

Social and cultural development in the 16th century

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Plan

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Terms

- Stoglav' Church Council
- the *Domostroi*: a handbook of household management
- ' (*beschest'e*: 'injured honour

1-Histories of Culture and Mentality for the Muscovite period in the sixteenth-century



- So diverse a populace cannot be said to have possessed a single mentality. But since clichés abound about the Russian character even for the Muscovite period, it is worth assessing sixteenth-century Orthodox East Slavs' attitudes towards the supernatural, community, and family, based on contemporary sources.
- Sixteenth-century Russians were nominally Orthodox Christian, but that statement is as misleading as saying that most Europeans before the Reformation were Catholic. Just as in pre-Reformation Europe, sixteenth-century Russian Orthodoxy combined Christian beliefs with practices drawn from the naturalist and animistic beliefs of the various Finno-Ugric peoples with whom the East Slavs came in contact

2-Stoglav' Church Council concept



At the 1551 'Stoglav' Church the hierarchy identified a wide incidence of improper religious practices. Parish schools or seminaries were nonexistent, parish organization was weak, books, sermons, and learning were limited to ecclesiastical élites. The council had to content itself with establishing some mechanisms to supervise parish clergy but otherwise just exhort the faithful to avoid what it considered 'pagan' behaviour. By examining death rituals, marriage ceremonies, prayers, and a range of celebratory practices, one can discern a 'popular culture', that is, a range of beliefs and practices exhibited by the entire social range which was distinct from the prescriptions of the official Church.

That culture featured a view of the world significantly different from the typical Christian one as Eve Levin points out. Rather than seeing the world as basically good, created by God and disrupted by the Devil, sixteenth-century Russians seem to have regarded it as a universe of powerful natural forces 'neither good nor evil but wilful and arbitrary'. They identified these forces in Christian terms (the Devil) or terms drawn from Finno-Ugric beliefs (*nezhit*, a force of evil in nature; bears and foxes were equated with evil). They summoned supernatural forces to protect themselves, drawing both on Christian intercessors (Jesus, Mary, and others) and Finno-Ugric (appealing to the power of ritual sites like bathhouses or trees and herbs imbued with supernatural powers). These customs showed no social distinctions: even the tsar's marriage ceremony shared folk customs associated with fertility; boyars are recorded consulting folk healers; wills with evocations of non-Christian attitudes stem from the landed class.

3-Role of The Church in the sixteenth century



- The Church in the sixteenth century railed against many of these practices, and had some success in asserting its presence and rituals at key moments such as death and marriage. It promoted a new vision of spirituality as well.
- Until the early 1500s, monasteries, monks, and an ascetic way of life had constituted the norm in church teaching about social and religious behaviour. But as monasteries became less exemplary with greater worldly success, the church hierarchy diversified the focus of spiritual life, offering saints' cults, sermons, other moralistic writings and teachings, and more ritual experiences to appeal more broadly. As Paul Bushkovitch has noted, official spirituality in the sixteenth century emphasized the collective, public experience of the faith, not the more inner-directed, personal piety that developed among the élite in the next century.

4-Implementing of the household management in the sixteenth-century “the *Domostroi*”



- The *Domostroi* depicts the family as the structuring principle of the community and of the polity; the grand prince is portrayed as the head of the realm construed as a ‘household’, just as the father is the head of an extended household of wife, children, servants, and other dependents. Both patriarchs rule justly but firmly; each demands obedience and responds with just and fair treatment. Women and children are to behave and obey; physical force is recommended to fathers to keep them in line. But women also have remarkably broad latitude and responsibility
- Offsetting its otherwise more typical Muscovite misogynistic views of women is the *Domostroi*’s parallel depiction of them as capable household managers, empowered in the domestic realm. Theirs is the primary responsibility for leading the family to salvation by the example of virtue and piety; theirs is the responsibility of making the household economy and servants productive by skilful management. Christian values such as charity to the poor and just treatment of dependents are balanced by a keen attention to sexual probity all of which values worked towards social stability as much as piety

5-The impact of **Culture and Mentality** in this period



- This was a typically eclectic premodern Christian community
- the church's de facto tolerance of syncretism, paralleled by the state's toleration of religious diversity (the Orthodox Church was specifically enjoined against aggressive missionary work in newly conquered areas such as Kazan and Siberia),
- helped ensure that the sixteenth century passed with remarkably little societal tension over matters of belief, a stark and oft-noted contrast to the turbulent sixteenth century of Reformation in Europe.

6-Strategic of Mechanisms of Social Integration



- The grand princes' primary goals in the sixteenth century may have been expanding their territory and extracting resources from it, but to do so they needed a minimal degree of social cohesion in the realm as a whole to ensure stability.
- Their major strategy in this regard, as we have suggested, was to tolerate diversity
- They had limited tools of integration and used them judiciously. As in other states, however, they relied on coercion and meted out harsh punishment to disloyal servitors, tax cheats, and rebellious subjects
- They were particularly inclined to declare boyars to be in 'disgrace' (*opala*) for brief periods (often a few days) to chasten them and keep them in line. Frequently they tempered the punishments with last-minute reprieves, bestowing their benevolent 'mercy' and 'favour'.
- They also made abundant use of such harsh punishments as confiscation of property demotion in rank, exile, imprisonment, and execution whenever their authority was challenged.
- They put most of their energies into appealing to the élite since its loyalty was crucial to the state's goals

7-Active techniques of integration

- Active techniques of integration that touched all society seem to have focused on the Orthodox population. The non-Orthodox (called 'tribute' people) generally were neither integrated into the élite (except for the highest clans among them) nor addressed by many of the less tangible institutions of integration
- The Church was one of few institutions whose rituals and symbolism reached across the realm; conveniently its teachings legitimated the secular government as appointed by God
- The Church and state recognized local holy men as saints on the national or local levels and thus worked to integrate disparate parts of the realm into a putative Orthodox community. Rulers used ritual moments, such as pilgrimages and processions, to demonstrate the ruler's power, piety, and relationship to his men and people; such moments were often accompanied by the distribution of alms, the founding of new monasteries and chapels, and other overtures to the local community
- Ivan IV participated almost incessantly in annual pilgrimages that traversed the centre of the realm; rulers' ceremonial entrances into conquered cities (see examples in chronicles *sub anno* 1478, 1552, and 1562) show the tsar both as humble penitent and powerful leader.
- Rulers also used architecture as a symbolic statement.
- The state also extended protection to all society for 'injured honour' (*beshchest'e*), implicitly defining the state as a community unified by honour
- Honour was defined as loyalty to the tsar, to the Church, to one's social rank, to family and clan
- Specifically excluded from the community of honour were 'thieves, criminals, arsonists, and notorious evil men', while even minstrels, bastards, and slaves were included (1589 law code)
- The state also appealed to all its inhabitants with a vision of community by according all subjects, even non-Orthodox, the right to petition the ruler
- The central focus for building a cohesive state was the court, which sought to project a coherent public image of the realm and its relationship to the élite. Genealogies of the Daniilovich family traced its descent to the Vladimir-Suzdal principality (twelfth and thirteenth centuries), while panegyrics and hagiography created a pantheon of Muscovite heroes, most notably Grand Prince Dmitrii Donskoi (1359–89).
- In the sixteenth century this vision became more universalist and less accurate. Genealogical tales of the Muscovite grand princes began to extend the family line through Kiev to ancient Rome in a typically Renaissance quest for a classical heritage.
- Much of this imagery directly appealed to the élite by making use of allegorical military themes. Moscow's boyars and élite, although illiterate, could absorb a consistent vision of the state and their place in it by gazing at the frescos, battle standards, and icons that decorated the churches and chambers where they attended the tsar. Allegorically these depicted the state as the Lord's heavenly army, a remarkably apt and probably compelling image for a state whose élite was defined by military service

Conclusion

- The image of the state as a Godly community of virtuous warriors and dependents of the tsar was acted out in collective meetings that first appeared in the mid sixteenth century.
- They seem to have fulfilled other functions than legislation; indeed, in the wake of the abolition of regional governors, they served as means of communication of state policy to the countryside to mobilize support for its military and fiscal policy.
- They also played an important symbolic role by physically creating a community of tsar and people in ritual fashion that may have worked cathartically as Emile Durkheim described rituals working to energize the community, to build bonds, and to resolve tensions. Clearly these were the challenges that stood before Muscovite rulers in the sixteenth century as they sought to bolster stability in constantly growing and vastly diverse lands

Questions

1. What is the contemporary sources of the orthodox east slaves in the muscovite period (16th century)
2. What is the pre-reformation Europe in the 16th century?
3. What are happened at the 1551?
4. What is role if the church in the 16th century?
5. What is “the domostroi”? And what is the relation between domostroi and household management?
6. What is the impact of culture mentality in this period?
7. Determined the strategie of mechanisms of social integreation?