

CATHERINE II AND ORTHODOX CLERGY IN THE RITUAL OF THE IMPERIAL JOURNEY: THE ASPECT OF LEGITIMATION OF POWER

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The relevance of the studied problem is caused by need of studying the practices of legitimation of the imperial power in the XVIII century in Russia. It gives the opportunity to understand the mechanisms of stability of the absolute power in Russia. The purpose of the article is to examine the communication of the empress Catherine II and Orthodox clergy during imperial travel as means of political legitimacy. The leading method of the study is the semiotic method which allows to analyze laudatory words, welcoming speeches of the Russian clergy. In the article the ways of legitimation of Catherine II are identified, the aspects of a sacralization of the power in laudatory words of ecclesiastics are represented, the ideological matrixes forming the image of the empress as the pious monarch are revealed. The materials of the article may be useful in the creation of research on the history of Russia of the second half of the XVIII century, in the preparation of a textbook on the history of the Russian Empire.

Keywords: history, ritual, legitimacy, clergy, orthodox identity, sacralization

INTRODUCTION

During the imperial travel the empress Catherine II made use of the symbolic resources of cultural space: religious, moral and other resources to confirm the image of the Russian empress. An important element of this image was its orthodox component. A big role in the statement of pious image of Catherine II was played by Orthodox clergy. In this regard the empress's trips around the country are of great interest in the respect of studying the use of factors of religious and cultural identity as means of political legitimacy.

In modern western sociology and political science this term designates "process of providing a political, social order on the basis of distribution and use of the symbolic capital (Zavershinsky, 2002). The typology of M. Weber (Weber, 1990) and his followers (Lipset, 1981; Beetham, 1991) is the basis of different concepts of legitimacy where belief in the importance of a social order, the ability of elite to provide the domination by beliefs in moral symbols, sacred emblems and legal formulas (Mills, 1998) are represented.

R. Wortman's book devoted to this aspect demonstrates that the semiotics of ceremonial of the Russian sovereigns supported the creation of the myths defining an image of the tsar during different epochs. (Wortman, 1995). Wortman emphasized that a special role in the imperial ceremonial belonged to clergy, legitimizing by the sermons and speeches the power of the Russian empresses of

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the XVIII century, including Catherine II. In general, foreign researchers were interested in: the religious policy of the Russian power in the context of an imperial discourse (Geraci & Khodarkovsky, 2001), the influence of the institutional development of the Orthodox Church on the national religiosity (Freeze, 1998), to a lesser extent – the activity of certain representatives of the enlightened clergy and their preaching culture (Papmehl, 1983; Wirtschafter, 2013).

The Russian researchers paid attention to the rhetorical strategies of churchmen in creation of court sermons (Kagarlitsky, 2002), to the history of their distribution (Kislova, 2005). The problem of communication of the empress Catherine II and the Orthodox clergy in rituals during her trips around the country, welcoming speeches and laudatory words of the clergy in the context of legitimation of the power is poorly-investigated.

METHODOLOGY

The speeches of ecclesiastics (welcoming speeches, laudatory words, congratulatory speeches) written on the occasion of arrival of the empress allow the practice of legitimation of the power of the monarch. The speech, the word are types of the church sermon. The contents of the sermon were defined by two plans: the plan of the current situation and the plan of authoritative topos which were borrowed from sacral texts, patristical and hagiographic literature etc. (Kagarlitsky, 2002). Analyzing the similar texts, it is necessary to take into consideration that meeting the crowned person, ecclesiastics hoped to raise the status and reward, and to improve material conditions of dioceses etc. The theoretical basis of the study is the semiotic method which applied to the analysis of ceremonial journeys of the Russian monarch and welcoming speeches of clergy. This method was used while studying a mythological component of texts, in the analysis of the metaphors that can reflect the reality and produce ideological meanings.

When working with the texts it is important to analyze the key concepts (“general welfare”, “Mother of the Fatherland”), their study is focused on the consideration of their place in the rhetorical strategy of the author and following determination of the forms of legitimacy.

RESULTS

Catherine II in religious rituals of imperial journeys

Catherine II understood the importance of manifestation of religious identity not only in everyday, court and political life, but also during her trips around the country. The emphasis on a religious component was certainly caused by illegitimate ascension on a throne.

At the beginning of reign it was important to Catherine to declare the devotion to Orthodoxy and Church to strengthen its political positions. In a month after

crowning – on October 17, 1762 – she went to the first pilgrimage – to Trinity Monastery. In the official report on this visit it was noted that the archimandrite Lavrentiy called her as “the liberator of Russia”, according to the piety of being “the second Elena”, but by the courage of “Israeli Yudifi” (the Description, 1762). Thus, the Orthodox clergy consciously starts designing a pious image of the new ruler. The same purposes were served also by Catherine’s pilgrimage in May, 1763 to Rostov where she went to the opening of Dmitry Rostovsky’s reliquary.

During subsequent trips Catherine constantly sought to maintain the image of the Orthodox empress that found its reflection in the accurate execution of religious practices. Practically in each settlement, having descended from horses or the steamship, she went straight to a church, attended the service, listened to the liturgy, kissed the images and relics of the saints.

Catherine paid much attention to clergy: she visited cells, patients in the hospitals, invited ecclesiastics to lunch. Catherine as a truly pious empress was well-known for her donations, gifts to Russian Orthodox Church. Catherine’s behavior in religious rituals, her grants and gifts represented her as the Orthodox empress. All this had to convince the population that Catherine took care of the Orthodox Church.

Sacralization of power in welcoming speeches of ecclesiastics on arrival of the empress Catherine II

The rituals of journeys of Catherine II implemented the function of maintaining the certain legitimate image of power, and the special role in designing of this space legitimacy belongs to the Russian Orthodox Church. The speeches of ecclesiastics (welcoming speeches, laudatory words, congratulatory speeches) written on the occasion of arrival of the empress allow to reveal the practices of legitimacy of the monarch where sacralization of an image of the monarch made its major part.

The sacralization of a medium of Supreme power in Russia which was an important dominant of the Russian culture of that time (it is typical also for sermons), becomes the axis of the Russian cultural consciousness shaped by the Baroque epoch. Within this culture the figure of sacralization – an identification or convergence of the monarch and God is actualized in numerous options (Zhivov & Uspensky, 1996).

When drawing up sermons the authoritative topic of Scripture becomes an important resource of influence and persuasiveness of an imperial political discourse (Kagarlitsky, 1998). The speech of the Belarusian archbishop Georgy Konissky, made in Mstislavl’ on January 19, 1787 on Catherine II’s arrival was in this regard indicative: “We will leave to Astronomers to prove that the Earth revolves around the sun: our sun (they mean Catherine) goes around us, and goes in the order so we could live well. ...”. The arrival of the empress was compared with the Christ’s

coming, and sun personified Catherine II and an image of Christ, “coming in at midnight” (Konissky, 1864: 275-276).

In many laudatory speeches the image of the empress was likened to God, that gives the clergy the chance to show the validity of her coming to power. For example, Veniamin, the Archbishop of Kazan and Sviyazhsk (V.Putsek-Grigorovich), in a welcoming speech on May 26, 1767 ennobled her sacral image that (tsars terrestrial) “... more than other predecessors she is the Lord’s Anointed and put on the throne of the Russian Orthodox Christian Kingdom “ (Veniamin, 1769: 4-5). Thus, the ascent of the empress on a throne was substantiated with the will of God. In the speeches made by clergy in 1787 during Catherine’s travel to the Southern Russia Catherine was compared to “the Eternal Father” (Samuil, 1787: 48.), “the Heavenly Father” (Feofan, 1787: 43), with “the Risen Christ” (Samuil, 1787: 50.). The comparison of the monarch to “A man of God” was found in writings (Ioasaf, 1787: 5).

According to Y.V. Kagarlitskiy (1998), the sacralization in itself didn’t assume any consequences from an identification of the monarch with a sacral image. Deliberate artificiality of panegyric convergence, their demonstrative conventionality served only to create around the ruler and his court a certain solemn and ceremonial aura. The panegyric rhetoric organized the expansion and reproduction of a discourse of power in court ceremonial, formed space for gesticulation emphasizing the loyalty of the speaker to an imperial order (Kagarlitskiy, 1998).

In our opinion, this was of great importance. After all, pronouncing the laudatory words, making the welcoming speeches happened outside the imperial court, in the communicative space in which not only by the monarch, but also by other important actor – the citizen is presented, who perceived and estimated (“read out”) an image of power, and also conveyed to the others what he heard and saw. This communication was an important aspect of legitimacy of power of the Russian state.

Similar comparisons affected the consciousness of contemporaries: they were available to understanding and perception of people around. In E.F. Komarovskiy’s memoirs, the eyewitness of the stay of Catherine in Kiev, the speech of the metropolitan Samuil (told on Easter) was noted, where he compared Catherine with Christ who came to his pupils after Revival (Komarovskiy, 1869). The contemporaries also admired G. Konissky’s speech (Konissky, 1864). Thus, the regular execution of these practices did not remain unnoticed by citizens ((Dobrynin, 1872; Khayrutdinov, 2015; Khayrutdinov & Karimov, 2015; Tumanin, 2014; Khayrutdinov & Mironova, 2015).

Succession of the power of Catherine II in laudatory words and speeches of clergy

The important aspect of legitimacy of the monarch power such as the establishment of succession of the power of Catherine II with the previous governors in welcoming

speeches, laudatory words can be traced. Catherine was not only seen as the successor of the previous governors, but the continuer of affairs of Peter I and Elizabeth (Veniamin, 1769).

On the other hand according to these documents, the clergy showed the understanding of the difference of nature of the political power of Catherine II and Peter I, Catherine's special qualities as a ruler, that also was a means of her political eminence. So, the Archbishop of Pskov and Riga Innokentij during Catherine's stay in Pskov in 1780 in his speech concerning Peter the Great's arrivals to this city pointed out that his activity to protect the inhabitants of the city had aggressive character. But Catherine's arrival was associated with "the piece which descended on the city from heavens of Israel", as she "approves safety of the citizens peacefully". The purpose of state-building was reflected in a context of the concept of general welfare: "world and silence from the outside, pleasure for all and everyone" (Innokentij, 1787: 18-19).

The ecclesiastics used an image of a place of stay of the crowned person to show the successive line of the empress with the previous governors. In Kostroma, on May 14, 1767, during her arrival in Ipatiev Monastery, the Bishop Damaskin reminded the empress of the importance of the monastery for Romanov family – that here the scepter of the Russian state was received by "the ancestor of your Imperial Majesty" (Voznesensky, 1859: 31-32).

The image of the city was also brightly used in speeches of ecclesiastics in Kiev: the symbols of the city are the princes Vladimir, Yaroslav, and others. Through these symbolical toponymy the archetypes of updating and transformation of the power appeared that was connected with the presence of the Russian empress in this ancient city. On March 11, 1787 after the Divine Liturgy the Metropolitan Samuil drew attention of the empress to the place where they were – the St. Sophia's Cathedral. Noting the milestones of its existence from Yaroslav the Great up to Peter the Great, the Metropolitan focused on linking of times and the Russian governors: henceforth the temple "will apprehend the new shine of the power" owing to the presence of "such" monarch in it. Thus, the appeal to the history of St. Sophia's Cathedral, where the empress stayed, was used as a means of legitimacy of the monarchic power (Samuil, 1787).

The concept of the "general welfare" and the "Mother of the fatherland"

The texts under our consideration belong to the last quarter of the XVIII century. Researchers marked out that the baroque tradition, unlike the civil sphere, steadily remained in spiritual environment, even in the XIX century (Zhivov & Uspensky, 1996). However, the epoch of the enlightened absolutism nevertheless affected the culture of preaching. One of the grounds of legitimacy of power in the eighteenth century – the general welfare of all citizens (their physical and spiritual well-being, the best worldly system and general peace) was declared as the aim of the state.

This concept emerges through the baroque “stamps” in the texts of ecclesiastics.. A concept of the «general welfare» was traced in connection with a concept of the “Mother of the Fatherland”.

So, those rational constants of the image of the “Mother of the Fatherland” of Catherine II as “indulgence”, “mercy”, “care about education ... of the people”, “maternal conversations”, which made the semantic content of concepts of the “Mother of the Fatherland” and the “general welfare”, are justified in the speech of the Metropolitan Samuil on March 28, 1787. Mercifulness, as a part of the image of the mother of the fatherland was transferred to the subjects (Samuil, 1787: 50).

DISCUSSION

The problem of legitimation of the Russian rulers by the representatives of Orthodox clergy in imperial rituals was studied by R. Wortman. However, the individual representations of monarchs were in the basis of his work, which he called the scenarios of power (Wortman, 1995).

Domestic linguists analyzed the rhetorical strategies of churchmen in creation of court sermons, discursive practices (Kagarlitsky, 1998) and also studied the history of their distribution (Kislova, 2005).

The problem of communication of the empress Catherine II and the Russian clergy in the ritual of her journey around the country, the study of welcoming speeches and laudatory words of clergy in the context of legitimation of the power has not almost been studied in the scientific literature.

CONCLUSION

Catherine II used all possibilities of religious rituals to increase her political influence. The religious practices allowed her to present herself as the Orthodox empress. In ceremonials of meetings of Catherine II an important role was assigned to clergy: they emphasized the Orthodox identity of the Russian monarch, the succession of her power. The laudatory words of the Orthodox clergy legitimated Catherine’s power. The ideological “matrixes” which affected the consciousness of the population were reflected in these speeches. They formed the public image of Catherine as the pious empress who is guided in her actions only by the purposes of “general welfare”.

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