

Dmitry Khitrov

Lomonosov Moscow State University,
Department of History,
119311, Moscow, Lomonosovsky prospekt 27-4

The Territorial Coverage of the Overall Land Description (Valovoe Pis'mo) of the 1620s-1640s in Russia

Valovoe pis'mo of the 1620s-1640s was the first surviving overall description of land resources and population of Russia. Being both a tax census and the land registry, the documents are of exceptional importance for the study of historical geography and socio-economic history of medieval and early modern Russia. At the same time, the territorial coverage of the description is not quite clear. Pis'mo was a continuous work of Pomestny prikaz (Land Chancellery), and the new books were compiled as the existing ones for a certain county (uezd) were getting obsolete. The decision on carrying out the new overall description in 1622, has intensified the work and modified the form of the description. The resources of Pomestny prikaz were limited, however, so the work was not finished until the mid-1640s, and the decision if a new survey for a certain county will be made continued to involve the consideration of the relevance of the latter description. The paper considers territorial coverage of the known books, compiled between 1622 and 1640-ies, discusses the differences in the form of description, and determines which of them can be attributed to the valovoe pis'mo.

Keywords: Early modern period, Russia, land cadasters, piszovyie knigi