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Territorial Heraldry of the Muscovite Tsardom in the "Titulyarnik" of 1672

Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of images of territorial coats of arms in the "Titulyarnik" of 1672. The "Titulyarnik," existing in several copies, is the most important source on the history of Russian heraldry. It is a complete visual embodiment of the complex of territorial coats of arms, formed via mentioning the corresponding lands in the royal title. By the early 1670s, the

territorial title of the Russian tsars included over 30 names. It had significantly changed and had been supplemented in connection with the events of the war between Russia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of 1654–67, which was successful and resulted in annexation of new territories. These territorial incorporations were interpreted by the Russian side as the return of the ancestral lands, the "fatherland" of the Muscovite sovereigns. The "Titulyarnik" became the second source after the Great Seal of Ivan the Terrible, in which the heraldic representation of the royal title was given in its entirety. The complex of territorial coats of arms underwent certain changes since the end of the 1570s, when the Great Seal of Ivan the Terrible had been created. These changes most probably took place under the first Romanovs, starting in the 1620s. At the same time, some coats of arms were re-drawn. In the "Titulyarnik," most of the territorial coats of arms were also changed. Moreover, the complex of territorial coats of arms was supplemented with completely new coats of arms. Iconographic and source analysis of the images of coats of arms and their comparison with earlier versions has allowed the author to identify some important patterns of their transformation. It has been determined that many territorial coats of arms of the "Titulyarnik" were significantly strengthened by Christian semantics. This was primarily done by addition of various Christian symbols to the coats of arms. The most important of these symbols was the cross, represented in its two forms — straight and x-shaped cross. Thus, the heraldic reform carried out in the "Titulyarnik" was consistent; it was associated with the need to emphasize the Orthodox nature of the Muscovite Tsardom as guardian and defender of the Christian religion. Christian semantics also appeared in the heraldic verses written by an unknown author in the 1670s. In these verses, the territorial coats of arms were described and their interpretation was given. Variants of the coats of arms presented in the "Titulyarnik" continued to exist in the period of the Russian Empire.

Keywords

Heraldry, title of tsar, territorial coats of arms.

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