

The Profit Motive: Regional Economic Development in Muscovy after the Conquest of Kazan'

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1. Introduction

Muscovy's active period of eastward expansion began with the conquest of Muslim Khanate of Kazan' in 1552. With the subsequent conquest of the Khanate of Astrakhan, Muscovy gained outright control over the entire Volga River and its important trade route. Scholars of Russian expansion and of the Middle Volga Region (the former territory of Khanate of Kazan') have suggested that the economic benefit of controlling the Volga trade route was one of the motivating forces in Muscovy's conquest.¹ While several studies have explored the Volga's position as an international trade route, there has been little attention given to the domestic role of the Volga region's trade or the infrastructure developments Muscovy enacted to support and foster more trade along the Volga.²

With the incorporation of the entire Volga River, Muscovite authorities

¹ For a discussion of the economic motivations in conquest, and their relationship to the religious and political motivations, see Jaroslaw Pelenski, *Russia and Kazan: Conquest and Imperial Ideology (1438-1560s)*, (The Hague 1974), pp. 23-61.

² For an introduction to the Volga trade route under Muscovite rule, see: J. Kaufmann-Rochard, *Origines d'une bourgeoisie Russe (XVI^e et XVII^e siècles)*, (Paris 1969), pp. 93-154, *passim*; Paul Bushkovitch, *The Merchants of Moscow 1580-1650*, (Cambridge 1980), pp. 92-101; Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay, "Les routes commerciales et militaires au Caucase du Nord aux XVI^eme et XVII^eme siècles," *Central Asian Survey*, 4 (1985), pp. 1-19; Janet Martin, "Muscovite Travelling Merchants: The Trade with the Muslim East (15th and 16th Centuries)," *Central Asian Survey*, 4 (1985), pp. 21-38; L. K. Ermolacva, "Krupnoe kupechestvo Rossii v XVII—pervoi chetverti XVIII v. (po materialam astrakhanskoi torgovli)," *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 114 (1986), pp. 303-325; Stefan Troebst, "Die Kaspi-Volga-Ostsee-Route in der handelskontrollpolitik Karls XI: Die Schwedischen Persien-missionen von Ludvig Fabritius 1679-1700," *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 54 (1998), pp. 127-204.

hoped to develop the Middle Volga Region in order to achieve several goals. First and foremost, the region must be self-sufficient economically, capable of feeding its own population if not producing a surplus, plus generating sufficient revenue to support the region's administrations plus a portion for Moscow. Second, with the entire Volga River under Moscow's control, Muscovy became a complete international crossroads for trade, improving the state's negotiating position with other nations. In order to achieve these goals, the central chancelleries in Moscow instituted a widespread series of economic improvements for the Middle Volga Region in order to develop both regional trade and the region's ability to support international trade. These improvements included developing necessary infrastructure such as warehouses and markets, establishing local businesses to harness the region's natural resources, and instituting a comprehensive toll system to produce immediate financial benefits for local and central authorities. In order to affect international trade, the Muscovite chancelleries limited access to the Volga, ultimately selling monopolies to foreign companies, which produced steady revenues for state coffers. Muscovy adopted a typical, early-modern protectionist position against foreign investment and trade, which suited the central authorities with its dependence on tight economic control. Even with the state involvement in local and international trade, the Volga River generated ample revenue to fulfill all the state's goals.

2. Regional Trade

The Muscovite government's development of the economic infrastructure of the Middle Volga Region was one of its most important projects of after the conquest of Kazan'; the central chancelleries, especially the *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa* (the region's governing chancellery), actively directed the economic development of the Middle Volga Region, planning and implementing the necessary structures throughout the territory. The city of Kazan' already fulfilled a role in a trade network as an entrepôt, but was the only developed part of the Volga trade route that predated Muscovite conquest. Muscovite authorities needed the infrastructure to support trade along the entire Volga River; including storage facilities for goods moved along the river, mechanisms

for exploiting the region's natural resources, marketplaces to sell those goods, and administrative structures for monitoring the developing trade system. The government used all possible tools to realize their economic goals as quickly as possible, displaying a rare feat of cooperation among the chancelleries, managing to promote trade and to control merchants along the frontier.

Control of the Volga River trade route was one of the primary goals of the conquest of Kazan', but trade was not limited in the region only to the Volga but also travelled overland. The primary route remained the Volga River, with merchants travelling west and south from Nizhnii Novgorod, through Vasil'gorod, Koz'modem'iansk, Cheboksary, Kokshaishk, Kazan', Tetiushii, Samara, Saratov, Tsaritsyn, and ending at Astrakhan.³ Other merchants preferred a partially overland route likely opting to escape river tolls along the Volga, though trade on this route still supplemented the Volga River trade. The first of these overland routes ran from Arzamas through Alatyř' to Tetiushii, following the first military defensive line in the region, where it reached the Volga River, and then merchants travelled downstream through Saratov. When Simbirsk was constructed in 1649 as part of the new, more southerly defensive line running through Saransk, the overland trade route crossed south from Alatyř' to Simbirsk, which likely was a better port than Tetiushii. The establishment of both the defensive lines and the new cities of the region occurred at the direction of the central authorities; the first governor of Simbirsk oversaw its transition from a fort to a trading centre according to the directions of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich.⁴

The *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa* concerned itself with the security of

³ The state knew and treated these cities as a functioning trade route. Shortly after the conquests of Kazan' and Astrakhan, charters referenced these cities as the trade route. One from 8 July 1578 to the Troitse-Sergeevskii Monastery in Astrakhan referred to goods travelling upriver to Kazan', Sviiazhsk, Cheboskary, Kokshaishk, Vasil-gorod, and Nizhnii Novgorod. S. M. Kashanov, "K istorii Volzhskogo torgovogo sudokhodstva vo vtoroi polovine XVI v.," in Iu. P. Smirnov, *et al.* (eds.), *Voprosy istorii narodov Povolzh'ia i Priural'ia*, (Cheboksary 1997), p. 49.

⁴ I. S. Romashin, *Ocherki ekonomiki Simbirskoi gubernii XVII-XIX vv.*, (Ul'ianovsk 1961), pp. 1-5.

⁵ The protests of merchants moving goods along the Volga River are discussed in Kaufmann-Rochard, *Origines d'une bourgeoisie Russe*, pp. 100-102.

the trade routes, because numerous petitions had reached Moscow complaining of raided caravans and stolen goods.⁵ As early as in 1613, instructions sent to local governors (*voevody*) in the region from the *Prikaz* required the governors to observe all merchants travelling on the Volga River. In Kazan', for example, when merchant caravans prepared to travel downriver to Astrakhan, a herald announced the date of departure allowing other merchants to join the party. The *Prikaz* also instructed the governors in charge of cities along the Volga to make efforts to guarantee the safety of merchants.⁶

The increased protection of traders over the course of the seventeenth century also enabled more effective customs collection. All caravans travelling upriver from Astrakhan were stopped and examined in the cities along the Volga River. If the merchants lacked proper permission for trade, or were carrying any banned items, the caravans were seized.⁷ Further instructions from the *Prikaz* required the governors to be wary of merchants who might have fished in the Volga as well as moved goods, and instructed each governor to watch the customs official in the city to ensure proper taxes were being paid for the goods.⁸

The revenue raised from the customs collection from river trade was considerable. For example, Simbirsk's customs official collected 129 roubles from tariffs in May 1666 alone, and averaged approximately 100 roubles per month throughout the following summer. During the winter, customs duties dropped to little as 10 roubles per month from the decreased traffic, but trade duties over the course of one year were more than the money produced from fines in the governor's court in that same period.⁹ Also, these figures omit taxes collected from salt sales or fishing privileges, which would produce a much higher figure for the total revenue produced from commercial activities along the river.

The regulation of the trade routes extended beyond the governor's observations of trade inside his city walls. The *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa*

⁵ Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnykh arkhivov (RGADA), f. 16, Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv, r. XVI, Vnutrennee upravlenie, op. 1, d. 709, ll. 52-53ob., and ll. 71-75ob.

⁷ RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, ll. 14ob-16.

⁸ RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, ll. 32ob-35.

⁹ A. N. Zertsalov, *Materialy dlia istorii Simbirskia i ego uezda (Prokhodo-raskhodnaia kniga Simbirskoi Prikaznoi Izhy) 1665-1667 gg.*, (Simbirsk 1896), pp. 94-95, 98-100.

employed monasteries to monitor trade travelling either over their own land or over designated areas. Kazan's Zilantov Uspenskii Monastery received supervisory powers for a stretch of the Volga River near the city of Tetiushii. Trading boats and fishing boats paid variable rates to the monastery on a sliding scale based on the commercial activity and the size of the vessel.¹⁰ Other monasteries had the rights to tax land-based trade, such as Saransk's Spasskii Monastery, which collected tolls for all commodities transported from Kazan' to Saransk. The monastery then turned a portion of its profits over to the government as tax revenue, allowing both local and central authorities to prosper with minimal expenses on their part.¹¹

The combination of monasteries and governor monitoring merchant activities and taxing goods throughout the region resulted in a functioning, if ad-hoc, toll system, filling state coffers and increasing the central authorities' knowledge of local trade practices. This toll system also regulated all fishing rights throughout the region, since fishing the region's rivers and moving goods over those rivers were linked by central authorities. With numerous fishable rivers throughout the territory, the *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa* closely watched sales of fish. The *Prikaz* instructed the governor of Kazan', for example, to maintain records on the volume and price of fish being sold in Kazan', compare that information to previous years, and report any irregularities to the *Prikaz*.¹² This allowed the *Prikaz* to gather accurate data on the growth of the fish market and utilize that information to adjust taxes upon the fish trade.

The *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa* extended control over trade beyond regulating tolls by directing the construction of structural improvements to support trade. Specifically, this generally took the

¹⁰ A trading boat (*tovarnii lodok*) paid one *grivna*, a ocean-going fishing boat (*plavnyi lodok*) paid two *dengi*, while a small fishing boat (*botik*) paid only one *dengi*. N. L. Rubinshtein, ed., *Istoriia Tatarii v dokumentakh i materialakh*, (Moscow 1937), 26 February 1662, p. 156.

¹¹ Ovam Voroblevskii wrote to Archimandrite Avram of the monastery after paying the toll for transportation of salt. He told the archmandrite that he was only paying the toll because it was the tsar's command.

RGADA, f. 281, Gramoty kollegii ekonomii, op. 7, d. 10828, 1686.

¹² RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, ll. 16ob-21.

form of funding storage depots along the river. Arzamas's Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Monastery, for example, received a charter (*gramota*) in 1614 instructing the abbot to construct granaries in two places on its land, one in town and one outside of it, in order to provide a place for merchants to store their goods. In this case, the monastery's village of Strakhov in Arzamas province provided the revenue for construction, though the money generated from the rent of the silos would be turned over to the government.¹³ Similarly, the Zilantov Uspenskii Monastery in Kazan' built ten granaries and two small huts inside the monastery to provide for traders along the Volga River on instructions from Moscow during the 1620s; the central authorities informed the abbot that these buildings were to be rented to merchants travelling along the river.¹⁴

The central chancelleries were closely involved in the construction of new businesses throughout the region as well.¹⁵ On occasion, central chancelleries ordered local businessmen to establish new businesses for the chancelleries' benefit. For example, Mamatagei Zamanov, a silk factory-owner in Kazan', received orders from the *Posol'skii Prikaz* (Foreign Chancellery) in 1676 to obey earlier directives from the *Prikaz Tainykh del* (Privy Chancellery), which had instructed him to establish a factory in Simbirsk to generate revenue for the *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa*.¹⁶ The central chancelleries also dedicated their efforts to monitor established businesses as well. This was the case in 1697 when the *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa* instructed the governor of Kazan' to supervise Stepan Vladychkin's mine in Rutkinyi Mountain, as well as its workers and its production, in order to ensure the mine's success.¹⁷

¹³ RGADA, f. 281, op. 1, d. 246, 12 April 1614.

¹⁴ G. Z. Kuntsevich, comp., "Gramoty Kazan'skogo Zilantova monastyrja," *Izvestija obshchestva arheologii, istorii, i etnografii pri Imperatorskom Kazanskom universitete*, 17 (1901), pp. 294-298.

¹⁵ The most thorough discussion of the development of domestic industries in the early modern period is Joseph T. Fuhrmann, *The Origins of Capitalism in Russia: Industry and Progress in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (Chicago 1972).

¹⁶ RGADA, f. 159, Prikaznye dela novoi razborki, op. 2, Posol'skii prikaz, d. 1490, l. 13, 11 May 1676.

¹⁷ *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Russiskoi Imperii*, (St. Petersburg 1830), Vol. 3, p. 291. Hereafter, *PSZ*.

The history of salt-refining in the Middle Volga is indicative of the chancelleries' interference in the development of regional businesses. Sviiazhsk's Bogoroditsii Monastery became one of the earliest large-scale salt merchants. The *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa* instructed the monastery to import 10,000 puds (361,000 lbs.) of salt from Astrakhan. The importation of the salt was not taxed, greatly facilitating the importation. The salt could be sold in Kazan', Sviiazhsk, or Nizhnii Novgorod for whatever commodities were needed by the monks, including bread, honey, butter, hemp-seed oil, sheepskin, or cloth. In 1613, the *Prikaz* raised the amount of salt imported by the monastery to 20,000 puds, making the monastery an early centre for salt-trading in the Middle Volga Region.¹⁸ Later records reveal that the monastery imported 33,250 puds of salt in 1621, an increase from the 21,687 puds bought in 1610/11, which had sold for 3,376 rubles.¹⁹ Salt prices varied in the region throughout the seventeenth century, between 1 pud for .01556 rubles in 1610 to 1 pud for .03125 rubles by the 1665, but the volume of salt steadily increased.²⁰

Later in the seventeenth century local businesses established salt refineries at the direction of Moscow, producing salt to supplement the earlier imports from the south. In the 1660s, an official tsarist charter instructed the Savva-Storozhevskii Monastery in Kazan' province to establish a salt refinery (*solianyi promysl'*) on their lands in Samara province along the Volga River. The *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa* granted the monastery the right of hiring outside workers for the salt refinery in the 1670s, allowing the monastery to increase its

¹⁸ The original grant was made on 13 July 1606; the increase was granted on 3 August 1613. I. P. Ermolaev and D. A. Mustafina, eds., *Dokumenty po istorii Kazanskogo kraia: Iz arkhivokhranilits Tatarskogo ASSR (vtoraia polovina XVI—seredina XVII): Teksty i komment.* (Kazan' 1990), #24, pp. 60-62.

¹⁹ Ermolaev and Mustafina, *Dokumenty Kazanskogo kraia*, #39, 11 March 1621, pp. 92-95.

²⁰ The merchant Iakov Ilantov syn Lukoshkov bought 320 puds of salt for 100 roubles from the Zilantov Uspenskii Monastery. RGADA, f. 1455, Gosudarstvennye i chastnye akty pomestno-votchinnikh arkhivov XVI-XIX vv., op. 5, d. 223, January 1665. Richard Hellie demonstrated in his study of the Russian economy that salt prices were seasonally variable. Therefore, the increased price for salt sold in January of 1665 versus an average salt price over a year might only reflect that seasonal transition. Richard Hellie, *The Economy and Material Culture of Russia*, (Chicago 1999), pp. 157-160.

²¹ RGADA, f. 281, op. 8, d. 11548, 21 March 1682.

productivity.²¹ By the end of the seventeenth century, the Volga Region was well-known for its salt production, testifying to the success of state interference.²²

With intense interest from central authorities in the region's economic infrastructure, it is worth noting that local trade developed, centred around new marketplaces in the region's old and new cities. These local markets supported the development of intra-regional trade, which also kept the Volga trade route supplied. Local merchants and abbots bought and sold a variety of regional commodities, especially grain, fish, and salt to each other and to travelling merchants.²³

In most parts of the Middle Volga Region, the courtyard of a prosperous urban monastery was the central marketplace in its town, especially in the early years of a new town. These monastic marketplaces fostered the development of a regional economy. For example, Arzamas's Troitse-Sergeevskii Monastery was the primary market of Arzamas, Simbirsk's market was located in its Troitse-Sergeevskii Monastery, and Kazan's Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Monastery served Kazan'.²⁴ The customs house (*tamozbennaia izba*) in Kazan', in fact, sat just outside the monastery's walls, to register merchants travelling to and from the market by 1565.²⁵ Descriptions of these monastic courtyards depict them as bustling markets, complete with numerous merchants and a variety of

²² For a comprehensive study of the regional salt trade, see: N. V. Ustiugov, *Solevarennaia promyshlennost' soli kamskoi v XVII veke: K voprosy o genezise kapitalisticheskikh otosbenii v Russkoi promyshlennosti*, (Moscow 1957).

²³ Though there is no comprehensive history of Volga trade, there are several studies of individual towns and families in the region. These include: I. M. Pokrovskii, *K istorii pomestnogo i ekonomicheskogo byta v Kazanskom krae v polovine XVII veka*, (Kazan' 1909); N. A. Baklanova, *Torgovo-promyshlennaia detatel'nost' Kalmykovykh vo vtoroi polovine XVII v.: K istorii formirovaniia Russkoi burzhuzii*, (Moscow 1959); I. S. Romashin, *Ocherki ekonomiki Simbirskoi gubernii XVII-XIX vv.*, (Ul'ianovsk 1961); N. B. Golikova, "Torgovlia krepostnymi bez zemli v 20-kh godakh XVIII v. (Po materialam krepostnykh knig gorodov Povolzh'ia)," *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 90 (1972), pp. 303-331; and Aleksandr Andreev, *Stroganovy*, (Moscow 2000).

²⁴ Contracts signed by these monasteries and merchants prove the importance of these courtyards. For example, the merchants Fedor Lukochinov syn Sibiriak signed a contract with the elder of Simbirsk's Troitse-Sergeevskii Monastery for space in its courtyard. RGADA, f. 281, op. 8, d. 11534, 9 June 1656.

²⁵ Rubinshtein, *Istoriia Tatarii v dokumentakh i materialakh*, p. 234.

commodities.²⁶ While the cities along the Volga benefited from steady river traffic, even inland cities such as Saransk had a diverse market visited by merchants from Arzamas, Atemar, Insar, Nizhnii Novgorod, Penza, Temnikov, and even Ark'angelsk.²⁷

Both the monasteries and the local government benefited from the development of these local marketplaces. Monasteries charged rents to merchants for space in their courtyards, turning over a portion of the rents to the government.²⁸ Competition over space in the monastic courtyards was strong, with traders frequently petitioning abbots in order to receive space within the courtyard, on occasion offering land instead of money if necessary.²⁹ At one point, the Troitse-Sergeevskii Monastery in Arzamas accepted enough land to cut its yearly revenue from its market in half.³⁰

As the regional marketplaces grew during the seventeenth century, most expanded into the city centres beyond the confined monastic courtyards. By 1686 in Kazan', the archimandrite of Moscow's Chudov Monastery petitioned Kazan's governor in order to claim 30 *sazhen* of land in the city's new marketplace, which was currently under the governor's control.³¹ With the rise of an urban market under the control of the city's governor, monasteries became petitioners for space, but the revenue from rents was now completely controlled by the local

²⁶ In the records of Nikita Vasil'evich Borisov and Dmitrii Andreevich Kikin, written between 1565 and 1568, described Kazan's Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Monastery's courtyard with numerous secular and ecclesiastical merchants. *Materialy po istorii Tatarskoi ASSR: Pitsovye knigi goroda Kazani 1565-68 gg. i 1646 g.*, (Leningrad 1932), pp. 14, 32.

²⁷ A. I. Iakovlev, ed., *Saranskaia tamozbennaia kniga za 1692 g.*, (Saransk 1951).

²⁸ Unsurprisingly, the central chancelleries occasionally had to remind the monasteries of their responsibility to turn over a portion of this rental income. Such a letter was sent to Kazan's Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Monastery in 1596, for example.

RGADA, f. 281, op. 4, d. 6436, 18 May 1596.

²⁹ For example, Andronik Elizarov petitioned the abbot of Arzamas's Troitse-Sergeevskii Monastery for the right to sell goods in the monastery's courtyard, offering the monastery some land inside the city walls in exchange. RGADA, f. 281, op. 1, d. 249, 1618/19.

³⁰ In a letter from the Arzamas's Troitse-Sergeevskii Monastery's cellarer to Archimandrite Deonisii in 1632, the cellarer informed the abbot that instead of the expected 30 roubles from this year's rent, there would instead be 16 roubles this year and another 16 roubles in two years.

RGADA, f. 281, op. 1, d. 270, 16 March 1632.

³¹ RGADA, f. 281, op. 8, d. 11560, 14 August 1686.

government. Though monasteries lost revenue from the loss of their marketplaces, the new markets testify to the success of economic growth in the Middle Volga Region.

The commodities sold in Volga marketplaces consisted primarily of the region's natural resources. Grain and fish were common, as was salt, which several monasteries and later businesses produced. Beekeeping, a traditional occupation among the non-Russian populations of the region, produced honey and beeswax, valuable early-modern goods. There was a trade in horses as well, driven by the presence of the nearby nomadic tribes, such as the Nogai Tatars, and by the end of the seventeenth century local farmers had entered the business as well.³² Some of these commodities were sold throughout Muscovy, especially honey, wax, and horses, while the region itself consumed most of its grain and fish.³³

Honey was one of the region's first natural resources to be exploited by Muscovite authorities. As early as 1555, for example, local beekeepers paid tribute to the new Muscovite government with their honey production; the newly established Russian Orthodox Church hierarchy received yearly allocations of 500 puds (18,050 lbs.), 200 puds, and 6 puds of honey, respectively. According to the land cadaster of 1623-1624, there were 2,330 Tatar beekeepers in Kazan' province alone.³⁴ Throughout the seventeenth century, beekeeping remained an important ingredient of Muscovy's economic development of the region. When the *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa* instructed Kazan's governor to monitor all honey sales in his city in 1698, honey production assumed the relative

³² Controlling the horse trade was among the first actions of Muscovite authorities in the Middle Volga Region. In February 1555, for example, Kazan's governor received a charter from Moscow instructing him to welcome the Nogai horse traders to the marketplace at the Troitse-Sergeevskii Monastery; the Nogai gave 5 horses to the monastery as rent on space in the courtyard. *Akty, sobrannye v bibliotekakh i arkhivakh Rossiiskoi imperii arkhieograficheskoiu ekspeditsieiu imperatorskoi akademii nauk*, Vol. 1, (St. Petersburg 1836), #235, p. 239.

³³ Volga merchants infrequently appear selling grain or fish outside of the Volga Region, while there was a large market for these goods inside the Volga Region. For example, in Saransk in December 1691, local merchants sold 1,227 *cheti* of rye and oats (176.7 tons). *Saranskaia tamozhennaia kniga*, pp. 16-19.

³⁴ I. M. Pokrovskii, "Bortnichestvo (pchelovodstvo), kak odin iz vidov natural'nago khoziaistva i promysla bliz Kazani v XVI-XVII vv." *Izvestiia obshchestva arkhologii, istorii i etnografii pri Imperatorskom Kazanskom universitete*, 17 (1901), pp. 67-73.

importance of fish, which had previously been the only commodity to receive such special attention.³⁵

Local merchants supplemented the economic life of the Middle Volga Region by buying and selling varied commodities throughout Muscovy. These merchants not only sold the region's fish, honey, wax, salt, and horses but also silk, caviar, leather, horseshoes, nuts, and numerous pelts, among other goods. Prokopci Andreev from Kazan' was a typical merchant of the seventeenth century, buying sable, fox, and bear pelts in Siberia for sales in Velikii Ustiug, Vologda, and Iaroslavl', but also buying imported Persian silk in Kazan' for sale in those same places during the 1630s.³⁶ By the end of the seventeenth century, the Volga Region was a valuable centre of production in its own right, and an entrepôt for numerous trade goods.

The Middle Volga's trade network developed under the watchful eye of the Muscovite chancelleries with a combination of observation and tax-collecting by local authorities. The overland trade route followed the government's military defences; commands for the construction of various buildings enabled more trade along the Volga River itself. Governors, monasteries, and the *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa* benefited from the toll system, and the combination of their collective interests guaranteed the enforcement of those policies. Local governors not only enacted centrally-created policies but also provided thorough information to the *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa* to help maintain and regulate the trade system. Based on earlier records, the subsequent instructions to the region's governors established tax rates for commodities such as fish, as well as the nature and volume of Volga River trade.³⁷ The result of this information was an intensively regulated trade system during the seventeenth century, which generated revenue for the state and fostered the use of the Volga river for increased trade. With local trade along the Volga providing revenue to the centre and frontier Muscovite authorities successfully

³⁵ The instruction of 1697 instructed the governor to insure the delivery of the tsar's honey to Moscow. *PSZ* 3, p. 293.

³⁶ A. I. Iakovleva, ed., *Tamozhennye knigi Moskovskogo gosudarstva*, I, Velikii Ustiug, (Moscow 1950), 4 October 1633, p. 20; 2 January 1634, p. 30; 8 April 1635, p. 158; 9 October 1635, p. 166; and 9 February 1636, p.177.

³⁷ This information is contained in several clauses in the instruction of 1697, *PSZ* 3, pp. 290-291.

harnessed the region's best resource, proving the economic value of the conquest of the Khanate of Kazan'.

3. International Trade

The chancelleries' involvement in the economic development of the Middle Volga also advanced the Volga's ability to sustain international trade. Control over the entire Volga river made Muscovy a conduit for east-west and north-south trade. English, Dutch, Swedish, Persian, Indian, and Armenian traders, in addition to Russian subjects, all had vested interests in the smooth functioning of the trade route. The international competition for access to the Volga not only increased toll revenue for the region but also empowered Muscovite trade negotiations with foreign powers. The discussion of foreign trade in this section draws extensively from the records of the English merchants, who established the first foreign trade company in Moscow, and remained an integral part of the international trade of Muscovy throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. English merchants were not the most successful foreign nationals engaged in Volga-River trade, but their experiences are indicative of the relationship between Muscovite authorities and foreign merchants.

The Volga river trade route induced foreign trade contacts with Muscovy. When the English established trade contacts with Muscovy in the middle of the sixteenth century, the potential access to eastern goods was one of their interests. As the English East Indies Company established itself in Persia, it considered the Volga River a secure route for export of Persian silks, moving goods up the Volga to Moscow, then to the English trade entrepôt in Arkangel'sk, where the goods could be transported in English ships. This trade route required concessions from Muscovite officials for transport along the Volga, an issue first raised by Queen Elizabeth I. The English enticed Muscovite support with the promise of the lucrative trade travelling through Muscovy.³⁸ After a few years of

³⁸ In writing to Tsar Boris Fedorovich, Queen Elizabeth reported that her ambassador, Francis Cherry, would soon raise the issue of Persian trade with the tsar at his convenience. Public Records Office (PRO), PRO 22/60, English Royal Letters in the Soviet Central State Archive of Ancient Records, 1557-1655, #17, 30 May 1600.

negotiations, the English received a guarantee of access to all Persian, Chinese, and East Indian goods transported through Muscovy.³⁹

The Time of Troubles prevented the English from taking advantage of this trade concession.⁴⁰ Once the Time of Troubles ended with the election of Mikhail Fedorovich, the English pursued another guarantee of access from the new tsar. King Charles I promised Mikhail Fedorovich that he desired that "this Trade of Silk should be settled in your Majesties Dominions rather than in any other Kingdome," producing tariff revenue for Muscovy.⁴¹ This time, however, the English attempts were not successful, and the Volga trade remained closed to English merchants.

Despite the reversal of Muscovite policy, English merchants petitioned the tsar to regain the earlier concessions. Several factors motivated the English desire. The first was a belief in the superior speed and safety of transportation along the Volga river when compared with Ottoman Turkey, where the English faced restrictions against their movement. In fact, at one point Charles I sought permission for his ambassador to Persia to travel through Muscovy to Arkangel'sk for "his speedier returne."⁴² The second, and perhaps more pressing, factor was England's developing competition with the Dutch over access to the East.⁴³ Following the English merchants' loss of privileges during the Time of Troubles, the Dutch petitioned the tsar for the right to export Persian silk through Muscovy, guaranteed by a thirty-year monopoly for the Company of Filippo.⁴⁴ While that plan was not successful, Dutch merchants succeeded in signing an

³⁹ PRO, SP 91/1, Secretaries of State: State Papers Foreign, Russia, ff. 209r.-210r., [c. 1605].

⁴⁰ English difficulties in Moscow during the Time of Troubles are discussed in Geraldine M. Phipps, *Sir John Merrick, English Merchant – Diplomat in Seventeenth-Century Russia*, (Newtonville, MA 1983), pp. 47-73.

⁴¹ PRO, PRO 22/60, #33, 1 February 1626.

⁴² PRO, PRO 22/60, #38, 27 April 1629. The tsar did give his permission, though the Persian Ambassador did not use this route to England due to his untimely death in Persia, PRO, PRO 22/60, #49, 5 January 1631.

⁴³ For specific studies of Anglo-Dutch competition over Russian trade, see Inna Lubimenko, "The Struggle of the Dutch with the English for the Russian Market in the Seventeenth Century," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Series 4, 7 (1924), pp. 27-51; S. I. Arkhangel'skii, "Anglo-Gollandskaia torgovlia s Moskvoi v XVII v.," *Istoricbeskii sbornik*, 5 (1936), pp. 5-38; and Violet Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century*, (Baltimore 1950), pp. 115-119.

⁴⁴ Lubimenko, "The Struggle of the Dutch," pp. 44-45.

advantageous treaty with the Persian Shah in 1619, which the English hoped to match if not surpass.⁴⁵ Throughout the seventeenth century, Dutch merchants gained several exclusive export contracts for Russian goods, including important naval commodities such as tar and timber. The English attempts to break the Dutch export monopolies increased the importance of Muscovy and the Volga river for both the English Muscovy Company and East Indies Company.⁴⁶

The English applied steady pressure on the Muscovite government throughout the seventeenth century for access to the Volga river and a potential Persian silk monopoly. John Hebdon, the English envoy in Moscow during the 1660s, recorded his attempts to persuade the tsar's authorities for an English concession, which would enable a transfer of English trade from Ottoman Turkey to Muscovy. Hebdon explained his negotiating tactics in a memo to the Foreign Secretary, telling the tsar's officials that the Ottoman sultan attempted to "enriche himselfe and with a great many violencyes and injuries by laying upon then heavy impositions let them passe from himselfe unto Christian Countreys." If English trade travelled along the Volga through Moscow onto Arkangel'sk, both English and Armenian traders would be safer, and the tsar would receive the thanks of Persia's Shah Abbas.⁴⁷

Muscovite control over the Volga river gave its authorities the ability to negotiate advantageously with early-modern trading countries. In spite of English attempts to wring concessions from Moscow, the Muscovite government increasingly regulated and controlled Volga trade throughout the seventeenth century, and denied the English most of their demands. The initial agreement with the English Muscovy Company

⁴⁵ The East Indies Company petitioned Charles I after the Dutch Treaty of 1619, asking for an English ambassador to Persia in order to neutralize the Dutch advantage. PRO, CO 77/4, East Indies Original Correspondence, 1570-1856, ff. 135r-136r., April 1629.

⁴⁶ One of the first Dutch monopolies in Muscovy was for the export of tar, establishing the pattern for later Dutch monopolies in the seventeenth century. An English merchant in Moscow, Thomas Wyche, petitioned King Charles I for redress against the Dutch tar monopoly. PRO, SP 91/2, f. 244r., 1633.

⁴⁷ PRO, SP 91/3, Part 1, ff. 117r.-117v., 6 December 1666. For a discussion of the tsar and Shah Abbas's relationship from a Russian perspective, see P. P. Bushev, *Istoriia posol'stv i diplomaticheskikh otnoshenii Russkogo i Iranskogo gosudarstv v 1613-1621*, (Moscow 1987).

granted those merchants freedom from local tariffs, but the merchants were only allowed to reside in the northern territories of Muscovy, specifically Arkangel'sk, Kholmogory, Jaroslavl', Vologda, and Moscow.⁴⁶ While Muscovy expanded to the east and south during the seventeenth century, the English trade did not, even with the short-lived tsarist guarantee of access to eastern goods. The trading relationship therefore more heavily favoured Moscow by the middle of the seventeenth century, once the Muscovy Company's free trade agreements were revoked completely during the English Civil War. John Hebdon petitioned the tsar several times for the return of the Company's "ancient privileges" in the 1670s, but the Muscovite government refused to reinstate them, prospering from its tax revenues on English trade and satisfied with the existing Dutch monopolies.⁴⁹

Other foreign traders suffered from the increased trade regulations in Muscovy. Following the denial of one of Hebdon's request for the restoration of privileges in 1676, the *Posol'skii prikaz* notified him that all foreign merchants in Muscovy "shall come upon their borders no further than such and such places." The English and Dutch remained limited to trading in the north, only using the port at Arkangel'sk, but in addition the Persians could only trade in Astrakhan, and the Swedes only in Pskov and Novgorod.⁵⁰ These new regulations increased restrictions against foreign merchants and provided the state greater control over all exports.

Regulating the movement of foreign merchants was part of the central chancelleries' plan to create a regulated zone of trade within the interior of Moscow. If English or Dutch merchants intended to utilize the Volga river as a major trade route during the second half of the seventeenth century, only the Russian *gosti*, a closed group of elite Russian merchants, or the Armenian Company, a state-controlled monopoly, were permitted

* PRO, SP 91/1, ff. 55r.-58r., February 1587.

⁴⁶ The Foreign Office instructed Hebdon to seek the restoration of the tax-free privileges as one of his highest priorities, PRO, SP 104/118, Secretaries of State: State Papers Foreign, Entry Books, ff. 17r.-19v., 30 September 1676.

⁵⁰ PRO, SP 91/3, Part 2, f. 222r., 4 December 1676. These "New Trade Restrictions" are also discussed in Stephen Frederic Dale, *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade, 1600-1750*, (New York 1994), p. 96.

to transport the goods.⁵¹ The Armenian Company was unusual, since it was the only group of foreigners allowed to transport goods along the Volga after these restrictions. The monopoly was established by 1677, and received special attention in the instruction to the governor of Kazan' that year. The instruction warned the governor not to interfere in the business of the Armenian Company and their transport of goods between Astrakhan and Moscow. The Armenians received these privileges from both the *Posol'skii Prikaz* and the *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa*, prohibiting any local intervention against the merchants.⁵² The Dutch were the beneficiaries of the Armenian monopoly, since the Armenians exclusively transferred Persian silk from Astrakhan to Moscow for them.⁵³ The English attempted to break this monopoly, but failed, partially because of a history of economic cooperation between the Dutch and Armenians.⁵⁴

The *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa* thought the instructions also gave governors the responsibility to monitor all foreign trade, in the same manner as their regulation of domestic trade. The instruction of 1649 was the first one to contain extensive instructions for the regulation of long-distance trading. The governors were required to inspect all possessions carried by the *gosti* travelling between Kazan' and Astrakhan, making

⁵¹ The *gosti* were the elite merchant class of Muscovy and have received much attention from historians, including: Bushkovitch, *Merchants of Moscow*; Samuel H. Baron, "The *Gosti* Revisited," *Explorations in Muscovite History*, (Hampshire 1991), pp. 1-21; A. A. Timoshina, "Raselnic gostei, chlenov gostinoi i suknonoi soten v russkikh gorodakh XVII v.," in A. Iu. Karlov (ed.), *Torgovlia i predpreimatel'stvo v feodal'noi Rossii*, (Moscow 1994), pp. 117-151.

⁵² RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, ll. 100-101. For a survey of the scope of Armenian-Persian trade, see R. W. Ferris, "The Armenians and the East India Company in Persia in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries," *The Economic History Review*, 26 (1973), pp. 38-62; and Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, (Cambridge 1984), pp. 182-206.

⁵³ Though the northern European merchants had lost their travel rights through the Volga by 1649, both Armenian and Indian merchants were permitted to transport goods through the region as long as they had been residents of Moscow for "many years." T. D. Lavrentsova, *et al.*, comp., *Russko-Indiiskie otnosheniia v XVII v.: Sbornik dokumentov*, (Moscow 1958), #76, III, June 1665, p. 152.

⁵⁴ The English Ambassador to the Netherlands reported on the presence of an Armenian enclave in Holland as early as 1630, when the Armenians established their own churches in Schoonhoven and Leland. PRO, SP 84/142, State Paper Office: State Papers Foreign, Holland, ff. 120r.-122r., 2/12 October 1630. For a study of Dutch-Armenian relations in the late seventeenth century, see Kéram Kévonian, "Marchands Arméniens au XVIIe siècle: A propos d'un livre arménien publié à Amsterdam en 1699," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 16 (1975), pp. 199-244.

sure that the head of customs (*tamozhennaiia golova*) in the city received the appropriate amount for the commodities. After the inspection, the governor and head of customs were to send a record of the trade goods to the *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa*.⁵⁵

Later instructions instituted greater restrictions. The instruction of 1677 informed the governor of Kazan' he needed to secure certain commodities within traders' caravans to prevent the sale of military goods to the Cossacks along the Volga. In addition, the governor was to provide guards for caravans to protect the goods being transported from nomadic raiders.⁵⁶ Furthermore, one article in the instruction of 1677 warned Kazan's current governor about a recent complaint of the governor of Astrakhan, who petitioned Moscow about difficulties of merchants travelling from Kazan'. The merchants protested unfair treatment in Kazan', where they had been charged high fees for their goods. Kazan's governor was to fulfill his duties but not impede the current trade.⁵⁷

The exchange of information enabled the increased regulation of the seventeenth century. Kazan's governor sent reports to the *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa* about trade passing through the city. The information concerning that trade was included in subsequent instructions, in order to provide the most current information about trade for more accurate customs' collection. Other governors along the Volga kept similar records, providing the *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa* with a complete record of all caravans along the river and where and when goods were sold.⁵⁸ The governors followed expected reports with occasional letters reporting incidental developments about Volga river trade. For example, in 1638 Kazan's governor petitioned the tsar concerning the arrival of Persian and Indian merchants in his city from Astrakhan. The merchants carried gifts for the *Posol'skii Prikaz* to persuade Muscovite authorities to allow

⁵⁵ RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, ll. 30ob-35, from 1649.

⁵⁶ RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, ll. 52-53ob.

⁵⁷ RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 709, ll. 71-76.

⁵⁸ For example, Saratov's governor also tracked customs owed in his city in a similar manner to Kazan's governor. Two of these records are published in Lavrentsova, *Russko-Indiiskie otshoshentia v XVII v.*, (Moscow 1958), #42, 7 December 1649, pp. 93-94; #43, 7 December 1649, p. 94.

them to travel to Moscow with their trade goods. For the moment, they remained in Kazan'.⁵⁹

Though the central authorities exerted efforts to control and regulate trade along the Volga, as well as the movement of foreigners inside Muscovy, there were limits to their success. English merchants were banned from moving south or east from Moscow, but at least one Englishman resided in Kazan' early in the seventeenth century.⁶⁰ The *Posol'skii Prikaz* awarded John White, a member of the Muscovy Company, the houses of his Russian debtors in Arzamas, creating an English property owner in a city he could not enter legally.⁶¹ Dutch merchants were also banned from the Volga Region, but in 1675 the *Posol'skii Prikaz* recorded the sale of an iron-works by its original owners, Andrei Andreev syn Vinibsov, Vologda-resident Iakov Galaktimov syn Galkin, and Dutch merchant Conrad Nordermann, to another Dutchman, Peter Meller.⁶²

While the Armenian merchants and the Russian *gosti* had exclusive privileges to trade along the Volga river, other merchants continued to trade within the region. Bukharan merchants, having established a large trade network throughout Eurasia, carried on their own trade along the Volga with permission from the central government.⁶³ Bukharan caravans travelled overland to both Astrakhan and Kazan', though they could then proceed along the Volga to Nizhnii Novgorod and on to Moscow.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Lavrentsova, *Russko-Indiiskie otnosheniia v XVII v.*, #12, No earlier than 23 August 1638, pp. 38-39.

⁶⁰ In 1622, James I petitioned Mikhail Fedorovich for the release of Dr. John Scroop from service in Kazan'. While Scroop was not a merchant, his presence in a city forbidden to the English displays the limitation of Muscovite prohibition. PRO, PRO 22/60, #28, 1622.

⁶¹ Maria Solomon Arel, "Making an Honest Ruble in the Russian North: Aspects of Muscovite Trade in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century," *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 54 (1998), pp. 18-19.

⁶² RGADA, f. 159, op. 2, d. 1361, 9 May 1675.

Many of the iron-works in Muscovy were established by the Dutch, so this transaction is not unusual in that regard. Lubimenko, "The Struggle of the Dutch," pp. 45-46.

⁶³ Audrey Burton, *The Bukharans: A Dynastic, Diplomatic and Commercial History, 1550-1702*, (New York 1997), pp. 460-501.

⁶⁴ Several documents recording the transit of the Bukharan merchants through Nizhnii Novgorod are published in, S. I. Arkhangel'skii and N. I. Privalova, eds., *Nizhnii Novgorod v XVII veke: Sbornik godumentov i materialov k istorii Nizhnogo Novgoroda i ego okrug, (Gor'kii 1961)*, #46-48, 4 December 1633-11 March 1634, pp. 82-84.

Therefore, while the Armenians possessed a monopoly over the transportation of Persian goods, other eastern commodities could be transported by Bukharans.

On several occasions, foreign merchants joined the ongoing English protests against Muscovite controls over the Volga. Persian and Indian merchants arriving or living in Astrakhan frequently petitioned Muscovite authorities for permission after travel to Kazan' was restricted. A nephew of the Persian Shah Mamandu Selbek, Oalarbek, protested the refusal of permission to travel to Kazan' from Astrakhan to deliver his goods. In previous years, Oalarbek had travelled to Kazan' without hindrance; he protested paying a middleman for that same transportation.⁶⁵ In that same year, an Indian merchant living in Astrakhan, Banda Mingaev, petitioned the governor of Astrakhan to receive permission to transport his goods to Kazan'. The governor of Astrakhan wrote to the current governor of Kazan' about Mingaev, arguing that Mingaev had this permission in the past and only wanted his rights restored.⁶⁶

Other complaints arrived in Moscow, especially concerning the high expense of the tariffs. The merchant Klima Kalmykov petitioned the tsar for freedom to move salt along the Volga between Saratov and Astrakhan. The local governors were collecting tolls, which Kalmykov believed should not have been charged.⁶⁷ Similarly, Petr Gudumov and Terchanin and Semen Gruzin complained in a petition that they were being stopped on the overland trade route between Arzamas and Simbirsk, and being held until they paid tolls, even though they were "people without trade" (*liudi bezomeny*). Gudumov and the Gruzins sent their complaint to the *Posol'skii Prikaz*, who were responsible for monitoring foreign trade, suggesting that despite their disclaimers they were transporting commodities through the region.⁶⁸ The English agent in Moscow, Thomas Meverall, complained to Tsar Feodor Aleksevich about taxes charged for Englishmen bought out of Turkish slavery and transported along the Volga and then north to

⁶⁵ RGADA, f. 159, op. 2, d. 328, 29 March 1677.

⁶⁶ Lavrentsova, *Russko-Indiiskie otnosheniia v XVII v.*, #172, 29 September 1677 and 8 October 1677, pp. 276-277.

⁶⁷ RGADA, f. 159, op. 2, d. 4356, After 1692.

⁶⁸ RGADA, f. 159, op. 2, d. 3924, l.1, 17 August 1689.

Arkangel'sk.⁶⁹ None of these attempts, however, were successful, since profits from tariffs were an important source of revenue for the state, and one of the reasons for Muscovite possession of the entire Volga river.

The lack of success of petitions and complaints against Muscovite trade regulations did not dissuade English merchants from continuing to seek access to Persian goods during the last quarter of the seventeenth century. A series of English agents in Moscow reminded English authorities of the potential windfall from Volga River trade. John Hebdon wrote to the Foreign Office in 1677 with word of Persian luxuries recently arrived in Moscow. Persian merchants were selling "severall sorts of Rarities, as Carpets, Severall sorts of Silks, Diamonds, and delicate Horses." Knowing the Foreign Office had stopped seeking access to Persia through Muscovy, Hebdon suggested a change of policy: "I could wish I might be thought worthy to serve your Honour not alone in procuring any of the aforesaid Commodities..."⁷⁰ Hebdon's suggestion followed the complete disruption of Volga trade during the Stepan Razin Revolt, which would make any trader wary of relying upon the Volga.

In fact, English merchants in Moscow did not pursue establishing Persian trade through the Volga Region again until Peter the Great was on the throne. In 1707, Charles Whitworth, the current English envoy to Muscovy, wrote to the Foreign Secretary of the possible gain for the English trading position with an alternate route to Persia.

English trade would still increase considerably if any expedient could be found to reconcile the interests of the Muscovite and East India Companys about introducing raw Silk from a Province of Persia calld Chilan, which lyes on the Caspian Sea: This Traffick is now in the hands of some Armenians, who have a permission from the King of Persia, and bring yearly great quantitys hither by Astracan up the river Wolga, Six hundred Bales being either come or expected this Winter, From hence it was usually sent to Holland, but now the Armenians will load two ships for Copenhagen, where they are endeavouring to Settle a Trade and Manufacture...⁷¹

⁶⁹ PRO, SP 104/118, ff. 32r.-34v., 22 April 1682.

⁷⁰ PRO, SP 91/3, Part 2, ff. 235r.-236v., 27 February 1677.

⁷¹ PRO, SP 91/5, Part 1, ff. 34r.-37v., 31 January 1707.

Whitworth's primary argument was not only the benefit of the Persian silk trade, but the continuing problem of the Dutch-Armenian trade relationship that forced the English out of the silk trade. Despite the disruption of trade along the Volga from domestic uprisings, the Volga trade route still attracted international interest.

Muscovite control over the Volga river created important opportunities for international trade negotiations. Interest from abroad in transporting good along the Volga followed quickly upon the heels of Muscovy's expansion. Years of monitoring and taxing trade along the river generated revenue, but as the seventeenth century progressed Muscovy adopted a protectionist attitude toward foreigners on the Volga, preferring state-designated monopolies rather than open travel. Though this position may have limited potential profits, it offered greater control to Muscovite authorities and guaranteed income.

4. Conclusion

After the conquest of Kazan' and Astrakhan, Muscovite authorities began a programme of coordinated development of the region's economic resources, both domestic production and international trade. This included developing local industry, regulating and taxing merchants' travel along the region's trade routes, and eventually using monopolies to limit access to Muscovy. In the way, Muscovy began a programme of mercantilistic economic development. Though the Muscovite government lacked an abstract theory of mercantilism as existed in Western Europe, the economic policies enacted in the Middle Volga Region would have been familiar to any Western economic planner.⁷²

Domestic disruptions to trade, primarily the Time of Troubles and the Stepan Razin Revolt, may have limited the success of these policies by increasing fears about the security of travel along the Volga, but both central and regional authorities benefited financially from the economic development of the region, resulting in consistent support for these

⁷² Recently scholars have identified mercantilistic trends in early-modern states before a well-developed theory of mercantilism arose. See J. N. Ball, *Merchants and Merchandise: The Expansion of Trade in Europe 1500-1630*, (London 1977).

mercantilistic policies. Muscovy's chancelleries invested in the region's infrastructure to nurture and solidify trade. Officials in Moscow directed the establishment of warehouses, local markets, mills, and other businesses. Both local administrators and churchmen supported the imposition of tolls on all regional trade and river traffic, producing steady tax revenues for religious and secular authorities in the Volga Region and in Moscow. The region's governors were especially vigilant in this regard, monitoring all river traffic and producing the data needed for Moscow to tax domestic and international trade more effectively.

Muscovite officials expected these measures to support a larger long-distance trade on the Volga River, allowing more Persian and Indian goods to reach as far as England or the Netherlands. In the end, however, Muscovy limited the growth of international trade by creating a group of transportation monopolies for state-designated merchant companies. These monopolies maximized Muscovy's ability to collect customs from tariffs and controlled the movement of all foreign traders through the country. Though the monopolies limited the total number of merchants travelling along the Volga, they completed the package of mercantilist reforms enacted during the seventeenth century. The combination of monopolies, tariffs, and state interference in local business produced a system identifiable as mercantilist, demonstrating the common features of early-modern economic development.

Traditionally, historians have suggested that mercantilism was introduced to Muscovy as a part of Peter the Great's reforms. Peter invested heavily in domestic industries, granted export monopolies to foreign merchants, and instituted a series of protectionist reforms to support the domestic economy. Peter's lack of an explicit mercantile doctrine, which was present in most Western monarchies, has led historians of Petrine Russia to debate whether Peter's reforms are best described as mercantilist, proto-mercantilist, or perhaps not mercantilistic at all.⁷³ This debate has neglected the pre-Petrine, Muscovite origins of

⁷³ This debate is present in all recent works on Peter the Great, for example Evgenii V. Anisimov, *The Reforms of Peter the Great: Progress through Coercion in Russia*, (Armonk, NY 1993), pp. 70-86; Lindsey Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*, (New Haven 1998), especially pp. 157-158.

all of Peter's economic "reforms." Peter did not create a mercantilistic economy *ex nihilo*, but extended and enforced policies used by the Muscovite chancelleries beginning in the previous century. While Muscovy lacked a Colbert, the development of the Middle Volga Region suggests that none of Colbert's reforms of the French economy would have been surprising to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, Louis XIV's contemporary and Peter's father.

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