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Institution of customs district chief in Russia in the first half of the 19th century*

STRESZCZENIE

Instytucja naczelnika okręgu celnego w Rosji w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku

NA początku drugiej dekady XIX w. na terenie Rosji pojawiła się instytucja naczelnika okręgu celnego. Pełnił on funkcje nadzorcze w stosunku do urzędów celnych działających na granicy monarchii Romanowów. Ponadto realizował zarządzenia organu zwierzchniego w postaci Departamentu Handlu Zewnętrznego Ministerstwa Finansów. Na podstawie źródeł rękopiśmiennych i drukowanych dokonano analizy, w wyniku której należy stwierdzić, że stanowisko naczelnika okręgu celnego powstało w ramach powolnej modernizacji administracji celnej na przełomie XVIII i XIX w. Ponadto sam proces kształtowania się zakresu praw i obowiązków naczelnika okręgu celnego miał miejsce w drugiej, trzeciej i czwartej dekadzie XIX stulecia. Tak wypracowany model urzędnika nadzorującego działanie administracji celnej i straży granicznej na stałe znalazł się w strukturach rosyjskiej administracji skarbowej. Co więcej, w 1851 r. w wyniku likwidacji odrębności celnej Królestwa Polskiego stanowisko naczelnika okręgu celnego pojawiło się na tych peryferiach Imperium Rosyjskiego.

Słowa kluczowe: Rosja, cło, urzędnik, administracja celna

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ABSTRACT

In the early 1820s the customs district chief was instituted in Russia. This official was in charge of all the customs offices operating on the borders of the Romanov Empire. Moreover, the customs district chief supervised other structures on behalf of the Foreign Trade Department of the Ministry of Finance (FTDMF). The conducted analysis of handwritten and printed sources justifies the conclusion that the position of customs district chief was instituted as a result of gradual modernisation of the customs administration at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. Moreover, the very process of shaping rights and duties of the customs district chief took place in the second, third and fourth decades of the 19th century. Such an operative model of the clerk supervising the functioning of the customs administration and border guards became permanently established in the structures of the Russian customs administration. Furthermore, in 1851, as a result of the liquidation of the customs autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland, the position of the customs district chief appeared in those peripheral territories of the Russian Empire.

Keywords: Russia, customs duties, clerk, customs administration

The functioning of the institution of customs district chief in the Russian Empire in the first half of the 19th century has not received any interest so far, neither that of Polish historians per se nor historians of law. However, together with the appearance of this institution on the territory of the Kingdom of Poland in 1851 it is important to analyse the origin of this position and investigate how the rights and duties of this official were formed in the structures of the local state administration responsible for setting and collecting duties in the then Russia.

The first years of Alexander I's reign brought about a number of significant reforms implemented in the area of state management. Young Tsar was influenced by equally young advisors, who were well educated and familiar with the most current administrative solutions implemented in the Western and Central European states.

One of the significant reforms introduced in Russia at the beginning of the 19th century was the shift from collegial forms of management towards monocratic ruling in central institutions of the state administration. This brought an end to collegiums, which, as introduced by Peter I in the second decade of the 18th century, were successful in fulfilling their duties in consecutive decades. On 8/20 September 1802 Tsar Alexander I signed an ukaz establishing ministries. One of them, the Ministry of Trade, took over the jurisdiction of the Collegium of Commerce (which was granted

the status of a ministry department headed by a director) and gained control over all local structures of the customs administration¹.

What was clearly seen was that in this period new mechanisms in management structure were being worked on to find the most convenient institutional forms. As a result, on the force of the ukaz of 25 July/6 August 1810 the ministry system was revised and the competences related to customs affairs were moved from the Collegium of Commerce (functioning as a department) to the jurisdiction of the Minister of Finance². This meant establishment of a new department of the Ministry of Finance, which was made responsible only for foreign trade and overseeing local structures of the customs administration³.

The monocratic form of management at the top of the central government was reinforced also in the powers of governors (in the local administration structures) and it actually influenced the process of formation of new positions in the state administration. The constantly growing territory of the Romanov Empire needed continuous enlargement and development of new administrative structures to reinforce the Russian influence, not only those related to foundations of general administration. Special attention, due to the significance of duties, was placed on establishing an efficient way of overseeing a network of customs offices, which brought significant revenue to the State's treasury.

Undoubtedly, the intention to bring order into the situation in the customs administration motivated activities undertaken in the State Council: working out clear and coherent regulations enabling implementation of hierarchical structure of customs offices. It was no coincidence that these activities were parallel to the introduction of changes in the structure of central units of the state administration.

The last two decades of the 18th century in Russia were the period of search for the most appropriate model of customs administration. One could have a more detailed look at those attempts to work out a functional system as they indirectly influenced the establishment of a modern system of state customs administration in the Romanov Empire.

¹ Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvennyy Istoricheskiy Arkhiv [hereinafter: RGIA], fond 19, opis 3, delo 1, fol. 1–2v; *Polnoye Sobraniye Zakonov Rossiyskoy Imperii, s 1649 goda* [hereinafter: PSZRI], vol. XXVII (1802–1805), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 20406, pp. 243, 246.

² PSZRI, vol. XXXI (1810–1811), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 24307, p. 279.

³ *Ibidem*, No. 24326, pp. 327–328.

The 1770s in Russia were the period of dynamic changes in the local structures of the management system. With the implementation of governorate management reform, the system of local administration was also enriched with governorate tax chambers, which started to operate in each governorate in the entire Empire on the force of the ukaz of 7/18 November 1775. They were made responsible for all affairs related to widely understood treasury – tax chambers were supposed to set and collect taxes and duties for the state treasury, including customs duties⁴. As a result, the Collegium of Commerce would oversee the customs offices functioning in a particular governorate through a deputy governor who was in charge of the tax chamber.

It was only the Tsar's ukaz of 24 March/4 April 1781 that made comprehensive regulation of the privileges and duties of tax chambers in relation to customs administration and customs duties collection. As a result, within each tax chamber “the Second Expedition” was established, which, according to paragraph 36 of the aforementioned ukaz, was made responsible for all customs affairs and control over them⁵. This supervision was to be implemented in a such a way that “nowhere nothing forbidden was to be secretly transported and allowed into the country, [...], and all goods, regardless of their kind, would be duly imposed duties upon [Author's own translation]”⁶. The guidelines for tax chambers also recommended saving documentation which served in the process of customs duties calculation. If need be, these documents were supposed to help conduct the investigation in tax chambers in case of inappropriacies. The customs expedition was also made responsible for overseeing the possession of customs stamps by the individuals responsible so that they were not used with goods upon which imposed duties were not collected⁷.

This legal act also enforced making all attempts of fraud of funds collected from customs duties public. The jurisdiction of this expedition extended over all clerks related in any way to the process of customs duties collection⁸.

⁴ PSZRI, vol. XX (1775–1780), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 14392, p. 240; V.A. Koshman, *Organy gosudarstvennoy vlasti v tavrisheskoy oblasti (1784–1796)*, Simferopol' 2018, p. 97.

⁵ PSZRI, vol. XXI (1781–1783), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 15141, pp. 84, 89.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 89.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 89–90.

Managerial positions in customs expeditions of tax chambers were occupied by councillors for customs affairs. These clerks dealt with all disputable issues related to imposing and collecting duties at the level of governorship, without contact with central authorities in Sankt Petersburg⁹.

The position of councillor for customs affairs, due to its range of powers, was regarded as the most important and the most significant figure for bringing revenue from customs duties to the Russian state treasury. Central authorities could not afford handing those positions over to clerks who were incompetent, of dubious morality and reputation. It is not surprising, then, that on 27 May/7 June 1782 Tsaritsa Catherine II issued an ukaz on recruitment of clerks for positions of councillors for customs affairs¹⁰. From that time on these positions were staffed with clerks with experience in state service (in the army or civil institutions) who completed a kind of preparatory course supervised by state councillor Herman von Dahl (Герман Юрьевич фон Даль), who occupied the position of councillor for customs affairs in Sankt Petersburg Governorate¹¹. Would-be clerks were supposed to become familiar with the reality of state service in the structures responsible for collecting duties by taking an informal preparatory course with Sankt Petersburg Customs Chamber¹². Such a mode of training was employed for some years until the positions of councillors for customs affairs were staffed with properly prepared clerks. The practice of employing clerks for over-staff positions in Sankt Petersburg Customs Chamber was abandoned after the Tsar's ukaz of 16/27 September 1796¹³.

After Catherine II's death, the throne was taken by her son Paul I. Even though Catherine II's successor reigned for a short period of time (1796–1801), he proved to be one of the most active regulators in customs legislation of the Romanov Dynasty in the history of Russia. Already in the first days of his reign, on 19/30 November 1796, the new Tsar decided to liquidate customs expeditions operating within governorate tax chambers¹⁴. As a result,

⁹ *Ibidem*, No. 15409, pp. 568–569.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ *Ibidem*; D.A. Zav'yalov, *Kar'yera tamozhennika v epokhu Yekateriny Velikoy*, "Tamozhennaya politika Rossii na Dal'nem Vostoke" 2015, No. 1(70), p. 93.

¹² *PSZRI*, vol. XXI, No. 15409, p. 569.

¹³ *PSZRI*, vol. XXIII (1789–1796), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 17509, p. 934.

¹⁴ *PSZRI*, vol. XXIV (1796–1798), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 17567, pp. 9–10; N.D. Borshchik, D.A. Prokhorov, *Tamozhennyye uchrezhdeniya Tavricheskoy*

all matters concerning functioning of customs administration and the very duties were put under direct jurisdiction of the Collegium of Commerce.

At the same time, the Chief Chancellery for Customs Duties (operating since 1764), which was an intermediary structure between the Collegium of Commerce and customs offices, was considered. It was decided that its further functioning might bring about difficulties in managing customs offices by the Collegium of Commerce. Thus, this position was liquidated and the competences and duties were handed over to the president of the Collegium of Commerce and clerks occupying new additional positions created especially to oversee customs affairs¹⁵.

Out of a few thousand ukazes signed by Paul I there was one that laid direct foundations for the future shaping of institution of customs district chief. On 6/17 March 1797 the ukaz was published which instituted offices of customs inspectors in 8 governorates (Viborg, Estland, Livonia, Courland, Lithuania, Volhynia, Podolia and Novorossiia Governorates) situated in western and south-western parts of the Russian state. These officials operated in the country, executed the orders of the Collegium of Commerce, audited customs chambers, took care of proper functioning of customs institutions. Customs inspectors took the place of councilors for customs affairs, previously functioning in tax chambers (customs expeditions of these institutions as mentioned before). They received the same salary as their predecessors. Moreover, they were allowed to maintain their own personal chancelleries, with staff writing clerks taking care of their functioning. These writing clerks were obliged to register all correspondence addressed at the customs inspector as well as that issued by the official. They were also responsible for preparing final drafts of documents and keeping order of the documentation stored in the customs inspector's chancellery. Since one of the key duties of customs inspectors was auditing local offices, it is no wonder that these clerks were awarded with a dedicated 500-ruble benefit for covering travel costs¹⁶.

oblasti v 1784–1796: struktura, shtat, funktsii, “Uchenyye zapiski. Elektronnyy nauchnyy zhurnal Kurskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta” 2018, No. 3(47), p. 12.

¹⁵ PSZRI, vol. XXIV, No. 17807, pp. 331–335; O.V. Morozov, *Mytna systema Rosiys'koï imperii v ukrains'kykh huberniyakh XVIII – pochatok XX st. Monohrafiya*, Dnipropetrovs'k 2011, p. 212.

¹⁶ PSZRI, vol. XXIV, No. 17871, pp. 510–511.

Customs inspectors could fully develop their activities only when proper housing arrangements have been made for them (premises for inspectors) and when they got appropriate assisting staff. This happened on the force of the ukaz of 7/18 October 1799, whose provisions were put into power on 1/12 January 1800¹⁷. Apart from announcing a guarantee to attempt to improve the housing situation of customs structures, this ukaz also increased the amount of financial benefit for inspectors to cover service travels to 750 rubles a year¹⁸.

Tsar's ukazes introducing regulations of customs management oftentimes specified the duties of customs inspectors drawn by a special instruction. Unfortunately, despite great attempts, it was not possible to find this document, which makes it impossible to fully analyse powers and duties of these clerks. Most probably, one of the objectives of customs inspectors, apart from typical auditing, was to issue opinions on clerical staff employed in lower-level customs institutions (chambers, sub-chambers and quarantines)¹⁹. The modernization processes in customs administration, thus, shaped its structures in such a way that they survived unchanged until early 1820s.

On 24 June/6 July 1811 Tsar Alexander I signed an ukaz instituting a new customs management for European trade. This legal act also introduced a new institution to the customs administration system – that of customs district. On the force of its regulations 11 customs districts (in Arkhangelsk, Sankt Petersburg, Reval, Riga, Libau, Palanga, Radivilov, Dubossary, Odessa, Theodosia and Taganrog) were established on the whole border between the Russian Empire and European countries²⁰. The same legal act, in its paragraph 3, made a clear statement on the organisation

¹⁷ PSZRI, vol. XXV (1798–1799), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 19141, pp. 802–805; V.G. Balkovaya, *Inspektory tamozhen v XVIII v.*, “Tamozhennya politika Rossii na Dal'nem Vostoke” 2014, No. 3(68), p. 120.

¹⁸ PSZRI, vol. XLIV, chast' vtoraya (*Kniga shtatov, otdeleniye III i IV*), Sankt Petersburg 1830, pp. 365, 369–370, 372.

¹⁹ PSZRI, vol. XXV, No. 18807, p. 509.

²⁰ RGIA, fond 1152, opis 1, 1811 god, delo 42, fol. 14–15v; PSZRI, vol. XXXI, No. 24684, p. 681; D.S. Radayde, *Razvitiye tamozhennoy sistemy Rossii po yevropeyskoy granitse v 1811–1819 gg.*, “Uchenyye zapiski Tavricheskogo natsional'nogo universiteta im. V.I. Vernadskogo”, seriya “Yuridicheskiye nauki” 2012, vol. XXV(LXIV), No. 2, p. 351; N.G. Savosina, *Territorial'naya organizatsiya tamozhennogo dela XIX veka*, “Gumanitarnyy vektor” 2014, Istoriya, No. 3(39), p. 52.

of a customs district. Each customs district was presided over by a district chief, who was in charge of all the chambers and sub-chambers and customs border guard units functioning in its territory²¹.

At this point, it is interesting to look in greater detail at duties and competences of customs district chiefs. They were responsible for overseeing the activities of customs chambers, sub-chambers and customs border guard units functioning in their jurisdiction; overseeing abiding by the rules and recommendations issued by superior structures; collecting reports from local customs structures on stopping and confiscating smuggled goods and passing these to superiors; taking care of proper positioning of customs border guard units to ensure possibly best surveillance outcome; specifying the number of horses needed for executing surveillance duties by customs border guard; collecting demand for staff in customs border guard units and passing that over to the Minister of Finance; petitioning the Minister of Finance for naval vessels (ships, boats) necessary for surveillance of the sea border of the Empire; applying for financial rewards for clerks on the occasion of stopped smuggled goods. Interestingly enough, customs district chiefs were supposed to act in accordance with the instruction issued some years earlier for customs inspectors. Enforcing their competences by those clerks was supposed to be facilitated by establishing seats of their chancelleries in the places housing the most important customs chamber in the entire district. One also needs to note that district chiefs were accountable to their superiors for malpractice and professional negligence. Holding the position of customs district chief brought about salary, travel and housing benefits as well as special financial rewards²².

Once the ukaz instituting the position of a customs district chief was announced, the superiority for this position was not fully clarified. It was only one day later, on 25 June/7 July 1811, that the legal act specifying the internal structure of the Ministry of Finance was issued. As a result, the Foreign Trade Department

²¹ RGIA, fond 1152, opis 1, 1811 god, delo 42, fol. 14; *PSZRI*, vol. XXXI, No. 24684, p. 681.

²² Latvijas Valsts Vēstures Arhīvs [hereinafter: LVVA], fonds 545, apraksts 2, lieta 50, fol. 17–18v; lieta 61, fol. 5v; *PSZRI*, vol. XXXI, No. 24684, pp. 682–684; N.G. Savosina, *Tamozhennyje uchrezhdeniya v sisteme organov gosudarstvennoy vlasti dorevoljutsionnoj Rossii*, Chita 2013, pp. 43–45.

of the Ministry of Finance (FTDMF) came into existence, which was subdivided into two divisions: Division of Commercial Foreign and Customs Relations and Accounting Stol (Referring Unit). The former one was subdivided into three stols (referring units) and it was responsible for collecting information on the functioning of customs districts, chambers and sub-chambers; collecting information on duties collected from goods brought to and taken out of Russia as well as from trade vessels sailing into and out of Russian ports; compiling maps of sea areas through which the customs border was delineated; overseeing proper customs duties collection; conducting cases of confiscation and sale of smuggled goods; dealing with cases related to building infrastructure of customs institutions; providing necessary stamps and forms for customs offices; dealing with personal affairs of customs clerks (employing, dismissing and rewarding clerks); conducting investigations related to clerks' offences and accepting complaints about customs employees; finally, overseeing a printing house producing necessary forms, books and announcements for customs administration structures²³.

However, the FTDMF started its operation as late as on 25 October/6 November 1811, which was due to necessary preparation at the central level so that the duties and affairs of the liquidated (on 8/20 November 1811) Collegium of Commerce could be taken over smoothly with no harm for overseeing customs administration and collecting duties²⁴.

At this point it is important to note the extraordinary circumstances connected with the functioning of customs district chiefs in the Southern Russia. Since trade posts on the coast of the Black Sea and the Azov Sea needed special protection, the positions of city chiefs were instituted in Odessa, Taganrog and Theodosia. The people occupying these positions were made responsible for overseeing customs chambers and customs border guard units functioning in these places. Initially, once the institution of customs district chief was established, the Ministry of Finance did

²³ RGIA, fond 19, opis 3, delo 7, fol. 3–14; *PSZRI*, vol. XXXI, No. 24688, pp. 740–741; N.G. Savosina, *Formirovaniye organizatsionnoy struktury Departamenta vneshney torgovli Rossii v pervoy treti XIX v.*, “*Vestnik Zabaykal'skogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*” 2014, No. 4(107), pp. 12–13.

²⁴ *PSZRI*, vol. XXXI, No. 24938, p. 942; vol. XXXII (1812–1815), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 24955, pp. 13–14.

not plan to introduce special precautions in this area. However, after a few months (on the force of the ukaz of 31 March/12 April 1812) it was decided that the official relationship between the chief of Odessa Customs District and Odessa city chief and military governor of Kherson Governorate, Emmanuel de Richelieu, should be restored in the same way as was with the then customs inspector before July 1811²⁵. It needs to be added that the same legal act regulated quite an exceptional solution to the issue of filling the positions of Theodosia and Taganrog Customs District chiefs. The responsibilities of chiefs of those customs districts were handed over to the city chiefs of Taganrog and Theodosia²⁶. This meant that these clerks, as representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, were in the domain of the FTDMF as regards supervision over customs offices and customs border guard²⁷.

It is interesting to note that the legal act instituting customs district chief did not give any details on how those positions were to be staffed. Neither did the Tsar's ukaz regulating the competences of the Minister of Finance in relation to the FTDMF. Since the position of customs district chief possessed high clerical rank, the matter of staffing this post was up to the chief of the Ministry of Finance, as was practised in the Russian state service. The candidate for a particular position was presented by the Minister of Finance, while the appointment or dismissal from the post was by the order of the ruling monarch. Such a procedure was specified for the first time in the customs act for Asian trade of 30 May/11 June 1817²⁸. This act of 1/13 January 1818 regulated the way of performing customs, supervision on the border of the Russian Empire in Asia and instituted three more customs districts: in Astrakhan (Astrakhan and Caucasian Governorates), Orenburg (Orenburg, Tobolsk and Tomsk Governorates) and Georgia (Georgia and provinces taken over from Persia during the 1804–1813 Russian-Persian war)²⁹. Apart from establishing new customs districts, this legal act obliged customs district chiefs to perform further

²⁵ PSZRI, vol. XXXII, No. 25068, pp. 262–263; Ye.P. Piskunova, *Deyatel'nost' gertsoga A.–E. de Rishel'ye v Rossii*, "Vlast" 2010, No. 10, pp. 109–110.

²⁶ PSZRI, vol. XXXII, No. 25068, p. 263; *Mesyatsoslov s rospis'yu chinovnykh osob ili obshchiy shtat Rossiyskoy imperii na leto ot Rozhdestva Khristova 1812*, Sankt Petersburg 1812, pp. 485–486.

²⁷ PSZRI, vol. XXXII, No. 25068, p. 263.

²⁸ PSZRI, vol. XXXIV (1817), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 26874, p. 342.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

duties and expanded their range of competences. The customs district chief was supposed to investigate the causes of events involved in limiting commerce or noting down factors obstructing development of internal industry and to take necessary action to prevent or revert the existing negative events. Obviously, all activities had to be reported to the FTDMF by the customs district chief, and the department's acceptance had to be gained for all initiatives leading to the improvement of this situation³⁰. The act also made a more detailed statement of the range of competences of customs district chief in relation to subordinated clerks employed on the territory in his jurisdiction. The customs district chief was empowered to employ clerks for lower-level or non-class positions in customs chambers and sub-chambers or his chancellery. If some offence was committed by a clerk appointed by the customs district chief, this official was empowered to put the offender to trial. However, the FTDMF had to be informed about such cases³¹.

According to the customs act on Asiatic trade, the customs district chief was entitled to promote clerks within those positions that did not have specified ranks. Moreover, they could be granted leaves up to four months. The remaining clerks occupying positions specified in the rank table and appointed by the FTDMF could apply to the customs district chief for a leave of up to 8 days³².

The customs district chiefs described herein also got special powers from the FTDMF as regards renovation of customs buildings. If needed, they could decide about starting renovation works if the cost did not exceed the sum included by the legislator in staff budget for the particular customs district³³.

On 14/26 December 1819 Tsar Alexander I accepted a draft of the customs act for European trade worked out in the State Council. The act repeated a number of regulations related to customs affairs from the customs act for Asiatic trade (issued 2 years earlier) and the 1811 ukaz establishing the institution of the customs district chief. However, one needs to note new solutions regulating the functioning of customs district chiefs. The first issue was the mode of appointment for the position. The solution adopted was for the candidate for the position of customs district chief

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 343.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 344.

to be presented by the FTDMF director to the Minister of Finance, who, once giving acceptance, applied to the Russian monarch for appointment on the force of the highest decision (*Высочайшего утверждения*)³⁴. Quite notably, this mode of appointment was in operation until the end of customs administration in the Romanov Empire. What is more, a slightly modified structure of customs offices on the customs border in the European part of Russia was introduced then – since 1/13 January 1820 the following customs districts were supposed to operate: Arkhangelsk, Sankt Petersburg, Reval, Riga, Libau, Kovno, Grodno, Radivilov, Dubossary, Odessa, Theodosia and Taganrog³⁵.

On the force of the customs act of December 1819 the customs district chief gained the power to present clerks with good reputation and already employed in those structures as candidates for higher positions in the customs administration (except for chiefs of first- and second-class customs chambers). These proposals were sent for acceptance of the FTDMF director. Moreover, the customs district chief gave suggestions for positions of customs guard ober-guards and their aides to the FTDMF director. He was completely free, though, to employ horse-mounted guards or customs janitors in offices³⁶. As can be noticed, the customs district chief gained competences to implement his own employment policy in both customs offices and customs border guard units that functioned in the district within his jurisdiction.

The 1819 customs act made a detailed specification of the duties of the customs district chief. This official was responsible for controlling people dealing with trades (controlling trade permissions) in sea ports, customs chambers on the border and inside the country. The chief was also directly in charge of appropriate surveillance of the border by customs border guard, deciding about relocation

³⁴ RGIA, fond 1152, opis 1, 1819 god, delo 88, fol. 25v; *PSZRI*, vol. XXXVI (1819), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 28030, p. 472.

³⁵ RGIA, fond 1152, opis 1, 1819 god, delo 88, fol. 23v–25; *PSZRI*, vol. XXXVI, No. 28030, pp. 420–421. It needs to be noted that since 11/23 August 1825 Kovno Customs District was replaced by Yurburg Customs District. LVVA, fonds 545, apraksts 2, lieta 61, fol. 15, 18v; *PSZRI*, vol. XL (1825), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 30446, pp. 417, 419.

³⁶ *PSZRI*, vol. XXXVI, No. 28030, p. 472; O.N. Karlina, *Organizatsiya tamozhennogo kontrolya na zapadnoy granitse Rossiyskoy imperii v kontse XVIII – pervoy polovine XIX v. (na materialakh Volynskoy gubernii, [in:] Rossiyskiye i slavyanskiye issledovaniya: nauchnyy sbornik*, Vypusk 9, eds A.P. Sal'kov, O.Ya. Yanovskiy, Minsk 2014, p. 40.

of border guard units into those places where dangers involved in its underprotection could appear³⁷.

Clearly, the new customs act for European trade empowered customs district chiefs to decide upon many urgent matters related to direct customs supervision or related to administrative operation of customs offices. These clerks could dismiss from post all clerks employed in offices who were suspected of offence or crime; put clerks on trial (provided the FTDMF was informed about it); clear out competence disputes; make decisions as regards inquiries submitted from customs offices or subordinated clerks that required immediate action (the FTDMF had to be informed about the decision in each case); conduct investigations or extraordinary audits in offices³⁸.

Another noteworthy aspect introduced by the 1819 act was the system of financial rewards for customs clerks. It is important since the beneficiary of the established system was the customs district chief himself. The act allowed using 3% of customs duties generated from European trade for rewards for customs administration clerks. Out of these, 1% was kept in local customs structures (chambers and sub-chambers), while the remaining 2% were sent to the FTDMF. At the end of each year customs clerks, including customs district chiefs, were awarded a special financial benefit (out of the 1% funds). The funds in the possession of the FTDMF (the 2% funds) were distributed after the year was concluded (in the meantime they were placed in the state bank to increase capital) only to those clerks who proved exceptional in executing their professional duties³⁹.

Customs district chiefs had a wide range of competences which allowed efficient functioning in all areas of life connected with supervision of customs duties collection. On 17/29 June 1824 they were additionally empowered to present candidates for positions of court assessors to land courts operating in 11 border poviats (in Vilna, Volhynia, Podolia Governorates and in Białystok District) on the land border of the Romanov Empire. Customs district chiefs (in Kovno, Grodno and Radivilov) suggested clerks who displayed full devotion and perfect conduct in executing professional duties as candidates for assessors. These were supposed to be authorized

³⁷ *PSZRI*, vol. XXXVI, No. 28030, p. 473.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 474.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 478.

by local civil governors. Assessors for customs affairs were supposed to represent the government in smuggling cases that were brought to trial in land courts⁴⁰.

Thus, it can be concluded that the customs district chief was granted an exceptionally wide range of competences. Efficient collection of duties by customs clerks was supported by establishing a chancellery of customs district chief. It was composed of special-task clerks, a secretary and writing clerks, with the staff size specified by the customs act⁴¹.

An interesting tendency was an attempt to establish aspects that would distinguish customs resort clerks from employees of other structures of state local administration. One such sign was introduction of new uniforms for customs administration. Before September 1827 both customs district chiefs and other employees of customs offices wore uniforms used in governorates in which their administrative structures were located. This changed with the legal act of 23 August/4 September 1827, according to which the uniforms used in the Ministry of Finance were introduced into the customs administration. Customs district chiefs were given the uniforms reserved for department chiefs of this ministry, with just one difference – as a form of identification, the uniforms of customs district chiefs had an additional tiny sewing or beads on lapels⁴². A few weeks earlier regulations were issued on wearing uniforms by those customs district chiefs that were appointed out of reserve military personnel – these were allowed to retain military uniforms⁴³.

In the third decade of the 19th century a combination of different factors led to the expansion of the customs districts structure in Russia. These were, among others, penetration of the southern parts of Tsarist Russia by foreigners dealing with trade and

⁴⁰ The position of assessor for customs affairs was to be established in the following poviats: Telshi and Raseiniai (Vilna Governorate), Sokółka (Białystok District), Vladimir, Kremenets, Starokonstantinov and Dubno (Volhynian Governorate) as well as Kamenets, Proskurov, Ushytsia and Letichev (Podolia Governorate). *PSZRI*, vol. XXXIX (1824), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 29953, pp. 388–390.

⁴¹ *Svod Zakonov Rossiyskoy Imperii* [hereinafter: *SZRI*], *Ustavy Kazennogo Upravleniya*, chast' vtoraya, Sankt Petersburg 1832, p. 11.

⁴² RGIA, fond 19, opis 4, delo 9, fol. 17; *Polnoye Sobraniye Zakonov Rossiyskoy Imperii, sobraniye II* [hereinafter: *PSZRI II*], vol. II (1827), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 1317, p. 691.

⁴³ *PSZRI II*, vol. II, No. 1282, p. 645.

territorial expansion of the Romanov Empire in Transcaucasia and on the western coast of the Black Sea.

Increased interest in sea trade with Russia on the Black and Azov Seas resulted in greater amount of water transport. The FTDMF authorities decided to establish a sea port in Kerch to facilitate trade in this area. This led to the move of customs administration existing therein. On the force of the ukaz of 10/22 October 1821 the Kerch–Yeni-Kale Customs District seated in Kerch was established, headed by the local city chief, similarly to the aforementioned Theodosia and Taganrog Customs Districts. The chief of Kerch–Yeni-Kale Customs District was immediately subordinate to Kherson Military Governor⁴⁴.

The Russian-Turkish and Russian-Persian conflicts of the second half of the 1820s ended up in territorial gains for the Romanov Empire, in both Transcaucasia and at the Black Sea. New border areas needed customs administration structures, which was done, among others, in the Bessarabian District. On the force of the ukaz of 30 September/12 October 1830, the customs line was moved from the Dniester to the Prut and the Danube. Two customs districts started to operate in Bessarabia since 25 October/6 November 1830: Upper-Bessarabian (Sculeni) and Lower-Bessarabian (Izmail), while Dubossary Customs District was liquidated⁴⁵.

The process of accommodation of customs administration to the new territorial reality in the Northern Caucasus and Transcaucasia took place very quickly. The ukaz of 3/15 June 1831 introduced a new administrative division of these areas as regards customs supervision. The scope of territorial jurisdiction of the chief of Astrakhan Customs District was limited to the so-called Caucasian Line. All the customs offices operating on the coast of the Black Sea (up to the Sukhum-Kale fortress) were subordinated to the authority of the chief of Kerch–Yeni-Kale Customs District. The remaining area under the Russian rule in the Caucasus and

⁴⁴ *PSZRI*, vol. XXXVII (1820–1821), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 28776, pp. 874–875. On 6/18 August 1829 the position of Theodosia city chief was liquidated and the competences of the chief of Theodosia Customs District were taken over by the Taurida Civil Governor (*PSZRI II*, vol. IV [1829], Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 3071, p. 587). Finally, on 3/15 June VI 1837 the customs affairs of Theodosia Customs District were handed over to the Kerch–Yeni-Kale city Chief (*PSZRI II*, vol. XII, *otdeleniye pervoye* [1837], Sankt Petersburg 1838, No. 10300, p. 359).

⁴⁵ *PSZRI II*, vol. V, *otdeleniye vtoroye* (1830), Sankt Petersburg 1831, No. 3968, pp. 85–86.

the Transcaucasia formed the newly organized Transcaucasian Customs District seated in Tiflis. In its territory a new network of customs offices was established that was supposed to serve trade with Persia and Turkey⁴⁶.

Apart from expansion of customs administration structures evidenced in the increase in the number of customs districts, one also needs to note the process of expansion of the range of competences of customs district chiefs. This was facilitated by new regulations of customs acts, introduced both for European and Asiatic trade.

As mentioned before, the customs district chief was in charge of customs border guard operating on the territory of his jurisdiction. He had a wide range of competences in relation to this unit, which enabled shaping its structure as located along the state border. Besides, he was empowered to select staff of customs border guard⁴⁷. As a result, the customs border guard, as a new military formation established on 1/13 January 1828 to guard and protect the European border of the Romanov Empire, was fully subordinated to customs district chiefs. This happened on the force of regulations on establishing customs border guard, signed on 5/17 January 1827 by Tsar Nicholas I⁴⁸. It gave customs district chiefs a wide range of powers: commanders of brigades and half-brigades and independent companies were fully subordinated to the customs district chief; ober-guards and aides to ober-guards (unit commanders) were supposed to send information related to customs affairs directly to customs district chiefs; customs district chiefs were empowered to transfer ober-guards and their aides to other customs border guard units functioning within their jurisdiction (cases of such translocation were reported monthly to the FTDMF); they drew up the plans of division of brigades and half-brigades into companies and units for authorization by the Minister of Finance; decided upon the structure of border guard posts, planned the activities of mobile guards patrolling the border line; agreed to conscripting reserve soldiers to border guard units;

⁴⁶ *PSZRI II*, vol. VI, *otdeleniye pervoye (1831)*, Sankt Petersburg 1832, No. 4621, pp. 432–433.

⁴⁷ *PSZRI*, vol. XXXVIII (1822), Sankt Petersburg 1830, No. 29067, pp. 225–226; K. Latawiec, *Rosyjska straż graniczna w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1851–1914*, Lublin 2014, pp. 28–30.

⁴⁸ The regulations on establishment of customs border guard were issued on 19/31 August 1827. *PSZRI II*, vol. II (1827), No. 1282, p. 645; K. Latawiec, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

made decisions on providing supplies and food for customs border guards according to the DFTMF instructions; supervised the operation of customs border guard units and allocated the financial benefit (1,000–2,000 rubles per year assigned by the DFTMF) for audit-related travels⁴⁹. Reporting of customs border guard units to customs district chiefs, as established in 1827, lasted until the end of the 1890s, once reforms giving independence to the Independent Border Guard Corps from civil customs administration were implemented.

The scope of territorial jurisdiction of customs district chiefs was not limited only to the relatively narrow strip of the border line, in which customs offices (chambers and sub-chambers) and customs border guard units operated. For the sake of customs duties collection, to fight smuggling, in some major cities such as Vilna, Kiev (since 11/23 August 1825) or Berdichev (since 18/30 March 1836) positions of special-task clerks operating on behalf of the Ministry of Finance were established. These clerks directly reported to chiefs of Yurburg Customs District (Vilna) and Radivilov Customs District (Kiev, Berdichev)⁵⁰.

The ukaz of 28 January/9 February 1831 added a number of new regulations to the customs act in force in the European part of Russia. Most importantly, the regulations on awards on the occasion of confiscation of smuggled goods were further specified so that this additional source of income became available also for customs district chiefs⁵¹.

As regards financial issues, it needs to be noted that the customs administration was included in the regulations of 26 May/7 June 1835, which allowed general administration clerks employed on staff positions in Siberia, Caucasus and Transcaucasia to obtain additional financial benefits granted due to employment in difficult conditions (mainly climate)⁵². These benefits were awarded to

⁴⁹ *PSZRI II*, vol. II, No. 1282, pp. 645–647.

⁵⁰ *PSZRI*, vol. XL, No. 30446, pp. 417–418; *PSZRI II*, vol. XI, *otdeleniye pervoye* (1836), Sankt Petersburg 1837, No. 8997, p. 220; vol. XXVII, *otdeleniye pervoye* (1852), Sankt Petersburg 1853, No. 26830, p. 747; *SZRI, Ustavy Kazennogo Upravleniya, chast' vtoraya (Uchrezhdeniya i ustavy tamozhennyye)*, Sankt Petersburg 1842, p. 13; *Stat'i k Shestomu Tomu Svodu, [in:] Prodolzheniye Svoda Zakonov Rossiyskoy Imperii, izdaniya 1842 goda*, vol. XVII (*S 1 Iyulya 1852 po 30 Iyunya 1853 goda*), Sankt Petersburg 1853, p. 17.

⁵¹ *PSZRI II*, vol. VI, *otdeleniye pervoye*, No. 4300, pp. 74–76.

⁵² More on the proces of formation of a system of benefits for clerks, among others, in the Caucasus, can be found in: A. Górak, *Kształtowanie przywilejów*

customs administration clerks (including customs district chiefs) on 19/31 October 1836⁵³. These extraordinary privileges were available for customs district chiefs as long as until the end of the Tsarist rule in Russia.

Surely, the competences of customs district chiefs were expanded by handing to them the power to conclude contracts for lease of buildings or ships as long as the value of the lease did not exceed 1,000 rubles. Such actions were sanctioned by the decree of the Committee of Ministers and authorized by the highest decision of Tsar Nicholas I of 16/28 August 1832. Since that time on the customs district chief no longer had to obtain the DFTMF's authorization of the lease contract. This made functioning of customs district chiefs and their supervision over customs administration infrastructure more effective⁵⁴.

The process of formation of the Russian customs administration structures completed in the early 1830s. In the next two decades, until the end of 1840s, there were no major changes due to lack of change in the Russian border. However, it is useful to analyse in this place also new legal regulations related to the functioning of the customs administration, with a special focus on the customs district chief.

In 1832 the first edition of the Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire was issued, which was the official publication of legally binding acts on the territory of Russia. It was prepared under the supervision of Mikhail Speransky by the 2nd Department of His Imperial Highness' Own Chancellery. Legal acts related to customs affairs were included in volume 6. The 1832 edition comprised the customs act issued for European and Asiatic trade, which contained a number of legal regulations (decrees for the customs resort) pertaining to the customs district chiefs⁵⁵.

rosyjskiej służby cywilnej za Kaukazem w latach 1800–1844, [in:] *Dzieje biurokracji*, vol. IV, part 1, eds A. Górak, K. Latawiec, D. Magier, Lublin–Siedlce 2011, pp. 241–270.

⁵³ *PSZRI II*, vol. XI, *otdeleniye vtoroye* (1836), Sankt Petersburg 1837, No. 9620, pp. 116–117.

⁵⁴ *PSZRI II*, vol. VII (1832), Sankt Petersburg 1833, p. 559; *SZRI 1832, 1833, 1834, 1835 gody*, *chast' vtoraya (Stat'i k 6, 7, 8, 9 i 10 Tomam Svoda)*, Sankt Petersburg 1836, p. 1227.

⁵⁵ Undoubtedly, the great asset of the Complete Collection of Laws is that it gives insight into the contents of lower-rank legal acts included in the volume, which for different reasons are not unavailable for analysis. See *SZRI, Ustavny Kazennogo Upravleniya*, *chast' vtoraya*, Sankt Petersburg 1832.

The analysis of the 1832 Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire, its subsequent edition (from 1842) and their continuation allows specification of competences and duties of customs district chiefs. These clerks were obliged to send horse-mounted and foot guards unable to do service due to illnesses to invalid commands, fire brigades or leaving them as janitors of customs offices; send lower-rank border guards unable to do service due to incurable diseases to home guard units; issue passports to clerks granted leave (after passing over the duties to their temporary deputies)⁵⁶; apply for funds necessary to provide medical treatment to lower-level border guards and horses owned by the formation⁵⁷; immediately send customs administration representatives to join investigations led in the cases of customs law breach⁵⁸; inform top-level border guard officials of the reasons for sending border guards to this formation in order to avoid cases of translocation of clerks under inquiry or investigation⁵⁹; supervise particularly closely the registers of lower-rank soldiers sent to serve in customs border guard or as customs janitors⁶⁰; make decisions in cases of inappropriate actions of lower-rank border guards and those chancellery clerks that were employed on the force of customs district chief's decision (without a necessity to obtain the DFTMF's authorization)⁶¹; send information about deaths (with circumstances and causes) of customs resort clerks occupying class positions and border guard officers⁶².

Towards the end of the 1850s the range of competences and duties of customs district chief was finally established to become a permanent and essential part of the system of management

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 23–25.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 39–40.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 56.

⁵⁹ SZRI, *Ustavy Kazennogo Upravleniya, chast' vtoraya (Uchrezhdeniya i ustavy tamozhennyje)*, p. 18.

⁶⁰ This regulation was introduced on the force of the decree for the customs resort dated 9/21 February 1845. LVVA, fonds 545, apraksts 2, lieta 77, fol. 4–4v; *Stat'i K Shestomu Tomu Svoda*, [in:] *Prodolzheniye Svoda Zakonov Rossiyskoy Imperii, izdaniya 1842 goda*, vol. VI (*S 1 Yanvarya po 31 Dekabrya 1845 goda*), Sankt Petersburg 1846, p. 17.

⁶¹ This regulation was introduced on the force of the decree for the customs resort dated 7/19 December 1847. LVVA, fonds 545, apraksts 2, lieta 79, fol. 47; *Stat'i K Shestomu Tomu Svoda*, [in:] *Prodolzheniye Svoda Zakonov Rossiyskoy Imperii, izdaniya 1842 goda*, vol. X (*S 1 Iyulya po 31 Dekabrya 1847 goda*), Sankt Petersburg 1848, p. 20.

⁶² *Ibidem*.

of local structures of the customs resort. Moreover, the actions taken towards the Kingdom of Poland in the second half of the 1840s resulted in liquidation of its customs autonomy. As a result, three positions under discussion came into being in the Kingdom's territory as of 1/13 January 1851⁶³ when Verzhbolovo, Kalisz and Zawichost Customs Districts were established. Their chiefs were granted the same competences and duties with regard to supervision of dependent offices and border guard structures as their counterparts from customs districts situated in other parts of the western and southern borders of the Russian Empire⁶⁴.

Customs district chiefs came into being on the territory of the Russian Empire as a result of the modernisation of the state administrative apparatus at different levels. Thanks to the establishment of this position, effective customs administration appeared, whose aim was to provide the Romanov Empire's treasury with possibly highest revenue from the goods brought to Russia or taken outside the country. These clerks acted as intermediaries between the FTDMF and customs chambers/sub-chambers and enabled highly effective supervision over customs clerks employed in customs offices situated in borderline areas. Customs district chiefs were a part of the clerical intelligentsia elite of financial administration on the borders of the Romanov Empire in the first half of the 19th century. They were a part of state service, possessed high civil or military ranks and their appearance on the territory of the Empire was a sign of gradual professionalization of the state administration within the local structures of the Russian Ministry of Finance.

Translated by JAROSŁAW KRAJKA

⁶³ More on the institution of customs district chief in the Kingdom of Poland at the beginning of the second half of the 19th century can be found in: K. Latawiec, *Investigating the Position of Customs District Chief in the Kingdom of Poland in the Early 1850s*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 2022, vol. XXXI, No. 2 [forthcoming].

⁶⁴ Together with the transfer of the Russian customs supervision in the Kingdom of Poland to the border with the Kingdom of Prussia and the Austrian Empire, Grodno Customs District was liquidated. See *Ustawa celna dla Królestwa Polskiego*, Warsaw 1851, pp. 18–21, 34–35, 44–47, 96–97, 128–141; K. Lyatavets, *Tamozhennyye uchrezhdeniya v Tsarstve Pol'skom v 50–60 gg. XIX veka*, [in:] *Istoriya torhivli, podatkov ta myta. Zbirnyk naukovykh prats'*, ed. O.O. Dyachok, Dnipropetrovs'k 2007, pp. 125–126; A. Górak, K. Latawiec, *Rosyjska administracja specjalna w Królestwie Polskim 1839–1918*, Lublin 2015, p. 143; K. Latawiec, A. Górak, J. Legieć, S. Bogdanow, *Naczelnicy organów rosyjskiej administracji specjalnej w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1839–1918. Słownik biograficzny*, vol. II (*Ministerstwo Finansów*), Lublin 2016, pp. 36–37.

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