

Russian Imperial Identity in the Reign of Anna Ioannovna and the Birth of the Petrine Myth

A. S. Belousov

For citation: Belousov A. S. Russian Imperial Identity in the Reign of Anna Ioannovna and the Birth of the Petrine Myth. *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. History*, 2023, vol. 68, issue 3, pp. 601–613. <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu02.2023.303>

The paper is devoted to the issue of self-identification of the Russian monarchy of the 18th century and its environment. The authorities and elites constantly turned to the symbolic practices of succession to Peter I in the process of acquiring a new imperial identity. They manifested themselves in various forms: legislative acts, calendar, holidays of Peter's dates, illuminations, etc. The personality of Peter I and adherence to his ideas formed a certain consensus within the political and economic elite, in connection with which the image of the first Russian emperor began to play one of the fundamental roles in the communicative strategies of Russian monarchs of the 18th century. The reign of Anna Ioannovna became a bifurcation point for the mechanism of political self-identification and continuity of the Russian imperial power. In response to the political crisis of 1730, the cult of Peter the Great began to be formed, reflecting the imperial idea of Russia. Anna Ioannovna, taking advantage of the Russian military success in the 1730s, revised the cult to in order to build her own original ideological narrative. It involved emphasizing the empress's virtues and presenting Russia as the main defender of the Christian world. A subsequent attempt to "debunk" the Petrine cult, on the contrary, led to its strengthening, both among the Russian political elite and a wider strata (guards and officer corps). This finally formed the Petrine myth. The personality of Peter I turned into something transcendent for the political system of the Russian Empire.

Keywords: Peter I, Anna Ioannovna, Russian monarchy, imperial identity, Peterhof.

Российская имперская идентичность в правление Анны Иоанновны и рождение петровского мифа

A. С. Белоусов

Для цитирования: Belousov A. S. Russian Imperial Identity in the Reign of Anna Ioannovna and the Birth of the Petrine Myth // Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. История. 2023. Т. 68. Вып. 3. С. 601–613. <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu02.2023.303>

Статья посвящена вопросу самоидентификации российской монархии в XVIII в. и ее окружения. Переживая процесс приобретения новой имперской идентичности, власть

Alexander S. Belousov — PhD (History), Associate Professor, ITMO University, 49, Kronverksky pr., St. Petersburg, 197101, Russian Federation; Head of Publishing Department, the Peterhof State Museum-Reserve, 2, Razvodnaya ul., Peterhof, St. Petersburg, 198516, Russian Federation; belousov1504@gmail.com

Александр Сергеевич Белоусов — канд. ист. наук, доц., Национальный исследовательский университет ИТМО, Российская Федерация, 197101, Санкт-Петербург, Кронверкский пр., 49; заведующий редакционно-издательским отделом, Государственный музей-заповедник «Петергоф», Российская Федерация, 198516, Санкт-Петербург, Петергоф, ул. Разводная, 2; belousov1504@gmail.com

© St. Petersburg State University, 2023

и элита постоянно обращались к символическим практикам преемственности идей Петра I. Они выражались в самых различных формах: законодательных актах, календаре, праздновании петровских дат, иллюминациях и т. п. Личность Петра Великого и приверженность его идеям формировала определенный консенсус внутри российской политической и военной элиты, в связи с чем образ первого русского императора стал играть одну из основополагающих ролей в коммуникативных стратегиях российских монархов XVIII в. Правление Анны Иоанновны становится точкой бифуркации для механизма политической самоидентификации и преемственности российской императорской власти. В ответ на политический кризис 1730 г. начинает формироваться культ Петра Великого, отражающий имперскую идею России. Анна Иоанновна, используя военные успехи России в 1730-х гг., предприняла попытку демонтажа культа для конструирования собственного оригинального идеологического нарратива. Он заключался в акцентировании благодетелей императрицы и выдвигании России на роль главного защитника христианского мира, то есть первой империи Европы. Проявлением это становятся придворные торжества, праздничные иллюминации, а также главная императорская резиденция — Петергоф. Особый интерес представляет семантический анализ скульптурного облика фонтана «Самсон, разрывающий пасть льва», сооруженного в честь победы при Полтаве, и каскада «Шахматная гора», где воплощенный барочными средствами старинный русский змееборческий сюжет служит для поддержания нового идеологического конструкта Анны Иоанновны. Попытка «отречения» от петровского культа в дальнейшем (дворцовый переворот Елизаветы Петровны) наоборот провоцирует его усиление как для российской политической элиты, так и для более широких слоев (гвардия и офицерский корпус). Это окончательно формирует петровский миф. Личность Петра Великого превращается в трансцендентальное означаемое для политической системы Российской империи.

Ключевые слова: Петр I, Анна Иоанновна, российская монархия, имперская идея, Петергоф.

During the rule Anna Ioannovna, a number of ideological programs, advertised both in Russia and abroad, were developed being determined by the established culture of the 18th century and the foreign-policy and home-policy circumstances. Due to the cultural traditions of the time, the method of communication did not suggest a direct dialogue, but was rather indirect by nature and manifested itself in illuminations, memorable books, architectural monuments, coins and etc.

Anna Ioannovna ascended the Russian throne with the help of the supporters of absolute power and the Imperial Guard, who opposed the power of the Supreme Privy Council. However, the events of February 25, 1730, did not give rise to the formation of the empress's own party — the one she could rely on. Over the period of two years the power struggle between the Russian and German groups had been going on at the imperial court. Finally, the latter had the upper hand in 1732, swearing an oath to Ekaterina Ioannovna, Anna's elder sister, as heir to the throne, while their opponents were arrested and exiled¹.

During this struggle for power the first ideological narrative of Anna Ioannovna's reign, aimed at the assertion of her right to absolute authority and the Russian throne, began to take shape. The key role in it was undoubtedly assigned to Peter I.

The connection with the first Russian emperor used to be expressed in different forms throughout the 18th century: references in legislative acts, celebrations of the military vic-

¹ Petrukhintsev N.N. Tsarstvovanie Anny Ioannovny: formirovanie vnutripoliticheskogo kursa i sud'ba armii i flota 1730–1735 g. St. Petersburg, 2001. P. 41, 62–65.

tories of Peter I, illuminations etc. The most famous object of these symbolic practices became one of the popular monuments of St. Petersburg — “the Bronze Horseman”. It is understandable why its pediment bears the following short inscription: “PETRO primo CATHARINA secunda MDCCLXXXIIC” (“to PETER the first from CATHERINE the second, 1782”). The personality of Peter the Great and adherence to his ideas formed a certain consensus within the Russian political and military elite, in connection with which the image of the first Russian emperor began to play one of the fundamental roles in the communicative strategies of Russian monarchs of the 18th century.

According to R. Wortman, Anna Ioannovna formed a “power scenario”, which later Elizabeth Petrovna and Catherine II began to follow — the struggle for the cause of Peter, care for the “common good” (i. e., the State) as opposed to the aristocracy². We can agree with this thesis, but it should be corrected. The formation of such a “scenario” was not smooth and controllable process during which the cult of Peter became something more than an ordinary ideological construct. In the second quarter of the 18th century, the imperial identity of Russia was shaped.

The reign of Anna Ioannovna is a key point of bifurcation in the process of forming the mechanism of political self-identification and succession of the Russian imperial power of the 18th century, since it was under her that this political instrument was finally implemented as a response to the crisis of power in 1730, and even a subsequent attempt made to revise it, on the contrary, demonstrated its systemic-political cementing, i. e., the fixation on the personality of Peter the Great as something transcendent reflected³ in the minds of the Russian elite. However, during her reign attempts were made to “reject” Peter the Great, which, on the contrary, accelerated the process of creating this strategy, as evidenced by the words of Elizaveta Petrovna — “You know whose daughter I am” — in the coup.

The first manifestation of the above-mentioned ideological narrative was the compilation of the official printed calendar. The first 1731 calendar of the new empress was drafted by the Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences and delivered to the court in Moscow. Anna Ioannovna immediately came up with some alterations. Firstly, she demanded that the references to the duke of Holstein and his son be removed from the calendar, thus excluding young Karl Peter Ulrich, future Peter III, from the list of possible heirs to the throne⁴. Secondly, she actually prohibited to mention the events of February 25, 1730. As lady Rondeau wrote in her letters, the empress became extremely angry at the mention of this date as the day when she was declared the Empress of All Russia in the calendar, as she considered the death of Peter II the beginning of her reign⁵.

The first official calendar mostly contained a list of festive occasions and personal holidays of the royal family. In this way the empress continued the tradition of a big royal family, articulated by Catherine I, which emphasized the superiority of the monarch in the family and sought to reconcile the conflicting interests of all its members. At the same time, Anna, unlike Catherine I, found it important to prove her kinship with the dynasty

² Wortman R. S. Stsenarii vlasti. Mify i tseremonii russkoi monarkhii: in 2 vols. Vol. 1. Moscow, 2002. P. 123.

³ Sokolov B. G. Gipertekst istorii. St. Petersburg, 2001. P. 117–121.

⁴ Pogosian E. A. Petr I — arkhitekto Rossiiskoi istorii. St. Petersburg, 2001. P. 339.

⁵ Rondo. Doneseniia i drugie bumagi angliiskikh poslov, poslannikov i rezidentov pri russkom dvore s 1728 po 1733 god // Sb. RIO. St. Petersburg, 1889. Vol. 66. P. 291.

in general rather than with one famous predecessor. However, the printed calendars of the 1730s featured only a series of public events, important for the society, but did not define the way of their organization⁶, which makes it impossible to fully evaluate the ideological concept of the empress. Hence, it is worth examining the decorative part of the festive illuminations.

This issue was touched upon in serious studies on the festive culture of Russia in the 18th century, including the works of D. D. Zelov⁷ and E. B. Dedova⁸. However, they did not focus on the analysis of allegorical illuminations in the context of the ideological programs of the Russian monarchs of the era of palace coups.

The fireworks were organized only for the royal holidays (birthdays, coronations, and name days) and the New Year due to the public nature of these celebrations. Other festivals were less magnificent and were usually celebrated at the court only. This is the reason why the decoration of the illuminations enables to analyze the elements of the ideological program of Anna Ioannovna and the official position of the royal family towards the events of the time more thoroughly.

The topic of the empress's belonging to the dynasty, which justified her claims to the throne, was a constituent element of the decorative part of illuminations at the dawn of her rule. The firework of 1731, organized to commemorate the name day of Anna Ioannovna, was ornamented with a band bearing an inscription: "If the root is sacred — so is the branch". The illumination of the next year, timed to coincide with the date of the coronation, was decorated with the portraits of Peter I and Anna Ioannovna. In 1733, the illumination in honour of the birthday of the empress, was already decorated with the portraits of Anna's parents, and in 1735 the main motto of the coronation day firework was "Backed by the kinsmen, decorates with virtues"⁹.

The personality of Peter I, undoubtedly, stood out among the rest; that is why Anna Ioannovna spared no effort during her first years on the throne emphasizing the symbolic connection with his reign. At the same time, she displayed great interest in the objects related to the first emperor, searching for his personal belongings, books, and tools.

In 1732 and 1733, the festivities to commemorate the name day of Peter I were conducted in the form of a festival of cavaliers of the order of St. Andrew the First-Called and were accompanied by a magnificent reception. Another important festival, which dates back to the times of Peter I — the date of the conclusion of the Treaty of Nystad celebrated as the day of cavaliers the order of St. Alexander Nevsky. Such a format of the organization of festivities demonstrated a specific corporate structure of the imperial court¹⁰.

Thus, in the first years of her rule Anna Ioannovna by means of the festivals of cavaliers, illuminations, and other institutional measures created a communicative system in

⁶ Pogosian E. A. Petr I — arkhitekto Rossiiskoi istorii. P. 324, 347, 363–364.

⁷ Zelov D. D. Ofitsial'nye svetskie prazdniki kak iavlenie russkoi kul'tury kontsa XVII — pervoi poloviny XVIII veka: PhD thesis (History). Moscow, 2002.

⁸ Dedova E. B. Allegoricheskie obrazy v iskusstve feierverkov i illiuminatsii v Rossii serediny XVIII veka: k probleme panegiricheskogo napravleniia v khudozhestvennoi kul'ture elizavetinskogo vremeni: PhD thesis (History). Moscow, 2011.

⁹ Rovinskii D. A. Obozrenie ikonopisaniia v Rossii do kontsa XVII veka. Opisanie feierverkov i illiuminatsii. St. Petersburg, 1903.

¹⁰ Pogosian E. A. Petr I — arkhitekto Rossiiskoi istorii. P. 356–357, 368–369; Rondo. Doneseniia i druzhie bumagi angliiskikh poslov, poslannikov i rezidentov pri russkom dvore s 1728 po 1733 god. P. 533–534.

order to reach a compromise among the state elites. Commitment to the ideas and precepts of Peter I became one of the highly advocated themes.

However, since 1733 Peter-oriented topics had gradually disappeared from the everyday life of the court and became an isolated realm, remaining only in the officially printed calendar in the form of the festivities reminding of Peter I¹¹. Thus, the aspect of the empress's family-ties little by little was removed from the public sphere. It is not a coincidence that it was in 1733 when the German party gained a final victory at the court. At the same time, Russian foreign policy livened up. These circumstances enabled Anna Ioannovna to substantiate her right to the throne not only by her family ties, but by her personal achievements. Understandably, the first stage of the preparations for the Russo-Turkish War of 1735–1739, accompanied by the development of the first draft of the course of actions by A. I. Osterman, and the resumption of shipbuilding on the river Don started at that particular time.

Approximately during the same period the War of the Polish Succession took place. In the course of it, B. Kh. Münnich forced Danzig to capitulate and defeated the French landing party, which came to support Stanislav Leshchinsky¹². The victory was perceived as a triumph of the Russian arms and the restoration of the international prestige of Russia, lost under Catherine I and Peter II. That was why the Russian elites were of the same opinion about the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War of 1735–1739, whereas some groups at the court, headed by B. Kh. Münnich, viewed it as a “new holy war”. It is also no wonder that his plan of combat operations was compared to a “new crusade”.

One anonymous article, published in the annotation to the newspaper “Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti” (Saint Petersburg Bulletin) in February 1736 represented a peculiar reflection of the anti-Turkish feelings prevailing at the Russian court. The introduction to the article stated that it was authored by a foreigner who indicated himself as “K”. The author discussed the War of the Polish Succession and the Ottoman-Persian conflict, laying stress on the weakness of the Ottoman Empire, “In this war there is not a trace of the past courage of the Ottoman Empire, which used to behave as if it could conquer all the countries in the world <...> It is obvious that they can give only a weak rebuff and are pressed so ruthlessly by the Persian arms that keep asking for peace, burning with shame, but to no avail”¹³. The main idea of the article came down to the argument that in the future war Russia was predestined to success due to the wisdom of Anna Ioannovna and the might of her army: “God subdues the Turkish state and exalts Russia. All the parts of this vast monarchy are closely connected and all the important affairs of the state are administered by her with great wisdom, thus her Imperial Majesty both can protect her own territories and support her allies”¹⁴.

Familiarity with the international affairs and the panegyric in honor of Russia indicate that the authorship can be ascribed to a person close to the imperial court circle, most likely to B. Kh. Münnich. The time of publication and its content, which partly echoes the ideas of a “new crusade”, confirm this. The emergence of such material in the main na-

¹¹ Pogosian E. A. Petr I — arkhitektorskaia istoriia. P. 357–361; Pogosian E. A. “I nevozmozhnoe vozmozhno”: svad’ba shutov v Ledianom dome kak fakt ofitsial’noi kul’tury // Trudy po russkoi i slavianskoi filologii. Literaturovedenie. Vol. IV. Tartu, 2001. P. 106–109.

¹² Kersnovskii A. A. Istoriia russkoi armii: in 4 vols. Vol. 1. Moscow, 1992. P. 74–76.

¹³ Primechanie // Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti. St. Petersburg, 1736. No. 53. P. 42.

¹⁴ Ibid. P. 43.

tional newspaper, in fact, the mouthpiece of the official ideas of the state, indicates that at the beginning of the war the advocates of a more aggressive course towards the Ottoman Empire prevailed over those who preferred not to go beyond the local conflict, and used the contemporary events for the creation of a certain ideological concept.

Also, it was during that period that the decorative part of the festive illuminations acquired a pronounced military character. It is noteworthy that under Anna Ioannovna's reign "military" fireworks were arranged not only for the New Year, as it was practiced at the time of Peter I¹⁵, but also for the main festivals of the Empire — the birthday (January 28) and the coronation (April 28) of the empress. This fact indicates that Anna Ioannovna perceived military victories as key events of her rule. The fact that the majority of the state elites spent winters in St. Petersburg (which was used for the new plans of the future campaign) accounts for the incorporation of the military topic into the scenarios of the above-mentioned festivals.

Thus, the New Year illumination of 1735 featured Anna Ioannovna with the symbol of victory in one hand and the rod in the other with a motto "New years, new triumphs"¹⁶. Next year on April 28 the installation dedicated to the victory of Russia in the War of the Polish Succession was erected. It represented a Russian crown on the victorious banners and a female image of Poland kneeling before the empress¹⁷. The New Year festivities were marked by an image of a sun among the constellations of the zodiac, with an imperial monogram bearing a motto "God bestows new years and new victories upon us".

The theme of the Russo-Turkish War (or Russo-Austro-Ottoman War) for the first time emerged in the illumination commemorating the 44th birthday of Anna Ioannovna. In the foreground it featured a table full of the Turkish and Tatar weapons; above it there was a portrait of the empress, wearing a laurel wreath, with an inscription "Anna the Great" and a motto "Bestowed by God to protect the fatherland". On the right, there was an installation representing the forge of Vulcan, which symbolized successfully reformed military institutions, bearing an inscription "The affirmance of peace". On the left, there was a picture illustrating the shelling of a Turkish fortress, presumably Azov, with a motto "The pacification of foes". At the Spit of Vasilevskii Island the firework theatre imitated the Perekopskaia line with the gates crowned with a Russian flag and bearing an inscription "The destruction of the enemies' gates"¹⁸.

The festivities, arranged on April 28, 1737, developed the above-mentioned military motifs further. The key image of the illumination was the double-headed eagle of Russia. In the central scene it was depicted as rising above the Crimea and the Black Sea and holding an olive branch and a sword with an inscription "grants the laws rather than passes them" in its claws. In the right scene the eagle was shown soaring above the river Don, holding the keys from the fortresses Azov and Liutik. The inscription underneath stated "Never gives back what is hers". The left one was quite similar, but included the mouth of the river Dnieper with its fortresses and the eagle holding a laurel wreath and the lightning bolts of Zeus. The inscription read: "Overcomes all the obstacles". In the theatre of fireworks there was a triumphal arch decorated with a figure of a double-headed eagle with an

¹⁵ Pogosian E. A. Petr I — arkhitektor rossiiskoi istorii. P. 76–95.

¹⁶ Rovinskii D. A. Obozrenie ikonopisaniia v Rossii do kontsa XVII veka. P. 211.

¹⁷ Ibid. P. 214.

¹⁸ Ibid. P. 216.

orthodox cross and stepping one foot on a setting moon. The composition finished with a motto “Destroys the realm of darkness”¹⁹.

In 1738, on the birthday of Anna Ioannovna, the illumination featured a female image of Russia, with a face of the empress, and all the Christian peoples, who had been praying for her long rule. The motto of the illumination was “Long live great Anna”. On both sides of the main picture there were two more. One of them displayed the fortress of Ochakov with crescents on top of the houses and the inscription “To the brave achievements”, the other one — the same fortress, but with Christian crosses and running away Turkish army, and the inscription “by courageous protection”²⁰.

The last illumination touching upon the Russo-Turkish War dates back to April 28 of the same year. It looked like a big marquee, with a double-headed eagle on top of it and an imperial crown in its center. On both sides of the marquee there were camps decorated by the Turkish arms, victorious banners, bay trees and palms. In addition to this installation, there was another one, featuring an imperial crown on the pedestal with the monogram of Anna Ioannovna, the list of her virtues, and an inscription “Protection and pride”. On the left side there was an obelisk with the monogram of the empress, and bowing figures of a Tatar and a Turk. The scene was marked with the following inscription: “Humbly revering the victor”. On the right, the figure of Europe riding a bull, resting on the Turkish shields and guns and lifting an imperial crown, was placed. This part of the illumination was accompanied by an inscription: “With joy does Europe elevate this”, which implies that Europe was grateful for the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, the victory that made Russia superior to all other states²¹.

Apparently, Anna Ioannovna embedded the military achievements of Russia in a new ideological program of her reign. The main home-policy issue of this program was the substantiation of her rights to the Russian throne on account of her wisdom and virtues. The foreign-policy leitmotif involved the Russian crown’s claims to the supremacy of Russia over other European monarchies and the status of the main protector of Christendom. It is not a coincidence that the reverse side of the medal in memory of the capture of Azov in 1736 bore the following engraving: “PACE EVROP. PROMOTA. TARTARIS VICT. TANAI LIBERATO. 1736” (“Peace in Europe has been preserved. The Tatars have been defeated. Tanais [Don] has been set free”).

This rhetoric can be attributed to certain foreign policy communication between the European powers related to the state building because of the lack of equality, institutionalization and autonomy.

These elements of the incompleteness of the European model of state system were articulated by Johannes Burkhardt, a German professor, who used them to explain the belligerence of the European history of the early modern period²².

At the same time, under the influence of the Russo-Turkish War the attitudes towards the themes concerning Peter I, also changed. This is obvious from the publication of a historical work of the academician G. Z. Baier, which gives an account of the history of the

¹⁹ Ibid. P. 216–217.

²⁰ Ibid. P. 218–219.

²¹ Ibid. P. 220.

²² *Burkhardt J. Die Friedlosigkeit der Frühen Neuzeit. Grundlegung einer Theorie der Bellizität Europas // Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung. 1997. No. 24. P. 509–574; Langevishe D. Chto takoe voyna? Evoliutsiia fenomena voyny i ee legitimatsiia v Novoe vremia // Ab Imperio. 2001. No. 4. P. 19–20.*

Azov fortress. There is no evidence that the study was commissioned by the empress or Baron J. A. Korff, the head of the Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences, personally, but, presumably, the court was familiar with it.

Most of the material of G. Z. Baier's work covers the Turkish Wars of Peter I. It features the tsar as a brave warrior and a gifted military leader from a young age. The author does not clearly evaluate his deeds but refers to the Turkish and Tatar assessments of Peter I. In the eyes of Russian readers these negative comments became a sort of praise to the first emperor²³. The concerns of the Crimean Khan are communicated through his conversation with the Ottoman Sultan: "Having completed the war with the Cesar, the Sultan must make sure that the new Nemche Giaur does not fill the Ottoman Porte with serious misgivings"²⁴.

According to E. A. Pogosian, it was these "indirect" praises addressed to Peter I that made the book of G. Z. Baier a kind of eulogy to Peter I rather than to Anna Ioannovna²⁵. However, the final lines of the book are: "Finally, Azov has been given back to the Turks under the above-mentioned peace treaty"²⁶. Peter I, despite all his talents and merits, lost the last war to the Turks and was forced to return Azov.

Thus, the work of G. Z. Baier should not be perceived only as a full-fledged panegyric on Peter I. The text had a definite political task — to exalt Anna Ioannovna in a subtle way. The book of G. Z. Baier was brought out two years after the capture of Azov, when the memory of it was still alive and emphasized by the publication of different maps with etchings²⁷. Thus, contemporaries, looking upon the events of the Russo-Turkish War in the context of the deeds of Peter I, were expected to conclude that it was Anna who managed to return the losses of Peter I and even to outstrip his achievements.

Another important place, closely associated with Peter I, Peterhof, also underwent similar processes. The reign of Anna Ioannovna became the golden age for the palace and park ensemble on the Gulf of Finland. She resumed all the construction works suspended under Catherine I and Peter II²⁸. According to V. A. Letin, throughout the "decade of Anna's rule" a symbolic program, based on the political ambitions of the empress, was systematically carried out²⁹. The practices of symbolic succession to Peter I were directly connected with Peterhof, which was not only founded by the first emperor but was also associated with the ritual practices of faith in the tsar and loyalty to him³⁰.

²³ Pogosian E. A. Petr I — arkhitektor rossiiskoi istorii. P. 371.

²⁴ Baier G. Z. Kratkoe opisanie vseh sluchaev kasaiushchikhsia do Azova ot sozdaniia sego goroda do vozvrashcheniia onogo pod Rossiiskuiu derzhavu. St. Petersburg, 1738. P. 255.

²⁵ Pogosian E. A. Petr I — arkhitektor rossiiskoi istorii. P. 372.

²⁶ Baier G. Z. Kratkoe opisanie vseh sluchaev kasaiushchikhsia do Azova ot sozdaniia sego goroda do vozvrashcheniia onogo pod Rossiiskuiu derzhavu. P. 284.

²⁷ Karta Azovskogo moria s graviuroi "Osada Azova" // Rossiiskaia natsional'naia biblioteka. Otdel kartografii. K1-Plan 1/38; Karta // Ibid. K1-RossE 4/59.1; Karta // Ibid. K1-Cher 4/26; Boeck E. Accurateste und Wahre Abbildung des Russischen Lagers und retrenchement vor der Turdischen haupf vestung Assoff. ... 20 may dieses 1736 // Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département Cartes et plans. GE D-17891.

²⁸ Raskin A. G. Dusha Petergofa. Fontany i kaskady. St. Petersburg, 1999. P. 65–66.

²⁹ Letin V. A. Petrovskii tekst usadbenykh proektov serediny XVIII veka: anninskii Petergof // Obshchestvo. Sreda. Razvitie (Terra Humana). 2010. No. 4. P. 103.

³⁰ Nikiforova L. V. Chertogi vlasti. Dvorets v prostranstve kul'tury. St. Petersburg, 2011. P. 320.

The fountain “Samson tearing the lion’s jaws”³¹ was constructed in 1735 in the scoop of the Marine canal in front of the Grand Cascade³². Most of the historiographers claim that Peter I planned to introduce the Battle of Poltava of 1709 into the decoration of the Grand Cascade in the form of the allegoric figure of Hercules fighting the hydra. It was proposed to place this group of figures on top of the Grand Cascade, but Peter I did not live long enough to carry out this plan³³. It was not the only time when Peter I used this image. The sculptor N. Pino received a commission from the state to carve the figure of the tsar in the form of Hercules striking a lion (the symbol of Sweden) with a spear³⁴. However, on top of the Grand Cascade Peter I wanted to place the figure of Hercules fighting the Lernaean hydra, a multi-headed snake with poisonous breath.

The image of a serpent was often used in the panegyric genre of the 18th-century Russia as a symbol of the Ottoman Empire — a foe of Christianity and a torturer of peoples. The play “The triumph of the Orthodox world”, staged by the Slavic-Greek-Latin Academy in 1702, can serve as an example of this. In one of the episodes the chariot of triumphant Mars was drawn by a snake and a lion, symbolizing the victories of Peter I over Sweden and Turkey³⁵.

Peter I himself after the Azov campaigns was praised for releasing Orthodox peoples from the yoke of “Mahomet — the Asiatic snake”, who had been spilling the blood of Christians for thousands of years, and killing them in thousands ‘with a sword and in prisons’³⁶. The prototype of the snake was Sultan Mehmed II who conquered Constantinople. The Pruth campaign of Peter I was glorified as the battle of Christians against the Turkish yoke. It is not a coincidence that in his “Speech”, delivered in the presence of Peter I, Şerban Cantemir pinned hopes on the revival of Greece through Russian campaigns against the Ottoman Empire³⁷.

In the labors of Hercules, the slaying of the Lernaean hydra is the second story after the Nemean lion, which he slew to wear its skin. It was after the victory over Sweden that Peter I planned a new war in the east to regain the lost territories and to strengthen the south. However, the plans of Peter I about the Cascade were not realized and “Hercules” was replaced with “Samson”.

The sculpture of “Samson tearing the lion’s jaws” was cast by Rastrelli in 1735³⁸. According to the drawing by M. Makhaev of 1756, “Samson” had a beard and long hair like a Bible character³⁹. What was the reason for the replacement of “Hercules” sculptural group with “Samson”? The point is that by the early XVIII century Samson had occurred only in Russian epic stories (bylinas) and apocryphal texts, and only in the first years of Russia’s

³¹ Fontannaia gruppa “Samson, razdiraiushchii past’ l’va” // Gosudarstvennyi muzei-zapovednik “Peterhof”. Fond “Skul’ptura”. Inv. No. PDMP 48/1-sk.

³² O sdelanii pod Samsonovskuiu figuru vnov’ p’edestala // Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (hereafter RGIA). F. 490. Op. 2. D. 6. L. 1–7.

³³ *Ardikutsa V. E.* Fontany Petrodvortsa. Leningrad, 1972. P. 60–61.

³⁴ *Krotov P. A.* Bitva pri Poltave. St. Petersburg, 2009. P. 358.

³⁵ *Grebeniuk V. P.* Obzor proizvedenii panegiricheskogo soderzhaniia pervoi chetverti XVIII v. // Russkaia staropechatnaia literatura (XVI — pervaaia chetvert’ XVIII v.). Panegiricheskaia literatura Petrovskogo vremeni. Moscow, 1979. P. 18.

³⁶ *Ibid.* P. 46.

³⁷ *Ibid.* P. 70.

³⁸ *Iumangulov V. Ia.* Petergovskii Samson. Biografiia pamiatnika. St. Petersburg, 2015. P. 12, 18.

³⁹ *Petergov v graviurakh i litografiakh XVIII — nachala XIX veka.* St. Petersburg, 2014.

rivalry with Sweden it became a generally accepted and widely known symbol of Russia directly associated with Peter I⁴⁰.

At the same time, the creation of the sculpture of “Samson” deviated from the established rules of allegory, when the character had to be compared with ancient heroes or gods. The Old Testament story about Samson came to the fore. It is likely that this was due to the fact that moment the Russian contemporary culture was transitioning to its own heroic genre. So, after only a few years, Lomonosov refused to compare Peter with ancient images (he considered them “fables”) and turned to the themes of ancient Russian literature⁴¹.

The installation of the sculpture was preceded by the War of the Polish Succession, which played an important role in the development of the new ideological narrative. It was the first triumph of the Russian warfare in nine years, which of course emphasized the significance of the military heritage of Peter I, with the Battle of Poltava standing out against the background of other events.

The overwhelming majority of Russian historiographers ascribe the installation of “Samson” to the 25th anniversary of the Battle of Poltava, which was celebrated on June 27, 1734, in St. Petersburg: “Last Wednesday the Battle of Poltava was solemnly commemorated by an ordinary prayer service and gunnery from the fortress and the Admiralty”⁴². It is noteworthy that the adjective “ordinary” used in the story does not correspond to the idea of a large-scale celebration.

The tradition of the celebration of such events (5th, 10th, 20th anniversaries) dates back to the 19th century. Hence, the contemporaries of Anna Ioannovna did not take 1734 year as the anniversary of the Battle of Poltava. Historiography coined this stereotype by extrapolating these ideas to the events of the 18th century. Consequently, it is a mistake to identify the installation of the fountain “Samson” with the anniversary of the Battle of Poltava, although it represents its allegory. It is also significant that there is no reliable information about the exact date of the unveiling of the fountain in 1735. If the fountain had been created to commemorate the Battle of Poltava, it would have been launched in the presence of the empress on June 27. Anna Ioannovna arrived in Peterhof only on July 3 in the evening⁴³.

It appears that the installation of “Samson” is concerned not with the anniversary of the Battle of Poltava, but with the ideological narrative of Anna Ioannovna. Peter I himself associated the Battle of Poltava with the Old Testament celebration of Easter. He called this victory the “resurrection of Russia”⁴⁴. Under the rule of Anna Ioannovna, the victories achieved in the course of the War of the Polish Succession were undoubtedly put down to the successful reforms of the army in the early 1730s (the military land committee and the naval committee) and personal efforts of the empress. Anna Ioannovna needed to confirm her right to the Russian throne, to strengthen the position of the “German party” and to maintain consensus in it, so the empress portrayed herself as a worthy heir to Peter I at official events. At the time of the creation of Samson, Anna Ioannovna sought to concen-

⁴⁰ Raskin A. G. Dusha Petergofa. Fontany i kaskady. P. 178.

⁴¹ Moiseeva G. N. Drevnerusskaia literatura v khudozhestvennom soznanii i istoricheskoi mysli Rossii XVIII veka. Leningrad, 1980. P. 27–28.

⁴² Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti. 1734. No. 53. P. 222.

⁴³ Ibid. 1735. No. 54. P. 436.

⁴⁴ Pogosian E. A. Petr I — arkhitektor rossiiskoi istorii. P. 124.

trate on the idea that she was the most worthy successor of the first emperor since the war with Turkey had not yet begun then, which allowed her to move away from using the personality of Peter the Great when interacting with the elite. After the first successes in the course of the war, declared by B. Kh. Munnich a “new crusade”, communicative meanings were replaced in favor of military successes, which played a special institutionalizing and legitimizing role in modern era.

Military spirit is intrinsic not only to “Samson”, but to the Chess Mountain Cascade located in the eastern part of the Lower Park of Peterhof. No later than in spring 1733 I. Ia. Blank drafted a new project of a cascade with two fountains at its footsteps. Three dragons on top of the cascade dominated the project⁴⁵. In April of 1738, Anna Ioannovna ordered to carry out the adopted project of the cascade with the fountains⁴⁶.

The cascade was crowned by three wooden dragons, carved by I. Kazantsev, M. Alexandrov, and A. Kirsanov, modeled on the wax moulds, cast by K. Osner, and painted by G. Brumkorst. Its construction was completed in 1739. Roman-style fountains, which are part of the composition of the cascade, frame the view of it and the perspective of the Monplaisir alley, like huge pylons. They were installed in 1739, designed by I. Ia. Blank and I. Davydov⁴⁷. Historiography knows little about the semantics of the new cascade and the meaning of the dragons on top of it.

Most likely, the dragons on top of the cascade-mountain symbolize Turkey — the “Asiatic snake”. The Roman-style fountains, in turn, play an important symbolic role. The symbol of Rome is directly connected with the title of the Ottoman sultans. Rum was the Arabic word for the Eastern Roman Empire. This name was adopted by the Ottomans, who used to call the territories conquered in the south-east of Europe the land of Rum (Rum-ili in Turkish). Mehmed II, having captured Constantinople in 1453, took the title of the Caesar of the Roman Empire (Kaser-i-Rum in Turkish). This title is mentioned in the diplomatic correspondence of Ottoman Sultans with the representatives of other countries, including Christians⁴⁸. At the same time, the Turkish Sultan was also publicly referred to as emperor of Constantinople⁴⁹.

The presence of a grotto on top of the cascade can be attributed to the hagiographic motif of the “Miracle of St. George”, when the snake crawls out not from the water but from the cave. It would be interesting to know why three dragons were placed instead of one. Probably, this is the reference to the number of wars with the Ottoman Empire at that time: 1686–1700, 1710–1713, 1735–1739. This interpretation is corroborated by the date of the construction of the cascade — 1738, when a new war was in full swing. However, this is only a hypothesis.

The installation of this cascade made up an axis with the Palace of Monplaisir, which had a special symbolic meaning as the main space of Peter I in Peterhof. After the demise of the first emperor, the palace turned into something like a proto-museum to keep the

⁴⁵ Inostrannye spetsialisty v Rossii v epokhu Petra Velikogo: Biograficheskii slovar' vykhodtsev iz Frantsii, Vallonii, frankoiazychnykh Shveitsarii i Savoi: 1682–1727. Moscow, 2019. P.90.

⁴⁶ O perestroike ruinnogo kaskada i o postroike fontanov v nizhu po obe ego storony // RGIA. F. 490. Op. 1. D. 20. L. 1–5.

⁴⁷ Raskin A. G. Petrodvorets. Dvortsy-muzei, parki, fontany. Leningrad, 1984. P.106–109.

⁴⁸ *Stavrides Th.* The sultan of Vezirs. The life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelovic (1453–1474). Leiden; Boston; Koln, 2001. P.20.

⁴⁹ Nynе vladeiushchaia Evropa, na 1736 god genvaria na 1 den' // Zhurnal Ministerstva vnutrennikh del. St. Petersburg, 1839. No. 2. P.71.

memory of him. The central hall of the palace, decorated with a picture of the solar god Apollo, and the cascade intertwine into a peculiar snake-fighting motif, which dates back to the culture of the Tsardom of Muscovy, where the concept of a snake-fighting tsar, the protector of the sun of orthodoxy — pure faith — from the snake, was articulated in the 16th century⁵⁰. Hence, the axis, which unites the cascade and the palace, creates a snake-fighting motif, with the dragons representing the dark forces and Apollo fighting the evil. Most likely, Apollo symbolizes the owner of the palace, i. e., the Russian monarch, and the dragons — the Ottoman Empire.

Thus, an ancient Russian story narrated by the visual baroque methods directly correlates with the ideas of the new ideological narrative of Anna Ioannovna, highlighting the role of Russia as the main protector of Christendom.

Also in 1737, Peterhof became a place of storage of military trophies. After the successful capture of Ochakov, B. Kh. Minikh sent his wing adjutant, Captain P.I. Olits, to the empress with the following military gifts: 9 bunchuks, 8 maces, 7 silver shields, 14 banners. The trophies were delivered to Anna Ioannovna on August 14, 1737, in Peterhof, where she examined them for about an hour⁵¹.

Thus, Peterhof became one of the key centers for the implementation of the new ideological narrative of Anna Ioannovna. It is not a coincidence that the large-scale construction works in the palace and park ensemble progressed in parallel with its gradual development.

To sum up, the causes of the Russo-Turkish War of 1735–1739 are rooted in the sphere of foreign policy, economy, and ideology. High officials of the Russian Empire, despite their mutual contradictions, had sought to start a new war with Turkey since the early 1730s with their geopolitical interests in mind. The Caucasian campaign of the Crimean Tatars, the vassals of the Ottoman Empire, and their raids on Ukraine were solely *casus belli* for Russia.

As a result, having ascended the Russian throne, Anna Ioannovna faced a certain crisis of the legitimacy of her power, which was juxtaposed with the process of incorporation of the Russian elite into the pan-European system and “search” for its place there. Russia had not yet assumed the role of a “multinational empire”⁵², which took place later. The Russian government and its elite were still forming their new imperial identity. Appeal to the personality of Peter I, to his image and politics allowed the empress to establish a consensus within the elite and to prove her rights to the throne. The empress later abandoned the cult of Peter and began to use Russia’s military successes to construct a new ideological narrative, where the main role was given to her, whereas the empire played the leading role among European powers with the status of the main defender of Christian civilization. Such a “renunciation” of the cult of Peter, on the contrary, only strengthened its significance both for the Russian elite and for a wider strata (primarily the guards and officers) and finally turned the Petrine myth into the semantic core (transcendentally signified) of the new imperial Russian statehood.

⁵⁰ *Pliukhanova M. B.* Siuzhety i simvoly Moskovskogo tsarstva. St. Petersburg, 1995. P. 220.

⁵¹ Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti. 1737. No. 66. P. 542.

⁵² *Manshtein Kh. G.* Zapiski o Rossii // Perevoroty i voiny. Khristofor Manshtein, Burkhard Minikh, Ernst Minikh, Neizvestnyi avtor. Moscow, 1997. P. 158.

References

- Ardikutsa V.E. *Fontany Petrodvortsya*. Leningrad, Lenizdat Publ., 1972, 144 p. (In Russian)
- Burkhardt J. Die Friedlosigkeit der Frühen Neuzeit. Grundlegung einer Theorie der Bellizität Europas. *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 1997, no. 24, pp. 509–574.
- Dedova E. B. *Allegoricheskie obrazy v iskusstve feierverkov i illiuminatsii v Rossii serediny XVIII veka: k probleme panegiricheskogo napravleniia v khudozhestvennoi kul'ture elizavetinskogo vremeni*: PhD thesis (History). Moscow, 2011, 30 p. (In Russian)
- Grebeniuk V. P. Obzor proizvedenii panegiricheskogo sodержaniia pervoi chetverti XVIII v. *Russkaia staropechatnaia literatura (XVI — pervaiia chetvert' XVIII v.)*. Panegiricheskaia literatura Petrovskogo vremeni. Moscow, Nauka Publ., 1979, 312 p. (In Russian)
- Iumangulov V. Ia. *Petergovskii Samson. Biografiia pamiatnika*. St. Petersburg, Tsvetprint Publ., 2015, 138 p.
- Kersnovskii A. A. *Istoriia russkoi armii*. Vol. 1. Moscow, Golosv Publ., 1992, 304 p. (In Russian)
- Krotov P. A. *Bitva pri Poltave*. St. Petersburg, Istoricheskaiia illiustratsiia Publ., 2009, 416 p. (In Russian)
- Langevishe D. Chto takoe voina? Evoliutsiia fenomena voiny i ee legitimatsiia v Novoe vremia. *Ab Imperio*, 2001, no. 4, pp. 7–28. (In Russian)
- Letin V. A. Petrovskii tekst usadebnykh proektov serediny XVIII veka: anninskii Peterhof. *Obshchestvo. Sreda. Razvitie (Terra Humana)*, 2010, no. 4, pp. 102–106. (In Russian)
- Moiseeva G. N. *Drevnerusskaia literatura v khudozhestvennom soznanii i istoricheskoi mysli Rossii XVIII veka*. Leningrad, Nauka Publ., 1980, 262 p. (In Russian)
- Nikiforova L. V. *Chertogi vlasti. Dvorets v prostranstve kul'tury*. St. Petersburg, Iskusstvo-SPb Publ., 2011, 702 p. (In Russian)
- Petrukhintsev N. N. *Tsarstvovanie Anny Ioannovny: formirovanie vnutripoliticheskogo kursa i sud'ba armii i flota 1730–1735 g.* St. Petersburg, Aleteiia Publ., 2001, 352 p. (In Russian)
- Pliukhanova M. B. *Siuzhety i simvoly Moskovskogo tsarstva*. St. Petersburg, Akropol' Publ., 1995, 336 p. (In Russian)
- Pogosian E. A. “I nevozmozhnoe vozmozhno”: svad'ba shutov v Ledianom dome kak fakt ofitsial'noi kul'tury. *Trudy po russkoi i slavianskoi filologii. Literaturovedenie*, vol. IV, Tartu, [s. n.], 2001, pp. 80–109. (In Russian)
- Pogosian E. A. *Petr I — arkhitektor rossiiskoi istorii*. St. Petersburg, Iskusstvo-SPb Publ., 2001, 424 p. (In Russian)
- Raskin A. G. *Dusha Petergofa. Fontany i kaskady*. St. Petersburg, Lenizdat Publ., 1999, 303 p. (In Russian)
- Raskin A. G. *Petrodvorets. Dvortsy-muzei, parki, fontany*. Leningrad, Lenizdat Publ., 1984, 191 p. (In Russian)
- Rovinskii D. A. *Obozrenie ikonopisaniia v Rossii do kontsa XVII veka. Opisanie feierverkov i illiuminatsii*. St. Petersburg, Izdanie A. S. Suvorina, 1903, 303 p. (In Russian)
- Sokolov B. G. *Gipertekst istorii*. St. Petersburg, Sankt-Peterburgskoe filosofskoe obshchestvo Publ., 2001, 193 p. (In Russian)
- Stavrides Th. *The sultan of Vezirs. The life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelovic (1453–1474)*. Leiden, Boston, Koln, Brill Academic Pub., 2001, 449 p.
- Wortman R. *Stsenarii vlasti. Mify i tseremonii russkoi monarkhii*. Vol. 1. Moscow, OGI Publ., 2002, 605 p. (In Russian)
- Zelov D. D. *Ofitsial'nye svetskie prazdniki kak iavlenie russkoi kul'tury kontsa XVII — pervoi poloviny XVIII veka*: PhD thesis (History). Moscow, 2002, 31 p. (In Russian)

Статья поступила в редакцию 4 февраля 2023 г.

Рекомендована к печати 3 мая 2023 г.

Received: February 4, 2023

Accepted: May 3, 2023