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Sources on the Title Heraldry of Muscovy of the Second Half of the 17th century

Abstract

An important stage in creation and unification of title emblems of Muscovy is connected with the war between Russia and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and further changes of the title during the reign of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich. At the turn of 1660s-1670s, a number of new title emblems appeared, while the old ones underwent yet another transformation. When creating new emblems, the Western European models were considered and in some ways the title emblems acquired a more pronounced heraldic character. Thus, some new emblems could have originated in the heraldry of the Scandinavian countries and the Holy Roman Empire, other, such as the Siberian coat of arms, combined heraldic symbols of the regions in the

aggregate. In a number of earlier emblems Christian semantics were reinforced. Such Christian symbols as hand emerging from clouds, cross, gospel, banner with cross, etc. were added. Christian semantics of the titular heraldry are evident in the heraldic virsi (verses) written at the end of the reign of Alexei Mikhailovich. Despite the fact that the finished complex of title emblems was presented in the "Titulyarnik" of 1672, the old or different versions persisted, which proves the variable nature of title heraldry in the second half of the 17th century. Images of the title coats of arms in three illustrated copies of the "Titulyarnik" display unity, but some differences in detail allow to work out ownership of each copy. "Titulyarnik" was probably the first Russian land coat of arms, even if images of title coats of arms on some regals (saadaks, plates) still retained features of the old visual tradition. The existing complex of the title coats of arms was recorded in the late 17th century in several written sources with heraldic images. The complex of preserved heraldic sources allows to reconstruct the history of the title heraldry in Muscovy in its entirety and to identify main stages in its evolution.

Keywords

Heraldry, heraldic figures, Tsar's title, title heraldry, territorial coats of arms, heraldic sources.

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