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GENESIS PECULIARITIES OF RUSSIAN HERALDRY

Abstract: Heraldry is a result of society hierarchization. It reflects the will to highlight the achievements of nobility, as well as to define a person as part of a family, a bearer of information about cultural layer. Formed as an independent sphere of existence of the Medieval culture, heraldry turned into an effective regulating and preserving mechanism of cultural memory.

The family heraldry emerged in the knightly European cultural space, so is unified in form and function. Russia has no chivalry institution, thus it has different genesis and pragmatics. The development of Russian nobility is peculiar and has several periods. In Russia the sign, quite close, but not identical, to European coat of arms in structure and pragmatics, appeared simultaneously with Europe. Some examples of Russian armorial bearings are even older than most of European. It is also possible to speak about proto heraldic signs. The classical heraldry came to Russia in the reign of Peter the Great, though appeared to be very specific. One of the reasons of it was the influence of Polish tradition. Although the impact mostly touched family heraldry, land coats of arms were more culturally specific and frequently organized in the way different from heraldic rules. One of the latest family arms made artificially was the emblem of the Romanovs pointed to Livonia and Prussia as native element. Russian College of Arms became a regulating institution in heraldry, introducing spontaneous Russian emblems into heraldic realm, and giving it legality, though it was also rather out of order.

Heraldry is an attribute of the society with profound stratified differences. In the modern socio-political reality and political culture, heraldic signs serve as an intensive means of cultural identification. One of the main characteristics of Russian heraldry is its extreme politicization, especially in the sphere of state emblems. Besides Russian heraldic aspect of culture was closely related to scientific and artistic spheres, as well as it was less structuralized within the heraldic system than European examples.

Keywords: Protoheraldic Sign, Boyar, Coat of Arms, Russian Heraldry, Armorial, Heraldry, Semantics, Pragmatics.

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ОСОБЕННОСТИ ГЕНЕЗИСА РУССКОЙ ГЕРАЛЬДИКИ

Аннотация: Геральдика — результат иерархизации общества. Она отражает стремление аристократии подчеркнуть достижения родов, а также определить себя как часть семьи, носителя информации о культурном пласте. Оформившись как самостоятельная сфера средневековой культуры, геральдика превратилась в эффективный регулирующий и сохраняющий механизм культурной памяти.

Родовая геральдика формируется в рыцарском европейском культурном пространстве, а потому она едина по форме и функциям. В России нет института рыцарства, тем самым, геральдика имеет другой генезис и прагматику. Развитие русского дворянства своеобразно и имеет несколько периодов. В России знаки, весьма близкие, но не идентичные европейскому гербу по структуре и прагматике, появляются одновременно с Европой. Некоторые образцы гербов России даже старше большинства европейских. Также можно говорить о протогеральдических знаках. Классическая геральдика пришла в Россию в царствование Петра Великого, хотя и оказалась весьма специфичной. Одной из причин этого было влияние польской традиции. Хотя в основном воздействие коснулось родовой геральдики, а земельные гербы были более культурно специфичны, и часто были составлены вопреки геральдическим правилам. Одним из самых поздних во многом искусственных родовых гербов был герб Романовых, указывающий на происхождение из Ливонии и Пруссии. Русская Геральдия стала регулирующим институтом и ввела стихийную русскую эмблематику в геральдические рамки, придав ей легитимность, хотя она также была довольно хаотичной.

Геральдика является атрибутом общества с ярко выраженными стратифицированными различиями. В современной социально-политической реальности гербы служат активным средством культурной идентификации. Одной из главных характеристик русской геральдики является ее крайняя политизированность, особенно в сфере государственных гербов. Кроме того, русский геральдический аспект культуры был тесно связан с научной и художественной сферами, а также был менее геральдически системным, чем европейские образцы.

Ключевые слова: протогеральдический знак, боярин, герб, русская геральдика, гербовник, Геральдия, семантика, прагматика.

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Heraldry is supposed to be the most complicated sign system, except a natural language, it can also be viewed as a language itself. It is built according to specific rules, its semantics, syntax and pragmatics are very prominent.

Russian heraldry, as it is formed on the peculiar basement, differs from European one, still being the part of it. First of all, Western European heraldry is associated with knightly culture, and "...Russian history did not know medieval chivalry. Therefore, our land coats of arms originated from ancient emblems and signs on seals, coins, military banners" [8, p. 8].

Study of different aspects of symbolic systems gives the opportunity to distinguish cultural type peculiarities in general, and algorithm for development of means of information transmission, such as signs. Heraldry manifests some global patterns of semiotics and special variety of national armorial bearings. As heraldry is still productive and seemed to be an important part of culture, it is urgent for studies. The aim of this paper is to mark the peculiarities of Russian armorial bearing genesis. Based mostly on Russian fundamental researches of last century the paper focuses on peculiar features of Russian family arms. The choice of references is done this way as mostly all contemporary heraldic studies are made on the basement of the fundamental resources of previous time (sometimes even without citation). The main point is if it is possible to speak about Russian heraldry, specific or an integral part of European one.

Russian land emblems appeared almost simultaneously with Western European coats of arms. One of the first Russian coats of arms — a lion — was the emblem of the founder of Moscow, Yuri Dolgoruky, and then became the coat of arms of the city of Vladimir. It is known and recorded in the middle of the 12th century. There were very few coats of arms of such ancient origin in Western Europe [10].

At the same time, there are evidences that the main figures of some other Russian city coats of arms have an even more ancient origin than the Vladimir arms. "For example, images of a bear, elk or deer, eagle, etc., which became the basis for emblems, and later coats of arms of the cities of Yaroslavl, Nizhny Novgorod, and some other, arose long before the Yuri Dolgoruky's lion" [8, p. 8].

In pre-Mongol times in Rus, there were emblems—"progenitors" of coats of arms. They include the above-mentioned emblems and some others, for example, a trident or bident as the heraldic sign of the princes of Ancient Rus.

Heraldry in the classical sense came to Russia from the West, and its history, as in Europe, is connected with the history and culture of nobility. The history of the Russian aristocracy is voluminous and complex and requires a separate study. Here we will note only individual milestones, without which the consideration of Russian heraldry is quite difficult. For the Russian aristocracy throughout the centuries-old history of the country, such concepts as "князь", "бояре", "дворяне" (knyaz, boyars, nobility) are relevant. The very origin of the word "knyaz" (from the Scand. "koning", along with "vityaz" from "viking") serves as the basis for the origin of the socio-cultural layer. Though there are different approaches to the etymology of these words [2]. It is widely accepted that modern family heraldry in

Russia began with the “era of nobility” (i.e. from the 17–18th centuries) forces us to touch upon its immediate predecessor, the “era of boyar”. Since the 15th century, the concept of “children of the boyars” was in use in Russia. The boyars are the highest form of feudal nobility. Representatives of the most ancient princely families formed a closed class circle. The title of boyar was not hereditary and was not easy to obtain. The number of boyars was very small (four under Vasily Vasilyevich, nineteen under Ivan III). “Children of the boyars” were in fact the sons of boyars, and many of them, not becoming boyars, retained that title for life. Until the 15th century, the Moscow boyars included no more than four dozen noble boyar families: the Koshkins, Morozovs, Buturlins, Golovins [5]. In their relationship to the Grand Prince, these boyars retained the character of free advisers and brethren of the prince, as the boyars were in the 12th century. Since the second half of the 15th century, the system of Moscow boyars has changed. By the end of the 16th century, according to the genealogical boyar lists, it is possible to count about 200 noble families. These are titled princely families: Rurikovich, Gediminovich, descendants of the great and appanage princes. The hierarchy of the boyars was very complex. One of the reasons for it was that the hierarchy was determined by the position the boyar occupied at the time of his transfer to the service of Moscow Grand Prince.

From the 16th century, “boyar children” had to be at military service, gathered with their people under the banner of the prince at the first demand. “Boyarness” ended with the death of its last representative I.Y. Trubetskoy in 1750.

At the prince’s court there were court servants – “youths”. For the first time under Andrei Bogolyubsky they began to be called “dvoryane” (nobility). During the reign of Ivan IV, that term also began to be used to refer to “boyar children”. Later, the nobility gained strength, but for a long time it was heterogeneous. Under Peter I, there was relative unification; he declared military service to be the main source of nobility. “Szlachta”, which replaced the term “dvoryane”, came through the Polish language from German “Geschlecht” (gens). In the last years of Peter’s reign, both terms were in use, but only under Catherine II “dvoryane” displaced “szlachta” from everyday communication [1]. The emergence of Peter the Great’s “Table of Ranks” [15], which granted nobility to anyone who had risen to the rank of chief officer and collegiate assessor in the civil service, actually blurred the boundaries of the aristocracy and in many ways deformed the integrity of the clan and boyar aristocracy. At the same time, it created the preconditions for the formation of a new aristocracy, which flourished in the Catherine era. Musin-Pushkin became the first count in Russia, however, that title was granted to him by Western monarchs in 1694. B.P. Sheremetev became the first Russian count in 1706, and P.P. Shafirov became the first baron in 1710. In 1707, A.D. Menshikov received the title of Duke of Izhora and His Serene Highness Prince of the Russian Empire. In the first years of the 18th century, Peter the Great titled L.V. Bruce, F.A. Golovin, P.M. Apraksin, P.L. Tolstoy, and others. “In 1797, by order of Tsar Paul I, the huge noble class had been ranked and regimented into six grades: the Old Aristocracy (noble before 1686), the Titled Nobility, Naturalized Foreign Nobility, Noblesse de cap (civil servants of high rank), Noblesse d’epée (army officers of the rank of colonel upwards), and Untitled Nobility, each with their own appropriate arms” [12, p. 31].

It should be mentioned that the immediate predecessors of coats of arms were generic and family signs of ownership. The Slavs had “borders”, “banners”, “marks”, and the Turks had “tamgas”. The oldest heraldic images on the territory of Russia can be divided into three groups:

- 1 Sarmatian emblems (which arose long before the Common Era and spread in the “Roman era”).
- 2 Coats of arms of the Bosphor (as the coats of arms of Tiberius Eupator, Sauromates II, etc. B.A. Rybakov wrote that the heraldic signs of the Bosphor kings were, on the one hand, a kind of coat of arms confirming the royal dignity, and on the other hand, tamgas [7]. Mostly the coats of arms of Bosphor had nominal Sarmatian emblems at the chief, and a dynastic trident at the base).
- 3 Symbolic ornaments of a heraldic and magical nature.

Objects with heraldic images — bidents and tridents were found on the territory of the Ancient Rus and Hungary. Information about the heraldic signs of the ancient Russian princes, who used them as signs of property, dates back to the middle of the 10th century. The ancient Russian heraldic symbols disappeared in the 13th century, as V.L. Yanin writes, as a result of evolution: the structure of coats of arms was simplified, the individual character of the coat of arms was lost, turning into a territorial sign [9]. In pre-Christian Rus, the signs of a flying falcon, a “diving falcon” (which was the top clan’s sign of the feudal elite of Kievan Rus), and a centaur were widely used. At the same time, in contrast to the Western European interpretation of the centaur as a symbol of the devil and vice, in Rus it, especially armed, had the meaning of an ancient political emblem. Its image was quite common in Russian lands. Along with these signs, one can see other emblems of ownership on various objects — images of tridents, pitchforks, as well as axes, plows, etc. Thus, there were emblems, mainly of plant, animal and agricultural origin. This, perhaps, manifested such characteristics of Russia as the connection between culture and nature. Classical family heraldry developed under the influence of Western European heraldry and, above all, Polish.

The Polish coats of arms served as models for the coats of arms of many Russian noble families. The Polish-Lithuanian heraldic system existed semi-officially on a large scale for a long time and largely determined the features of noble heraldry in Russia. Runic signs brought to Poland from Western Europe were actively used in Polish heraldry. The Polish heraldic system itself borrowed little from the Western European one, in which the heraldic sign arose as a means of identifying a knight in war and was associated primarily with weapons. Unlike Western Europe, Polish heraldry was based on the kin principle. In Poland, there were many banners with family signs, under which relatives and neighbours stood in case of danger, which was the reason for sharing one sign by different families. It should be noted that in Poland, among the aristocracy, double surnames were quite common: the first was a sign of belonging to some community (for example, an army was gathered under one banner for some campaign), and the second was the surname itself. Unlike countries that followed the Western European heraldic tradition, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth never had an official College of Arms, and the function of registering coats of arms (but not of the right to a coat of arms) was taken over by private individuals. In the 16th–18th centuries, they created author’s reference publications on noble genealogy and heraldry and armorials (Okolski, Paprocki, Nesecki, etc.), which included many (but far from all) coats of arms of the gentry. Registration of coats of arms gives them a certain stability. And in the last centuries of the existence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, an informal stabilization of Polish-Lithuanian heraldry took place, although many original heraldic examples were lost.

After the joining of a number of lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the Russian Empire in 1772, 1793, 1795, 1806 and 1815, the final consolidation of certain family coat of arms of the gentry took place.

The process of family coats of arms registration went almost simultaneously on the lands that passed to Russia after the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the territory of Left-Bank Ukraine. “The “Cossack elders” as early as the 17th – first half of the 18th century, among other traditional attributes of belonging to the noble class, acquired coats of arms of Polish models. Traditional genealogical legends for Ukraine trace the oldest and many ordinary Cossack families to Polish gentry. Sometimes these legends were officially recognized (as in the case of the Razumovsky Counts, who were declared to be descendants of the Polish Ruszynski family)” [4, p. 24].

Noticeable traces of the Polish heraldic tradition in Russia can be traced back to the end of the 17th–18th centuries in the territory of the former Smolensk Voivodeship. After the capitulation of Smolensk in 1654, the local gentry swore allegiance to Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, preserving not only their estates, but also the Smolensk gentry regiment (which existed until 1765). The Polish family coats of arms of many Smolensk families of Polish-Lithuanian origin (Voevodsky, Glinka, Princes Drutsky-Sokolinsky, Rachinsky, Khrapovitsky, etc.) or Russian families that were also in the tsar’s service (for example, the Potemkins) were preserved (and were later included in the “General Armorial of the Noble Families of the All-Russian Empire”) [14] in the first half of the 17th century. The western lands were even more susceptible to Western European influence culturally than the central regions. The heraldic heritage of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was initially under the jurisdiction of two independent authorities: the College of Arms (later the Department of Heraldry) of the Governing Senate and the College of Arms of the Kingdom of Poland (abolished in 1862). The College of Arms under the State Council of the Kingdom of Poland was formed on June 25, 1836. In 1841, the State Council was abolished, but the College of Arms remained. In 1849, Warsaw began compiling the “Polish Armorial”, which was supposed to be published in 8 parts. However, only two of its parts were made, in 1850 and 1851, approved by Emperor Nicholas. The Polish coats of arms were included in them, as well as the coats of arms officially recognized as Polish nobility ones by the College of Arms of the Kingdom of Poland (but not included in the Armorial), were considered finally approved in Russia. “A study of the practice of the St. Petersburg College of Arms (the Department of Heraldry and its Heraldry Section) allows us to state that the existence of the Polish-Lithuanian heraldry system was perceived by the Russian authorities not only as a real, but also a legal fact” [4, p. 25–26]. A significant percentage of the approved coats of arms of the Russian nobility were coats of arms of Polish-Lithuanian families. Polish coats of arms were usually approved approximately in the form in which they were listed under the corresponding name in the “classical” Polish armorials, which was used for references on Polish coats of arms in the Heraldry Section of the Department of Heraldry. Sometimes the “classical” Polish-Lithuanian coats of arms were “reworked”, stylistically similar to the examples of Russian heraldry of that time. In addition, small changes were made (for example, it was quite common to “colour” the ostrich feathers as a crest, the natural white colour of which, accepted in the Polish heraldic tradition, turned into silver. Polish coats of arms introduced a Gothic element into Russian heraldry, although Gothic itself did not exist in Russian culture.

F. Santi, being at the base of Russian heraldry, did not have the opportunity to delve into the peculiarities of Russian emblems, and gave them a Western European style, introducing ready-made French forms into it.

For European countries, in general, mutual penetration of heraldic traditions from one country to another and vice versa is typical. In our case, attention is drawn primarily to the scale of assimilation of Polish heraldic examples by Russian heraldry, which inspired many creators of Russian family coats of arms.

During the reign of Peter I, awarding people who had served the state conscientiously was accompanied by granting them coats of arms. The tsar himself and the King of Arms with his staff monitored the correctness of that process. In the 1860s and 1870s, a large fee was charged for documents related to coats of arms for the title.

In addition to the recorded coats of arms, there were a significant number of “unapproved” ones, the owners of which were not registered in the College of Arms, but actively used. The phenomenon of circumventing the heraldic law was also characteristics of Western Europe.

In the second half of the reign of Alexei Mikhailovich, emblems were often called coats of arms. Through foreigners, Russia adopted the “fashionable Western tradition” of drawing armorial bearings. Emblems in the form of coats of arms were widely used on everyday objects of that time. The beginnings of family heraldry appeared long before its official approval. In the 17th century, clergy and some boyars used the so-called “клейноды” with arbitrarily chosen emblems. Many of these signs were transformed into coats of arms, others remained unapproved, but were actively used in everyday life. V.S. Drachuk identifies 6 types of Russian family coats of arms: princely original, princely granted, count, baronial, noble original, noble granted [3]. The coats of arms included in the “General Armorial” are divided into three groups by origin. The first group includes coats of arms of families descended from Rurik and Gedimin. The Rurikids are descendants of the princes of the 12th–15th centuries: Goncharovs, Odoevskys, Volkonskys, etc. Their coats of arms contain emblems used by representatives of these families as a sign of ownership, i.e. emblems of appanage principalities, cities, lands owned by their ancestors. In subsequent generations, these emblems are placed in parts of the shield, giving way to new signs.

The second group includes borrowed coats of arms that were introduced to the “General Armorial” without any significant changes to their prototypes. These are primarily coats of arms of Polish and other foreign families that received diplomas for honorary titles from foreign monarchs or used Western European emblems according to legends about their origin.

The third group includes coats of arms of persons who received nobility by meritorious ranks.

The general forms adopted in the production of the “Armorial” were the following: a French-type shield (slightly pointed at the bottom). The shields of princely families were covered with a velvet mantle on ermine fur and a hat with ermine trim, three golden arcs with pearls and an orb with a cross. The same decorations were also given to untitled families, but descended from appanage princes. The helmet used was a Western European lattice one, topped with crowns (count's with nine pearls, baron's, consisting of a golden hoop, entwined with a pearl thread, noble with three visible teeth and two pearls between them). The coats of arms of ancient noble families had heraldic supporters. The second helmet was given to barons and united families, three — to counts and princes, who could have up to five helmets. Helmets differed in shape. A helmet of the Ancient Russian form was given only to ancient Russian families. The scions of the princes descended from Rurik and Gediminas had the right to place a crown of the Ancient Russian form in the coat of arms.

The main elements of noble heraldry were images of warriors, body parts, various types of weapons, representatives of the animal and plant world, mythological characters, stars, crescents, crowns, crosses, etc. A frequent element of noble emblems was the double-headed eagle, however, its use gradually declined.

In the late period of development of noble heraldry (from the second half of the 19th century), objects associated with the development of science and art (globes, astrolabes, etc.) penetrated into the images.

Family heraldry in Russia flourished with the strengthening of contacts with foreigners, and borrowed much from European heraldic practice. One of the first noble coats of arms was the coat of arms of D.I. Narbekov, recorded in the first half of the 70s of the 17th century, submitted together with a heraldic poem to the Chamber of Genealogy [11]. The poem describes the feat of Narbekov in the Battle of Kazan, which was reflected in the coat of arms, as well as the origin of the Narbekovs, the principles of heraldry and its perception in the 17th century. He was awarded by Ivan the Terrible. That case was an example of the modified and then approved Polish heraldry. The shield is divided horizontally into two parts, the lower part is once again vertical. In the upper field gules on the sinister is a fortress argent with three towers, on the middle tower is a moon argent, on the other two there is a five-pointed star or. On the dexter, a warrior gallops towards the fortress, his eye is struck by an arrow, his hand with a sword is torn off by a cannonball. Below, in the dexter field or, in the middle, there is a vertical fur strip. In the sinister field azur there is a cross or, above it a crown or, below a moon or with horns up. Above the shield is a turban gules with a feather, above it a drawn bow and an arrow with the point up. On the edges of the shield there are two helmets, above them there are three ostrich feathers, the outer feathers are or, the middle ones are azur. In front of the feathers there are laurel wreaths. The mantling is azur with or [14, p. 407]. Some alien researchers suppose that “the only really distinctive feature of Russian heraldry, however, was that heraldic animals faced in the opposite direction to the rest of Europe, sinister rather than dexter, although there was some attempt to bring things more closely into line with western usage. St. George and his horse in the arms of Moscow, for instance, were reversed to dexter in 1856” [12, p. 31].

Since the 19th century, the “coat of arms of the House of Romanov” has meant the coat of arms of the dynasty that ruled since 1613, created by Baron B.V. Köhne during the reign of Alexander II. By that time, the acquisition of coats of arms by the nobility was practically complete. One of the few noble families that did not have coats of arms was the royal family. The non-royal branch of the Romanovs died out in 1654 with the death of the childless boyar, N.I. Romanov, a cousin of the first tsar of the family. To create the coat of arms, Köhne used family tradition and a drawing of the ensign of boyar N.I. Romanov. However, the ensign itself was lost; the drawing was a reconstruction of the second half of the 19th century based on a description of the second half of the 17th century. The Romanov coat of arms is argent, griffin gules with a sword and targe or (a shield with a hole in the middle), topped with a small eagle, on a border sable of 4 or and 4 argent torn off lion heads. Köhne changed the colour of the griffin from gold to red, which implies the Livonian roots of the family (Livland had the opposite colour combination — a silver griffin on a red field, although the founders of the family came from Prussia). Baron M.A. Taube [6] deduces that the Romanovs acquired the griffin as a symbol from Mikhail Romanov's grandfather, boyar Nikita Romanovich Zakharyin-Yuryev, who became famous in the Livonian War. Although this symbol is considered the personal emblem of the boyar, who borrowed the emblem of Livonia. The coat of arms received by Livonia in 1566 was the own coat of arms of Jan Chodkiewicz (the Polish governor of Livonia).

The Romanovs, Sheremetevs, Kolychevs and other old families traced their lineage back to Glanda Kambila (Andrei Kobyla) and acquired coats of arms based on the Gdansk city coat of arms at the beginning of the 18th century (except for the Romanovs). The Saltykovs, Sheins and Kutuzovs are considered to be descendants of Mikhail Pruzhanin and use the Prussian eagle in their coat of arms.

There is a description of the boyar's large banner, which features an eagle sable and three arms with a cross, a crown and a sword emerging from a cloud above it. The arm with a sword and a black eagle is an obligatory part of the Polish coat of arms of Soltyk and the coat of arms of West Prussia. The arm with a crown is found in the coat of arms of the city of Kneiphof, one of the three components of the city coat of arms of Königsberg. A hand with a cross emerging from a cloud is the coat of arms of the Livonian city of Pernau. Based on all of the above, we can conclude that in the 17th century the Romanovs used the image of a black eagle on a white background as a family emblem, and the lions and griffins were of secondary importance. Some confusion and inaccuracy in the composition of the Romanov coat of arms was aggravated by the fact that Köhne followed the Western tradition in composing the coat of arms, without taking into account Russian specifics. In the middle of the 19th century, the Romanov coat of arms acquired a complex form with numerous divisions of the dexter of the shield, reflecting the marriages of the royal family with foreign royal houses.

As Russia was in the process of accepting heraldic traditions, it became necessary to legalize bearing arms, resulted in Russian College of Arms. In all the countries, where heraldry existed, such institutions were created to ensure the correctness and legitimacy of coat of arms. The fate of Russian College of Arms was quite complicated. The first Russian "Titulyarnik" [13] was compiled in 1672 by the translator of the Embassy Office Nicholas Spafariy and the clerk Peter Domov. The Board of Foreign Affairs was in charge of granting diplomas for honorary titles. The growth of the granted nobility was accompanied by various kinds of violation. Russian family heraldry was "devalued" by granting a large number of coats of arms to people of non-noble class. The "Table of Ranks" [15] consolidated the new class hierarchy, abolishing the old division based on pedigree. The legislative consolidation of coats of arms was associated with the establishment of absolute monarchy and the dependence of the nobility on the monarch. In 1673, the King of arms of the Austrian Emperor Leopold I Lavrenty Khurelich was invited to Moscow. Besides Peter's associate Yakov Bruce, was an expert in heraldic art.

There is little information of the Russian College of Arms. It is known about activities in supervising the military and civil service of nobles, issuing coats of arms, diplomas and patents for coats of arms. Peter's implantation of Western traditions not only transformed the socio-cultural situation in the country, but also introduced a legal aspect into emblems. Imitation of Western models of aristocratic culture could not help but include heraldry in its circle as one of its main attributes. Though still Russian heraldry even family one was quite peculiar.

In 1705, the book "Symbola et Emblemata" was published in Amsterdam. That book was a scientific summary of the emblems accepted in Europe. Peter I was interested in the book and wanted his favorite emblems to be spread among the people, reflecting the peculiarities of the country. The College of Arms (Герольдмейстерская контора), founded in 1722, was the first institution to be in charge of coats of arms. In 1800, it was transformed into the Heroldie (Герольдия), and in 1848 into the Department of Heraldry (Департамент Герольдии) of the Governing Senate, and in 1857 the Heraldry Office of the Department of Heraldry (Гербовое отделение Департамента Герольдии) was formed, abolished after October 1917.

The transformations had a negative impact on the work, which was already in poor order. The documents of the College of Arms of the 18th century are stored in the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts. Peter I concentrated matters concerning the nobility under the jurisdiction of the King of Arms. However, for a very long time, coats of arms were not his most important issue. The main concern was the fight against noblemen evading service. The

heraldic service dealt not only with noble genealogy, service and coats of arms, but also with state, land and military heraldry, as well as the registry of titles of prince, count and baron and the creation of coats of arms for those receiving these titles. In parallel, the Chancellery of Moscow Heraldic Affairs (Канцелярия Московских Герольдмейстерских дел) existed in Moscow from 1722 to 1871. The functions of the Chancellery were the same as those of the Office. In 1763, it came under the subordination of the departments of the Senate.

In 1723, the Heraldic institutions moved to St. Petersburg. The work on drawing coats of arms slowed down. One of the most important feature was the links of heraldic sphere with the science and arts and the correspondent institution.

The College of arms was closely connected with the Academy of Sciences. Thus, academician I.S. Bekenshteyn (professor of the law) was the main consultant on heraldry at the Academy and drew coats of arms for regimental flags. In 1765, the College was transformed into the Heroldie (Герольдия), subordinate to the 1st Department of the Senate. In the 70–80s of the 18th century, the main attention was paid to city coats of arms. A new surge of interest in family coats of arms occurred at the end of the 18th century.

On June 10, 1857, the Heraldry Department was established under the Chancery of the Department of Heraldry. Baron B.V. Köhne was appointed the head of the Heraldic Department. He carried out significant reforms in state heraldry: changing the design of the coat of arms, creating large, medium and small coats of arms of the Empire, a system of coats of arms for members of the royal family, and introducing a flag with heraldic colours. After the Revolution, the Heraldic Department was transformed into the Heraldic Museum in April 1918. In July 1931, it became the Cabinet of Auxiliary Historical Disciplines as a part of the Leningrad Department of the Central Historical Archive. On July 25, 1939, it was transformed into the Archive Cabinet at the Central State Archives in Leningrad.

At the turn of 1987–89, the process of active heraldic creativity began in the state and public spheres. In May 1987, the Heraldic Commission of the History Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences was created as an advisory institution. On February 20, 1992, the State Heraldry Service (Государственная геральдическая служба) was formed as an independent Department of the Committee for Archives under the Government of the Russian Federation. G.V. Vilinbakhov became its head. Then it was transformed into the Heraldry Department of the State Archival Service (Управление геральдики Государственной архивной службы), and then The College of Arms (Государственная герольдия). The position of the King of Arms (Государственный герольдмейстер) was occupied by G.V. Vilinbakhov. Russian College of Arms became a regulating institution, engaged in creation of coat of arms and put spontaneous Russian emblems into heraldic frameworks, and giving it legality. Though there were many variants of its names, structure, activities, position and headquartering.

Heraldry is the result of the hierarchization of society. It reflects the will to highlight the achievements of clans, as well as to define oneself as part of a clan, a bearer of information about one's cultural layer. The desire for identification is associated with such cultural property as Adamism. Not only to highlight, but to designate oneself, to give a name to oneself and one's deeds. Having formed as an independent sphere of existence of the Medieval culture, heraldry penetrated all layers of the socio-cultural environment of that time, and turned into an effective regulating and preserving mechanism of cultural memory. The cultural nature of the properties of heraldry indicates the presence of still productive enormous cultural work in its structures. Heraldry is a linking element between people, organizations, countries, reveals the emergence of various social institutions, plays an important role in the attribution of monuments provided with a coat of arms, helps to clarify economic and cultural ties.

Russian heraldry has the very specific features that were mostly the reflection of historical and cultural peculiarities. Ancient emblems and coats of arms of Russian cities in symbolic images tell about the history and geography of the regions. Among them there are many Canting arms, reflecting the name of the city, and also characterizing the lands in geographical, agricultural or historical terms. During the time of Peter I, land emblems gradually turned into city emblems. They were based on the personal seals of the governors of the regions, etc., emblems of the principalities. In the first decades of the 18th century from the point of view of the canons of Western heraldry, city emblems are not heraldic. In 1692, the first document appeared confirming that land emblems are also city emblems. As already mentioned, heraldry is an attribute of a hierarchical society. Being a direct aspect of the culture of the aristocracy, it played a cementing role in the formation of the nobility of Russia. Emblems in Rus existed spontaneously for a long time, not relying on strict rules and not being legally fixed, while in the West there was already a heraldic system. The socio-cultural situation in Russia was different, given the above facts.

As any other nation, Ancient Rus had complicated system of signs and emblems. For heraldry is very distinct practice, any coat of arms should possess particular feature to be a real arms. It should be hereditary, juridically fixed. The armorial bearings should possess a shield as the background, specific colours and emblems of particular nature and shape. In Russia the sign quite close, but not identical, to European coat of arms in structure and pragmatics appeared simultaneously with Europe. Some examples of armorial bearings in Russia are even older than most of European.

Though still classical heraldry came to Russia together with Peter the Great. In any case, Russian heraldry appeared to be very distinct. And one the reasons of it was the influence of Polish tradition. The main point is the absence of chivalry institution and kin nature of signs.

Mostly all the influences touched family heraldry, and land coat of arms were more culturally specific. The family heraldry is formed in the knightly European Cultural space, and thus it is unified in form and function. The land coat of arms are frequently organized in the way different from heraldic rules. Especially it is concerned the state armorial bearings which can be much far from the classical arms. The land signs are quite ancient, go back to the patron of a region and the kin living there. These symbols are mostly associated with natural phenomena, types of activity of population, native legends.

So the main problem is to suppose the heraldry as a specific aspect of culture that belonged only to Europe. Heraldry and coat of arms are very prominent phenomenon, based on chivalry culture. Thus in the kernel there is family armorial bearings. Land coat of arms are closely connected with family ones. Though a real arms in origin is still the sign of a knight. State coat of arms as well as land ones are older and sometimes very different from that of a kin. Many state arms are not arms at all but emblems. On the other hand European aristocracy was deeply connected with the estate, and the knight arms can be the symbol of a "castle" in origin. Russia has no knight culture, so family coat of arms are formed on the principles of European examples. Land arms are close to emblems but begin to obtain the features of arms earlier than in Europe. And arms of the nobility were mostly the arms of a person. So basically the heraldry in Europe is a sign of necessary identification and differentiation but in Russia the reason for it was mostly political game. Russian arms tried to be the integral part of the European scheme but as the reason was different it resulted in ignoring of some rules. It can be the absence or changes in the form of the shield (e.g. in Titulyarnik, where they were oval), the arrangement and shape of figures etc. though heraldry in Russia was more closely

connected with the work of scientists and artists. Thus may be it is better to use fixed term Russian Heraldry as it really is heraldry although not entirely accordant.

Heraldry continues to develop today, mainly in the sphere of social production (creation of coats of arms and emblems for various social institutes: from schools to banks and companies). In the modern socio-political reality and the sphere of political culture, heraldic signs serve as an intensive means of cultural identification and agitation. Heraldry is also a symbol of special status. The heraldic boom in Russia in recent times is associated with the reorganization of the socio-cultural sphere of society. Heraldry is an attribute of the society with profound stratified differences. In the modern socio-political reality and the aspect of political culture, heraldic signs serve as an intensive means of cultural identification. One of the main characteristics of Russian heraldry is its extreme politicization, especially in the sphere of state emblems. Heraldry is a fairly strict science and art, manifested in many spheres of human activity, which requires a balanced approach and consistency, it is one of the most structured sign systems, which does not tolerate syntactic subjectivity, but does possess a wealth of interpretations, correlated with the language in its cognitive space.

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