ARTICLES

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THE ELITE CLERGY
DIET IN LATE MUSCOVY.

"You are what you eat" is a truism that becomes ever more true with advances in nutrition science. Regrettably, we have little knowledge of what people of any caste ate in Early Modern Russia. Economic documents, such as trade and estate records, provide a general picture of what was available, and at what cost. Such gross indicators, however, do not tell us what dishes people ate, what combinations they consumed, or how often they ate this or that. Nor, particularly, do they tell us much about the quantities people ate.

Two remarkable books, heretofore little used by historians, help solve some of these problems. In 1890 Andrei Aleksandrovich Titov published The Expense Book of the Patriarch's Chancellery. The Dishes Served to Patriarch Adrian and People of Various Other Ranks from September 1698 through August 1699.1 This book lists the foods served every day of the year in the household of the head of the Russian Orthodox Church. Unfortunately, this source does not tell us exactly who ate what or how much each person ate. It is possible also that it omitted foods too obvious or unimportant to include, although there is no evidence that this in fact was the case. Regardless of these possible limitations, the volume tells us a great deal about the eating habits of the upper strata of the Muscovite clergy. A similar account, Patriarch Filaret Nikitich's Book of Dining, lists the dishes served in 1623-24 (September 1 through August 31).

In order to provide a more complete picture of dining in Muscovy, we have reorganized what Patriarch Adrian (1637 or 1639-1700) and his fellow diners

1. A. A. Titov, Raskhodnaiia kniga Patriarshego prikaza kushan'iam podavavshiemia Patriarkhu Adrianu i raznogo china litsam s sentiabria 1698 po avgust 1699 g. (St. Petersburg: Tipografia A. Katanskogo, 1890). These dates are the translation of the Russian year 7207, dating from the "creation of the world" in 5508 B.C. Peter the Great changed the calendar system to the Julian system the following year.

ate by courses and tallied how many times each dish was served. The 1623-24 account has been used for comparison. In addition, we have analyzed what Patriarch Adrian served in accordance with the Orthodox calendar of feasts and fasts. The cycle of fasts was clearly an important part of Orthodox life in Muscovy, and must have been particularly important for dictating what the clergy ate and its consequent level of well-being. In his sixteenth-century account of his travels to Russia, Giles Fletcher observed that Russians observed fasts "so strictly and with such blind devotion that they w[ould] rather die than eat one bit of flesh, eggs, or such like, for the health of their bodies in their extreme sickness."3 Despite the obvious importance of fasts and feasts, the rules governing them in Muscovy were ambiguous and perhaps contradictory. The menus presented in the Raskhodnaia kniga, though they do not clarify the rules, do show how the top religious officials observed these religious holidays at the very end of the institution of the Patriarchate.

The tables show a relatively healthy diet, which emphasized fish and was probably low in fat. Most likely, this diet aided longevity, but we must stress that most Russians did not have as healthy a diet as the Patriarch. The following tables show only the diet of the top of the elite. The average life expectancy at birth in this period was probably less than 30 years. Widespread dietary deficiencies and public health problems, including an insecure water supply system, ignorance of sanitation, and inadequate medical attention, all contributed to this figure. Although Patriarch Adrian and his guests probably shared the sanitation and water supply systems common to everyone else in Moscow, their diet certainly gave them an advantage others did not have in the struggle for a longer life. Adrian himself died at age of 61 or 63.

The food served at Patriarch Adrian's table varied by the time of the year and even week, not, apparently, because of the availability of different foods (the same kinds of foods were served all year round) but instead, because of the church calendar. The food on Patriarch Filaret's table similarly varied with the church calendar, although not as strictly. On a typical fast day, Adrian served pies with mushrooms and vegetables, cabbage soup, bread, various mushroom dishes, kasha, and kissel. On non-fast days, he served those dishes in addition to fresh and salted fish, pies with fish, and sometimes egg and cheese dishes. For feasts, he served the same foods as on non-fast days, but with a greater quantity of dishes and a greater variety of fish. For the most part, there was remarkable continuity from 1623-24 to 1698-99 in the kinds of foods served at the different times of the year.

The following tables present the dishes served by Patriarch Adrian roughly in order of presentation. Table 1 shows that very few drinks were served at the