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Development of the Office Clerk Ranks in the Table of Ranks in the 18th Century

Abstract

The article continues the author’s research of emergence and development of the Russian state system of ranks according to the Table of Ranks. He has identified a great number of 18th century orders that regulated the activities of a special group of officials on clerical positions. This group of civil ranks has not yet been a subject of special study. The article studies the development of this special rank group of clerical officials who served in the district and gubernia secretary offices, the Collegiums and the Senate, for the first time. It describes the duties and requirements for the highest clerical officials, such as secretaries of various classes of the Table of Ranks, as well as translators, minute-takers, actuaries, and registrars. A special

attention is paid to the promotion mechanisms for clerical officials. The study demonstrates that serving in secretary offices was unpopular among the nobility. The government had to recruit its clerks among other classes; noble rights did not apply; and promotion to highest clerical ranks — those of secretaries — was only allowed as an exception if there were no candidates from the nobility. In 1762, the order of Peter III permitted promotion to secretaries of clerks from commoners. The majority of the examined ranks remained in the Table for 200 years and formed the basis of the lower rank civil servants system. Records management in subordinate offices of the directorates was a foundation of a successful state policy; thus, and the clerical officials were given special attention of the monarchy. This makes the studied group of clerical ranks unique.

Keywords

Sources, Table of ranks, rank, class, Senate, Collegiums, civil service ranks, secretary, registrar.

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