

Made for a company of the Moscow Strelitz belonging to Alexis Lavrentevich Obuchov's regiment. Dated 17th March 1691. Captured at Saladen in 1703.

H. 251 cm, W. 261 cm. Cloth of taffeta, the middle field black with medallion in light blue, bordure in pink with white corners, the outer bordure in brown. Fringe of silk in eight different shades of colour. Attachment of red cloth. Ornament in intarsia with black-painted letters, outlines and markings. Haloes and crowns painted in gold and now blackened silver colour. (The upper bordure's religious motif is composed on the obverse of the colour. The other chief motifs are executed on the reverse of the colour and shown in mirror-image monogram.)

On the colour's upper bordure can be seen the sign of the Cross marked by ten stars and flanked by Sts. Constantine and Helena. On the lower bordure is a text cartouche giving the date of the colour and the troop to which it belongs.

The chief motif, surrounded by a laurel crown, is a yellow double-headed eagle with a breastplate showing the Czar on horseback fighting the dragon. From the year 1495, when Ivan III had taken back the golden double-headed eagle which the Byzantine Empire had lost 33 years before when it was overthrown, it had been the coat of arms of the Czar and the Russian Empire. The three crowns were added to the coat of arms in 1625, and in 1627 they are mentioned as symbols of the kingdoms of Kasan, Astrakhan and Siberia.

In the corners are fields with coats of arms representing Great Perm (elephant), South Russia (crossed lances), Bulgaria (lion supporting cross-banner), and Vyatka (cross-bow emerging from clouds).

The composition of the ornaments and the heraldic and botanical motifs give evidence of strong influence by the art of western Europe. The Strelitz in Moscow had served since 1555 in Kremlin as a kind of life-guard to the Czar. During the latter part of the seventeenth century, they gained a powerful position, so strong as to make the government dependent on them. Czar Peter the Great was suspicious of their reliability and decided on the year 1698 to exterminate them by massacres and deportations, and to disband the corps. During the great northern war, however, the need of soldiers forced him to use the shattered remnants of the corps to restore four regiments. This happened in about 1702, and several of the trophies displayed are from these Strelitz regiments; cf. Nos. 10, 11, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21, of which No. 13 and four chekhols under No. 14 were captured from Obuchov's regiment.