

Number of Protestants in the Russian Administrative Apparatus under Peter the Great

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to elicit the number and proportion of Protestants among civil servants in the Russian Central government under Peter the Great. The author determines a circle of officials who could potentially profess the Protestant faith (whose families came from Western and Central Europe countries) and verifies their confessional status. For this purpose the author used a genealogical method, which consists in finding and systematization of unique biographical data, as well as in ascertainment of family ties (including the data of Lutheran and Catholic metric books). The results revealed that Protestants were concentrated in the upper level of the State apparatus in the initial period of Russian Collegiums' development. The number of Protestants in the composition of civil servants in the Central apparatus in 1720 was in the range of 59–73 persons. Among responsible officials of 1–8 classes (106 persons) the Protestants were no less than 20, 8%. However, by the end of the reign of Peter I the proportion of Protestants in this category of servants has decreased to about 8–10%.

Keywords: Protestants, State apparatus in Russia, personal composition of officialdom, share of Protestants in Russian administration, Russia under Peter the Great.

Introduction

In the 18-th century many natives of Western Europe countries have brought a great contribution to forming the Russian statehood. However the role of Protestants and their religious ideas in this process has not received an objective estimation till now. Scientists do not even know how many Protestants were in the Russian state apparatus. In special publications there were the best studied processes of government's organization (Medushevsky 1993; Anisimov 1997), and we have a few works

considered the social and personal composition of civil officials in Russia in the 18-th century (Pisar'kova 2007; Serov 2007). Still the authors of these works do not raise the question about the religion of civil servants-foreigners. As a rule the historians who have studied the personal composition of Russian bureaucracy, in this structure have detailed only a category of "inozemtsy" (foreigners) and have interpreted these foreigners generally, without confessional differences. Usually for studying the administration of Peter the First many scientists use the information about foreign officials in the Russian Central state apparatus in 1720, which was introduced in the 19-th century by Russian lawyer and historian Dmitry Polenov. However, historians were interested in social parameters of the group of foreign civil servants; they were studying the conditions of civil service and the duties of foreigners (Pisar'kova 2007, pp. 180–183, 552–554) and only occasionally their nationality (Petrukhince 2008, pp. 80–85). The religions of the officials found by Polenov have never been a subject of analysis, except A.E. Alakshin's monograph, who identified the most of these foreigners with the Protestants (Alakshin 2006, pp. 359–361). But this historian relied only on the data about places of their births and has not taken into account all available information. Actually no one has attempted to ascertain the faith of Europeans who clerked in Russian boards and central offices on the basis of documents. This article partially should fill the given gap (partially – because in some cases we have no comprehensive or even minimal biographic data about officials-foreigners in Russia under Peter the Great). Thus, the aim of the work is to elicit the proportion of Protestants in the composition of Central state apparatus in Russia at the age of Peter the Great for further study of the role of Protestants in Russian administrative modernization.

Materials and Methods

The share of Protestants among civil servants in various periods of Peter's reign can be determined on the basis of several sources. It is the decree of December, 15th, 1717 "About the appointment of presidents and vice-presidents in the Collegiums" (Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossijskoj imperii, pp. 527–528), Polenov's list of foreigners who served in Russian boards in 1720 (Polenov 1869, pp. 1729–1766), and also the enumeration of officials made in 1724–1726 by the Russian scientist and statesman Ivan Kirillovich Kirillov, which was published in his book "The blossoming condition of the All-Russian state" (Kirillov 1977, pp. 36–45, 111–114, 167–168). The study addressed two objectives: at first, it was necessary on the basis of the named sources to determine a circle of persons who could potentially profess the Protestant faith (whose families came from Western and Central Europe countries); secondly, it was necessary to produce documentary verification of their confessional status. For this purpose the author used a genealogical method, which consists in finding and systematization of unique biographical data, as well as in ascertainment of family ties (including the data of Lutheran and Catholic metric books). In addition to church books, the article is based on

the data of entombments in the non-Orthodox cemeteries of Petersburg, on the personal sources and also on the conclusions of special genealogical and Church historical researches. Regarding the list of foreign civil servants of 1720, it is composed on the basis of Polenov's data that were published in his own paper (Polenov 1869, pp. 1729–1766) and also in Pisarkova's book as a special supplement (Pisar'kova 2007, pp. 552–554). From this list Moslems and those foreigners who have embraced the Orthodoxy were excluded (certainly, only in the case when it was possible to identify their religious belonging). For clarity the information about foreign officials is tabulated.

Results

According to the decree of 15 December 1717, many senior members of the first Russian Collegiums were foreigners. Among fifteen top administrators we find them: Baron Magnus Wilhelm von Nieroth (was appointed vice-president of Kammer-Collegium), Hermann von Brevern (vice-president of Justice-Collegium), Adam Weyde (who took the place of the second president of Military board), vice-president of Admiralty board Cornelius Cruys, vice-president of Commerce-Collegium Schmidt and president of Berg-Manufacture-Collegium Jacob Daniel Wilhelm Bruce (*Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossijskoj imperii*, pp. 527–528). Almost all of them were Lutherans – this is proved by Church metric books of Petersburg and Moscow Lutheran parishes and by the other sources. The religion of Vice-president Schmidt is not clear only – he could be a Catholic or even an Orthodox German, however it is unlikely. Tsarist Minister J. Lefort has determined the character of Schmidt: “This is a man who knows a trade and money and served in this sphere in Bavaria” (Kozlova 1991, p. 141). It is unknown whether he came from Bavaria or only served there. All other administrators distinctly were born and educated in Lutheranism; therefore they tried to be helpful to the Church and their brothers in faith. Bruce and Weyde were the active parishioners and the patrons of the Lutheran church of Saint-Michael in Moscow (CSAM 1735, l. 1–2; CSAM 1766, l. 27 turn., 77 turn.). Soon they patronized the coreligionists already in Petersburg (Alakshin 2006, pp. 89–92, 104, 362). A Baltic Baron Magnus von Nieroth, like every landowner in this region, was a patron of the Lutheran parish churches. In his estate Albu in Esthland he established a Knightly academy for orphans from poor noble families and with the help of its director (pastor Wrede) he paid great attention to the children's moral development (Gavrilov 2011, p. 68). Hermann von Brevern came out of a wealthy merchant family that received Swedish nobility. He was born in the family of Riga superintendent and Lutheran theologian Johann Brevern. Before the annexation of Riga to Russia, he was vice-president of Riga Hofgericht and was defending the interests of local Protestant communities (Zapiski knjazja Petra Dolgorukova, p. 480; Zurabjan 2004, p. 30). His son Karl later became President of Russian Academy of Sciences and was an active Lutheran, a parishioner of Petrikerche in Petersburg (Büsching 1766, p. 88). A division of Adam Weyde, accommodated in Moscow, in 1719 was actually a Lutheran

community and this General cared about it as it was his own family. Further, after the relocation of the Weyde division to Petersburg, it will become the nucleus of the German Lutheran community of the Casting yard (Liteinyi dvor) (Alakshin 2006, p. 102). Finally, Cornelius Cruys played a very big role in the formation of Protestant communities in the city on Neva – Vice Admiral built in his Garth a first simultaneous church (both for the Lutherans and Calvinists), he took pastors from foreign countries; he assisted the Protestants with money and protected them in front of authorities (Alakshin 2006, p. 91–92, 141–148, 182–183). Thus, by the beginning of 1718, the Protestants (namely Lutherans) were not less than one third of the number of Boards’ heads (five of fifteen Presidents and Vice-presidents, named in the decree).

We have wider data about the foreign officials for the year of 1720. The data are tabulated (table 1). An indication of the faith with a question mark in the table means the most probable religion. All indicated with this sign are Lutherans who were immigrants from traditionally Protestant countries with a predominantly Lutheran population. On 30 July 1720 they swore allegiance to the service of the Czar with the help of Lutheran pastor Johann Leonhard Schattner who ministered in the community of Pushkarskaya Sloboda (in the future – St. Anne). Thus, their belonging to the Lutheran Church is very possible (Polenov 1869, pp. 1759–1764).

Table 1: Information about foreigners who served in Russian Collegiums in 1720, indicating their religion

№	Appointment	Name	Birth place	Religion
Kammer-Collegium				
1	Vice-president	Magnus Wilhelm von Nieroth	Esthland	Lutheran
2	Councilor	Heinrich von Fick	Hamburg	Lutheran
3	Assessor	Anton Johann von Salz	Esthland	Lutheran?
4	Assessor	Christian Berggard Glück	Marienburg	Lutheran
5	Secretary	Stephan Kochius	Prussia	Lutheran?
6	Kammerier	Johann Schmidt	Vyborg	Lutheran?
7	Translator	Jacob Kwist (Quist)	Narva	Lutheran?
8	Translator	Joachim Richert	Shania (Sweden)	Lutheran?
9	Actuary	Johann Georg Growe	Lievland	Lutheran?
10	Unter-Kammerier	Johann Matthias Pauli	Brandenburg	Lutheran?
11	Unter-Kammerier	Martin Schwanwitz	Torun	?
12	Clerk	Heinrich Grebner	Magdeburg	Lutheran?
13	Scribe (Schreiber)	Johann Schlaetterman	Stockholm	Lutheran?
14	Scribe (Schreiber)	Heinrich Ludwig Geber	Danish Holstein	Lutheran?
15	Scribe (Schreiber)	Jacob Johann Seelind	Riga	Lutheran?
16	Scribe (Schreiber)	Philip Trummer	Silesia	Lutheran?
17	Scribe (Schreiber)	Christian Wilhelm Cornelius	Prussia	Lutheran?

Revision-Collegium				
18	Vice-president	Johann Friedrich von Schmiden	Saxony	Lutheran
19	Assessor	Johann Berngardt Müller	Rostock (Mecklenburg)	Lutheran
20	Commissary	Christian Grüll	Riga	Lutheran?
21	Secretary	Johann Ostervaldt	Hamburg	Lutheran?
Justice-Collegium				
22	Vice-president	Hermann von Brevern	Riga	Lutheran
23	Councilor	Siegesmund Adam Wolf	Lievland	Lutheran
24	Councilor	Hans Heinrich Strig	Lievland	Lutheran?
25	Protonotarius	Ferdinand Heidenreich	Austria	?
26	Archivist	Alex Caspar Reimers	Reval	Lutheran?
27	Translator	Jacques Vernisober	France	Calvinist
28	Translator	Johann Wurm	Lievland	Lutheran?
29	Translator	Johann Wetzel	Sweden	Lutheran?
30	Copyist	Karl Wilhelm Steinmetz	Danzig	Lutheran?
State-office-Collegium				
31	State-commissar	Karl Prinzenstiern	Sweden	Lutheran
32	Secretary	Wilhelm Schulz	Prussia	Lutheran
33	Kammerier	Detlew Joachimsen	Ingermanland	Lutheran?
34	Translator	Abraham Jochems	Reval	Lutheran?
35	Unter-Kammerier	Georg Soltner	Berlin	Lutheran?
36	Actuary	Georg Spanaus	Dresden	Lutheran?
37	Accountant	Lucas Willers	Hamburg	Lutheran?
38	Kammer-scribe	Heinrich Sandten	Prussia	Lutheran?
Commerce-Collegium				
39	Councilor	Jean Paul Bacon	Bavaria	Catholic
40	Councilor	Franz Collins	London	?
41	Councilor	Jacob Guvitt	Edinburgh (Scotland)	?
42	Councilor	Jean Magnan	France	?
43	Councilor	Andreas de Cassis		?
44	Assessor	Johann Lefort	Geneva	Calvinist
45	Assessor	Dietrich Willers	Hamburg	Lutheran?
46	Assessor	Andrey Decals		?
47	Secretary	Johann Gottfried Günter	Prussia	Lutheran?
48	Commissary	Martin Speermann	Danzig	Lutheran?
49	Actuary	Peter Holstein	Narva	Lutheran?
50	Clerk	Gottfried Georg Kanzler	Dorpat (Lievland)	Lutheran?
51	Copyist	Georg Friedrich Tille	Hamburg	Lutheran
Admiralty-Collegium				
52	Vice-president	Cornelius Cruys	Stavanger (Norway)	Lutheran
53	Translator	Hamilton (Englishman)	Moscow	?
Berg-Manufacture-Collegium				

54	President	Jacob Daniel Wilhelm (James Daniel) Bruce	Moscow	Lutheran
55	Privy councilor	Anania Christian Pott von Luberas	Silesia	Lutheran
56	Assessor	Heinrich Schlatter	Zurich	Calvinist
57	Assessor	Vincent Reuser	Hamburg	Lutheran
58	Assessor	Jacob Lion Delehien	England	?
59	Assessor	G. Bargueret de Pressi		?
60	Secretary	Johann Friedrich Schmiden	Dresden	Lutheran?
61	Clerk	Johann Friedrich Lewin	Brandenburg	Lutheran?
Collegium of Foreign Affairs				
62	Privy councilor	Heinrich Johann Friedrich Ostermann	Bochum (Westphalia)	Lutheran
63	Historian	Johann Crussali	Venice	Catholic
64	Translator	Johann Keldermann		Lutheran
65	Translator	Franz Schoevius		Lutheran
66	Scribe (Schreiber)	Johann Schubert		Lutheran
67	Courier	Michael Ostergarden		Lutheran
Military-Collegium				
68	Privy councilor	Robert Wilhelm (Roman) Bruce		Lutheran
69	Privy councilor	Wolmar Anton von Schlippenbach	Lievland	Lutheran
70	Councilor	Johann Günter		Lutheran
71	General-auditor	Zentarov	Konigsberg (Prussia)	Lutheran?
72	Secretary	Franz Johann Wüst	Lignitz (Silesia)	Catholic
73	Ober-Kriegs-Fiskal	Gedden	Kaunas	?
Without specifying the place of service				
74		Gabriel Straub		?
75		Ernst Friedrich Crompein		Catholic?
76		N. Hoffmann		?
77		Wilhelm Blankennagel		?

The Polenov's material defines the faith of some persons. For example, in the State-commissar Prinzenstiern's patent it was announced that he can remain in his non-Orthodox "Christian faith". Such officials of Collegium of Foreign Affairs, as Keldermann, Schoevius, Schubert and Ostergarden, were named the Lutherans. Their colleague Crussali was a Catholic (Polenov 1869, pp. 1752, 1765). With regard to other persons, to determine their religion it was necessary to use a variety of materials. The translator of Justice-Collegium Vernisober belonged to the famous Moscow family of Calvinists who had fled from France after the repeal of the Nantes edict and became the parishioners of the Dutch church in Petersburg (Tastevin 1910, pp. 640–641). The assessor of Berg-Collegium Heinrich Schlatter was born in Zurich, in a famed center of Calvinism, and

lived some time in Berlin. His descendants professed the Lutheranism (a son Johann Wilhelm married a daughter of pastor Wassermann from Duderhof) (Balzer 1844, pp. 280–282). The study also found that many of the officials were Church leaders: Heinrich von Fick from Kammer-Collegium was a member of the Church Council of Lutheran Petrikirche (Büsching 1766, p. 229) and was visiting some sermons and worships of the Duke Karl-Friedrich of Holstein during his stay in Russia (Bergholtz 2000a, p. 452; Bergholtz 2000b, p. 89). The secretary of State-office Wilhelm Schulz, Fick's son-in-law, was going into Lutheran community of St.-Catherine in Petersburg (RSAAA 1888, l. 102–102 turn.). The assessor Christian Glück was the son of a famous pastor Ernst Glück and was the head of the Moscow school-gymnasium founded by his father (Bergholtz 2000a, p. 420). In the gymnasium he taught philosophy, ancient languages and Lutheran theology (RSAAA 1703, l. 8–11 turn.). Later he was in the Lutheran community of the Admiralty part in Petersburg (CSHAP 1727, l. 2). Many of these officials were members of Church Councils: Johann Müller, an assessor of Revision-Collegium, and assessor of Berg-Collegium Vincent Reuser – in Petersburg Annenkirche; Councilor of Justice-Collegium Wolf – in Petrikirche since 1728; Robert (Roman) Bruce, Jacob's elder brother, was one of the founders of the Lutheran church of St. Anne in Petersburg (as the commandant of the Petersburg fortress he decided in 1704 to move the Kirk of St. Anne from the fortress to Pushkarskaya Sloboda) (Büsching 1766, p. 229, 310–314; Alakshin 2006, p. 103–104, 109, 122; Grot 1797, p. 77, 96). The religion of some specialists is proved by the metric books: the councilor of Commerce-Collegium Bacon was a Catholic, as the secretary of Military-Collegium Franz Wüst (CSHAP 1710, l. 9–20). The copyist of Commerce-Collegium Georg Tille was a member of Church Council in the community of St. Peter in Petersburg (CSHAP 1734, l. 1). The privy councilor of Berg-Collegium von Luberas was a parishioner of Lutheran church of St. Michael in Moscow – September 9, 1722, he baptized in the church his daughter Sophie-Elisabeth (CSAM 1766, l. 148). The military councilor Johann Günter was a churchwarden of St. Anne community in Petersburg (RSAAA 1888, l. 1–1 turn.). He participated in baptismal rites as a godfather in Lutheran churches of Petersburg and Moscow (CSAM 1766, l. 158). Some relatives of the assessor Salz and secretary Ostervaldt were buried in evangelical cemeteries of Petersburg (Peterburgskiy nekropol' 1912a, p. 183; Peterburgskiy nekropol' 1912b, p. 330). Finally, the civil servant Ernst Friedrich Crompein is accepted as a likely Catholic – he is referred to as the godfather of a child in the Catholic community of Petersburg, which, however, does not exclude the possibility of having the Protestant faith (CSHAP 1710, l. 12 turn.).

The table shows, that in 1720 the Central State apparatus of Russia includes 77 foreigners who presumably confessed Western-Christian religions. Among them we find 22 Lutheran, 3 Calvinists and 3 Catholics, as evidenced by historical documents. Also, 34 civil servants are identified as probable parishioners of Lutheran Church. This probability is very high considering the data about their birthplace, about the patents, that were guaranteeing them freedom of faith in Russia and considering the fact of their

oath made with the help of Lutheran pastor Schattner (all these facts give to the authoritative historian Alakshin the basement to see in these people exactly Protestants) (Alakshin 2006, p. 359–361). One person is recognized as a potential Catholic. And finally, religion of 14 persons has remained unclear – among them there are Germans (one from Poland), some French, English, a Scot, a Swiss and an Austrian. Theoretically some of them could be Catholics, Protestants (Lutherans, Calvinists and Anglicans) and even Orthodox.

Discussion

Thus, the number of Protestants in the composition of civil servants in the Central State apparatus in 1720 was in the range of 59–73 persons. In total in 1720 in the apparatus of Collegiums and various boards of Petersburg and Moscow there were 1569 people (we mean only officials and clerks without the auxiliary personnel – i.e. without the guard, executioners, soldiers, craftsmen and others) (Pisar'kova 2007, pp. 188–189). Accordingly the share of Protestants averaged about 3,8–4,7%. However, if we analyse the structure of the higher administration level (officials of the Central apparatus of 1–5 classes), we'll see that among 32 officials in this category 9 were Lutherans, i.e. they amounted more than 28%. They were Nieroth, Schmiden, Brevern, Cruys, both of Bruce, von Luberas, Ostermann and Schlippenbach – all of them had ranks within 3–5 classes of the Table of ranks. In the segment of civil servants of 6–8 classes, as the table shows, 21 foreigners worked (not 14, as Pizar'kova indicated) (Pisar'kova 2007, pp. 188) – it is Fick, Salz, Glück, Prinzenstiern, Müller, Wolf, Strig, Bacon, Collins, Guvitt, Magnan, Lefort, Willers, Decals, Schlatter, Reuser, Delehien, de Pressi, Günter, Zentarov and Gedden. This list includes a State-commissar and Councilors of Collegiums (ranks of 6 class), a General-auditor (7 class), assessors and an Ober-Kriegs-Fiskal (8 class). Among them were the Lutherans, the Calvinists, a Catholic and some persons whose religion is not defined. We find exactly in this segment 13 Protestants, but certainly they were more. Taking into account that the number of Russian officials of 6–8 classes in 1720 was 53 (Pisar'kova 2007, p. 188), the share of foreigners accounted for 28,4%, and the share of Protestants – at least 17,6%. Overall, among responsible officials of 1–8 classes (106 persons) Protestants were no less than 20,8%. In the segment of officials 9–14 classes the percentage of foreigners amounted to 17,7% (it is hard to determine how many of them were Protestants), and among clerks it is generally 1% (Pisar'kova 2007, p. 188). All these data testify the wide participation of Protestants in the work of Russian State Collegiums in the initial period of their development. Results of the research refute the view of Soviet scientists that the foreigners were always a very small group among the officials of Russian State boards, and that they were occupying mostly lower clerical posts which did not allow them to influence administrative processes (Medushevsky 1983, p. 140). Our figures suggest the contrary, namely they indicate a big representation of Protestants (more foreigners) in the upper segment of the board apparatus and, conversely, their paucity among ordinary clerks in 1720. Appositely, N.

Kozlova in 1990s expressed a doubt about correctness of Medushevsky's conclusions about the small role of foreigners in Russian boards (Kozlova 1991, p. 142). However, already in 1722, the number of foreign officials in Russian Collegiums was greatly reduced, due to an attempt of Peter the Great to adapt the collegiate system to Russian conditions and to make it effective (Pisar'kova 2007, p. 190). A contemporary wrote that an inspection of foreign civil officials in Petersburg in early 1722 showed their reduction up to 20 people (Bassewitz 2000, p. 398). In the years 1724–1726 among responsible officials of the first eight classes we find a little more than 20 foreigners (Kirillov 1977, pp. 36–45, 111–114, 167–168). According to our calculation, the share of Protestants among civil servants of 1–8 classes in this period was approximately 8–10%.

Conclusion

On the basis of varied sources (such as legal, Church and personal documents) we may confirm that the Protestants (the Lutherans) prevailed among the foreign officials under Peter I. Due to the reform of the Central administration (because of Collegiums' establishment) the necessity of using the European experience increased. By the end of the reign of Peter the Great the Protestants (and the Europeans generally) took a strong position in the Russian Central government and really were able to influence the governance and political development of the country. In the period of Collegiums foundation in Russia they were indispensable.

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