

A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW OF TOBACCO DURING THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE*

UN BALANCE HISTORIOGRÁFICO SOBRE EL TABACO EN EL IMPERIO RUSO

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to present a historiographical evaluation of the research regarding tobacco in the Russian Empire, from seventeenth century Muscovy until 1917. The studies about tobacco embrace issues related to governmental policies and the appropriate legislation, the regions of cultivation, centres of trade, and prosopography, among others. The article has the following objectives: to outline the periodisation of the tobacco studies, to reveal the works of Russian Imperial, Soviet, contemporary Russian and foreign scholars, to expose the main topics of the research carried out, and set out approximate directions for future research.

Keywords: tobacco, Russian Empire, Muscovy, historiography.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este artículo es presentar un balance historiográfico de la investigación sobre el tabaco en el Imperio Ruso, desde la Moscovia del siglo XVII hasta 1917. Los estudios sobre el tabaco abarcan los temas relacionados con las políticas gubernamentales y la legislación apropiada, las regiones de cultivo, centros de comercio y prosopografía entre otros. El documento persigue los siguientes objetivos: esbozar la periodización de los estudios sobre el tabaco, revelar los trabajos de los eruditos imperiales rusos, soviéticos, rusos contemporáneos y extranjeros, exponer los temas principales de la investigación realizada y establecer direcciones aproximadas para futuros trabajos.

Palabras clave: tabaco, Imperio ruso, Moscovia, historiografía.

* All the translations from Russian and Ukrainian into English, as well as the responsibility for the possible mistakes, are mine.

RESUM

UN BALANÇ HISTORIOGRÀFIC SOBRE EL TABAC A L'IMPERI RUS

L'objectiu d'aquest article és presentar un balanç historiogràfic de la recerca sobre el tabac a l'Imperi rus, des de la Moscòvia del segle XVII fins el 1917. Els estudis sobre el tabac abasten els temes relacionats amb les polítiques governamentals i la legislació apropiada, les regions de conreu, els centres de comerç i prosopografia entre d'altres temes. El text tracta d'assolir els següents objectius: fer una proposta de la periodització dels estudis sobre el tabac, ficar de relleu els treballs dels erudits imperials russos, soviètics, russos contemporanis i estrangers, exposar els temes principals de la recerca realitzada i establir direccions aproximades per a futurs treballs.

Paraules clau: tabac, Imperio rus, Moscovia, historiografia.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, the Russian Federation is the world's third-largest market for tobacco products, behind China and the USA, ruled by the transnational tobacco companies (GILMORE, 2009; ZARUBOVA ROSS, SHARIFF & GILMORE, 2008: 26). Russia is in the top-10 list of countries¹ whose citizens smoke tobacco from the age of 15 and upwards; 41.5% in 2005 and 39.3% in 2016 (RITCHIE & ROSER, 2020). Given this, tobacco represents a source of replenishment of state taxes² and offers job vacancies in agriculture and trade, contributing positively to economic growth. However, excessive tobacco use negatively affects national population health, leads to the development of diseases, increases mortality rates, and places an additional bur-

den on the country's health system (ZARUBOVA ROSS, SHARIFF & GILMORE, 2008: 4–20, 32).

As Shirokova and Skul'skaya (2016) underline, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the farming of tobacco in the Russian Federation underwent a complete decay and mostly depends on the acquisition of raw materials and other substances for cigarette production abroad. Considering the dimension of the tobacco market and the current state of the Russian tobacco industry, the studies of its history are indispensable. Therefore, it is particularly important to examine the roots of tobacco treatment in the Russian Empire,³ as well as to trace the historiography regarding this crop.

- 1 The top-10 countries in 2016 are: Kiribati, Montenegro, Greece, Timor, Nauru, Indonesia, Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Chile.
- 2 Tobacco revenues consisted in 28.9 billion of roubles or 27% of the revenue from excise taxes collected on the sale of automobile fuel, alcohol, and tobacco, or 0.13% of GDP in 2005.
- 3 The state-of-the-art tobacco studies during the Soviet period are omitted due to the limited size of this article and the intensity of the topic, which is the theme of the prospective paper.

Tobacco, a colonial product from America, spread to Muscovy in the sixteenth century, contributing to the Europeanisation of tobacco (GOODMAN, 1993:54), and, simultaneously, from China, through the newly-affiliated Siberian territories (MONAHAN, 2009: 61–82). In Imperial Russia, tobacco legislation, tax policy, cultivation allocation, production, and trade are closely related to the dynamics of the recently incorporated territories and, consequently, different social groups and nationalities (YÁNYISHEV-NÉSTEROVA, 2019).

This article pursues the following objectives. First, it aims to outline the periodisation of the tobacco studies, linked, in case of the national scholars, to the economic development of the country. Thus, the paper lists in chronological order the works of the Imperial, Soviet, contemporary Russian, and foreign scholars. Second, it attempts to expose the main topics of the investigation, and third, to set forth approximate directions for future research with the indications of the primary sources' allocation.

STUDIES OF RUSSIAN IMPERIAL SCHOLARS, FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO 1917

The 1762 decree of Catherine the Great replaced the monopoly of tobacco and paved the way to free tobacco cultivation and commerce. As a direct consequence of the favourable legislation and territori-

al expansion with an appropriate climate for tobacco growing, the Russian trade statistics registered tobacco export from the first third of the nineteenth century (VALETOV, 2017).

In general terms, in the mid-nineteenth century, the Russian Empire was characterised as a backward agrarian country, where wheat and rye represented a considerable share of export commodities. The 'Development of Capitalism in Russia' (LENIN, 1899) began firmly after the serfs' emancipation reform in 1861, and the government practised a protectionist policy to keep the *nascent*, as said by Alexander Hamilton (1791), national industry.

Russian Imperial scholars involved in tobacco research occupied public service positions or belonged to the aristocracy and large landowners' class. They drew attention to the comparative history of tobacco in Russia and other European countries, legislation, tariff policies, studies of cultivation regions, and elaboration of the handbook over tobacco farming. The major ideas laid in the sphere of tobacco's appearance, production, and benefits' income for the treasure, reflect the main policies of the state.

Thus, Chulkov (1786, 1855), a state-employee of the Department of Commerce, published the history of tobacco regulation in Russia from the sixteenth century to 1762, broadly using primary documents from the Senate Archive and the

Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire. Ragozin (1871), a Moscow noble, and economist, statistician, and publicist by profession, dedicated his work on tobacco and its taxes in the Russian Empire. His publication is especially valuable, as it represented some quantitative data regarding recovered tobacco taxes, expressed in monetary units from 1839 to 1869; information on the number of planters and plantations for 1868; and cigarettes and *papirosy*⁴ production from 1862 to 1869, recovered from the Excise Duty Management Department (*Upravlenie Aktsiznymi Sborami*) or General Directorate of Consolidated Fees and Treasury Sales (*Glavnoye upravleniye neokladnykh sborov i kazennoi prodazhi pitei*) under the Ministry of Finance (RASKIN, 2001). Grumm-Grzhimaylo, a descendent of the impoverished noble family (GRUMM-GRZHIMAYLO, 2014) began his public career in the Ministry of Finance, and later, worked in the Ministry of Justice. He contributed to the chapter in the tobacco industry edition with an overview of the various branches of the tobacco manufacturing industry (GRUMM-GRZHIMAYLO, 1863:213–373). His masterpiece embraced the following

problems: the history of tobacco appearance, the initial and current regions of cultivation, some aspects regarding excise policy, and the recent state of the Russian tobacco industry. Grumm-Grzhimaylo argued that despite the laborious process of tobacco breeding, its cultivation, further processing, and selling, it could be a beneficial business, especially in the southern regions of the Empire. Finally, the author detailed the expansion of tobacco and indicated that it could play a more important role in foreign trade.

The publication of Storozhev (1890) outlined the origins of Malorossian (now Ukraine, the Sumy region) tobacco-growing within the frontiers of the Russian Empire, whereas Tverdokhlebov (1886:178–182) addressed his research to the first tobacco manufacture of Akhtyrka, founded in 1718 and located on the Malorossian soil of the Empire.

Ponomarev (1888:116–127), a PhD in Agriculture and Forestry and a full member of the Imperial Free Economic Society in Russia (*Imperatorskoie Vol'noie Ekonomicheskoe Obschestvo*), published an essay on the government measures in the development of agriculture in Russia from the beginning of the state to

4 *Papirosy* (plural), *papirosa* (singular) is a tobacco product of Russian origin, made from yellow fermented tobaccos, a specific type of cigarette. *Papirosy* gained wide popularity in the second half of the nineteenth century and remained the most widespread type of tobacco products in the Russian Empire and the USSR until the distribution of filter cigarettes in the middle of the twentieth century. See BOKAREV, 2009:148.

the present, including tobacco. In the overview, the author highlighted questions regarding the distribution of land for tobacco cultivation and the establishment of a special tobacco office in Romny, Malorossia and an exemplary tobacco plantation at the Bessarabian School of Gardening, etc. Furthermore, the detailed data regarding tobacco breeding in other regions of the Russian Empire, such as Bessarabia, Kubán' Region, and Transcaucasia, were revealed by Scherbachev (1889–1894).

Pokrovskiy (1895, 1902), a Russian statistician, economist, editor, and state-employee of the Customs Duties Department (*Departament Tamozhennykh Sborov*) of the Ministry of Finance, since 1891 was chairman of the Statistical Commission at the Imperial Free Economic Society (YATSUNSKIY, 1957: 241–243). Pokrovskiy directed the edition of the statistical yearbooks of the nineteenth century, containing information on Russian foreign trade, detailed in monetary and weight items, main commodities, including tobacco, and principal commerce partners.

Milyukov (1892), a historian, political figure, and leader of the Constitutional Democratic Party, People's Freedom Party or *Partia Kadetov* (ELKIN, 1945:137–141) authored a fundamental publication about the Russian economy in the eighteenth century and the reforms of Peter the Great. Tobacco, in that case, was examined through the

framework of the state monopoly and tax implementation on any strategic commodity, such as rhubarb, salt, or wine.

We could affirm that the first historiography of Russian tobacco was created by enlightened layers of the Russian Imperial society. The Russian Empire, involved in a global market, was interested in the major export of its products, including tobacco, and the tobacco studies, regarding the monopoly creation, legislation, farming regions, tariff policies, etc., supporting the export tendency.

RESEARCH OF THE SOVIET-ERA ACADEMICS, FROM 1922 TO 1991

In 1922, in the course of the New Economic Policy, Lyubimenko, a member of the Commission on the Study of the Natural Economic Forces of Russia, an institution adjunct to the Russian Academy of Science (*Komissia po izucheniyu estestvennykh proizvoditelnykh sil Rossii, sostoyaschaia pri Rossiiskoy Akademii Nauk*) published his masterpiece 'The Wealth of Russia. Tobacco'.

In regards to this, it is crucial to outline the previous general context to Lyubimenko's book: the October Revolution of 1917, flowing into the Civil War, and the participation of the Russian Empire in World War I. The Bolshevik's victory in the Civil War determined the economic development of Russia for nearly seven decades, characterised by state ownership of the means of

production. Moreover, the Bolshevik government signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918. This ended Russian involvement in the First World War and led to considerable territorial losses on the Western front, including Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, and Bessarabia, the most economically developed (WHEELER-BENNETT, 1938), and, in the case of the last two, principal regions of tobacco growing. In 1918, the Soviet government established the State Monopoly on Foreign Trade, ensuring national interests in the field of foreign commercial relations (POZDNIAKOV, 1969). During the 1920s, after the proclamation of the Soviet Union, comprised of Russian, Byelorussian, Ukrainian, and Transcaucasian Soviet Republics, the young Soviet state initiated its struggle for international political recognition. The state did this by concluding many commercial treaties (Korovin, 1928) and leading a New Economic Policy within its borders, aimed at the restoration of the national economy after the destruction of the Civil War.

Consequently, Lyubimenko's work (1922) represented an overview of the tobacco industry in the Russian Empire as one of the sources of the national wealth, as the Soviet government recovered the previously lost territories with climate characteristics beneficial to the tobacco farming. The publication provides regional data on cultivation, production, and productivity during the

pre-revolutionary period, varieties of tobacco, number of factories, and the key trade countries. The essay provided some recommendations for the government, namely the restoration of the tobacco industry in Soviet Russia and its transformation from small-scale farming into large-scale production.

There were no publications regarding tobacco during Soviet industrialisation, wartime, and post-war period. Proper tobacco research was not a priority of Soviet academics, although the Khrushchev *thaw* brought some liberalisation to Soviet historical science, and tobacco could be found within the context of the State's emergence, the rise of the Absolutism, or regional studies. Thus, Troitskiy (1966) revealed the fiscal policy of the Imperial Government and clearly related the creation of monopolies on several commodities, together with tobacco, to the upsurge of the Absolute State. Nesterenko (1959) and Slyusarskiy (1964) dedicated their studies to the economic development of Soviet Ukraine and its roots within the Russian Empire, highlighting tobacco farming as an important component of traditional agriculture. Additionally, Slyusarskiy (1964), using the primary sources of the *Archive of the Ancient Documents*, paid special attention to the Akhtyrka manufacture, the first tobacco factory of the Empire, settled by the Peter the Great decree in Malorossia (now Ukraine).

In summary, Soviet scholars spo-

radically presented tobacco studies due to the industrial orientation of the Soviet Union on the one hand, and the solid presence of Scientific Communism over the historical science on the other. Tobacco was examined in the framework of the 'Absolutist State' rise or the regional economic development of the Soviet Ukraine.

Contemporary Russian studies, from 1991 to nowadays

Contemporary Russian scholarship, freed from several restrictions imposed by the Communist Party on the Soviet historical science, has led tobacco research since the 2000s—the epoch corresponded to retrieval after the collapse of the USSR, in the following ways: regional studies, parliamentarian issues, tobacco fabrics, prosopography of the tobacco manufacturers, and the first tobacco organisations.

Thus, Shapovalov (2002) published an essay on the usage of tobacco in the Siberia region (seventeenth century to the first half of the twentieth century), strongly supported by archaeological and ethnographical

data. Medvedev (2003) presented a remarkable study about tobacco farming by German settlers⁵ in the region of the Low Volga river. 'Sarepta on Volga'—the historical title of the German colony—gave tobacco manufacture the name Sarepta, founded in 1768, and the creation of the Sarepta Trade House in Saint Petersburg in 1766 (MEDVEDEV & SINKEVICH, 2012).

The book of Malinin (2006) provided a significant overview of tobacco in Russia, since its first appearance to the foundation of tobacco factories in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, Malinin's essay, directed to a non-academic audience, lacks the archival sources, which represents the main drawback of the publication.

An article by Seleznev (2007) focused on the approval of tobacco laws in the First State Duma (Lower House) during 1905–1906, and the position of the Constitutional Democratic Party⁶ supported the small farms' tobacco production in detriment of the large-scale producers.

The following scholars focused their tobacco research in the determinate

5 On 22 June 1763, the Catherine the Great Manifesto declared the lands from Saratov up and down the Volga river free for the German settlers. From 1763 to 1766 near 6,342 families of German colonists arrived there and formed a small colony called Sarepta. See: Report of the Holy Synod.

6 The Constitutional Democratic Party, headed by Pavel Milyukov, obtained 161 deputy chairs over 488 in the First Duma.

areas of the Russian Empire: Zaitsev (2011) highlighted the emergence of tobacco in Crimea in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, arguing that its appearance was an outcome of the Ottoman smoking tradition; Sedov (2012) stressed the spread of tobacco in Russia from the North and Novgorodian territories, emphasising its illicit trade in the seventeenth century despite its prohibition; Sinchina (2016) highlighted the development of the tobacco industry in the Kubán' region in the late nineteenth century. Prokhorov (2018) studied the rise of the tobacco industry, its commerce, and the settlements of tobacco manufacturers under the control and direction of the Crimean Karaites⁷ from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century. One of them, a Karait merchant called Samuil Bagay, settled a tobacco factory 'lava' in Moscow in 1856 (PROKHOROV, 2018: 342–343), in which the Soviet epoch was nationalised and functioned throughout all the Soviet periods. Finally, Filimonova (2018) studied the background and most important decisions of the First Tobacco Growers Congress, which took place in the Kubán' region in June 1910.

Thus, Russian contemporary studies of tobacco are represented by individual researchers, emphasising the regional tobacco performance. Most works continued the investigations of the Russian Imperial and Soviet academics and possess a strong background of primary sources, preserved in central and local archives. These studies show the diversity and potential scale of tobacco research in Russia, concentrating on the topics of prosopography, manufacturing, production, and domestic and overseas trade.

FOREIGN RESEARCH

Foreign scholars conducted research on Russian tobacco without any ideological constraints. The first investigations of Russian tobacco took place in the first half of the twentieth century. Frederiksen (1943) studied the introduction of tobacco under Peter the Great's rule, providing detailed information on the tobacco Treaty between the Marquis of Carmarthen and the Czar of Muscovy, signed in 1699. However, it was Price (1961), who provided a fundamental study of the British tobacco trade and its expansion into the Russian market from the seventeenth to the early eighteenth century.

⁷ Karaites, or *Karaimy* in Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, and Lithuanian, a Turkic-speaking group, who adapted Karaites Judaism. This ethnic group is currently spread over the territory of Central-Eastern Europe or within the boundaries of the former Russian Empire. See SCHEGOLEVA, 2011.

The collective monograph, directed by Romaniello and Starks (2009), examined different aspects of tobacco in Muscovy, the Soviet Union, and modern Russia. The book contains 16 chapters, mostly written by English-speaking authors. The edition embraces topics such the following: tobacco policies in seventeenth-century Russia, trade in Siberia, advertising of tobacco production according to social class and gender in Imperial Russia, transformation of the tobacco industry at the beginning of the Communist era, anti-smoking posters of the Soviet state, tobacco relations with Bulgaria, interview with the former Director of 'lava' manufactory Leonid Sinel'nikov, the transition to the capitalist economy, accompanied by the transnational tobacco companies occupation of the national deregulated market, and the impact of tobacco on the health of the modern Russian population. The monograph represents an outstanding 'centralised study' of tobacco in Imperial Russia, transition to the Communist era, and the modern Russian Federation, covering different aspects, and catalyses further international research of Russian tobacco.

Komlikova (2015, 2017) and Pasit-ska (2017) devoted their studies to tobacco during the Russian Imperial period in the context of the national Ukrainian tobacco industry development, paying special attention to the Akhtyrka plant and the Sumshchy-na (the Sumy region of present-day

Ukraine). Zhemukhov (2018) described the integration of Circassian tobacco (Caucasus region) into the global market of the Russian Empire. The quality of Circassian tobacco permitted competition with Virginian and its characteristics allowed it to become a specific currency among the Siberian and North American indigenous. Finally, Yányshév-Nésterova (2018, 2019) traced the institutional development of tobacco legislation in the Russian Empire (seventeenth to late nineteenth centuries) and provided explanations on the tobacco monopoly cancellation and the Akhtyrka tobacco manufacture dissolution as a result of the introduction of a capitation tax.

Accordingly, foreign research, which embraces collective scholarly work, the knowledge of Russian or Ukrainian, leveraged by the strong financial support and applied to the Russian archives, produces outstanding outcomes. Here the tobacco studies are embedded in the international modern history period, economics, gender, and social history.

CONCLUSION AND FINAL REFLECTION

The following conclusions are made based on this paper. Firstly, tobacco studies of the Russian Empire period are scarce, with approximately 50 publications, accepting the rich provincial diversity of the Russian Empire, its territorial expansion, and the economic development. In the words of Romaniello (2009),

'...we realized how little had been written on the subject'. The internationalisation of research of the twenty-first century has allowed tobacco research to flourish, as scholars do not face any ideological limitations, may receive financial support, take an advantage of digitalised data, and benefit from availability of archival sources.

Secondly, the overview of publications enables them to formulate that the pre-revolutionary works reflected a general condition of the tobacco industry, fiscal policies, legislation, and production regions. The second millennium's publications focus the geographical studies of tobacco: North (Novgorod, Arkhangelsk), West (current Ukraine), East (Siberia, China), South (Crimea, Caucasus, Kubán') and central parts of the Empire (the Volga river region). Regional tobacco research involves utilisation of primary sources from local archives, contributing in a qualitative manner to the macro quantitative tobacco studies, provided by the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Finance. Current tobacco studies embrace the foundation of tobacco fabrics, the prosopography of Russian tobacco merchants and manufacturers, and fitting of the Russian tobacco studies into the global discussion over tobacco with respect to the 'branch-

es' of history: economic, cultural, social, and gender.

Thirdly, taking into consideration the long history of Russian smoking, further research is required regarding the topics of global trade via the systematisation of data, fiscal policies, regional production, manufacturing, employed workforce, prosopography, transition to the Communist era, etc. Jointly with the Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire, the primary sources regarding tobacco topics are found in the Federal Archives of Russia,⁸ located in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Samara, Simferopol and Vladivostok, abundant local archives, and/or in the Archives of neighbouring countries, such as Ukraine,⁹ with offices in Kyiv, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Dnipropetrovs'k, Zaporishian region or Odesa, as most of present-day Ukraine entered into the Russian Empire. The Kingdom of Poland (1815–1917) and the Grand Duchy of Finland (1809–1917) also formed part of the Russian Empire and provide potential topics for Russian tobacco research. Finally, tobacco in the Russian Empire should be examined not only as a part of tobacco Europeanisation but also in the context of the strong influence of neighbouring China and the mix of cultures in Siberian Russia.

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