

**MSC 2020****International Scientific and Practical Conference «MAN. SOCIETY.  
COMMUNICATION»****THE CHANGING TIMES IN THE MONASTIC SOLICITOR'S  
CORRESPONDENCE (17<sup>TH</sup> – EARLY 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)**

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**Abstract**

In the article, the behavioural practices of the second half of the XVII – beginning of the XVIII century are considered on the basis of new archival material. The funds of the Valday Iversky Monastery and Tikhvin Assumption Monastery of the Archive of the Saint Petersburg Institute of History contain extensive correspondence between the monastic authorities and their representatives in Moscow, Novgorod and other cities on various administrative matters. The epistles of the archimandrites of these monasteries and the detailed replies of the monastic solicitors contain detailed descriptions of court cases, tax collection, new recruits supply, mobilization of monastic property for military needs, changes in the culture and life of the turn of the XVII-XVIII centuries. These new materials allow us to analyze in a new way the informal aspects of government policy, ways of adapting the population to the tsar's edicts, and clarify the content and chronology of the multifaceted process of transition of the Moscow Tsardom ( to the modern history period.

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*Keywords:* Russia of the XVII century, government reforms of Peter the Great's, bells, tobacco, history of clothing



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## 1. Introduction

At the turn of the XVII–XVIII centuries, Russia made one of the most significant changes in its history. Its assessments were and remain closely related to the worldview of researchers and thinkers who approached the deeds of Peter the Great and the results of his reforms from the point of view of the prevailing ideas of their time. With the abundance of works devoted to the history of Russia in the Peter and pre-Peter times, the least studied are the daily life of the inhabitants of the Russian state, their reaction to cardinal changes in all the life spheres in the eyes of one or two generations..

## 2. Problem Statement

The assessments of Peter the Great in historical and historiosophical works range from enthusiastic praise to categorical condemnation – from the “tsar-demiurge” to the “tsar-antichrist” (Burlak et al., 2003; Medushevskij, 1994; Solov'ev, 2009). Aksakov (1889) ascertained that:

Peter's great work, as an exceptional worship of the West, as an exceptional denial of all Russian, ... was exactly a new thing, unprecedented in Russia... this is exactly a revolution, and in this regard, Peter cannot be called a successor. No, it had no predecessors in ancient Russia. (p. 48)

Platonov (1917), on the contrary, believed that “Peter's activity did not bring anything radically new in comparison with the past” (pp. 541-542). Such different approaches to the problem, perhaps not so categorical, remain relevant to this day.

## 3. Research Questions

The urgent research task remains a concrete historical analysis of how the new phenomena of Russian life of the pre-Peter period correlated with the subsequent transformations of the early XVIII century. This article selects several of the most significant phenomena of the second half of the XVII century and analyzes their connection with the Peter's reforms: the recruitment of so-called “New Order Regiments” and the establishment of a regular army in the first years of the Great Northern War; the borrowing of resources from the church in the second half of the XVII century and confiscation of church property at the beginning of the Great Northern War, including the removal of church bells for casting cannons; the practice of tobacco distribution in the XVII century and its legalization in 1698; the appearance of new foreign elements in clothing in the last decades of the XVII century and the cardinal reform of dress in 1698-1702.

## 4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this comparison is to clarify the multidimensional process of restructuring Russian society at the turn of the XVII–XVIII centuries and highlighting the leading trend that made it successful.

## 5. Research Methods

Most of the used information about the complex and contradictory processes of the period under study is contained in official records, since the private archives of that time have been preserved in incomparably poor condition. A fresh perspective on the history of the transition period from the Moscow tsardom of the XVII century to the modern time is given by internal monastic correspondence: letters from the large monasteries authorities to their representatives in the cities and their replies. Recently, this type of source has attracted increased attention from researchers (Berelowitch, 2016; Novokhatko, 2017). These documents contain vivid responses to many events of national significance, as well as to the phenomena of everyday life in Russia of the XVII and early XVIII centuries. The paper uses documents from the funds of the Valday Iversky Monastery (f. 181) and Tikhvin Assumption Monastery (f. 132), preserved at the Archive of the Saint Petersburg Institute of history of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Archiv SPb II RAN). This article summarizes the results of the author's long-term research on the history of the second half of the XVII – beginning of the XVIII century, based on this set of sources.

## 6. Findings

The historical literature discusses the question of the readiness of Peter's military reform. Some researchers believe that the “New Order Regiments” of the XVII century were “a new sprout from the old tree”: they had elements of the army of the modern time, but they remained part of the old military system and therefore did not yet become a regular army (Anisimov, 1989, pp. 96-101; Sedov, 2008, pp. 290, 323). Another point of view is based on the fact that the “New Order Regiments” of the XVII century had already been a regular army (Kurbatov, 2003 Malov, 2006).

Let's consider this problem through the practice of recruiting infantry and reiters regiments during the second half of the XVII — early XVIII century according to the documents of the Valday Iversky Monastery. In connection with the beginning of the Russo-Turkish War (1673-1681), recruitment to the infantry regiments was announced. Ideally, it was supposed to collect those soldiers who already had combat experience of the Russo-Polish war of 1654-1667, but were disbanded at its end. The actual state of thing during the collection of former soldiers was described in detail to his authorities by the solicitor of the Novgorod habitation of the Valday Iversky Monastery V. Samsonov: “The other sent soldiers were unreasonable, although they probably will be accepted; but the others will be hardly chosen: that, who were sent from Lokotsk - he has no hands, his arms are twisted in his elbows, he can't even bring a spoon to his mouth, and the one from the village of Isensk is such a rogue and a hawker, probably he is a cow shepherd; maybe he started drinking on the road. There is also the Gagransky Merkushka, he has no money at all, his brothers feed him. Imagine, what kind of servants they will be” (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. d, p. 19). It is important to emphasize that the maintenance of soldiers called up for service was assigned not to the treasury, but to the peasant volost (district) that supplied the recruit. A similar practice of recruitment to soldiers' regiments can be traced in the years of the Crimean and Azov campaigns.

At the beginning of the Russian Northern War, two fundamentally new steps were taken to create a regular army. Recruits began to be taken not only for a few months of marching time, but for life. There was systematic information about their training – a crucial way to turn recruits into a regular military unit.

Now the fate of the soldiers no longer depended on the next payment from the peasant community from which they were exposed. From now on, their life was entirely determined by the state's maintenance, training, and the fate of the regiment that became their home (Sedov, 2015). Thus, using the previous experience of the evolution of "New Order Regiments", Peter I took a decisive step towards the creation of a regular army. To replace certain signs of regularity of the military system of the XVII century the army of the modern time was created. The regular army cannot exist on its own, but has become part of the regular state created under Peter the Great.

Another important issue of discussion in the transition period of the second half of the XVII – early XVIII century is the relationship between the autocratic power and the church. In historical literature, the prevailing view is that the leading trend of that time was the struggle of the tsarist and Patriarchal power, which ended with the submission of the latter at the end of the XVII century, and then the abolition of the Patriarchate in 1721.

The documents that the monastery's archives allow to offer a different view at the problem: centuries-old tradition of patronage of the Emperor over the church allows to analyze the relations of church and state specified time, not in the sense of contrasting with the previous tradition, and as it is a natural evolution, but in the new environment. In December, 1669 the authorities of the Valday Iversky Monastery handed a petition to the tsar for non-payment of Streletsky bread. The decision of the Duma on this petition was transmitted to the monks in these words: "You are hoping for the old to come back, that all the the state pays for you, the servicemen are hard to be dead". In March, 1670 the Iverian authorities again began to bother the tsar about the reduction of taxes, and Alexey Mikhailovich rebuked them with words: "Let the old men brew their beer not so often, father, but I can't let my Streletsy be dead" (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. c, p. 5, 87-88). These authentic words were spoken in the days of Stepan Razin's campaign on the Volga, where the Streletsy garrisons were ready to go over to the side of the rebels. The autocrat clearly expressed his will: state necessity is more important than the economic interests of a privileged monastery.

The property rights of the church in the Moscow state had their own specifics. It was not spelled out in any law and it becomes clear from the internal correspondence of the monastery. In November 1675, the tsar's ambassadors to Sweden were traveling through Novgorod, and the Novgorod voivode ordered to station their horses temporarily at the Iversky courtyard in Novgorod. In response, the monastic servant presented a genuine tsar's letters patent, which released the monastery from the billeting. The voivode ordered the clerk to read the letter aloud in front of many people and said that he was obedient to the tsar's will, but in this case he would not observe the monastery's privilege: "...ambassadors according to by the tsar's edict must follow it and the whole state needs their presence, ...and now there is a need. Yes, and for the fact that very close there is a ship's wharf, where the ambassador can from the courts go out and henceforth enter the courts". What the voivode said in front of witnesses reveals experience in explaining their actions. This precious example of the chief's rhetoric begins with a statement of the inviolability of the tsar favor expressed in the letters patent of the monastery, and ends with a list of reasons why the current state necessity cancels the same letters patent of the monastery. From the modern point of view, there is a clear contradiction here, but from the words of the voivode, there seems to be no contradiction, since the sovereign's interest did not suffer: after all, the ambassadors were sent by tsar's edict. It is significant that the representative of the monastery shared this view of the situation. In a reply to his superiors, hidden from

the eyes of the voivode, he said that he first declared the right of his monastery, and then explained that he did not insist, so as not to anger the voivode and the ambassadors, who did not hesitate to say that they would stand where they considered it convenient (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. d, p. 83-84). As we can see, the right of a subject lost its binding force if it came into conflict with the state interest. The monastic solicitor had no chance to resist the actions of the voivode and the tsar's ambassadors, and to contradict — it would cause more problems.

The real attitude of the voivodes and writ judges to the monastic privileges recorded in the letters patent allows us to see the continuity of the church policy of the sovereigns of the period of the Moscow tsardom and Peter's time. It is necessary to take into account the characteristic feature of the letters patent: the monastery could count not on its inalienable right, but on the tsar favor. The essence of the matter is admirably expressed in the reply of the Iversky solicitor from Moscow to the monastery in 1691 about the lost lawsuit in the Moscow order: "Anything the sovereigns deign and as they order to mark on that matter, so wake up according to their state will, and not according to your authorities' unauthorized will, and it is impossible to remake voluntary will to the end. And at the state's mercy there is no sample, as the sovereigns will, so it will be, and although it is taken away, and more will be granted" (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. g, p. 113). From this system of concepts characteristic of pre-Peter times, the policy of secularization of church lands and the mobilization of monastic property for military needs grew at the beginning of the Russian Northern War.

In this regard, it is appropriate to refer to the story, which is referred to when they want to emphasize the negative attitude of Peter I to the church and the Orthodox tradition – the removal of bells for casting cannons at the beginning of the Russian Northern War. This fact is usually considered as a blasphemous violation of Moscow piety and humiliation of the church. New sources allow us to strongly revise the established point of view on this issue. Even before the Crimean campaigns, Moscow authorities began to describe church bells as a possible source of copper for state needs. Diploma of the Metropolitan Novgorod Cornelius in the Tikhvin Assumption Monastery in March, 5 1685 informed about the tsar's edict, "in the Novgorod the Great in Yurievo, and in the Khutyn Monastery, and Antoniev Monastery, and in your Tikhvin Assumption Monastery, and Vyazhishchsky Monastery, and in Dukhov Monastery bells have to be rewritten as in which the convent bells, and those in which weight and what they signed. And it will be on which bells the signature is not written, and those bells hang down that in those bells will be weight, and then write in the books" (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. a, p. 24). Signed bells were considered as an inalienable part of the church property received by the deposit-will. Since only those bells that did not have a signature were supposed to be weighed, it can be concluded that the authorities estimated the volume of bell copper in the monasteries for possible removal and melting.

After losing almost all the artillery at Narva in November 1700, Peter I returned to the previous idea of taking the necessary copper from the church and in February of the following year ordered to remove the fourth part of the bells from all the bell towers (judging by weight), as well as to take away the cannons that were available in the monasteries. For a modern researcher, the tsar's edict on the removal of copper tools from monasteries in order to restore the artillery looks quite justified, while the decree on the removal of church bells for casting cannons is often presented as a measure too radical and even blasphemous.

However, the monastic authorities perceived this somewhat differently: they insisted on keeping their guns and were more relaxed about having their bells taken from them.

Some lords and monasteries rushed to execute the tsar's decree of 1701 on the removal of the fourth part of all the bells with great zeal. The Metropolitan of Vologda sent two-thirds more bell copper to Moscow than was required from him: in February 1701, 22 carts carried only two bells (weighing 46 poods) to Moscow; about 180 poods, put on the norm and another 200 poods over the norm (Fedyshin, 1995).

The head of the monastery prikaz, the boyar I. A. Musin-Pushkin, was surprised at such helpfulness of the Vologda Bishop and ordered "to interrogate and learn where such profits were taken, and the great sovereign does not want to get anything spare" (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. h, p. 33). However, the sar "graciously praised" Vologda Metropolitan, especially for the fact that he sent over the norm and also rare red copper, which should be added to the bell and boiler when producing cannons. As a return gift, Peter I ordered to take to Vologda two bells, including one very large, weighing more than 176 pounds. This bell was cast in 1691 by the famous master Ivan Motorin. It was installed in Vologda and was called "Swan" for its special white color (Fedyshin, 1995).

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It should be emphasized that the collection of bell copper was part of the general collection of valuable metal throughout the country. In 1701, Moscow even closed the trading rows where they sold boilers and all sorts of copper products; so that it was difficult to buy even a small copper lamp in the capital, since all the available metal was sent to the Cannon yard (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. h, p. 69). Monastic documents confirm the final data recorded in the letter of Yakov Bruce in 1721, that during the Russian Northern War more than 24 thousand poods of copper were collected for casting guns, of which only about a third were bell-shaped, including broken bells (Petrukhintsev, 2004). Collecting church copper for cannons, including the bell, was part of the efforts of the entire country during the difficult years of the beginning of the Russian Northern War. Russian Orthodox church has traditionally contributed to the organization of resistance to the enemy and the creation of new artillery for the Russian regular army.

Another significant event of the Peter's era, which opposed the Moscow tradition, is considered to be the tsar's edict on the introduction of tobacco smoking. Documents of monastic archives allow establishing its wide distribution in Russia of the XVII century long before legalization in 1698. In the Moscow state, there was an official ban on the trade and consumption of tobacco, which was considered ungodly. However, the smuggling of overseas potions went several ways: by foreign merchants through Arkhangelsk and Astrakhan, across the southern border; significant supplies of tobacco were carried out by Novgorod peasants, who in the second half of the XVII century numerous gangs exported large quantities of prohibited goods from abroad. Prosecution by the authorities and high fines (25 rubles for each person

caught with tobacco) could not stop the profitable trade. It is interesting that the monastic authorities, not wanting to make it public, covered up their smugglers and gave bribes to Novgorod voivodes and deacons so that they would not start tobacco business (Sedov, 2012).

The following illustrative episode testifies to the spread of tobacco consumption in pre-Peter times (in the XVII century it was said that tobacco was not smoked, but “drunk”). In 1689, two residents of the Tikhvin Posad quarreled: Fedot Filimonov and his employee Bobyl Ivan Dmitriev. The fight moved to the foul: “after that they both called each other tobacconists; and Ivan told Fedot: I bought tobacco at yours” (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. b, p. 3). In this dialogue, if it be permissible so to call this an ugly scene, both participants said that he had kept hidden. They agree that being a tobacconist is sinful and forbidden, but both have already violated this commandment in everyday life. In this case, the ban for them both existed and no longer seemed to exist. This was the implicit transition from the medieval Canon to its violation. In fact, Peter I did not so much impose tobacco consumption as legalize its distribution in Russia in the interests of the treasury – with the payment of customs duties.

Another symbol of the sharpness of Peter's turn in the history of Russia is considered to be the clothing reform. The analysis of Peter's edicts on changing the appearance of subjects in the context of changes in clothing in the second half of the XVII century allows us to see the gradual penetration of foreign innovations and the growth of this process at the end of the century, even before the famous decrees of 1699-1702 on the introduction of first Hungarian, and then German and French kaftans.

Monastic documents have preserved numerous information about the borrowings of Polish and “German” clothing. At first, Russian people did not borrow the entire foreign costume, but only its individual elements. So, in the second half of the XVII century, “German hats” with wide brims were in great demand. In 1668, on the Novgorod courtyard of the Iversky Monastery, they bought for 1 rouble 20 kopecks “two German black hats, < ... > and those hats were given to the treasurer Isakiy and to the old Pamoy” (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. k, p. 77v). In 1677 the builder of the Novgorod courtyard of the same monastery was bought “German white hat” for 1rouble 80 kopecks. (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. i, p. 15v). As we can see, the monks did not hesitate to wear foreign headdresses. In the first half of the XVII century foreign merchants “demonstrated” in the customs “hats” selling them in dozens, and in the second half of the century – even in hundreds. In the customs book of the Tikhvin Assumption Monastery of 1665-1666, six foreign merchants declared a total of 992 hats brought from abroad for sale on the local market (Davydova et al., 1960).

In 1685, the Swedish Ambassador on his way from Novgorod to Moscow presented Archimandrite of Valdaysky Iversky Monastery with his hat, which then the deacon of the Novgorod Metropolitan begged for himself (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. e, p. 3, 25, 25v, 27, 32-32v.). It turns out that the Swedish hat was not shameful to wear even the solicitor of the Novgorod Metropolitan, as well as to present it from the monastery. Foreign hat in this case was not a rejection of Russian clothing in general, but only an element of custom violation, a noticeable addition to traditional Russian clothing, a way to stand out and thereby emphasize their high status. A departure from tradition as a matter of pride is a sure sign of its demise. The new-fangled Swedish hat, which had recently been worn by a Protestant, should not be a sign of the destruction of the soul of the new owner, but an object of his pride.

How not accidental was the gift of a foreign hat to the Iverian Archimandrite Joseph is evidenced by the following fact: in April 1687, he ordered the solicitor of the Novgorod courtyard, “buy and send to us the most deliberate five hats of German, French for the sake of our Archimandrite's cell boys”. However, there were no such hats in Novgorod: “and there are no good little French hats in our city that are better than good ones, and there are no bad ones. And about hats as you asked, if they are necessary to you need, we will order trade people from abroad to send it” (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. f, p. 118, 125). In the same month, the Iversky Archimandrite was bought in Moscow “gloves good, of German made” for 1 rouble 20 kopecks. (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. j, p. 81–81v).

On October 22, 1680, the first edict on clothing change appeared in the history of Russia, which abolished the okhoben and odnoryadka (the types of top garments) at the court, which most distinguished the old Moscow dress of that time from the Polish and Hungarian ones. At the same time, the decree of October 22 strictly prohibited the wearing of foreign dress (Sedov, 2008; Shamin, 2005). However, this edict became the frontier after which the borrowing of clothing from Eastern and Central European countries went faster.

Peter's edict of 1700 on the introduction of the Hungarian kaftan is usually understood as a radical transformation of the Russian dress. In fact, Western European dress was introduced in Russia not so sharply, because the Hungarian kaftan was formed under strong Turkish influence, and it can be estimated as an Eastern – style clothing brought by Peter from the West, but shorter-up to the knee. The next decree of 1701 introduced the Western European costume proper – the German Kaftan; in 1702, the German kaftan was introduced. It was ordered to wear a French dress in summer and a Saxon dress in winter, which completed the turn towards Western European fashion that began in the second half of the 17th century (Akeliev, 2013).

## 7. Conclusion

Comparison of the tsar's edicts and documents of the monastic archives allows us to more fully represent the multi-dimensional transition period of Russian history in the second half of the XVII – beginning of the XVIII century. The tsar's edicts of that time turned certain innovations that sometimes occurred in spite of official prohibitions into national events. What was born spontaneously, as a new phenomenon of everyday life, then became part of the regular state of the modern time. This conclusion does not ignore the violence of the tsar's orders, which is especially noticeable in the Peter I epoch: Peter's edicts were often accompanied by threats of death to those who disobeyed. The autocratic power led the era of transformation, since it had already developed in pre-Peter times as an institution of power characteristic of Russia at that time. In this sense, the violent and forced character of the Peter's reforms also had roots in the former history of Russia.

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