

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

More than a dozen pretenders appeared in Russia in the early seventeenth century, during the period of civil strife and foreign invasion known as the Time of Troubles. The most successful of these was the First False Dimitry, who occupied the throne in 1605–6; he was followed by Second and Third False Dimitrys and by various other impostors.

Maureen Perrie traces the careers of these pretenders and offers explanations of their success. She argues that support for the false tsars and tsareviches was influenced not only by the ingenious tales they told to justify their claims, but also by religious-miraculous notions of Christ-like rulers risen from the dead, and by 'popular monarchist' views of the true tsar as the scourge of the boyars. Her conclusion draws comparisons and contrasts between the Russian pretenders and royal impostors who appeared elsewhere in early modern Europe.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The
False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Pretenders and popular monarchism
in early modern Russia

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Pretenders and popular monarchism in early modern Russia

The false tsars of the Time of Troubles

Maureen Perrie

*Centre for Russian and East European Studies
University of Birmingham*



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

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

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/9780521472746

© Cambridge University Press 1995

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 1995

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

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Perrie, Maureen, 1946–

Pretenders and popular monarchism in early modern Russia: the false tsars of the Time of Troubles/Maureen Perrie

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0 521 47274 1

1. Russia – History – Time of Troubles, 1598–1613. 2. Russia – Kings and rulers – Succession. I. Title.

DK111.P36 1995

947'.045 – dc20 94-48442 CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-47274-6 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-89101-1 Paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2009

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate. Information regarding prices, travel timetables and other factual information given in this work are correct at the time of first printing but Cambridge University Press does not guarantee the accuracy of such information thereafter.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>		x
<i>Note on transliteration, names and dates</i>		xii
<i>Chronology of events</i>		xiii
<i>Glossary of Russian terms</i>		xv
<i>List of abbreviations</i>		xvii
Introduction		1
Prologue Tsarevich Dimitry and Boris Godunov		7
The end of a dynasty		7
On the eve of the Troubles		22
Part 1 The First False Dimitry		33
1 The fugitive monk		35
Rumours of a pretender		35
The man who called himself Dimitry		37
Grisha Otrep'ev		44
The 'pretender intrigue': conspiracy theories		50
2 The campaign for the crown		59
The invasion of Russia		59
The rising in the capital		69
Moscow and coronation		78
3 The pretender on the throne		84
True tsar; good tsar?		84
Tsarevich Peter		90
Death and denunciation		97
Part 2 Rebels in the name of Tsar Dimitry		107
4 Tsar Dimitry lives!		109
Rumours in Moscow		109
Shakhovskoi and Molchanov		115
		vii

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii	Contents	
	Ivan Bolotnikov	120
	The siege of Moscow	125
5	The uprising continues	131
	The Astrakhan' tsareviches	131
	Tsarevich Peter at Putivl'	134
	The lower Volga: Tsaritsyn and Astrakhan'	144
	The siege of Tula	149
	Part 3 The final stages of the Troubles	155
6	The Second False Dimitry: from Starodub to Tushino	157
	Tsar Dimitry at Starodub	157
	The rallying of support	168
	The cossack tsareviches	174
7	The Second False Dimitry: Tushino and Kaluga	182
	The Tushino court	182
	The struggle for the towns	187
	Kaluga	196
8	Tsarevich Ivan Dimitrievich	208
	Ivan Zarutskii and the national liberation movement	208
	The Third False Dimitry	211
	Zarutskii's last stand	218
Epilogue	After the Troubles: pretence in the later seventeenth century	229
Conclusion		239
	The pretenders of the Time of Troubles: a comparative analysis	239
	Pretence and popular monarchism	247
	<i>Bibliography</i>	251
	<i>Index</i>	262

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Illustrations

<i>Figures</i>		<i>page</i>
1	The Muscovite royal house in the sixteenth century	8
2	Marriage alliances of the Romanov and Godunov clans with the old dynasty	13
3	The house of Vasa in Sweden and Poland during the Time of Troubles	25
4	Real and false descendants of Ivan the Terrible	177
 <i>Maps</i>		
1	Russia and her neighbours at the beginning of the seventeenth century	23
2	Russia and Poland-Lithuania, showing places visited by the First False Dimitry in 1602–4	48
3	The towns of south-west Russia	60
4	Northern Russia	188
 <i>Plates</i>		
1	Inscription in the book presented by Prince Vasiliĭ Ostrozhskii to the monks Grigorii, Varlaam and Misail in 1602	44
2	The <i>raskat</i> in Astrakhan'	139
3	The Second False Dimitry	159

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

My interest in the pretenders of the Time of Troubles dates back more than twenty years, although my work on the topic has been somewhat intermittent. My approach to the subject has undergone considerable modification over the course of time. In the 1970s, inspired by notions of pretenders as ‘social bandits’ and their followers as ‘primitive rebels’, I was drawn to the Time of Troubles by Soviet works that depicted the period as a ‘peasant war’ whose participants were guided by ‘popular socio-utopian legends about returning royal deliverers’. Preliminary research, however, indicated that these concepts could not be supported by the evidence. Discouraged, I moved off to work in other fields, returning to the Time of Troubles only when my study of the folklore about Ivan the Terrible suggested potentially more fruitful approaches to pretence. The thinking behind the present volume has been influenced by semiotic interpretations of cultural history, by the concept of *mentalité*, and by studies of symbolism and ritual in popular culture – although an inherent tendency to scepticism and empiricism has, I hope, saved me from some of the more self-indulgent excesses of ‘theory’.

Over the years in which this book has been in the making I have accumulated a number of debts. Some of the material was first presented to seminars at the universities of Birmingham, East Anglia, Glasgow and London, and I am most grateful to participants for their comments. The Study Group on Eighteenth-Century Russia has provided a welcoming and discerning audience for papers that strictly lay outside its chronological remit. British scholars working on pre-Petrine Russian history form a small and select group: Paul Dukes, Lindsey Hughes, John Klier, Philip Longworth, Denis Shaw and R. E. F. Smith have at various times and in various ways provided much valued support and encouragement. Among Russian historians, I have benefited from discussions in Moscow with L. V. Danilova, the late V. B. Kobrin, V. D. Nazarov, A. A. Preobrazhenskii and A. L. Yurganov. R. G. Skrynnikov of St Petersburg University has provided encouragement over a long period of time. Fellow members of the Centre for Russian and East European Studies at Birmingham have displayed surprising tolerance towards a colleague whose interests seemed to be drifting ever further away from their own more contemporary concerns. Some have even pretended to believe

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

my protestations about the ‘relevance’ of my work to the post-Soviet period, when Russia, in her new Time of Troubles, was beset with false prophets, if not (yet) with false tsars.

Research for the book has been conducted in Birmingham, in the Alexander Baykov and Main University Libraries; in London, in the British Library and in the library of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES); in Moscow, in what was then the Lenin Library; and in what was then Leningrad, in the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library and the Library of the Academy of Sciences (BAN). I am grateful to the staffs of all these libraries for their efforts on my behalf; and especially to Jenny Brine of the Baykov Library for her assistance at a time when I was particularly dependent on the lifeline of Inter-Library Loans.

Research visits to Russia have been funded by the University of Birmingham and by the British Council. In the later stages of work on the book I benefited from the exchange agreement, initiated by the historians at SSEES, between the English ‘consortium’ universities and the Institutes of History of the Academy of Sciences in Moscow.

Finally I should like to thank my husband Bill for his patience, tolerance and support. As for our sons, Martin and Alan: the publication of this volume should finally convince them that ‘writing a book’ was not just a euphemism for listening to Radio Three in the study, and avoiding tiresome domestic chores.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Note on transliteration, names and dates

Transliteration from Russian follows the simplified form of the British Standard (BS 2979–1958). Some first names have been anglicised (e.g. Michael, Peter); Dimitry has been preferred to the more correct Dmitrii or Dimitrii. Personal names and placenames from Belorussian and Ukrainian areas that formed part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the early seventeenth century have posed a particular problem: they are mostly given in transliterated Russified form. Even with Polish names, I have not been entirely consistent: Marina Mniszech is preferred to the more correct Maryna Mniszchówna. I apologise for any offence to national sentiment that may be caused by such hybrid usages, which have been adopted purely in the interests of convenience and simplification.

Dates are given according to the Old Style (Julian) calendar, which was nine days behind the Western (Gregorian) calendar in the sixteenth century, and ten days behind in the seventeenth. Occasionally, when citing sources that used the Western calendar, I have provided both dates. The Russian calendar in this period numbered years from the creation (5509 BC), and the year began on 1 September. Dates in the form '1605/6' (where the month is unknown) refer to the Russian year 7114, i.e. the period from 1 September 1605 to 31 August 1606.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Chronology of events

- 1533–84** **Reign of Ivan IV ('the Terrible')**
 1547 Ivan's coronation as first tsar
 1552 Conquest of Kazan'
 1557 Conquest of Astrakhan'
 1558–83 Livonian War
 1565–72 *oprichnina*
 1571 Burning of Moscow by Crimean Tatars
 1581 Death of Tsarevich Ivan Ivanovich
1584–98 **Reign of Fedor Ivanovich**
 1591 Death of Tsarevich Dimitry of Uglich
1598–1605 **Reign of Boris Godunov**
 1601–3 Famine
 1603 Khlopko uprising
 1603 Appearance of First False Dimitry at Brahin
 1604–5 Invasion of Russia by First False Dimitry
 1605 13 April: death of Boris Godunov; accession of Fedor Borisovich
 1 June: rising in Moscow against Godunovs
 21 July: coronation of First False Dimitry
1605–6 **Reign of First False Dimitry**
 1606 April: appearance of Tsarevich Peter-Ileika on Volga
 8 May: Dimitry's marriage to Marina Mniszech
 17 May: murder of First False Dimitry
 19 May: election of Shuiskii as tsar
 1 June: Shuiskii's coronation
1606–10 **Reign of Vasilii Shuiskii**
 1606–7 Bolotnikov revolt
 1606 summer: appearance of Tsarevich Ivan Augustus in Astrakhan'
 November: arrival of Tsarevich Peter-Ileika at Putivl'
 November–December: siege of Moscow by Pashkov and Bolotnikov
 1607 January: arrival of Tsarevich Peter ('the Bear') in Orsha

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv	Chronology of events
	June: appearance of Second False Dimitry in Starodub
	June–October: siege of Tula
	10 October: surrender of Bolotnikov and Tsarevich Peter at Tula
	November: Tsarevich Fedor comes to Dimitry's camp at Bryansk
1608	24 April: Dimitry denounces cossack 'tsareviches'
	June: Dimitry's arrival at Tushino
	September: Marina acknowledges Dimitry at Tushino
1609	February: military agreement between Shuiskii and Sweden
	September: Poles besiege Smolensk
	December: Dimitry flees from Tushino to Kaluga
1610	24 June: Żółkiewski defeats Dimitry Shuiskii at Klushino
	17 July: deposition of Vasilii Shuiskii
	August: Muscovites swear allegiance to Władysław
	September: Poles occupy Moscow
	11 December: murder of Dimitry at Kaluga
1611	March: first national liberation army besieges Moscow
	March: Third False Dimitry arrives in Ivangorod
	July: Swedes occupy Novgorod
1612	July: Zarutskii flees from Moscow encampments
	August: second national liberation army, under Minin and Pozharskii, arrives at Moscow
	November: liberation of Moscow
1613	February: election of Michael Romanov as tsar
1613–45	Reign of Michael Romanov
1613	autumn: Zarutskii arrives in Astrakhan' with Marina and Tsarevich Ivan Dimitrievich
1614	12 May: Zarutskii flees from Astrakhan'
1617	Treaty of Stolbovo with Sweden
1618	Treaty of Deulino with Poland
1634	Peace of Polyanovka with Poland
1645–76	Reign of Aleksei
1669–71	Razin rebellion
1676–82	Reign of Fedor Alekseevich
1682–1725	Reign of Peter I ('the Great')
1761–2	Reign of Peter III
1762–96	Reign of Catherine II ('the Great')
1773–4	Pugachev revolt

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Glossary of Russian terms

<i>ataman</i>	Cossack chieftain; the elected leader of a cossack band.
boyar (Russian <i>boyarin</i> , pl. <i>boyare</i>)	In the narrow sense, the highest rank of member of the tsar's boyar <i>duma</i> (<i>boyarskaya дума</i>) or council. More broadly, a member of those aristocratic clans whose senior representatives were eligible for appointment to boyar status.
<i>dvor</i>	'Court': more specifically, after the abolition of the <i>oprichnina</i> (q.v.), the government of the tsar's personal domain.
<i>dvoryanin</i> (pl. <i>dvoryane</i>)	Nobleman (literally, 'courtier'); a military servitor of higher rank than a <i>syn boyarskii</i> (q.v.).
<i>d'yak</i>	'Secretary': a leading official in the bureaucracy.
<i>gramota</i>	An official document or charter; a proclamation.
<i>izvet</i>	Communication, petition.
<i>kholop</i>	Slave, bondsman.
<i>murza</i>	Tatar nobleman.
<i>narod</i>	The ('common') people: a category comprising peasants, slaves, cossacks and artisans.
<i>okol'nichii</i>	'Lord-in-waiting': a member of the boyar council, holding the court rank below boyar.
<i>oprichnina</i>	In 1565–72, the division of the realm that was directly under the tsar's control (cf. <i>zemshchina</i>). By extension, the tsar's bodyguard (<i>oprichniki</i>), and the reign of terror that they implemented.
<i>raskat</i>	A form of execution in which the victim was thrown from the top of a tower.
<i>ras[s]triga</i> , <i>ros[s]triga</i>	Unfrocked monk.
<i>samozvanchestvo</i> (<i>samozvanstvo</i>)	Pretence, imposture: the 'pretender phenomenon'. Cf. <i>samozvanets</i> (pl. <i>samozvantsy</i>), a pretender, impostor.
<i>skomorokh</i>	Minstrel, popular entertainer.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xvi Glossary of Russian terms

<i>strelets</i> (pl. <i>strel'tsy</i>)	Musketeer.
<i>syn boyarskii</i> (pl. <i>deti boyarskie</i>)	Literally, 'boyar's son': the most junior rank among the service nobility.
tsar (Russian <i>tsar'</i>)	From 1547, the official title of the Russian ruler (previously grand prince). Cf. tsaritsa (tsar's wife); tsarevich (tsar's son); tsarevna (tsar's daughter).
<i>ukraina</i>	A region of Russia to the south-west of Moscow, including the towns of Tula and Orel. Not to be confused with Ukraine, then part of Poland-Lithuania.
verst (Russian <i>versta</i>)	Unit of length: 0.663 mile; 1.067 km.
<i>voevoda</i>	(1) A general, military commander; (2) a town or city governor.
<i>vor</i>	State (political) criminal; 'rogue', scoundrel. Cf. <i>vorenok</i> (dim.), 'little rogue'.
<i>yurta</i>	Cossack settlement.
<i>zemshchina</i>	The 'land': in the reign of Ivan IV, the territory that was governed by the boyar <i>duma</i> , rather than by the <i>oprichnina</i> or <i>dvor</i> (q.v.).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47274-6 - Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time and Troubles

Maureen Perrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Abbreviations

<i>AAE</i>	<i>Akty, sobrannye v bibliotekakh i arkhivakh Rossiiskoi imperii Arkheograficheskoyu ekspeditsiyu</i>
<i>AI</i>	<i>Akty Istoricheskie</i>
<i>ChIOIDR</i>	<i>Chteniya v Imperatorskom Obshchestve Istorii i Drevnostei Rossiiskikh pri Moskovskom Universitete</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Pskovskie letopisi</i>
<i>PLDR</i>	<i>Pamyatniki literatury Drevnei Rusi</i>
<i>PSRL</i>	<i>Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei</i>
<i>RIB</i>	<i>Russkaya Istoricheskaya Biblioteka, izdavaemaya Imperatorskoyu Arkheograficheskoyu Kommissiyu</i>
<i>SGGiD</i>	<i>Sobranie Gosudarstvennykh Gramot i Dogovorov, khranyashchikhsya v Gosudarstvennoi Kollegii Inostrannykh Del</i>
<i>SIRIO</i>	<i>Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva</i>
<i>VIB</i>	<i>Vosstanie I. Bolotnikova</i>
<i>ZhMNP</i>	<i>Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya</i>