

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08400-0 - Catherine the Great and the Russian Nobility: A Study Based on the
Materials of the Legislative Commission of 1767

Paul Dukes

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CATHERINE THE GREAT
AND THE
RUSSIAN NOBILITY

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08400-0 - Catherine the Great and the Russian Nobility: A Study Based on the Materials of the Legislative Commission of 1767

Paul Dukes

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CATHERINE THE GREAT AND THE RUSSIAN NOBILITY

A STUDY BASED ON THE
MATERIALS OF THE LEGISLATIVE
COMMISSION OF 1767

BY

PAUL DUKES

Lecturer in Russian History, University of Aberdeen



CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1967

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08400-0 - Catherine the Great and the Russian Nobility: A Study Based on the Materials of the Legislative Commission of 1767

Paul Dukes

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521048583

© Cambridge University Press 1967

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1967

This digitally printed version 2008

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 67-13802

ISBN 978-0-521-04858-3 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-08400-0 paperback

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08400-0 - Catherine the Great and the Russian Nobility: A Study Based on the
Materials of the Legislative Commission of 1767

Paul Dukes

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

To my Mother and Father

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08400-0 - Catherine the Great and the Russian Nobility: A Study Based on the Materials of the Legislative Commission of 1767

Paul Dukes

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xi
1 Crown and nobility in Russia before 1762	1
Services and privileges	3
Serfdom and the economy	9
Government and society	15
Education and culture	25
2 Peter III, Catherine II and the nobility	38
Peter III's emancipation manifesto	38
Catherine II and her policy	46
The elections to the Legislative Commission	57
The opening and agenda	76
3 Serfdom and the economy	86
The economic content of the instruction	86
Contemporary ideas on the economy	91
Catherine's early economic policy	105
The Legislative Commission and the economy	110
4 Social and political attitudes	145
Qualifications for nobility	145
Noble rights and privileges	158
Local government and class organization	162
Central government and the role of the nobility	176
5 Education and culture	189
Official views of education	189
Education at the Legislative Commission	195
The Church	210
Russian culture	215
6 Catherine the Great and the Russian nobility	218
The significance of the Legislative Commission	218
The decrees of 1775 and 1785	222
Serfdom and the economy	229
Government and society	237
Education and culture	241
Conclusion	248
<i>Bibliography</i>	253
<i>Index</i>	261

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08400-0 - Catherine the Great and the Russian Nobility: A Study Based on the Materials of the Legislative Commission of 1767

Paul Dukes

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

This work does not pretend to be an exhaustive history of the reign of Catherine the Great. A full biography of the Empress, doing justice to her as ruler and diplomat, lover and correspondent, would take several volumes. Here, I have been primarily concerned with Catherine as legislator, with an attempt to show the limitations placed upon her domestic policy by the prejudices and desires of the nobility. Even this aim has not been thoroughly carried out. For example, at least twenty members of the nobility found their way to her bed, and these favourites, particularly Orlov and Potemkin, exercised an influence on the Empress much greater than most of their fellows. Rather than examining the views of such individuals, I have tried to show the class attitudes of the nobility, which Orlov, Potemkin and the others would to varying extents share.

The principal source material for this study has been the documents concerning the Legislative Commission of 1767 published by the Imperial Russian Historical Society. The focus of attention has been on the statements of noble opinion in the instructions and by the deputies and has only touched on the participation of other classes in the Commission. The activity of the sub-committees, which remained in session after the closure of the General Assembly of the Commission, has been little investigated.

The main body of the work is preceded by an examination of crown and nobility in the years before Catherine's accession, and followed by an analysis of the most important legislation of her reign in the years following the closure of the Commission, with an estimate of the extent to which this was influenced by the attitudes of the nobility. All dates in the book are Old Style, that is eleven days behind the New Style calendar throughout the eighteenth century.

Catherine the Great and the Russian Nobility is a revision and enlargement of a London University Ph.D. thesis, which was produced with the sympathetic encouragement and guidance of Professor G. H. N. Seton-Watson and Dr J. L. H. Keep of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies. Although the subject is one which has not received much detailed attention from Western European or overseas students of Russian history, their pre-Revolutionary and Soviet counterparts have given various aspects of it

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08400-0 - Catherine the Great and the Russian Nobility: A Study Based on the Materials of the Legislative Commission of 1767

Paul Dukes

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface*

extensive consideration, and I have drawn heavily on the information and ideas supplied by such men as Bochkarev, Bogoslovskii, Chechulin, Florovskii and Got'e, not to mention Solov'ev and Kliuchevskii, of older generations; and Beliaevskii and Druzhinin of the newer. Among non-Russian historians, an increasing number of whom have shown interest in eighteenth-century Russian history, Marc Raeff has produced the work of most value to me, and I must also express my thanks to him for the bibliographical and more general advice that he gave me when my researches were just beginning. Allen McConnell kindly read the entire manuscript and made several suggestions for its improvement. Finally, I would like to record my gratitude to E. N. Williams, who in one of his own recent works gave thanks to his pupils 'for the education I receive'. In my case at least, principally more than fifteen years ago but not a little since, the teaching has been in the other direction. Of course, the responsibility for errors and misunderstandings in this book is entirely mine.

King's College, Old Aberdeen

P.D.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08400-0 - Catherine the Great and the Russian Nobility: A Study Based on the Materials of the Legislative Commission of 1767

Paul Dukes

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ABBREVIATIONS

M.	Moscow.
SPB.	St Petersburg.
L.	Leningrad.
<i>PSZ</i>	<i>Polnoe sobranie zakonov.</i>
<i>RA</i>	<i>Russkii arhiv.</i>
<i>RS</i>	<i>Russkaia starina.</i>
<i>RV</i>	<i>Russkii vestnik.</i>
<i>SEER</i>	<i>Slavonic and East European Review.</i>
<i>SIRIO</i>	<i>Sbornik imperatorskogo russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva.</i>
<i>TVEO</i>	<i>Trudy vol'nogo ekonomicheskogo obshchestva.</i>
<i>VE</i>	<i>Vestnik Evropy.</i>
<i>ZMNP</i>	<i>Zhurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia.</i>