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*Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*

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Volume 17, Number 2 (Spring 2016)

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## The Vibrant 18th Century

The 18th century is an unsettled and unsettling age. It was the culmination of the many transitions that marked the early modern period and the beginning of a recognizably different era, in which several of the key problems underlying modernity emerged in sharpest relief. Paul Bushkovitch and Nancy S. Kollmann have recently reminded us how firmly the 18th century was rooted in previous centuries marked by dynamism and rapid change, including the rapid transformation of mores in elite society and political culture, together with intensive economic and demographic shifts. For both of these historians, early modern Russia is best understood as “an empire teeming with group and individual actors, colliding and rushing forward.”<sup>1</sup> These collisions make the 18th century an exciting period to study, yet they are also precisely what render it so difficult to characterize. Marc Raeff may have exaggerated when he wrote, “the Russian nobleman of Elizabeth’s time, less than one generation after the death of Peter the Great, bore no resemblance to his grandfather, or even father.”<sup>2</sup> Within any single generation, however, the diversity of actors was enormous.

Some of these actors rushed forward, avidly embracing change; others preferred to stay put. The осмьнадцатый вѣкъ is no less remarkable for the social, political, and cultural institutions to which it gave rise than for the ones it left behind. To an earlier generation of historians, including Raeff (b. 1923), Iurii Lotman (b. 1922), Michael Confino (b. 1926), and Isabel de Madariaga (b. 1919), the 18th century was precisely one of becoming, and it was from this vantage point that they addressed such questions as the nature of autocracy, secularization, the transfer of Western ideas and customs, deepening social stratification, and the formation of the modern state, with its growing emphasis placed on legislation and legal

<sup>1</sup> Kollmann uses these words to characterize Bushkovitch’s interpretation in Paul Bushkovitch, “Change and Culture in Early Modern Russia,” *Kritika* 16, 2 (2015): 291–316; Nancy S. Kollmann, “A Deeper Early Modern: A Response to Paul Bushkovitch,” *Kritika* 16, 2 (2015): 317–29, here 318.

<sup>2</sup> Marc Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1966), 73.

norms. Younger scholars are drawn to the same questions, though with a greater eye to the institutions and beliefs that the 18th century did not outlive.

The four articles presented in this edition by Evgenii Akelev, Sergey Chernikov, Elena Marasinova, and Lorenz Erren address all these themes. Each is dedicated to a specific decree, making law and the mechanisms by which the state exacted obedience from its subjects a central theme. The first three, which use fine-grained archival research, are equally impressive for what they can tell us about 18th-century Russian society—not only the expansion of social stratification but also its limits. Marasinova modifies our picture of a deep stratification in the 18th century by showing that penalties for the murder of a serf were no less harsh than those for murdering a nobleman. Akelev shows us how information about Peter and his designs on his subjects' beards traveled down the ranks and across Russia, allowing us to listen in on conversations between men of diverse origins. Chernikov draws on statistics to measure the manner in which Peter's law on single inheritance of 1714 affected both members of the nobility and their serfs. Whether it be Peter's decree on single inheritance (Chernikov) or his decree on beard shaving of 1705 (Akelev) or Elizabeth's 1744 decree staying executions (Marasinova), the focus is less on the wording of the decree than on the social, economic, and cultural circumstances that gave rise to each and their lasting impact on the population. Erren's contribution on the succession act of 1722, too, stresses continuities over change.

As our authors make clear, autocratic decision making appears less arbitrary when one situates a decree in its social, cultural, and political circumstances. Peter's notorious law on shaving is a case in point. When we build in the context of the times, the famous barber of St. Petersburg is no longer the scissors-bearing *deus ex machina* familiar from older approaches but rather a chin stripper hard at work on a stage that has already been set; he understands the importance of timing and is alive to the possibility and consequences of resistance. Akelev's argument certainly fits the paradigm of an "early modern empire that had to constantly renegotiate its 'deals' with subject peoples in order to be successful."<sup>3</sup> The same paradigm applies no less strikingly to Erren's interpretation of Peter's succession act. Again, the argument highlights deliberative decision making, an awareness of past precedents. "Deals" are certainly being made here, as Erren emphasizes the importance of negotiation and acclamation in constituting monarchical legitimacy.

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<sup>3</sup> Kollmann, "A Deeper Early Modern," 319.

All four authors think of law as imposing obligations on the state as well as its subjects; it expressed monarchical will and set the standards that future rulers could not ignore. Richard Wortman, our commentator for this forum, contemplated this problem in his important and innovative work *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness*. For Russian emperors and empresses, law was integral to the regulation of state and society as an extension of their authority. At the same time, the “tsar’s attachment to personal power made him chary of all legal definition of authority.” “Thus, the tsar appeared in two guises—as the absolute monarch directing institutions and insisting on compliance with the law, and as the patriarch autocrat,” one whose will and capacity to manifest “personal grace” was in no way constrained by law.<sup>4</sup> By calling into question whether Peter’s 1722 Law on Succession was indeed a radical departure from past precedents, Erren addresses precisely this tension. Marasinova’s study of the death penalty also uncovers this dynamic. As she shows in regard to Catherine II, the great empress was bound by Elizabeth’s suspension of capital punishment to avoid this penalty and readily worked through the Senate to issue sentences, yet she nonetheless continually inserted her own personal instructions on the need for spiritual penance.

The authors whose research appears in this cluster submitted their articles individually. The thematic concentration was thus a happy coincidence, but it may also be revealing, given the rise of what seems to be a new preoccupation with the development of a “legal consciousness” in Russia. With growing skepticism about the ability of electoral politics to secure the rights of citizens, law—and more expressly, respect for the rule of law—is drawing increasing attention, both in Russia and internationally. The emphasis here seems to fall on the willingness of the monarch and state to adhere to laws as written; the ability of laws (both within the confines of a single state and across national borders) to create precedents; and the difficulty in any autocracy of distinguishing among monarchical will, intent, command, decree, and the “desire of the ruler when expressed by his subordinates.”<sup>5</sup>

As Richard Wortman’s detailed commentary to the articles attests, some of their findings are controversial. Proposing new interpretations of certain core themes in the scholarship, they demonstrate the continuing relevance of

<sup>4</sup> Richard S. Wortman, *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 9, 16, 18. The autocrats’ preference for law as a tool of innovation rather than one of precedence and preservation is also stressed in the section on Catherine II “as legislatrix” in Richard S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy 1: From Peter the Great to the Death of Nicholas I* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 122–28.

<sup>5</sup> Wortman, *Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness*, 16.

the 18th century—both as a historical phenomenon and as a field of study—and the difficulties involved in pinning down the institutions, mores, and attitudes that it produced. Last, but not least, it remains a mirror of our age, a vibrant and changing era that seems perfectly suited to engage the questions of our own vibrant and indeterminate times.



## **The Barber of All Russia**

### **Lawmaking, Resistance, and Mutual Adaptation during Peter the Great's Cultural Reforms**

EVGENII V. AKELEV

Peter the Great's cultural policies are generally regarded as having broken decisively with the past. Measures aimed at Europeanizing Russians' habits of grooming and dress served to exemplify these policies, ushered in at the autocrat's behest without heed to the mood of the Russian populace. Peter's notorious decree on shaving beards has long symbolized the radical and violent nature of his policies.<sup>1</sup> Historians have based their findings primarily on top-down legislative acts, but without an in-depth analysis of the processes by which they were implemented, they and the reading public more broadly came to assume that Peter's beard-shaving policy had been imposed in one fell swoop, with immediate and "positive" results. The question of how individuals responded to Peter's innovations has likewise been neglected. Too often, the rare representations of the Russian subject in the scholarly literature have been generalizing, one-dimensional, and speculative in character. V. M. Zhivov gave his rendition a comedic quality: "Deprived of his beard, the servitor, looking in the mirror and wiping his mouth, received a daily reminder that

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<sup>1</sup> Oleg Kharkhordin, reflecting in the introduction to *Teoriia praktik* on the phenomenon of everyday life, notes that "changes in everyday practices are overwhelming for the individual." At the same time, the author calls to mind Peter the Great as an exception, noting that a goal-oriented transformation of shared everyday practices is only possible "for a sovereign with theocratic pretensions, on the order of Peter I." See V. V. Volkov and O. V. Kharkhordin, *Teoriia praktik* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Evropeiskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2008), 45.

he had joined the new secular government and wondered whether he would stand ‘among the shaven heretics’ at the Day of Judgment, as the church had not all that long ago fixed in his mind.”<sup>2</sup>

There is a grain of truth to this view, yet I hope in this article to shed further light on the implementation of Peter’s cultural initiative through the prism of individual actors’ behavior—both the authorities responsible for the execution of the monarch’s decrees and the ordinary subjects they influenced. This angle of analysis allows us, first, to clarify what the tsar hoped to achieve; second, to show how the implementation of his policies differed in various regional contexts, meeting not only resistance but also support; and third, to demonstrate that the development and implementation of the decree on beard shaving was closely associated with an analysis of public sentiment. For Peter attended carefully to the mood of the populace, which he tried to control—often making concessions, sometimes stifling reform, even occasionally rescinding his commands. Ultimately, I hope to answer a question that has bedeviled numerous historians: how it was that Peter managed to carry out such harsh and compulsory reforms in the cultural sphere, often in spite of existing church prohibitions, without facing serious public resistance.

### **Why Did Peter the Great Impose the Mandatory Shaving of Beards?**

It is well known that in the 16th and 17th centuries, most Russians viewed shaving as a sin. Shaving the beard corrupted the image of God, who had made man in His image and likeness; eternal torment awaited the transgressor. Strict prohibitions against beard shaving were found in *Stoglav* and *Kormchaia kniga*, as well as in texts attributed to Maksim the Greek and Patriarch Adrian.<sup>3</sup> What, then, motivated Peter’s decision to force his subjects to shave their beards?

Some researchers have explained the tsar’s initiative as a demonstrative break with Old Muscovite values, based on a desire to bring Russians

<sup>2</sup> V. M. Zhivov, *Iz tserkovnoi istorii vremen Petra Velikogo: Issledovaniia i materialy* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2004), 39.

<sup>3</sup> See F. I. Buslaev, *Istoricheskie ocherki russkoi narodnoi slovesnosti i iskusstva* (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia pol’za, 1861), 2:233–36; P. P. Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura v Rossii pri Petre Velikom* (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia pol’za, 1862), 2:158–59; G. V. Esipov, *Raskol’nich’i dela XVIII stoletii: Izvlechennye iz del Preobrazhenskogo prikaza i Tainoi Rozysknykh del kantseliarii* (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia pol’za, 1861), 2:159–61; V. O. Mikhnevich, *Istoricheskie etiuudy russkoi zhizni* (St. Petersburg: F. S. Sushchinskii, 1882), 2:54–60; and Lindsey Hughes, “‘A Beard Is an Unnecessary Burden’: Peter I’s Laws on Shaving and Their Roots in Early Russia,” in *Russian Society and Culture and the Long Eighteenth Century: Essays in Honour of Anthony G. Cross*, ed. Roger Bartlett and Hughes (Münster: Lit, 2004), 25–29.

closer to foreigners.<sup>4</sup> Others saw Petrine beard shaving as a battle against superstition.<sup>5</sup> A third group interpreted the transformation of Russian subjects' appearance in the context of the principles of "good order" (*reguliarstvo*) to be implemented in their private lives.<sup>6</sup> A fourth contingent tried to make sense of the beard-shaving decree from a financial point of view, as one of the new revenue-generating statutes.<sup>7</sup> Which point of view is most valid? Answering this question would require documentary evidence from Peter explaining his intentions. Yet not one of the tsar's well-known decrees or letters lays out his motivations for prohibiting beards. Indeed, the monarch left the motivations behind many of his acts unstated.<sup>8</sup>

Clues to the tsar's personal outlook on the beard-shaving policy can be detected by analyzing different editions of *Gistoriia sveiskoi voiny* (The History of the Swedish War)—the largest historical work of Peter's time. Under the personal supervision of Peter the Great, work on this text was carried out from 1715 and continued until the end of his life, though it was never completed.<sup>9</sup> The first and second editions of the *History of the Swedish War*, compiled from 1717 to 1722, did not report on the introduction of forced

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., I. I. Golikov, *Deianiia Petra Velikogo, mudrogo preobrazitelia Rossii, sobrannnye iz dostovernykh istochnikov i raspolozhennye po godam* (Moscow: Nikolai Stepanov, 1837), 1:154–55; N. G. Ustrialov, *Istoriia tsarstvovaniia Petra Velikogo*, 5 vols. (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Vtorogo otdeleniia Sobstvennoi Ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Kantseliarii, 1858–63), 3:191–95; Mikhnevich, *Istoricheskie etiuudy russkoi zhizni*, 74; S. M. Solov'ev, *Sochineniia*, 18 vols. (Moscow: Mysl', 1988–2000), 7:549–50; 8:100–1; and A. B. Kamenskii, *Or Petra I do Pavla I: Reformy v Rossii XVIII veka. Opyt tselostnogo analiza* (Moscow: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 2001), 101.

<sup>5</sup> In her article on beard shaving in Peter's time, Hughes carefully analyzed the complex religious, cultural, political, and gender representations associated with beard shaving, concluding that Peter's "quarrel was not with beards as such but with the attitudes that attached special significance to them and made people willing to die to preserve them" (Hughes, "A Beard Is an Unnecessary Burden," 31).

<sup>6</sup> E. V. Anisimov, *The Reforms of Peter the Great: Progress through Coercion in Russia*, trans. John T. Alexander (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), 218–19; P. V. Sedov, "I v sobore, i u vладыki byl v vengerskom plat'e" (Izmenenie vneshnego vida novgorodtsev v kontse XVII–nachale XVIII v.)," in *Novgorodika–2012: U istokov rossiiskoi gosudarstvennosti. Materialy IV mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii 24–26 sentiabria 2012 g.* (Velikii Novgorod: Novgorodskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2013), 240.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., V. O. Kliuchevskii, *Sochineniia* (Moscow: Mysl', 1989), 4:118–22; Paul Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great: The Struggle for Power, 1671–1725* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 227; and I. V. Rudenko, *Borodovye znaki 1698, 1705, 1724, 1725* (Rostov-on-Don: Omega, 2013), 8.

<sup>8</sup> Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great*, 7.

<sup>9</sup> T. S. Maikova and A. A. Preobrazhenskii, eds., *Gistoriia Sveiskoi voiny: Podennaia zapiska Petra Velikogo*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Krug, 2004), 1:15–76; E. A. Pogolian, *Petr I: Arkhitekotor rossiiskoi istorii* (St. Petersburg: Iskusstvo, 2001), 244–80.

beard shaving, just as it was silent on numerous other domestic reforms.<sup>10</sup> The third edition of 1723, however, did recount innovations that at first glance had nothing to do with the war: the translation and printing of engineering books and historical calendars, the establishment of schools, the practice of sending nobles to study in Western Europe, the establishment of the Order of St. Andrew, and the calendar reform. Here an account of the transformation of Russian subjects' outward appearance also appears.<sup>11</sup> According to E. A. Pogosian, the text was intended to delineate "the set of reforms that, together with the introduction of a regular army, introduced Russia into the circle of 'well-ordered' nations." Here Pogosian refers to the 1716 Military Code, containing Peter's idea that the transformation of the military "marked the transition from 'barbaric custom' to 'good order,' the sign of 'a well-regulated nation.'"<sup>12</sup>

Reports describing the transformation of Russian subjects' appearance merit a closer look. Peter's personal chancellery (Kabinet) contains various draft texts relating to the *History of the Swedish War*.<sup>13</sup> Among them is a revised copy of the original version, compiled between 1722 and 1723, describing how the appearance of Russian subjects changed: "In that same year, 1699, His Tsarist Majesty thought it necessary to abolish the old-fashioned Russian dress (which was similar to that of Tatar and other Muslim [busurmanskii] peoples) and ordered all his subjects, male and female, in Moscow and in other towns, to dress in the manner of the European Christian countries, as well as ordering [them] to shave [their] beards, which was done from this time on."<sup>14</sup> The original version of the report announcing the introduction of beard shaving in the *History of the Swedish War* thus explicitly juxtaposed "old-fashioned Russian dress"—identified with the clothing of "Tatar and other Muslim peoples"—to the "manner of the European countries," which are "Christian." The report examines the custom of wearing the beard in the same context.

<sup>10</sup> Maikova and Preobrazhenskii, *Gistoriia Sveiskoi voiny*, 1:81–82.

<sup>11</sup> See the third edition of *Gistoriia Sveiskoi voiny*: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov (RGADA) f. 9 (Kabinet Petra I), op. 2, otdelenie I, kniga 4, l. 9. The interim revision of the reports with Peter the Great's corrections (ibid., kniga 7, ll. 6–8 ob.) was published as "Nabroski svedenii o pervykh kul'turnykh reformakh Petra I, sdelannye im dlia sostavliaemoi v Kabinete E. V. Istorii ego tsarstvovaniia, bez daty" (N. A. Voskresenskii, *Zakonodatel'nye akty Petra I: Redaktsii i proekty zakonov, zametki, doklady, donosheniia, chelobit'ia i inostrannye istochniki* [Leningrad: Akademiia nauk, 1945], 115–16).

<sup>12</sup> Pogosian, *Petr I*, 262–66.

<sup>13</sup> Maikova and Preobrazhenskii, *Gistoriia Sveiskoi voiny*, 1:70–71.

<sup>14</sup> RGADA f. 9, op. 6, d. 2, l. 6. Here and below, all emphases are mine.

This report would undergo major editorial corrections in the years to come.<sup>15</sup> Yet the text cited above seems to convey the mindset of Peter himself and that of his associates. Confirming this hypothesis, some direct parallels turn up in the tsar's correspondence with members of his retinue. In a letter dated 12 February 1713, A. A. Kurbatov, vice-governor of Arkhangel'sk, informed the tsar:

In Arkhangel'sk's province many people of varying ranks, if not all, wear old-fashioned clothes and do not shave their beards, and as I heard, the former rulers did not force them to do so, which is why I voice my concern. I think that it should have been possible to eradicate this crudeness [*grubiianstvo*] in past years through many of your sovereign decrees, which up to now have not been enacted, for laws are written in vain if they are not obeyed (as has been written). And almost everybody who comes to the market from other provinces wears Russian dress and beards, including even young people. Truly, Sovereign, such crudeness ought to be done away with so that pagan customs [*obychai poganskiia*] are exterminated with such clothing.<sup>16</sup>

Key words in this letter reveal important parallels with the original version of the report appearing in the *History of the Swedish War*: the "custom" of wearing beards is "pagan" (barbarian) and "rude." The purpose of the decrees was to "eradicate this crudeness." Undoubtedly, the ideas expressed in Kurbatov's letter echoed the tsar's own sentiments. Some of Peter's letters, though written on other subjects, may serve as confirmation. A letter by Peter to Ia. F. Dolgorukii of 13 February 1715, insisting on marriages between members of the Russian nobility and foreigners who adhered to non-Orthodox creeds, remarked: "we have a great need to have all kinds of intercourse with other European peoples, not only in great but also in minor affairs, so that by this [means], the crudeness of old customs [*grubost' starykh obychev*] gradually disappears."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The following editions replace the comparison of traditional Russian attire with the clothing worn by so-called Busurman peoples by one with Polish attire. For more details, see E. V. Akel'ev, "Iz istorii vvedeniia bradobritiia i 'nemetskogo' kostiuma v petrovskoi Rossii," *Quaestio Rossica*, no. 1 (2013): 90–98. This fact confirms S. A. Mezin's observation that during Peter's reign, he and his ideologues "tried once again not to set the new Russia at variance with the ancient" one. They were skeptical of many Western authors' judgment of pre-Petrine Russia as "barbarous." See S. A. Mezin, "Petr I kak tsivilizator Rossii: Dva vzgliada," in *Evropeiskoe Prosveshchenie i tsivilizatsiia Rossii*, ed. S. Ia. Karp and Mezin (Moscow: Nauka, 2004), 10.

<sup>16</sup> *Pis'ma i bumagi imperatora Petra Velikogo* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992), 13, pt. 1:371–74.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Ernest A. Zitser, *The Transfigured Kingdom: Sacred Parody and Charismatic Authority at the Court of Peter the Great* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 108–9.

Peter and his supporters, therefore, appear to have viewed the customary practice of growing a long beard as a *visual code* signaling membership in an “impolitic” (or uncivilized) people.<sup>18</sup> The battle with the beard was, for Peter, a struggle against elements of barbarism, against customs that were “Busurman,” or inherited from Tatars.<sup>19</sup>

### When Did Peter the Great Order His Subjects to Shave Off Their Beards?

Diplomatic dispatches by Christoph Ignaz von Guarient, the imperial ambassador, and the diary of his secretary, Johann Korb, attest that immediately after returning from the Grand Embassy in August 1698, the tsar began forcibly removing the beards of state officials.<sup>20</sup> Around this time,

<sup>18</sup> Ricarda Vulpius has shown that, by the Petrine era, the view of the Russian state as civilizationally superior had established itself among the political elites. They expressed it, for example, when ranking Russia among the so-called “political” nations, with “civilized” defined in opposition to “barbarian.” Russia’s entry into the class of “political” nations was associated with the Petrine reforms in particular: Rikarda Vul’pius [Ricarda Vulpius], “Vesternizatsiia Rossii i formirovanie rossiiskoi tsivilizatsionnoi missii v XVIII veke,” in *Imperium inter pares: Rol’ transferov v istorii Rossiiskoi imperii (1700–1917)*, ed. Martin Aust, Vulpius, and Aleksei Miller (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010), 14–41. According to Vulpius, the concept of the “political” was derived from the Polish language in the early 18th century and became a “symbol of the new way of thinking.” It included a repertoire of everyday customs, habits, and mores that separated “political” from “nonpolitical” nations. Symptomatically, the English sailor John Deane, after serving in the Russian navy from 1712 to 1722, observed Russians’ fanatical commitment to observing fasts no matter what the circumstances, and he called this an “impolitic custom” (Sir Cyprian Bridge, *History of the Russian Fleet during the Reign of Peter the Great by a Contemporary Englishman (1724)* [London: Navy Records Society, 1899], 104–5). On the concept of the “political,” see also Ingrid Schierle, “Semantiken des Politischen im Russland des 18. Jahrhunderts,” in *Politik: Situationen eines Wortgebrauchs im Europa der Neuzeit*, ed. Willibald Steinmetz (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2007), 226–47; and Mezin, “Petr I kak tsivilizator Rossii,” 6.

<sup>19</sup> In his treatise, *Politika* (1663), Iurii Krizhanich observed that Russian warriors running with their big puffy beards “seem more like forest savages than swift and brave men of valor.” Moreover, he regretted that, by their appearances, Russians preferred “to imitate barbarous peoples—Tatars and Turks—instead of the noblest of Europeans” (Iurii Krizhanich, *Politika* [Moscow: Nauka, 1965], 442–43). Outlining the “faith and traditions of the Tatars” in a publication of 1692, Andrei Ivanovich Lyzlov, disparagingly described the Tatars’ custom of letting their beards grow out: “The typical Tatar is of average height, broad-shouldered, dark-skinned, has frighteningly black, convex eyes, wears a long scraggly beard resembling a goat that doesn’t get sheared enough” (*Skifskaiia istoriia* [Moscow: Nauka, 1990], 118–19). As several historians have observed, West European travelers perceived the Russian custom of wearing a beard as an Asiatic custom until the second half of the 18th century. See, e.g., Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 22, 31–33, 37–38.

<sup>20</sup> Ustrialov, *Istoriia tsarstvovaniia imperatora Petra Velikogo*, 3:621–23; Johann Georg Korb, *Diary of an Austrian Secretary of Legation at the Court of Czar Peter the Great*, trans. Count MacDonnell (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1863), 1:155–57.



Beard token from the Hermitage Gallery collection. *Obverse*: the date “CZ godu” (that is, 7207). *Reverse*: the image of a beard and inscription “Paid” (*dengi vziaty*)

Source: Rudenko, *Borodovye znaki*, 103.

Peter and his associates began to formulate the implementation of beard-shaving policies throughout the realm. This is evidenced by a decree preserved in the documents collection of the Armory Chamber (Oruzheinaia palata), issued at Peter’s behest in October 1698:

On the ... day of October of this year [7]207, the Great Sovereign, Tsar, and Grand Prince Petr Alekseevich, Autocrat of all the Russias, Great and Little and White, has issued a personal sovereign decree to make 15,903 tokens [*chekhi*] from copper in the Silver Chamber;<sup>21</sup> there should be beard symbols on one side, and on the other, the words “year two hundred and seven” should be printed. Once the tokens are made, they should be sent to the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery [Preobrazhenskii prikaz] to the *stol’nik* Prince Fedor Iur’evich Romodanovskii and company. And all the money for making the tokens, for copper, for victuals for the workmen, and other supplies should be taken from the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery.<sup>22</sup>

This document shows that the details underpinning the first decree on beard shaving had already been determined by October 1698. In particular, the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery and Romodanovskii personally would be responsible for its implementation. Furthermore, individuals would be permitted to wear a beard provided they paid a special tax. A procedure for paying this fee to the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery was proposed, followed by

<sup>21</sup> I. V. Rudenko, a numismatist, convincingly accounted for the odd number of beard tokens in this document (15,903 pieces): this was the calculated number of 1.03 gram tokens that could be produced from one pood (16.38 kilograms) of copper. The only surviving beard token from 1698/99 weighs 1.05 grams (Rudenko, *Borodovye znaki*, 16).

<sup>22</sup> RGADA f. 396 (Arkhiv Oruzheinoi palaty), op. 1, d. 33560, l. 1; G. V. Esipov, ed., *Sbornik vypisok iz arkhivnykh bumag o Petre Velikom* (Moscow: Katkov i Ko., 1872), 1:166; M. G. Demmeni, *Ukaz 1698 goda o chekanke borodovykh znakov* (St. Petersburg: B. M. Vol’f, 1910), 5.

the issuance of distinctive tokens. The decree would be published widely (as is indicated by the large number of tokens that were to be minted). Working out all these details was no trivial matter, requiring repeated consultations to reach agreements. The tsar or his agents must have been quite actively engaged, and they had already started printing beard tokens in October 1698. An unknown quantity of them were even minted (the only extant copy dating from 1698 or 1699, reproduced above, is housed in the Hermitage Gallery collection).<sup>23</sup>

Historians have debated the dating of the beard decree, with some favoring 1698 as the year of issuance, antedating the appearance of the well-known decree on beard shaving in January 1705.<sup>24</sup> Clearly, however, the draft legislation prohibiting beards did not go into effect in 1698, nor did it appear in the six years that followed. This can be confirmed definitively by considerable tangential evidence (to which I return below) and by archival sources, including financial and revenue accounts.

A collection of financial accounts found in the Armory Chamber archive, were, as Peter had decreed, sent to the Privy Chancellery (Blizhniaia kantseliaria) monthly from 1701 to 1714.<sup>25</sup> Between 1701 and 1704, no fees from beard wearers were manumitted to the Moscow Police Chancellery

<sup>23</sup> S. I. Chizhov, "Borodovye znaki," *Trudy moskovskogo numizmaticheskogo obshchestva* 3, 2 (1905): 336–37; Demmeni, *Ukaz 1698 goda*, 3–5; Rudenko, *Borodovye znaki*, 15–16, 102–3.

<sup>24</sup> Some historians—such as Nikolai Ustrialov, Grigorii Esipov, and Vladimir Mikhnevich—agreed that the decree on beard shaving was issued immediately after Peter returned from his Grand Embassy in September 1698 (Ustrialov, *Istoriia tsarstvovaniia imperatora Petra Velikogo*, 3:195; Esipov, *Raskol' nich' i dela XVIII stoletii*, 163, 174; Mikhnevich, *Istoricheskie etiiudy russkoi zhizni*, 79). They were not troubled by the fact that the first known decree on beard shaving dated to 1705: they believed the original decree had simply not been found yet. According to a second view, voiced by Evgenii Anisimov and Anatolii Shashkov, the first decree on beard shaving was promulgated in 1700, along with the famous decree on European dress of 4 January 1700, while the decree issued on 16 January 1705 was merely a reiteration (Anisimov, *Reforms of Peter the Great*, 218–19; A. T. Shashkov, "Delo 1705 g. 'o protivnosti i o preslushanii ego tsarskogo velichestva ukazu tomskikh zhitelei o nemetskom plat'e i o britii borod," in *Problemy istorii Rossii*, 2: *Opyt gosudarstvennogo stroitel'stva XV–XX vv.*, ed. Shashkov [Ekaterinburg: Volot, 1998], 301). A third set of scholars holds that the 16 January 1705 decree was the first decree on beard shaving (Hughes, "A Beard Is an Unnecessary Burden," 24; E. V. Akel'ev and E. N. Trefilov, "Proekt evropeizatsii vneshnego oblika poddannyykh v Rossii pervoi poloviny XVIII v.: Zamysel i realizatsiia," in *Fenomen reform na zapade i vostoke Evropy v nachale Novogo vremeni [XVI–XVIII vv.]*: *Sbornik statei*, ed. M. M. Krom and L. A. Pimenova [St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii universitet, 2013], 156–57).

<sup>25</sup> The accounts at the Armory Chamber Archive are housed in RGADA f. 396, op. 3. P. N. Miliukov commented on Peter's decree, based on Privy Chancellery documents stored in the State Archive of the Russian Empire (now RGADA f. 19) in *Gosudarstvennoe khoziaistvo Rossii v pervoi chetverti XVIII veka i reforma Petra Velikogo* (St. Petersburg: M. M. Stasiulevich, 1905), 83, 80–81. He did not have access to the Armory Chamber account books I analyze here.

(Prikaz zemskikh del), the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery, the Military Service Chancellery (Razriadnyi prikaz), or to any central governing body.<sup>26</sup> A new revenue source did appear—after the issuance of the January 1705 beard decree—in the Moscow Police Chancellery’s account statements: a tax “on beards.”<sup>27</sup> These financial records clearly show that the tsar, for reasons unknown, postponed the enactment of the decree first drafted in 1698 until the beginning of 1705—that is, for almost seven years.<sup>28</sup>

Did this long deferral mean that Peter the Great, knee-deep in northern military matters, lost interest in his beard-shaving initiative? The available evidence points toward the opposite conclusion. The Petrine edict on dressing in the West European manner, formally issued on 4 January 1700, may serve as a point of orientation.<sup>29</sup> It had been drafted in 1699.<sup>30</sup> Yet it sparked such an

<sup>26</sup> In addition to monthly account statements from the Moscow Police Chancellery of 1701–8, which have undergone detailed scrutiny, I also studied the 1701 financial accounts of the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery, Military Service Chancellery, Foreign Affairs Chancellery (Posol’skii prikaz), Investigative Chancellery (Sysknoi prikaz), Monasterial Chancellery (Monastyrskii prikaz), Palace Chamber of Justice (Dvortsovyi sudnyi prikaz), the War Affairs Chancellery (Prikaz voennykh del), and the Great Treasury (Prikaz Bol’shoi kazny) (see RGADA f. 396, op. 3, kn. 1, 5–8, 11, 13, 16, 26, 31, 79, 112, 129, 145, 168).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, kniga 112, l. 3.

<sup>28</sup> A report on the introduction of the “beard tax” by the imperial emissary, Otto Pleyer, dated 24 January 1701, can be interpreted as evidence that the decree on beard shaving was expected (Ustrialov, *Istoriia tsarstvouvaniia imperatora Petra Velikogo*, 4, pt. 2:552; Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great*, 227). Probably Pleyer reported rumors and hearsay about the possible introduction of a law on beard shaving rather than referring to a certifiable fact.

<sup>29</sup> *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii s 1649 goda: Sobranie pervoe s 1649 po 12 dekabria 1825 goda* (hereafter *PSZ*), 45 vols. (St. Petersburg: Tipografia II-ogo otdeleniia Sobstvennoi Ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Kantseliarii, 1830), 4, no. 1741: 1.

<sup>30</sup> I. A. Zheliabuzhskii’s diary entry from July 1699 refers to the preparation of the famous decree on making Russian subjects wear West European clothing: “There had appeared a decree on French dress, and many people copied that decree, and many were caught with this decree and taken to the Mock Court (Poteshnyi dvor) and questioned where they had got it and from whom they had copied it” (“Dnevnye zapiski,” in *Rozhdenie imperii: Nakanune petrovskikh reform* [Moscow: Fond Sergeia Dubova, 1997], 317–18). In one copy of Zheliabuzhskii’s diary, this entry contains a curious continuation, which was omitted from the copies that formed the basis for the published version: “And these inquiries led to Semen Zhukov, a clerk of the Service Land Chancellery [Pomestnyi prikaz]. The copies had come from him, because he had been ordered to make an excerpt for a report about [the decree on West European] dress, but the decree had been made public before the report. And for this, Semen Zhukov was punished with a merciless knouting” (RGADA f. 181, op. 2, d. 125, ll. 455 ob.–56). This entry shows that the 1700 decree on European dress was so remarkable that information about it had spread around Moscow in July 1699 even as it was still being drafted in the Moscow Kremlin. Semen Leont’evich Zhukov, a clerk at the Service Land Chancellery, who had been entrusted with making an excerpt for a report on the decree, could not help sharing information about the decree with colleagues and acquaintances. Consequently, copies of the decree quickly spread through Moscow, triggering a criminal investigation whose records I have unfortunately been unable to find. On Semen Zhukov, see S. B. Veselovskii, *D’iaki i*



Detail of A. Schoonebeck's 1702 engraving

Source: Pushkin Museum of Fine Art. Inv. GR-6252 ([http://russianprints.ru/printmakers/sh/schoonebeck\\_adrian/svadba\\_shanskogo\\_muzhskaya\\_polovina.shtml](http://russianprints.ru/printmakers/sh/schoonebeck_adrian/svadba_shanskogo_muzhskaya_polovina.shtml)).

enormous public outcry that over the next four years the ruling was repeatedly reaffirmed and clarified.<sup>31</sup> Two years later, in 1702, Peter I promoted the new law by arranging a grand didactic production at the wedding reception for his court jester Fiofilakt Shanskii. On the first two days, the guests were instructed to dine at Lefortovo Palace in Old Russian attire, with the men

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*pod 'iachie XV–XVII vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1975), 186; N. F. Demidova, *Sluzhilaia biurokratiia v Rossii XVII veka (1625–1700): Biograficheskii spravocnik* (Moscow: Pamiatniki istoricheskoi mysli, 2011), 198–99.

<sup>31</sup> On the outcry, see the following cases: RGADA f. 371 (Preobrazhenskii prikaz), op. 2, stolbtsy 817, 822, 819, 884, 934, and 1021. On 20 March 1700, Aleksei Kurbatov wrote to the tsar: “The people have been feeble, as it were, in executing your sovereign decrees on Hungarian caftans and the use of knives and other matters, wishing things to be as they were. And if it is your sovereign will that these decrees be inviolably fulfilled, deign, Sire, that by your autocratic command these same decrees should be renewed, albeit, Sire, under threat of punishment and lest in the future the swift execution of your personal sovereign decrees be neglected” (RGADA f. 9, otdelenie II, kniga 1, l. 103). The first reissued decree on European clothing was announced in August 1700 (Ustrialov, *Istoriia tsarstvovaniia imperatora Petra Velikogo*, 3:350). It was then repeated every year. In *PSZ* the decree on European dress appears on 30 December 1701 (4, no. 1887: 182), 28 February 1702 (4, no. 1898: 189), and 22 December 1704 (4, no. 1999: 272–73). A decree was also published in 1703, the text of which has not yet turned up, though its existence is substantiated by one case from Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery, which mentions that in the spring of 1703 “decrees on clothing [that were to be followed] under harsh penalty of death” were hung on poles in the town of Dmitrov (RGADA f. 371, op. 1, d. 93, l. 4 ob.).

and women cordoned off to make merry in separate rooms. On the third and final day, however, the court wore suits in the West European fashion and celebrated in the company of women.<sup>32</sup> This remarkable event was captured by an eyewitness, Adriaan Schoonebeck, who created two engravings depicting the male and female halves separately. The first engraving features 300 male courtiers dressed in *okhabni* with a rectangular collar. *Okhabni* are known to have been worn by threading one's hands through the arm slots and tying the sleeves behind. The sleeves in the engraving fully extend to the cuffs, which was presumably quite bothersome for guests at a wedding feast. Peter obviously prearranged this performance down to the smallest detail to force attendees to observe just how cumbersome traditional Russian court garb was in comparison to its West European counterparts.<sup>33</sup> Notice, too, that many of the elite courtiers appearing in Schoonebeck's engraving still had their beards, confirming the absence of a formal ban on facial hair.

Though beards were not yet formally banned, any nobleman who continued to wear one risked being deprived of it any day. In 1700, the boyar Prince Ivan Khovanskii asked Grigorii Talitskii: "They are shaving beards. What should I do if they shave my beard?"<sup>34</sup> It is possible that Khovanskii feared the tsar's barbers, who, as Cornelius de Bruyn witnessed on a trip to Moscow in 1702, could remove anyone's beard "at the tsar's table and everywhere else."<sup>35</sup> Then again, it is conceivable that Khovanskii had the tsar himself in mind. Well might Peter chop off the fretful boyar's beard single-handedly, for he is alleged to have done so often. We know about one such incident from a solicitor (*striapchii*) of the Valdaiskii-Iverskii Monastery who reported that when Peter feasted in Novgorod on 7 October 1701 on the occasion of Sergei Lapshinskii's name day, he took it upon himself to debarb many of the guests in attendance, including Savva Borovitinov, an employee of the Novgorod metropolitan; the solicitor Iakov Lapshinskii; and the local nobleman Bogdan Neleelov.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, in a letter dated 19 December 1702, the Prussian ambassador Johann Georg Baron von Keyserling recounted how the tsar cut off Tikhon Streshnev's beard with his own hands.

<sup>32</sup> Shanskii's wedding is described in Cornelius de Bruyn's travelogue, republished in *Rossia XVIII veka glazami inostrantsev* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1989), 59–63; and Zheliabuzhskii, "Dnevnye zapiski," 341. On Shanskii's wedding, see A. I. Zaozerskii, *Fel'dmarshal B. P. Sheremetev* (Moscow: Nauka, 1989), 201; M. A. Alekseeva, *Graviura petrovskogo vremeni* (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1990), 34–35; Zitser, *Transfigured Kingdom*, 113–17.

<sup>33</sup> I would like to thank S. M. Shamin for help with interpreting Schoonebeck's prints.

<sup>34</sup> RGADA f. 7 (Tainaia kantseliariia), op. 1, d. 1348, ll. 12 ob.–13. Note that Khovanskii confessed under interrogation that he really did ask Talitskii that question.

<sup>35</sup> *Rossia XVIII veka glazami inostrantsev*, 92.

<sup>36</sup> Sedov, "I v sobore, i u vладыki byl v vengerskom plat'e," 236.

Peter did so despite Streshnev's status as a boyar and head of the Military Service Chancellery, even after Streshnev complained about not having the opportunity to buy the right to keep his beard, for which he was prepared to shell out several thousand German silver coins.<sup>37</sup>

On the one hand, the examples cited above substantiate my claim that between 1698 and 1704 there was no officially sanctioned, empire-wide injunction against wearing beards. On the other hand, these examples indicate that Peter never lost his keen interest in policing the appearance of his subjects. Why then was the decree on beard shaving, so extensively readied for enactment in the autumn of 1698, imposed on the populace only from 1705 onward?

### Preparing Russian Subjects for the 1705 Decree

Beginning in the autumn of 1698, rumors that Peter the Great wanted to see his subjects beardless and that he did not approve of growing a beard rapidly spread across Muscovy, becoming the subject of a heated debate. Every adult male member of the population had somehow to react to this information, arrive at a conclusion, and choose a course of action. Analyzing this process in all its complexity, this section teases out the broad range of attitudes espoused by Russian subjects with regard to the news about beards.

As it turned out, the array of possible behavioral strategies was extremely broad. Many continued to wear a beard, not paying any attention to the rumors and fresh abundance of clean-shaven faces. Unfortunately, little information about these passive resisters—and they may have represented the majority—survives.<sup>38</sup> To many others, however, the “beard question” was deeply upsetting: they participated in debates about facial hair removal, and some asked bishops for clarification.<sup>39</sup> Some considered it important to take timely action to change the tsar's mind and sought to exert influence in various ways. They could appeal to influential people, by which they meant, first and foremost, church hierarchs.<sup>40</sup> Others organized collective petitions, posted broadsides, or disseminated circulars opposing beard removal.<sup>41</sup> Finally, a brave few appealed directly to Peter himself.<sup>42</sup> Yet another set of people shaved, either in keeping

<sup>37</sup> Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great*, 233–34.

<sup>38</sup> Sedov, “I v sobore, i u vладыki byl v vengerskom plat'e,” 230–42; RGADA f. 7, op. 1, d. 1348, ll. 12 ob.–13; f. 371, op. 2, stolbets 911.

<sup>39</sup> On the debates, see RGADA f. 371, op. 2, stolbetsy 920, 1027; op. 1, d. 42, l. 1 ob.; d. 305. On the requests for bishops' advice, see [Dimitrii Rostovskii], *Rozysk o naskol' nicheskoï brynskoï vere ob uchenii ikh o delakh ikh* (Moscow: Sinodal'naia tipografiia, 1855), 298–99.

<sup>40</sup> RGADA f. 165 (Sekretnye dela), op. 1, d. 9, l. 1.

<sup>41</sup> RGADA f. 210 (Razriadnyi prikaz), op. 13, stolbets 1741.

<sup>42</sup> RGADA f. 371, op. 2, stolbets 739; op. 1, d. 245.

with current fashion or by virtue of their proximity to the tsar, but felt such remorse afterwards that they refused to part with the shorn facial hair and would later confess to having sinned by shaving.<sup>43</sup> Then there were those who quietly shaved their beards, taking a skeptical stance toward the idea that beard shaving could somehow influence the salvation of one's soul.<sup>44</sup>

I must emphasize here that this controversy did not necessarily involve two discrete factions—supporters and opponents of beard shaving—separated by an invisible line, as historical research has led us to imagine. Nor can tensions between the attitudes and behavioral patterns outlined above be explained away as a function of social status: they cut across society from court circles to villages, dividing them. One case from the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery archive is exemplary. Incidentally, it dates to the year in which Peter's edict banning beards went into effect. On 19 April 1705, in the Trinity–St. Sergius Monastery village of Dubrovo in the Murom district, the monastery servant Iakov Gnusin was shaving his beard while peasants were preparing feed for the cattle. Looking at Gnusin, a peasant named Boris Petrov declared, “I would behead the man who ordered beards to be shaved!” To which Gnusin replied: “Are you in your right mind? Why do you speak so? God deigned it, and the sovereign has decreed that beards be shaved.”<sup>45</sup> The men squabbling in the barnyard were residents of the same village, indicating that social identity was not the determining factor. Evidently, talk of a similar kind spread through boyars' residences, markets and town fairs, taverns, and community bathhouses. In the course of these debates, many people changed their stance, which is not surprising: it is one thing to learn of such startling news for the first time but quite another to picture the tsar, his boyar, or one's own boss or neighbor—all without beards.<sup>46</sup>

To subject these attitudes and behavioral practices to quantitative scrutiny, mass data would be necessary, and the sources are insufficiently numerous. Qualitative analysis of individual episodes, however, can provide insights into the strategies men adopted to express agreement or disagreement with the growing practice of beard shaving throughout Russia. I now analyze five such cases.

The first took place in 1699, when Archimandrite Joasaph of the Znamenskii Monastery in Moscow happened to be in attendance at the burial

<sup>43</sup> On refusals to part with shorn beards, see John Perry, *The State of Russia under the Present Czar* (London: n.p., 1716), 195–97; F. I. Timiriazev, “Boroda Timofeia Arkhipycha (iz vospominanii E. A. Naryshkinoi),” *Russkii arkhiv*, no. 1 (1874): 612–20. On confessing the sin of shaving, see RGADA f. 371, op. 1, d. 42, l. 5.

<sup>44</sup> RGADA f. 371, op. 2, stolbets 920; op. 1, d. 245; d. 305.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, op. 1, d. 305, ll. 7–7 ob.

<sup>46</sup> Sedov, “I v sobore, i u vладыki byl v vengerskom plat'e,” 239.

of a townsman and encountered a group of holy fools collecting alms. The archimandrite ordered them to be arrested and chained and to escort their leader, Ivashka Nagoi (Naked Johnny), to his cell. The following exchange between Nagoi and Archimandrite Joasaph was recorded on the basis of the archimandrite's testimony, which the holy fool confirmed in all its details under interrogation.

*Archimandrite Joasaph:* Why are you collecting money in the market stalls and at burials?

*Ivashka Nagoi:* This is not a crime. People give me money on account of my holiness, and I take it to distribute among the poor, for which I will be rewarded by God. They would not have given the money to anyone else. And I wish to do more. I will go to Preobrazhenskoe and will denounce [*oblichat* ] the tsar, for beards are being shaved, and for consorting with Germans, and for abandoning Orthodoxy for the German faith.<sup>47</sup>

*Archimandrite Joasaph:* Accursed Ivashka, have you lost your mind? The things that you say! Our Sovereign is not in Moscow. He deigned to go to Azov and is now in Azov.

*Ivashka Nagoi:* He will come soon to Moscow to meet German ambassadors.

*Archimandrite Joasaph:* Who told you that that the tsar is coming back to Moscow to receive German ambassadors?

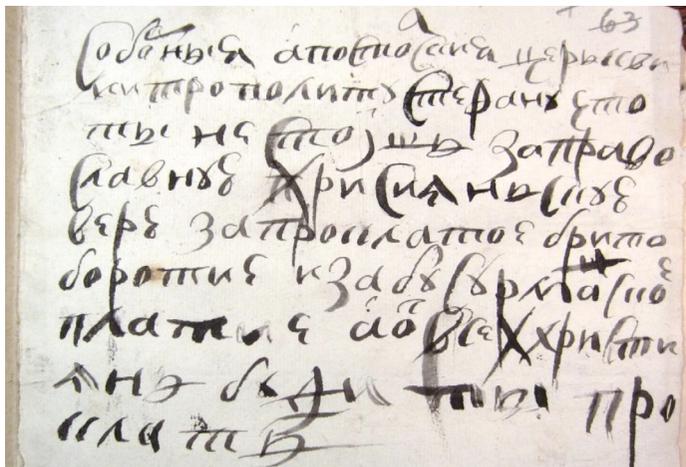
*Ivashka Nagoi:* The people speak of it.

*Archimandrite Joasaph:* What did you see, you wretched naked demon you? Or have you gone mad? Our Most Holy Patriarch is the head of the church, bearing the image of God, and he has not seen any seditious or sinful offers on the part of the tsar.

*Ivashka Nagoi:* And what kind of a patriarch is he, anyway? He is interested only in eating and drinking, and in safeguarding his dignity and white hood. And that's why he fails to denounce the tsar. And you, the church dignitaries, are the ones who are bought and sold.

After their meeting, the archimandrite had Nagoi jailed and went to see the patriarch to tell him what had transpired. Patriarch Adrian ordered that Ivashka remain under guard until the tsar's return to Moscow. In January 1700, the case was referred to the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery for investigation. As early as 12 June 1700, an assembly of the Boyar Duma heard the proceedings of the case. They sentenced the holy fool to be flogged, to have his tongue removed, and to be exiled to the Solovetskii Monastery, but after personally

<sup>47</sup> Ivashka Nagoi's statement should not be taken to mean the tsar *ordered* beards shaved. Instead, the holy fool wanted to denounce the tsar because "beards are being shaved." He may have had in mind the growing practice of beard shaving among those close to the tsar.



An unsigned letter sent to Stefan Iavorskii pronouncing a malediction on him for failing to defend the Orthodox faith and for not facing off against the “god-forsaken practice of beard shaving.”

Source: RGADA f. 165, op. 1, d. 9, 1.1.

reviewing the case on 27 July, Peter stiffened the punishment, condemning the accused to lifelong forced labor in Azov.<sup>48</sup>

Although Ivashka Nagoi never appeared in Preobrazhenskoe to denounce the tsar, his words nonetheless reached Peter, having passed through the patriarch’s office, the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery, and the Boyar Duma before arriving at their intended destination. The idea that the tsar’s recent acts and deeds needed to be denounced was in the air.<sup>49</sup> It is no accident that Ivashka named rumors as the source of his political information. Many commoners thought that the head of the Orthodox Church should be the first to personally denounce Peter. Indeed, the revered holy fool Ivashka Nagoi expressed a willingness to take on the task allotted to the patriarch. These political sensitivities appear to have been fairly widespread, as seen in an anonymous letter sent to Stefan Iavorskii, successor to the recently deceased Patriarch Adrian. The unknown author gave the patriarch pro tem a real dressing down, informing Iavorskii that his defense of Orthodox Christianity

<sup>48</sup> RGADA f. 371, op. 2, stolbets 739, ll. 1–15.

<sup>49</sup> The idea of the need to denounce the sovereign stands out in the famous episode of 1697, when Avramii, an elder monk of the Andreevskii Monastery, filed an appeal to Peter, laying out his criticism of the tsar’s conduct. See RGADA f. 371, op. 2, stolbets 484, ll. 4–34; N. A. Baklanova, “Tetradi startsa Avraamiia,” *Istoricheskii arkhiv* 6 (1951): 145–46; N. B. Golikova, *Politicheskie protsessy pri Petre I: Po materialam Preobrazhenskogo prikaza* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1957), 77–86; and James Cracraft, *The Church Reform of Peter the Great* (London: Macmillan, 1971), 19–20.

had been inadequate, and that he had done too little to fight the abominable shaving of beards.<sup>50</sup>

The second incident highlights other forms of collective resistance. In 1700, the Military Service Chancellery investigated the posting of several leaflets against beard shaving in public places. The first such leaflet was discovered on 27 May 1700 posted on a cross, seven miles from Trinity–St. Sergius Monastery on the road to Moscow. On 1 June 1700 and 18 June 1700, respectively, identical leaflets were discovered on the gates of the Archangel Michael Monastery in Iur'ev-Polskii and in Suzdal'. Unfortunately, the leaflet itself has not been preserved in the case files. We know one was sent to the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery on 11 August 1700, but a search for the case file among the chancellery's records has proven fruitless. Nevertheless, the leaflet's contents can be discerned on the basis of indirect evidence. When the leaflet was found on 18 June 1700, it was brought to Suzdal' Governor Vasilii Islen'ev at his office, and he ordered it read aloud. During the recitation, Fedor Mikhailov, a clerk at the governor's office, suddenly exclaimed, "The bishop and archbishop of Tver were also going to announce the same!" When interrogated, the clerk testified that he had heard from Treasurer Iona Vologotskii that the metropolitan of Suzdal' had urged the bishops to go to the tsar and petition him (*bit' chelom*) "not to shave beards." It is clear that the leaflet called for a similar plea to the tsar "not to shave beards." Most likely, this appeal was addressed to military servicemen, hence the Military Service Chancellery conducted the investigation.<sup>51</sup>

As these two cases demonstrate, the forcible removal of beards at the tsar's court incited a wave of protest, news of which undoubtedly reached the tsar. Yet rumors that the tsar not only neglected to forbid his subjects to shave their beards but, on the contrary, actively willed them to do so had a very different effect. As the following three episodes from the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery archive show, such rumors facilitated the rapid and mass expansion of beard shaving in every stratum of Muscovite society.

In July 1701, the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery investigated a case submitted from the town of Romanov, near Voronezh, on 30 March 1701 concerning an incident that took place during Easter Week 1700. Vikula Fedorov, a priest at the Trinity Church, had been making the rounds in town carrying icons and performing prayer services, when he performed prayers at the house of his spiritual son, the soldier Parfenka Kokorev. The soldier

<sup>50</sup> In all likelihood, Iavorskii did appeal to the tsar with the request not to ban beards at the legislative level. Either way, one of his homilies condemning the shaving of beards has been preserved. See Zhivov, *Iz tserkovnoi istorii vremen Petra Velikogo*, 126–27.

<sup>51</sup> RGADA f. 210, op. 13, stolbets 1741, ll. 1–2, 6–7, 21, 37–38.

was beardless: as Nikiforov explained, he had begun shaving his beard while serving in the army outside Azov. When those present at the service came to kiss the cross, Fedorov and Nikiforov had an interesting exchange, which can be reconstructed in detail by comparing the testimonies of the defendants and witnesses in the case. Fedorov rebuked his spiritual child: “Why have you shaven your beard? You would have done better to have asked me, because you are my spiritual son.” (The priest himself admitted to saying this, and the witnesses confirmed it.) Nikiforov attempted to justify himself: “The boyars and princes in Moscow now shave [their] beards, because the great sovereign so deigned it.” One witness conveyed Nikiforov’s reply slightly differently: “The sovereign does not now forbid us to shave [our] beards.” Nikiforov claimed that Fedorov responded by calling him an enemy and infidel (*basurmanin*) and by making an offensive remark about the tsar. The witnesses did not corroborate this claim, however, and later, at the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery, Nikiforov himself confessed he had defamed the priest because he had been drunk. The judgment in the case was even more curious. On 31 July 1701, after listening to the particulars of the case, Prince Romodanovskii ordered the slanderer Nikiforov sent to the Military Service Chancellery for reassignment to service; Fedorov was to be released from the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery and given a letter vouchsafing his freedom.<sup>52</sup>

This case clearly shows that a general ban on growing beards had yet to be issued in 1701, otherwise a priest who had rebuked his spiritual charge for beard shaving would have not gone unpunished and been released so easily from the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery. Yet it also clearly shows that awareness of the tsar’s failure to forbid the practice of shaving beards—indeed, his endorsement of it—had reached even the remotest corners of Muscovy. Yet again people reacted in different ways. Some parted with their beards with ease, not even considering it necessary to consult their spiritual confessors. Others, as this fourth case shows, chose to behave in the opposite manner: by going to confession.

In 1703, the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery investigated a case involving monks from the Simonov Monastery in Moscow, suspected of disseminating texts on the prohibition against beard shaving. The investigation found that Petr Konarkhist, cell attendant to the monastery’s abbot, had in December 1702 personally compiled a miscellany of “sundry edifying things ... to be read to cure gloom.” He included an article on the prohibition against beard shaving excerpted from a printed edition of *Kormchaia kniga*, taken from the abbot’s cell. Before Christmas, Konarkhist gave the unbound miscellany to Hierodeacon Iessei Shosh to correct “according to the rules, one article

<sup>52</sup> RGADA f. 371, op. 2, stolbets 920, ll. 2, 12–16, 29.

after another, as decently as possible” and write a “laudatory preface.” Several days later in the monastery refectory, Shosh overheard a conversation between Hierodeacon Irinarkh, the monastery’s librarian, and the monastery’s former treasurer Feodosii. Feodosii asked Irinarkh to find him a copy of *Kormchaia kniga* containing the prohibition against beard shaving. The monk explained he was interested because the monks and laymen who came to him for confession often confessed to the sin of shaving. He needed to find out what rule applied to such transgressions. The librarian replied by giving a wave of his hand and saying, “It’s not a matter for nowadays!” Overhearing this conversation, Lessei approached Feodosii and told him he had such a book.<sup>53</sup> This case, with all its twists and turns, reveals a fact rarely seen in the sources: some men shaved but, having done so, confessed to the sin of beard shaving. It is remarkable that even monks figured among them.

From then on, facial hair removal gradually spread in the widest social circles. Clean-shaven faces were seen not only in the environs of the tsar’s court or the military; they also began to appear before the eyes of the ordinary Russian subject, in his circle of close friends or among neighbors. Driven to despair, some were forced to act, as in this fifth case. In December 1704, the Nizhnii Novgorod barge hauler Andrei Ivanov arrived in Moscow and announced he had come on a matter of great importance to the tsar. At the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery, Ivanov relayed his message for the tsar: Peter was acting wrongly by destroying the Christian faith and ordering the shaving of beards, the wearing of German dress, and the use of tobacco. Ivanov had no acquaintances in Moscow, and no one had sent him to deliver this message to the tsar. He had come on his own because “many townsmen in Nizhnii Novgorod were shaving [their] beards, wearing German dress, and using tobacco,” and he wanted the tsar to order everything changed. Aside from this, Ivanov had no business with the tsar. He was tortured at the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery and asked about his co-conspirators. Who had sent him to Moscow and urged him to denounce the tsar? After being tortured, Ivanov died at the chancellery.<sup>54</sup>

This case is often used in the historical literature to illustrate all-around dissatisfaction with the decrees mandating German clothes and beard removal.<sup>55</sup> However the vivid figure of the barge hauler Andrei Ivanov, who decided to come to Moscow and denounce the tsar in an act of desperation, should not overshadow the behavior of the “many townspeople in Nizhnii

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., op. 1, d. 42, ll. 1–10, 23–31.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., d. 245, ll. 1–2 ob.

<sup>55</sup> Esipov, *Raskol' nich' i dela XVIII stoletia*, 171–74; E. F. Shmurlo, *Petr Velikii v otsenkakh sovremennikov i potomstva*, no. 1 (St. Petersburg: Senatskaia tipografiia, 1912), 6; Hughes, “A Beard Is an Unnecessary Burden,” 29.



A beard token from 1705 from the holdings of the State Historical Museum.  
*Source: Rudenko, Borodovye znaki, 107.*

Novgorod” who “were shaving [their] beards.” There is no doubt that the tsar became aware of such sources regarding changes in popular sentiment. It is entirely possible that by the end of 1704, Peter had concluded that his subjects were prepared for a legislative ban on maintaining a beard.

### Implementing the 1705 Decree

Peter the Great’s beard-shaving decree of 16 January 1705 is well known. Its provisions were as follows: a ban on wearing beards applying to all social strata, with the exception of the clergy. Peasants were allowed to keep their beards only in rural areas (in towns they were required to pay a kopeck every time they passed through a border gate). To keep their beards, all other men must pay an annual fee ranging from 30 to 100 rubles, depending on the beard wearer’s social status. To pay the fee, men with beards had to travel to Moscow and appear at the Moscow Police Chancellery. Only residents of cities and towns in the Far North and Siberia could pay the annual fee to local authorities. Those who paid the beard tax were to receive “tokens” that were required to be “worn or kept on one’s person.”<sup>56</sup>

In January and February 1705, the decree was promulgated in Moscow and the towns of central Russia.<sup>57</sup> It was also dispatched to far-flung towns

<sup>56</sup> *PSZ*, 4, no. 2015: 282–83.

<sup>57</sup> The Moscow Police Chancellery from February 1705 lists a sum of money spent on delivery of “official announcements about beards” in 14 towns: RGADA f. 396, op. 3, kniga 112, l. 13. It appears that the decree was sent out to larger cities and distributed to nearby localities by local administrators. It was received in Pereslavl’-Riazanskii, for example, on 10 February 1705, after which it was sent on to other towns (RGADA f. 1154 [Riazhskaia prikaznaia izba], op. 1, d. 29, ll. 1–2 ob.).

along the Volga River,<sup>58</sup> as well as to Siberia.<sup>59</sup> In addition to the decrees themselves, the official notice provided detailed instructions related to implementation measures.<sup>60</sup>

Faced with differing reactions from townsfolk and peasants who visited the cities, the administrators responsible for carrying out the decree had to attend to countless unforeseen circumstances. How much time were they supposed to give residents to adjust to the news? What were they supposed to do to the people who, having been chosen to collect the beard fee at the town gates, refused to fulfill their duties? How were they supposed to contend with peasants who, having traveled to the city from afar, were not able to pay the tax? What about those who ignored the law altogether, keeping their beards without paying the fee, either because they did not want to or could not? If a townsman opted to pay the beard tax but only brought 20 or 25 rubles and promised to pay the rest later, should he be given a beard token? What about townspeople who did not shave off their beards completely, but simply trimmed them a bit? How were they supposed to handle men who

<sup>58</sup> Based on the testimony of people involved in the Astrakhan rebellion, N. B. Golikova suggested that the decrees on beard shaving and German attire arrived in Astrakhan several months before the uprising, in the winter or spring of 1705 (*Astrakhanskoe vosstanie 1705–1706 gg.* [Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1975], 76–77). I discovered supporting evidence in the account statements at the Moscow Police Chancellery. The May 1705 account statement shows that funds had been disbursed to send two carts carrying clerks and soldiers with beard tokens to Astrakhan for three months and five days (RGADA f. 396, op. 2, kniga 112, l. 37). The account statement was filed at the Privy Chancellery on 4 June 1705, by which time the clerks and soldiers had returned from Astrakhan, having spent just over three months on the road. They must therefore have left Moscow in late February or early March and arrived in Astrakhan around April 1705.

<sup>59</sup> On 12 February 1705, the decree on beard shaving was sent from the Moscow Police Chancellery to the Siberian Chancellery (RGADA f. 214 [Sibirskii prikaz], op. 5, d. 859, l. 10 ob.; RGADA f. 199 [Portfeli G.-F. Millera], op. 1, portfel' 133, chast' 4, ll. 185, 215; *Pamiatniki Sibirskoi istorii XVIII veka* [St. Petersburg: Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del, 1882], 1:273). From there, the decree was distributed to Siberian cities and towns. On 18 April 1705, the decree, instructions, and 5,000 beard tokens were delivered to Tobol'sk. The decrees and tokens were then sent to even farther-flung Siberian towns. Hence the decrees on beard shaving and German clothing were delivered to Tara on 17 May 1705 (RGADA f. 649 [Tarskaia kantseliariia rozysknykh del], op. 1, d. 1, l. 4; RGADA f. 158 [Prikaznye dela novykh let], op. 1, d. 130, ll. 1–1 ob.). The decree and 500 beard tokens were received in Eniseisk on 28 July 1705 (RGADA f. 199, op. 1, portfel' 133, chast' 4, ll. 215–16; *Pamiatniki Sibirskoi istorii XVIII veka*, 1:273–76). In Tomsk, the decrees were received on 16 September 1705 (Shashkov, "Delo 1705 g.," 311), and the decree and 400 copper beard tokens arrived in Irkutsk only on 2 October 1705 (RGADA f. 214, op. 5, d. 859, ll. 10 ob.–11).

<sup>60</sup> See the Moscow Police Chancellery instructions from 20 March 1705, which were received by Ryzhsk Governor F. E. Kozinskii (RGADA f. 1154, op. 1, d. 29, ll. 1–2 ob.). See also the instructions received in Tobol'sk on 18 April 1705 (RGADA f. 199, op. 1, portfel' 133, chast' 4, ll. 185–86 ob., 215–16; *Pamiatniki Sibirskoi istorii XVIII veka*, 1:273–76).

shaved off their beards initially but then let them grow back? The handling of these and many other issues depended on the local administration, which was influenced by the particularities of each municipality. The importance of the local context is demonstrated by the following three examples, each representing a different scenario in which the 1705 decree was implemented.

The decree on beard shaving was delivered to the Siberian town of Tara on 17 May 1705 by the gentryman (*syn boiarskii*) Petr Sokolovskii and the Cossack Mikifor Grebenevskoi. Its pronouncement sparked a wave of spontaneous protests among the local populace. As the Tara governor and *stol'nik* Mitrofan Ivanovich Vorontsov-Vel'iaminov reported to Tobol'sk, on 5 June 1705, no fewer than 500 town and country residents had gathered at the governor's office. They had included Captain (*rotmistr*) Iakov Cheredov, the gentrymen Afonasii Cheredov, Vasilii Zalivin, Kuz'ma Stepanov, infantry Cossack hundredsman (*sotnik*) Vlas Nefed'ev, and a large number of mounted and infantry Cossacks and gentrymen. All declared their refusal to obey the decree. The governor did not even succeed in naming a swornman (*tseloval'nik*) to stand at the town gates to collect the necessary fees from people wearing beards and "unlawful" clothes. Tobol'sk Governor Mikhail Cherkasskii advised Vorontsov-Vel'iaminov to invite representatives from the "county residents of all ranks" to his office for negotiations. He must exhort them to ask the tsar to pardon them for their transgressions, pointing out that were no other such "opponents" and "violators" of the tsar's decree in Siberia. However, Vorontsov-Vel'iaminov's persistent attempts to convince Tara's residents to obey the decree only escalated the tension. As the governor reported, on 5 July 1705 he again summoned Cheredov, Nefed'ev, the decurion (*desiatnik*) Maksim Gladkov, the mounted Cossack fifty-man (*piatidesiatnik*) Andrei Semin, and several other representatives "of other ranks." They firmly told him that "they will not make their souls sin," "they obstinately will not shave their mustaches," and "they will not change their style of dress." They even threatened, "for now they are too few in town, [but] others will arrive from the country." When a "large group of people of all ranks" gathered at the Tara governor's office on 15 July, the governor once again tried to convince them to obey the tsar's decree, and again the residents of Tara categorically refused, announcing their intentions to send a petitioner to the tsar in Moscow to request that the stipulations on beards and clothing to be revoked.<sup>61</sup>

Neither the Tobol'sk nor the Muscovite authorities took action to force Tara's residents to comply with the tsar's orders. The people of Tara would store this success in their collective memory for years to come, as they

<sup>61</sup> RGADA f. 158, op. 1, d. 130, ll. 1–3 ob.; f. 649, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 1–6 ob. The collective petition of the Siberian residents is discussed in more detail below.

showed in 1722. That year, Tara received the tsar's new decree on succession stipulating that Peter could choose his heir and requiring an oath of loyalty to this yet-to-be-named successor. Residents now recalled: "In the past we stood up for our beards and clothes and no harm came to us. Now we will stand again as we did before! We will not pledge loyalty without knowing his name. We demand a named successor to whom we can kiss the cross!"<sup>62</sup> So began the infamous Tara uprising of 1722, which, as is well known, was suppressed by the tsarist authorities with exceptional cruelty.<sup>63</sup>

In another Siberian town—Tomsk—events followed a slightly different scenario. The decree on beard shaving and the clothing regulations, announced on 16 September 1705, again elicited a spontaneous outburst of indignation. A large crowd of Tomsk residents appeared at the office of the governor, the *stol'nik* Grigorii Mikhailovich Petrovo-Solovovo, declaring to him its refusal to obey the decree. That day, at the governor's demand, the refusal was put into writing and signed by 150 residents of Tomsk. The vast majority (123 people) were Cossacks (infantry, mounted, and those retired from service)—including several officers (the hundredman Petr Berezkin, fifty-men Afanasii Batoshkov, Dmitrii Burnashov, Iakov Vershinin, Fedor Miasnikov, and the decurion Ivan Belousov). In addition to the Cossacks, two dozen townspeople (including the icon painters Iakov Fomin and Petr Alekseev), six gentrymen, and three employees of the Tomsk governor's office (the guard Vasilii Tiurin, as well as the interpreters Grigorii and Ivan Berezkin) joined the rebel movement.<sup>64</sup>

But Governor Grigorii Petrovo-Solovovo quickly brought the situation under control thanks to the support of certain Tomsk residents, including Savva Tsyzurin, head of the Tomsk Cossack infantry and cavalry forces. Indeed, Tsyzurin proclaimed in writing that "his own Tomsk regiment, many servitors," acted "without his knowledge and in an unknown sort of treasonous insanity." He added that he was not "one of the partakers" and was "ready to shave his beard and mustache and start dressing in the German manner."<sup>65</sup> Solovovo and Tsyzurin's actions split the protestor camp. Already on 18 September 1705, 35 Tomsk residents who had earlier signed the renunciation letter brought their writs of confession to the governor's office. They fingered several Cossacks—"schismatics"—who had allegedly convinced them to oppose the decree; they asked to be pardoned, for they were prepared

<sup>62</sup> RGADA f. 649, op. 1, d. 1, l. 1 ob.

<sup>63</sup> See N. N. Pokrovskii, *Antifeodal'nyi protest uralo-sibirskikh krest'ian-starobriadtsev v XVIII v.* (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1974), 34–66.

<sup>64</sup> Shashkov, "Delo 1705 g.," 311–14.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 319.

“to wear German clothes” and “to shave their beards and mustaches.”<sup>66</sup> The next day, 40 Tomsk residents “of various ranks” who had not participated in the disturbance three days earlier came to the office to express support for the governor, announcing that they had “not sided” (*ne obsbchniki*) with the opponents of the sovereign’s decree, and that they were “ready to begin shaving their beards and wearing German clothes.”<sup>67</sup> On 20 September 1705, three of the “ringleaders”—the gentryman Andrei Stepnoi, mounted Cossack Gerasim Balakhnin, and former Moscow musketeer Grigorii Kazin—expressed their willingness to pay the yearly tax to keep their beards.<sup>68</sup>

Yet another variant took place in Astrakhan, where the governor and *stol'nik* Timofei Ivanovich Rzhenskii and his administration implemented the decrees on beard shaving and West European garments in an abusive manner that, according to N. B. Golikova, took the “form of derision and violence.”<sup>69</sup> Having received notice of the new legislation in April 1705, Rzhenskii hurried to publicize the decrees and assigned swornmen to collect fees for noncompliance at the gates to the city, leaving the people of Astrakhan no time to tailor their new “German” clothes. As the townspeople themselves wrote in a confession of guilt, “there were very few tailors.” They were all taken to the governor’s house to make “German” clothing (evidently, Rzhenskii profited handsomely by having his agents sell the new style of clothing in town).<sup>70</sup> For this reason, “they were unable to make the new clothing in such a hurry.” Forcing Astrakhan residents to shave their beards and buy “German” attire, Governor Rzhenskii frequently resorted to violence. Not content to post tax collectors at the city gates, he sent his own people out on Sundays and holidays to harass townspeople who failed to comply with the new laws. According to Astrakhanites’ testimony, Rzhenskii’s henchmen would drag townspeople out of churches and onto prominent streets or intersections where “they cut off mustaches and beards straight along with the flesh underneath,” while also slicing off the long dresses of women and girls, exposing their bare bodies to everyone.<sup>71</sup> The city became firmly convinced that the sovereign had not decreed forced shaving and German clothes, but that the governor was acting on his own and in his own interests. The people of Astrakhan were partially correct: Rzhenskii’s conduct was seriously at odds with the instructions sent to the cities, according to which local authorities were to report all

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 317–19.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 319–21.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 314–15.

<sup>69</sup> Golikova, *Astrakhanskoe vosstanie 1705–1706 gg.*, 79.

<sup>70</sup> Golikova, *Politicheskie protsessy pri Petre I*, 312.

<sup>71</sup> N. B. Golikova, ed., *Sotsial'nye dvizheniia v gorodakh Nizhnego Povolzh'ia v nachale XVIII veka: Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: Drevlekhranilishche, 2004), 371.

cases of disobedience to Moscow and await further orders.<sup>72</sup> That Rzhevskii intentionally defied instructions is evident from a case that followed. On 23 July 1705, he received a decree from Moscow stipulating that townspeople be given time to tailor new garments before fees for improper attire could be collected.<sup>73</sup> Rzhevskii did not publish this decree, instead delaying its implementation.

The governor's actions famously led to the largest rebellion of Peter's reign. On the night of 30 July 1705, musketeers and soldiers carried out a planned siege of the Astrakhan kremlin, which housed the governor's office and residence, killing many "official people," foreigners, and clerks.<sup>74</sup> Miraculously surviving, the senior clerk of the Astrakhan governor's office, Petr Rychkov, provided one of the most vivid descriptions of the ordeal to the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery in the autumn of 1706. He was sleeping peacefully in his home when, in the fourth hour of the night, a crowd of assailants ("roughly 70 of them") broke down the door and burst into the house. Thinking he was being robbed, Rychkov shouted "Robbery!" and climbed up on the stove. From there, he was "grabbed by the hair" and dragged to the Astrakhan kremlin. On the way, he heard the "tocsin ringing" and saw multitudes of Astrakhan and Muscovite musketeers and soldiers running in the streets, carrying all manner of weapons, and yelling that "they stood for the faith, for the mustache, and for the beard, and against German clothes."

At the Astrakhan kremlin, he was placed under guard in a stone chamber where he spent the remainder of this turbulent night. Six musketeers, none familiar to him, awoke him the next morning, leading him to an assembly (*krug*) that insurgents had formed. "About 4,000" musketeers and soldiers had congregated, standing "weapons in hand and shouting that he, Petr, should be hacked to pieces because he gave the decrees on beard shaving and foreign dress to the swornmen." Luckily for Rychkov, Governor Rzhevskii was brought in at this moment: the rebels had found him hiding in a chicken coop at his residence. This saved Rychkov's life. The galvanized crowd screamed at the

<sup>72</sup> For example, the instructions sent to Riazhs'k prescribed: "And those people who refuse to obey, not wanting to shave off their mustaches and beards, report their names and ranks to the Moscow Police Chancellery" (RGADA f. 1154, op. 1, d. 29, ll. 1–2 ob.). This is precisely what many administrators did (see, e.g., RGADA f. 210, op. 8, viazka 37, d. 25, ll. 152–53). It was well known that the Moscow Police Chancellery called the shots in conflict situations. In June 1708, the Moscow Police Chancellery sent its representative to the town of Pogoreloe Gorodishche to investigate residents' "obstinacy" toward the decree on beard shaving. Attendant costs are mentioned in the account statements (RGADA f. 396, op. 3, kniga 168, ll. 30–30 ob.).

<sup>73</sup> RGADA f. 371, op. 1, d. 458, ll. 210–11; Golikova, *Astrakhanskoe vosstanie 1705–1706 gg.*, 77.

<sup>74</sup> Golikova, *Politicheskie protsessy pri Petre I*, 296.

governor, wanting to know “why he forced them to wear German clothing and to shave off their beards and mustaches, and why he issued orders to go around to churches cutting off women’s Russian-style dresses.” The governor replied that “following a sovereign decree from the Moscow Police Chancellery [he] ordered that German clothing be worn and beards and mustaches be removed, and that [he] did not issue the order to have women’s dresses cut off in churches.” In response, foremen escorted Rychkov to Rzhevskii’s office and “ordered that he, Petr, bring those documents to the assembly.”<sup>75</sup> Instead of retrieving the edict sent in March (perhaps he simply could not find it), Rychkov showed the rebels a more recent decree from the Moscow Police Chancellery announcing the moratorium on the collection of fines until everyone had time to acquire new outfits. The rebels were now convinced that the governor “forced beards to be shaved off and German clothing to be worn by his own volition,” and they “beat to death” Governor Rzhevskii and several clerks. That same day, the assembly drafted a manifesto to the Don Cossacks calling for their support.<sup>76</sup> As proof of Rzhevskii’s criminality, the rebels posted the official notice from the Moscow Police Chancellery received in Astrakhan on 23 July 1705, which the governor had ignored.<sup>77</sup>

By the time Peter the Great found out about the Astrakhan rebellion, it had already spread throughout the Lower Volga region. The letter describing these events, by Boris Golitsyn, head of the Chancellery of the Kazan Palace, reached Peter in Mittau on 10 September 1705. The tsar was so shocked that the letter struck him as insane: “that madcap letter that Prince Boris sent led us to such doubt that we thought he does not know himself what he is writing.”<sup>78</sup> But by 12 September 1705, Peter reported to Streshnev that he was sending Field Marshal Boris Sheremetev to Moscow with cavalry and infantry regiments and requested that, before his arrival, all the money from the chancelleries and all the munitions be secretly collected and carted away from Moscow in the care of trustworthy people to hide or bury them in the ground.<sup>79</sup>

Letters written by the tsar on 10–12 September 1705 attest that Peter, hearing of the occurrences in Astrakhan, seriously feared that the conflagration in the Lower Volga might spread throughout Russia, quickly reaching even to Moscow. The rebels had indeed intended to seize Tsaritsyn, Kazan, and—with the support of people from other regions—capture Moscow. Once there, the

<sup>75</sup> Golikova, *Sotsial’nye dvizheniia v gorodakh Nizhnego Povolzh’ia*, 316–17.

<sup>76</sup> Golikova, *Politicheskie protsessy pri Petre I*, 224; Golikova, *Sotsial’nye dvizheniia v gorodakh Nizhnego Povolzh’ia*, 123–29.

<sup>77</sup> Golikova, *Sotsial’nye dvizheniia v gorodakh Nizhnego Povolzh’ia*, 20.

<sup>78</sup> Peter to F. A. Golovin, 10 September 1705, *Pis’ma i bumagi imperatora Petra Velikogo* (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia tipografiia, 1893), 3:441.

<sup>79</sup> *Pis’ma i bumagi imperatora Petra Velikogo*, 3:445.

Astrakhan insurrectionists planned to find out from the boyars whether or not the tsar was alive. If it turned out that the decrees on beard shaving and wearing foreign attire really did come from the tsar, they would petition him “to return to the old belief, to not have to dress in the German manner, and to not have to shave facial hair.” And if he refused, then “he would have to be killed, for if that were the case, then the true tsar [would] have been replaced by a false tsar.”<sup>80</sup>

The Astrakhan rebels’ plot did not strike many contemporaries as preposterous. The Prussian envoy von Keyserling, for one, reported to Berlin on 11 April 1705 that if Charles XII mounted an offense on Moscow, a serious revolt against the tsar would break out in the Russian state, for “the whole country is inclined to revolution because of their abolished customs, shorn beards, forbidden clothing, confiscated monastery property, their divine service which has been altered in some places, and the new heavy taxes that are invented daily and whose names they did not even know before.”<sup>81</sup> The upheaval in Astrakhan forced Peter to acknowledge the validity of these dangers and move toward seriously softening his cultural policies.

### Amending the 1705 Decree

On 9 November 1705, Peter dispatched his next decree to Ivan Buturlin, head of the Moscow Police Chancellery: “To Buturlin, to cease distribution of the decrees on beards and clothing to the Volga region towns. [These decrees] are for better times, not under such grave circumstances.”<sup>82</sup> Thus Peter issued a personal decree to suspend the previous legislation on shaving and the dress in the entire Lower Volga region. Likewise, on 12 February 1706 Peter responded to Guard-Sergeant Mikhail Shchepotev, who had asked how to deal with residents of Chernyi Iar who had joined the Astrakhan rebels in the event that the town surrendered voluntarily: “Besides forgiving them and returning everything to how it was before, nothing is to be done.”<sup>83</sup> It can be assumed that “how it was before” implies the tsar’s decision to allow residents of the Lower Volga region to wear beards and “Russian” clothing.

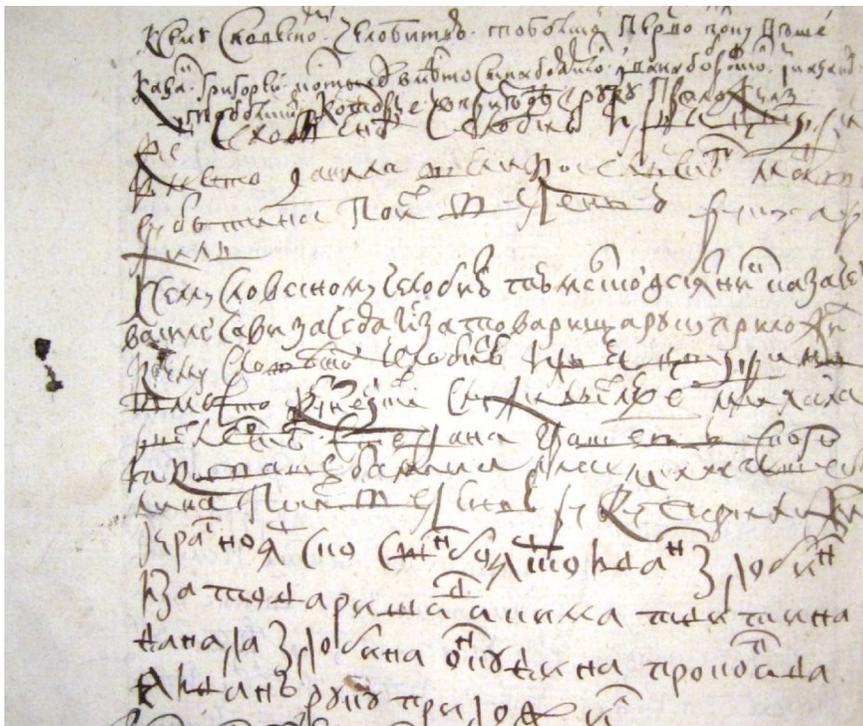
Not so long ago, E. N. Trefilov found reliable evidence confirming the existence of a Petrine decree allowing inhabitants of the Lower Volga region to refrain from shaving their beards. In the autumn of 1706, the Astrakhan

<sup>80</sup> Golikova, *Astrakhanskoe vosstanie 1705–1706 gg.*, 179.

<sup>81</sup> Cited in Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great*, 243–44.

<sup>82</sup> Copied to the journal of Peter’s personal decrees by his chamber secretary Aleksei Makarov: RGADA f. 9, op. 1, kniga 1, l. 28; *Pis’ma i bumagi imperatora Petra Velikogo*, 3:492.

<sup>83</sup> *Pis’ma i bumagi imperatora Petra Velikogo* (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia tipografiia, 1900), 4:91.



Fragment of the collective petition from Siberian residents with the signatures of representatives from the towns of Tobol'sk, Tiumen', Kuznetsk, and Krasnoiar'sk

Source: RGADA f. 214, op. 1, kniga 1451, l. 112 ob.

townsman Kirill Zimin was arrested in Moscow on charges that he was strutting along the streets with a beard. When interrogated at the Moscow Police Chancellery, Zimin explained that “his beard was not shorn because residents of the Lower Volga towns are subject to a decree exempting them from having to cut off their beards.” In response, the Moscow Police Chancellery verified the accuracy of Zimin's statement. When it became clear that the man they had apprehended really was from Astrakhan, he was released.<sup>84</sup>

Yet another personal Petrine decree, distributed to Siberian residents, allowed them to abstain from shaving their facial hair and wearing “German dress.” This decree was issued after the tsar met requests by 112 servitors from 19 Siberian towns, who arrived in Moscow at the end of 1705 and appealed directly to the Siberian Chancellery. In a collective petition that survives in the original, the Siberian residents pointed out that the law would be impossible to enforce in Siberia because “nobody would wear German

<sup>84</sup> E. N. Treflov, “Predstavleniia o tsarskoi vlasti uchastnikov narodnykh buntov Petrovskogo vremeni” (Candidate of Historical Sciences diss., Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 2010), 148–49.

clothes in such bitter cold temperatures, and besides, there is nothing to make European clothes out of in Siberia because of poverty.”<sup>85</sup>

In early 1706 (no later than 19 January), Prince Matvei Gagarin turned the petition over to Peter the Great. In all likelihood, the tsar’s verbal order to Gagarin was formalized in the Siberian Chancellery to become a tsar’s decree.<sup>86</sup> It goes as follows:

Last year, 1705, Our Sovereign Majesty’s instructions on dress and *on other similar affairs* were sent to you in Tobol’sk and to all Siberian towns. And the residents of the Siberian towns of all ranks petitioned Our Sovereign Majesty to allow them, on account of their poverty, to keep their clothing and horse saddles as before. And We, the Great Sovereign, designate that those instructions all be dismissed and not implemented, and instead We order to be worn clothes and saddles, *and other such things*, however one wants, because the instructions sent earlier did not accord with Our Sovereign Majesty’s decree.<sup>87</sup>

The decree was sent from Moscow to Tobol’sk and Tiumen’ on 19 January 1706, whence it was soon dispatched to Siberian towns such as Tomsk, where it was announced on 21 April 1706.<sup>88</sup> Although it does not explicitly permit wearing beards, we can assume that they are signified in the expressions “on other similar affairs” and “other such things.” In any case, residents of Siberian towns and several governors interpreted the decree that way. Thus, after the decree was publicized in Tomsk, the beard-sporting gentryman Andrei Stepnoi and former Moscow musketeer Grigorii Kazin—both mentioned above—showed up at the governor’s office requesting a reimbursement of the tariff they had paid for their beards in September 1705. Governor Petrovo-Solovovo agreed with them on the point that the new ruling could indeed be interpreted as a reversal of the erstwhile decree on beard shaving and refunded the tax monies on the condition that the men forfeit the funds if he turned out to be mistaken.<sup>89</sup>

Yet another Petrine decree—one that has hitherto escaped scholarly attention because it was omitted in the *Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire*—went into effect on 28 August 1706. In issuing this new

<sup>85</sup> RGADA f. 214, op. 1, kniga 1451, ll. 111–12 ob.

<sup>86</sup> As shown by a mark on the copy of the decree in the Siberian Chancellery’s directory of decrees: “Prince Matvei Petrovich Gagarin ordered the Great Sovereign’s decree to be copied down” (RGADA f. 214, op. 1, kniga 1451, l. 111).

<sup>87</sup> RGADA f. 214, op. 1, kniga 1451, ll. 63 ob.–64. The decree is undated in *PSZ*, 4, no. 2132: 363.

<sup>88</sup> RGADA f. 214, op. 1, kniga 1451, l. 64; Shashkov, “Delo 1705 g.,” 316.

<sup>89</sup> Shashkov, “Delo 1705 g.,” 316.

edict, Peter annulled a policy concerning peasants originally enshrined in the 1705 legislation: “The Great Sovereign, Tsar, and Grand Prince Petr Alekseevich, Autocrat of All Great and Little and White Russia has issued by His Majesty’s decree: court, patriarchal, episcopal, monasterial, ecclesiastical, service-estate, and patrimonial-estate peasants with beards shall be allowed to pass through the city gates and no fee is to be taken from them.”

By 2 September 1706, the decree had been distributed to all chancelleries in Moscow, and from there it circulated to the cities and towns.<sup>90</sup> Without a doubt, mass discontent over the harsh measures that had been applied in executing the beard-shaving decree helped prompt this new decree. The harshness of those measures is exemplified by one Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery case from early in 1705, when peasants unable to pay the tax at the Moscow city gates had their beards forcibly removed.<sup>91</sup> Probably, other towns took similar measures, provoking a wave of protest. Peter the Great’s decree from 28 August 1706 was designed to ease the tension that had built up during the extraordinarily difficult years of warfare, showing that the tsar and his associates closely monitored popular sentiment and even demonstrated a certain flexibility in implementing their cultural policies.

While working to implement the 1705 decree, therefore, Peter’s government eventually scrapped its plan to expand mandatory beard shaving to all regions of Russia uniformly after encountering various strategies of resistance from its subjects. The essence of the new strategy is expressed in the tsar’s response to Kurbatov’s letter of 12 February 1713. In that letter, the vice-governor of the Arkhangel’sk region bemoaned both the populace’s refusal to comply with the beard-shaving decree and the accommodations made by local administrators in view of their noncompliance. On 28 April 1713, Peter answered Kurbatov: “Concerning the Arkhangel’sk region people you write about who wear old-fashioned clothes and do not shave their beards: try to correct it unobtrusively [*ispodvol*].”<sup>92</sup>

Thus Peter did not give up on transforming the external appearance of his subjects but instead asked local governors to adjust their methods to the distinctive characteristics of each locality. It is no accident that from 1706 to 1721 no single decree issued a prohibition of beards for the entire Muscovite state—unlike the law of 1705. That said, decrees did target individual towns and cities. A 23 February 1707 decree addressed to the residents of Nizhnii Novgorod reiterating the need to wear West European style attire and shave

<sup>90</sup> RGADA f. 158, op. 1, d. 108, ll. 1–2; f. 214, op. 1, kniga 1451, ll. 371–72.

<sup>91</sup> RGADA f. 371, op. 1, d. 325, l. 4 ob.

<sup>92</sup> *Pis'ma i bumagi imperatora Petra Velikogo*, 13, pt. 1:140–41.

beards.<sup>93</sup> On 17 December 1713 and again a year later, St. Petersburg residents were strictly forbidden to wear beards.<sup>94</sup> Early in 1714, the exact same decree was publicized in Velikii Novgorod.<sup>95</sup> A decree on beard shaving was similarly reissued in 1712–13 in Galich, where the Swedish prisoner of war Karl Roland witnessed its implementation.<sup>96</sup>

Zooming out to envisage the results of Peter the Great's efforts to transform the appearance of his subjects throughout the Russian tsardom, our gaze would meet a kaleidoscope of images, in which the "old" became curiously entangled with the "new" in various proportions depending on the place. Merchants who had grown accustomed to their beard-friendly home towns found themselves prosecuted when they traveled to other cities. For instance, on 1 October 1706, the Iaroslavl' merchant Egor Maslov was captured immediately upon his arrival in Rostov for appearing "in Russian dress and with a beard."<sup>97</sup> The same thing happened to Afanasii Potapov, a salesman for the merchant Afonasii Toreev, when he arrived to the town of Belev from Kolomna.<sup>98</sup> Due to the paradoxical nature of such incidents, Peter the Great decided after the war to destroy the residual traces of Old Muscovy in his subjects' appearances once and for all.

### **Petrine Legislation on Beard Shaving in the 1720s**

Visiting the Senate on 6 April 1722, Peter the Great wrote a decree in his own hand requesting governors "to double down on the old decree on beards." A beard could be kept under only two conditions: by paying a sum of 50 rubles per year; and by wearing only "Old Russian" clothing, by which Peter the Great had in mind the following: "a homespun coat with a standing collar, loose tunics [*feriazii*] and single-breasted caftans [*odnoriadki*] with the appropriate neckerchief." A bearded man in any other clothing should be

<sup>93</sup> Excerpts from this decree appear in a 1760 case featuring illegal beards: "According to the decree of the Moscow Police Office from 23 February 1707 addressed to the residents of Nizhnii Novgorod, all ranks of people, excepting the ecclesiastical ranks, priests, and deacons, and lectors, and arable peasants, and coachmen are to wear a French or Saxon outer layer, a German jacket, and pants and boots, ... also all ranks of people besides priests and deacons must shave beards and mustaches" (RGADA f. 288 [Raskol' nicheskaia kontora], op. 1, d. 779, ll. 18–18 ob.).

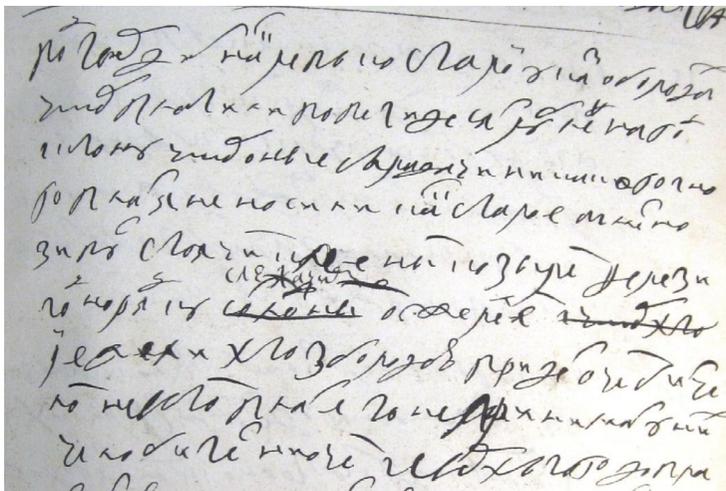
<sup>94</sup> *PSZ*, 5, no. 2874: 137.

<sup>95</sup> Sedov, "I v sobore, i u vладыki byl v vengerskom plat'e," 239.

<sup>96</sup> Carl von Roland, "Souvenirs de captivité en Russie," *Cahiers du monde russe* 47, 3 (2006): 635–36. Thanks to Anna Joukovskaia for help with dating Roland's report.

<sup>97</sup> RGADA f. 210, op. 8, viazka 37, d. 25, ll. 152–53.

<sup>98</sup> RGADA f. 875 (Belevskaia landratskaia kantseliaria), op. 1, d. 12.



Fragment of the 6 April 1722 decree on beard shaving, written by Peter the Great.  
 Source: RGADA f. 1451, op. 1, kniga 13, l. 292.

apprehended, taken to government agents, and assessed a large fine of 50 rubles, half of which would be paid to the person who caught him.<sup>99</sup>

This decree marked the beginning of a second wave of persecution of beard enthusiasts in the central cities.<sup>100</sup> However, implementing the decree required a number of additional legislative decisions and several major updates. Almost as soon as it was issued, the government began responding to Russian subjects' many attempts to avoid having completely to remove their facial hair by merely trimming their beards—not shaving all the way down to the skin. A Senate decree from 12 June 1722 ordered that men who only cut their beards with scissors, “not to the skin,” should be counted “among the bearded.”<sup>101</sup> It soon transpired that many bearded men, unwilling to part with their facial hair, could not afford such steep fines and were consequently detained in their town’s jails. Local governors appealed to the Senate for further intructions, and on 14 June 1723, senators ordered these men forcibly

<sup>99</sup> RGADA f. 1451 (Imennye ukazy Petra I), op. 1, kniga 13, ll. 292–92 ob.; *PSZ*, 6, no. 3944: 641–42. I use the translation in Hughes, “A Beard Is an Unnecessary Burden,” 30.

<sup>100</sup> See, e.g., RGADA f. 875, op. 1, d. 12; f. 288, op. 1, d. 888; f. 540 (Novoladozhskaia vovodskaia kantseliariia), op. 1, d. 87. In these years, some governors tolerated residents wearing beards. Thus in December 1724, Ivan Sidorov, a Tver’ inspector (*fiskal*), reported to St. Petersburg that there, “Merchants and all ranks of people ... do not shave their beards and wear Old Russian dress.” He filed a complaint against Tver’ Governor Peter Lobkov, who had freed bearded men brought to him to be fined. Interestingly, no criminal proceedings were raised against Lobkov (RGADA f. 386 [Kantseliariia fiskal’ nykh del], op. 1, d. 29).

<sup>101</sup> RGADA f. 248 (Senat i ego uchrezhdeniia), op. 2, kniga 57, ll. 135–35 ob.; *PSZ*, 6, no. 4034: 720.

shaved and released on surety bond.<sup>102</sup> Several days later, however, the tsar visited the Senate and tightened measures against defaulters, ordering them to be sent to work in Rogervik to pay off their beard fines.<sup>103</sup>

On 13 November 1723, Peter the Great, again in the Senate, personally penned a decree on the establishment of a special Senate body to collect fines assessed for illegal beards and the dual tax imposed on “schismatics,” or Old Believers (this was known as the Old Believers’ Office—Raskol’ nicheskaiia kontora).<sup>104</sup> In these edicts, the emperor again bade that special “copper tokens” be minted for those subjects who paid their beard fees. Three days later, Field Marshal General James Bruce [Iakov Brius] presented the Senate with a prototype of these tokens bearing the inscription, “the beard is an unnecessary burden—a fee for the beard has been taken.” In December 1724, 2,600 of these beard tokens were prepared for distribution in 1725.<sup>105</sup> Due to the emperor’s death, this never occurred. On 12 June 1728, the Senate ordered that the “tokens be melted down to produce kopecks.”<sup>106</sup>

In the years that followed, Anna Ioannovna and Elizaveta Petrovna made several attempts to enact Peter’s beard-shaving legislation of the 1720s.<sup>107</sup> Materials from the Old Believers’ Office, however, indicate that Old Russian grooming and dressing habits persisted throughout the population in various Russian towns and cities as late as the 1740s and 1750s.<sup>108</sup>

## Conclusion

In an article published in 2000, Richard Hellie tried comprehensively to answer the question of why the Russian elite, aware of its diminished status,

<sup>102</sup> *PSZ*, 7, no. 4245:77.

<sup>103</sup> *PSZ*, 7, no. 4256: 86–87. *PSZ* mistakenly includes this decree in the sixth volume among the June 1722 edicts: 6, no. 4041: 725. For an example of the decree’s implementation in Moscow, see RGADA f. 288, op. 1, d. 888.

<sup>104</sup> RGADA f. 1451, op. 1, kniga 18, ll. 381–85 ob.; *PSZ*, 7, no. 4596: 368.

<sup>105</sup> See RGADA f. 271 (Berg-kollegiia), op. 1, kniga 105, ll. 31–32.

<sup>106</sup> *PSZ*, 13, no. 10053: 737–39.

<sup>107</sup> V. V. Kosatkin, “O borodachakh i raskol’nikakh, chtoby za borodu poshlinu platili i v ukaznom plat’e khodili,” *Trudy Vladimirskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi komissii* (Vladimir: Gubernskoe pravlenie, 1899), 1:59–82; I. N. Iurkin, “Staroobriadets i ego kostium v russkom gorode vtoroi chetverti XVIII veka,” in *Obschestvennaia i kul’turnaia zhizn’ Tsentral’noi Rossii v XVII–nachale XX veka: Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, ed. Mikhail Karpachev (Voronezh: Izdatel’stvo Voronezhskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1999), 115–38; Akel’ev and Trefilov, “Proekt evropeizatsii vneshnego oblika poddannyykh,” 161–62.

<sup>108</sup> On the investigation of a group of cases concerning unlawful beards among residents of different towns and cities by the Old Believers’ Office from 1730 to 1760, see Akel’ev and Trefilov, “Proekt evropeizatsii vneshnego oblika poddannyykh,” 162–72.

did not resist the Russian autocrat.<sup>109</sup> This article has pursued a similar line of inquiry: how could the Russian monarch stigmatize beards without triggering a serious backlash, especially since his subjects were convinced of the sinfulness of shaving? Some have attributed their seeming quiescence to the political elite's alleged slave mentality, its readiness to fulfill any of the sovereign's decrees. Others have pointed out that the destruction of the musketeers left no forces capable of opposing the tsar. Yet another group has stated that the decrees on beard shaving did not affect the wider population, including the peasantry.<sup>110</sup>

The question is related to the more general interpretation of Peter's reign in scholarship, which has been influenced by the works of Ustrialov, Solov'ev, Esipov, Shmurlo, and Golikova: the view that the tsar-transformer enacted his cultural policies primarily by means of harsh coercive measures, without taking into account his subjects' responses, indeed in the face of strong disapproval of the majority of the populace. This interpretation, however, is in serious need of revision. Having analyzed letters of solicitors at the Valdaiskii, Iverskii, and Uspenskii monasteries from the early 18th century, P. V. Sedov reached a striking conclusion: that researchers' unquestioning assumption that the population had briskly rejected Peter's decrees on beard shaving and clothing is "far from the reality of the situation." Actually, Peter the Great's contemporaries held no firm or unanimous opinion about the tsar's cultural initiatives; their views changed as they debated the innovations and acclimated themselves to these new-fangled ways of life.<sup>111</sup>

I would hazard to guess that this process deeply influenced Peter's government. The tsar could not help but realize that without *the direct participation* of many Russian subjects, the wholesale transformation of grooming and clothing standards would be impossible. Perhaps this is why the decree banning beards, elaborately conceived in the autumn of 1698, was made public only after extensive preparation. Peter first planted the idea in the minds of members of the elite through playful shaving spectacles and personalized oral decrees, allowing its diffusion among ever widening circles of people.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>109</sup> Richard Hellie, "Thoughts on the Absence of Elite Resistance in Muscovy," *Kritika* 1, 1 (2000): 5–20.

<sup>110</sup> See, e.g., Esipov, *Raskol' nich' i dela XVIII stoletia*, 162, 164–65; Mikhnevich, *Istoricheskie etudy russkoi zhizni*, 75–76; and R. M. Kirsanova, *Russkii kostium i byt XVIII–XIX vekov* (Moscow: Slovo, 2002), 14.

<sup>111</sup> Sedov, "I v sobore, i u vладыki byl v vengerskom plat'e," 238, 241.

<sup>112</sup> For example, the boyar Boris Sheremetev attended a banquet on 12 February 1699 in Franz Lefort's mansion "having donned German attire according to the Great Sovereign's decree" (*Puteshestvie po Evrope boiarina B. P. Sheremeteva 1697–1699* [Moscow: Nauka, 2013], 102). In 1703, James Bruce orally transmitted to "prominent" (*narochitye*) Novgorod townsmen the tsar's order to shave their beards (Sedov, "I v sobore, i u vладыki byl v vengerskom plat'e," 236).

Historians have already noted that beard shaving appeared in Russia long before Peter's reforms.<sup>113</sup> In the 1690s, Patriarchs Ioakim and Adrian were compelled to appeal to members of their flock to stop shaving their beards.<sup>114</sup> From 1698 to 1704, the fashion for clean-shaven chins accelerated significantly. By the time that Peter the Great's famous 1705 decree was announced in Russian cities, many of his subjects have already parted with their facial hair, and they did so voluntarily.

When Hellie mentioned "resistance" in his article, he meant open rebellion against the monarch, leading either to the tsar's murder or to concessions that would have placed limits on his arbitrary grip on power.<sup>115</sup> In this article, having studied the implementation of a decree in light of Russian subjects' actual behavior, I conclude that Peter's cultural initiatives came to fruition in different regional contexts utilizing different scenarios. Their particular configuration was dictated by such factors as the personality of the local administrator, his resources in influencing the populace, the town's distance from Moscow, psychological preparedness for the decree, and many others. Depending on the particular "style" of the decree's implementation, townspeople selected different strategies of resistance—from demonstrating peaceful "willfulness" to delivering collective petitions and inciting open rebellion.<sup>116</sup> In this sense, my findings resemble those of Alf Lüdtke, who has shown that rank-and-file Germans in the 19th and 20th centuries could achieve a certain degree of autonomy from higher authorities in various, sometimes unexpected ways. These reactions become visible only when researchers observe the everyday behavior of individual actors.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>113</sup> See, e.g., S. M. Shamin, "Moda v Rossii poslednei chetverti XVII stoletii," *Drevniaia Rus': Voprosy medievistiki*, no. 1 (2005): 23–38; and Sedov, "I v sobore, i u vладыki byl v vengerskom plat'e," 231–33.

<sup>114</sup> Esipov, *Raskol' nich' i dela XVIII stoletii*, Prilozheniia i materialy, 64–72; A. P. Bogdanov, *Russkie patriarkhi, 1589–1700* (Moscow: TERRA, Respublika, 1999), 2:330–33.

<sup>115</sup> Hellie, "Thoughts on the Absence of Elite Resistance in Muscovy," 8.

<sup>116</sup> Alf Lüdtke has used the term *Eigensinn* or stubborn willfulness (See Alf Lüdtke, "Rabochie, *Eigensinn* i politika na germanskikh predpriiatiiakh v 1880-e–1914 god," in his *Istoriia posvednevnosti v Germanii: Novye podkhody k izucheniuiu truda, voiny i vlasti* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2010), 84–128. *Eigensinn* has an analogue in 18th-century Russian sources—*upriamstvo*. For example, in August 1703, solicitors of the Iverskii and Valdaiskii monasteries reported: "General Iakov Vilimovich [Bruce] arrived in Novgorod and communicated the Sovereign's decree to several prominent people, that they are not to go around with beards and in Russian dress, because they had long ago been ordered so but had remained stubborn [*upriamy*]" (Sedov, "I v sobore, i u vладыki byl v vengerskom plat'e," 236). In 1748, the Belgorod merchants Vasilii Vorozhenskii and Andrei Kurchaninov testified to the Senate: "In the Russian Empire many people of various ranks in opposition to the established decrees stubbornly [*upriamstvom svoim*] walk around in the unsanctioned clothes and sport beards" (*PSZ*, 12, no. 9479: 828–29).

<sup>117</sup> Lüdtke, "Rabochie, *Eigensinn* i politika na germanskikh predpriiatiiakh."

Against the backdrop of the Great Northern War, Peter the Great and his government proved to be extremely sensitive to manifestations of discontent over the 1705 decree. A year later, not only was the law suspended in several large regions, but some of its central provisions were also revised. The documents cited above suggest that, at the same time, Peter adopted a newly calculated political strategy whereby the specific conditions of each locality at the ground level would determine the Europeanization of his subjects' appearance, so as not to aggravate them unduly. The government maintained this strategy until the beginning of 1722, when it again attempted to mold the physique of Russian subjects toward a "well-ordered" appearance, which, nonetheless, proved just as ineffectual as the first operation.

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