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Customs Books of the 17th – 18th centuries in Regional Archives of Russia: Some Preliminary Results of Identification

Abstract

Customs books are the main mass source on the history of domestic and foreign trade of Russia in the 17th – 18th centuries. The main body of these documents is available in various fonds of the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts. Customs books are also kept in several

other archives, libraries, and museums in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Scientific literature provides information on the availability of documents of this type in some regional archives of the Russian Federation. However, no systematic identification and registration of customs books in regional archives has been made. In 2019–2020, the author of the article has carried out a survey of several regional archives that, according to the information in scientific literature, store customs books. The survey was mostly carried out in absentia (by sending written requests to the archives and by viewing digitized copies of archival series on the Internet). The information on the customs books found in the regional archives was compared with the data provided in the historiography. The survey has established presence of customs books in eight regional archives, including the State Archive of the Arkhangelsk Region (23 books), the State Archive of the Astrakhan Region (84), the State Archive of the Voronezh Region (4), the State Archive of the Irkutsk Region (13), the State Archive of the Murmansk Region (1), the State Archive of the Pskov Region (42), the State Archive of the Tyumen Region (201), the Velikoustyug Central Archives (2). In total, 370 such sources have been identified in 34 towns (about 10% of all currently known sources of this type). The revealed customs books date from 1646/47 to 1754. Their overwhelming majority are 18th century documents. The results of the customs books identification in the regional archives are preliminary, since only archives cited in historiography have been examined so far. In addition, the identified corpus of customs books demands clarification and supplementation, since references provided by the archives may be incomplete, and there are inaccuracies and omissions in the series. It is concluded that to collect comprehensive and accurate data on customs books in central and regional archives is only possible *de visu*.

Keywords

Customs books, mass historical sources, source study, archeography, records management, regional archives.

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