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Political Economies of Capitalism, 1600–1850

POLITICAL REASON AND THE LANGUAGE OF CHANGE

**REFORM AND IMPROVEMENT IN EARLY
MODERN EUROPE**

Edited by

Adriana Luna-Fabritius, Ere Nokkala,

Marten Seppel and Keith Tribe

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Political Reason and the Language of Change

This collection of essays re-examines ideas of change and movements for change in early modern Europe without presuming that “progressive” change was the outcome of “reforms”.

“Reform” today implies rational, incremental change to public institutions and procedures. “Improvement” has a more general application, emphasising the positive outcome to which “reform” is oriented. But the language of reform is today used of historical personalities and movements that did not themselves use the term, and who in many cases were not necessarily seeking the progressive change that we would understand today. The activities of “reform” were embedded in contemporary politics, and while “improvement” was part of a contemporary vocabulary, its real presence has been obscured by the range of natural languages in which it was expressed. Contributors to this volume seek to establish what was meant by contemporary usage. Bringing together scholars of Russia, Southern, Western, Central and Northern Europe, this collection sheds new light on both common and divergent features of a political process too often treated as a uniform movement towards modernity.

This volume is a useful resource for students and scholars interested in Enlightenment studies, intellectual history, and conceptual history in early modern Europe.

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Reform and Improvement in Early
Modern Europe

Edited by

**Adriana Luna-Fabritius, Ere Nokkala,
Marten Seppel and Keith Tribe**

First published 2023
by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Luna-Fabritius, Adriana, editor. | Nokkala, Ere, 1978– editor. | Seppel, Marten, 1979– editor. | Tribe, Keith, editor.

Title: Political reason and the language of change : reform and improvement in early modern Europe / edited by Adriana Luna-Fabritius, Ere Nokkala, Marten Seppel and Keith Tribe.

Description: Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY : Routledge, 2023. |

Series: Political economies of capitalism, 1600–1850 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022011275 (print) | LCCN 2022011276 (ebook) |

Subjects: LCSH: Enlightenment—Europe. | Social problems—Europe. | Civic improvement—Europe. | Europe—Social conditions—18th century. | Europe—Politics and government—18th century. | Europe—Intellectual life—18th century.

Classification: LCC D286 .P595 2023 (print) | LCC D286 (ebook) | DDC 940.2/53—dc23/eng/20220614

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022011275>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022011276>

ISBN: 978-1-032-07389-7 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-07390-3 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-20667-5 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003206675

Typeset in Times New Roman
by codeMantra

Contents

<i>List of contributors</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
1 Introduction: Reform and Improvement in Early Modern Europe	1
ADRIANA LUNA-FABRITIUS, ERE NOKKALA, MARTEN SEPPEL AND KEITH TRIBE	
PART I	
Rethinking Key Concepts of Political Economy: Reform and Improvement	21
2 Reform: Elements for a Conceptual History	23
KEITH TRIBE	
3 The Evolution of the Concept <i>Verbesserung</i> and the Anonymous German Discourse of Improvement	44
MARTEN SEPPEL	
4 “Changes to preserve everything the way it always was”: The Idea of Reform and the Slow Disintegration of the Old Regime	65
ALEXANDRE MENDES CUNHA	
5 “Changes Are Harmful to the State”: The Concept of Reform in Russian Political Thought, 1700–1790	86
SERGEY POLSKOY	
6 Reform and Utopia in Early Modern Italian Political Economy: Historicising a Tension	113
ADRIANA LUNA-FABRITIUS	

PART II

Agents and Ideas of Improvement and Reform in Context	137
7 Projects for the Improvement of Constitutional Order: Late Cameralists as Advocates of Political Change	139
ERE NOKKALA	
8 Joseph von Sonnenfels and the Political Codex (1763–1817)	158
IVO CERMAN	
9 The Translation, Adaptation and Mediation of Cameralist Texts in Austrian-Habsburg Lombardy’s “Age of Reform”	174
ALEXANDRA ORTOLJA-BAIRD	
10 How Undiplomatic Memoirs Shaped Enlightenment Reform: Melchor Rafael Macanaz’s <i>Memorias</i> and Contexts of Change in Bourbon Spain	198
EDWARD JONES CORREDERA	
11 Making and Trading Metals: A Narrative of Swedish Improvement	218
MÅNS JANSSON AND GÖRAN RYDÉN	
12 National Economics in Sweden: Reform and the Political Economy of Industrial Progress 1800–1850	239
LARS MAGNUSSON	
13 Epilogue	259
KARI SAASTAMOINEN	
<i>Index</i>	267

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5 “Changes Are Harmful to the State”

The Concept of Reform in Russian Political Thought, 1700–1790¹

Sergey Polskoy

In late 1762 the Senator and Ober-Hofmeister Nikita Ivanovich Panin received some comments from the Empress Catherine II concerning his project to create an Imperial Council and reorganise the Senate. Panin sought to create unchangeable laws and institutions that could not be reversed or altered by a subsequent monarch. The institutions were intended to stabilise the system of state administration and protect it from the series of *coups* that had disrupted the Russian throne in the course of the eighteenth century. The Empress commented extensively on Panin’s project, one remark directly concerning the problem of how one could actually bring about changes to state order. Catherine was worried that “the inflexible administrative establishment obstructs all turning towards the better, all change and correction.” She faced a dilemma: sooner or later, the administrative system would have to be improved; governing bodies and fundamental laws would also need to be changed, so they could not be “unalterable”. This remark prompted Nikita Panin to respond at length to the Empress’s comment, noting that

The establishment of the form and order of government is indisputably a part of state policy, as is religious faith. Hence frequent changes in both spheres are equally harmful to the state. Russia does not need to search abroad for such examples, its establishments and laws have been changed almost as often and with the same ease as decrees on inheritance, on the vodka tax, on customs duties and on even less important matters. To her distress, Russia has not only experienced an almost constant rocking of the throne of her sovereigns, but also its occupation by Poles, defrocked monks and absconders. Which is why, following the great insights of statecraft, Russia should wish that once a properly established system was created it would remain fixed and unchanged for a long time.²

Panin compared the state structure with religious dogma; no change could be without harm. The monarch should respect not only “fundamental laws”, but also “simple ancient customs, if they do not become generally harmful with the changing times” - only then would correction be needed. It turned

out that the “reformer” Panin was trying to close off the path to “changes”. He sought to do so with an extreme measure, necessary to correct a general corruption that endangered the traditional foundations of society. The same attitude shaped his proposals aimed at restoring order and a monarchical power that had been shaken by a series of coups. Catherine II generally shared Panin’s perspective.

Russian historiography traditionally treats both the Empress and her closest adviser as exemplary eighteenth century reformers. But neither the Empress nor her councillor ever used this concept in its modern sense, instead using the word *réforme* in their French texts to refer to the religious Reformation of the sixteenth century. Was the concept of reform in its modern political sense familiar to these eighteenth-century actors? Is it possible to employ a term introduced by historians during the second half of the nineteenth century to refer to the phenomena of previous eras? Are “reforms” a universal phenomenon for all historical periods? Can we call all past changes and improvements “reforms”?

Any historian seeking to understand the political history of the eighteenth century faces questions of this kind that call for the methods of conceptual history, especially the research associated with *Begriffsgeschichte*.³

Reform or Improvement?

The concepts of *reforma* (reform) and *reformator* (reformer), in today’s sense, only came into active use in Russian political writings and historiography in the second half of the nineteenth century – especially on the eve of, and during, the “Great Reforms” of Tsar Alexander II of the 1860s and 1870s that were designed to modernise the administrative institutions and social practices of the Russian Empire. Greatly influenced by European liberal thought, historians during this period applied a progressive vocabulary to Russian historical development. In particular, the degree of commitment of rulers to a policy of innovation and reform became a symbol of progress, or if its absence, deviation from such policy being seen as a slowing of social development.

All the same, the historians of the time rarely used the European word “reform” directly, more often using its Russian equivalent – *preobrazovanie* (transformation), which had entered the active vocabulary of Russian authors in the second half of the eighteenth century. Sergey Solovyov, the greatest liberal historian of this era, does not use the words “reform” and “reformer” – neither in his multivolume *History of Russia* (29 vols., 1851–1879), nor in his *Public Readings on Peter the Great* (1872).⁴ He always employs *preobrazovanie* (transformation, transfiguration), *preobrazovatel’* (transformer, changer), *preobrazovatel’naya epoha* (transformational epoch).

As early as 1849 the historian Timofey Granovsky did use the concept of *reformator* (reformer) in his course of lectures relating to the key figures of the European Reformation of the sixteenth century, and in 1869 the journalist Nikolay Danilevsky called Peter the Great the *velikiy reformator* (the

great reformer) in his book *Russia and Europe*.⁵ And a later generation of historians, including Vasilii Klyuchevsky and Pavel Milyukov, actively used the term “reform” from the 1890s, along with its synonym “transformation”.⁶ Since the beginning of the twentieth century “reform” has slowly replaced the former-use of “transformation” in works of Russian history.

In Soviet historiography the idea of reform was used for even earlier eras, as far back as the legendary Princess Olga who had, according to Soviet historians, introduced the first administrative reforms in the middle of the tenth century. The same perspective was used of other late medieval and early modern princes, Ivan the Terrible (1533–1584) being seen as the greatest “reformer”.⁷ In the 1990s and the early 2000s the paradigm of reformism as a means of writing historical narratives became especially common – most probably as a response to the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s in Russia. In this historiography the entire history of the Russian state appears as an infinite sequence of reforms and counter-reforms.⁸

“Reform” has become a convenient tool for Russian historians, used to describe practically any innovation of the past: from publishing new laws to introducing new administrative positions – from the tenth to the twenty-first century. Such indiscriminate use has tended to empty the term of any specifically “progressive” signification. The concept is still actively used to describe the activities of historical agents in quite different periods, often leading to an anachronistic interpretation of events. Efforts at critical revision date only from the 2010s, associated with a turn to the methods of *Begriffsgeschichte*.⁹ This implies a turn to the importance of understanding the meaning of “improvements” and “corrections” when used by actors in the past who are now called *reformers*.

The loan-word “reform” is almost never encountered in eighteenth-century Russian, but there are several important synonyms in the language that act as equivalents when translating this concept from European languages. Indeed, the active vocabulary of an educated eighteenth-century Russian rarely included the words “reform” (as well as “Reformation”) and “reformer” – these foreign words were not actually transcribed, and were absent from Russian dictionaries. The first and second editions of the *Russian Academy Dictionary* (1794 and 1822) did not include the words. By the end of the eighteenth century transcriptions of these words began to penetrate everyday language as a synonym for “improvement”. During his interrogation in June 1792, the freemason and publisher Nikolay Novikov stated that he knew that “in German lands there was reform (*reforma*) of Masonic rules”.¹⁰

The meaning of what later became known as “reform” and “reformation” was usually conveyed in Russian by *ispravlenie* (correction, improvement), less often by *ponovlenie* (renewal) or *peremena* (change); only in the last third of the eighteenth century did the term *preobrazovanie* (transformation) appear. The term *ispravliat'* (to correct, to improve) was used to translate the verb “to reform”, then later *peredelyvat'* (to remake), *peremeniat'* (to change) and, finally, *preobrazovat'* (to transform). In the translation of the fourth

edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1762), published in Russian in 1786, the article “Réforme” is rendered as follows:

Réforme. s. f. Restoration of order, correction. *La réforme des abus*, elimination, reduction of abuses. *La Réforme, ou Prétendue Réforme*, reformation, that is, a change in church statutes.

Réformer, v. act. To restore (*vostanovit'*) the ancient, better order, to correct (*ispravliat'*), to transform (*preobrazovat'*). *Réformer la Justice*, to correct justice. *Réformer le Calendrier*, to correct the calendar. *Réformer ses moeurs*, to improve morals, *Réformer un écrit*, to correct a writing.¹¹

At the same time what is now known as the Reformation was called Reform, the word Reformation having a similar, but broader, meaning than reform:

Réformation. s.f. Restoration of ancient or better order, correction, transformation, renewal, establishment of a better order. *La réformation des moeurs*, the correction of morals. *La réformation de la Justice*, establishing the better order in legal practices.

La réformation des abus, des désordres, removing abuses and disorder. *La réformation des monnoies*, recoinage.¹²

At the same time, a reformer is someone who promotes both reform and reformation:

Réformateur, s.m. Transformer, corrector, reformer, renewer. *Réformateur, ou prétendus Réformateurs*, Reformists, or Protestants.¹³

Being close to these terms, the Russian noun *preobrazovanie* (transformation) appears rather late, only in the 1770s. In particular, in Aleksandr Radishchev's Russian 1773 translation of Abbot Mably's *Observations sur les Grecs* (1749) he equally uses *preobrazovat'* (to transform) and *ispravit'* (to correct) to translate the verb “réformer”, just as he uses *preobrazovanie* (transformation) and *ponovlenie* (renewal) to translate *réforme*. But Mably, as well as Radishchev, uses both terms to describe, above all, changes in laws and morals, like “correcting old vices”.¹⁴ But such reforms cannot correct the foundations of government.

Accordingly, *peremena* in its older meaning is seen as change, change of order, change on the throne; and this notion barely affects change in the basis of government and manners of people, unlike reforms that can lead to deeper changes:

The Asians, who were cowed by the autocracy, had to obediently wear chains.....the patient and obedient Persians never thought of rebelling while being oppressed: did they care about the fate of their master? The revolution (*peremena*) that put Darius's crown on the head of Alexander was no change for the state – it retained its position.¹⁵

At the same time, “change” could also act as a synonym for reform. In this sense, the concepts of “reform” and “revolution” under the Ancien Régime turned out not only to be close to each other, but also related in several meanings. In Mably’s *Entretiens de Phocion* (1763; Russian translation 1772) one can read the following statement, as translated by Peter Kurbatov:

And when society has different needs according to time and location; when new circumstances and change (*peremena*) often render the people very different, therefore should not the main focus of politics be to vary its principles and course?¹⁶

Note that here the word “change” (*peremena*) is used to translate the French “révolution”, at this point signifying “the cycle of change”, conveying Mably’s sense that political changes are necessary in an evolving and varying society.

Alongside the term “transformation”, the noun *preobrazitel’* (transformer) appears in the Russian language during the second half of the eighteenth century, being primarily used as a calque to convey the French word *réformateur*. Hence if in the middle of the eighteenth century *réformateur des mœurs* was translated into Russian as “corrector of morals” (*ispravitel’ nra-vo*), by the time of the second edition of the *Academic Dictionary* (1822) this widely used expression becomes “transformer of morals” (*preobrazitel’ nra-vo*); it also being explained that *preobrazitel’* refers to the person “who transformed and changed something into another image, form”.¹⁷ Ivan Golikov, who collected material on Peter I for many years, published in 1788 his multivolume work under the title *The Great Deeds of Peter the Great, The Wise Transformer (preobrazitel’) of Russia*.¹⁸ The term *preobrazitel’* used in the title was however still so rarely used in the Russian language that Golikov rarely uses it; by the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, it was increasingly in use.

Seeking equivalents of *réforme* and *réformateur*, Russian translators used complex constructions that suggested to the reader the meaning of these expressions. Alletz’s 1769 historical dictionary of monarchs refers to Peter the Great: “Le Czar délivré des inquiétudes de la guerre, se livra tout entier à la réforme de son Empire pendant les années suivantes”. This was translated as follows: “Freed of the concerns of war, Peter’s sole concern remained caring for common good (*nazidanie ob obcshem blage*) in his Empire”.¹⁹ The translator does not directly translate the word “réforme”, but gives a semantic translation – “caring for common good”, while following the meaning quite accurately – the “reform” enacted in this period was aimed at achieving *obshcheye blago* (the public good). This is how Catherine II understood her activities, this is what “reformers” or “enlightened despots” had in view as the purpose of “correction”/“reforms”/“improvement” in Europe and Russia during this era.

At this time, the Russian word *ispravlenie* (improvement) was also used to translate the concept “police”. In the case of “police” there was the same

orientation, because the goal of “good police” (*blagochinie*) was to correct manners and morals, to establish good order, to improve and maintain order in the city. This understanding of *ispravlenie* directly relates to the ideas of German cameralists, primarily the treatises by Johann Heinrich Gottlob Justi (*Die Grundfeste zu der Macht und Glückseligkeit der Staaten*, 1760–1761) and Joseph von Sonnenfels (*Grundsätze der Polizey-, Handlungs- und Finanzwissenschaft*, 3rd ed., 1777), which were also translated into Russian at this time.²⁰

Thus the words “reform”, “reformation” and “reformer”, phonetically transcribed from European languages, were practically absent from the vocabulary of eighteenth-century Russian. To translate these terms and to lend them meaning, the words *ispravlenie* (correction or improvement), *ispravitel'* (corrector or improver) and the corresponding verb *ispravlyat'* (to correct, to improve) were primarily used. The nouns *ponovlenie* (renewal), *peremena* (change), *preobrazovanie* (transformation) and derived verbs were used much less frequently. Semantically these terms remained practically unchanged throughout the century. They designated the meanings linked with the concept *ispravnyi* (proper, correct, serviceable). *Ispravnyi* means meeting any requirement, error-free, true, accurate, correct. *Neispravnyi* is something that has lost this status and should be corrected. Hence *ispravlenie* (correction, improvement) is an action aimed at restoring, returning to a good state.

Most often during this era, when speaking of correction concerning people, it was the correction of morality, the spiritual correction of the personality and the improvement of social morals and manners that was meant. This concept of correction was gradually transferred to the political sphere. During the time of Peter the Great “correction” or “improvement” was used to denote the tsar’s actions, those actions that would be later called “reforms”. Feofan Prokopovich, listing Peter’s deeds for the benefit of Russia, claimed:

He was the true Head of his Country, not by Sovereignty only, but by his Deeds: for as the Head diffuses those enlivening Juices of the Brain, and as they are call'd, the vital Spirits, through all the Members, Limbs, and the whole Compages of the Body, so this most excellent and best of Princes labour'd to transfuse through all the Orders of his Kingdom, the Knowledge he had acquir'd by his own Industry and Study. And did he not indeed make vast Improvements (*ispravleniami*) by his Labours?²¹

This medical and at the same time mystical metaphor of the body politic²² connected the sovereign and his subjects for the improvement of the earthly kingdom. But did the Russian tsar and his contemporaries attribute to his “reforms” the meaning assumed by nineteenth-century historians? Did he and his contemporaries see these “reforms” as purely secular, forward-looking, innovative actions, a clear plan for changes in governance, introducing new institutions and a system of relationships that would improve the life of the whole society?

Renovatio and Improvements, 1700–1740

In eighteenth-century Russia there were two main political ideas involving reform as social “correction”: religious-mystical and instrumental. The first of these concepts became the Christian theory of royal power and bore the imprint of a political theology created in ancient Rome. It was embodied in the emperor’s imitation of Christ (*Christomimetes*); the second was associated with an even more ancient cosmological and eschatological tradition of “renovation” (*renovatio*), seen as a return to the correct sources for existence.²³

The idea that prevailed in most traditional cultures treats renewal as a return: everything negative is a product of modernity, only the past incarnates the correct order; all “disorders” and deterioration are the properties of modern times which destroy the rightful structure, consequent on the deterioration of the human morals. The mythological idea of a bygone “golden age” and the dominance in the present of a destructive “iron” age is part of an ancient European heritage. In this sense, only through returning to an older order could what had been lost be regained.

A common metaphor for any early modern political entity (*state, republic, society*) was a building, a house, a structure erected in the past and since undergoing the blows of a merciless time.²⁴ A properly constructed new house withstands the challenges of fate for a long time, but wind and rain eventually destroy its walls, the foundation subsides, the roof rots, and eventually the house has to be restored or renovated: it needs to be reformed. Like a building, the state suffers from time and the collapse of morals, deteriorating under the blows of evils and temptations. The task of the ruler (or government) is to detect the beginning of such deterioration and protect the state from the blows of moral bad weather, periodically renovating or restoring the state – in this sense, renewal is always restoration and people of the early modern era saw no contradiction between these concepts. At the same time, the architect (that is, the ruler) should not destroy the building and erect a new one, or rebuild it beyond recognition; his goal is only to renew it, thus, to reform. In particular, this metaphor is used by Cardinal Richelieu in his “Political Testament” for Louis XIII – even the visible shortcomings or disorders of the state building finally serve its stability, and therefore they must be protected when carrying out reforms:

Disorders that were established by political necessity and reason of state must be reformed over time. For this, the people’s minds should be gradually prepared, and not go from one extreme to another. An architect who perfectly masters his art and corrects the errors of an old building, and brings it into a suitable symmetry without destroying it, deserves greater praise than one who, having pulled everything down to the ground, erects a perfect and finished structure anew.²⁵

Richelieu's "political testament" was well known in eighteenth-century Russia; the book was translated into Russian twice, in 1725 and 1766.²⁶ Richelieu himself was considered by Peter the Great to be an exemplary statesman. As Voltaire reported during Peter's visit to Paris in 1717, he visited the cardinal's grave and exclaimed: "The Great man! I would give you one half of my land so you could teach me how to rule the other half."²⁷

As already noted, during the era of Peter the Great Russia lacked the equivalent of the modern political concept of "reform". Peter did not explain the term *ispravlenie* (correction, improvement) in his legislation until the beginning of the 1720s. Mostly during this time the concept of *ispravlenie* was used by the church hierarchy to describe religious renewal, changes in Christian life, restoration of spiritual perfection, and finally, fulfilment of their duties. The *okruzhnoe poslanie* (circular letter) of Patriarch Adrian, frequently cited by church leaders, reflected this sense:

The priest should be a reverent teacher, not a blasphemer, not a swearing talker, not a proud, angry and cold-hearted one, not a drunkard, not a murmur or a rebel, and not dare to be a sinner, but correct (*ispravlyat'*) all this in the spirit of meekness.²⁸

"To correct" means a pastoral struggle with the sins and "spiritual ailments" of the flock, being a role model like the apostles had been, as Metropolitan Job writes to Stephen Yavorsky:

I am glad to hear about your spiritual reforms (*ispravleniah*) and care for the common good and salvation of the Church, in this you are like the new Paul, always following the evangelical path.²⁹

At first glance, this moral understanding of correction has nothing to do with the idea of political "reform" in this era. Probably the first mention of *ispravlenie* (correction) as social reform is seen in Peter I's manifesto of January 25, 1721 on the creation of a Spiritual Collegium (Synod) to govern the Russian church, which preceded the publication of *Duhovnyi Reglament* (Spiritual Regulations). Very often, it is seen by historians as a statement of the reformer's political programme:

Amongst the many Cares which the Empire committed to Us by God, requires for the good Government of our Hereditary Kingdoms and Conquests, casting our Eye on the Spiritual Order, and observing in them great Irregularity, and a great Defect in their Proceedings; We should indeed be afflicted in Our Conscience, and have too just Cause to fear lest We appear to be guilty of Ingratitude to the most High, If, after by his gracious Assistance We have happily succeeded in a Regulation (*v ispravlenii*) both Military and Civil, We should neglect the Regulation of the Spiritual Order: And lest when the impartial Judge

shall require of Us an Account for the vast Trust he hath reposed in Us, We should not be able to give an Answer.

We should neglect the Regulation (*ispravlenie*) of the Spiritual Order.³⁰

However, if we read this text carefully we will not find anything new in comparison with the traditional Christian comprehension of “reform”, seen as the duty of the Christian monarch, who acts as *podobie* (icon) and personification of God on earth, striving to renew his subjects in preparation for the Kingdom of heaven. In the same manifesto Peter explicitly declares that he acts “after the Example (*podobiem*) of former religious Kings, recited in the Old and New Testaments, having taken upon Us the Care of the Regulation (*ispravlenii*) of the Clergy, and Spiritual Order”.³¹ In this sense, Peter’s constant use in his laws and letters of the phrases “Our people” and “the people entrusted to Us” (by God) becomes understandable. It is always about the king’s dealing with his people, about his personally responsibility before the Lord for the maintenance and correction of the people entrusted to him. In Russia, the legacy of the Byzantine theory of the Christian “kingdom” (*Basilieia*) was evident in the conception of Eusebius of Caesarea that the ruler “who wants to be a true king must first of all reform himself as man”.³² Contemporaries viewed Peter as a self-created person. Being a semi-educated and unskilful prince, he had educated himself, become a carpenter (outward likening to Jesus Christ the Saviour), a ship builder (likened to Noah, who saved mankind from the flood), the architect of the temple (*hramina*) and defender of justice (like Solomon).³³

The myth of renovation (*renovatio*) was constantly used by panegyrists and Peter’s eighteenth-century biographers.³⁴ However, this inevitably raised the question of the Christian monarch’s duty to the people entrusted to him for, in imitation of God, the earthly sovereign had to strive to correct his subjects. This concept of *Christomimesis* (imitation of Christ) had become the basis of Russian Orthodox political theology and suggested a way of *ispravlenie* (improvement):

Just as the Saviour orders the supernatural Kingdom for His Father, so the emperor makes his subjects on earth fit for it; just as the one opens the doors of the Father’s Kingdom to those who leave this world, so the other after having purged this terrestrial kingdom of godless error calls all pious men into the mansions of the empire (εισω βασιλικῶν οἰκῶν).³⁵

In many ways this political theology determined Peter’s actions. Focused on a secular comprehension of Peter’s activities, traditional historical writings supposed that Peter, like all Russian monarchs of the eighteenth century, was moving towards a secular state and used his reforming activities as a way to legitimise unlimited power aimed at the “common good”. Summarising this trend, Cynthia Whittaker states:

Although paternalistic, Peter had no use for the Muscovite patriarchal-*votchina* realm. He broke the identification of the person of the tsar with the state and insisted that the populace take two separate oaths, one to the ruler and one to the state.... By affirming the right pick his own successor, Peter disparaged the traditional dynastic or genetic basis of rule in the same way that he tried to disclaim edenic, theological associations. Among the populace, of course, these older views of a Saint-Prince or Orthodox Tsar persisted or, better said, coexisted. Thus, Peter's justification for power, the telic criterion of the common good, only strengthened the autocracy by adding yet another source of legitimacy.³⁶

Today almost all of these statements seem anachronistic. Since the 1980s historians have begun to revise this approach, noting that both Peter and his successors retained the religious concept of power and understanding of reform. Stefan Baehr argued that "during the secularisation of Russian culture in the last third of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth century" it remains relevant "to portray the tsar and his Russia as a 'political icon' of the heavenly world". This indicated that "a medieval modeling system during a period of modernisation and a church structure during a period of secularisation reflects the fact that Russia's Byzantine and Orthodox heritage remained very much alive after Peter the Great."³⁷ Ernest Zitser comes to a similar conclusion, demonstrating that behind the "sacred parodies" of the All-Joking and All-Drunken Synod, organised by Peter I,

lay not a mission to secularise Muscovy, but rather a belief in the divine gift of grace (charisma) reputedly possessed by Peter Alekseevich, the man whom royal panegyrists hailed as Russia's 'God and Christ', since its organisers, immersed in the religious culture of their time, simply did not have an alternative worldview and were unfamiliar with secular concepts of power.³⁸

Donald Ostrovsky also shows that the gap between the Muscovite past and Peter's Russia is not entirely obvious, "Russia remained more traditional than modern even after Peter's reign"; social and economic patterns, as well as political ones, persisted for a long time.³⁹

It is significant that Cynthia Whittaker cites the case of Tsarevich Alexei as an example of Peter's secular behaviour: "Peter even sacrificed his own son to the state since he could not be expected to continue his father's reforms".⁴⁰ Meanwhile, in the published case of Tsarevitch Alexei,⁴¹ everything is permeated by the biblical justification of the father's and master's behaviour towards the disobedient son and slave, likened to Absalom.⁴² In his 1718 treatise the German political writer and historian Gottlieb Samuel Treuer describes Peter's transformations as acts aimed at glorifying the greatness of the state as the personal possession of an absolute monarch.

The opposition of the new and the old is considered from the perspective of what is useful and useless for this monarch's patrimony; all that is associated with superstition and past delusions, that has lost all utility and can lead to destruction of the sovereign's power (*gosudarstvo*), must be rejected. Adherence to such antiquity is a delusion, and if the heir to the throne cannot be convinced, it is necessary to choose another heir:

The father of this son bestowed on him constant love; he used thousands of ways to eradicate from his heart an attraction towards his people's old habits, but since this was all in vain, he foresaw the future ruin of his empire.⁴³

This logic is followed by Archbishop Feofan Prokopovich in his *The Justice of the Monarch's Right to Appoint the Heir to his Throne* – an official commentary on the law of Imperial succession (1722).⁴⁴ Feofan describes the intentions of the tsar:

our Lawgiver and Sovereign, as a true Father of his Country, who, in his great zeal for the country, has thought little of his own great pains and efforts not only to preserve it, but also to expand it greatly; and to strengthen it with civil and military improvements (*ispravlenii*), and with the bastion of improvement (*ispravlenii*), namely, with most excellent statutes and laws...⁴⁵

Peter strengthens and expands his hereditary patrimony as a caring lord and ruler, correcting his lands, household and slaves, and borrowing useful things from foreign countries. An attraction towards the people's old habits is not an adherence to the truth, but rather to ingrained delusions. The truth is also rooted in the past. It is not by chance that Feofan uses biblical and historical evidence and examples from the past to justify the right of the monarch to depose his unworthy heir and appoint a new one. The new norm of succession is justified not on account of its novelty, but due to the "invention of tradition", rooting this norm in the past.⁴⁶ At the same time, from Feofan's viewpoint the norm itself is rational, its requirements are reasonable, but this is clearly not enough for him to justify "innovation". It has to be shown that it is not an innovation, but has always been natural for "regular nations".

This explanatory model can be transferred to all Peter's "reforms". The improvements that Peter implemented in Russia appear not to be a system of thoughtful reforms as in the understanding of the nineteenth century; in fact, Vasily Klyuchevsky pointed out long ago the absence of any reform plan associated with Peter the Great.⁴⁷ These are genuine improvements aimed at solving specific problems, fixing a crumbling "temple", or rebuilding it according to old patterns borrowed from the European "regular nations" who had built something worthy of imitation in the past, thanks to their thinking and experience. This new temple was built by Peter according to old European patterns. And this novelty is also rooted in the past. Peter was an

improver of his patrimonial estate (realm), in Antioch Kantemir's words – “a tsar taking care of his household” (*tsar domostroynyi*),⁴⁸ and an ambitious ruler who tried to expand and consolidate the position of his dynastic empire.

From the second half of the nineteenth century historians interpreted Peter and his successors as rational reformers, driven by the conception of reform advantageous to a modern impersonal state. But the very idea of such a state was formed no earlier than the time of the French Revolution. Claudio S. Ingerflom has argued that the Petrine vision of his power was remarkable both for its religious and patrimonial features and in its representation of power as inherently personal.⁴⁹ Peter I was focused upon the Byzantine and Muscovite tradition of monarchical duty and the religious-mystical understanding of “reform”. It has been shown that there was not a single Western European early modern political treatise (Machiavelli, Grotius, Hobbes, Locke) in his otherwise comprehensive library;⁵⁰ but there was a translation of the Byzantine “Mirror of Princes” – a book by Agapetus Diakonos, *Horatory Chapters*.⁵¹ Agapetus claimed that “if the king became like God, then his subjects would be re-formed in the image and likeness of their king”.⁵²

Contemporaries and close descendants did not regard Peter as a reformer in the modern political sense. Comments that appeared immediately after his death, both in Russia and abroad, associated his activities with the demiurge, who does not restore the old but creates something new and unprecedented. Peter is equal to God because he created a new Russia from nothing, as Chancellor Gavriil Golovkin said when in 1721 petitioning Peter to agree to the title of Emperor: Peter created his realm “from nothingness into being”.⁵³ This is not reform, nor is it restoration: it is creation. In his 1725 “Elegy for the Death of Peter the Great”, Vasily Trediakovsky puts the following description of Peter into the mouth of mournful Pallas:

... Peter was the keeper of wisdom,
A new creator (*sotvoritel'*) of his state.⁵⁴

Independently following the same position, Bernard de Fontenelle declares in his *Éloge du Czar Pierre I* that there was no previous correct form to return to, it just didn't exist; for Peter it was necessary to build everything from nothing:

Then the great plan that he had designed was revealed in all its scope. Everything had to be done anew in Muscovy, there was nothing to improve. This was the creation of a new nation, and it was necessary to act alone, without help, without tools.⁵⁵

Therefore Peter's deeds are rarely called reforms at this time;⁵⁶ they represented a “general change” (*le changement general*), which meant that Russia was changed by Peter for the better, improved, as Friedrich Christian Weber writes in the preface to his book: «Rußland seit einigen zwanzig Jahren ganz verwandelt und verändert sey». ⁵⁷ In conformity with the terminology

of this epoch, Peter arranged “revolutions” (*les revolutions*) in his state – in the plural, since there were changes made in different areas.⁵⁸ In his *Éloge*, Fontenelle uses the term “réforme” only once, linked with the corrections of the Orthodox Church and the religious life of subjects.⁵⁹ In the preface to French translation of “Das Veränderte Russland”, the publisher used the verb “réformer” in the sense of to correct, to eliminate abuses, to improve.⁶⁰

Therefore Ernest Zitser is right to state that “both ‘reform’ and ‘revolution’, in the sense in which they are conventionally used, are anachronisms that would have very little meaning for actors in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Russia”; Peter’s activity can be understood only through language of his time; his “reforms”, aimed at improving his kingdom, were not substantially modern, but rather were caused by “his sense of divine election for his imperial vocation and his unswerving belief ... that he was predestined for greatness”.⁶¹

Re-form, Manners and Laws, 1740–1790

Peter the Great is therefore seen as the creator of a new flourishing Russia, but his deeds remained unfulfilled; the “temple” (*hramina*), as Peter metaphorically called his renewed Russia, remained unfinished. To a greater or lesser extent his successors legitimated their powers and actions by appealing to his legacy, his great deeds for the renovation of Russia. This was especially true for the reign of two empresses – Elizabeth Petrovna (1741–1761) and Catherine II (1762–1796) – who both came to power through usurpation, on the bayonets of the palace guards; who overthrew the legitimate sovereigns to whom both empresses had previously sworn loyalty. The idea of restoration, a return to the true principles of Peter the Great, was used to justify these “revolutions”. During their reigns reforms began to be interpreted as the restoration of political institutions and principles of state administration first established by Peter I.⁶² However, like any restoration, the actions of Elizabeth I and Catherine II was a work of innovation, since they and their entourage interpreted Peter’s thoughts in a manner beneficial for them. They attributed new meanings to old ideas.

The accession of Elizabeth Petrovna to the throne in November 1741 involved the restoration of her father’s sacred cult. Thousands of copies of sermons were printed at the behest of the Empress, numerous court preachers reminded Elizabeth’s subjects of Peter’s merits, and that his daughter had regained a throne unjustly taken from her.⁶³ At the same time, Elizabeth presented herself not only as the heiress of Peter by “blood”, but also as the continuer of his great deeds. This is how Stephen Kalinovskiy sees the resurrected Peter in Elizabeth:

Elizabeth is not just a daughter of Peter, but a daughter filled with the spirit of her father, so when she ascended the All-Russian throne it is necessary to remember, listeners, that it was Peter who rose from the

dead, that it was Peter who ascended to his throne, it is necessary to think that it is Peter who commands, governs, conquers.⁶⁴

This comparison directly refers us to a mimetic interpretation of the Orthodox monarch, resurrected like Christ. Commenting in a sermon before the Empress on the phrase “Jesus has come to his city” (Matt. 9: 1), Evstaphiy Mogilyanskiy asked the question “what do we mean by this ‘city’?”. Having examined the positions of the church fathers, he came to the conclusion that “the souls of the faithful [to God] accept the city of God in themselves”, but Christ is its true incarnation, and Empress Elizabeth “invincible in faith and love for God” became like Christ himself, she appears as the “Humble Nazarene” in Russia, the embodiment of the City of heaven.⁶⁵ Ioanniky Skabovsky equally sees a manifestation of God’s will in the actions of Peter and his daughter: “God, who worked in Peter, also works in Petrovna”.⁶⁶

At the same time the *ispravlenie* (correction) is interpreted by Elizabethan preachers within the framework of court piety. This idea was fully expressed in the sermon of Bishop Markell Rodyshevskiy on March 28, 1742. Glorifying Elizabeth as the incarnation of Christ, as well “doing beneficence” (Luke 24: 114), the bishop addressed the audience, discovering, on the one hand, the duty of the monarch (“minister of God”) to demonstrate the image of God on earth for his subjects, and the duty of subjects to follow the example of the monarch on the path of correction (*ispravlenie*):

And Christ suffered for us..., he left an image (*obraz*) for us, so let us follow his footsteps, as well as the ministers of God, chosen by God on earth and established by his will, not for their own sake do they keep and fulfil God’s commands... but more for the people, for the sake of the people, showing an encouraging example: so that they also do more of this and remain in the fear of God, and in any subjugation, and not in godless opposition.⁶⁷

On the other hand, the monarch’s duty is to punish subjects who do not follow the example set by his sovereign, who do not want to change their lives according to the precepts of Christ:

The master acts, but the slave does not want for anything, the master labours and the slave is in a state of bliss and self-will, the master strives, and the slave is lazy... Moreover, the Monarch carries a sword, according to the great Apostle, and can take revenge on you fiercely, but is still waiting for your correction (*ispravleniay*) and repentance, you play with fire, you fight with the lion, beware – this meekness will turn into anger, and the judgment will be impartial.

Markell diligently lists many examples of Elizabeth’s Christian piety, her following all Christian sacraments and rituals. He views the Empress as the

veritable image of God – “your resurrector from the dead”, “an imitator of Christ” and “his glorious faithful and benevolent minister”. Thus, spiritual improvement (*ispravlenie*) is the most important act of the earthly monarch, and the deeds of the “pious new [Saint] Helen of Russia”, who intends to expel blasphemers and heretics, eradicate “heretical poison” and publish Orthodox books, are viewed by Markel as a true “reform”.⁶⁸

However, Elizabeth reveals herself not only in moral correction, returning to the institutions and laws of her father; she also restores the previous order by means of *re-forme*, returning to their previous form the old institutions that had been undermined in previous reigns. Rejecting the changes of those who had ruled since her father, Elizabeth solemnly proclaimed in her decree on December 12, 1742:

We noticed that the order of internal state affairs completely differs from that under Our Father... giving rise to much neglect in internal government affairs of any level, and justice has already become very weak... And because of this, to end the disturbance to governance that has occurred up to the present, we order... that the decrees and regulations [of Peter I] be restored, and that all affairs shall be governed in strict accordance with them – in all governments of Our State.⁶⁹

Further, she ordered the cancellation and withdrawal of all decrees made by previous monarchs that “are not similar to the current state of time and are harmful to the benefit of the state”, while the criterion of any benefit is compliance with the decrees of Peter I. For Elizabeth, the return to the conditions of her father is essentially conservative and traditional – this means the restoration of a true order trampled by corrupted rulers – “villains” during the reign of Empress Anna Ioannovna (1730–1740). For Elizabeth, “reform” appears in its true eighteenth-century meaning. It is not an innovation, but adherence to the old order, a return to the “proper” and rejection of the “faulty”.

However, in the 1750s, new trends in understanding of the term *ispravlenie* emerged. It turned out that to restore order in the empire it was not enough to return to the laws and institutions of Peter the Great; constant complaints of subjects regarding unfair trials and a lack of clear and consistent legislation forced the empress to state in the Senate on March 11, 1754 that: “primarily, before any other matters, it is necessary to create clear laws and to start this immediately... because manners and customs change over time, that is why a change in laws is also necessary”.⁷⁰ During the previous 12 years, the Empress had changed her attitude towards correcting laws. Instead of returning to the old ones, she now demanded new laws; but interestingly, there is here an echo of Montesquieu’s ideas about the interrelation of manners and laws. Christof Dipper suggests that an important change in the understanding of “reform” in France took place due to Montesquieu, such that reform became seen as an adaptation of political circumstances

to changed temporal conditions. Monarchs must constantly acknowledge these changing circumstances and reform their country. At the same time, for Montesquieu reform is “a cautious, almost imperceptible process concerning group psyche, aimed at “mœurs et manières”.”⁷¹

Montesquieu stated that

...when a prince wished to make great changes in his nation, it was necessary to reform by laws that which was established by laws, and that he change by manners that which was established by manners; and it is very bad policy to change by laws that which must be changed by manners.⁷²

He cited Peter I as an example of such bad policy:

The law that obliged Muscovites to cut their beards and shorten their clothes, and the violence of Peter I, which limited to the knee the long cloaks of those who entered the towns, was tyrannical. ... Peter I, lending the customs and manners of Europe to one European nation, found this easier than he had anticipated. The empire of climate is the first among all empires. He therefore had no need for laws to change the customs and manners of his nation; it was sufficient to be inspired by other customs and other manners.⁷³

Catherine II had read Montesquieu’s treatise carefully, and Elizabeth seems to have learned about it from her favourite Ivan Shuvalov, an admirer of the French Enlightenment. For correction, it was not enough to return to past correct regulations – new laws were needed, since the subjects and their morals have changed. Unpolished and uneducated under Peter I, they now became civilised and needed other laws. This idea of a nation’s historical development was a new idea for the statesmen of this era, and made them think about the impossibility of drafting universal legislation that would remain forever afterwards unchanged.

This idea is also clearly present in the February 18, 1762 Manifesto on the Nobility’s Liberties, promulgated by Peter III (1761–1762), rendering the Russian nobility exempted from compulsory life-long service. On behalf of the emperor it was stated that nobles had the right to choose either to serve or not because now, thanks to the laws of Peter the Great, there was widespread education and correct manners:

We gladly note... [that] manners have been improved; knowledge has replaced illiteracy... noble thoughts have penetrated the hearts of all true Russian patriots who have revealed toward Us their unlimited devotion, love, zeal, and fervour. Because of all these reasons We judge it to be no longer necessary to compel nobles into service, as has been the practice hitherto.⁷⁴

That is, the change in the manners of the nobility led to the need to grant new rights and broad privileges to subjects.

The same idea, that first we need a moral transformation, and then change in laws will follow, was shared by the wife of Peter III, who removed her husband from the throne in June 1762 and had to legitimate her long reign through her great deeds for the “common good” of her loyal subjects. Like Elizabeth, Catherine II used the image of Peter the Great, she also declares a return to his institutions and laws;⁷⁵ she told the Prince de Ligne that she always mentally asked the question – what Peter the Great “would have done, if he were in my place?”⁷⁶ However, for Catherine II the idea was not to return to Peter’s principles, but to Montesquieu’s idea of a gradual correction of morals, later followed by innovations in legislation.

We are already familiar with Panin’s remarks about “changes”. It should be noted that Catherine II generally shared this position of her first minister. In the 1780s, reviewing her time on the throne in letters to Melchior Grimm, she never used the word reform or transformation, speaking only of corrections and improvements, or new institutions created by her to strengthen the existing order. For example, in 1787, having learnt about the *Assemblée des notables* in France, she remembered her Legislative Commission (1767–1768), and described her goals in the following way:

... my assembly of deputies turned out to be successful, because I told them: There these are my principles. Now please tell me your complaints. Where do your shoes pinch? Well, let us put that right. I have no kind of system; I want only the common good, it is my own.⁷⁷

The metaphor of the tight shoe is not accidental; the sovereign must improve the existing shoes, but not offer new shoes instead of old ones every time. In this sense Catherine II defined herself as an improver. In her *Instructions (Nakaz) to the Legislative Commission* she argued, for example, that “A great Number of Slaves ought not to be in-franchised [i.e. emancipated] all at once, nor by a general Law” (article 260); first it is necessary to provide serfs with property and establish precise standards for work and wages (261, 270), then accustom landlords to the idea that free peasants will be more interested in increasing the productivity of their land and household, and therefore will bring more income to landowners and the state (295–297). And then, in future, it might be assumed that landowners, on the basis of personal agreements with peasants, would be able to free them.⁷⁸ Liberation would be a private matter for landowners and peasants, the sovereign need only create the conditions for gradual changes and a movement towards this goal. After Denis Diderot’s death, having learnt about his harsh remarks about her *Instructions (Nakaz)*, the Empress wrote to Grimm:

... if my *Instruction* was to Diderot’s taste it would turn everything upside down. However I maintain that my *Instruction* was not only good,

but perfect and well suited to the circumstances, because in the eighteen years it has existed not only has it done no harm at all, but also that all the good that it produced and that is generally recognised comes from the principles established by this *Instruction*.⁷⁹

According to Catherine, the monarch-legislator should create laws that correspond to existing circumstances, but not make drastic and total changes. “Changes are harmful to the state”, Catherine could repeat after Count Panin.

During Catherine’s era, the image of Peter I serves as an ideal statesman, for both Catherine II and those of her critics who were sceptical of her “improvements”. In particular, criticism of Catherine’s actions was expressed in the 1780s by Nikita Panin and his court party which, in addition to his relatives (Panins, Kurakins, Repnins), included Panin’s secretary, a talented dramatist and writer, Denis Fonvizin. Describing the intellectual position of the “reformer” Panin and his group, David Rancel identified it precisely with the term *starodumstvo* (literary “old-thought”, more precisely “old-fashioned moral virtue”), after the main character in the Fonvizin comedy *Nederosl’* (*The Minor*, 1782) – *Starodum* (Old-thinker). Reporting the basic ideals of *starodumstvo*, Rancel says:

Since the monarch and his court set the tone for society, corruption spread outward from the center.⁸⁰ After Peter’s death, *starodumstvo* implied, a general decline in moral values set in.... As a result, the state was turning into an unfeeling monster, trampling on honor, justice, and personal integrity in the interests of preserving the privileges of its crooked and unqualified agents.... Since these derived from the corrosive effects of absolute power, the monarch should understand that it was not only his duty but his interest to institute fundamental laws setting limits to the exercise of autocratic power. ... *starodumstvo* stayed strictly within the Enlightenment approach of persuasion, education, and gradualism. It placed the onus for reform on the monarch himself, appealing to him with a blend of arguments culled from Christian morality, natural law theory, and simple common sense, philosophically based in a kind of vulgar deism.⁸¹

Montesquieu’s idea of a relation between morals and the purpose of “reforms” becomes obvious in the comedy *The Minor*: people appear to be victims of their own vices, “because all human beings possessed the germ of evil”. This is the cause of *zlonravie* (bad “mœurs”), which is a consequence of lack of education, and education led the noble people to *blagonravie* (“honneur” in the sense of Montesquieu), but and the sovereign must correct these evils, and not necessarily with the help of laws and institutions. The dialogue of two positive characters in Fonvizin’s comedy demonstrates this:

Pravdin. Human misfortunes, of course, occur due to their own corruption; but the ways to make people kind...

Starodum. ...they are in the hands of the sovereign. Everyone sees that without good behaviour no one can climb the career ladder; that no seniority and no money can buy what is rewarded with merit; that people are chosen for positions, not positions stolen by people – then everyone sees the advantage of his good behaviour and everyone becomes good.⁸²

The monarch's purpose is to correct the morals of his subjects only through self-correction; so the monarch should be a role model for his subjects.⁸³ This is not much different from the theory of assimilation to Christ, only that the God-man image is replaced by the enlightened monarch, serving as a model of virtues. Indeed, Panin's ideals were rooted in the past, and the goals of his "reforms" were limited by the establishment of the power of the nobility – implying educated and well-bred aristocrats who were meant to rule the empire and maintain the administrative building. Therefore, Panin and his contemporaries cannot be regarded as reformers in the image of liberal enlightened bureaucrats of the nineteenth century; they had completely different goals, ideals and concepts.⁸⁴

The letter of Count Semyon Vorontsov to Fyodor Rostopchin reproduces Nikita Panin's typical attitude to reform 30 years later, after the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Brought up at the court of Elisabeth Petrovna, having lived most of his active life under Catherine II, Count Vorontsov in 1814 pinned all his hopes on the Emperor Alexander I, who, after the defeat of Napoleon, had to return to Russia and carry out reforms that Vorontsov presented not as the harmful innovations and inventions of his advisers, but as a return to the correct principles of Peter the Great. In this respect the old Russian aristocrat fully expressed the idea of a political reform as the restoration of the previous order, which he acquired in the middle of the eighteenth century:

It should be hoped that he [the Emperor] will feel that the time has come to restore order and establish justice in his own country, which will perish if he does not restore order and recover everything as it was from the moment the Senate was established by Peter the Great until the first year of the deceased Empress's reign [Catherine II]. She started to innovate; Her son [Paul I] turned everything upside down, not putting in place anything he had demolished; and her grandson [Alexander I] had the misfortune of being surrounded by figures who, full of pride and vanity, considered themselves superior to the great founder of the Russian Empire. These gentlemen began to work on poor Russia, and new laws were issued every day; these gentlemen have become law-making machines; they only did this, with the speed of their ignorance and frivolity. These prescriptions were based on hypothetical representations

of their imagination and on what they read but poorly understood; these were the experiments they wanted to do with poor Russia. They did not know that experiments are good only in physics and chemistry, but may turn fatal in jurisprudence, administration and political economy.⁸⁵

This quote proves that Semyon Vorontsov, calling for corrections and improvements in Russia, insisted on returning to the correct institutions of Peter I and refused to accept any innovations, which were seen as harmful. This statement precisely depicts the understanding of the “reform” in Russia in the eighteenth century. Sophisticated planning, divorced from life and experience, appears to be the unrealisable dreams of “projectors”. This cannot be regarded as a reform, since “reform” is the restoration of order, the correction of what is faulty, the improving of manners and morals, and only after this improving legislation; and thoughtful innovation always appears only as part of the caution renovation.

Conclusion

The rhetoric and practice of *ispravlenie* (correction, improvement) that existed in the eighteenth-century Russia had little in common with the modern concept of reform, formed in the middle of the nineteenth century. The traditional understanding of reform as (1) restoration of the old regular (*ispravnyi*) order, or (2) rising (through imitation) to the proper ideal model (whether it is the image of the God-man or the laws and manners of the “regular European nations”) – prevailed until the middle of the eighteenth century, when joined by (3) the concept of needful coherence of manners and laws, which requires the ruler to bring about constant changes due to the moral changes in his subjects over time. But in this new meaning reform can have a dual meaning: on the one hand, the sovereign is obliged to reform morals carefully, serving as an ideal model for his subjects and pursuing a policy aimed at encouraging the well-behaved and worthy ones; and on the other hand, the very change in manners should lead to the introduction of new legislation appropriate to the updated situation. However, such reform is always aimed at changing people’s behaviour and manners, not institutions, which are always secondary to people.

Russian historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries could not therefore find any exact plan of institutional reforms, either from Peter I or from Catherine II, but they nevertheless treated them as reformers. But these “reforms” of the eighteenth century lacked any sense of the planning and systematisation with which progressive nineteenth-century reform was associated. Historians reconstructed the plans of Peter I and Catherine II according to their own frequently anachronistic conceptions of reform, designed according to the patterns of reformism of the nineteenth century.

In the eyes of his contemporaries, Peter the Great was not a reformer, but the *sotvoritel’* (creator) or *ustroitel’* (arranger, improver)⁸⁶ of a new kingdom,

following the models of the old European regular states, while his successors tried to restore the correct order that this *Pater Patriae* had established. Catherine II and her associates attempted to improve the morals and manners of their subjects, certain that “the legitimisation for being kind does not fit into any chapter of the *Ustav Blagochinia* (Police Ordinance)”; they acted slowly and cautiously, primarily focused upon administrative and estate legislation. In this respect they saw themselves first of all as “reformers of morals”.

Notes

- 1 This study was completed within the framework of the Basic Research Program at the National Research University–Higher School of Economics (HSE) in 2022.
- 2 Nikita Ivanovich Panin to Catherine II, 1762, Nauchno-issledovatel'skii arkhiv Sankt-Peterburgskogo Instituta Istorii Rossiiskoi Akademii nauk (NIA SPbII RAN), f. 36, op. 1, d. 400, 179v–180r.
- 3 See Eike Wolgast, “Reform, Reformation”, in Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhart Koselleck, eds., *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* 5 (Stuttgart: Klett–Cotta, 1984), 313–60; Neithard Bulst, Jörg Fisch, Reinhart Koselleck, Christian Meier, “Revolution, Rebellion, Aufruhr, Bürgerkrieg”, in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* 5, 653–788; Christof Dipper “Réforme”, in Rolf Reichardt, Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, Jörn Leonhard, eds., *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich 1680–1820*, Heft 19–20 (München: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015), 115–40; and the chapter in this volume by Keith Tribe.
- 4 Sergey Solovyev, *Istoriya Rossii s drevneyshikh vremen*, Vols. 1–29 (Moskva: universitetskoy tipografii, 1851–1879); Sergey Solovyev, *Publichnyye chteniya o Petre Velikom* (Moskva: v universitetskoy tipografii, 1872).
- 5 Timofey Nikolaevich Granovsky, *Lektsii po istorii Srednevekovia* (Moskva: Nauka, 1987), 55; Nikolay Yakovlevich Danilevsky, *Rossiya i Evropa* (Sankt-Peterburg: Obshchestvennaya polza, 1871), 279.
- 6 Vasilij Klyuchevskiy, *Kurs russkoy istorii*, Vol. 3 (Moskva: Lissnera i Sobko, 1916); Pavel Nikolayevich Milyukov, *Gosudarstvennoye khozyaystvo Rossii v pervoy chetverti XVIII stoletiya i reforma Petra Velikogo* (Sankt-Peterburg: Balasheva, 1892).
- 7 See e.g. Boris Rybakov, *Kievskaya Rus' i russkie kn'azhestva XII–XIII vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1982), 363–67; Alexander Zimin, *Reformy Ivana Groznogo* (Moscow: Sotsgiz, 1960).
- 8 Natan Eydelman, *Revolutsiya sverkh v Rossii* (Moscow: Kniga, 1989); Alfred Rieber, “The Reforming Tradition in Russian History”, in Alfred Rieber, A.Z. Rubinstein, eds., *Perestroika at the Crossroads* (New York: Sharpe, 1991), 3–28; Boris Anan'ich, ed., *Vlast' i reformy: Ot samoderzhavnoi k sovetskoy Rossii* (St. Petersburg: OLMA-press, 1996); Alexander Kamensky, *Ot Petra I do Pavla I: Reformy v Rossii XVIII veka* (Moscow: RGGU, 2001).
- 9 See Mihail Krom, “Religiozno-nravstvennoye obosnovaniye administrativnykh preobrazovaniy v Rossii XVI v.”, in Ludwig Steindorff, ed., *Religion und Integration im Moskauer Russland: Konzepte und Praktiken, Potentiale und Grenzen 14.–17. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 49–64; Mihail Krom, Lyudmila Pimenova, eds., *Fenomen reform na zapade i vostokey Evropy v nachale Novogo vremeni (XVI–XVIII vv.): sbornik statey* (Sankt-Peterburg: Evropeyskiy universitet, 2013); Mayya Lavrinovich, “Reformy rannego Novogo vremeni kak model i kak istoriograficheskiy konstrukt”, *Rossiyskaya istoriya* 4 (2014): 4–9;

- Mikhail Kiselev, “K istorii diskursa reform v Rossii rannego Novogo vremeni”, *Rossiyskaya istoriya* 4 (2014): 23–29.
- 10 Nikolay Novikov, *Izbrannyye proizvedeniya* (Moscow; Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoye izdatelstvo khudozhestvennoy literatury, 1951), 614.
 - 11 *Dictionnaire de L’Académie française, troisième édition* 2 (Paris: Bernard Brunet, 1762), 566–67; *Polnoy frantsuzskoy i rossiyskoy leksikon*, s poslednyago izdaniya leksikona Frantsuzskoy akademii na rossiyskoy yazyk perevedenny Sobraniyem uchenykh lyudey, Vol. 2 (Sankt-Peterburg: Imperatorskaya tipografiya, 1786), 395.
 - 12 *Polnoy frantsuzskoy i rossiyskoy leksikon*, Vol. 2, 395
 - 13 *Ibid.*, 395.
 - 14 For example, Mably declares that: “un peuple qui commence à se réformer, est capable d’exécuter de grandes choses, malgré les vices dont il n’a pu encore se corriger; mais un peuple qui dégénère et se corrompt, ne retire presque aucun avantage de vertu.” Gabriel Bonnot de Mably, *Observations sur les Grecs ou des causes de la prospérité et des malheur des Grecs* (Geneve, 1766), 145–46.
 - 15 Alexander Radischev, *Polnoe sovranie sochineniy*, Vol. 2 (Moscow; Leningrad: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1941), 301; Mably, *Observations*, 226.
 - 16 “Puisque la Société a, selon les lieux & les temps, des besoins différents; puisque de nouvelles circonstance & une révolution rendent souvent un peuple si différent de lui-même, la principale attention de la politique ne devoit-elle pas être de varier ses principes & sa conduite?” – Mably, *Entretiens de Phocion, sur la rapport de la morale avec la politique* (Amsterdam: Heideggurr, 1763), 18; Peter Kurbatov, trans., *Razgovory Fokionovy o skhodnosti nravoucheniya s politikoyu* (Sankt-Peterburg: Imperatorskoy Akademii Nauk, 1772), 21.
 - 17 *Slovar Akademii Rossiyskoy, po azbuchnomu poryadku raspolozhenny*, Vol. 5 (Sankt-Peterburg: Imperatorskoy Akademii Nauk, 1822), 224–25.
 - 18 Ivan Golikov, *Deyaniya Petra Velikago, mudrago preobrazitelya Rossii*, Vols. 1–12 (Moskva: Novikov, 1788–1789).
 - 19 Pons Augustin Alletz, “Pierre le Grand, Czar de Russie”, in *Les princes célèbres qui ont régné dans le monde*, Vol. 4 (Paris: Delalain, 1769), 326; Petr Bogdanovich, trans., *Kratkoye opisaniye zhizni i slavykh del Petra Velikago pervago imperatora vsrossiyskago* (Sankt-Peterburg: Bogdanovich, 1788), 83.
 - 20 Ivan Bogayevskiy, trans., *Osnovaniye sily i blagosostoyaniya tsarstv*, Vols. 1–4 (Sankt-Peterburg: Imperatorskoy Akademii Nauk, 1772–1778); Matvey Gavrilov, trans., *Iosifa Zonnenfelsa Nachalnyya osnovaniya politsii ili blagochiniya* (Moskva: Novikov, 1787). See Danila Raskov, “Cameratism in Eighteenth-Century Russia: Reform, Translations and Academic Mobility”, in Ere Nokkala, Nicholas B. Miller, eds., *Cameratism and the Enlightenment: Happiness, Governance, and Reform in Transnational Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2020), 274–301.
 - 21 “An Oration in Praise of Peter the Great... by Theophanes, Arch-Bishop of Ple-skow and Narve” (June 29, 1725) in Thomas Consett, *The Present State and Regulations of the Church of Russia. Establish’d by the late Tsar’s royal edict* (London: Holt, 1729), 305; *Feofana Prokopovicha arkhiepiskopa Velikago Novagrada i Velikikh Luk... Slova i Rechi pouchitelnyye, pokhvalnyye i pozdravitelnyya*, Vol. 2 (Sankt-Peterburg: pri Sukhoputnom Shlyakhetskome Kadetskom korpuse, 1761), 148.
 - 22 See Andreas Musolf, “Political metaphor and bodies politic”, in Ursula Okul-ska, Piotr Cap, eds., *Perspectives in Politics and Discourse* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2010), 23–42.
 - 23 See Gerhart B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform. Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 7–36, 107–32; Steven Runciman, *The Byzantine Theocracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 5–25.

- 24 Among the most famous authors who used this building metaphor were Jean-Jacques Rousseau (“The Social Contract”, Book II, Chapter 8) and Immanuel Kant (“Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose”).
- 25 *Testament politique d’Armand du Plessis, Cardinal duc de Richelieu* (Amsterdam: Desbordes, 1688), 175–76. In Russian translation: *Testament Politicheskoy kardinala dyuka de Rishelio*, manuscript translation of 1725, Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov (RGADA), f. 1274, d. 3166, 49; *Politicheskoye zaveshchaniye kardinala dyuka de Rishelye frantsuzskomu korolyu* (Moskva: pri Imperatorskom Moskovsom universite, 1766), 156.
- 26 The translation of 1725 was distributed in handwritten versions, nine manuscripts have survived in Russian archives. The second published translation went through two editions (1766 and 1788), which demonstrates its popularity.
- 27 Voltaire, *Les oeuvres completes de Voltaire*, Vol. 46 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1999), 78.
- 28 Grigoriy Esipov, *Raskolnichi dela XVIII stoletiya*, Vol. 2 (Sankt-Peterburg: Obshchestvennaya polza, 1863), 80–81.
- 29 Evgeniy Anisimov, ed., “*Moskva i Novgrad edina derzhava Bozhiya*”: *Novgorodskiy mitropolit Iov i ego peregovorki kontsa XVII-nachala XVIII v.* (Novgorod: Novgorodskiy gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2009), 143.
- 30 The text was prepared by Theodosius Yanovsky and corrected by the tsar himself. *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii*, Vol. 6 (Sankt-Peterburg, 1831) (hereafter *PSZ*), no. 3718 (January 25, 1721). This is a translation by Consett, *The Present State*, 2.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 3.
- 32 Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, 109.
- 33 All these comparisons were endlessly used by his panegyrists in the eighteenth century. Petr Krekshin, among others, compared Peter with Solomon, and wrote: “Solomon did not know how to make great warships, frigates, boats, galleys with his own hands, he did not even see them, did not even hold a musket in his hands nor know anything about these things. Your Imperial Majesty was a skilled craftsman in all of the above, and could do every thing with his own hands, therefore it can be seen that Your Imperial Majesty was gifted with much wisdom from God himself, even more than Solomon, ... and if it did not come from God himself, it was impossible for all such knowledge and crafts to be learned in a life of one hundred years; but Your Imperial Majesty has learned everything in a very short time.” See Petr Krekshin, *Istoricheskoye rozyaskaniye o velichestve del Petra Velikogo* (1752), Otdel rukopisey Gosudarstvenno istoricheskogo muzeya (OR GIM), Uvarov’s collection of manuscripts, no. 434, 10r-10v.
- 34 See Stephen L. Baehr, “In the Re-Beginning: Rebirth, Renewal and ‘Renovatio’”, in Anthony G. Cross, ed., *Russia and the West in the Eighteenth Century: Proceedings of the II International Conference organized by the Study Group on Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Newtonville, MA: Oriental Research Partners, 1983), 152–66; Stephen L. Baehr, *The Paradise Myth in Eighteenth-Century Russia. Utopian Patterns in Early Secular Russian Literature and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 41–64.
- 35 Ladner, *The Idea of Reform*, 121–22.
- 36 Cynthia H. Whittaker, “The Reforming Tsar: The Redefinition of Autocratic Duty in Eighteenth-Century Russia”, *Slavic Review* 51 (1992): 85.
- 37 Stephen L. Baehr, “Regaining Paradise: The “Political icon” in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-century Russia”, *Russian History* 11 (1984): 149.
- 38 Ernest A. Zitser, *The Transfigured Kingdom: Sacred Parody and Charismatic Authority at the Court of Peter the Great* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 169.

- 39 Donald Ostrowski, “The Façade of Legitimacy: Exchange of Power and Authority in Early Modern Russia”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44 (2002): 534–63; and his “The End of Muscovy: The Case for circa 1800”, *Slavic Review* 69 (2010): 426–38.
- 40 Whittaker, “The Reforming Tsar”, 84.
- 41 *Obyavleniye rozysknogo dela i suda po ukazu ego tsarskogo velichestva na tsarevicha Alekseya Petrovicha* (Sankt-Peterburg, 1718). This “*Obyavleniye rozysknogo dela i suda*” was translated into German and French and published in Europe in 1718.
- 42 Peter declared that Alexei had an intention that was “sacrilegious and similar to the example of Absalom”. See *Obyavleniye rozysknogo dela*, 40.
- 43 A Russian manuscript translation of Treuer’s dissertation was in the library of Peter I: [sine ind.], *Istiazanie po Natural’noy pravde, skol daleko obladatelskaya vlast rasprostrayetsya pervorodnogo svoeyego printsa ot naslediya derzhavstvovaniya vyklyuchit*, c. 1720, Otdel rukopisey Biblioteki Akademii nauk (OR BAN), manuscript no. 17.15.9, 29r. Passage from Gottlieb Samuel Treuer, *Untersuchung nach dem Recht der Natur, wie weit ein Fürst Macht habe, seinen erstgebohrnen Printzen von der Nachfolge in der Regierung auszuschliessen* (s.l., 1718), 20.
- 44 *Pravda voli monarshey vo opredelenii naslednika derzhavy svoey* (Sankt-Peterburg, 1722).
- 45 Antony Lentin, *Peter the Great: His Law on the Imperial Succession in Russia, 1722. The Official Commentary: Pravda Voli Monarshei* (Oxford: Headstart History, 1996), 135–37. Antony Lentin translate *ispravlenie* as a reform, but in a contemporary German translation this fragment translated as “Civil and Militair-Verbesserungen” – *Das Recht der Monarchen, in willkühriger Bestellung der Reichs-Folge* (Berlin: Ambrosius Haude, 1724), 2. *Verbesserung* conveys the meaning of the Russian *ispravlenie* much more accurately and is closer to the English word *improvement*. See also Christoph Schmidt, “Aufstieg und Fall der Fortschrittsidee in Rußland”, *Historische Zeitschrift* 263 (1996): 5, quotes another description of Peter written by Feofan Prokopovich (“die posthumen Lobrede auf Peter vom 29. Juni 1725”) in a contemporary German translation: “Er liebete sein Vaterland und wollte dasselbe verbessern ... Seine darunter angewandte Mühe hat auch reiche Früchte getragen. Denn alles, was in Rußland jezo floriret und uns ehemals unbekannt gewesen, ist durch ihn eingeführet worden. Ja was wir in besserer Kleidung, im freundlichen Umgange, in Mahlzeiten und andern Dingen als nützlich und wohlanständig angenommen, das haben wir ihm allein zu danken, dergestalt, daß wir jezo uns derjenigen Manieren schämen, deren wir uns ehemals berühmeten.”
- 46 See Sergey Polskoy, “‘Istyazaniye po naturalnoy pravde’: legitimatsiya nasiliya i stanovleniye ratsionalnogo politicheskogo yazyka v Rossii XVIII veka”, in Mihail Velizhev, Timur Atnashev, eds., *Kembridzhskaya shkola: teoriya i praktika intellektualnoy istorii* (Moskva: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2018), 429–41.
- 47 Klyuchevsky argued that: “At first sight his reforming activity seems to have had no definite plan, no system of consecutiveness, and, though eventually covering the structure of the State throughout, and affecting many sides of the national life, to have revised no sphere of government homogeneously or integrally”; “Peter, in becoming a reformer, did so only involuntarily, automatically, and unawares. The prime factor first introducing him to reform, and then permanently impelling him in the same direction, was the factor of war” – Vasilii Kluchevsky, *A History of Russia*, Vol. 4, trans. G.J. Hogarth (London: Dent and Sons, 1926), 59, 214. Paul Bushkovitch supposes that: “The case of Aleksei was the greatest spur to Peter’s reform in the history of the reign, greater even than the Northern War.” – Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great: The Struggle for Power, 1671–1725* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 425.

- 48 Antioh Kantemir, *Sobraniye stikhotvoreniy* (Leningrad: Sovetskiy pisatel', 1956), 241.
- 49 Claudio Sergio Ingerflom, "'Loyalty to the State' under Peter the Great? Return to the Sources and the Historicity of Concepts", in Philip Ross Bullock, Andy Byford, Claudio Nun-Ingerflom, Isabelle Ohayon, Maria Rubins, Anna Winestein, eds., *Loyalties, Solidarities and Identities in Russian Society, History and Culture* (London: SSEES, 2013), 18–19.
- 50 See Elizaveta Ivanovna Bobrova, ed., *Biblioteka Petra I: Ukazatel-spravochnik* (Leningrad: BAN, 1978). Judging from this description, it's clear that Peter preferred technical and reference works, rather than theoretical writings. At the same time, there were many religious books in Peter's library. Peter had the historical (but not political) writings of Pufendorf (nos. 655–56, 1414–17), and, importantly, D. Saavedra Fajardo's *Idea of a Christian Political Prince* (no. 193).
- 51 Bobrova, ed., *Biblioteka Petra I*, 57, no. 294; *Agapita diakona Glavizny pouchitelny* (Kiev: v Lavre Pecherskoy, 1628).
- 52 Baehr, *The Paradis Myth*, 17–18.
- 53 Cited in Zitser, *The Transfigured Kingdom*, 169. This phrase corresponds to the central prayer of the Orthodox liturgy, where it is said that God brought "everything from nothingness into being." See Viktor Zhivov, "Kul'turnye reformy v sisteme preobrazovaniya Petra I," in A. D. Koshelev, ed., *Iz istorii russkoi kul'tury*, Vol. 3 (Moskva: Yazyki russkoy kultury, 1996), 550.
- 54 Vasilii Trediakovskiy, *Izbrannyye proizvedeniya* (Moskva, Leningrad: Sovetskiy pisatel', 1963), 58.
- 55 *Éloge du Czar Pierre I. par M. de Fontenelle Prononcé à l'Assemblée Publique de l'Académie des Sciences, le 14 Novemb. 1725* (Paris: s.i., 1727), 14.
- 56 William Richardson, *Anecdotes of the Russian Empire: In a Series of Letters Written, a Few Years Ago, from St. Petersburg* (London, 1784), 177, did write of Peter's "great labour of reforming the Russians", but this usage itself was distinct from that of the later nineteenth century, as argued by Keith Tribe. Even in the 1820s, German literature treated Peter the Great as an "improver" (*Zarische Verbesserungen*): see Benjamin Bergmann, *Peter der Große als Mensch und Regent*, Vol. 1 (Königsberg, 1823), 386.
- 57 *Das Veränderte Russland: in welchem die ietzige Verfassung Des Geist- und Weltlichen Regiments* (Frankfurt: Nicolaus Förster, 1721), I. In the English translation, *The Present State of Russia*, Vol. 1 (London: Taylor, 1723), we read "Russia has been entirely reformed and changed", while in the French, this place is translated "l'Empire Russien a changé depuis vingt-ans". *Mémoires anecdotes d'un ministre étranger résidant à Pétersbourg, concernant les principales actions de Pierre le Grand* (Haye: Jean van Duren, 1737), VII.
- 58 For an example, see the popular eighteenth-century series of books by René Aubert de Vertot (1655–1735) on revolutions in the history of Europe: *Histoire des révolutions de Portugal* (Paris, Michel Brunet, 1711); *Histoire des révolutions de Suède* (Paris: François Barois, 1722), 2 vols. and *Histoire des révolutions arrivées dans le gouvernement de la République romaine* (Paris: Barois, 1727), 3 vols. All these books were translated into Russian by different writers (in 1789, 1764–1765, 1774–1775), but in all cases "revolutions" was translated as *peremeny* (changes).
- 59 "Le Czar osa entreprendre la réforme de tant d'abus, sa Politique même y étoit intéressée." – "The Tsar dared to undertake the reform of many abuses, his policy was itself linked to it." – Fontenelle, *Éloge du Czar Pierre I*, 34.
- 60 "reformer les abus qui s'étoient glissés dans l'administration de la Justice, ou pour mieux dire reformer la Justice elle-même, où le désordre avoit régné jusqu'alors". – *Nouveaux Mémoires Sur L'état Présent de la Grande Russie ou Muscovie* 1 (Paris: Pissot, 1726), X–XI.

- 61 Ernest A. Zitser, “The Difference that Peter I Made”, in Simon Dixon, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Russian History* (Online Publication Date: Jun 2016).
- 62 See on this “scenario” of legitimisation Richard S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy from Peter the Great to the Abdication of Nicholas II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 40–43, 65–66.
- 63 See Ekaterina Kislova, “Izdanie pridvornykh propovedey v 1740-e gody”, *XVIII vek* 26 (2011): 52–72; Konstantin Bugrov, “Politicheskoye bogosloviye elizavetinskoy ery: legitimatsiya vlasti Elizavety Petrovny v pridvornoy propovedi 1740-kh - 1750-kh gg.”, *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 436 (2018): 131–38.
- 64 Stefan Kalinovskiy, *Slovo v den torzhestvennago Vozshestviya na roditelskiy Imperatorskiy Prestol ... imperatritsy Elizaveti Petrovny ... 1742 goda noyabrya 25 dnya* (Moskva: Moskovskaya tipografiya, 1744), 1r.
- 65 Evstafiy Mogilyanskiy, *Slovo v nedelyu pyatuyu po pentikostii, v Vysochayshem prisutstviye ... 1742 goda iyulia 11 dnya* (Moskva: Moskovskaya tipografiya, 1742), 10, 18.
- 66 Ioannikiy Skabovskiy, *Slovo v nedelyu dvadesyat tretiuyu, po soshestviyu Svyatogo Dukha, v vysochaysheye prisutstviye ... 1742 goda noyabrya 14 dnya* (Moskva: Moskovskaya tipografiya, 1742), 11.
- 67 Markell Rodyshevskiy, *Slovo pri prisudstvii Eya Imperatorskago Velichestva ... 1742 goda marta 28 dnya* (Sankt-Peterburg: pri Imperatorskoy Akademii, 1742), 8.
- 68 *Ibid.*, 15–16.
- 69 *PSZ* 11: no. 8480.
- 70 Cited in Sergey Mikhaylovich Solovyev, *Sochineniya v 18 knigakh* 12 (Moskva: Mysl', 1993), 190.
- 71 Dipper, “Réforme”, 5–6.
- 72 Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des lois*. Book 19 ch. 14 – (Paris: Éditions Garnier, 1973), t. 1 335–36.
- 73 Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois*, 336.
- 74 *PSZ* 15: no. 11444.
- 75 See Karen Rasmussen, “Catherine II and the Image of Peter I”, *Slavic Review* 37 (1978): 57–69.
- 76 Cited in Evgenii Schmurlo, “Pert Velikii v otzenke sovremennikov”, *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosvesheniya* 6 (1911): 32.
- 77 *Sbornik imperatorskogo russkogo istoricheskogo obschestva (SIRIO)*, Vol. 23 (Sankt-Peterburg: Akademii Nauk, 1878), 403.
- 78 *The grand instructions to the commissioners appointed to frame a new code of laws for the Russian Empire: composed / by Her Imperial Majesty Catherine II. Empress of all the Russias ...* Translated from the original, in the Russian language, by Michael Tatischeff: a Russian Gentleman (London: Jefferys, 1768), 136, 138, 144–45.
- 79 *SIRIO* 23, 373.
- 80 This is the central idea of Prince Mihail Scherbatov's pamphlet “On the Corruption of Morals in Russia” (1787–1788), but he dates this corruption precisely from the era of Peter I and accuses him of it. See Antony Lentin, ed. and trans., M. M. Shcherbatov, *On the Corruption of Morals in Russia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969).
- 81 David L. Ransel, *The Politics of Catherinian Russia: The Panin Party* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), 271.
- 82 Denis Fonvizin, “Nedorosl'”, in *Sobraniye sochineniy v dyukh tomakh*, Vol. 1 (Moskva; Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo Khudozhestvennoy Literatury, 1959), 168.

- 83 See Arlette Jouanna, *Le Prince absolu. Apogée et déclin de l'imaginaire monarchique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2014), 223–44.
- 84 David Ransel accurately noticed this distinction: “Much of the confusion has stemmed from the Panin’s frequent appeals to legal standards based on merit and service. These concepts have a very modern ring and seem to belong to the bureaucratic reform era of the nineteenth century, when they came to be associated with notions of objective standards of performance. To aristocrats of the age of absolutism the terms merit and service, while certainly implying a minimum level of competence, were most prominently associated with such ideas as the status and quality of one’s family over several generations, the proved merits of one’s forebears through long service to the crown, and a level of culture and refinement that reflected not merely technical expertise but, more important, an aristocratic moral tone and courtly manner.” – Ransel, *The Politics of Catherineian Russia*, 279.
- 85 Semyon Vorontsov to Fyodor Rostopchin, London, 7 (19) June 1814 in *Arkhiv knyazya Vorontsova*, Vol. 8 (Moskva: Gracheva, 1876), 520.
- 86 See *Veysmanov nemetskiy leksikon s latinskim* (Sankt-Peterburg: Imperatorskoy Akademii Nauk, 1782), 687 – “Schöpfer, conditor, creator, procreator, tvorets, tvoritel’, sozdatel’, ustroitel’”.