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A new volume of customs registers from the Russian North

by Daniel Waugh

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Tamozhennye knigi Sukhono-Dvinskogo puti XVII v. [Sost. S. N. Kisterev, L. A. Timoshkina]. Vyp. 1. S.-Peterburg: "Kontrast", 2013. 368 pp. ISBN 978-5-4380-0025-9.

As S. N. Kisterev indicates in his introduction to what promises to be a new series publishing the complete texts of the late Muscovite customs registers, earlier publication of such important documentary material has a somewhat mixed history. The first serious work of preparing them for publication began as early as 1908 (!), an undertaking which A. I. Iakovlev brought to fruition finally with the publication of three substantial volumes in 1950-51 (*Tamozhennye knigi Moskovskogo gosudarstva XVII veka*). Since then, there have been various other complete or partial publications of customs registers for Muscovy, including ones by Timoshkina, who also has written reviews of such publications. As Kisterev makes clear here, he and his co-editor disagree with the approach some have taken to publish only excerpts rather than the complete texts. This new series aims at providing complete texts, with this first volume containing the book for a single year (1634/5) for Velikii Ustiug (RGADA, f. 137, Op. 1, Ustiug. No. 30). Since Iakovlev had selected for his edition the surviving books for several different northern towns which covered the same years, he had omitted this volume, publishing the ones for 1633/4 and 1635/6, years for which the material also is available for Sol'-Vychevodsk and Tot'ma. The current edition thus gives us an unbroken three year run of the Ustiug books. Iakovlev also published books from those same towns for the 1650s and 1670s-80s. Others remain in manuscript.

For those unfamiliar with these important documents, a few comments here will highlight their great interest. The register has several sections, each reflecting a particular area of responsibility of one of the local officials and his staff. Thus, there is the register focusing on collections made from those who came to Ustiug from other towns, another dealing with the members of the *gostinaia sotnia*, another dealing with collections from pedestrians and those involved in the horse trade, etc. The entries are rich in information. A lot of the material records merely transit (entrance and exit) fees, whether or not the individual brought goods to be sold there. Goods intended for the local market were subject to duty. In either case, whatever goods were brought into town were inventoried (by number or other measure of quantity); a value would be assigned to those to be sold locally. Goods in stock not sold in the previous year might also be inventoried. The individuals who arrived and paid the levies are named, their town of origin specified, and if they were agents for someone else, those individuals are named as well. Thus we find several members of a single family trading regularly between Iaroslavl' and Ustiug, and we have the agents of Dutch merchants based in Arkhangel'sk. We know precisely what the means of transport were—different types of boats, caravans small and large, or perhaps only a

horse or two. The range of goods listed in the registers is broad: furs, grain, livestock, caviar, cloth (including English and Central Asian), boots, mirrors, metal wares, etc.

Of course this evidence has long been mined by scholars (everyone still cites, for example, the major monograph by A. Ts. Merzon and Iu. A. Tikhonov on Ustiug commerce published in 1960). But there clearly is much more that can be done using this material. The careful indexes of personal and geographic names in the new volume will facilitate research. Presumably it would have made little sense to try to add an index of all the different goods, given the density of their listings on every page of the text.