Ethnicity as Social Rank: Governance, Law, and Empire in Muscovite Russia

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Most European early-modern states transitioned from composite monarchies into centralized ones. Essentially, composite monarchies were “more than one country under the sovereignty of one ruler.”¹ As Moscow expanded and acquired the surrounding principalities either by inheritance or force, its grand princes enacted a series of legal and administrative reforms to dissolve the differences among its territories and create a centralized monarchy.² These political reforms began under Ivan III, who instituted a standardization of Muscovite legal practice and formalized a defined system of social precedence, mestnichestvo, which accorded high rank to his newly acquired provincial elites within the Muscovite social system. Change could not happen overnight, and further legal reforms by Ivan IV, in addition to new religious reforms to eradicate differences of practice among his subjects, centralized the Grand Prince’s political and religious authority.³

The conquest of the Khanate of Kazan’ in 1552 posed new challenges for the Ivan IV, reintroducing aspects of a composite monarchy within his kingdom. Though much of his territory had been integrated, the Tsar once again grappled with the management of a multiple state. Employing two common tactics of all composite monarchies, Ivan both accommodated local elites in the land of the former Khanate and followed a policy of allowing regional autonomy in order to maintain minimal control.⁴ Both of these tactics dictated Muscovite policy in Kazan’ for more than 100 years after Moscow’s initial conquest. However, this compromise with local interests was never intended as a permanent state of affairs on Muscovy’s frontier, since both tactics were temporary solutions until such a time that the state could exert direct authority and transition toward a centralized monarchy.⁵

In order to manage successfully the lands of the former Khanate while allowing local interests, new principles entered the Muscovite legal system to accommodate the ethnic and religious differences of the Tsar’s new subjects. There was no immediate solution to this problem, but over the course of a century ethnicity identity ultimately developed as a separate rank within the Muscovite social hierarchy. Once this process was confirmed a separate rank in the Ulozhenie of 1649, the state gained a new ability to enact punitive measures upon the populations of its expanding empire. By creating a special space within the social hierarchy for non-Russians, the Tsar also
created an opportunity for increasing restrictions against their independence and earlier local accommodations.

By placing Muscovite integration of land and people within the framework of composite monarchies, this paper will shed new light on both the extension of centralized political authority in Muscovy and the relationship between the tsar and his non-Russian subjects. Much of the existing literature of Moscow and Kazan’ has focused upon the conquest as Orthodoxy’s battle against Islam, and even recent studies of the position of Kazan’s Tatars within Muscovy have failed to take note the greater process of the Muscovite state transitioning from a composite monarchy to centralized polity. As the process of centralization was typical of early-modern European monarchies, this paper will position Muscovite political developments as part of the general narrative of European history rather than as an exception to it.

Regional Administration

Following the conquest of the Khanate of Kazan’, fear of both local rebellions and raids from nearby steppe nomads determined Muscovite governance over its new frontier. With a region containing Turkic Chuvashes and Tatars and Finno-Ugric Maris, Mordvins, and Udmurts, Ivan IV’s government had to resolve several issues simultaneously to successfully integrate this region and its peoples into the pre-existing social hierarchy, political system, and religious framework. Some Tatars of the Khanate continued to resist the conquest throughout the 1550s, and outbreaks of violence from the non-Russian populations in the region remained an ongoing problem, including the Mari Revolt of 1573–1577 and a rebellion in 1582–1584 with participants from all of the region’s ethno-linguistic groups (Chuvashes, Mordvins, Maris, Tatars, and Udmurts). The Time of Troubles added to the difficulties of controlling the frontier by engulfing the region in a national and international conflict. The ascension of the Romanov dynasty to the throne in 1613 began a new era in Muscovite governance, including the expansion of the bureaucracy and standardization of administrative practice, but the earliest years were no more stable than those of Ivan IV’s reign, with another rebellion troubling Muscovite control in 1615–1616. The peoples of the former Khanate did not accept readily their new position within the Muscovite state.

Faced with the region’s resistance, the state employed two proven strategies to control the frontier. The state drafted local elites into positions of prominence within the Muscovite social hierarchy, and it allowed accommodations with the local populace, maintaining many of the features of the pre-existing political entity—the Khanate of Kazan’—under the tsar’s nominal control. The first was more readily achieved than the second. The Khanate of Kazan’ was a successor state to the Mongol Golden Horde; the Khanate’s army maintained the tradition of Mongol cavalry as much as the Muscovites themselves did. While the highest
nobles of the Khanate—the Tatar mirzas—blended with the highest nobles of Muscovy, the remaining Tatar and Chuvash cavalry found themselves re-employed in the tsar’s army in their traditional capacity, becoming the frontier’s new pomeshchiki, military servitors who received land to support their service. Surprisingly, while the mirzas may have converted to Russian Orthodoxy to maintain their elite status, many of the new Tatar and Chuvash pomeshchiki kept their original faith without pressure from Moscow. Though as early as Ivan the Terrible’s Livonian War the utility of traditional steppe cavalry was being questioned in Moscow, as long as the Tatar and Chuvash pomeshchiki effectively matched the military capabilities of steppe nomads their role as frontier military servitors was secure.¹¹

While the central chancelleries hoped non-Russian elites would enter the tsar’s army as cavalry, there was no presumption that these new subjects were loyal to the tsar, especially from a territory with a rebellious history. Most non-Russian servitors needed to demonstrate their loyalty to the tsar through military service before receiving a grant of pomest’ë and the accompanying rank of pomeshchik. Both Iangil’d Enandarov and Bakrach Ianchurin received their pomest’ë in 1595, but each Tatar previously had enlisted in the tsar’s service. For his longer period in the army, Enandarov ultimately obtained more land than Ianchurin, who was a more recent entry into the tsar’s ranks.¹² If more than one generation of a family provided military service, the reward of land could increase.¹³ For those who had been injured in the tsar’s service, it was possible to receive additional compensation. Dmitrev Grigorev syn Azter’ëv, for example, was provided with a house in addition to his pomest’ë in recognition of his injuries in the tsar’s service.¹⁴ Some unfortunates were not as lucky: Andrei Vasil’ev syn Davydov, who served the tsar in both Kazan’ and Alatyr’ in the 1660s, was left wounded and with nothing by the early 1670s.¹⁵ Despite Davydov’s case, more than a century after the initial conquest of the Khanate of Kazan’, loyal military service remained the most frequent explanation of why an individual servitor would be awarded pomest’ë.¹⁶

Loyal service overrode any consideration of a servitor’s religious faith, especially in successive generations of a single family. Both converts to Russian Orthodoxy and Muslims received extensive land grants in the Middle Volga Region. In this way, frontier service paralleled the practices already employed for Russian elites, who required loyal service to the tsar to maintain and advance their position in society.¹⁷ Iakov Vasil’ev syn Asanov, a converted Tatar in service to the tsar and former Tatar mirza, received extensive lands in Kazan’ province along the road to Samara in the 1590s. This included the village of Bimer, settled with both Orthodox Russians and converted Tatar peasants. His son maintained possession over the land, received the right to build a mill, and even received more land, taken from the Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Monastery’s lands in Kazan’ in 1616.¹⁸ The family retained possession over all of their lands throughout the seventeenth century, successfully defeating claims made on their land by Kazan’s Bogoroditsii Convent, and later by a fellow mirza family, as well as resisting two attempted tax increases.¹⁹ When the Russian and Tatar peasants residing on the Asanov’s estates attempted to protest their
treatment at the hands of the Asanovs, the family once again proved victorious against another complaint. The local governor willingly supported a prominent landlord against the interests of his serifs. 20

The Khoziashev family were another Tatar family of Kazan’ with extensive landholdings in the province; however, the Khoziashevs remained Muslim. Their pomest’e included two villages, Isheevskoe and Taveleva, and a tavern. 21 Another Tatar family, the Ennametevs, repeatedly attempted to claim the Khoziashevs’ land in the 1630s, which would have dispossessed the original servitor’s three children, but without success. 22 The central authorities rewarded the loyalty of the Khoziashev family, who successfully defeated at least two more claims on part of their family’s estates later in the seventeenth century. 23

The Begishevs were a Muslim Chuvash family with lands in both Iadrin and Sviiazhsk provinces. In 1619, a grant confirmed Ekbulat Begishev’s right to his father’s land, and subsequent grants maintained his rights despite the governor of Kazan’s attempt to seize their land in Sviiazhsk. In each case, the central chancelleries supported the Begishevs’ claim in response to the family’s petitions. 24 The Begishevs’ village in Sviiazhsk province, Chirkina, was populated by Muslim Tatars. Iambulat Atkeev, an Orthodox Tatar servitor, made at least two attempts to claim the village, but each time the central authorities sided with the Muslim Begishevs based on their long history of loyal service to the tsar. 25

The influence and prominence of non-Russian and non-Orthodox families among the servitor ranks demonstrates the ability of local elites to be accommodated within the Muscovite hierarchy. In this way, regional policy maintained a separate identity for the lands of the former Khanate from that of the interior. Some elite Tatars converted to Russian Orthodoxy in the sixteenth century and resultantly enjoyed high status, but conversion never became a prerequisite for Muscovite service in the century following the conquest of Kazan’ because of the continuing defensive needs of an exposed frontier.

The experience of the military elite should not be equated with the experience of non-Russian peasants under Muscovite law, yet here as well local interests prevented complete incorporation within the Muscovite state. The majority of non-Russian peasants became iasachnye liudi under Muscovite rule—a general category that defined their relationship to the state through their economic relationship, as people who pay tribute. Iasachnye liudi status allowed non-Russians to maintain their traditional lifestyles as farmers, trappers, beekeepers, or fishermen, and limited their contact with Muscovite officials primarily to their yearly tribute payments. Therefore, local autonomy became the standard method of governing the non-Russian population. A small number of non-Russians, however, found themselves placed into a new relationship with their conquerors, from their new status as peasants working either for a monastery or for the Muscovite pomeshchiki. Though iasachnye liudi were the largest percentage of non-Russians within the Middle Volga Region, as time passed more non-Russians found themselves repositioned within Muscovy as peasants attached
to a military servitor’s land, but only as the state’s authority and control in the region were solidified. In other words, as the region transitioned from being a part of a composite monarchy to an integral component of a unified polity.

For the first 100 years of Muscovite rule in the Middle Volga Region, the *iasachnye liudi* comprised the largest proportion of non-Russians living in the region. Both newly established towns and old urban centers profited from large numbers of tribute-paying residents. In the oldest Russian city bordering the region, Nizhnii Novgorod, there were nearly 100 Mordvin villages paying yearly *iasak* to the city’s coffers. In Simbirsk, a town built upon an earlier Muscovite outpost on the Volga in 1649, the yearly *iasak* from 28 villages of *iasachnye liudi* contributed more into the town’s coffers than trade tariffs from the three months of highest volume, June through August.

The *iasachnye liudi* continued in their traditional economic practices, which raised large revenues for Muscovite authorities. These practices included beekeeping, for wax and honey were among the region’s most valuable commodities. As early as 1555, for example, the Muscovite government guaranteed the Russian Orthodox Church that local beekeepers in Kazan’ province would pay the Church their yearly tribute in honey and wax. In a land cadaster from Kazan’ of 1623–1624, there were still 2,330 Tatar beekeepers living in the province. In the tax records from 1614–1615 from Nizhegorod province, Finno-Ugric Mari and Mordvin beekeepers alone paid the city a total of just over 167 rubles, about half as much money as the 28 *iasachnye* villages of Simbirsk paid for their total *iasak* payment.

Occasionally, the *iasachnye liudi* benefited from fulfilling the state’s economic goals. If a village demonstrated its loyalty to the tsar with consistent tribute payments over several generations, its elders could receive the legal right to their ancestral lands, confirming their independence from the central authorities. This was the case for the *iasachnyi* Tatar Aladiachek Bivaev, an elder of the village of Nirkov-Amachev in Sviiazhsk province, who accepted the rights to all of his village’s land in 1625, which had been bequeathed to the villagers in honor of the loyalty of their ancestors. When the state was unwilling to confirm independent status on the local populations, non-Russians attempted to extract that concession by entering Muscovite service to receive their traditional village as their service land. For example, the Mordvins Boiashka Arzamasov and Lukashko Khudiakov received their village in Arzamas province as their *pomest’ye* from the central chancelleries, but Arzamasov and Khudiakov’s attempt to turn this land over to their fellow villagers was rejected.

For monastic peasants, the situation was different than for the *iasachnye liudi*. While many remained in their traditional economic practices, monasteries had both economic and legal control over their non-Russian peasants and closer observation of their activities than local government officials assumed over most *iasachnye liudi*. This was Moscow’s first attempt at outright control over the region’s populations. The process began as early as during Ivan IV’s conquest of Kazan’, and monasteries received non-Russian villages throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth
centuries. By 1646, however, the region’s three oldest monasteries only oversaw a total of 15 villages with a combined population of 1,851 non-Russians, so this alternate path to incorporation was hardly well worn.

As was common in Muscovy, monasteries and their abbots in the region became important juridical figures over their peasant populations, though on the frontier this population was primarily comprised of non-Orthodox non-Russians. Local abbots received the right to hear legal disputes and court cases for their subjects, providing these hierarchs with extensive authority over their peasants’ daily lives. In 1555, both Sviiazhsk’s Uspenskii Bogoroditsii Monastery and Kazan’s Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Monastery received the right to judge all of their people, both in cities and in the countryside. This privilege placed non-Russian, and generally non-Orthodox, peasants under the direct control of Orthodox institutions, which could attempt to inculcate Russian Orthodox values in the countryside through its verdicts.

If the purpose of the monasteries’ supervision of non-Russians was to support conversion efforts, however, there is little evidence of their success. In fact, if a monastery succeeded in converting a non-Orthodox village to Orthodoxy, then that village and its people could be granted to a military servitor. While the state would not allow Muslim or animist peasants to be a Russian servitor’s peasants, Orthodox peasants were suitable. Furthermore, the Russian peasants of the region generally resided on military servitor estates, rather than upon monastic ones. As more Russians settled in the region, usually displacing non-Russians, monasteries witnessed steady losses of their original land grants and peoples. Privileging Orthodox and Russian peasants for military service land created a strong pressure on monastic landowning, ironically making lands settled with unconverted non-Russians a monastic asset in land disputes. In other words, the central chancelleries created an incentive among monasteries against conversion, which only contributed to affirming the region’s separate status from Moscow.

While conversion might have ensured non-Russian loyalty, at least theoretically, monasteries further complicated the relationship between Muscovy and its non-Orthodox subjects by superseding the state’s connection with its non-Russian subjects. Frequently, Mordvin peasants in Arzamas and Alatyr’ provinces preferred monastic supervision to local governors’ or Muscovy’s administrative chancelleries’. Some Mordvins even trusted Orthodox monks more than their fellow co-religionists, and could provide a resource in the countryside for monasteries supervising extensive lands. For example, the Muslim Mordvin Gerasim Onanin reported to his landlord, the abbot of Arzamas’s Spassko Monastery, that his fellow villagers, the Muslim Tatars of Cherny Khrety, had fled the area and were not returning. Monasteries maintained cordial relationships with non-Russians in the area, and there was no evidence that the monastery demanded or expected conversion as a result of its kindness.

The experience of non-Russian monastic peasants was a change from the connections between the Khanate and its subjects, but monastic peasants remained at a distance from secular authorities because of their new ecclesiastical intermediaries.
This was not the case for non-Russians granted to pomeshchiki, who fully entered the Muscovite legal system as peasants residing on military servitor estates. Most non-Russian peasants in this category, however, remained under the direct supervision of non-Russian servitors. As a result, even a pomeshchik’s peasants were more likely under the control of someone of similar ethnic, and usually religious, background, and direct Russian supervision remained at a distance. The numbers of non-Russians living on the lands of Muscovite servitors was quite small, but grew at a rapid rate in the seventeenth century as this new type of landholding became more common. The percentage of non-Russians who became servitors’ peasants varied from province to province inside the Middle Volga Region, though the number was highest in Arzamas, the province closest to Muscovy’s heartland. This resulted in a greater percentage of Mordvins, the primary non-Russian group in that region, entered into this category of peasants when compared with Tatars or Chuvash, for example, who generally remained iasachnye liudi.

Military servitors’ peasants were under the direct legal authority of local Muscovite governors and had both labor and financial obligations to their landlords. Even so, when these peasants protested their legal status to the central authorities, it tended to be when a Russian servitor was given control, further challenging any attempted incorporation directly into the Muscovite social system. The peasants of Chernukha, a Mordvin village, petitioned Tsar Fedor Aleksevich to be returned to the Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Convent of Arzamas, which had been granted the village more than fifty years earlier, in 1626/27. The villagers preferred the convent as a landlord to their current one, a Russian servitor. Frequently the central government responded to protests with charters instructing villagers of their responsibilities to their new landlord, as was the case when a group of peasants living in Kudeiarovskaia village in Alatyr’ province were reminded of their legal obligation to their servitor landlord, Dmitrii Kuroedov.

While Muscovite administrative policy in the lands of the former Khanate did not create an autonomous local self-government—the essence of a separate entity within a composite monarchy—in principle it functioned as merely that. For approximately the first 100 years of Muscovite rule, there was little change among the religion or lifestyle of the non-Russian populations. The Khanate’s Tatar, Chuvash, and, on occasion, Mordvin cavalry maintained their elite status as new pomeshchiki in Muscovy, and most of the peasantry remained iasachnye liudi with minimal contact with regional or central authorities. Even monasteries lacked interest in the conversion of the local populace. The only group to encounter the coordinated effort of the Muscovite authorities were non-elite, urban non-Russians. In fact, the exclusion of this population from newly conquered cities began shortly after the conquest of Kazan’. By the 1690s, there was an established “Tatar district” outside the walls of Kazan’, and subsequent censuses confirm its continuing existence well into the eighteenth century. Even this physical separation merely reaffirmed the distinct status of non-Russians within Muscovy. In many ways, the Khanate of Kazan’ persisted as a
distinctive entity inside Muscovite borders, with many of the tsar’s new subjects living as if there had only been a nominal change in the region’s governance.

**Accommodating Difference in Law**

For more than a century after the conquest of Kazan’, Muscovite administrative policy for the region generally followed the principle of minimal control over the local population. However, this did not preclude the gradual evolution of Muscovite law, or the administrative practices of the central chancelleries, from attempting to integrate the region’s multiethnic and multiconfessional population within the state. As the *Sudebniki* of 1497 and 1550 and the growth of a centralized bureaucracy drove the eradication of regional difference in the Muscovite heartland, the *Ulozhenie* of 1649 and the organized bureaucratic corps strove to eradicate ethnic and religious differences as a protected status. While experiments to resolve these differences in law began shortly after the conquest of Kazan’, the *Ulozhenie* and later administrative practices succeed in classifying non-Russian status as a separate social rank, below the Russian elites, townspeople, and peasants. However, the privileged position within Muscovy for non-Russian *pomeshchiki* continued to muddy the waters, because the greater status of state servitor could override social differences created by ethnic and religious plurality. In the end, the separate social rank of non-Russian non-servitors did not prevent their equal access to Muscovite courts, but it did facilitate their ultimate incorporation within Muscovite society, ending the local accommodations of earlier administrative practices.

Unfortunately, only a few documents relating to legal status of the non-Russians before 1613 exist. Aidar Nogmanov’s recent study of the Tatars’ position in Muscovite law included only two documents before 1613. As a result, the first extant *nakaz* (instruction) to Kazan’s voevoda in 1613 serves as a suitable starting point, revealing the methods of state control over Kazan’ and its hinterland by the time of the Romanov dynasty. The instruction both confirms the right of non-Russians to have equal access to the legal system, and their position at the bottom of the social ranking system

and in Kazan’ the *dvoriane, deti boiarskii*, and any service people, and princes, and mirzas, and Tatars, and Udmurts, and Bashkirs, and Chuvashes, and Maris [have the right] to be judged and receive justice according to their rank according to tsarist *ukaz* without hassle.

At the same time, the *nakaz* imposed restrictions upon the non-Russians, at least if they “thought about instability or sedition.” If such rumors reached the voevoda, he was instructed to investigate, by interrogating the local populace, and then send word to Moscow. Other than a warning about the possible danger of the Crimean Tatars and the local Nogais, there was no other mention of non-Russians in this first instruction.

By 1649, the nature of the relationship between Kazan’s voevoda and the local population was defined much more clearly. On 16 May, the Prikaz Kazanskogo
dvortsa (the region’s supervisory chancellery) wrote a new nakaz for Kazan’s latest voevoda, which evolved in both breadth and detail from the earlier nakaz of 1613, reflecting the overall growth of governance in the region. As before, the instruction began with the traditional clauses that the previous governor should now turn over the keys to the city, and that everyone within the city and its region should recognize its new governor. The social ranks in Kazan’ now recognized a greater degree of complexity, but unquestionably the non-Russians remained at the bottom:

Kazan’s gentry and deti boiarskii, and Lithuanians, and Germans, and Cossacks, and foreigners (vsiakim inozemtsom), the novokreshchane, and princes, and mirzas, and Tatar servitors (desiatni), and high servicemen and town residents . . . and also all peasants registered in Kazan’ region and all registered in the tribute books, including the Chuvashes, and the Maris, and the Udmurts.48

Unlike the earlier instruction, Tatar military servitors ranked above townsmen and well above their fellow non-Russians, reflecting the continuing (if not elevated) importance of military service in Kazan’. Unlike the instruction of 1613, there was an explication of the various methods the voevoda must use in order to guarantee the collection of taxes. As the majority of non-Russians in the region remained iasachnye liudi, their yearly tribute payments were a serious concern for the central chancelleries. Specifically, individual clauses warned the voevoda that local Tatar, Chuvash, and Mari peasants must be closely observed in order to guarantee their tribute, unlike the past occasions when they had not paid the voevoda.49 In addition, these iasachnye liudi must also be carefully inspected, because it was possible that many of them had fled from their original homes. While collecting tribute, the voevoda was instructed to inquire about the origins of these tribute-payers; if any had fled from another region, they should be held and then returned to their original homes.50

While the nakaz detailed concerns about iasachnye liudi’s tribute payments in two clauses, the discussion of security policies needing to be enforced in order to control the non-Russians spanned several. In 1613, there had only been one recommendation that the voevoda investigate possible “instability or sedition.” By 1649, there was a complete package of policies in place. The instruction warned the governor to closely regulate the movement of all non-Russians arriving and departing from town. No one was to be allowed to leave if it reduced the size of the town. Anyone who left would need to be granted permission by the governor; if they did not have permission and tried to depart, they should be put in jail. Furthermore, the governor was “ordered to watch and closely guard the non-Russians, in order that those who deceitfully asked for leave would not spread their treachery in Kazan’.”51 Russians residing in the city faced no such restrictions. Furthermore, the governor also had the responsibility for preventing the sale of certain items in the Chuvash and Mari villages in Kazan’s hinterland: helmets, sabers, iron, rifles, and any goods from blacksmiths or silversmiths.52 Finally, and perhaps most famously, the voevoda was
instructed to take hostages from the “best people” (samye lutchii liudi) among the Tatars, Chuvashes, Maris, and Udmurts and keep them in the hostage-house (amanatnyi dvor). The hostage-taking was to ensure tribute payments and to discourage the possibility of a revolt.

Unquestionably, between 1613 and 1649 there was a clear escalation of the involvement of the tsar’s central chancelleries in the governing decisions on the frontier. While the nakaz of 1613 was only four manuscript pages, 1649’s ran to nearly twenty pages. As Moscow assumed increased responsibility, the relative independence of Kazan’ was eroded. Furthermore, the specificity of the instructions had grown astronomically, increasingly filled with details about certain problem areas. While hostages were to be taken from all of the non-Russian groups living in Kazan’s district, the instruction only warned the voevoda about sales of weapons to Chuvash and Mari villages, suggesting there had been a specific problem among those groups. Blanket statements about the difficulty of collecting tribute, conversely, suggested that it was a general problem among all of the local populace.

Later in 1649, the Muscovite government made its legislative great leap forward with the promulgation of the Ulozhenie. While much has been written about the Ulozhenie, in particular as the completion of the enserfment process, what has been largely neglected to date is that it also completed the legal transformation of the status of non-Russians within the Muscovite hierarchy. The evolution of treatment of the non-Russians as seen in administrative practice since the conquest of Kazan’ guided the laws affecting all non-Russians from this date forward. In many ways, the Ulozhenie accommodated ethnic and religious differences of the tsar’s non-Russian subjects as had earlier administrative practice, including access to the Russian legal system. For example, the courts relied primarily upon oral testimony, which is typical of pre-modern court systems, with the reliability of testimony being assured by an oath. Russians and converted non-Russians would kiss the cross as a sign of their trustworthiness, while Muslims and animists were required to “take an oath . . . according to their creed.” After testimony had been provided to the court, it needed to be signed for validation: “Tatars who are literate in the Tatar language [would sign] over their signatures,” and illiterate non-Russians would sign over their mark. With the Russian legal system willing to accommodate difference, non-Russians, Muslim or animist, and peasant or elite, frequently petitioned the central authorities—another right granted to all subjects of the tsar in the Ulozhenie. For example, the animist Mordvin peasants living on the lands of Arzamas’s Troitse-Sergeevskii Monastery continually petitioned the central government during the seventeenth century to protest the arrival of Russian colonizing peasants on their lands. Furthermore, there was no restriction upon non-Russians suing Russians.

It is also apparent from the Ulozhenie that most non-Russians occupied the bottom rung of the social hierarchy. This is revealed time and again in lists of the tsar’s subjects. An example of this can be found in the clause on oath-taking during judicial proceedings. Non-Russians were treated separately from all Orthodox subjects.
(clergy, provincial gentry, townsmen, village elders, and peasants). While Tatar mirzas were at the top of the non-Russian hierarchy, certainly they were separate from the Russian elite—despite any evidence of their assimilation.

Interrogate the provincial servicemen [dvoriane], and provincial gentry [deti boiarskie], and various servicemen, and townsmen; and elders of court villages and rural taxpaying districts, their sworn assistants, and peasants, and Russians of various ranks according to the oath of the Tsar.

Interrogate princes, mirzas, and Tatars, and Chuvashes, and Maris, and Udmurts, and the various people who pay tribute [iasachnye liudi] according to the oath of their faith.58

The status of non-Russians who converted to Russian Orthodoxy remained an ambiguity in this case. Novokreshchane were not included among the lists of Orthodox, but neither were they included among those needing special accommodation in court for their different religious status. This suggests that non-Russian status carried some innate difference from Russians; even when religion was not a clear divide, ethnic difference kept non-Russian converts legally separate from their own co-religionists.

Furthermore, as the Ulozhenie created solutions for current problems facing early-modern Russia, it continued to treat non-Russians’ ethnicity as a primary category of difference. For example, enserfment was the solution to the ongoing problem of peasant flight; keeping the land under cultivation was necessary for keeping men under arms. Another method for keeping the land under cultivation and supplies of men under arms was to introduce reforms of the current system of distributing military service lands. However, military service lands belonging to Tatars, Chuvashes, and Mordvins became a separate type of landholding from Russian military service lands: “in the future do not grant the service of lands of Russians to Tatars, or Tatar lands to Russians as service landholdings.”59 In addition, Russians were not allowed to buy or exchange service land from Tatars, Mordvins, Chuvashes, Maris, Udmurts, or Bashkirs, each of whom was named explicitly.60 If a Russian did “take land on a mortgage or hire for many years” with any of the non-Russians, the lands were to be confiscated. “Moreover, they shall be in disgrace with the sovereign for that.”61

Differences created by religion only added to the pressures on non-Russians created by the Ulozhenie. While clearly there was to be no exchange of lands between Russians and non-Russians, if a non-Russian had converted to Russian Orthodoxy, then they could seize land from Muslim-service Tatars.62 Furthermore, there is a general suspicion that Muslim Tatars (and not their converted brethren) would be very likely to attempt to escape from their service obligations. “Mirzas and Tatars shall not lay waste to their own service landholdings. They shall not flee from those service landholdings of theirs into other towns … They shall not abandon service.”63 With Tatar pomeschchiki placed well below Russian military servitors in the social hierarchy, it was relatively easy to add restrictive measures that only affected them without restricting in any way Russian military servitors. Also, this law was the very first indication of state support for a conversion effort, demonstrating
the Ulozhenie marked the beginning of the end for the toleration of religious difference.

One final restriction upon Tatar pomeshchiki was a residency requirement: Tatar servitors had to reside upon their estates, unlike Russian military servitors. In general, military servitors served in the army, while their families might reside on their lands, in town, or on other estates. Since the majority of Tatar military servitors received their service lands on the frontier, particularly in Kazan’ province and its surrounding territory, this law also kept Tatars stationed on the frontier. While military servitors ranked as gentry in Russian society, Tatar servitors were kept firmly away from the center of political authority, which reinforced their status in Russian society as a separate rank from other military servitors according to the Ulozhenie.

In general, the Ulozhenie acknowledged social divisions created by differences of ethnicity and religion as a social category below all others. Non-Russians had equal access to the Russian judicial system, up to and including the right to petition the tsar. There was no expectation of conversion among non-Russians (with the caveat of non-Russian slaves), and in fact there was allowance for different faiths during the oath-taking in court. However, conversion to Russian Orthodoxy did provide some protection for non-Russian military servitors against having their lands seized, and anyone of a “non-Orthodox faith” who “casts abuse on the Lord God” faced the punishment of being executed by burning in a cage. Therefore, while all social ranks were equal under the Russian law, this should not be understood as equal treatment under the law. In fact, the official recognition of non-Russians’ separate status in Russian society greatly facilitated the increasingly punitive measures enacted by the government in the second half of the seventeenth century.

**From Composite to Centralizing Monarchy**

The conquest of the Khanate of Kazan’ had created a composite monarchy inside a state that had only recently enacted widespread reforms specifically to end regional differences. In the century following the conquest, accommodations with the people of the former had maintained much of the regional differentiation. The methods for transforming a composite monarchy into a unified state had been employed in Moscow’s earlier expansion: incorporate the local elite and use law to eradicate difference. Muscovy’s tsars willingly employed a promise of composite monarchies in order to achieve foreign policy goals throughout the early-modern era, such as Aleksei Mikhailovich’s attempt to become the king of the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania, when he promised to maintain each kingdom’s separate composition. Therefore, the process of incorporating the land of the Khanate was hardly unique, but instead was an early attempt to employ a successful expansionist strategy for a multiethnic population. The new twist was that Moscow placed neither its elite nor
its peasantry on equal footing with Russians; ethnic and religious differences became enshrined as fundamental distinctions of social rank in Muscovite law.

As such, there was no method available to non-Russians to achieve “Russian” status following the promulgation of the *Ulozhenie*. While numerous studies have discussed the possibility of gaining “Russian” status inside Muscovy, potentially a slow transition as new qualities were added, conversion to Russian Orthodoxy was never sufficient for remaking a non-Russian anything other than a non-Russian in Muscovite law. For example, in a muster scroll for Sviiazhsk, *pomeshchiki* were divided into four categories: Russians, *inozemtsy*, *novokreshchane*, and “Tatars and *mirzas*. Similarly, later instructions to Kazan’ continued to employ the hierarchical list of the city’s populace as in 1649, beginning with the *dvoriane* and *deti boiarskie*, then *novokreshchane*, *mirzas*, Tatars, and then the remaining residents. Novokreshchane as a social category was different than being Tatar, but it was not possible to shed that distinct label of newly converted for “Orthodox,” much less “Russian.”

Further complicating the position of the non-Russians in the lands of the former Khanate, several events in the second half of the seventeenth century focused attention upon the possible disloyalty of the tsar’s subjects. Following decades of relative peace, the Stepan Razin Revolt in 1670 engulfed the entire the region, though it was also short-lived, beginning in September and completely suppressed by January of 1671. The damage, however, was extensive. Rebels destroyed Alatyr’ and killed several *voevody*, numerous local officials, and one priest. This violence forced a re-evaluation of security policies and Muscovy’s treatment of the region’s populace, prompting the acceleration of some procedures and the abandonment of others.

Compounding the difficulty erected by the rebellion was a religious conflict arising from Russian Orthodoxy’s schism beginning in the 1660s. By 1675, Muscovite authorities received the first reports of schismatics (later known as Old Believers) in the Middle Volga Region, including evidence accusing a local archimandrite of corresponding with a known schismatic community in the Muscovite north, and at least one violent crime among the peasantry as a village outside of Arzamas attempted to expel a schismatic from its own settlement. The immediate response to the growing danger in the Middle Volga from the central authorities was to isolate any schismatics from the general community, though by 1676 reports of increasing violence among the peasantry suggested that this first precaution was insufficient.

With unrest in the region a growing problem, both secular and religious authorities accelerated a drive to end the legal distinction of the tsar’s non-Russian subjects. The separate status of the non-Russians enabled an entire package of policies to be enacted, sharply restricting their relative freedom that had preceded 1649. Certainly Muscovite administrative policies had become increasingly restrictive, but *iasachnye liudi* status, with its minimal connection to the state despite comprising the majority of the population, was increasingly threatened by administrative innovations in the wake of the *Ulozhenie*. Though enserfment had been completed with the *Ulozhenie*, the transformation of the legal status of *iasachnye liudi* into the eventual category of state
peasant had only begun. It is undeniable, however, that the transformation was underway. In 1662, an entire Tatar village in Simbirsk received the rights to their village and its lands because all 41 men in the village entered the tsar’s service; in 1663, a nearby Chuvash village of Khirkhosa and its 17 men also enrolled in the tsar’s service to retain their village. Following the entrance of a village’s men into the tsar’s service, they would petition the central authorities to award their village to the entire community and not hold it as their individual service land. This new, outright connection to the tsar removed the non-Russians from their distant relationship with the state, reflecting the explicit growth of administrative control.

Accompanying the juridical change of entering Muscovite service, iasachnye liudi began to lose their traditional economic privileges. The loss of privileges depended greatly upon the type of occupation of the iasachnye liudi. For example, fishermen among the Mordvins in Alatyr’ province and Maris of Iadrin province lost their fishing privileges on the Sura River in 1667. The only exceptions to this was beekeeping, which remained a right of many indigenous apiarists well into the eighteenth century. However, it was also the most profitable of the traditional occupations among the non-Russian populations. In fact, unlike most of their iasachnye brethren, Mordvin, Tatar, Chuvash, Mari, and Udmurt beekeepers of Arzamas province successfully petitioned the tsar to retain their iasachnye status in 1682. This decision from the central chancelleries exempted these non-Russians from paying the traditional peasant poll tax to the local governor, and instead they continued to pay yearly tribute in honey and wax.

The changing status of the iasachnye liudi was one of several innovations affecting the non-Russian population; monastic peasants also faced new restrictions. Unlike the iasachnye liudi, their juridical change did not occur until the second half of the eighteenth century, but this did not impede the process of altering their relationships with their monastic landlords in the seventeenth century. In particular, the central authorities increasingly supported the transplant of non-Russians from the monastic estates in the Middle Volga onto the exposed southern frontier in order to allow more Russian peasants to settle in the northern portions of the region. This policy was targeted at monastery lands, because the state decided that the dispossessed non-Russians could continue to fulfill their economic obligations to their monasteries from a distance, allowing their hereditary lands to be assigned to Russian military servitors with Russian peasants.

The Mordvins of Arzamas and Alatyr’ provinces experienced widespread deportations in the second half of the seventeenth century because of this policy. To a limited extent, this process began as early as the 1640s, when Arzamas’s Troitse-Sergeevskii Monastery lost one of its Mordvin villages, but the process accelerated in the 1680s when the monastery lost several more of its Mordvin villages. The experience of the Troitse-Sergeevskii Monastery represented the general treatment of the Mordvins in the region who suffered from this forced migration to the south, resulting in an overall drop in Arzamas and Alatyr’ provinces of one-third of the Mordvin population.
The experience of the Mordvins illustrates the changing status of monastic peasants. Though they were initially a vital part of Muscovite settlement in the region, by the last quarter of the seventeenth century the central authorities limited monastic supervision of non-Russian peasants. As this change was accompanied by an increase of Russian peasant settlement in the region on lands newly granted to military servitors, the abandonment of support for monastic landholding transformed the ethnic composition of the region. Furthermore, the Mordvins’ experience demonstrates the real danger of increased centralized control over the non-Russian population. While the Tatars and Chuvash, for example, were primarily *iasachnye liudi*, the Mordvins had been the most likely population placed into the legal categories of monastic or servitor peasant. Without the protection of *iasachnye* status, this resulted in the Mordvins becoming those most victimized by the tsar’s authority.

In the era of Muscovite control over the Khanate, the central chancelleries enacted policies that discouraged monasteries’ conversion efforts among their own peasantry, but by the 1680s the tsar’s government actively promoted conversion to Orthodoxy. In 1680, the first financial incentives for the conversion of Muslim Tatars of Kazan were enacted, other populations of the former Khanate received the state’s attention the following year. Subsequent laws further pressured Muslim Tatars to convert, eventually granting the local authorities the right of seizing land from Muslim Tatars in order to provide more land for converted Tatars. As Muslims throughout the territory faced continuing pressure to convert at the direction of the state, Russian Orthodox officials became increasingly concerned about the validity of Orthodox observances among the converted Tatars, Mordvins, Maris, and Chuvashes. The following century would only bring a coordinated conversion campaign, beginning in the 1730s.

From this perspective, the growth of administrative practices and the promulgation of the *Ulozhenie* of 1649 were just the opening volleys in a long-term struggle to incorporate the local population living in the lands of the former Khanate of Kazan. As more reforms and policies were added, the local accommodations that had defined the first 100 years of Muscovite control over the Khanate were steadily eliminated. In this way, the tsar’s government adjusted to incorporate its new land and peoples directly, ending the transitional era of a composite monarchy, thereby creating a more unified monarchy by minimizing regional differentiation. As Muscovite expansion continued, however, the process was renewed, recreating the challenging circumstances of Kazan’s conquest. However, the tsar’s government enjoyed the knowledge that its legal and administrative systems were sufficiently flexible to accommodate new differences with the growing boundaries of an emerging expansionist power.

**NOTES**

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Eurasian Studies of Harvard University, March 2005. I thank the participants of these forums and the anonymous readers for Nationalities Papers for their comments and suggestions.


2. Legal reforms as a method of colonial control have attracted increasing attention in recent years. For a comparative discussion of the process, see Lauren Benton, Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400–1900 (New York: Cambridge, 2002).


5. Paul Bushkovitch recently applied the composite monarchy model to Muscovy, but argues that the process began with the southern expansion into Ukrainian lands. This article argues, conversely, that the process began a century earlier with Muscovy’s first incorporation of a foreign, ethnically and religiously different state, the Khanate of Kazan’. Paul Bushkovitch, “What Is Russia? Russian National Identity and the State, 1500–1917,” in Andreas Kappeler, Zenon Kohut, Frank Sysyn & Mark von Hagen, eds, Culture, Nation, and Identity: The Ukrainian–Russian Encounter, 1600–1945 (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003), pp. 144–161.

6. Though non-Russian ethnic status became a separate social rank in Muscovy, it did not preclude access to the legal system. This conclusion follows George Weickhardt’s observations of “due process and equal justice” in Muscovy—it may not have been equality, but it was equal access. George G. Weickhardt, “Due Process and Equal Justice in the Muscovite Codes,” Russian Review, Vol. 51, 1992, pp. 463–480.


9. For accounts of some of the violence in the Middle Volga Region, see Istoriia Tatarii v dokumentakh i materialakh (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe sootstvo no-ekonomicheskoe izdatel’stvo, 1937), p. 367, and A. I. Kopanev and A. G. Man’kov, eds, Vossstanie I. Bolotnikova: Dokumenty i materialy (Moscow: Nauka, 1959). The most recent discussion of these events is in Chester S. L. Dunning, Russia’s First Civil War: The Time of Troubles and the Founding of the Romanov Dynasty (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), pp. 261–384, passim.


13. Nurmanet Nurkeev was awarded hereditary land in addition to his pomest’e in acknowledgment of his loyal service following his father’s. Ermolaev and Mustafina, Dokumenty po istorii Kazanskogo kraia, #31, 13 April 1622, pp. 72–74.

14. Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiiv drevnikh aktov (RGADA), f. 1156, Saranskaia prikaznaia izba, op. 1, d. 9, l. 4–5, after 27 June 1680.

15. RGADA, f. 159, Prikaznye dela novoi razborki, op. 2, Posol’skii prikaz, d. 1171, l. 1, 1671–1676.

16. As late as 1675, when the Russian Leontii Luk’ianov syn Chufarov received his pomest’e in Simbirsk uzed, loyal service was cited as the reason for the grant. P. Martynov, comp., Seleniia Simbirskogo uezda (Materialy dlia istoriia Simbirskogo dvorianstva i chastnogo zemlevladeniia v Simbirskom uezde) (Simbirsk: Tipo-litografiia A. T. Tokareva, 1903), p. 120.


18. Ermolaev and Mustafina, Dokumenty po istorii Kazanskogo kraia, #17, 11 April 1597, pp. 51–52; #21, no earlier than September 1602, pp. 56–57; #23, 18 November 1604, pp. 58–59; #32, after 16 February 1616, pp. 74–75; #33, 22 February 1616, pp. 76–78.


24. Begishev was identified as a Chuvash in the earliest documents, though later records identify his family as “service Tatars.” However, it was common in the seventeenth century for Muscovite sources to label any Muslim as “Tatar.” Furthermore, possessing a Muslim village indicated that the Begishevs were Muslim. Stepanov Mel’nikov, ed., *Akty istoricheskie i iuridicheskie i drevniiia tsarskiiia gramoty Kazanskoi i drugikh sosedsstvennykh gubernii* (Kazan’: Knigoprodavets Ivan Dubrovin, 1859), #4, 26 June 19, pp. 8–9; #6, 1621, pp. 11–12; #7, 9 July 1621, pp. 13–14.

25. Mel’nikov, *Akty istoricheskie i iuridicheskie*, #9, 8 February 1624, pp. 15–16; #15, 5 February 1636, pp. 28–29; #16, after 16 February 1636, pp. 29–30.


31. RGADA, f. 281, Gramoty kollegii ekonomii, op. 1, d. 289, 17 March 1642.


33. The monasteries were Kazan’s Troitse-Sergeevskii and Zilantov Uspenskii, and Sviaazhsk’s Bogoroditsii. Information taken from I. Pokrovskii, “K istorii Kazanskikh monastyreii do 1764 goda,” *Izvestiia obshchestva arkhitekologii, istorii i etnografii pri Imperatorskom Kazanskom universitete*, Vol. 18, 1902, pp. 16–22. Pokrovskii’s information is from the census of 1646 in Kazan’ province. Similar data do not exist for most of the region’s monasteries, because of the inconsistent information kept in the census records.


37. For example, Sviiazhsk’s Troitse-Sergeevskii Monastery lost a village of Russian peasants in Sviiazhsk province to the governor of Kazan’ in 1669. RGADA, f. 1455, Gosudarstvennye i chastnye akty pomestno-votchinnykh arkhivov XVI–XIX vv., op. 5, d. 859, 29 September 1669.

38. It is likely that Onanin hoped for an adjustment in the yearly tax collection to reflect the lost labor, but his letter to the monastery just referred to his loyalty to the monks of the monastery. RGADA, f. 281, op. 1, d. 293, 23 February 1648.


40. Alishev suggests that by the end of the sixteenth century 71% of the land in Arzamas province was divided into pomest’ia, resulting in large numbers of Mordvins under direct Russian control. Alishev, Istoriicheskie sudby narodov Srednego Povolzh’ia, p. 97. A. V. Emmausskii argued that Muscovite persecution against the Mordvins began under Ivan III, but increased dramatically with the rise in Muscovy’s Mordvin population after 1552. Muscovite monasteries founded following the conquest of Kazan’ specifically targeted the traditional lands of the Mordvins for their own estates. Emmausskii, “Iz istorii bor’by za zemliu i krest’ian v Arzamasskom uezde v XVI–XVII vv.,” Trudy Kirovskogo nauchno-issledovatel’skogo instituta kraevedeniiia, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1934, pp. 7–8.

41. The response from the tsar’s government was to return the petition without answering their plea. RGADA, f. 281, op. 1, d. 303, 30 March 1679.


45. Nogmanov, Tatary Srednego Povolzh’ia i Priural’ia, p. 194.

46. RGADA, f. 16, Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv, r. XVI, vnutrennee upravlenie, op. 1, d. 709, l. 3a ob., 16 April 1613, copy from 1720.

47. RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, ll. 3a ob.–3v.

48. RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, l. 7.

49. RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, ll. 13ob–14ob.

50. RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, ll. 11ob–13ob.

51. RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, ll. 9–10.

52. RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, ll. 11–12.

53. RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, ll. 10.

54. This conclusion agrees with George Weickhardt’s recent argument that the Ulozhenie “was essentially a codification and publication of the Rule Books of the Chancelleries,” connecting the origins of the Ulozhenie with administrative practice. George G. Weickhardt, “Early Russian Law and Byzantine Law,” Russian History/Histoire Russe, Vol. 32, 2005, p. 15.


56. RGADA, f. 281, op. 1, d. 277, ll. 9–11.5, 5 January 1646 and l. 6, 2 August 1686. Frequently petitions are only revealed through responses to early requests, such as a land grant to support Tatar and Mordvin servitors in Saransk, in a favorable response to their earlier petition. RGADA, f. 1156, op. 1, d. 9, ll. 7–9, 2 November 1682.

57. Non-Russians in this case were “Tatars and other high non-Russians” (ili Tatarovia ili inye vsiakie inozemtsy). Ulozhenie, XIV: 3, p. 97–98.


60. Ulozhenie, XVI: 43, p. 112. This law does signify a major change from earlier years, when land transactions between Russians and those groups were not uncommon. For example, a charter from 26 January 1632 records a land exchange between a Tatar and a Russian, the Tatar receiving land in the countryside in exchange for his house in the city of Arzamas; another from 27 February 1633 records a land transaction between a Russian and a Mordvin, the Mordvin receiving service lands in the countryside and the Russian receiving the rights to space in the market at the Troitsii-Sergeiv Monastery in Arzamas. RGADA, f. 281, d. 267; RGADA, f. 281, d. 276, respectively.


63. *Ulozhenie*, XVI: 45, p. 112. While many Tatar servitors did receive notices for failure to provide service, this was not an uncommon phenomenon in Russia. Vasili Elatin was reminded by the Prikaz Kazanskogo dvoratsa that he owed them both taxes and service that he had failed to provide the previous year. RGADA, f. 1209, op. 78, d. 2753, 16 April 1654. The Kazanskii dvorets reminded Savin Fedorov syn Aukin and Petr Painravevich Nechaev in 1688 to fulfill their duties in Saransk *uezd*. RGADA, f. 1209, Pomestnyi Prikaz, op. 78, d. 2749; Aukin’s is l. 1, Nechaev’s is l. 2. The Pomestnyi Prikaz reminded Boris Skaskev in Saransk on 20 May 1694 of his failure to fulfill his obligations. RGADA, f. 1209, op. 78, d. 2750.

64. *Ulozhenie*, XVI: 45, p. 112.

65. Eventually Russian military servitors on the frontier also were given a residency requirement in order to shore up Russia’s defenses. A d’iak of Atemar, Petr Samoilov, accepted *pomest’e* in nearby Saransk *uezd* on 30 May 1677. Samoilov remained in town rather than settle on his land, leaving the land unused. Moscow sent him a rather sternly worded *gramota* in 1679, commanding him to travel to his land in Saransk and provide the service for which it had been granted. RGADA, f. 1455, op. 2, d. 6497, 13 September 1679.

66. *Ulozhenie*, I: 1, p. 3.


68. RGADA, f. 210, Razriadnyi prikaz, op. 21, d. 228, ll. 1–20ob., no earlier than 1669.

69. RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, l. 37, 22 March 1677, and l. 117, 21 July 1686.

70. Here I am not suggesting there was no attempt to “Russify”, merely that the final result of achieving “Russian” status was impossible. For an excellent description of early-modern Russification, see Michael Khodarkovsky, “Four Degrees of Separation: Constructing Non-Christian Identities in Muscovy,” in Ann Kleimola and Gail Lenhoff, eds, *Culture and Identity in Muscovy, 1539–1584* (Moscow: ITZ-Garant, 1997), pp. 248–266.


73. The archimandrite was from Sviiazhsk’s Bogoroditsii Monastery, *Narodnoe antitserkovnoe dvizhenie v Rossii XVII veka: Dokumenty Prikaza tainych del o raskol’nikakh, 1665–1667 gg.* (Moscow: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1986), pp. 61–62, 120–121, 143–146. Aleksandr Vasil’ev’s family was burned by their fellow villagers in Arzamas province. RGADA, f. 159, Prikaznye dela novoi razborki, op. 3, Novgorodskaiia chetvert’, d. 448, ll. 25–28, no later than 12 October 1675.

74. The Novgorodskaiia chetvert’ instructed the governor of Arzamas that if any other “schismatics or fascinated people” (*raskolniki i prelesnye liudi*) were uncovered doing “an evil thing” (*zloi del*), then they should be imprisoned in an isolated cell. RGADA, f. 159, op. 3,
d. 448, ll. 29–30, 13 October 1675. Arzamas’s governor reported with alarm the discovery of Old Believers in his province, which he feared would induce more violence among the local peasantry. RGADA, f. 159, d. 563, ll. 93–97, 12 May 1676.

75. With the inconsistent extant records it is difficult to make a direct comparison, but 176,580 peasants in 1678 in Kazan’ and Simbirsk provinces were iasachnye luidi versus only 31,260 serfs in 1662–1672. Alishev, *Istoricheskie sudby narodov Srednego Povolzh’ia*, p. 96. By the end of the eighteenth century, only 32% of the peasantry in Kazan’ province were serfs, while the remainder were state peasants. Janet M. Hartley, *A Social History of the Russian Empire, 1650–1825* (London: Longman, 1999), p. 19.

76. Vereshchagin, *Proshloe nashego kraia*, #4, 6 August 1662, p. 23; #5, no earlier than 26 September 1663, pp. 23–24.

77. In 1664, four Tatars in service from the village of Elkova in Simbirsk received the right to their village, which they attempted to legally give to the village’s remaining iasachnye Tatars. The petitioners wrote that they only entered the tsar’s service to be awarded land so the village Tatars would no longer be “exiled or convicted” and no longer “be questioned” by Muscovite authorities. Martynov, *Seleniia Simbirskogo uezda*, 25 May 1664, pp. 184–185.


79. To ensure this policy, the Prikaz also notified the current governor of the change in policy. RGADA, f. 1103, Arzamasskaia prikaznaia izba, op. 1, d. 25a, 1682. This policy is a change from the desires of local beekeepers in Nizhegorod, Kozmodem’iansk, and Kurmymsh provinces during the 1660s. Then those apiarists petitioned their landlord, the Makar’evskii Zheltovodskii Monastery in Nizhni Novgorod, asking for privilege of paying their tribute in cash rather than honey. They wanted to sell their honey directly to merchants, rather than allowing the monastery to profit as the middleman. *Akty iuridicheskie, ili sobranie form starinnago deloproizvodstva* (St Petersburg, 1838), #202, 211–214, 23 June 1663 (Nizhegorod), 23 June 1663 (Kozmodem’iansk), and 20 June 1664 (Kurmymsh).


81. The Mordvins of the village of Maloe Morosevo in Alatyr’ petitioned the tsar in 1680 about losing their land to Russians. The state’s reply informed the Mordvins that they had no reason to complain because they were supposed to claim their new land in the village of Mokshalev in Saransk province. RGADA, f. 1103, op. 1, d. 24, January 1681. Other Mordvin villages, such as that of the elder Rozan Siavashev in Arzamas province, received instructions detailing their move from the interior of the Volga Region to their new home along a river outside of the city of Saransk. RGADA, f. 281, op. 7, d. 10824, February 1683. For a discussion of monastic landholding among the Maris’ traditional lands, see A. G. Ivanov, *Ocherki po istorii Mariiskogo kraia XVIII veka* (Ioshkar-Ola: Mariiskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 1995), pp. 80–106.

82. The Mordvins protested the arrival of Russian peasants who were seizing their lands. RGADA, f. 281, op. 1, d. 291, 5 January 1645; and RGADA, f. 281, op. 1, d. 277, 16 February 1688, ll. 1–5.5.

83. Overall, from 1624–1626 to 1721, there was a 33% decline in Mordvin households in three representative districts (stany) of Alatyr’ province (Nizsurskii, Verkalatyrskii, and Verkhusurskii). A. Geraklitov, *Alatyrskaya Mordva po perepisiam 1624–1721 gg.* (Saransk, 1936), pp. 15–24.

84. The change against monastic landholding was more common in the northern Middle Volga than in its southern portions, where the state continued to support monastic landholding.
For example, in 1686 the state supported the claim of the Savvo-Storozhevskii Monastery of Simbirsk against its Tatar peasants in Voznesenskoe, who tried to get released from monastic supervision. RGADA, f. 281, op. 8, d. 11557, 26 July 1686.

85. For the Muslim Murzii Tatars, see Polnoe sobranie zakonov Russiiskoi Imperii (PSZ), Series 1, 45 vols (St Petersburg: Tipografiia i obdelenie sobstvennoi ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Kontseiliaria, 1830), Vol. 2, #823, p. 267, 21 May 1680; #867, pp. 312–313, 16 May 1681; and #870, p. 315, 24 May 1681. Following the offers to Muslim Tatars, nearby animist Mordvins were offered incentives for conversion to Orthodoxy on 16 May 1681. See Apollon Mozharovskii, “Po istorii prosveshcheniia Nizhegorodskoi mordvy,” Nizhegorodskiiia eparkhial’nyia vedomosti, Vol. 16, 1890, pp. 664–665.


87. For example, Metropolitan Adrian of Kazan’ warned Archimandrite Misail of the Maloiunginskii Monastery in Kozmodem’iansk to watch all of the converted peasants on the monastery’s estates. Grekov and Lebedev, Dokumenty i materialy po istorii Mordovskoi ASSR, Vol. 2, #208, 16 November 1687, p. 72.