Shiite particularism also reinforced Arab suspicions of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), despite the Iranian regime's attempts to give the revolution a pan-Islamic character so that it would not be portrayed as a Shiite phenomenon.

A certain "limitation" of Islamic ideology in terms of developing new state institutions and reforming existing ones forced the Iranian authorities to adopt a more tolerant attitude towards nationalism as a more

[18] *Hunter S.T.* Iran Divided: The Historical Roots of Iranian Debates on Identity. Culture and Governance in the 21st Century. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014. P. 272.



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.
From open sources

flexible instrument of reform. With the accession to power of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005–2013), the development of Iranian nationalism resumed. M. Ahmadinejad and his supporters held the view that Iran was not merely a territorial and ethnic construct but also a cultural and spiritual phenomenon and the product of an ancient civilisation. In other words, Iran had constituted a distinct civilisation long before Islam. These views left their mark on Iranian society and generated public demand for the development of Iranism and nationalism as the basis of Iranian identity and an alternative to Islamism. Contemporary Iran urgently needs such ideas in order to reach a dignified agreement with the West on the nuclear issue and reconsider its policy in a number of Arab countries in the Middle East. Thus, the possibility remained for the revival of nationalism as the foundation of a new political ideology in Iran.

The development of independent Arab states, theories of pan-Arabism and the Arab national movement, alongside Iranian nationalism, complicated Arab-Iranian relations. In the process of building new nation-states, a number of Arab countries, above all Iraq and the monarchies of the Persian Gulf, used the image of Iran as that of an alien entity from whose expansion they needed to defend themselves. The presence of enclaves of Iranian populations in these countries and Iran's cultural

influence on their subjects intensified these states' hostile attitude towards Iran[19].

Iran's attempts to preserve its position in the region and in the Persian Gulf were perceived by Arab countries as additional evidence of the hostile and expansionist nature of Iranian foreign policy. Under monarchical rule in Iran, the strengthening of nationalism coincided with a revival of historical rivalry with the Arabs. However, as the experience of the Islamic Republic demonstrated, limiting Islam through nationalism did not contribute to the development of friendly ties between Arabs and Iranians[20].

Thus, traditional ethnic and religious differences were transformed, under conditions of modernisation, into issues of national security and the preservation of state integrity.

The Israel factor

The nature of Iran-Israel relations was determined by a whole range of factors. The dynamics of bilateral ties depended on the evolution of domestic processes in Iran and Israel, the particular features of the formation and development of their political systems and state institutions, the nature of ruling elites, and the confessional and ethnic composition of local societies. Ideological orientations, demographic indicators, geographical parameters and the specific nature of the resource base were also of considerable importance. Israel and Iran were "outsiders" in the Arab world. In the 1940s–1960s, owing to a number of geographical factors and ethnic, confessional and cultural differences between the populations of Israel and Iran, Tehran did not regard Tel Aviv as a potential threat to its security. This circumstance contributed to the rapprochement of the two countries in the 1950s against the background of the powerful rise of Arab nationalism and pan-Arabism[21]. At this time, Israel adopted the so-called

---

19 *Halliday F.* Arabs and Persians beyond the Geopolitics of the Gulf // Cahiers d'Etudes sur la Mediterranee Orientale et le Monde Turco-Iranian. July, 1996. № 22.

20 *Khosrow G.* Siyasat va Qodrat dar Jomhuri-ye Eslami-ye Iran (*Power and Politics in the Islamic Republic of Iran*). Tehran, P. 620.

21 *Наумкин В.В.* Современный конвергентный арабский национализм в зеркале исторической памяти // Полис. Политические исследования. 2021. № 6. С. 42–59.

"peripheral" strategy in its foreign policy. As a result of a reassessment in Tel Aviv and Tehran of the objects and sources of national threats, normal relations and mutually beneficial cooperation developed between the two states. The establishment and development of relations between Iran and Israel exacerbated tensions between the Shah's government and the clergy and secular Iranian nationalists. The clergy sought to protect the holy sites in Palestine, while nationalist forces saw parallels between the Palestinian struggle and Iran's anti-colonial movement of 1951[22]. Both groups sharply criticised the Iranian government's policies concerning cooperation with Israel. Under these circumstances, the government of Mohammad Mosaddegh (1951–1953) pursued a policy that came to be known as "calculated ambivalence"[23]. On the eve of the 1953 coup, the position of left-wing forces in the army strengthened against the backdrop of the weakness of M. Mosaddegh's government. This led Tel Aviv to fear the possibility of a coup in Iran and the accession to power of left-wing forces led by military officers, as had occurred in Egypt and Iraq[24]. Tensions between the Shah's government and the secular and religious opposition became particularly pronounced during the country's modernisation processes in 1960–1970. Nationalist supporters of Iranian Prime Minister M. Mosaddegh were closely connected with Iran's Islamist forces. In the 1960s, these groups established close contacts with Arab nationalists and Islamists and enjoyed their support. They based their policy towards Israel on domestic considerations, namely hostility towards the Shah's regime and its pro-Western orientation. Their radical opposition to the Shah's government intensified after the overthrow of M. Mosaddegh. Later, the Islamist wing of the nationalist forces joined with left-wing and Islamist forces and sided with the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979[25].

Thus, domestic factors did not exert a decisive influence on the nature of Iran's state policy towards Israel, and vice versa. However, failure to

---

[22] *Bialer Uri.* The Iranian Connection in Israel's Foreign Policy, 1948–1951 // Middle East Journal. Spring 1985. № 39. P. 292–315.

[23] *Ramazani R.K.* Iran and the Arab-Israeli Conflict // Middle East Journal. Autumn 1978. № 32. P. 416.

[24] *Sohbani S.* The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations: 1948–1988. Westport. CT: Praeger, 1989. P. 77–84.

[25] *Ramazani R.K.* Iran and the Arab-Israeli Conflict // Middle East Journal. Autumn 1978. № 32. P. 415–420.

take them adequately into account in the foreign-policy decision-making process could have the effect of creating latent conflicts between Tel Aviv and Tehran. After the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, Tehran severed all relations with Israel and declared the need for the destruction of the Jewish state. Tehran's anti-Israeli position came at a high cost to the country and became a major cause of deteriorating relations with the United States and the West as a whole, followed by the imposition of sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran[26].

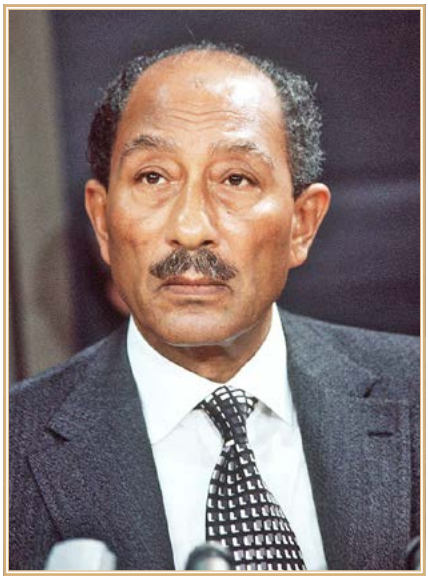
The nature of Iran-Israel interaction depended heavily on systemic factors in international relations in the Middle East. Inter-Arab relations, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue largely determined the dynamics of Iran-Israel relations[27]. Iran-Israel contacts activated the conflict potential inherent in Arab-Israeli relations and intensified distrust in Arab capitals towards the policies of Tel Aviv and Tehran in the Middle East. Iran's relations with Israel introduced new dimensions into perceptions of threats and security in the Arab-Muslim region[28]. Arab countries manipulated the Iranian and Israeli threat factors in order to balance their relations with one another, gain influence in the Arab environment or obtain material benefits. Following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Iran decided to balance its relations with Israel by developing ties with Arab regimes hostile to Israel. From Israel's perspective, the normalisation of relations between Iran and Iraq was a highly alarming signal and a challenge to the national security of the Jewish state. Tel Aviv feared that, having resolved the Kurdish issue, Saddam Hussein might become more active against Israel. Any normalisation of relations between Iran and the Arab countries was highly undesirable for Israel. Conflict and hostility in Arab-Iranian relations diverted the attention of Arab countries away from Israel and its political agenda in the region. Israel hoped that the Islamic Revolution in Iran might alter the positions of Arab countries towards the Jewish state. The revolutionary rhetoric of the IRI alarmed not

---

[26] *Bialer U.* The Iranian Connection in Israel's Foreign Policy, 1948–1951 // Middle East Journal. Spring 1985. № 39. P. 292–315.

[27] *Mathew M.W.* The Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate: British Imperial Imperatives // British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies. 2013. 40. № 3. P. 231–249.

[28] *Sohbani S.* The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations: 1948–1988. Westport. CT: Praeger, 1989. P. 77–84.



Anwar Sadat.
From open sources

only conservative Arab leaders but also Ba'athists in Iraq and Syria, who feared that it could destabilise their populations. At the same time, Tel Aviv hoped that the Iran-Iraq War (1981–1988) might induce Iran to turn towards Israel. During the first six years of the Iran-Iraq War, Israel assisted Iran by supplying it with weapons. Israel's expectations regarding the new Islamic regime in Iran proved mistaken. From the late 1980s, Israel began changing its Middle Eastern political strategy, placing greater emphasis on normalising relations with individual Arab states. This was facilitated to a considerable extent by the visit of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to Jerusalem and the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1978. The changing geopolitical situation in the Middle East at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries altered the attitudes of many Arab countries towards Israel[29].

In reality, Iran and Israel possessed rather limited political instruments for shaping relations within the Arab environment. The complicated history of Iran-Israel relations demonstrated a certain political "isolation" of Israel and Iran and their "confinement" between Arab ambitions and the rivalry of world powers in the Middle East. Hostility in

[29] *Bialer U.* The Iranian Connection in Israel's Foreign Policy, 1948–1951 // Middle East Journal. Spring 1985. № 39. P. 292–315.

Iran-Israel relations, just as agreement between them, did not automatically guarantee Tehran and Tel Aviv friendly relations with the Arab world. Interaction between Tel Aviv and Tehran was a persistent source of tension in the regional political environment. Theoretically, systemic factors at the regional and international levels could have contributed to improving relations between Iran and Israel. In practice, however, they led to an intensification of the Iran-Israel confrontation in the region[30].

The role of inter-Arab relations

Inter-Arab politics had a major influence on the issue of Arab-Iranian relations. The ideas of Arabism and Islam became firmly established in the national consciousness of Arabs and served as factors of political and national identification for the majority of the population of Arab countries[31]. At the same time, the distinctive character of the regional political environment left its mark on the foreign policies of Arab states.

The dominant ideologies in the Arab world during this period were Arab nationalism, pan-Arabism and Arab socialism. These ideological concepts were fundamentally hostile to Iran and threatened its territorial integrity. The nature of Iran's political system and its regional policy influenced the balance of forces and interests in the Arab world. From this perspective, Iran became a kind of target for Egypt. Gamal Abdel Nasser attempted to overthrow the Shah's regime in Iran and supported opposition forces in Iran, including Islamists. Iran accused Egypt of supporting the anti-Shah unrest of 1962[32].

In the 1950s, Syria did not play an independent role in regional politics. Damascus was an object of the struggle for influence between Cairo and Baghdad. The establishment of the United Arab Republic (UAR),

---

30 *Ахмедов В.М.* Эволюция ирано-израильских отношений в условиях кризиса в Сирии // Пути к миру и безопасности. 2023. № 1 (64). С. 147–166. DOI: 10.20542/2307-1494-2023-1-147-166.

31 *Noble Paul.* The Arab State System: Pressures, Constrains and Opportunities // Bahgat Korany and Ali al-Din Hillal Dessouki (eds). The Foreign Policies of Arab States. Boulder, Colo: Westview Pres, 1991. P. 49–102.

32 *Dawisha A.* Egypt in the Arab World: The Elements of Foreign Policy. London: Macmillan, 1976. P. 131, 234.

comprising Egypt and Syria, in 1958, caused concern in Tehran. Iran regarded this development as a change in the regional balance of power and an attempt by radical Arab regimes to seize control in the Arab East. The accession to power of the Ba'ath Party in the Syrian Arab Republic (SAR) in March 1963, together with its ideological and political positions, was viewed negatively in the Shah-era Iran. Thus, differences in approaches to Israel and the Palestinian issue, as well as inter-Arab alliances with Egypt and Iraq, exerted a certain influence on the Shah's Iran's policy towards Syria[33].

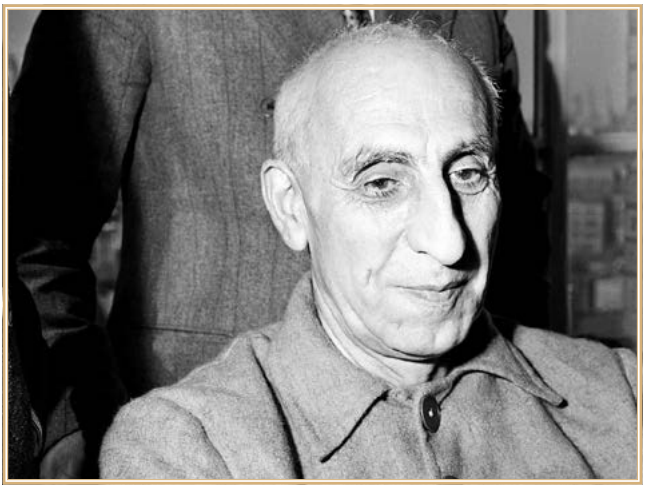
The influence of Arab nationalism on relations between Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (hereinafter KSA — *V.A.*) was highly specific. During the 1950s–1970s, the KSA was interested in relations with Iran as a means of countering pan-Arabism and Arab nationalism. However, with regard to the Persian Gulf and regional leadership, the KSA employed methods drawn from the political arsenal of Arab nationalists. Iran's official ideological doctrine during this period was based on secular ideas of modernisation. The state ideology of the KSA was based on Wahhabism, which represented one of the strictest schools of Sunni doctrine. Possibly under the influence of Wahhabi doctrine, Saudi leaders harboured particularly strong feelings towards Iran compared with other Arab countries. In practice, Saudi-Iranian relations were determined by the struggle for influence in the Persian Gulf and rivalry for leadership in the Islamic world[34].

Another factor influencing Iran-Arab relations was inter-Arab rivalry. Inter-Arab relations often assumed an acute character. The principal factors shaping inter-Arab contradictions were the struggle for leadership, ideological differences, attitudes towards Israel and Iran, the Palestinian issue, and the policies of the world powers. The rivalry among Egypt, Iraq and Syria for leadership in the Arab world was explained by the fact that these countries had historically been major cultural and political centres of the Arab world: Damascus was the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate, Iraq of the Abbasid Caliphate, and Cairo of the Fatimid Caliphate. Ideological differences were another source of disagreement between the Arabs and Iran. Until the early 1970s, the Arab countries

---

[33] *Picard E.* Lebanon: a Shattered Country, Myths and Realities of the Wars in Lebanon. New York: Holmes & Meir, 1996. P. 202.

[34] *Badeeb S.M.* Saudi-Iranian relations 1932–1983. London: Center for Arab and Iranian Studies, 1994. P. 164.



Mohammad Mosaddegh.
From open sources

experienced intense ideological rivalry between secular, nationalist and revolutionary regimes and conservative religious governments. This rivalry became known as the Arab "Cold War"[35]. Such sentiments affected bilateral relations between Iran and the Arab countries. Any attempts by Iran to secure its interests in the immediate Arab territorial periphery were regarded by one or another competing Arab country as a threat to its leadership ambitions.

Differences in the relations of Arab countries with the leading world powers constituted another factor in Iran-Arab disagreements. During the Cold War, Arab countries' relations with the USSR and the West largely determined their positions towards one another. Arab countries that maintained good relations with the USSR generally maintained normal bilateral ties with one another while simultaneously becoming objects of distrust and hostility on the part of US allies. Yet this in itself did not guarantee friendly bilateral relations. Examples include relations between Syria and Iraq and between Iraq and Egypt. Following the end of the Cold War, Arab countries attempted to adapt to US policy in the Middle East. This largely determined the nature of their future relations[36].

[35] *Kerr M.* The Arab Cold War. Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971. P. 174.

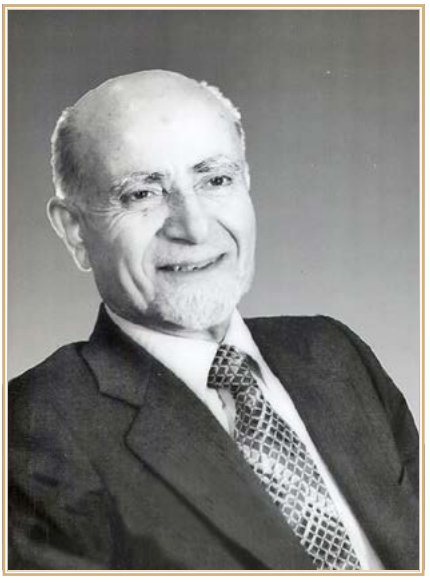
[36] *Stavridis J.* Are we entering a New Cold War? FP. February 17. 2016. https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/17/are-we-entering-a-new-cold-war-russia-europe/ (accessed 12.09.2025).

The imbalance of power among the Arab states gave Iran an opportunity to act as an arbiter in inter-Arab relations. Arab countries used the Iranian factor to constrain the ambitions of their rivals. Arab states often used the Iranian factor to balance their relations with one another, gain influence in the Arab environment or obtain material benefits. Egypt adopted such an approach in the 1950s, as did Syria until the beginning of the events of 2011. The use of Iran as a counterbalance to revolutionary Arab movements became apparent in Yemen after the 1962 coup and the outbreak of the civil war, which continued until 1968–1970[37].

The nature of inter-Arab relations affected Iran's security and its ties with the Arab countries. This was particularly evident in Iran's relations with the Persian Gulf states. It was in the Gulf that relations between the two sides were frequently tested from the perspective of security. In the 1960s, Egypt intervened in the events in Yemen, where it confronted Saudi Arabia. This seriously complicated Iran's security situation in the Persian Gulf. Iran was forced to intervene in inter-Arab disputes because it frequently became an object of their conflicts. Tehran could not effectively exploit inter-Arab divisions because no Arab state was willing to go all the way in an alliance with Iran. During the civil war, Iran supported Zaydi forces. Iran feared that Yemen would become an ally of Nasser's Egypt, which represented the antithesis of the Shah's Iran. Saudi Arabia viewed these steps by Tehran with suspicion. It clearly did not want Egypt and Iran to strengthen their military presence near its borders, fearing that this could destabilise the internal situation in the kingdom[38]. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Iran, Iraq and the KSA competed for dominance in the Persian Gulf. Under these circumstances, the smaller Arab monarchies of the Gulf regarded Iran as a counterbalance to the ambitions of these states. Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Libya, moreover, posed a threat to the Arabian monarchies with their patriarchal systems of rule. From this perspective, the Arab monarchies viewed Iran as a counterbalance to revolutionary tendencies

[37] *Guldescu S.* The Background to the Yemeni revolution of 1962 // Dalhousie Review 1965. 45. №. 1. P. 66–77. https://dashspace.library.dal.ca.bitstrem/handle/10222/59002/da./ (accessed 15.12.2025).

[38] *Katz M.N.* Yemeni Unity and Saudi Security // Middle East Policy. 1992. № 1. P. 117–135.



Mehdi Bazargan.
From open sources

emanating from the Arab East. However, they never supported Iran because of their sense of pan-Arab solidarity[39].

The policies of the world powers

Iran's contacts with European powers date back to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Alongside their desire to secure economic and trade advantages in Iran, European countries sought to use Iran as a counterbalance in their relations with the Ottoman Porte. From the early nineteenth century, Britain began to display heightened interest in Iran. The British were concerned about Russian activity in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus. The protection of British possessions in India became the priority of British policy in the Middle East.

After Britain established control over the Persian Gulf, Iran encountered British influence along its southern borders. In 1892, Britain signed a protectorate treaty with Bahrain, disregarding the Iranian suzerainty

[39] *Snyder S.* Saudi and UAE Boots on the Ground Intensify the Yemen War. The World, PRI, August 12, 2015. https://www.pri.org/stories/2015-08-12/saudi-and-uae-boots-ground-intensify-yemen-war (accessed 18.03.2025).



Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and US President Jimmy Carter.
From open sources

over the island previously recognised by the ruling Al Khalifa family. After the First World War, Britain pursued a systematic policy of removing Iranians from the island. In 1971, under pressure from Britain and the United States, Iran was forced to relinquish its rights to Bahrain in favour of the Arabs[40].

The disputed islands in the Persian Gulf constitute another legacy of British colonial rule. Before Bahrain gained independence and the UAE was established, Britain conducted negotiations with Iran over ownership of the disputed islands. Ultimately, their status remained unresolved. The question of the *thalweg* in the Shatt al-Arab is another contentious aspect of relations between the Arabs and Iran. It was partly created by the British on the basis of their political preferences and interests in the region.

The Second World War brought the United States to the forefront in the Middle East. The United States became the dominant power in the Persian Gulf, placing its main emphasis on the KSA on the basis of the country's geography and natural resources. Significantly, the United States never had comparable relations with Iran. Its policy towards Iran was instrumental in nature. The US administration believed that, in order to preserve its

[40] *Wilson T.A.* The Persian Gulf: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century. 1928, reprinted New York: Hyperion Press, 1981. P. 315.

position in the region, the United States should distance itself from Iran. Following an exchange of visits between the Shah of Iran and US President Jimmy Carter in November–December 1977, many began to believe that the United States had "abandoned" the Shah. By refusing to support the Shah, the United States effectively acted as a catalyst for the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The United States may not have expected Islamists to come to power in Iran in place of a secular and liberal ruler such as M. Mosaddegh[41]. Immediately after the revolution, it appeared that the Americans' calculations had proved correct. The first government in Tehran after the Shah was formed by politicians of a pro-Mosaddegh type associated with the Iran Freedom Movement, headed by Mehdi Bazargan. However, the situation soon changed dramatically. Less than a year later, Bazargan's government resigned. The hostage crisis, which could only be resolved by January 1981, seriously strained relations between the two countries for many years and benefited the Arab regimes aligned with the United States. The Islamic Revolution changed the regional balance of power and posed a challenge to the Arab regimes. Iran's relations with the Arab world deteriorated for a long period and acquired a conflictual character. The Iran-Iraq War of 1980–1988 is a case in point; in practice, it became an Arab-Iranian war[42].

Thus, Iran's policy towards the Arab countries was influenced by a whole group of factors: the bipolar nature of the international political system, the geopolitical significance of the Middle East to the United States and its deep involvement in the region's social and political processes, and the weakness of regional states and their dependence on the policies of the great powers. In practice, this led to an intensification of the Arab-Iranian confrontation in the region.

Conclusion

The historical legacy of Arab-Iranian relations in a predominantly Sunni region intensified the sense of vulnerability and threat, which was

41 *Dilip H.* The Longest War: Iran-Iraq Military Conflict. New York: Routledge, 1991. P. 364.

42 *Наумкин В.В., Кузнецов В.А.* Исламский мир и исламские организации в современной мирополитической системе // Вестник Московского университета. Серия 12: Политические науки. 2013. № 4. С. 30–56.

conceptually institutionalised in the form of interventionist tendencies in policy. Iran was constantly concerned with maintaining a favourable balance of power that would exclude threats to its national security and sovereignty from any international actor in the Middle East.

The Iran-Israel War of 2025 revealed a number of new trends in the development of the system of international relations in the Middle East. It created preconditions for changes in the policies of regional states, including the nature of Arab-Iranian relations. The war demonstrated that the historical legacy of Arab-Iranian relations, confessional and ethnic differences, and the notorious Sunni-Shiite divisions largely serve as instruments for the political manipulation of poorly educated Arab and Iranian masses in the interests of implementing the political plans of world powers in the Middle East. At present, these instruments are poorly suited to creating adequate conditions for the Arab countries and Iran to enter the emerging new world order in the Middle East.

Israel's growing claims to a position of regional leadership are generating new concerns among the Arab states of the Persian Gulf. Israel's aspiration to impose a unipolar "New Middle East" places the GCC countries before a difficult choice. How long will the political strategy of the Arab monarchies be able to balance on the borderline between the questionable benefits of normalising relations with Israel and containing its aspirations for regional dominance? Reliance on the United States in the long term no longer guarantees security, while a policy of neutrality does not guarantee stability.

The Iran-Israel War exposed dangerous miscalculations and shortcomings in the security systems of the GCC countries and the vulnerability of Iran's regional strategy, particularly with regard to the practical benefits of maintaining the "Axis of Islamic Resistance" project over the long term. As a result, the Arab monarchies are beginning to reassess their course towards normalising relations with Israel and are cautiously moving closer to Tehran.

The principal differences between Iran and the GCC countries today focus on the challenge of reconciling Iran's security concerns with the Arab monarchies' course towards building an economically centred model of relations among the states of the Persian Gulf. Israel is committed to confrontation regardless of any economic shocks. Consequently, the KSA is increasingly concluding that an alliance with Tel Aviv is incompatible with the kingdom's long-term political agenda.

The weakening of Iran's position and the military capabilities of the Islamic resistance forces is forcing Iran to reconsider its previous strategy under conditions of international pressure and a partial loss of prestige in the region. Most Middle Eastern states have grown weary of unending armed confrontation and are opting for new instruments of economic cooperation and technological integration. The IRI's exclusive reliance on military force is regarded by the regional powers as a factor of danger and risk. How long can Tehran maintain a balance between its political and ideological ambitions and the domestic political challenge? Growing economic problems and an increasingly active protest movement may sooner or later lead to a change of regime in the country.

At the same time, regardless of how difficult the process of establishing new relations between Iran and the Arab countries may be, Iran's Arab prospects in the region will depend to a considerable extent on whether Tehran succeeds in reaching an international agreement on the nuclear issue. Following the war of 2025–2026, this issue is becoming not merely a matter of political prestige but, above all, a condition for the survival of Iranian statehood.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare no relevant conflict of interests.

References

1. Akhmedov V. The evolution of IranIsrael relations amid the Syrian crisis. *Pathways to Peace and Security*. 2023;1(64):147–166. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.20542/2307149420231147166
2. D'yakonov I.M. The Achaemenid Empire. In: *Istoriya Vostoka. Vol. I. Vostok v drevnosti*. Moscow: Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS; 2002. p. 290–311. URL: https://book.ivran.ru/f/istoriya-vostoka-tom-1-vostok-v-drevnosti-2002.pdf?ysclid=mrl00s5qm7241335115 (in Russ.).
3. Kulagina L.M., Akhmedov V.M. *Main directions of Iran's policy in the Arab countries of the Middle East (1990s — early 2020s)*. Moscow:

Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS; 2021. p. 210. https://elibrary.ru/dsuqia (in Russ.).

4. Kulagina L.M. Iran in the second half of the 19th – early 20th century. In: *Istoriya Vostoka. Vol. IV. Vostok v novoe vremya (late 18th – early 20th century). Book 2.* Moscow: Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS; 2005. p. 70–83. URL: https://book.ivran.ru/f/istoriya-vostoka-tom-4-vostok-v-novoe-vremya-kn2-2005.pdf?ysclid=mrl0by5xep477691508 (in Russ.).
5. Novosel'tsev A.P. The Sasanian State. In: *Istoriya Vostoka. Vol. II. Vostok v srednie veka.* Moscow: Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS; 2002. p. 23–33. URL: https://book.ivran.ru/f/istoriya-vostoka-tom-2-vostok-v-srednie-veka-2002.pdf?ysclid=mrl0gn6819684649276 (in Russ.).
6. Novosel'tsev A.P. The Safavid State in the 16th – early 17th century. In: *Istoriya Vostoka. Vol. III. Vostok na rubezhe srednevekov'ya i novogo vremeni (16th–18th centuries).* Moscow: Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS; 2000. p. 99–119. URL: https://book.ivran.ru/f/istoriya-vostoka-tom-3-vostok-na-rubezhe-srednevekovya-i-novogo-vremeni-2000.pdf?ysclid=mrl13xepu0137973424 (in Russ.).
7. Naumkin V.V. Contemporary convergent Arab nationalism in the mirror of historical memory. *Polis. Political Studies.* 2021;(6):42–59. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.17976/jpps/2021.06.04
8. Naumkin V.V., Kuznetsov V.A. The Islamic world and Islamic organizations in the modern world political system. *Moscow University Bulletin. Series 12: Political Science.* 2013;(4):30–56. https://elibrary.ru/rdwyrb (in Russ.).
9. Fedorova I.E. Elements of PanIranism in Iran's foreign policy. *Islam in the Near and Middle East.* 2015;(9):437–442. https://elibrary.ru/vduwan (in Russ.).
10. Al Bashir M.W. Islamic Sufism: Origins, influences and rules. *Kan Historical Periodicals.*2017;(33). (in Arab.). https://platform.almanhal.com/Files/2/109110; https://kanhistorique.blogspot.com/
11. Amanat A., Vejdani F. Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in Historical Perspective. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137013408
12. Antonius G. The Arab Awakening. The Story of the Arab National Movement. Safety Harbor, FL: Simon Publications; 2001. P. 490. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315828718

13. Bialer Uri. The Iranian Connection in Israel's Foreign Policy, 1948-1951. *Middle East Journal*. 1985;39(2):292–315. URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/4327068
14. Badeeb S. M. Saudi-Iranian relations 1932–1983. London: Center for Arab and Iranian Studies, 1994. P. 164.
15. Hunter S.T. Divided I. The Historical Roots of Iranian Debates on Identity. In: Culture and Governance in the 21st Century. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield; 2014. P. 272. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743815001762
16. Halliday F. Arabs and Persians beyond the Geopolitics of the Gulf. *Cahiers d'Etudes sur la M diterran e Orientale et le Monde TurcoIranien*. 1996;(22). 18 p. https://doi.org/10.4000/cemoti.143
17. Mathew M.W. The Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate: British Imperial Imperatives. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. 2013;40(3):231249. https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2013.791133
18. Noble P. The Arab State System: Pressures, Constraints and Opportunities. In: The Foreign Policies of Arab States. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 1991;49102. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429310966
19. Picard E. Lebanon: a Shattered Country, Myths and Realities of the Wars in Lebanon. New York: Holmes & Meier; 1996. P. 202.
20. Badeeb S.M. SaudiIranian Relations 19321983. London: Center for Arab and Iranian Studies; 1994;164. URL: https://openlibrary.org/books/OL22246459M/Lebanon_a_shattered_country
21. Dilip H. The Longest War: IranIraq Military Conflict. New York: Routledge; 1991;364. URL: https://www.routledge.com/The-Longest-War-The-Iran-Iraq-Military-Conflict/Hiro/p/book/9780415904070
22. Katz M.N. Yemeni Unity and Saudi Security. *Middle East Policy*. 1992;1(1):117135.URL:https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1475-4967.1992.TB00025.X
23. Аятолла Занджани, Мохаммад Таваколи. Усуль-сиясат-харидж-ий-джамхурие-иран-исламий-мабнаи-унван-бихи-динийю (Религиозные принципы как основа внешней политики Исламской Республики Иран) // Маджалла Батрухджи касли (Ежеквартальный исследовательский журнал). Тегеран, 2012;42:2. https://journals.ut.ac.ir/article_29898_0.html. (In pers.)

24. Хосрой Г. Сиясат-ве-ходрат-дар-джамхори-эслами-иран (Власть и политика в исламской республике Иран). Тегеран, б.г. С. 620. На перс. яз.

Vladimir M. Akhmedov

C.Sc. (History),
Senior Research Fellow Assistant Professor Institute
of Oriental Studies Russian Academy of Sciences,
SPIN-код: 2570-6004,
AuthorID: 681793,
ORCID: 0000-0002-4952-2964

Alexander V. Abrosimov

graduate student,
the research laboratory assistant at the Center forthe
Study of the Near and Middle East of the Institute
of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences,
SPIN-код: 3508-1855,
AuthorID: 1279309,
ORCID: 0009-0006-7732-4849

Received 17.05.2026
Revised 25.06.2026
Accepted 27.07.2026

DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.58.006
Original paper

Andrey V. Ganin

Institute of Slavic Studies Russian Academy of Sciences,
Moscow, Russian Federation,
E-mail: andrey_ganin@mail.ru

"I Cannot Achieve Not Only Release, but Even Simple Justice..."

The Case of K.I. Zhikhor and the Military Agent Section of the All-Russian General Staff of the Armed Forces. 1918

Abstract

This article is devoted to the previously unknown case of the Military Agent Section of the All-Russian General Staff of the Armed Forces, within the framework of which an entire group of individuals, including several prominent military specialists headed by former Colonel K.I. Zhikhor, was arrested in Moscow in September 1918. The material demonstrates the specific features of the repressive practices employed by the Cheka against former officers during the Russian Civil War. While most of those involved in the case were soon released, K.I. Zhikhor himself remained imprisoned throughout the entire Civil War period and was ultimately forced to change his military profession, becoming an engineer. Based on documents from the Central Archive of the Federal Security Service of Russia and other archives, introduced into scholarly circulation for the first time, the article analyzes the causes, course, and consequences of the case. In addition, the article traces in detail the fate of the principal

© Andrey V. Ganin, 2026

defendant, K.I. Zhikhor, a loyal Soviet military specialist who continued to face persecution for political reasons in subsequent years, which ultimately led to his execution.

Keywords:
Russian Civil War; Red Army; Military specialists; Cheka (VChK); White underground; Repressive practices; K.I. Zhikhor

For citation:
Andrey V. Ganin "I Cannot Achieve Not Only Release, but Even Simple Justice..." The Case of K.I. Zhikhor and the Military Agent Department of the All-Russian General Staff of the Armed Forces. 1918. The Historical Reporter. 2026. Vol. 60. P. 318–377. DOI: 10.35549/HR.2026.2026.58.006

Soviet repressive practices directed against military specialists of the Red Army during the Civil War period– and, more broadly, against former officers– remain insufficiently studied, while historiographical layers have at times only complicated the understanding of the true course of events[1]. Meanwhile, the surviving archival materials make it possible to investigate these subjects in considerable depth, although the sources relating to this issue

[1] In particular, the commentators of the document collection *V.I. Lenin and the Cheka* claimed that among the arrested "General Staff personnel", after V.I. Lenin's intervention, all were released for lack of evidence except L.V. Kvitnitsky and K.I. Zhikhor, whose criminal activity was allegedly proven (*В.И. Ленин и ВЧК* (1917–1922 гг.): *Сб. документов.* М., 1975. С. 140). None of this corresponds to reality. Zhikhor's criminal activity was never proven; not all were released; and among those released, some in fact belonged to the White underground. The hero of the First World War, former Colonel L.V. Kvitnitsky, was in fact executed, a fact Soviet editors preferred to conceal.



K. I. Zhikhor.
From open sources

possess their own specific characteristics. In order to understand the causes, course, and consequences of the case discussed below, extensive work in the archives of Moscow and Yalutorovsk was required, as well as the painstaking collection, literally piece by piece, of documents connected with this story.

Arrests

"On September 5, 1918, at about five o'clock in the afternoon, while approaching my house on Povarskaya Street, I saw that ten or twelve soldiers entering it, evidently for the purpose of conducting a search. I entered after them, presented my documents, and stated my name. Indeed, it was a detachment of the Cheka which, after carrying out a search and confiscating all current official papers, arrested me and took me to the Cheka headquarters, from where, after an initial interrogation, I was transferred to Butyrka Prison, completely unaware of the reason for my arrest", wrote the arrested Head of the Military Agent Section of the Military Statistical Department of the All-Russian General Staff of the Armed Forces (ARGS) and former Colonel Konstantin Ivanovich Zhikhor to the

Chairman of the Special Section of the Cheka, M.S. Kedrov, on April 9, 1919[2].

The author of this appeal could not have imagined that, as a result of his arrest, he would spend the entire Civil War in detention and would even be forced to change his profession. Let us attempt to determine the reasons for such punishment within the context of the repressive policies and practices of that time.

In this case, the Chekists arrested not only Zhikhor himself. The entire Military Agent Section of the ARGS, responsible for foreign military intelligence, was imprisoned: first the head, K.I. Zhikhor, and the following day his assistant V.A. Ivanovsky and the translator P.S. Arapov. However, by the autumn of 1918, under the conditions of the blockade of Soviet Russia, there could no longer be any talk of intensive international military contacts, and therefore the loss of the Section passed almost unnoticed.

Zhikhor's Pre-Revolutionary Biography

K.I. Zhikhor was born on May 20, 1882, in Elisavetgrad, Kherson Governorate. The difficult conditions of Soviet life taught him the art of adaptation, and therefore in some Soviet questionnaires he identified himself as a Great Russian[3], in others as a Ukrainian, a member of the *raznochintsy* class[4] or of the petty bourgeoisie[5], and the son of a singing and music teacher[6]. In a questionnaire completed while imprisoned in a concentration camp in 1919, he claimed to possess Ukrainian citizenship and described his native language as "Russian-Ukrainian"[7].

---

2 Центральный архив Федеральной службы безопасности России (ЦА ФСБ). Д. Р-49135. Л. 247–247 об.

3 Центральный государственный архив Московской области (ЦГАМО). Ф. 6336. Оп. 1. Д. 3. Л. 18.

4 Государственный архив Российской Федерации (ГА РФ). Ф. Р-4042. Оп. 15. Д. 695. Л. 44; ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 272.

5 ГА РФ. Ф. 10035. Оп. 1. Д. П-41957. Л. 4 об.; Центральный государственный архив Кировской области (ЦГАКО). Ф. П-6799. Оп. 8. Д. СУ-9894. Т. 1. Л. 7.

6 ГА РФ. Ф. 10035. Оп. 1. Д. П-41957. Л. 9; ЦГАКО. Ф. П-6799. Оп. 8. Д. СУ-9894. Т. 1. Л. 13.

7 ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 272.



K. I. Zhikhor, 1909. *F. A. Gushchin Collection. Published in the original quality for the first time*

At the same time, an NKVD memorandum prepared for his arrest in 1935 stated that he came from the nobility[8], while in one document he was even described as a former Polish general[9]. In reality, however, as service records demonstrate, he was the son of a collegiate councilor of the Kherson Governorate and belonged to the hereditary nobility[10]. During an interrogation on September 25, 1918, he stated that "the award bestowed upon me by the former government of the Order of St. Vladimir, 3rd class, granted me hereditary nobility"[11]. In his autobiography of 1928, he wrote modestly about his parents: "My father was an employee of the Treasury Chamber, my mother was the daughter of an artist/art teacher"[12]. The officer knew German, French, and English, though he was most fluent in French. He also had a younger brother, Mikhail (November 21, 1884–?), a cavalry captain of the 17th Dragoon Nizhny Novgorod Regiment of His Majesty stationed

8 ГА РФ. Ф. 10035. Оп. 1. Д. П-41957. Л. 1.
9 ГА РФ. Ф. Р-4042. Оп. 15. Д. 695. Л. 11 об.
10 ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 172, 194.
11 Ibid. Л. 221.
12 ГА РФ. Ф. А-390. Оп. 24. Д. 5589. Л. 8.

in Tiflis[13]. Mikhail graduated from the junior class of the accelerated first-course program of the Imperial Nicholas Military Academy and during the Civil War served in the White Don Army and in the Armed Forces of South Russia, completing his service with the rank of lieutenant colonel[14]. Since such family ties could entail serious difficulties in Soviet times, K.I. Zhikhor wrote in Soviet questionnaires that he had no contact with his brother.

In 1900, after graduating from the Don Emperor Alexander III Cadet Corps (although some Soviet documents contain fictitious claims that he graduated from a gymnasium), K.I. Zhikhor entered the Nicholas Engineering School in St. Petersburg, from which he graduated in 1903. During the Soviet period he attempted to conceal his officer service— apparently in order to avoid questions regarding his 1918 arrest— and claimed that in the summer of 1903 he had worked as an intern for the Batignolles company in St. Petersburg during the construction of the Kamenny Island Bridge across the Neva, which supposedly became his first engineering experience, and that in 1904—1905 he taught construction engineering ("Building Components— Materials and Construction Work") at technical courses in Odessa. In reality, however, from 1903 to 1906 Konstantin Ivanovich served in the 11th Sapper Battalion of Emperor Nicholas I in Odessa.

In 1906, Zhikhor entered the Nicholas Academy of the General Staff, from which he graduated in 1909 (Zhikhor's later Soviet-era claims that he had also graduated from the Military Engineering Academy were false). During the Soviet period, he asserted that he had subsequently left the army because of illness and worked in civilian institutions, but this too was untrue. In his autobiography of 1928, for example, he stated that from 1908 to 1914 he had worked as assistant director for technical affairs at the Schroeter & Co. office in Odessa and allegedly also taught at construction courses[15]. In reality, he spent two years commanding a company of the 59th Lublin Infantry Regiment in fulfillment of the service qualification requirement, served as Senior

[13] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 272.

[14] See: Нижегородские драгуны на фронтах Великой войны, 1914—1918: Воспоминания. М., 2014. С. 274, 281; *Волков С.В.* Генералы и штаб-офицеры русской армии. Опыт мартиролога. М., 2012. Т. 1. С. 430.

[15] ГА РФ. Ф. 10035. Оп. 1. Д. П-41957. Л. 11.

Adjutant of a divisional staff, and temporarily performed the duties of Chief of Staff of the 14th Infantry Division, with which he departed for the front of the First World War.

Concerning his wartime service, Zhikhor wrote that in 1914–1915 he served on the Southwestern Front at the headquarters of the 14th Infantry Division. During the battles near Mikołajów and Gródek on August 27–30, 1914, Senior Adjutant Zhikhor distinguished himself, for which he was awarded the St. George Golden Weapon. On August 28, after the death of the division's Chief of Staff, he assumed that position and "worked bravely and selflessly, repeatedly exposing his life to evident danger, and through his advice and transmission of the Division Commander's orders contributed to the accomplishment of the mission assigned to the division"[16].

In 1915–1916, Zhikhor served in Petrograd in rear-area positions and in the Main Directorate of the General Staff (MDGS) as assistant clerk and clerk due to illness[17]. Many could only envy such a service–meetings with foreign military representatives, banquets, decorations. The 1918 investigative file preserved a diploma awarding Zhikhor the Legion of Honour, dated June 16, 1916[18]. By the age of thirty-five, the officer had accumulated quite a collection of foreign decorations, which also included the British Commander's Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, the French Officer's Cross of the Order of Academic Palms, and the Serbian Order of St. Sava, 3rd class.

During interrogation on the day of his arrest, September 5, 1918, conducted by the Head of the Counter-Revolution Department of the Cheka, the future prominent Soviet statesman N.A. Skrypnik, Zhikhor testified: "During the February Revolution, I was arrested together with other officers living in the Astoria H[otel] and sent to the St[ate] Duma, but after about four days I was released. During the October Revolution, I was also arrested in the same hotel, but after about three days I was released and resumed my work"[19]. Zhikhor completed his service in the old army with the rank of colonel.

---

16 Supreme Order of 24 February 1915.

17 ГА РФ. Ф. А-390. Оп. 24. Д. 5589. Л. 8.

18 ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 169.

19 Ibid. Л. 216.

In the opinion of General V.V. Marushevsky, the last Chief of the General Staff of Imperial Russia, Zhikhor was entirely unsuited for interaction with foreign missions. Marushevsky recalled: "I became acquainted with him in connection with the matter of my appointment to Italy. From the very first meeting he struck me by his lack of manners, his appearance, and even his rudeness. How such a staff officer could be appointed to a position involving communication with all foreign missions is beyond me. Most likely, the majority of the best General Staff officers were at the front, and only due to a lack of choice did they have to make do with Zhikhor. In addition to these qualities, he also manipulated the clerical environment through the crudest demagogic methods. Needless to say, I intended to change all this at the earliest opportunity"[20].

Zhikhor in the Red Army

Since the employees of the MDGS remained in service at the beginning of 1918, Zhikhor entered the Red Army almost naturally, becoming a military specialist (*voenspets*). In the spring of 1918, the MDGS moved from Petrograd to Moscow. At that time Zhikhor was designated as a representative of the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs assigned to maintain liaison with foreign military missions[21]. In May 1918, the MDGS was transformed into the All-Russian General Staff (ARGS), and the personnel transferred to the new institution. In his autobiography of 1928, Zhikhor somewhat distorted his service in the Red Army, claiming that he had served in the ARGS from 1917 to 1919 as head of a section, although the ARGS did not yet exist in 1917, and by 1919 the military specialist was already under arrest.

In the ARGS, Zhikhor occupied the post of Chief of the Military Agent Section of the Military Statistical Department of the Operations Directorate and, as before the revolution, maintained contacts with foreign military representatives. During interrogation on September 5, 1918, he explained how and why perceptions of foreign military

[20] Croatian State Archive. HR-HAD-810. K. 1; *Ганин А.В.* «Два месяца на посту начальника Генерального штаба (сентябрь – октябрь 1917 г.)» генерала В.В. Марушевского // Исторический вестник. 2024. № 49. С. 280–281.

[21] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 143.



K. I. Zhikhor (third from left) and foreign military agents
at the St. George's Day celebration.
Central Archive of the Federal Security Service

representatives in Soviet Russia changed during 1918: "After arriving in Moscow, I was instructed by L.D. Trotsky to provide information to foreign military representatives– the French, Italians, and English. I was not instructed to inform military representatives of other states. Subsequently a Japanese agent arrived. Before Trotsky's order prohibiting all relations with foreigners was published (about a month and a half ago), I believed that the Japanese also belonged to the general circle of 'allied' representatives, as indicated in my mandate. After the publication of the order, we presented a report at which Trotsky confirmed the prohibition. In any case, I could have provided little information, since I myself was not informed.

After the first meeting (held under the chairmanship of Comrade [N.I.] Podvoisky in April), it became clear that the participation of foreigners in discussing organizational questions was of little use. At that

time M.D. Bonch-Bruevich instructed me not to provide foreign representatives with any numerical data or similar information"[22].

At first, Zhikhor personally visited the foreign military representatives. He went three times to see the French mission at the house of I.A. Mantashev near Petrovsky Park, twice visited the British at the Elite Hotel, and several times called on the Italians at 18 Pokrovsky Boulevard. Japanese attaché Lieutenant Colonel K. Furuya and others also visited Zhikhor himself. Around Easter, Zhikhor communicated with foreigners aboard the train of Commissar N.I. Podvoisky. The information provided to the foreigners was on several occasions censored by the Military Head of the Supreme Military Council, former General M.D. Bonch-Bruevich.

In the testimony given in 1935, Zhikhor noted: "I maintained official contacts with the dep[uty] military attachés of the following countries: France, the United States, England, Japan, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. After the October Revolution, while serving as Chief of the Stat[istical] Dep[artment] of the All-Russian Gen[eral] Staff, I met in the course of my duties with the Italian m[ilitary] attaché Mr. P. Ruggeri-Laderchi; I do not remember the m[ilitary] attachés of other states"[23].

By the summer of 1918, seventeen Russian military agents abroad were officially recognized, assisted by five deputies. In addition, four representatives operated at the headquarters of Great Britain, France, the United States of America, and Italy. Under the authority of the military agents served seventy-seven servicemen and five copyists. From January 1, 1918 onward, none of these individuals had received pay. On June 24, 1918, the Military Statistical Department of the Operations Directorate of the ARGS raised the issue of salaries, but the People's Commissar for Military Affairs, L.D. Trotsky, imposed a strict resolution on the corresponding document: "In view of the fact that, according to information received by me, the military agents are spending funds remaining in foreign banks from allocations of former governments and, without providing any reports, are pursuing policies hostile to Soviet power, all of them are to be dismissed (except those concerning whom special orders shall be issued)"[24]. After this, Zhikhor's workload diminished significantly.

---

[22] Ibid. Л. 216–216 об.

[23] ГА РФ. Ф. 10035. Оп. 1. Д. П-41957. Л. 11.

[24] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 242.

At that time, the thirty-six-year-old Zhikhor led the life of a bachelor (during interrogation in September 1918 he described himself as unmarried and alone[25]); he would start a family only later. His investigative file preserved a letter addressed to Mesdames Stucken and Take (names translated from Russian – *Editor*) (care of Sidorova, 17 Leontyevsky Lane[26]), dated April 5, 1918: "I believe that you are very pretty and interesting young ladies, and since you are both cheerful and lively, I should like to marry both of you at once, but unfortunately you would probably not agree to this. I am an officer of the General Staff, good-looking, decorated with eleven Russian and foreign orders, recently arrived in Moscow owing to the evacuation of the Main Directorate of the General Staff, where I presently serve. I have a well-furnished apartment, which I hope you will someday visit, notifying me beforehand by telephone 35–51, in the evening when I am usually at home. Unfortunately, I cannot send you a photograph at present, since I am still wearing civilian clothes, and my military belongings have not yet arrived from Petrograd. I am very handsome and have no doubt that you will like me, just as I already like both of you in absentia. I regret that I cannot kiss you or your hands, but if you marry me this will undoubtedly happen, although I warn you in advance that I do not like prolonged kissing– just a little peck and nothing more. And what about you? In any case, we shall discuss that later. If you wish, write me a few words at the following address: Prechistenka, Eropkinsky Lane 7, apartment 4, to Colonel Konstantin Ivanovich Zhikhor, or call me at telephone no. 35–51, preferably in the evening between six and seven.

For now, adieu.

Your admirer in absentia,

K. Zhikhor"[27].

The correspondence concerned an acquaintance initiated through an advertisement in a matrimonial newspaper[28].

25 Ibid. Л. 216.

26 Ibid. Л. 154а.

27 Ibid. Л. 152–153 об.

28 Ibid. Л. 217 об.



Colonel K. I. Zhikhor with foreign representatives during a visit to the Petrograd Cabinet of Forensic Examination, 1916. *Central Archive of the Federal Security Service. Published for the first time*

Before his arrest, Zhikhor had already moved to another address in Moscow— 22 Povarskaya Street, apartment 2 (he also worked there in apartment 5[29])— but as a result of the arrest the military specialist lost this apartment[30]. His savings amounted to 3,318 rubles in a savings account and a monthly salary of 300 rubles[31]. Konstantin Ivanovich was a member of the Economic Society of the Former Main Directorates of the War Ministry. In the summer of 1918, he suffered from catarrh of the upper lobe of the right lung, malnutrition, and had a scar on his left

[29] Российский государственный военный архив (РГВА). Ф. 11. Оп. 4. Д. 98. Л. 1, 3.

[30] ГА РФ. Ф. 10035. Оп. 1. Д. П-41957. Л. 14.

[31] ГА РФ. Ф. Р-4042. Оп. 15. Д. 695. Л. 44.

thigh, as a result of which in August 1918 he received a medical certificate granting him the right to resign from the army[32].

The obtaining of such a certificate was probably connected less with medical problems than with a desire to leave the ranks of the Red Army. The case file contains blank passes and a pass issued by the Ukrainian General Consulate in Moscow, two of which are dated August 8 and 24, 1918[33]. During interrogation, Zhikhor claimed that these documents belonged not to him but to his acquaintance N.N. Vinogradov. Indeed, on one of the passes this surname can barely be deciphered. However, Zhikhor admitted that he himself had visited the Ukrainian consulate in order to find out how to obtain citizenship[34]. "I already had a medical certificate and wished to resign", he stated during the first interrogation on September 5, 1918[35]. During the second interrogation on September 25 he added: "In August of this year I requested a pass to Ukraine from the consulate, because I was ill then, as I still am now, and therefore wished to leave service in Moscow and go to my homeland for treatment"[36]. Thus, the former colonel did not wish to continue serving in the Red Army and intended to leave the territory of the RSFSR, but fate decreed otherwise.

The Hiding Place in the Piano

On September 5, 1918, a woman named Elizaveta Nikolaevna Lobacheva[37] appeared before N.A. Skrypnik, the already-mentioned Head of the Counter-Revolution Department of the Cheka, carrying a bundle of papers that had been discovered hidden inside the piano in her apartment. The papers contained detailed information on the condition of certain Red Army units, their deployment and armaments, information about military depots, the locations of Soviet institutions, personnel records describing attitudes and levels of loyalty to the authorities, private letters, evaluations of officials, lists of passwords and countersigns, plans of

32 ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 159.
33 Ibid. Л. 168.
34 Ibid. Л. 217.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid. Л. 221.
37 Ibid. Л. 3.

Moscow divided into sectors, and contacts within the commissariats, the Kremlin, and the militia. There were also recommendations on how to agitate against the Bolsheviks. Thus, some of the papers were Soviet documents, while others were unofficial in nature and may have been compiled by White sympathizers. The documents dated back to the spring of 1918 and dealt primarily with Moscow and the Moscow garrison.

At the same time, these materials, preserved in the investigative file[38], were largely unsystematic and random in character. Apparently, this was the cache of someone gathering information either to escape to the Whites with these documents, to pass them on to the anti-Bolshevik underground, or to deliver them to the Allies, but who never managed to make use of the collected material.

Had this occurred in the spring of 1918, such information would undoubtedly have been valuable to the White underground or the Allies. But several months had already passed, and by autumn the information was outdated. In January 1919, investigator Z.B. Katsnelson, acting on the instructions of A.V. Eiduk, Head of the Investigative Section of the Cheka's Special Department, examined the documents and concluded that they had been gathered by a spy. Katsnelson wrote: "Nothing in Soviet life escaped the attention of White Guard spies"[39]. But to whom could this cache have belonged?

Readers have probably already guessed that the hiding place in the piano had something to do with K.I. Zhikhor. Indeed, in April 1918, three of the four rooms in Lobacheva's apartment were requisitioned for the office of the Military Agent Section of the future All-Russian General Staff, headed by Zhikhor (the Section moved into the premises on April 9[40]). Zhikhor himself lived in the same building on the third floor, in apartment no. 5. In one of the rooms – the drawing room, where no one worked – stood a piano that Lobacheva had been renting for several years from a man named Burkevich. This room was also requisitioned by the military. Lobacheva asked Zhikhor to leave the room to her, but he refused, explaining that he needed it for secret meetings with visitors. Nevertheless, taking into account that Lobacheva was receiving no

[38] Ibid. Л. 12–18, 20–39 об., 41–53, 56–120.
[39] Ibid. Л. 3.
[40] Ibid. Л. 221.

compensation for the requisitioned premises, he allowed her to use the third room after office hours and to receive guests there[41]. The piano was locked, and the key remained with Lobacheva (supposedly to prevent infecting herself from visitors[42], an explanation that sounds unconvincing), but the upper lid remained open.

Deciding to return the piano, Lobacheva hired movers and sent the instrument back to Burkevich. This happened a couple of weeks before her report to the Cheka. On September 5, she visited Burkevich to ask how much she owed him, and he handed her the bundle found inside the piano, saying that the papers were anti-Soviet in nature and that she should burn them as soon as possible[43]. However, seeing that the documents were typewritten, Lobacheva decided to take everything directly to the Cheka, thereby sealing Zhikhor's fate.

Everyday Spy Mania

According to Lobacheva, "the atmosphere surrounding the activities of Zhikhor and his assistants aroused strong suspicions"[44]. She testified: "The quartermaster administration of the General Staff was located in my apartment. The quartermaster was for[mer] General[45] Stanislavsky, who, as far as I know, never once visited the apartment"[46]. In fact, Stanislavsky was a colonel and headed the Military Statistical Department to which Zhikhor's section belonged. It should be added that he has been identified as a White underground operative within the Red Army[47].

41 Ibid. L. 247.

42 Ibid. L. 9.

43 Ibid. L. 3 ob.

44 Ibid.

45 Correctly: *colonel*.

46 ЦА ФСБ. D. P-49135. L. 10.

47 See: Донесения белых агентов в Красной армии. 1919 г. / Публ. А.В. Ганина // Вопросы истории. 2012. № 6. С. 3–20; *Ганин А.В.* Полковник А.В. Станиславский: перипетии биографии русского офицера // Великая война 1914–1918: Альманах Российской ассоциации историков Первой мировой войны: Россия в Первой мировой войне. М., 2025. Вып. 10. С. 235–248; *same author*. Кадры Генерального штаба в период Гражданской войны в России 1917–1922 гг. М., 2023. Т. 2. С. 276, 288–289.

The case file contains an undated pencil note addressed to Zhikhor:

"Dear Konstantin Ivanovich,

I stopped by to say goodbye to you. I earnestly ask you not to lose sight of the proposals submitted to the Military Ec[onomic] Council and to continue pushing them forward as much as possible.

Furthermore, it is extremely important to press for the approval of the staffing tables for our military missions abroad, for which purpose appropriate written reports should be submitted to superiors no less than twice a week.

Yours,

A. Stanislavsky"[48].

According to Lobacheva's testimony, Zhikhor "often went to see Stanislavsky, constantly bringing reports and communications. He always spoke extremely negatively about the Bolsheviks and cursed them"[49]. When Lobacheva's husband was arrested, Zhikhor offered to obtain a passport for him under the name of some worker and help him flee to Ukraine; he also advised bribing someone in the Cheka[50]. The clerks were, judging by their speech, Ukrainians who changed frequently and returned home, and in conversation they always denounced the Bolsheviks. "Former people" visited as well (for example, Prince Gorchakov and various officers), as did foreigners (Lobacheva remembered a Japanese officer who had arrived from Vologda). After Lobacheva visited the Cheka concerning her husband's case, Zhikhor and the others began to regard her suspiciously and demanded that she move elsewhere. Shortly before the assassination attempt on Lenin, Zhikhor wanted to burn some papers in the kitchen, but Lobacheva forbade him to do so; nevertheless, she periodically found remnants of burned documents in the toilet[51]. Eventually, Lobacheva began locking the toilet when she left, although she was asked not to do so.

48 ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 158.
49 Ibid. Л. 10.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid. Л. 11.



K. I. Zhikhor, 1918. *Central Archive of the Federal Security Service. Published for the first time*

Zhikhor's assistants were the 21-year-old former cornet P.S. Arapov and the 38-year-old former General Staff Lieutenant Colonel V.A. Ivanovsky. The latter lived near Pokrovskie Gates, while Arapov lived near Povarskaya Street. Arapov was allegedly the son of a lady-in-waiting and the nephew of the lady of the court Naryshkina (probably referring to E.A. Naryshkina)[52]. He had been educated abroad and spoke foreign languages. a statement by his mother, D.P. Arapova, described him as a wartime officer, which was indeed accurate.

Arapov was a distant relative of the famous "Black Baron", General Pyotr Wrangel. He later emigrated from Russia, became one of the leaders of the Eurasianist movement, but eventually returned to the USSR and was executed. In the old Imperial Army, Arapov had served in the elite Life Guards Cavalry Regiment. Lacking financial means, he planned to leave Moscow and settle in his mother's small estate in the Volhynia Governorate[53].

[52] Ibid. Л. 10 об.
[53] Ibid. Л. 232.

Shortly before the arrests, according to Lobacheva's rather ordinary suspicions, the military specialists no longer appeared to be working, but instead sat reading newspapers and studying large maps (which may, in fact, have been part of their official duties). On the other hand, the military specialists themselves confirmed that the workload of the Military Agent Section was minimal due to Soviet Russia's international isolation[54]. They dealt mainly with correspondence concerning the pay of military representatives abroad[55]. During idle moments, they followed the fighting on the Western Front[56] using a large wall map from the French General Staff, while Ivanovsky practiced typing[57].

An Ambush for Everyone

Having received the important tip, Skrypnik ordered a search and the arrest of Zhikhor and the others at 22 Povarskaya Street, apartments 2, 3, and 5, which was carried out immediately[58]. Insignia, decorations, edged weapons, binoculars, documents, and money were confiscated. However, the search uncovered nothing particularly suspicious except for the passes found in Zhikhor's possession granting access to the Ukrainian General Consulate (though this had an explanation, as mentioned earlier) and a petition on behalf of the ARGS requesting that the Ukrainian General Consulate provide two seats on the next train to Kiev for the Ukrainian citizen and former lieutenant Kovrigin and his family because of his wife's illness[59]. Zhikhor later admitted that he himself had written Kovrigin's request, although he had no authority to do so[60].

Zhikhor himself was considered the principal suspect in the case[61]. Also arrested were the lodger Leonid Aleksandrovich Balin, Pyotr

54 Ibid. Л. 234 об., 236, 237 об., 247.
55 Ibid. Л. 236, 247.
56 Ibid. Л. 235.
57 Ibid. Л. 238.
58 Ibid. Л. 125–128 об.
59 Ibid. Л. 168, 180, 186, 220.
60 Ibid. Л. 221.
61 ГА РФ. Ф. 10035. Оп. 1. Д. П-41957. Л. 26.

Vasilyevich Maynev, Maksim Vasilyevich Samosyuk, Konstantin Konstantinovich Skurizin, and the building porter Zakharchenko. Balin, Maynev, Samosyuk, and Skurizin were released on the day of their arrest, September 5, 1918. However, Skurizin escaped while being transported back to the prison department[62].

The Chekists left a surveillance team at the apartment, and it remained there for quite some time, giving the arrest story a tragicomic continuation. In October 1918, S.A. Kuznetsov, Head of the Operations Directorate, together with Acting Head of the Military Statistical Department N.N. Shvarts (Schwarz), prepared a report for the Chief of the All-Russian General Staff regarding the arrest of the Military Agent Section. It stated: "On September 9, an inquiry was sent to the house committee of the building where the Agent Section had been located, requesting information about the circumstances under which the personnel of the Section had been arrested. As no answer was received, on September 14 the records office of the Military Statistical Department dispatched the courier Vasily Chuvakin to house no. 22 on Povarskaya Street in order to determine the condition of the premises of the Military Agent Section, whether any of its personnel remained there, and, if so, to invite them to the Department to collect papers and provide an update concerning the Section's affairs. When the dispatched Chuvakin failed to return for a long time, the Head of the General Section of the Military Statistical Department sent the watchman Panov to the same address. Upon returning, Panov reported that an ambush had been left in the premises of the Military Agent Section, from whom he learned that none of the personnel remained there, and that the courier Chuvakin, who had arrived earlier, had been detained and sent to the Extraordinary Commission on B[olshaya] Lubyanka.

On the same day, September 14, a communication no. 39315 was sent to the Head of the Counterintelligence Department of the Cheka requesting the release of courier Chuvakin[63], who had been "sent to the premises of the Military Agent Section on official business and to carry out assigned duties, since he could not possibly have been connected with the circumstances that had led to the earlier arrest of the Head of

62 ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 220 об., 347.

63 Document preserved in: Ibid. Л. 351.



A. N. Tsurpalev.
From open sources

the Section, Zhikhor. On September 22, together with the Commissar of the Directorate, I again petitioned the Extraordinary Commission for Chuvakin's release[64], and on September 30, under no. 39434, the Commissar of the Directorate [N.I. Favorsky] submitted a special petition requesting permission to enter the premises of the Military Agent Section in order to retrieve necessary files. None of the aforementioned petitions has been granted to this day"[65].

Chuvakin had been sent to Povarskaya Street by the Head of the General Section, former colonel V.S. Lazarevich[66]. Instead of releasing the unfortunate courier, the Chekists launched an investigation into the Military Statistical Department and the Operations Directorate of

[64] Document preserved in: Ibid. Л. 355–356 об.
[65] РГВА. Ф. 11. Оп. 5. Д. 120. Л. 53–53 об.
[66] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 342.

the All-Russian General Staff, trying to determine how news of Chuvakin's arrest had become known within three to four hours after it occurred[67].

A total of nine people were caught in the ambush. The most significant detainees were military specialists serving at the time – and before the Revolution – in the All-Russian General Staff: Pyotr Semyonovich Arapov (arrested September 6), Vladimir Alexandrovich Ivanovsky (September 6), and Alexander Nikolaevich Tsurpalev (September 12). In addition, several other visitors to the apartments were arrested: Nikolai Evgenyevich Anuchin, assistant manager of the pension fund of the Privislinskaya Railway, who had happened to stop by with his acquaintance I.S. Kostko (September 10); 26-year-old Aldona Ivanovna (Yanovna) Berg, an employee of the Moscow Soviet Food Department (she had worked for about half a year as a private tutor in the home of Lieutenant Colonel V.A. Ivanovsky[68] and had come looking for him; arrested September 6); Pyotr Andreevich Gudkov, a clerk in the Universal Military Training Department (September 6), who had come to visit his friend L.A. Balin; Iosif Stanislavovich Kostko, an instructor in the Universal Military Training Department of the Sokolniki District Military Commissariat (September 10), who had come to obtain a certificate; Commissar of the Operations Directorate of the All-Russian General Staff Nikolai Ivanovich Favorsky (September 9); and the 19-year-old courier Vasily Markovich Chuvakin (September 14). Only on September 22 were the ambushes in apartments no. 2 and no. 5 lifted and the premises sealed[69]. The Chekist on duty at the ambush found yet another series of Military Agent Section documents in apartment no. 2[70].

Most of those arrested turned out to be completely accidental victims. For example, A.I. Berg fell into the ambush because she and Ivanovsky's wife had been searching for him on the evening of his arrest. Ivanovsky's wife remained outside while Berg entered the apartment. The women visited Povarskaya Street twice and the Cheka once. During

67 Ibid. L. 350.
68 Ibid. L. 333.
69 Ibid. L. 210.
70 Ibid. L. 212.

the second visit to Povarskaya, Berg was detained[71]. She pleaded for her release as soon as possible, fearing she would lose her job[72].

As already noted, even the Commissar of the Operations Directorate of the All-Russian General Staff, N.I. Favorsky, was arrested. He had come on September 9 (only two days after being appointed by Chief Commissar of the ARGS I.L. Dzevyaltovsky) to acquaint himself with the personnel of the Military Agent Section[73]. His statement bears a resolution by Cheka chairman Felix Dzerzhinsky dated September 10, 1918: not to send him to prison, but to forward the case personally to him. At the same time, I.L. Dzevyaltovsky requested that the Head of the Cheka's Counter-Revolution Department, N.A. Skrypnik, release the Commissar, who had accidentally fallen into the ambush[74]. Skrypnik added the resolution that he should be released if nothing incriminating were found during the search. Nevertheless, Favorsky was released only on September 17 on the basis of Dzevyaltovsky's petition[75]. He spent more than a week under arrest. Thus, even securing the release of an innocent and responsible party official could prove difficult at that time – let alone nonparty military specialists, who could automatically be regarded as enemies solely because of their background. Later, Favorsky became involved in efforts to secure the release of the other arrested employees.

The release of some of the accidentally arrested individuals dragged on. In her conclusion regarding A.I. Berg, investigator M.I. Yanson wrote on October 24 that citizen Berg was "from an entirely different milieu, one to which counterrevolutionary officers would hardly have entrusted themselves... her inability to engage in active counterrevolutionary work is demonstrated by her elementary understanding of political questions and her petty-bourgeois cast of mind"[76]. Nevertheless, the woman remained under arrest until December.

People also interceded on behalf of N.E. Anuchin. In October, People's Commissar A.D. Tsiurupa vouched for him, and the investigator

71 Ibid. Л. 333.
72 Ibid. Л. 348 об.
73 Ibid. Л. 200.
74 Ibid. Л. 383.
75 Ibid. Л. 220 об.
76 Ibid. Л. 335 об.

himself considered it necessary to release the detainee[77]. Yet Anuchin, too, remained imprisoned until December.

At the same time, Lobacheva – the woman who had reported the hidden cache – was never detained and was not questioned again. As later noted in the report on the case, this "appears highly strange, since she was the wife of the prominent Mos[cow] merchant Lobachev; her husband had previously been arrested by the Cheka; moreover, according to testimony from those interrogated in this case... she was a very strange, even abnormal woman, and her relations with Zhikhor had been poor"[78]. Nor was Burkevich, the owner of the piano in which the cache had been discovered, ever interrogated.

On November 28, 1918, the Presidium of the Collegium of the Department for Combating Counter-Revolution ruled that the case concerning the "discovered archive of White Guards" should be returned to the investigative section for the preparation of a detailed report and conclusions concerning the entire case and each arrested individual[79]. Following this, on December 4, 1918, the Presidium ruled that the cases of Zhikhor, Arapov, and Ivanovsky should be transferred to the Cheka for further investigation; that the accidentally arrested Anuchin, Berg, Gudkov, and Kostko should be released under obligation to appear when summoned; and that the blacksmith Iosif Lyudvigovich Ivanovsky[80] – accidentally arrested at Sukharevka and mistakenly included in the Zhikhor and Ivanovsky case – should be released under the amnesty[81]. A.N. Tsurpalev also remained under investigation, although he was not mentioned in the document.

"I myself belong to the class of the proletariat intelligentsia ..." The Principal Suspects

Zhikhor was interrogated personally by Skrypnik on the very first day, September 5, 1918. During the interrogation, the military specialist

77 Ibid. Л. 338.
78 Ibid. Л. 4–4 об.
79 Ibid. Л. 379.
80 Ibid. Л. 222 об.
81 Ibid. Л. 122.

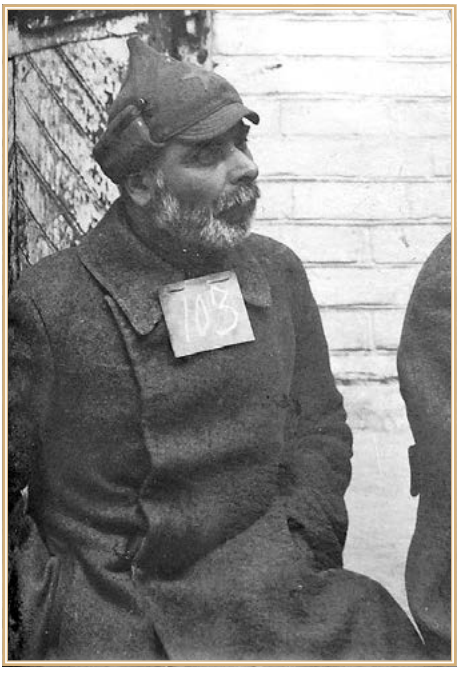
recounted his biography, provided the explanations already familiar to readers concerning the interaction between the Main Directorate of the General Staff and the All-Russian General Staff with foreigners, and commented on the character of the papers found in the piano. Zhikhor did not deny that some of the discovered documents belonged to him. However, he offered no explanation regarding the origin of the cache or the purpose for which it had been created.

Concerning his political views, he stated: "I work under Soviet authority in a fully loyal, honest, and conscientious manner. I do not belong to any party, nor did I belong to one previously. I have had no connection whatsoever with either the White Guards or counterrevolution, nor do I have any now". "I regard the Czechoslovak movement negatively, believing that if the consciousness of the masses demands a particular form of government such as Soviet power, then any actions against it are a risky undertaking. In my opinion, the English and French had no right to land troops in Arkhangelsk, since they were bound by certain obligations toward Russia. I am equally negative toward Krasnov's uprising. I would not consider it possible for myself to fight against Soviet power. If I were to go to Ukraine, I would not serve there at all, but would instead take a position in some office in Odessa, where it would always be possible to find employment – especially since I know foreign languages. Since I am ill, I am certain that they would not conscript me into the army in Ukraine, even under compulsory service. The fact that I wish to adopt Ukrainian citizenship I do not regard as a violation of my duty as an employee of the Soviet government, since I intended to resign, and I am a native of Ukraine"[82]. It is worth recalling that this statement was made by a man under arrest on the very day the "Red Terror" was proclaimed.

On September 6, 1918, Zhikhor was transferred from the prison department of the Cheka to Butyrka Prison (corridor 14, cell 16; by February 1919 – corridor 2, cell 5; by April 1919 – corridor 2, cell 10), where he remained registered under the authority of the Cheka.

On September 9, Chief of the All-Russian General Staff A.A. Svechin petitioned N.M. Potapov, Chief Administrator of the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs, requesting clarification regarding the reasons for Zhikhor's arrest, while Deputy People's Commissar E.M. Sklyansky was

[82] Ibid. Л. 217 об. – 218.



V. A. Ivanovsky under arrest. Early 1930s.
Federal Security Service Directorate for Saratov Oblast

asked to sign the corresponding telegram to the Cheka[83]. The telegram was sent, but no reply followed. Since the situation remained unclear, the inquiry to the Cheka was repeated at the end of March 1919.

On September 11, 1918, officials urgently demanded that Zhikhor be sent to Arzamas due to his assignment to the disposal of Commander-in-Chief J.I. Vatsetis. In this connection, the Head of the Operations Directorate of the All-Russian General Staff, S.A. Kuznetsov, requested Zhikhor's release from the Cheka[84]. Kuznetsov, a former Major General, had ties to the White underground and assisted officers within Soviet Russia[85]. It is possible that this was precisely why he attempted to help Zhikhor. Kuznetsov also requested that the salary due to Zhikhor for September–October 1918 be transferred to his own directorate for delivery to the General Staff officer S.D. Kharlamov[86]. One of the well-known military specialists among the Rattel

[83] РГВА. Ф. 11. Оп. 5. Д. 120. Л. 43.

[84] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 7.

[85] See: *Ганин А.В.* Кадры Генерального штаба. Т. 2. С. 272–273; *его же.* Медвежья услуга генерала Деникина // Родина. 2025. № 10. С. 110–113.

[86] РГВА. Ф. 11. Оп. 5. Д. 245. Л. 105.

brothers – most likely N.I. Rattel – was prepared to vouch for the arrested Ivanovsky[87]. In addition, the Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, Leon Trotsky, also intervened on behalf of the detainees. In October 1918, he wrote to Cheka chairman Felix Dzerzhinsky concerning Zhikhor and his colleague V.A. Ivanovsky that "for the resolution of current matters, the presence of the aforementioned personnel is extremely necessary"[88]. Trotsky also requested information regarding the charges brought against them. Nevertheless, this produced no result.

Attempting to improve his living conditions somewhat, Zhikhor petitioned the head of Butyrka Prison on September 23, 1918, requesting the return of the 450 rubles confiscated at the time of his arrest, which would have allowed him to purchase food at the prison shop[89].

Zhikhor's second interrogation took place on September 25 and was conducted by Ya.Ya. Zakis, Head of the Investigative Section of the Cheka. Zhikhor denied ownership of the papers containing information about Soviet troops[90]. No formal charges were brought against him. He was interrogated again only on January 18, 1919. He was also required to fill out several questionnaires, including one asking about the accusations against him – a section for which he reportedly did not know what to write.

On November 1 and 13, 1918, investigator M.I. Yanson attempted to systematize the case materials, noting that Ivanovsky and Arapov appeared to be the most suspicious among the detainees. According to her account, Ivanovsky maintained during interrogations that he had "only recently entered service; had seen nothing; knew nothing; no one had visited in his presence, etc."[91] Her conclusion on the case read as follows: "I shall refrain from presenting formal charges or conclusions in this case... While submitting the present case for consideration by the Collegium of the C-R Department[92], I nevertheless propose that the case be concluded, because it is already overdue (the information in the piano

87 ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 8.
88 РГВА. Ф. 1. Оп. 3. Д. 66. Л. 113.
89 ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 121.
90 Ibid. Л. 221.
91 Ibid. Л. 222.
92 Counter-Revolution.

dates from May–June), and it will yield us nothing new beyond those already arrested. It is hardly likely that any new information can be obtained from them, and therefore wasting additional time on them would be impractical"[93]. On November 30, the case of the "persons accused of espionage and connections with the Allied powers" was proposed for transfer to the Cheka, as it extended beyond the jurisdiction of the city of Moscow[94].

At the third interrogation in January 1919, Zhikhor declared: "These documents which, according to your words, were found in the piano – I have never seen them, as I already told Comrades Skrypnik and Zakis, nor have I ever written any of them"[95]. Zhikhor's argument appears fairly convincing: "I had a cabinet for storing official papers, and documents were also kept in three large boxes. If I had needed to conceal White Guard documents, there would have been no need to hide them in a piano; I could simply have concealed them among the papers in the boxes. My rooms were never locked, because, in my opinion, the locks had deliberately been damaged by someone, and all my attempts to isolate the office premises from Lobacheva's apartment were unsuccessful"[96]. Later, in a petition addressed in April 1919 to M.S. Kedrov, chairman of the Cheka's Special Department, he clarified that he could have stored anything necessary in a locked cabinet rather than in a publicly accessible piano[97]. Zhikhor believed the papers had been planted by someone else: "I neither wrote, handled, nor saw these papers, and I have no idea what they are"[98]. Moreover, two weeks before the arrest, Ivanovsky and Arapov had both been absent from work for a week due to illness, there had been no copyist present, and Zhikhor himself frequently left the premises open while away on official business. He could not even remember whether the piano had still been in the apartment at that time, especially since he had only recently recovered from pneumonia.

Lobacheva was dissatisfied that the military occupied her apartment. Zhikhor, meanwhile, had considered requisitioning all the

93 ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 222 об.
94 Ibid. Л. 223.
95 Ibid. Л. 224.
96 Ibid. Л. 225.
97 Ibid. Л. 248.
98 Ibid. Л. 227 об.

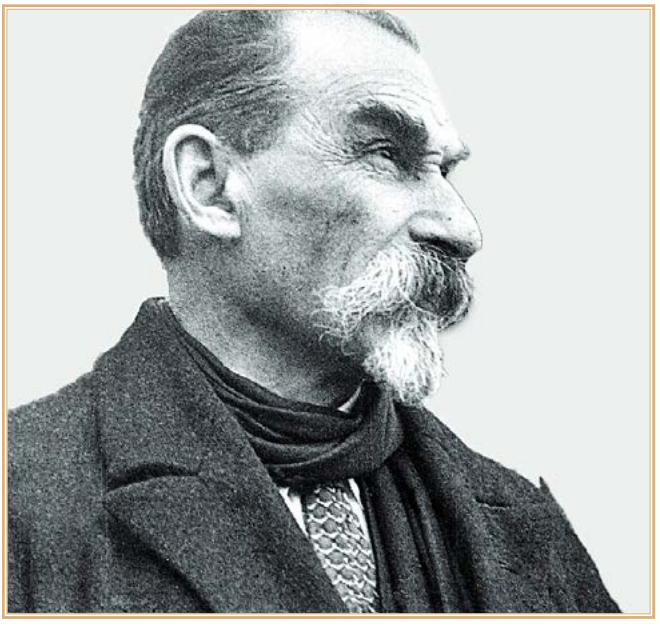
rooms, "since at the beginning the tasks of the Department[99], when relations with foreigners had not yet been severed and a reorganization of the Statistical Department was anticipated, were extremely broad"[100].

Zhikhor denied that he had advised Lobacheva to obtain a false passport for her husband or to bribe someone in the Cheka, but admitted that he had recommended her husband leave the country, since a single arrest would not be the end of his troubles[101]. "I never discussed politics with her at all; if I spoke with her, it was exclusively about her unsuccessful personal life"[102].

Arapov had entered service approximately three weeks before Zhikhor's arrest and had been accepted on the recommendation of Acting Head of the Statistical Department Baron A.L. von Nolcken, who later defected to the Whites. Arapov was intended for the position of junior clerk, although he was considered somewhat too young for it; however, he knew foreign languages, and given the personnel shortage, there was little opportunity to be selective.

According to Zhikhor, Ivanovsky "was a more serious man, a General Staff specialist. He had registered himself on the General Staff personnel list as wishing to enter Soviet service, and about a month before my arrest I went to him and offered him work under me, once again emphasizing the need for strictly professional work outside of politics. We did not discuss politics. He was a family man and was occupied chiefly with his service and the search for food supplies"[103]. Arapov gave similar testimony regarding Ivanovsky's priorities in life: "Ivanovsky was a very serious family man, chiefly concerned with his household"[104]. Another detainee, A.I. Berg, who had worked for the Ivanovsky family as a private tutor, characterized Ivanovsky during her interrogation on October 22, 1918 as "a quiet, unsociable man who was afraid to participate in anything for fear of becoming entangled and falling under suspicion. For this reason, he did not register [with the authorities] and entered

[99] Correctly: *section*.
[100] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 225–225 об.
[101] Ibid. Л. 225 об.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid. Л. 225 об. – 226.
[104] Ibid. Л. 235.



N. A. Skrypnyk.
From open sources

the General Staff[105] so as to remain under the military department and avoid registration. His political views were purely petty-bourgeois: sometimes he agreed with the policies of the Soviet government, at other times he criticized them, depending on how events affected them[106] personally. Ivanovsky was in no way a monarchist; he always adhered to republican tendencies in politics. His wife, however, sympathized with the monarchist order and said that given the ignorance of the people in Russia at present, no other system was conceivable. Still, neither of them acted actively in politics; they lived quietly and rather poorly. No one visited them except for one former officer, Nikolai Mikhailovich, who came by perhaps twice. They had no other acquaintances"[107].

Former Captain A.N. Tsurpalev had been Ivanovsky's predecessor as Zhikhor's assistant. During interrogation on the day of his arrest, he stated: "My political convictions: nonparty, believing it unwise to interfere in the struggle now taking place"[108]. Zhikhor later described his service

[105] Correctly: *All-Russian General Staff.*
[106] Sic in document. Apparently, correctly: *him.*
[107] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 341.
[108] Ibid. Л. 229 об.

with Tsurpalev in January 1919 as follows: "He left me, firstly because he was an ill man. He had been assigned an official mission to Arkhangelsk, but could not go due to poor health, which led to misunderstandings with the department chief and to his departure. He too was a General Staff specialist. I likewise never discussed politics with him. He fulfilled his official duties, and that was the extent of our relationship. After leaving the service, he came to see me once to inquire whether the order dismissing him had been issued, to which I replied that I had no such orders, since they were not sent to me but to the general office. After that he did not visit me again before my arrest"[109].

According to Zhikhor: "Since alongside my department there existed a similar department attached to the Supreme Military Council, where Mukhanov[110] worked, it was to him – being more centrally placed and more informed on political matters – that foreign agents turned. I, meanwhile, dealt chiefly with correspondence concerning the personnel of our agents abroad. Foreigners visited me very rarely. I remember one French officer coming to me, I believe in May. I do not recall his name. He came officially from the French military mission and asked where information regarding radiotelegraphy could be obtained. I replied that I was not informed on such matters and advised him to apply to the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs. Indeed, although for a time – specifically in March – I had been appointed to one of Podvoisky's commissions dealing with joint work with foreigners in organizing the Red Army, the entire matter soon passed into Mukhanov's jurisdiction, and I took no part in it. Satisfied with my answer, the French officer departed. a Japanese man named Furuya visited me twice, this being in mid-June or July, but in any case before Trotsky's order prohibiting relations with foreigners. The first time, as far as I recall, he came to inquire about the location of the Supreme Military Council; the second time he asked about the procedure for traveling to Vologda, since he needed to go where the embassies were then located. I directed him to the Military Commissariat. Our subsequent conversation was of an ordinary social nature, and Lobacheva entered during

[109] Ibid. Л. 226.

[110] This refers to former Colonel G.A. Mukhanov, who from 11 March 1918 held the post of Head of the Department for Liaison with Foreign Missions at the Headquarters of the Supreme Military Council.

it. I had known this Furuya previously in Petrograd, but in Moscow, aside from these two visits, I never met him. He also came once to my apartment when I was ill; evidently he had gone to the department and learned there that I was sick. He came once more before his departure to Vologda, but did not find me at home and left with the porter a piece of cloth as a gift for me – this is one of their customs when departing[111]. No other foreigners ever visited me. Several times an official from the General Staff came to see me for information regarding the procedure for dismissing our military agents abroad. I also recall that after leaving the service, Tsurpalev came several times during the officer registration campaign but did not find me; I believe he came in connection with the registration. Once he also came during my illness. He was working downstairs, but first came upstairs to me and asked permission to type something on the typewriter; I allowed him to do so"[112].

"I served honestly and was not engaged in espionage, nor did I intend to engage in it", the arrested man declared[113]. "When the search of my apartment was being conducted, I was out on the street and saw that about twelve men entered, apparently armed with rifles. If my conscience had not been clear, I could have fled, but it never occurred to me to do so, and I came to the apartment, since I could not even imagine the possibility of being accused of espionage"[114].

Seeking to emphasize his loyalty, Zhikhor added the following note to the interrogation record: "I would like to add: I served honestly, conscientiously, and loyally toward the Soviet government. For the excellent performance of the duties entrusted to me, I possess a written commendation from N.M. Potapov dating from April 1918, and I never entertained any thoughts of White Guard activity, remaining entirely on the ground of professional work. I myself am not an aristocrat, not a landowner, not a capitalist, and I never intended to defend their interests. On the contrary, recently I have been serving the proletariat, remembering Lassalle's idea that after the rule of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie comes the

[111] After Japan severed diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia on 3 August 1918, K. Furuya left Moscow for Stockholm.

[112] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 226 об. – 227.

[113] Ibid. Л. 227.

[114] Ibid. Л. 227–227 об.

role of the proletariat, and I myself belong to the class of the proletariat intelligenstia"[115].

Following the three interrogations, Zhikhor categorically denied involvement in espionage. He stated that he hardly ever used the room containing the piano and that after 3 p.m. the apartment remained at the disposal of the landlady, who received guests there, including Chekists. He regarded Lobacheva as capable of any kind of treachery against him and described himself as a completely loyal supporter of Soviet authority. He insisted that he had never held political discussions with his assistants, who themselves professed loyalty to the government and avoided political talk. a report on the case dated January 1919 noted: "He explains his desire to leave for Ukraine by the fact that he is ill and Ukrainian by birth. He admits the visits of the Japanese officer Furuya, but explains them by his position as head of the Military Agent Section. There was also a French officer; he denies visits from any English officer, asserting that these visits occurred before Trotsky's order prohibiting relations with foreigners"[116]. Zhikhor also testified that one of the clerks had departed for Ukraine and never returned.

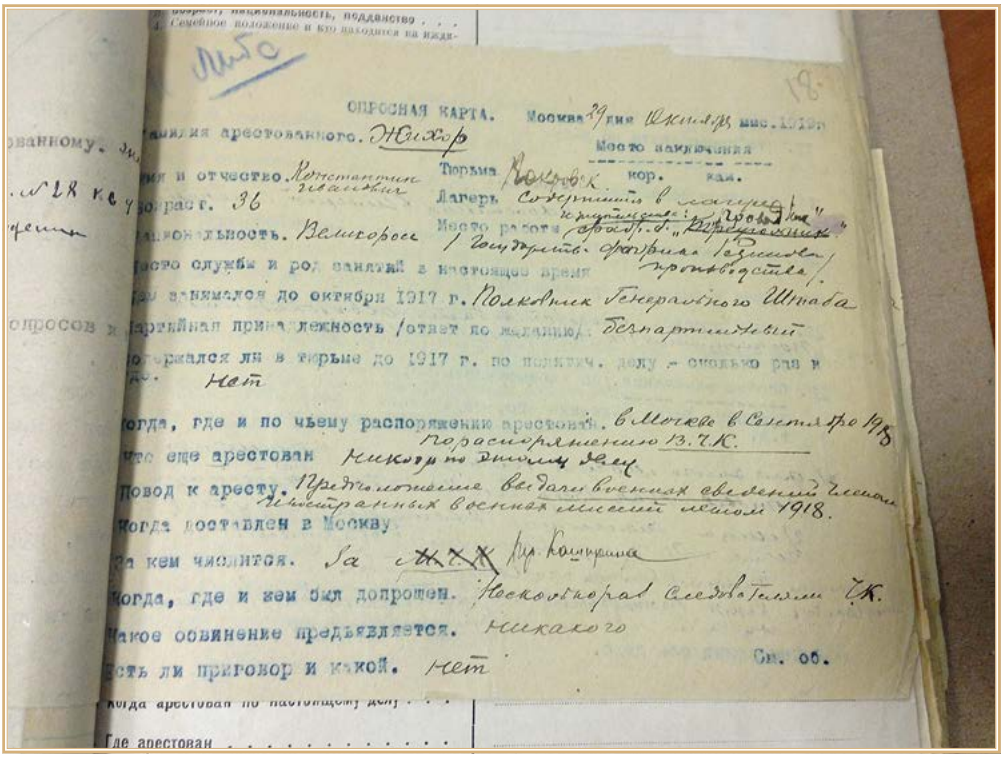
Zhikhor's assistant V.A. Ivanovsky stated that he sympathized with the Communists as the only stable authority, held progressive-liberal views, and wished the best for his homeland[117].

The arrested assistants claimed to know nothing about the discovered documents. They said they remained at work only from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and never sat in the room with the piano. They barely knew Zhikhor outside official matters, and he himself rarely appeared at the office. They also spoke unfavorably of the landlady.

As early as November 11, 1918, A.N. Tsurpalev, writing from Butyrka Prison (corridor 4, cell 30), appealed to the Moscow Political Red Cross:

"Having spent two months in prison (arrested September 12, 1918), no charge has been brought against me. Believing that the resolution of the Sixth Extraordinary All-R[ussian] Congress of Soviets fully applies to me as well, and having neither relatives nor acquaintances, I dare to

[115] Ibid. Л. 228.
[116] Ibid. Л. 4 об. – 5.
[117] Ibid. Л. 236 об.



ОПРОСНАЯ КАРТА. Москва 29 дня Июнь 1918 г.

Фамилия арестованного. Жихор

Имя и отчество. Константин Иванович

Место заключения

Тюрьма Бутырская кор. кам.

Лагерь Содержится в камере

Возраст. 36

Национальность. Великорос

Место работы (должность) Ген. шт. „Туркестан"

Место службы и род занятий в настоящее время Государств. преступник

Где занимался до октября 1917 г. Полковник Генерального Штаба

Партийная принадлежность (ответ по желанию) беспартийный

Привлекался ли в тюрьме до 1917 г. по политич. делу — сколько раз и когда. Нет

Когда, где и по чьему распоряжению арестован. В Москве в Сентябре 1918 г. По распоряжению Ч.К.

Кем еще арестован Никем по этому делу

Повод к аресту. Предложение выдать военных сведений Генерального Военного Штаба

Когда доставлен в Москву

За кем числится. За [redacted] Мур. Комиссии

Когда, где и кем был допрошен. Московской Следователем Ч.К.

Какое обвинение предъявляется. никакого

Есть ли приговор и какой. нет

Сн. об.

Где арестован

Questionnaire card of the Moscow Political Red Cross concerning K. I. Zhikhor. *Central State Archive of Moscow Oblast. Published for the first time*

address you with the earnest request to assist in securing my speedy release from imprisonment. I did not participate in [any] uprisings against Soviet authority, nor did I belong or do I belong to any political parties. Two months of imprisonment have severely affected my health and resulted in complete physical exhaustion. I have no strength left to endure more – better to be shot!"[118]

On December 22, 1918, Tsurpalev (then in Butyrka Prison, corridor 12, cell 56) drafted in pencil a petition addressed to A.V. Eiduk, Head of the Military Department of the Cheka, in which he described the accidental nature of his arrest: "Having received on September 11 of this year an offer from Muralov's[119] staff to occupy the position of Chief of Staff of a cavalry division being formed in Tambov, and

[118] ГА РФ. Ф. Р-8419. Оп. 1. Д. 147. Л. 82–83.

[119] The Old Bolshevik N.I. Muralov was at that time commander of the troops of the Moscow Military District.

having agreed to accept this position, on September 12 I went to the All-Russian General Staff wishing to coordinate my staff orders with my new appointment. On the way I was caught in a very heavy rain and entered the nearest department at 22 Povarskaya Street (staff orders are received by all departments, since appointments and transfers are not secret matters). Upon entering the apartment, I was arrested, having fallen into an ambush. I was attached to Zhikhor's case, and now I have been imprisoned for over 3 months without myself knowing why. Did I truly commit so great a crime by stopping to inquire about my own appointment? Considering such a term of imprisonment (over 3 months) sufficient to determine my relation to this affair (I consider myself uninvolved), and feeling no guilt upon myself, I earnestly request either that I be released from imprisonment or, if there are grounds, that formal charges be brought against me personally and that I be brought before a Revolutionary Tribunal. I earnestly ask that my request not be ignored, but that the matter be resolved one way or the other.

No accusation has been brought against me.

A. Tsurpalev"[120].

Similar information appeared in the interrogation records of Tsurpalev dated September 12, 1918, and January 18, 1919[121]. On December 26, Eiduk added the resolution to the petition: "Attach to Zhikhor's case".

Lenin's Intervention

As early as the beginning of December 1918, the All-Russian General Staff compiled a list of "General Staff personnel" arrested in Petrograd and Moscow[122], and Zhikhor, along with the other defendants in his case, was the only "Muscovite" on that list. Zhikhor also appeared in another (December) list compiled by the General Staff – a list of arrested

[120] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 123–123 об.
[121] Ibid. Л. 229 об., 231.
[122] РГВА. Ф. 4. Оп. 9. Д. 9. Л. 16.

individuals for whose release military authorities had petitioned[123]. On December 10, 1918, the Deputy Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic sent a request to the chairman of the Cheka[124] seeking the release of detainees against whom no charges had been brought. However, the issue could not be resolved quickly, and intervention by the Bolshevik leader himself became necessary, giving the case new momentum.

On January 8, 1919, a special resolution of the Council of Defense, signed by Vladimir Lenin, ordered that the arrested General Staff officers (K.I. Zhikhor, A.M. Zayonchkovsky, V.A. Ivanovsky, L.V. Kvitnitsky, V.S. Mikheev, M.N. Suvorov, D.G. Fokke (Focke), and A.N. Tsurpalev) either be released or formally tried. Among the eight named individuals were three defendants from the present case. Lenin's intervention was prompted by the severe shortage of General Staff officers in the Red Army, and the requested information was to be supplied within three days[125].

New interrogations began. In his conclusion on the case dated January 19, 1919, investigator Z.B. Katsnelson noted that the Investigative Section of the Cheka's Counter-Revolution Department "had missed the favorable moment for investigating the case and for uncovering the entire White Guard espionage organization. At present, after nearly five months have passed, this has become almost impossible, and the case now boils down merely to clarifying the guilt of these four individuals in storing and compiling White Guard espionage information, or, more precisely, owing to significant shortcomings in the handling of the investigation by the Cheka's Counter-Revolution Department, which no longer permit Zhikhor to be exposed as an active organizer of White Guard espionage, the case is reduced to accusing Zhikhor, as the person responsible for the premises of the Military Agent Section, of negligent maintenance of the office in an unsecured condition, which allowed – if perhaps not by him personally, then by someone else – the concealment of summaries of White Guard intelligence"[126]. The case was proposed for transfer

[123] Ibid. Л. 21.
[124] Ibid. Л. 23.
[125] В.И. Ленин и ВЧК (1917–1922 гг.): Сб. документов. М., 1975. С. 139–140.
[126] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 239.

to a Revolutionary Tribunal, and on February 7 the same Katsnelson proposed that everyone except Zhikhor be released under an undertaking not to leave Moscow[127].

In February 1919, an expert examination was conducted on documents submitted on February 7 by the Chekists to the Moscow District Military Commissariat. It was established that the handwriting of the individuals in Zhikhor's case did not match the documents preserved in the archives. However, the papers accurately reflected the real structure of the commissariat, which meant that the persons collecting the information had been closely connected with the Operations Department and may even have served there in February–March 1918 under the leadership of S.I. Aralov[128].

Ivanovsky and Tsurpalev

By the beginning of February 1919, Zhikhor, Tsurpalev, Ivanovsky, and Arapov all remained under arrest. On February 7, Deputy Chairman of the Cheka's Special Department A.V. Eiduk ordered the release of all of them except Zhikhor, under pledge to appear when summoned and not to leave Moscow without permission from the Special Department[129].

Apparently, Ivanovsky and Tsurpalev were released on February 10, since on that date they were assigned to the disposal of the Chief of the All-Russian General Staff[130]. They emerged from prison in poor physical condition. According to reports from February 11, "both are in urgent need of some period of rest and good nourishment"[131]. It appears that both military specialists received assignments to the Headquarters of the Northern Front. However, Ivanovsky did not even possess adequate clothing or footwear to make the journey[132]. On February 19 he reported to the head of the Records and Organization Department of the General Staff: "I report that I have no possibility whatsoever of

[127] Ibid. Л. 239 об.
[128] Ibid. Л. 2.
[129] Ibid. Л. 239 об.
[130] РГВА. Ф. 11. Оп. 1. Д. 63. Л. 53; Д. 67. Л. 27.
[131] РГВА. Ф. 6. Оп. 4. Д. 912. Л. 76.
[132] РГВА. Ф. 11. Оп. 5. Д. 1004. Л. 43.

departing for the headquarters of the Northern Front upon receipt of this assignment, due to the lack of clothing and, above all, footwear. During my imprisonment my overcoat was stolen, and now I walk about in an old torn greatcoat which I wore for four years at the front; moreover, I have absolutely no sturdy boots and at present am wearing someone else's felt boots.

I shall be able to depart for my assignment only as soon as I obtain something warm to wear and repair my boots"[133]. The military specialist was denied the requested allowance of 2,000 rubles before departure to the front[134]. In the end, Ivanovsky departed for his assignment only on March 10[135].

Whereas Ivanovsky resumed service after his release and continued until his re-arrest and execution in 1931 in the so-called "Microbiologists' Case"[136], Tsurpalev chose not to tempt fate. After receiving assignment orders placing him at the disposal of the Chief of Staff of the Northern Front, he abandoned his apartment (Nikitsky Boulevard, 5, apartment 4) without leaving a forwarding address and never arrived at his destination[137]. Throughout the second half of March, military authorities searched for him in vain, after which it became clear that he had fled.

In the spring of 1919, after Tsurpalev's disappearance, the personnel of the All-Russian General Staff, where he had formerly served as senior clerk in the Operations Directorate, attempted to establish his family circumstances. Here too they met with failure. Tsurpalev's service record was not in the Staff's archive; he did not appear in the last detailed General Staff register from 1914 because he had only entered the Academy in 1913; and according to private information he had no relatives in Moscow[138]. Between the issuance of Tsurpalev's assignment order on February 13 and the appeal by the General Staff Council to the Cheka's Special Department on April 22 requesting a search for the military specialist, two and a half months were lost in correspondence and

133 Ibid. Л. 44 об.

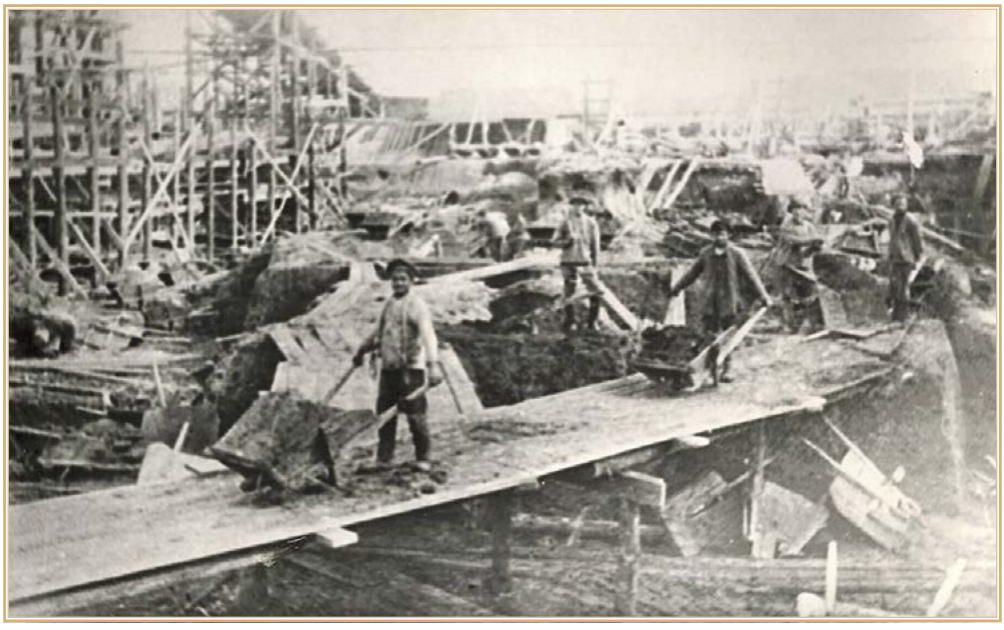
134 Ibid. Л. 55.

135 Ibid. Л. 59.

136 See: *Ганин А.В.* В тени «Весны». Бывшие офицеры под репрессиями начала 1930-х годов // Родина. 2014. № 6. С. 95–101.

137 РГВА. Ф. 11. Оп. 5. Д. 1004. Л. 58, 64, 69.

138 Ibid. Л. 74.



Construction of the first stage of the Kashira Regional Electric Power Station, 1919. *From open sources*

bureaucratic inquiries[139]. During this time, Tsurpalev managed to disappear. He resurfaced on the White-controlled South and by autumn 1920 was serving in the Russian Army of General Pyotr Wrangel, attached to the Quartermaster General under the Commander-in-Chief[140].

Dead End of the Investigation

Thus, all the individuals named in the January resolution of the Council of Defense ultimately had to be released by the Cheka due to lack of evidence. Only Zhikhor remained under arrest, and his prison-and-camp ordeal would continue for many years.

In April 1919, Zhikhor gave further explanations, although he revealed virtually nothing beyond what the investigation already knew. He did everything possible to convince the Chairman of the Cheka's Special Department, M.S. Kedrov, of his innocence (statement dated

[139] Ibid. Л. 76–76 об.

[140] Hoover Institution Archives, Wrangel Collection. Box 113. Folder 14; *Ганин А.В.* «Мозг армии» в период «Русской Смуты»: Статьи и документы. М., 2013. С. 736.

April 9, 1919): "In addition to the oral explanations I gave during my interrogation by you on April 8 of this year, I submit my testimony in written form.

At first you told me that all the information from my three previous testimonies had been verified, and that their complete truthfulness and plausibility had been established, except for the fact that by virtue of my official competence one might assume my connection with the incriminating documents... You agreed that the documents were not written in my hand, were not typed on my typewriter, did not contain materials constituting the subject of my official duties as Head of the Military Agent Section, and were found outside my office two weeks after the piano had been removed from c[itizen] Lobacheva's apartment.

In conclusion, you accused me of espionage on behalf of certain foreigners, indicating that it could be assumed that the incriminating papers had been passed to foreign visitors who came to see me on official business. To this I replied that three foreign officers had come to me on Povarskaya Street strictly on clearly defined official matters (as I had already testified during previous interrogations): a Frenchman – whose surname I do not know – requesting information on radiotelegraphy, which I never possessed; a Japanese officer – Lieutenant Colonel Furuya – petitioning for a pass to Vologda; and an Italian officer – Captain Ruggifi [Ruggieri-Laderchi] – asking for gasoline for an automobile. I directed all these individuals to the Military Commissariat as a more competent institution fully capable of satisfying their requests. The truthfulness of my statements was verified during the investigation and completely confirmed.

When asked whether one of my assistants might have placed the documents in the piano, I answered that Ivanovsky was entirely absorbed by concerns for his family, food, and service, while Arapov was young and morally incapable of such an act. Furthermore, when accepting them into the Department, I stated categorically that our work must proceed entirely outside politics and that we were obliged conscientiously to fulfill our modest duties as employees of a Soviet institution"[141].

Zhikhor stated that he did not live in that apartment and did not receive outsiders there, but that unknown individuals visited the landlady, Lobacheva, in the evenings after the workday in the department had

[141] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 244–244 об.

ended. In an additional statement the following day (April 10, 1919), he noted that he had not been acquainted with foreign consuls and had no experience in intelligence work, although during World War I he had become familiar with counterintelligence matters while serving in Petrograd as assistant clerk of the special office of the Main Directorate of the General Staff[142]. The prisoner petitioned for release "so that I may once again continue my work for the benefit of the Soviet Republic as before"[143].

In another statement addressed to M.S. Kedrov on April 9, 1919, Zhikhor wrote: "Having served for ten years in the General Staff, after the October Revolution I voluntarily remained in Soviet service, wishing to serve the proletariat, of which I am an educated [belonging to intelligentsia] representative. I worked conscientiously and loyally, and my self-sacrificing work for the benefit of the Soviet Republic has been documented by my superiors and is known to the highest leaders of the Military Commissariat – comrades Trotsky and Podvoisky"[144]. The prisoner further noted: "Conscientiously fulfilling the official duties entrusted to me, I would under no circumstances even have permitted the thought of entering into relations with organizations or persons hostile to Soviet authority"[145], while also complaining about the deterioration of his health in prison. On April 13, Kedrov ordered that the prisoner and his case be transferred to the Presidium of the Cheka for a final decision[146].

On April 15, 1919, military investigator Ya.Ya. Vogel drafted a conclusion on the case in which he drew attention to both the age of the case and the unusual circumstances of its origin – namely, the denunciation by the landlady. Vogel noted that Lobacheva's alleged desire to protect herself from infection "in my opinion could under no circumstances have served as a reason for locking the keyboard [of the piano], but instead gives rise to extremely serious suspicions that citizen Lobacheva herself, or her acquaintances, stored White Guard espionage documents there"[147], especially since only Lobacheva and the movers had been

142 Ibid. Л. 246.
143 Ibid. Л. 246 об.
144 Ibid. Л. 248.
145 Ibid. Л. 248 об.
146 Ibid. Л. 249; ГА РФ. Ф. Р-4042. Оп. 15. Д. 695. Л. 2, 4.
147 ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 251.

present when the piano was transported, while the bundle was allegedly discovered by citizen Burkevich, who was never interrogated. Thus, no one ever verified the reliability of Lobacheva's testimony. At the same time, Vogel acknowledged that Lobacheva's decision to report the matter to the Cheka seemed illogical if she herself had been guilty, since she could easily have ended up imprisoned as well. Interestingly, according to records of the Active Section of the Cheka's Special Department from spring 1919, neither Burkevich nor Lobacheva was still residing in Moscow, and their whereabouts were unknown[148]. Vogel proposed that the case be closed and that Zhikhor, who had already spent more than seven months in prison, be released. Zhikhor himself later – in a statement to the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs dated July 11, 1921 – came to regard Lobacheva as responsible for his arrest, believing that she had resented the requisitioning of her apartment for military needs[149]. It is possible that this assertion was not far from the truth.

Kedrov transferred the matter to a troika, which sentenced Zhikhor for involvement in counterrevolutionary activity, expressed in the storage of secret information and summaries concerning Red Army units for use in espionage work, to confinement in a labor camp (described in other documents as a concentration camp) until the end of the Civil War. The sentence was later reduced to five years' imprisonment[150].

"Even White Guards Such as Slashchev-Krymsky ... Have Received Amnesty"

Zhikhor remained imprisoned from September 5, 1918, until June 13, 1919, as a detainee under investigation. He was then to be released for lack of proof[151], but the matter dragged on. He was transferred from Butyrka Prison to the Pokrovsky Forced Labor Camp (Bolshoi Trekhsvyatitelsky Lane, 3) on July 11, 1919[152], after the prison-overcrowding

148 Ibid. Л. 252 об.

149 Ibid. Л. 255.

150 Ibid. Л. 250–251; ГА РФ. Ф. Р-4042. Оп. 15. Д. 695. Л. 27; Ф. Р-3917. Оп. 3. Д. 565. Л. 12.

151 ГА РФ. Ф. Р-4042. Оп. 15. Д. 695. Л. 1.

152 Ibid. Л. 1 об.



Главный корпус Каширской ГРЭС. 1928 г.
Из открытых источников

commission became interested in his case[153]. According to Zhikhor himself, in a 1919 questionnaire, this occurred on June 13[154]. Speaking in 1935 about his 1918 case, he stated: "Personally, I had no connection with espionage on behalf of the White Guards, and evidently the accusation against me was not confirmed during the investigation, because otherwise I, as a spy, would have been shot"[155]. To one acquaintance in the camp, Zhikhor explained the reason for his arrest by saying that "one woman had betrayed him"[156]. He was evidently referring to Lobacheva.

In the summer of 1919, the possibility of releasing the prisoner on personal surety was discussed, especially since he had been sentenced to forced labor for an act that did not actually constitute a criminal offense[157]. However, lacking relatives or acquaintances willing to serve as guarantors (two members of the Russian Communist Party could act in such a capacity), he was unable to secure release.

---

153 Ibid. Л. 3.
154 ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 272 об.
155 ГА РФ. Ф. 10035. Оп. 1. Д. П-41957. Л. 12.
156 Ibid. Л. 17.
157 ГА РФ. Ф. Р-4042. Оп. 15. Д. 695. Л. 7.

On July 23, 1919, while still formally under arrest, he was assigned to work at State Rubber Industry Plant No. 4 (the former *Provodnik*)[158]. From August 7 onward he worked there as assistant clerk to the plant completion commission, also residing at the site. On January 18, 1920, he was transferred without escort from the camp to the town of Kashira in Tula Province for construction work on the State Kashira Regional Electric Power Station. There he immediately assumed the position of Head of the Subsection for Hiring and Distribution[159] (from January 1, 1922, he was also Head of the Economic Department while retaining responsibility for hiring and distribution)[160]. As it turned out, he would remain there for several years.

In 1922, he recalled his work: "This department was newly organized by me and successfully coped with the difficult task of supplying the Kashira Electric Power Station with labor personnel, which was extremely difficult due to the lack of experienced qualified workers and specialists on the labor market. In addition to these duties, I was assigned special administrative tasks which were very burdensome for me, since they took place during lunch breaks and rest periods and required movement from one end of the vast construction site to the other. On October 23, 1921, during one of the busiest days of my work, I contracted typhus from a group of workers arriving from Ufa Province, because by the nature of my duties I was required to establish the closest possible contact with arriving workers. This illness, contracted in the performance of my official duties, in addition to other harmful effects on my health, dulled what had previously been a good memory, but I continued to work tirelessly, striving to contribute according to my abilities to the construction of Power Station, adding my share of persistent labor for the benefit of the RSFSR.

On January 1, 1922, I received a responsible appointment to the position of Head of the Economic Department of the same construction project while retaining responsibility for hiring and distribution.

At present, under my authority are the two aforementioned offices, more than 600 workers, 35 employees, four workshops, and multi-billion

---

[158] ЦГАМО. Ф. 6336. Оп. 1. Д. 3. Л. 18.
[159] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 255.
[160] ГА РФ. Ф. Р-3917. Оп. 3. Д. 565. Л. 12; ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 278.

state property in the form of inventory, residential quarters, bathhouses, laundries, and so forth"[161].

It is possible that his life during those years differed little from that of an ordinary employee. Zhikhor worked without physical confinement[162], although camp guards were present at the construction site[163]. The project was considered a priority undertaking – the Power Station had originally been expected to begin operation in autumn 1921. However, the launch had to be postponed. The station ultimately entered service on June 4, 1922. At that moment it was the second most powerful thermal power station in Europe.

Zhikhor made repeated attempts to regain his freedom, including through the Moscow Political Red Cross. On October 29, 1919, he filled out a questionnaire stating that the reason for his arrest had been "the alleged transmission of military information to members of foreign military missions during the summer of 1918"[164]. a recommendation in support of the prisoner may have been provided by the Head of the All-Russian General Staff, N.I. Rattel. In addition, in November 1919, member of the Russian Communist Party V.I. Rakov, who had supervised Zhikhor's work at Rubber Industry Plant No. 4, together with a large group of workers, vouched for him as a man loyal to Soviet authority[165]. The documents were submitted through the Political Red Cross[166]. Nevertheless, these interventions achieved nothing.

Possibly in autumn 1919, Zhikhor once again entertained the idea of securing freedom through Ukrainian citizenship, which he may have been eligible to obtain. Most likely this explains the information he provided about himself in the "Questionnaire for All Prisoners in Concentration Camps throughout the Territory of the Russian Soviet Republic", completed on September 12, 1919: nationality – Ukrainian; citizenship – Ukrainian; native language – Russian-Ukrainian[167]. However, this too produced no result. Later on, falsifying personal questionnaire

[161] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 278.
[162] ГА РФ. Ф. Р-3917. Оп. 3. Д. 565. Л. 12.
[163] ГА РФ. Ф. Р-4042. Оп. 15. Д. 695. Л. 36.
[164] ЦГАМО. Ф. 6336. Оп. 1. Д. 3. Л. 18.
[165] Ibid. Л. 135–137 об.
[166] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 275.
[167] Ibid. Л. 272.

data became a habitual survival strategy for Zhikhor in hostile conditions. In the same questionnaire, under the item "With which foreigners did you maintain contacts in Russia and abroad", Zhikhor wrote: "I had no personal contacts"[168], although this had in fact been part of his direct official duties in his previous position. Regarding his case, Zhikhor stated: "I was not informed of any term; according to information from the Pol[itical] Red Cross, I was supposed to have been released from the camp back in June of this year"[169]. Speaking about the issue of guarantors, Zhikhor wrote: "Being alone, having neither relatives nor acquaintances in Moscow, and having spent an entire year in confinement, I am greatly hindered in finding guarantors, especially since I have never once been granted leave from the camp. I have been promised assistance in obtaining guarantees by People's Commissar Kursky and a verbal promise of surety from the communist Comrade Guseva (from Petersburg[170])"[171]. The camp administration classified Zhikhor among the intelligentsia with higher education[172].

In September 1920, the chief engineer of the Kashira Power Station, G.D. Tsiurupa (the brother of People's Commissar for Food A.D. Tsiurupa), wrote to the Main Administration of Forced Labor that Zhikhor was "especially necessary to us as an employee who has demonstrated exceptional experience and skill in his work"[173]. Correspondence then began with the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the National Economy (VSNKh), A.I. Rykov, regarding the possible application of the November 1920 amnesty to him. By that time, Zhikhor headed the Department (Section/Subsection) of Labor Registration and Distribution at the Kashira Power Station. In November 1920, G.D. Tsiurupa and administrator Kremenetsky wrote to Rykov that Zhikhor, "while first working at State Rubber Industry Plant No. 4 and then, since January 1920, at the construction of the Kashira Power Station, always demonstrated diligent and honest fulfillment of his official duties. While managing the Department of Labor Registration and Distribution, Zhikhor showed

168 Ibid.
169 Ibid. Л. 273.
170 Correctly: *Petrograd*.
171 ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 273.
172 Ibid. Л. 275.
173 ГА РФ. Ф. Р-3917. Оп. 3. Д. 565. Л. 26.

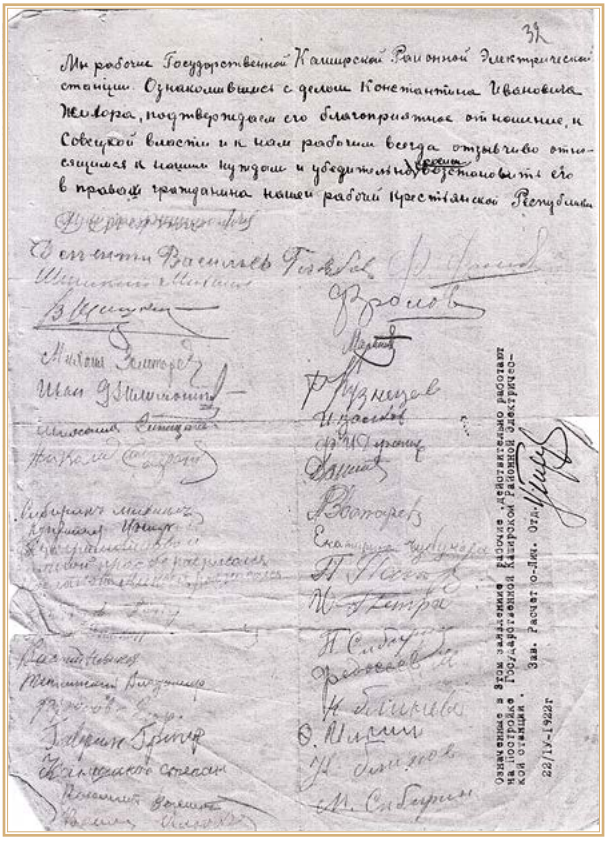
exceptional experience and skill in organizing this department, which under his leadership copes very successfully with its tasks, made all the more difficult by the almost complete absence on the labor market of qualified experienced workers and specialists. During his entire period of service and residence at the construction site of the Station, Zhikhor always proved fully loyal and was never observed in anything improper"[174]. During those same days, 71 workers of the Station signed a statement affirming that Zhikhor "honestly and conscientiously fulfills his duties", and strongly requested that he be retained in his current position[175].

In Zhikhor's registration card, compiled on December 25, 1920, in the Pokrovsky Forced Labor Camp of the Main Directorate of Public Works and (Forced) Labour Duties of the NKVD, it was noted that he possessed the specialties of construction technician and military specialist[176], and that he was being held by the Cheka as a hostage[177]. By decision of the Amnesty Commission on January 31, 1921, his sentence was reduced to five years – until September 6, 1923[178]. Zhikhor remained in the Pokrovsky camp throughout 1921 and 1922.

Moreover, in 1922 the camp commandant received instructions from the Main Directorate of Forced Labor to "urgently, within two days, return to the camp without the right to outside work the prisoner Zhikhor, who had been seconded from the camp to the Kashira construction project"[179]. The reason for such severity remains unclear.

Possibly, he had simply been forgotten, or some bureaucratic inconsistency had occurred. In a petition to the NKVD dated July 11, 1921, Zhikhor noted that the former political commissar of the Power Station had made inquiries about him at the Cheka in March 1921 and had "discovered that in the Cheka records there appears an arrested man named Zhikhor Konstantin Pavlovich, without indication of the charges, whereas my name is Zhikhor Konstantin Ivanovich, and furthermore there is no file on me at the Cheka at all. At the administration of the Moscow concentration camps the reason for my arrest is likewise unknown, though I

[174] ГА РФ. Ф. Р-4042. Оп. 15. Д. 695. Л. 7.
[175] Ibid. Л. 8–8 об.
[176] Ibid. Л. 1.
[177] Ibid. Л. 1 об.
[178] Ibid. Л. 1 об., 9.
[179] Ibid. Л. 16.



Petition by workers of the Kashira Regional Electric Power Station on behalf of K. I. Zhikhor, 1922. *State Archive of the Russian Federation. Published for the first time*

was informed there that I had been sentenced to five years of forced labor without indication of the actual offense"[180]. Of course, Zhikhor's case file did exist, and all documents were carefully added to it (even when his surname was distorted in petitions – for example, when he was referred to as *Zhikhar* or *Zhikhorov*[181]).

In July 1921, the Chief Engineer of the Power Station, G.D. Tsiurupa, informed the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the National Economy, P.A. Bogdanov, that Zhikhor, who had spent a year and a half as Head of the Subsection of Labor Hiring and Distribution, "personally organized this subsection, demonstrated exceptional experience and skill in his work, and fulfilled his duties diligently, honestly, and

[180] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 255 об.

[181] See, for example: Ibid. Л. 266, 268, 277.

conscientiously. In private life Comrade Zhikhor always proved fully loyal and was never observed in anything improper"[182].

On March 24, 1922, the commandant of the Pokrovsky Forced Labor Camp issued an authorization to guard Semyon Chuvilkin, instructing him to travel to Kashira and bring Zhikhor back to the camp[183]. However, the power station authorities were in no hurry to part with such a valuable specialist. On March 27, 1922, the construction administration of the Kashira Power Station informed the commandant of the Pokrovsky camp that "we are unable at present to release Comrade K.I. Zhikhor, since he occupies a responsible position here and has been employed at the construction site for nearly three years. Replacing him at this moment is impossible for us..."[184] Zhikhor was not handed over to Chuvilkin[185].

On March 28, 1922, Zhikhor appealed to the Special Commission for the Application of the November 1921 Amnesty with a lengthy statement regarding his amnesty request[186]. In this document, he reported that while still in Butyrka Prison he had "submitted seven petitions to various authorities, earnestly requesting that I be brought before a Revolutionary Tribunal, that some charges be brought against me, or at least that I be informed why I had been arrested. However, my request was not granted"[187]. The prisoner bitterly noted: "Almost all of my fellow inmates who have relatives, sufficient means, or connections have long since been released, even those who are clearly and demonstrably implicated in anti-state crimes. And I, who have been working for such a long time, sparing neither my health nor my strength, in a responsible position at a highly important state institution, cannot achieve not only release, but even the simple justice of being told why I have been under arrest for three and a half years. Even such White Guard officers as Slashchev-Krymsky, who shed workers' and peasants' blood with weapons in hand, have received amnesty"[188]. On the same

[182] Ibid. Л. 257.
[183] ГА РФ. Ф. Р-4042. Оп. 15. Д. 695. Л. 18.
[184] Ibid. Л. 17.
[185] Ibid. Л. 21.
[186] ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 278–279.
[187] Ibid. Л. 278.
[188] Ibid. Л. 278 об.

day, 66 workers of the State Kashira Power Station signed a petition on Zhikhor's behalf as a conscientious employee, requesting that he be retained in his position[189].

On March 30, 1922, the Chief Engineer of the Station, G.D. Tsiurupa, appealed to the Chairman of the GPU, Felix Dzerzhinsky, requesting amnesty for Zhikhor in light of his two and a half years of impeccable service on the construction project[190].

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee gathered information for Zhikhor's possible amnesty, requesting reports from all interested agencies. On April 13, 1922, Moscow Governmental Distribution Commission reviewed Zhikhor's case in connection with his petition. His release and removal of punishment, as well as transfer to compulsory labor without detention, were denied on the grounds that he was considered an active counterrevolutionary[191]. At the same time, as noted in a 1922 conclusion by the Department of Private Amnesty, during four years of imprisonment Zhikhor had "demonstrated impeccable conduct, a loyal attitude toward Soviet authority, and through his work rendered genuine service in organizing the First State Electric Power Station"[192]. In some documents Zhikhor was referred to as a former White officer, although in fact he had not been one[193].

On April 25, 1922, the Chief Engineer of the Power Station wrote to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee: "During the entire time of his presence at the construction site, citizen Zhikhor did not by a single word or action display anything anti-Soviet; on the contrary, through his work he consistently maintained order in his department, thereby contributing to the urgent work connected with the construction of the station. Nothing reprehensible was discovered in him during this time in political terms either"[194]. Supporting petitions for Zhikhor were signed by 66 Station workers, 200 residents of the village of Gorki in Kashira District, 160 residents of the village of Khitrovka in the same district,

189 Ibid. Л. 287.

190 Ibid. Л. 277.

191 ГА РФ. Ф. Р-4042. Оп. 15. Д. 695. Л. 24; Ф. Р-3917. Оп. 3. Д. 565. Л. 12; ЦА ФСБ. Д. Р-49135. Л. 1.

192 ГА РФ. Ф. Р-3917. Оп. 3. Д. 565. Л. 12.

193 Ibid. Л. 3.

194 Ibid. Л. 24.

residents of the village of Ternovo, Red Army soldiers of the 16th State Workers' Labor Artel, and others[195].

Finally, on July 18, 1922, the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee resolved to release Zhikhor[196]. The process, however, was delayed once again, this time because of bureaucratic complications: the copy of the decree lacked the official seal and the signature of the camp commandant, without which the Moscow Administration of Compulsory Labor of the NKVD refused to release the prisoner[197]. Only on August 17, 1922, was Zhikhor finally released from the camp, having apparently served the maximum possible term for the Civil War period. He continued to work on the power station construction project until 1924, first heading one department and later two[198]. In that same year, 1924, he was struck off from the rolls of the Red Army[199].

After the Release

Zhikhor was forced to part with his military profession and master a new one. He devoted the rest of his life to engineering and identified himself in questionnaires as an engineer[200]. In 1922, he even joined the Soviet Trade Employees' Union. In 1925, he worked for the publishing houses *Ogonyok* and *Mospoligraf*. From September 9 to December 1, 1925, he interned as a technical labor inspector in the Khamovniki District Labor Inspectorate. Beginning December 1, he worked as a technical labor inspector for Moscow's Krasnopresnensky District. On November 20, 1928, he resigned voluntarily and was appointed to the Labor Protection Department of the USSR People's Commissariat of Labor as scientific secretary of the Scientific-Technical Council[201]. In early 1929, he directed courses for the advanced training of

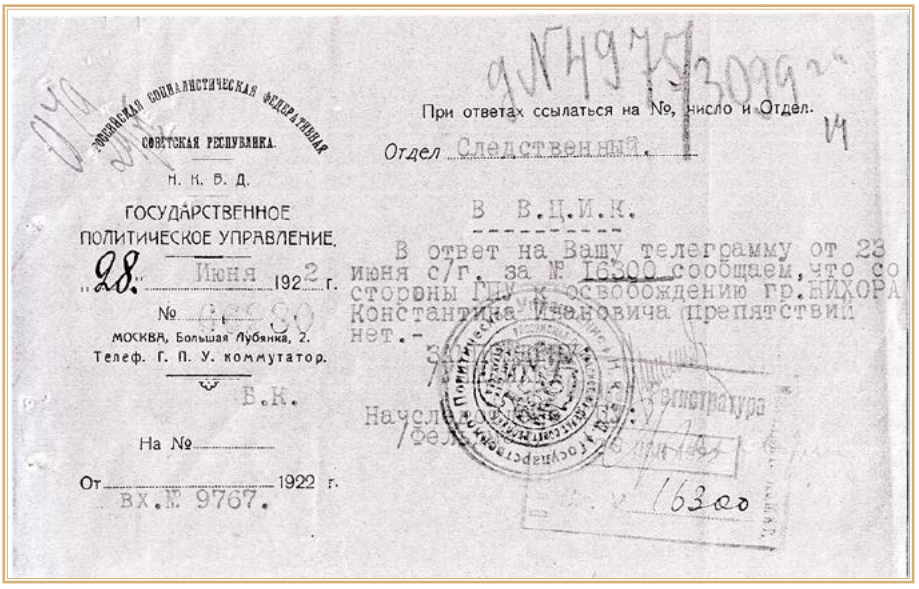
195 Ibid. Л. 24 об., 27, 32–36.
196 ГА РФ. Ф. Р-4042. Оп. 15. Д. 695. Л. 26, 27.
197 Ibid. Л. 30.
198 ГА РФ. Ф. А-390. Оп. 24. Д. 5589. Л. 8 об.
199 Order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR on Army Personnel, 1924, no. 338, 14 October.
200 ГА РФ. Ф. А-390. Оп. 24. Д. 5589. Л. 1.
201 Ibid. Л. 1 об.

technical inspectors[202]. In the summer of 1929, he attained the position of senior safety engineer. As of May 1930, Zhikhor worked for the Moscow Construction Association, located in the Second House of Soviets on Revolution Square[203]. From July 1, 1933, to March 1, 1935, Zhikhor taught industrial safety at the Moscow Architectural Technical School[204]. He was also an Associate Professor at the Moscow Engineering-Technological Institute of Bread Baking[205]. In 1934, he began work at the Central Research Institute of Labor for the Disabled, where he served as a safety engineer until his next arrest.

Even in the field of industrial safety he approached his work creatively and with the thoroughness of an old specialist. He was a regular contributor to the journal *Labor Protection*, where he published a number of articles on workplace safety, including: *An Accident During Oxy-Fuel Welding* (December 1925), *The Safety Cell at the Trekhgornaya Manufactory* (January 1926), *Do Not Remove Safety Guards* (April 1926), *Eye Injuries* (August–September 1926), *Mechanization of Moving Heavy Loads* (January 1927), *a Serious Accident During Iron Galvanization* (December 1927), and *a Case of Explosion at a Gas Generator Installation* (January 1928[206]). In 1928, the publishing house *Voprosy Truda* issued his pamphlet *Hazards of Gas Welding Operations and Methods of Prevention* in its popular industrial safety series. Accidents during gas welding operations and methods for preventing them were also the subject of a report delivered by Zhikhor at the All-Union Conference of Technical and Sanitary Inspection in 1927. The Labor Department of the Moscow Soviet was preparing for publication Zhikhor's *Practical Guide to the Inspection of Oxygen-Acetylene Installations*. In 1926, at the request of the Central Museum of Labor Protection, the former military specialist wrote a dramatized mock trial on industrial safety, which was staged in Moscow clubs. In addition, in 1933 he published the brochure *Safety Procedures in the Operation of Steam Boilers*, intended as explanatory material for a series of lantern slides.

---

[202] Ibid. Л. 7.
[203] Ibid. Л. 3.
[204] ГА РФ. Ф. 10035. Оп. 1. Д. П-41957. Л. 22.
[205] ЦГАКО. Ф. П-6799. Оп. 8. Д. СУ-9894. Т. 1. Л. 14.
[206] ГА РФ. Ф. А-390. Оп. 24. Д. 5589. Л. 8 об. – 9.

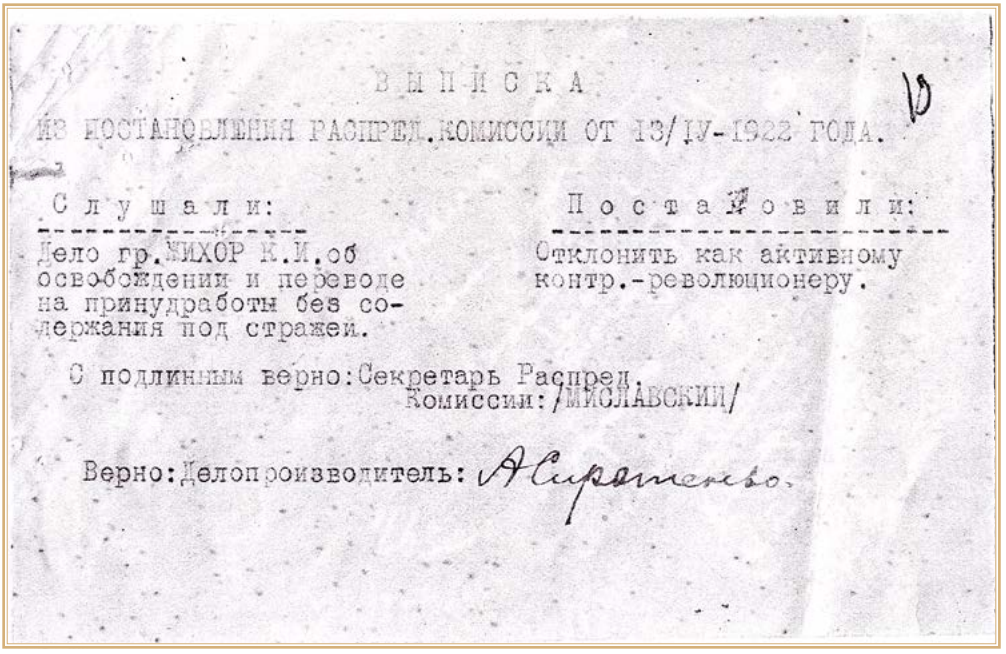

РОССИЙСКАЯ СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКАЯ ФЕДЕРАТИВНАЯ СОВЕТСКАЯ РЕСПУБЛИКА.
Н. К. В. Д.
ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЕ УПРАВЛЕНИЕ.
28. Июня 1922 г.
№
МОСКВА, Большая Лубянка, 2.
Телеф. Г. П. У. коммутатор.
Б.К.
На №
От 1922 г.
ВХ.№ 9767.
При ответах ссылаться на №, число и Отдел.
Отдел Следственный.
В В.Ц.И.К.
В ответ на Вашу телеграмму от 23 июня с/г. за № 16300 сообщаем, что со стороны ГПУ к освобождению гр. ЖИХОРА Константина Ивановича препятствий нет.-
Начальник
Секретарь
16300

GPU report to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee stating that there were no claims against K. I. Zhikhor, 1922. *State Archive of the Russian Federation. Published for the first time*

After his release from arrest, Zhikhor lived in Moscow, first in Borisoglebsky Lane, and from 1926 to 1935 at 6 Volkhonka Street, apartments 11 and later 20, into which he moved in 1930[207]. Zhikhor had three dependents. By 1935 his family consisted of his wife, Lidia Andreevna Litvinenko, aged 39, an artist employed by the Moscow Metro construction project, and their daughter Oksana, aged three and a half (born September 14, 1931)[208]. During the final years of the Soviet era, Zhikhor’s daughter, Oksana Litvinenko – a well-known Soviet and Russian geophysicist and Professor of Technical Sciences – requested access to her father’s case files and searched for relatives.

As a result of the upheavals of the Soviet period, the once cheerful and lively Zhikhor became a crushed and frightened man, excessively cautious[209], anxiously asking people to lower their voices whenever an acquaintance loudly declared himself a former officer, and trying to avoid discussions on current political issues[210].

[207] Ibid. Л. 1, 8; Ф. 10035. Оп. 1. Д. П-41957. Л. 3, 4.
[208] ГА РФ. Ф. 10035. Оп. 1. Д. П-41957. Л. 4 об.
[209] Ibid. Л. 24.
[210] Ibid. Л. 17 об.



ВЫПИСКА

ИЗ ПОСТАНОВЛЕНИЯ РАСПРЕД.КОМИССИИ ОТ 13/IV-1922 ГОДА.

Слушали:	Постановили:
Дело гр. ЖИХОР К.И. об освобождении и переводе на принудработы без содержания под стражей.	Отклонить как активному контр.-революционеру.

С подлинным верно: Секретарь Распред. Комиссии: /МИСЛАВСКИЙ/

Верно: Делопроизводитель: А. Сиратенко.

Extract from the resolution denying K. I. Zhikhor release, 1922.
State Archive of the Russian Federation. Published for the first time

His caution, however, proved useless when entire social strata were being purged. On April 5, 1935, Zhikhor, then an engineer at the Institute of Labor for the Disabled, was arrested again under Articles 58-10 and 58-6 of the Criminal Code on the grounds that he was allegedly anti-Soviet and connected with the former intelligence officer of the General Staff, Semyon Ilyich Mashin, who had been executed in 1930 for espionage on behalf of Japan[211]. The arrest was carried out by an officer of the Operational Department of the State Security Administration of the NKVD Directorate for Moscow Region.

During an interrogation on April 8, 1935, the arrested man was asked: "Name for me the General Staff officers of the old army with whom you met after your release from the con[centration] c[amp]"[212]. Zhikhor named the former colonel V.N. Gerbert (among military specialists of the General Staff the better-known figure was former captain A.V. Gerbert) and a certain Samsonov. Speaking about acquaintances who had been repressed, he mentioned the former military official of

[211] Ibid. L. 1.
[212] Ibid. L. 10.

the Foreign Section of the General Staff, Mashin. Later he also referred to meetings with military specialists – former General N.M. Potapov and former Captain P.M. Strykhar[213]. The investigator was interested in Zhikhor's foreign connections, including his contacts with the French communist Captain Jacques Sadoul (whom Zhikhor had met in 1916). There was nothing extraordinary in either Zhikhor's testimony or that of the other witnesses. Nevertheless, he was accused of contacts with foreign military representatives before the Revolution, although such contacts had in fact been part of his official duties at the time.

On May 21, 1935, by decision of the Special Council of the NKVD of the USSR, Zhikhor was sentenced to three years of administrative exile in the Kirov Krai, with the sentence counted from the date of arrest[214] (persons in administrative exile were deprived of their passports.) He wished to appeal the decision, considering it unjust. However, appeals were permitted only after one-third of the sentence had been served. In this case he was rehabilitated on October 23, 1990, under Part 1, Article 1 of the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of January 16, 1989.

In August 1935, Zhikhor settled in the town of Yaransk, where he obtained employment at the cooperative industrial artel "Metallist", becoming head of its wage-rate and labor-standardization bureau[215]. Konstantin Ivanovich tried very hard to ingratiate himself with the authorities. In an autobiography written in January 1936, he stated: "I carry out public work through the Workers' Invention Bureau, attended political education courses when the resolutions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern were being studied. In the evenings I conduct technical minimum classes for two groups of blacksmiths"[216]. But none of this helped.

For the third time, he was arrested on February 9, 1938, in Yaransk by the local district NKVD department on orders coming from the town of Kirov. He was accused of allegedly being "an agent of one of the foreign intelligence services", on whose behalf he had engaged in

[213] Ibid. Л. 14–14 об.
[214] Ibid. Л. 32; ЦГАКО. Ф. П-6799. Оп. 8. Д. СУ-9894. Т. 1. Л. 11.
[215] ЦГАКО. Ф. П-6799. Оп. 8. Д. СУ-9894. Т. 1. Л. 4, 7.
[216] Ibid. Л. 15.

espionage activities[217], and of having "systematically conducted c[ounter]r[evolutionary] agitation, spreading c[ounter]r[evolutionary] fabrications regarding the policies of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and the Soviet government"[218].

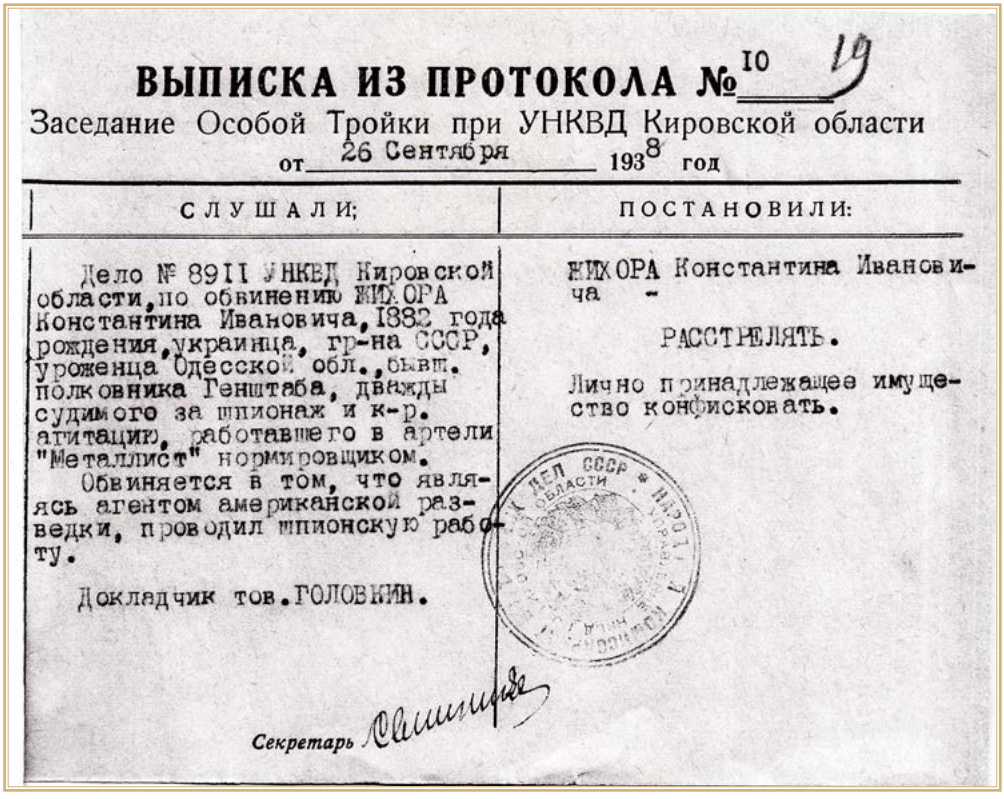
Konstantin Ivanovich was held in the Kirov city prison. The biographical questionnaire compiled after his arrest mentioned his prison and camp ordeals during the Civil War, which did not improve his chances for a favorable outcome.

The materials of the investigative case fully expose the NKVD officials who killed an innocent man. The indictment asserted that "the NKVD Directorate for Kirov Region received information that Konstantin Zhikhor, who was living in exile in the Kirov Krai, was carrying out espionage work"[219]. The NKVD officials did not explain how an administratively exiled man living in the remote district town of Yaransk could even theoretically have engaged in such activity.

During interrogations, Zhikhor confessed to everything that was demanded of him. Above all, he admitted that he had been recruited by the American military attaché Colonel Judson (*Джедсон*, as stated in the case materials) as early as 1916, and then "re-recruited" by the same man in June 1917 (what exactly this meant is unclear, but apparently it referred to being recruited a second time). Evidently, this concerned William Judson, who came to Russia in 1917 as part of Elihu Root's American mission. (In 1916, as far as can be determined, Judson was not in Russia and could not have recruited anyone there.)

Judson allegedly proposed that Zhikhor provide information on the condition of the Red Army (the investigators were unconcerned by the fact that in neither 1916 nor 1917 did the Red Army yet exist), promising to pay him 100 rubles a month. According to the investigation's version of events, Zhikhor and Judson continued working together until 1930[220]. The investigators again ignored the fact that Zhikhor had spent most of that period either out of military service or under arrest, while Judson himself had died in March 1923. Apparently to avoid

[217] Ibid. Л. 1.
[218] Ibid. Л. 2.
[219] Ibid. Л. 17.
[220] Ibid. Л. 10.



ВЫПИСКА ИЗ ПРОТОКОЛА № 10 19

Заседание Особой Тройки при УНКВД Кировской области

от 26 Сентября 1938 год

СЛУШАЛИ:	ПОСТАНОВИЛИ:
Дело № 8911 УНКВД Кировской области, по обвинению ЖИХОРА Константина Ивановича, 1882 года рождения, украинца, гр-на СССР, уроженца Одесской обл., бывш. полковника Генштаба, дважды судимого за шпионаж и к-р. агитацию, работавшего в артели "Металлист" нормировщиком. Обвиняется в том, что являясь агентом американской разведки, проводил шпионскую работу. Докладчик тов. ГОЛОВКИН.	ЖИХОРА Константина Ивановича – РАССТРЕЛЯТЬ. Лично принадлежащее имущество конфисковать.

Секретарь

Extract from the minutes of the meeting containing the death sentence imposed on K. I. Zhikhor. *Central State Archive of the Kirov Oblast. Published for the first time*

dwelling on such details, the indictment simply stated that Zhikhor remained an American spy as late as 1938, while acknowledging that no material evidence existed in the case[221] – though this was considered entirely irrelevant.

On April 1, 1938, the NKVD Directorate for Kirov Region attempted to transfer the case to the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR[222]. However, the case was returned because the sentence was to be issued by the Special Troika attached to the NKVD Directorate for the Kirov Krai. On September 26, 1938, Zhikhor was sentenced to death under Articles 58-6 and 58-10, Part 1, of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR. The sentence was carried out in Kirov on September 29, 1938 – almost exactly twenty years after the beginning of Zhikhor's

[221] Ibid. Л. 18.
[222] Ibid.

prison and camp ordeals. On February 27, 1990, Zhikhor was rehabilitated in this case by the military prosecutor of the Volga-Ural Military District on the grounds that no objective evidence of his guilt existed[223].

***

The case of K.I. Zhikhor and the others arrested in the autumn of 1918 in connection with the discovery in a Soviet General Staff of a so-called "White Guard archive" is highly interesting. On the one hand, the reason for the arrests was more than serious: a cache of secret documents had been discovered in a Soviet military institution, many of which apparently related to the Moscow White underground. However, the Cheka failed to determine who stood behind it.

Let us attempt to offer some hypotheses on this matter.

Several versions are possible. Most likely, the material was collected by one of the military specialists, since the reports on the condition of Red Army units had clearly been prepared by a professional. Only a military specialist could evaluate the significance of particular documents and had access to such information. It may be that the material was assembled in preparation for a future defection to the Whites together with the documents. On the other hand, by the autumn of 1918, when the documents were discovered, they had already become obsolete, since they dated back to the spring of that year. Thus, the creator of the archive apparently never managed to make use of them. It cannot be ruled out that one of Zhikhor's subordinates, or even Zhikhor himself (although no evidence is known of any personal disloyalty on his part), was connected with the anti-Bolshevik underground or was collecting information in the hope that it might someday prove useful — for example, in the event of departure for Ukraine, something Zhikhor himself had hoped for. It is less likely that the papers were hidden by some casual visitor to the apartment, although the premises had not been locked.

Naturally, the Cheka needed to determine whether a counterrevolutionary cell existed within the Military Agent Section of the All-Russian

[223] Ibid. Л. 24.

General Staff, or whether a lone individual had acted independently. However, the official investigation achieved nothing, and all those arrested except Zhikhor had to be released after several months in custody. As a result, one of the defendants in the case, the military specialist A.N. Tsurpalev, fled to the Whites. It cannot be excluded that the cache belonged either to him or to someone who was never implicated in the case at all.

By the time of the arrests, the work of the Military Agent Section was no longer especially intense because Soviet Russia was dismantling its network of military agents abroad, many of whom had sided with the opponents of the Bolsheviks. On September 2, 1918, the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs issued an order dismissing military agents abroad from service or recalling them to Russia[224]. The arrests of the Military Agent Section personnel began literally just a few days later. Subsequently, intelligence operations were removed entirely from the authority of the All-Russian General Staff and transferred to the newly created Field Headquarters of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic[225]. As a consequence of all these developments, the Bolsheviks later had to rebuild military intelligence almost from scratch and with the assistance of different specialists.

And although the organizer of the cache was never identified, Zhikhor, as Head of the Section, ultimately had to answer for the disorder within it. Because of this, he spent the entire Civil War in prison and labor camps – until the summer of 1922 (although during his work at the Kashira Power Station he apparently remained only formally classified as a prisoner). Later he endured several more arrests, the logical culmination of which was his execution during the years of the Great Terror. It hardly needs to be said that in none of these cases was there any evidence of Zhikhor's guilt. He was a loyal and conscientious worker in the old army, in the Red Army, and in civilian service alike, and the cruel and unjust treatment inflicted upon him – and upon hundreds of thousands of others during the Soviet period – had far-reaching consequences for the country.

---

[224] РГВА. Ф. 11. Оп. 5. Д. 97. Л. 59–59 об.

[225] *Кочик В.Я.* Советская военная разведка: структура и кадры. Статья первая (1917–1918) // Свободная мысль. 1998. № 5 (1474). С. 103.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

References

1. Volkov S.V. Generaly i shtaboficery russkoj armii: opyt martirologa. Moscow: FIV, 2012. Vol. 1. 736 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/qpwxmv (In Russ.).
2. Volkov S.V. Generals and staff officers of the Russian Army: the Martyrology experience. Moscow: FIV, 2012. Vol. 2. 728 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/qpwxnf (In Russ.).
3. Ganin A.V. In the shadow of the "Spring": Former officers under repression in the early 1930s. *Rodina.* 2014;(6):95–101. https://www.elibrary.ru/silrgt (In Russ.).
4. Ganin A.V. "Two months as Chief of the General Staff (September — October 1917)" by General V.V. Marushevsky. *Istoricheskij vestnik = Historical bulletin.* 2024;(49): 224-325. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.35549/HR.2024.2024.49.009
5. Ganin A.V. Cadres of the General Staff during the Russian Civil War, 1917-1922. Moscow: Kuchkovo pole Muzeon, 2023. Vol. 1. 1000 p. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.31168/907589-29-2 https://www.elibrary.ru/ebudaf
6. Ganin A.V. Cadres of the General Staff during the Russian Civil War, 1917-1922. Moscow: Kuchkovo pole Muzeon, 2023. Vol. 2. 968 p. (in Russ.). https://doi.org/10.31168/907589-29-2 https://www.elibrary.ru/nvijfz
7. Ganin A.V. a disservice to General Denikin. *Rodina.* 2025;(10):110–113. https://www.elibrary.ru/trcmnk (In Russ.).
8. Ganin A.V. The Brain of the Army during the "Russian Troubles": Articles and documents. Moscow: The Russian way, 2013. 880 p. https://www.elibrary.ru/author_items.asp (In Russ.).
9. Ganin A.V. Stanislavskij: peripetii biografii russkogo oficera. In: Velikaya vojna 1914–1918: Al'manah Rossijskoj associacii istorikov Pervoj mirovoj vojny: Rossiya v Pervoj mirovoj vojne.

2025;10:235–248. URL: https://raipmv.ru/upload/file/almanah_10_na_sayt.pdf (In Russ.).
10. Ganin A.V. Reports of white agents in the Red Army. 1919. *Questions of history*. 2012;(6):3–20. 2012;(6):3–20. URL: https://istmat.org/files/uploads/48428/donesenia.pdf (In Russ.).
11. Kochik V.Ya. Soviet military intelligence: structure and personnel. The first article (1917-1918). *Free thought = Svobodnaja mysl'*. 1998;(5):94–104. URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20150518083021/http://vif2ne.ru/nvk/forum/arhprint/228557 (In Russ.).

Andrey V. Ganin
D.Sc. (History),
Leading Research Fellow Institute of Slavic Studies
Russian Academy of Sciences,
SPIN: 1144-9875,
AuthorID: 523679,
ORCID: 0000-0002-8602-1990

Received 19.11.2025
Revised 21.12.2025
Accepted 27.01.2026

Author Guidelines

The Editorial Board accepts manuscripts that align with the journal's scope and focus.

The Editorial Board accepts for review:

- scientific articles;
- book reviews;
- documents;
- historiographical materials;
- articles/notes dedicated to eminent representatives of historical science.

The Editorial Board does not accept:

1. previously published works or simultaneous submissions to multiple publications;
2. plagiarized content;
3. materials that fail to meet the content and formatting requirements outlined below.

Content Requirements

The manuscript must be submitted to the Editorial Board as two separate files (.doc/.docx format only):

1. The manuscript text.
2. Author(s)' information.

The file name must contain the last name of the author(s).

The manuscript length should range from 1 to 2 print units (40 000–80 000 characters including spaces); font size 14 (Times New Roman without automatic hyphenation), first line indented 1.25 cm, line spacing 1.5. Longer submissions may be accepted with Editorial Board approval.

The following article elements are mandatory:

- Author(s)' full name and article title (in Russian and English).
- Abstract (in Russian and English). The abstract length should

range from 200 to 250 words. The abstract is a standalone text describing the main research results, including relevance, purpose, research methods, and brief findings.
- Keywords: 4–6 phrases separated by semicolons (in Russian and English).
- Article text.
- Acknowledgements.
- Author(s)' contribution.
- Conflict of interest.
- References.

The manuscript proper must be followed by:

Acknowledgements
This section lists all external funding sources that influenced the research findings, as well as all non-author individuals that contributed to the study.

Author(s)' Contribution
For multiple authors, describe each co-author's contribution according to CRediT.

Conflict of Interest
The manuscript must declare any current or potential conflicts of interest. If none exist, state «The author declares (/authors declare) no conflict of interest.»

References
Author(s) should cite works accessible to reviewers and readers. The reference list must contain at least 15 sources. Self-citation, i.e. including the author(s)' work(s) on the reference list, is permitted but must account for no more than 10% of all references.
Only sources directly mentioned in the text may appear in the reference list. References should include articles and monographs.
The journal has accepted an adapted version of the Vancouver Style of References design, which is one of the standards recognized by international databases.

The Editorial Board invites the authors to get acquainted with the features of Vancouver Style and design examples in the brochure on the official website of the British Columbia Institute of Technology: https://www.bcit.ca/files/library/pdf/bcit-vancouverstyle.pdf

The rules for the design of sources in Russian in References have been prepared in accordance with the recommendations of the Association of Scientific Editors and Publishers (ASEP), which you can also find in the journal Scientific Editor and Publisher:
https://www.scieditor.ru/jour/article/view/66/55

Links to articles:

Surname and first name of the 1st author, Surname and first name of the 2nd author. The title of the article. *The name of the journal*. Year;Volume(Number):00–00. https://doi.org/10.13655/1.6.1234567

Example:

Clarke A., Gatineau M., Grimaud O., et al. A bibliometric overview of public health research in Europe. *The European Journal of Public Health*. 2007:17(Suppl. 1):43–49. https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/ckm063

Links to books and monographs:

With 1–4 authors:

Surname and first name of the 1st author, Surname and first name of the 2nd author. *The title of the book or monograph*. The issue number (if there is one). City: Publishing house; Year. 000 p.

An indication of the editor or compiler:

Surname and first name of the 1st editor, Surname and first name of the 2nd editor, Eds. *The title of the book or monograph*. The reissue number (if there is one). City: Publishing house; Year. 000 p.

Example:

Young A. *Teaching writing across the curriculum*. Upper Saddle River (New Jersey): Pearson Prentice Hall; 1999. 70 p.

Bean J.C., Melzer D. *Engaging ideas: The Professor's guide to integrating writing, critical thinking, and active learning in the classroom*. 3rd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; 2021. 400 p.

A chapter from a monograph or an article from a collection:
Surname and first name of the 1st author, Surname and first name of the 2nd author. The title of the chapter or article. *The title of the monograph or collection*. City: Publishing house; Year. 000 p.

The name of the journal and the titles of monographs and collections are italicized. Dots are placed after the initials. Do not put a comma between the author(s)' last name and initials. If the article has more than five authors, the full names of the first three should be given, followed by «et al.».

Links to articles in Russian:
Surname and first name of the 1st author, Surname and first name of the 2nd author in Russian. The title of the article. *The name of the journal*. Year;Volume(Number):00–00.
Surname and first name of the 1st author, Surname and first name of the 2nd author in English. Translation of the title of the article. *Transliteration of the name of the journal/Official name of the journal in English*. Year;Volume(Number):00–00 (In Russ.).
Example:
Ганиева Г.Р., Васильева А.А. К вопросу подготовки переводчиков в сфере профессиональной коммуникации в техническом вузе. *Вестник Казанского технологического университета*. 2013;12:365–367.
Ganieva G.R., Vasil'eva A.A. The translator in the sphere of professional communication project. *Herald of Kazan National Research Technological University*. 2013;12:365–367 (In Russ.).

Links to books and monographs in Russian:
Surname and first name of the 1st author, Surname and first name of the 2nd author in Russian. *The title of the book or monograph in Russian*. City: Publishing house; Year. 000 p.
Surname and first name of the 1st author, Surname and first name of the 2nd author in English. *Translation of the monograph title*. City: Transliteration of the publishing house name; Year. 000 p. (In Russ.).
Example:
Морозов В.Э. *Культура письменной научной речи*. М.: Икар; 2008. 268 с.
Morozov V.E. *Culture of written scholarly speech*. Moscow: Ikar; 2008. 268 p. (In Russ.).

Formatting Requirements

Illustrations. Articles published in the journal may include illustrations. Electronic illustrations and photos must be submitted as separate files with a minimum size of 1000 pixels on the short side. Illustrations require captions describing the event or object being depicted, as well as the date. Illustration titles must appear in both Russian and English. Editorial Board reserves the right to select or replace article illustrations.

Citations. Use consecutively numbered (e.g., 1–32) footnotes in font size 12.

Footnotes may include Internet sources (news, reports, forums, videos), legal documents, statistics, media publications and textbooks. Citing dissertations/abstracts is allowed, provided that they are publicly accessible to readers. References to accepted but unpublished articles can be included with an «in press» label if the author(s) obtain written permission and acceptance confirmation. Information from unpublished sources should have an «unpublished data/documents» label, and the author(s) must, likewise, obtain written permission for the use of such materials.
All internet sources, including those cited in footnotes, require access dates.

Author(s)' Information

A separate file must include:

- Author(s)' full name.
- Academic credentials, title, position and affiliation (full institution name, city, country).
- ORCID, SPIN code, or AuthorID.
- Contact details: postal address with zip code, phone/fax (office, mobile), e-mail.

Copyright

The authors publishing in this journal agree with the following:

1. The authors retain the copyright to the work and entitle the journal to publish the work for the first time.
2. The authors reserve the right to enter into separate contractual arrangements regarding the non-exclusive distribution of the version of the work published here (for example, its placement in the institute's repository, publication in a book), with reference to its original publication in this journal.
3. Authors have the right to post their work on the Internet (for example, in the institute's repository or personal website) before and during the review process by this journal, as this can lead to a productive discussion and more links to this work (See: The Effect of Open Access).

Privacy

The names and e-mail addresses entered on the website of this journal will be used exclusively for the purposes indicated by this journal and will not be used for any other purposes or provided to other persons and organizations.

ПОДПИСКА

Оформить подписку на журнал «Исторический вестник» можно онлайн на сайте Почты России.

www.podpiska.pochta.ru

Наш индекс — ПА772.

Материалы журнала включены в систему Российского индекса научного цитирования.

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes



The next volume of The Historical Reporter
will be devoted to various sources of visual imagery,
including rare ones — coats of arms, “beard tokens”,
military standards and arms, triumphal arches
and fireworks, departmental awards, and other
unusual badges of distinction.



РУНИВЕРС

ПРОЕКТ РУНИВЕРС

Свободный доступ к материалам по отечественной истории и культуре

Тысячи дореволюционных книг и журналов

Старинные атласы с уникальными картами российских земель и городов

Все дореволюционные военные энциклопедии

Полное собрание законов Российской империи

Собрание архивных документов

Это и многое другое вы можете найти на сайте www.runivers.ru

Книжная серия «Наглядная хронология»

Планируется выпуск следующих изданий:

От Руси к России (X–XVI века)

Рождение Российского царства

Россия в эпоху Смуты

Россия при первых Романовых

Россия при Петре Великом

Россия в эпоху дворцовых переворотов

Россия при Екатерине Великой

Россия в первой половине XIX века

Россия во второй половине XIX века

Россия в XX веке