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OATHS OF ALLEGIANCE TO RUSSIAN MONARCHS IN THE 17TH CENTURY[1]

This study analyzes the formation and developmental history of the Russian population's oaths of allegiance to the tsar (often called "cross-kissing," meaning "swearing" or "oath-taking"), which became a form of State oath. The texts of the oaths and their ceremonial practices reflected the fundamental elements of Russian political culture in the 17th century, based on Orthodox doctrine. This essay focuses on the general normative regulations for the organization of oath ceremonies in Russian cities as well as on the evolution of the ideological content of the oath texts addressed to the Orthodox population. The oath procedures combined secular and religious rhetoric, which substantiated and listed the types of services and duties required of the tsar's subjects, the failing and breaching of which was a reason for excommunication from the church and/or secular punishment. The Russian state assigned varying degrees of rights and liberties to different social groups, correlating these privileges directly with the specific duties and obligations each group owed to the state. Consequently, the notion of subjecthood differed substantially among the various segments of the population. Although the widespread adoption of loyalty oaths fostered a collective sense of allegiance to the state, the rights of subjects were concurrently constrained by their association with particular social categories. Throughout the 17th century, the administration of the State Oath served to affirm the stability of the governing apparatus and the ruling dynasty and consolidated the loyalty of the population, gradually turning this ritual into an important political institution.

Keywords: Russian state; monarchy; cross-kissing; 17th century; State Oath; political culture; Orthodox; legitimacy

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INTRODUCTION

The various oaths used in the Russian State since the 16th century to proclaim allegiance to the reigning monarch have long been of interest to researchers. Oaths were always a public legally binding act that strengthened obligations of subjects to their ruler, while also being a sacred act of "promise," "swearing", or "oath-taking." As a result, numerous studies have analyzed both the political and legal foundations for the emergence and development of forms of state oaths. Both the role of Orthodox ideology, through which the sacralization of power was carried out, and the semantics of the rites of oaths have been discussed in great detail. Today, many scholars are actively engaged in examining various aspects of oaths in Ancient and Medieval Russia. A separate problematic field for historians is the clarification of the Russian Orthodox Church's stance on the practice of oaths, since the New Testament considers swearing or taking an oath to be a sin, one condemned by church authorities.[2] Very few recent studies are devoted specifically to 17th-century oaths of allegiance to Russian monarchs (state oaths) taken by the Russian population.[3] However, the topic of Russian state oaths and descriptions of the oath-taking ceremony consistently appear in various studies of social and political history, history of central government and Russian political culture (ceremonials, images and representations of power) in the Early Modern period.[4]

2 Д. И. Антонов, «Клятва и крест: Проблема судебной присяги в древнерусской правовой культуре XVI–XVII вв.», Древняя Русь. Вопросы медиевистики, no. 1(35) (2009): 42–53; See also: П. С. Стефанович, «Крестоцелование и отношение к нему церкви в Древней Руси», в Средневековая Русь. Под ред. А. А. Горский, вып. 5 (Москва: Индрик, 2004), 86–113; М. В. Корогодина, Исповедь в России в XIV–XIX вв.: Исследование и тексты (Санкт-Петербург: Дмитрий Буланин, 2006).

3 Д. А. Савченко, «"Государю хотети добра во всем": присяга подданных московскому царю (начало XVII в.)», Актуальные проблемы российского права, no. 8 (2013): 940–946; М. В. Королева, «Процедура государственной присяги в России XVII в.», Древняя Русь. Вопросы медиевистики, no. 4 (2020): 73–82; В. А. Слугина, «Организация церемонии присяг на верность царю Федору Алексеевичу в Западной Сибири (1676)», в История России с древних времен до XXI века: проблемы, дискуссии, новые взгляды: сборник статей. Под ред. Ю. А. Петрова, О. А. Плех (Москва: Институт российской истории РАН, 2022), 18–26.

4 There is a vast literature dedicated to the formation of Russian political culture, state ideology and statehood. See, for example, studies by V. I. Savva, P. N. Miliukov, M. A. Diakonov, R. G. Skrynnikov, N. V. Sinitsyna, B. A. Uspenskii, I. S. Chichurov, A. N. Sakharov, S. V. Lur'e, A. P. Bogdanov, N. A. Soboleva, A. I. Filiushkin, V. V. Shaposhnik, I. B. Mikhailova, P. Bushkovich, V. Kivelson, M. Khodarkovsky, N. Kollmann, E. Sashalmi.

Since several types of oaths (in the case of the Orthodox population, the act of taking the oath was often called "cross-kissing," since they would kiss the Holy cross when being sworn in)[5] existed in the internal political sphere of the Russian state in the late 16th century, it is important to distinguish among them since they all had different functions.

The first type of oath was the Judicial Oath, used in legal proceedings and court hearings. This particular oath-type was mentioned as far back as the Sudebniki (law codes) of 1497 and 1550. In the 1649 *Sobornoe Ulozhenie* (Law Code), Chapter X, entitled "The Judicial Process" prescribes the use of cross-kissing in different cases of interrogations and investigations. It was necessary for the courts that the one who testified "tell the truth, as if they are present on Judgment Day."[6] During a preliminary inquest, when a large number of people were interrogated (as a rule, residents of the same area) in regard to a suspect, cross-kissing was required of all who testified, except for the clergy, foreigners and non-Orthodox people. The monastic clergy had to confirm their testimony with a "monk's oath," the secular clergy with a "clerical oath," while non-Orthodox residents would be interrogated as per the *shert-oath.*[7] The consequences for violation of the Judicial Oath and, therefore, violation of the kissing of the cross are laid out in Chapter XIV of the *Sobornoe Ulozhenie* which, depending on the circumstances, specifies excommunication from the Church for six years, ten years or forever.[8] The way the procedural components of Judicial Oaths evolved and their connection with church ideology has been studied by D. I. Antonov,[9] while N. Kollmann[10] has explored the practice of applying Judicial Oaths in the legal culture of the Moscow state during the Early Modern Period.

The second type of oath was the Service Oath taken by officials. It was used when one entered an administrative-fiscal position or an elective position (in the case of the latter, the oath was often combined with the practice of the community putting up a surety bond as a guarantee that

5 Often researchers focus on the cultural and ideological content of cross-kissing and confuse these types of oaths.

6 Полное собрание законов Российской империи (Санкт-Петербург, 1830, Собр. 1, Т. 1), 44.

7 Полное собрание законов Российской империи (Санкт-Петербург, 1830, Собр. 1, Т. 1), 41. See the overview of articles on the Judicial Oath in the *Sobornoe Ulozhenie* and the procedure for carrying it out in М. Ф. Владимирский-Буданов, *Обзор истории русского права* (Москва: Типография МГУ, 2005), 442, 729, 735. (Original work published in 1907).

8 Ibid. 71–73.

9 Антонов, «Клятва и крест: Проблема судебной присяги», 42–53.

10 Nancy Kollmann, *Crime and Punishment in Early Modern Russia* (New Studies in European History) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 114, 118, 121, 126, 184.

the obligations of the appointed person would be honestly fulfilled).[11] P. B. Braun hypothesized that the religious basis of the oath for employees in the Moscow state was a key factor in their motivation to do good work.[12] N. F. Demidova studied texts of oaths that were given by those occupying certain positions in the administrative offices (*Prikazy*) of the Russian state from the end of the 16th-17th centuries to explore the concept of "public service."[13]

The third type of oath was the State Oath, or an oath that reinforced the relationship between the ruler in power – the Moscow Grand Duke / Tsar / Sovereign – and his subjects.[14] Most researchers agree that this form of oath is related to the practice of nobles kissing the cross before the Riurikovich princes to attest their loyalty and faithful service.[15] P. S. Stefanovich draws attention to the fact that from the end of the 14th century, a restructuring of relations between the ruler and the nobility took place. The old contractual agreement between retinue and lord was replaced by a relationship between unequal parties, and "by the beginning of the 16th century, cross-kissing as an oath of allegiance, initially imposed on the population by the state, became common practice."[16]

All three types of oaths demonstrate similarity in sacral-ritual, legal and textual aspects. For example, the 17th century Service Oaths' texts were made up of the State Oath, followed by the specification of job responsi-

11 Ibid. 67–68.

12 Peter B. Brown, "The Service Land Chancellery Clerks of Seventeenth-Century Russia: Their Regime, Salaries, and Economic Survival", *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 52, no. 1 (2004): 65–66.

13 Н. Ф. Демидова, Служилая бюрократия в России XVII в. и ее роль в формировании абсолютизма (Москва: Наука, 1987), 147–153.

14 Only one reciprocal cross-kissing incident is known to have taken place, when Vasily Shuiskii expressed his dedication to his subjects in 1606. Собрание государственных грамот и договоров, хранящихся в государственной коллегии иностранных дел (Санкт-Петербург, 1819, часть 2), 299–300; See also: Endre Sashalmi, *Russian Notions of Power and State in a European Perspective, 1462–1725: Assessing the Significance of Peter's Reign* (Boston, USA: Academic Studies Press, 2022), 300–301.

15 А. А. Горский, Русь от славянского расселения до Московского царства (Москва: Язык славянской культуры, 2004), 321; И. Г. Пономарева, «О происхождении московских "укрепленных" грамот», в Археологический ежегодник за 2012 год. Под ред. С. М. Каштанов (Москва: Русский фонд содействия образованию и науке, 2016), 75; А. А. Дружинин, «Эволюция властных отношений в Московском государстве в укрепленных грамотах конца конца XV – первой четверти XVI века», Вестник Московского городского педагогического университета. Серия «Педагогика и психология», no. 1 (41) (2021): 11–12.

16 П. С. Стефанович, «Отношения правителя и знати в Северо-Восточной Руси в XIV – начале XVI в. Крестоцелование как клятва верности?», *Cahiers Du Monde Russe*, no. 46 (1/2) (2005): 282–283.

bilities[17] as an afterword. Analysis here will focus on the State Oath as an indicator of a tributary connection between the Russian sovereign and his subjects and the procedures for swearing in the population. Because the oath to the monarch was a public act, this was one of the few events when the same narrative was broadcast to the entire population of the country: the parameters of belonging to the state were substantiated, the concepts of "loyalty" and "treason" were put forward, the grounds for the legitimacy of a person to occupy the throne were declared, all in written cross-kissing texts and in formal spoken form.

The next section will examine the origin, functions and political and legal significance of the State Oath in general, with a focus on the version for the Orthodox population. Subsequently, the section entitled "The Aboriginal Peoples of Siberia's Oath of Allegiance to the Russian Tsar" will look at the State Oath for the non-Orthodox population.

OATHS AND THE PROBLEM OF LEGITIMIZING THE POWER OF TSARS DURING THE TIME OF TROUBLES

Having ascended the throne in 1598, Boris Godunov introduced a new form of oath of allegiance to him and his family. Ivan Timofeev, the author of the *Chronicle* (*Vremennik* of Ivan Timofeev), believed that the text of the oath that was sworn was compiled on the personal order of Tsar Boris Godunov on the occasion of his accession. Timofeev writes that the oath was "stronger than it was under former tsars," securing loyalty of the people to the entire Godunov family, and was taken "not in residential buildings, but in churches, putting the hand on the Cross of Christ and entailing consequences that declared a church anathema upon those who violate the promises given in the oath."[18]

17 Н. А. Загоскин, История права московского государства, Т. 2. Центральное управление московского государства (Казань: Унив. тип., 1879); Демидова, *Служилая бюрократия*, 147; See also primary sources: «"Дела всякие делати и судити вправду": документы РГАДА по истории государственной службы в России. XVI–XVII вв.», Исторический архив, no. 5–6 (1998): 4–24. Although there were other types of services, where the oath was compiled as a complete, singular piece of text. See: В. А. Слугина, «Присяга якутского толмача XVII века», Вестник НГУ. Серия: История, филология, no. 19 (8) (2020): 128–134.

18 Временник Ивана Тимофеева, под ред. О. А. Державина, В. П. Адрианова-Перетц (Москва – Санкт-Петербург, Академия наук СССР, 1951), 234–235.

The surviving text of the "cross-kissing oath of loyalty to the service of Tsar Boris Fedorovich," dated 15 September 1598,[19] begins with the introductory phrase "I kiss the cross to<...> (Boris Fedorovich himself, his wife and children are listed) on that," followed by two thematically different sections. The first is a detailed account of Boris Fedorovich Godunov's ascension to the throne. It describes the blessing received from his sister, the Tsarina and nun Aleksandra Feodorovna, for his occupying the throne in response to the prayers and requests of "many people of all cities of the Moscow tsardom."[20] The text declares him "the noble, Christ-loving and *God-chosen Tsar* and Grand Duke ..."[21] The second thematic section, beginning with the words "and to my sovereign, my Tsar <...> I will serve..." lists the obligations of the swearer. The entire document ends with a confirmatory statement "I kiss this holy cross of the Lord on everything, as it is written in this entry" and a descriptive list of consequences that will occur in case of violations of the oath provisions.

The first part of the cross-kissing oath affirmed the consent of those being sworn in to the procedure for electing the reigning sovereign and substantiated the legitimacy of the new family on the throne. The second part of the oath specifically set out the obligations of the swearer to the sovereign and his family. The swearer had to guarantee not to harm the health of the reigning family, not to support rivals and usurpers of the throne, to defend state authority by military means and report uprisings, riots, or rebellions being prepared against the sovereign, not to organize any unrest, and finally to obey the Russian superiors in everything and not venture outside the boundaries of the Russian state.

References were also made to the Service and Judicial Oaths where the oath-taker promised to put state interests above his own and give truthful testimony during investigations. A list of consequences threatened the swearer with excommunication from the church in the case of violation of the oath: "... and I will no longer have the mercy of God and of the Most Holy Mother of God, and the great Russian wonderworkers <...> and all the

19 Акты, собранные в библиотеках и архивах Российской Империи Археографическою экспедициею Императорской академии наук, *Т. 2* (Санкт-Петербург, 1836), 57–61. The publishers pointed out that the document was compiled from the handwritten *Collection of Letters of the Time of Troubles*. As such, they expressed their doubts that this was the original title of the document.

20 This version of events is known as the Zemsky Sobor of 1598. The document itself does not use this term, but rather lists the politically subject categories of Russian society – the clergy, boyars, nobles, servicemen, merchants, and so on.

21 Акты, собранные в библиотеках и архивах, 57–58.

saints, and I will no longer have the blessing of the most holy patriarch <...> and metropolitans, and archbishops, and bishops, and archimandrites, and the entire consecrated ecumenical council."[22]

In this way, the inviolability of the health of the sovereign and his family was established, the norms of faithful public service were recognized, and the religious and ecclesiastical consequences described, with the emphasis on "God's chosen authority" contributing to the idea of the sacredness of the monarch and the Russian Tsarist power structure as a whole.

In historiography, the question of who exactly kissed the cross in allegiance to Boris Fedorovich Godunov and how often remains debatable. Likewise, the way the oaths were administered in remote regions and the categories of the population that were sworn in is not entirely clear. Nevertheless, this is the oath that most researchers consider the foundational text, since subsequent rulers developed theirs based on this model.[23] Structural changes, however, were applied in later texts. The order of the sections changed to include new circumstances or names where a title had changed, and various enemies or contenders for the throne were listed, as were states that Russians were forbidden from visiting, and so on. Thus, a more extensive set of sources left from the string of subsequent rulers during the Time of Troubles *(Smutnoe vremia)* gives us a better picture of the various components of the State Oath procedure.

During the Time of Troubles, the text that explained the circumstances of the death or removal of the previous tsar and the establishment of a new monarch and also announced that the procedure for kissing the cross to the new ruler had already taken place in Moscow (all the boyars and nobles who served – in the presence of higher church representatives – "kissed the cross") was separated from the text of swearing-in obligations. Official letters (charters) reporting the change of monarchs were sent from Moscow to local administrators or *voevodas* (governors) in various cities and regions of the Russian state.[24] In these charters, the addressees were instructed to administer oaths to the new monarch in their area. The entire Orthodox population would be ordered to gather in the church and in the presence of the clergy, listen to this informational charter (or part of

22 Акты, собранные в библиотеках и архивах, 61.

23 See: В. М. Каменцева, «"Присяги правителям" в Смутное время», *Vox medii aevi,* no. 1(4) (2019): 22; М. В. Королева, «Процедура государственной присяги в России XVII в.», Древняя Русь. Вопросы медиевистики, no. 4 (2020): 76.

24 The Moscow patriarch also sent letters echoing state orders to various cities (Собрание государственных грамот и договоров (часть 2), 189–190).

it) read out loud, and the administrators would take the oath themselves followed by the swearing-in of the rest of the people. In some charters, there was also an indication of the monarch's promise to his subjects. This statement of the intention (not obligation) of the tsar to reward[25] faithful service[26] was accompanied by templates of both cross-kissing and *shert* texts (texts of oaths for the non-Orthodox population), which were to be read to the local people. Local administrators were also instructed to compile and send to Moscow a full list of the names of residents who had undergone the cross-kissing procedure. During the Time of Troubles, all texts also warned that those who violated the terms of the oath would be excommunicated. These instructions were indeed implemented, as evidenced by the written responses of Siberian voevodas to the procedures for cross-kissing and *shert* oaths.[27]

Thus, an individual living in any region outside of Moscow would learn that he had to take the oath through an announcement by the local administrator in the local church. The notice explained the change of sovereigns, presented arguments in favor of the new tsar's legitimacy, and claimed that the entire Russian elite (representatives from many or all cities of the Moscow tsardom) had already taken the oath to the new ruler in Moscow. This information was presented in such a variety of ways that, coupled with the myths associated with popular monarchy,[28] these local announcements were unlikely to inspire confidence. For example, Fedor Borisovich's charter indicated that he occupied the throne with the blessing of his father,[29] while Dmitrii Ivanovich (Lzhedmitrii I) took the throne "with God's help," declaring Boris Godunov a traitor.[30] Vasily Shuiskii's charter denounced the impostor Grigory Otrepyev, and explained his own occupation of the throne by a universal "election" in his favor as well as citing his blood relationship with the Riurik dynasty. The charter issued by

25 On "awarding," see: А. Ю. Конев, В. А. Слугина, «"Сказать государево жалование...": практики обращения монарха к населению Сибири в конце XVI – XVII веке», Вестник НГУ. Серия: История, филология, no. 21 (1) (2022): 37–48.

26 Собрание государственных грамот и договоров (часть 2), 187–188; 201.

27 See: Акты времени правления царя Василия Шуйского (1606 г. 19 мая – 17 июля 1610 г.), собрал и ред. А. М. Гневушев (Москва, 1914), 66; Г. Ф. Миллер, *История Сибири,* Ч. 1 (Москва: издательство «Восточная литература», 2000), 257–258; Акты времени Междуцарствия (1610 г. 17 июля - 1613 г.) (1915), 5-6.

28 Maureen Perrie, *Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 5, 246–248.

29 Собрание государственных грамот и договоров (часть 2), 187.

30 Ibid. 201.

Fedor Ivanovich Mstislavskii and the boyars announced the failed council and their election and swearing of the oath to Prince Vladislav Sigismundovich.[31] Cross-kissing texts in contrast were stable documents as they always featured the same basic component – to serve, be faithful, wish the sovereign well, obey the orders of superiors, not to betray the state, and so on. It would seem that by maintaining consistency the compilers deliberately wanted to create a sense that the state apparatus was stable.

During the period of acute struggle for the throne, the oath was of particular importance because the population could choose to whom they would swear the oath. People could independently decide whether the tsar was legitimate and whether the letters sent from Moscow were authentic. During the Bolotnikov Rebellion Vasilii Shuiskii is known to have tried to intimidate traitors while bribing the population with promises of generous gifts to those who swore allegiance to him.[32] Historian Endre Sashalmi quite correctly notes that it was largely due to the development of the institution of oaths during the Time of Troubles that the concept of "state" appeared in Russian political culture in a meaning that was not identical to religious interpretations.[33] It can be said that, to some extent, the list of sworn obligations was also separated from the specific person in power at the time; this meant rulers changed, but obligations, in general, did not. In addition, the emergence of secular ideas about the "state" arising from the oral transmission of oaths and information charter texts went far beyond the Moscow offices (*prikazy*), while the church narrative continued in its traditional format – three-day prayers for the sovereign, services for health, and so on.

All these patterns of Russian political culture and political behavior – suspicion of oaths, the state's overreaction to their violation and simultaneous systematic "forgiveness" of oath-violators, coupled with bribery in the form of promises to reward and give benefits for demonstrated loyalty – were inherited by the legal culture of the Romanov dynasty and received legal approval in the *Sobornoe Ulozhenie* of 1649.

31 Собрание государственных грамот и договоров (часть 2), 438–439. For the lengthy text of the letter to Kazan, see Акты, собранные в библиотеках и архивах, 280–284.

32 Каменцева, «"Присяги правителям"», 29.

33 Sashalmi, *Russian Notions of Power*, 312–315.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTITUTION OF STATE OATHS

In line with this emerging tradition, a template of the oath of allegiance to Mikhail Fedorovich Romanov, along with the charter announcing the change of monarch, was sent to the cities and districts (*uyezdy*) of the Russian state. The charter explained in great detail the negative consequences of the reign of previous tsars, emphasized the representative nature and unity of the Zemsky Sobor which had elected Mikhail Fedorovich Romanov to the throne, and noted his connection to the Riurik dynasty.[34] The text of the cross-kissing oath itself was now more concise: the anachronistic and ornate sections about the ban on the production of poisons and practising witchcraft against the sovereign and his family had disappeared, along with sections regarding excommunication from the church for violating the oath. The ban on calling for another ruler was also clarified. Inviting rulers from Lithuania and the German principalities was banned, and it was also forbidden to look for rulers among Russian families or to call upon Marina Mnishek (wife of Lzhedmitrii I, and later Lzhedmitrii II) and her son to take the throne. The State Oath now acquired a more pronounced character of personal obligation, beginning with the individual stating his name and ending with a confirmatory statement, saying "I kiss this holy life-giving cross of the Lord on everything, as it is written in this entry."[35]

With the accession to the throne of Aleksei Mikhailovich in 1645, the central government strengthened control over the organization of the procedure for swearing in the population living in the various regions. In charters sent to the regions, the narrative of the succession of the oath was repeated several times: "and remembering your previous cross-kissing, as you kissed the cross to our father, blessed in memory, the great sovereign Tsar and Grand Duke Mikhail Fedorovich of all Russia, and to us, your great sovereign <...> serve in the same way as [you served] our father..."[36] The text of the 1645 oath itself underwent minor changes in comparison to the text of 1613. "Eastern neighbors" were added to the list of enemies of the Russian State – Tara and Tiumen Tatars, Kalmyks, Kirghiz, Yakuts and "other foreigners who are not obedient to the sovereign."[37] The general

34 Собрание государственных грамот и договоров, хранящихся в государственной коллегии иностранных дел (Санкт-Петербург, 1822, часть 3), 11–14.

35 Ibid. 14–15.

36 Русский Государственный архив древних актов (РГАДА). Ф. 214. Оп. 3. stlb. 137, Л. 235–236.

37 Собрание государственных грамот и договоров (часть 3), 421–422.

structure of the State Oath texts of the 17th century is discussed in the next section, "The Aboriginal Peoples of Siberia's Oath of Allegiance to the Russian Tsar in the Seventeenth Century: Rights and Obligations."

The procedure for swearing allegiance to the new monarch was a way to incorporate a maximum amount of people into the state and establish control over the actions of the local voevodas. The very next day after the death of Mikhail Fedorovich, officials and clerks were sent from Moscow to the regions. The voevodas were notified that these special commissioners were on their way to them and were asked to prepare for the oath procedure. In preparation, the voevoda of the administrative center was required to send copies of the texts of tsar's charters and oath texts to voevodas of other cities in their region that were subordinate to him, ordering them to be ready to convene the residents and invite representatives of the clergy from churches and monasteries so that they were in the church for the swearing-in procedure, and to prepare lists of current residents. After administration of the oath in the city, service people (usually at the rank of "boyar scions" (*deti boiarskie*) were to go with the clerks to arrange for similar ceremonies in other settlements of the administrative-territorial units.

The Moscow commissioners, upon arriving in the city, first had to swear in the voevoda and his inner circle, and then the voevoda himself had to read the oath to the city residents. The commissioners and voevoda were required to compile a register of names, identify those who did not attend, and later search for them so they could take the oath. In addition, Siberian voevodas at least were required to provide a detailed report on the ceremony and send copies of cross-kissing and *shert*-oath texts, according to which the residents had sworn allegiance, to Moscow, that is, to the Siberian Prikaz. The execution of this procedure is attested by the large number of surviving reports (at least from the Siberian regions), lists of oaths, and even nominal registers of those who took the oath.[38]

During the reign of Aleksei Mikhailovich, many provisions of the cross-kissing texts were consolidated in the *Sobornoe Ulozhenie* of 1649.[39] The legal consequences for violating the provisions of the kissing of the cross were recorded in a section in this entitled "The Sovereign's Honor, and How to Safeguard His Royal Well-Being." Legal historians have interpreted this section as a list of forms of high treason, which included preparation for

38 РГАДА. Ф. 214. Оп. 3. stlb. 137, 232; ibid. оп. 1, д. 194; ibid kn. 204, 40–51.

39 Г. Г. Тельберг, Очерки политического суда и политических преступлений в Московском государстве XVII века (Москва: Типография Московского университета, 1912), 93–94.

an armed seizure of power, aiding the enemies of the sovereign, revealing state secrets, surrender of a city to the enemy, setting fire to a city or houses, appearing before the tsar with a protest, and "misreporting" a crime.[40]

The connection of speeches against the authorities with perjury is directly recorded in historical documents. For example, the uprising in Pskov in 1650 was classified as "theft and crime of the cross." Bishop Raphael, sent to negotiate with the Pskovites, was required to obtain a confession of guilt from the instigators of the uprising, and was then required to lead the Pskovites once again to kiss the cross in allegiance to Aleksei Mikhailovich.[41] A similar practice applied to peoples who took the *shert*-oath (see "The Aboriginal Peoples of Siberia's Oath of Allegiance to the Russian Tsar in the Seventeenth Century: Rights and Obligations").

In 1654, all three types of cross-kissing oaths in the Russian State were reformed. The changes affected the procedural and ideological components of the oaths. The entire schedule of the oath ceremony, its organization and the oath texts themselves were compiled into one liturgical church book, called the *Chinovnik* or *Book of Rites*.[42] The key driver for the reforms was not the political content of the responsibilities bestowed upon the individual, but rather the religious practices during the oath ceremony hosted at church.[43]

Instead of "cross-kissing," the oath was now called "bringing to faith." The individual taking the oath, instead of kissing the cross, would now simply stand before a Bible, positioned on the *analogion* (lectern or slanted stand in the Eastern Orthodox Church).

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40 Т. К. Агузаров, Ю. В. Грачева, А. И. Чучаев, Уголовно-правовые проблемы охраны власти (история и современность) (Москва: Издательство «Проспект», 2016), 45.

41 «*Документы Земского собора 1650 года*», *Исторический архив*, no. 4 (1958): 150–151.

42 *Three ranks oath* 1654. https://dlib.rsl.ru/viewer/01002438148#?page=1 (Accessed September 03, 2020).

43 N. A. Zaozersky believes the reason for the reforms was a result of dynamic reform activity by Patriarch Nikon and the Zaporozhian Cossacks taking on Russian subjecthood (1654), who allegedly were used to taking oaths before a Bible (Н. А. Заозерский, «О свидетельской присяге в судопроизводстве XVII в.», Богословский вестник, ч. 2, no. 6/7 (1917): 93–107). It is worth noting that the relationship between the Russian authorities and the Zaporozhye army and Don Cossacks throughout the 17th century was quite tense but also unique in nature. The point of contact between the Russian authorities and the Cossacks were diplomatic embassies. Oath ceremonies were organized following special requirements. The cross-kissing oath texts, for example, were developed specifically for them (See, for example, Собрание государственных грамот и договоров, хранящихся в государственной коллегии иностранных дел (Санкт-Петербург, 1826, часть 4), 415–416; 432–439; 445–459). This all significantly differed from the way "internal" subjects of the Russian state took their oath at the time.

An appeal to the Bible was added to the oath, indicating that the promises of the swearer are edifying, given in accordance with the biblical "do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation…." (James 5:12, New Testament, English Standard Version). The "yes-yes" was a person's consent to the fulfillment of certain conditions or promises, and such a commitment was not considered an oath condemned by Orthodox ideology. M. V. Koroleva notes that this reform brought the swearing-in procedure in line with the commandment prohibiting the taking of an oath.[44]

Lastly, the order of reading prayers, psalms and teachings was established, indicating a desire to unify and standardize the oath-taking process.

The *Book of Rites* also contained the texts of the oaths themselves, drawn up in the name of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich. The subject's oath of allegiance to the tsar nearly coincides with the cross-kissing text of 1645. However, in connection with the birth of more children, the list of the tsar's family expands, and the list of potential "enemies" of the Russian state is reduced. The inclusion of the very text of the oath of allegiance to the tsar in the Church regulations contributed to the conservation of the text of the oaths, which ceased to exist as a separate document.

The regulated State Oath ceremony can be considered a clear example of the Byzantine principle of the "symphony" of powers (secular and spiritual). The clergy read prayers, psalms and teachings in the church, emphasizing the ideas of humility, trust and obedience to God and the tsar of the Orthodox tsardom. Secular officials read aloud the obligations to faithfully serve the Russian monarch. According to the regulations, the teaching of the priest concluded the ceremony, where he would threaten the violator of promises with terrible consequences – punishments, illnesses and eternal damnation of his soul. All this was woven into a single concept, which affirmed and developed the idea of the sacredness of the tsar and all his political institutions.

By the time Fedor Alekseevich became tsar in 1676, the entire population of Russia was taking the oath of allegiance as per the *Book of Rites*. It remains unclear by whom, when and how the text of the oaths was updated and the names of new rulers and their relatives were added. In all other aspects written sources confirm that the ceremony was organized and run

44 М. В. Королева, «Процедура государственной присяги в России XVII в.», Древняя Русь. Вопросы медиевистики, no. 4 (2020): 80–81.

in the same way it had been established under Aleksei Mikhailovich.[45] Original registers of those who took the oath in Western Siberia in 1676–1677 demonstrate that the oaths sought to cover the entire adult male population, since dependents, women and the clergy were not sworn in. Such documents appear highly reliable, since the Siberian administration was known for its scrupulousness in compiling registers of the names of those who took the oath. Next to the name of the individual taking the oath was a note of his profession (e.g., merchant, hunter, and so on). Reasons for any absences at the ceremony were also recorded. Travel to another city for work was the most commonly cited, although there was also evidence of population displacement in connection with the schism in the Russian Orthodox Church, also known as the *Raskol*. Most likely, the schismatics (now known as the Old Believers) sought to avoid taking oaths in churches that had adopted the new forms of worship.

During his reign, Tsar Fedor Alekseevich attempted to reform the *Book of Rites* oaths. In 1681, he ordered the Orthodox Church to reconsider the consequences for violations of the oath, such as the threats of eternal damnation and excommunication from the church. These terms were part of the teachings, and read aloud by the clergy during the oath ceremony. The tsar's suggestion, however, was limited to oaths taken by two individuals involved in a dispute. The issue was the disproportionate religious intimidations and punishments often imposed on one party as a result of an insignificant disagreement. The Orthodox Church also issued a resolution to remove the consequences in the Service Oath for officials taking office; however, it would seem that even this change was not put into practice.[46] No evidence has been found to suggest that the oath of allegiance saw any changes at this time. The oath to subsequent Tsars Ivan Alekseevich and Peter Alekseevich (in future, Peter the Great) followed the rules as established by the Romanov dynasty.

The break from this tradition occurred in connection with the church and administrative reforms of Peter the Great. All oaths were updated and restructured under the new state and imperial ideology of Russia, which was formed largely due to the ideas of F. Prokopovich. During this time, for

45 Полное собрание русских летописей. Т. 36. Сибирские летописи. Часть 1. Группа Есиповской летописи, под ред. А. П. Окладникова, Б. А. Рыбакова (Москва: Наука, 1987), 167–168.

46 Г. А. Воробьев, О Московском соборе 1681–1682 гг.: опыт исторического исследования Григория Воробьева (Санкт-Петербург: Изд. Книгопродавца И. Л. Тузова, 1885), 132–133, 141–143.

example, the wording „I swear by God" was used in oath texts. As was previously discussed, the clergy did not take oaths; however, in the Dukhovnii Reglament (Spiritual/Church Regulation) of 1721, a form of the oath for members of the spiritual college was approved. New imperial concepts of natural law, loyalty, and service according to ranks appeared in the oaths. Because of the criticism of the new forms of oaths "by God" (the reaction from the Old Believers was especially critical), F. Prokopovich was tasked to write an essay justifying the legitimacy and usefulness of oaths to the ruler. In this essay, entitled "A discussion of oaths," he argued in favor of maintaining the practice of religious oaths, claiming they did not contradict what is written in the Bible. However, F. Prokopovich did redefine the meaning and function of the oath. He pointed out that oaths are beneficial not only to the ruler personally, they also contribute to the "good of the people" (the public good) of the entire state.

CONCLUSION

Study of the practice of the oath of allegiance to the monarch is unquestionably connected with the origin and development of the institution of subjecthood in the Russian state of the Early Modern Period. In monarchical states, subjecthood was characterized by the presence of a personal political and legal connection between the subject (the individual) and the ruler of the state (the monarch). Such a connection was provided by an oath, which had a sacred character and was sworn by an individual or a group of individuals directly to the monarch.

As was already mentioned, from the early 16th century on, a series of succession crises brought with them extreme political uncertainty and social tension. In this context the practice of giving an oath of loyalty (cross-kissing for the Orthodox and *shert* for the non-Orthodox population) was used by the authorities as a vital tool to formalize the legitimacy of the ruling tsar. The purposeful spread of the practice of administering such oaths to a large politically and socially active population (in contrast to the previous experience of such oaths being taken solely by the inner circle of the grand duke/tsar) allowed the authorities to develop a procedure for public confirmation of loyalty to the reigning tsar and his state administration as a whole.

Throughout the 17th century, the state regulated the different forms of state oaths, and the procedures for swearing of oaths were unified and for-

malized. The state sent special commissioners to various regions to oversee the oaths, demanded that local governors provide detailed reports on the cross-kissing and *shert* ceremony, and requested lists of the names of those who had been sworn in. The orders written on behalf of the monarch and their solemn reading in the regions worked to make the tsar appear as one who "awards" and "pardons" in exchange for the promise of all to serve him faithfully, forever. The ideological grounds for oaths taken by the Orthodox population unusually combined secular, legally established behavioral standards for a subject belonging to the state (subordination, protecting the tsar from external and internal enemies, a ban on riots and uprisings) with religious Orthodox ideas about divine providence guiding the Russian monarch, and threats of damnation of the soul and excommunication of anyone who broke the promises made to the monarch.

The oath of allegiance became a fundamental public act that legally bound the entire population into subjecthood, regardless of religious affiliation and location. Various social groups of the Russian state were granted different sets of rights and freedoms, depending upon their different duties (types of services and obligations in favor of the state), meaning that the concept of subjecthood for different parts of the population varied significantly. While the process of promoting loyalty oaths for all encouraged general ideological attitudes of belonging to the state, subjects were simultaneously limited in terms of their rights through attachment of individuals to specific social groups, as was made especially clear in the process of incorporating the non-Orthodox peoples of Siberia into the Russian state.

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