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Pchelov, Evgeniy V.

Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, Russian Federation

The Color Scheme of the Russian Titular Coats of Arms of the 17th – Early 18th Century

Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of the color scheme of the Russian titular coats of arms of the 17th – early 18th century. Until late 17th century, the color scheme of coats of arms did not matter, since the emblems of the titular objects themselves were depicted on seals, for which they were created. However, by the end of the 17th century, these emblems began to acquire

increasingly heraldic appearance. An important stage on this path was creation of the “Titulyarnik” in 1672. In this book, the titular coats of arms were presented in color, but this colorization was not of heraldic nature. Only two coats of arms borrowed from Western European heraldry had a coat of arms coloring. Otherwise, the coats of arms of the “Titulyarnik” looked more like color illustrations than coats of arms in the truest sense of the word. The color of the coats of arms on the golden plate of Alexei Mikhailovich made by master Y. Frobos in 1675 was equally conditional. Here the color scheme of the coats of arms performed functions of symmetry in the overall pictorial composition. On the charters of the turn of the 18th century, titular coats of arms were drawn following the model of the “Titulyarnik.” However, at the turn 1710s, the colorization of the titular coats of arms appeared on the charters (although the previous tradition also persisted for some time). The description of coats of arms in color was first presented in Russian in “The Core of Russian History” written in mid-1710s in Sweden. The authorship of this book remains debatable. The description of the coats of arms from “The Core of Russian History” finds almost exact analogies in the images of coats of arms on charters starting from 1710, and also repeats the coloring from the corrected drawings of I.-G. Korb, published together with descriptions of the titular coats of arms in the German publications in 1708 and 1710. Apparently, the colorization of the titular coats of arms was associated with the provincial and military reforms of Peter the Great. It is significant that azur became the main heraldic color for the shields of the titular coats of arms. Gueles did not occupy a dominant position. In general, the color scheme of the coats of arms of the Peter the Great era may have been influenced by the creation of the color scheme of Russian flags. Later, the color scheme of a number of titular coats of arms changed significantly. Such changes, in particular, were recorded in the “Armorial of banners” (Znamyonnyi Gerbovnik) of 1729. They were associated with closer compliance with the formal rules of Western European heraldry. Thus, the colorization of Russian titular heraldry fell in the context of its gradual transformation from seals and emblems to coats of arms and largely determined this process.

### Keywords

Heraldry, color, titular coats of arms, “The Core of Russian History,” Petrine coats of arms, flags of army regiments of 1712, “Armorial of banners” (Znamyonnyi Gerbovnik) of 1729, Y. Frobos, I.-G. Korb.

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## About the authors

Pchelov Evgeniy Vladimirovich, PhD in History, associate professor, Russian State University for the Humanities, History and Archives Institute, department of special and auxiliary sciences of history, head of department, Moscow, Russian Federation, +7-905-581-81-76, [evg-pchelov@yandex.ru](mailto:evg-pchelov@yandex.ru)

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