Introduction

Rethinking Religion in Early Modern Russia

Perhaps no area of the study of the history of early modern Russia has changed in the last thirty years as much as the history of religion. In the Soviet era the subject did not exist as such, though the study of old Russian literature certainly flourished, particularly in the Pushkin House, (the Institute of Russian Literature of the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad), but also in Moscow and more modestly in Western Europe and the United States. The accomplishments of the scholars of that generation were immense, but they were limited not only by Soviet politics but by the very genre of their work. Historians of old Russian literature studied literary texts such as the lives of the Russian and Byzantine saints, but topics like the history of liturgy or canon law were only a marginal part of their research. Art historians conducted major studies of churches and icons, but often lacked the necessary auxiliary studies to make their own work complete. Historians in history faculties investigated the relations of church and state to varying degrees, but even many fundamental institutional areas such as the history of the parish network remained largely unknown, dependent on the pioneering but necessarily sketchy accounts of pre-revolutionary historians. The phenomenon of religious belief and experience and its role in society and state was not a subject for research.

In the last generation the history of religion, that is, of belief systems, institutions, theology, and their written traditions, have enjoyed something of a boom. The revolution is to a large extent empirical. We now have studies of the parish network,¹ the *Kormchaia kniga*,² many publications of monastic records, studies of learning and books,³ and even more research and text publications of the

- 1 P.S. Stefanovich, *Prikhod i prikhodskoe dukhovenstvo v Rossii v XVI–XVII vekakh* (Moscow: Indrik, 2002).
- 2 E.V. Beliakova, L.V. Moshkova, T.A. Oparina, *Kormchaia kniga: ot rukopisnoi traditsii k pervomu pechatnomu izdaniiu* (Moscow, Tsentr gumanitarnykh initsiativ, 2017); M.V. Korogodina, *Kormchie knigi: XIV – pervoi poloviny XVII veka*, 2 vols. (Moscow-St. Petersburg, Al'ians-Arkheo, 2017).
- 3 A.S. Usachev, *Knigopisanie v Rossii XVI veka: po materialam datirovannykh vykhodnykh zapisei*, 2 vols. (Moscow-St. Petersburg, Al'ians-Arkheo, 2018); O.S. Sapozhnikova, *Russkii knizhnik XVII veka Sergii Shelonin: redaktorskaia deiatel'nost'* (Moscow, Al'ians-Arkheo, 2010).

lives of the saints.⁴ Topics that did exist earlier, the work of Nil Sorskii and Iosif Volotskii, the great monasteries, the story of Nikon, the origins of Old Belief, the history of printed books, and the work of Simeon Polotskii, have seen the appearance of major new studies.⁵ The dramatic story of Old Belief continues to attract scholars.⁶ Many new sources have found editors.⁷ Scholars have begun to work with precision and broader scope on the church's translations and adaptations of Western and contemporary Greek writings,⁸ inter-Orthodox

- 4 G.M. Prokhorov, E.G. Vodolazkin, i E.E. Shevchenko eds., *Prepodobnye Kirill, Ferapont i Martinian Belozerskie*, 2d ed. (Sankt-Peterburg: Glagol, 1994); Gary Marker, *Imperial Saint: The Cult of St. Catherine and the Dawn of Female Rule in Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007).
- 5 David Goldfrank, ed. and trans. *The Monastic Rule of Iosif Volotsky* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 2000); idem, *Nil Sorsky: the Authentic Writings* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 2008); Jennifer Spock, "Community Building and Social Identity: Donations to the Solovki Monastery 1460–1645," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Neue Folge 55, 4 (2007), 534–565; eadem, "Administering a Right Life: Secular and Spiritual Guidance at Solovki Monastery in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Russian History* 39 (2012), 148–172; Pierre Gonneau, *La maison de la sainte Trinité: un grand monastère russe du Moyen-âge tardif, 1345–1533* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1993); S.V. Lobachev, *Patriarkh Nikon* (St. Petersburg, "Iskusstvo–SPB", 2003); Kevin M. Kain, "Before New Jerusalem: Patriarch Nikon's Iverskii and Krestnyi Monasteries," *Russian History* 39 (2012): 173–231; I.V. Pozdeeva, V.P. Pushkov, A.V. Dadykin, *Moskovskii pechatnyi dvor–fakt i faktor russkoi kul'tury, 1618–1652 gg.: ot vosstanovleniia posle gibeli v smutnoe vremia do patriarkha Nikona: issledovaniia i publikatsii* (Moscow, Mosgorarkhiv, 2001); idem, *Moskovskii pechatnyi dvor–fakt i faktor russkoi kul'tury. 1652–1700 gody: issledovaniia i publikatsii*, 2 vols. (Moscow, Nauka, 2007–2011); L.I. Sazonova, *Literaturnaia kul'tura Rossii: rannee novoe vremia* (Moscow, Iazyki slavianskikh kul'tur, 2006).
- 6 E.M. Iukhimenko, *Literaturnoe nasledie Vygovskogo staroobriadcheskogo obshchestva*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskikh kul'tur, 2008).
- 7 Some examples are the new edition of the works of Maksim Grek: N.V. Sinitsyna, ed., *Prepodobnyi Maksim Grek: Sochineniia*, 2 vols. (Moscow, Indrik, 2008–2014); and the first complete editions of Simeon Polotskii's poetry: Anthony Hippisley, *Vertograd mnogocvetnyj*, 3 vols. (Köln: Böhlau, 1996–2000); Lydia I. Sazonova eds., Simeon Polockij, Anthony Hippisley, Hans Rothe, Lydia I. Sazonova, eds., Simeon Polockij, *Rifmologion: eine Sammlung höfischeremonieller Gedichte*, 2 vols. (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2013–2017). Simeon Polotskii's sermons, which survive in manuscript as well as print, have no modern edition, a fact that makes his work seem more "secular".
- 8 Elke Wimmer, *Novgorod – ein Tor zum Westen?: die Übersetzungstätigkeit am Hofe des Novgoroder Erzbischofs Gennadij in ihrem historischen Kontext um 1500* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2005); A.A. Romanova, V.A. Romodanovskaia, eds., *Rationale divinarum officiorum Wilhelmi Durandi v russkom perevode kontsa XV veka* (Moscow–St. Petersburg: Indrik, 2012); Vittorio Springfield Tomelleri, *Il salterio commentato di Brunone di Würzburg in area slavo-orientale: fra traduzione e tradizione con un'appendice di testi* (Munich, Otto Sagner, 2004); M.A. Korzo, *Nravstvennoe bogoslovie Simeona Polotskogo: osvoenie katolicheskoi traditsii moskovskimi knizhnikami vtoroi poloviny XVII veka* (Moscow, IFRAN, 2011).

relations including schools,⁹ and attitudes toward other faiths.¹⁰ New work on Orthodoxy in the Ruthenian lands has provided essential background to the history of religion in Russia.¹¹ An absolutely crucial help to scholars is the multivolume *Slovar' knizhnikov i knizhnosti drevnei Rusi*, edited for many years by D.S. Likhachev and Dmitrii Bulanin.¹²

These are only some of the areas of recent research and some of the recent publications among many equally valuable. It is the case, however, that the flood of new material has produced less in the way of a new synthesis. Some of the existing attempts are very general and leave much by the wayside.¹³ Perhaps the sheer amount of new material creates problems for the historian, even the most industrious. The present collection is the result of an attempt to stimulate discussion on some of the many aspects of the history of Orthodoxy in Russia. That attempt was a conference, "Rethinking Religion in Early Modern Russia," at Yale University on April 7–8, 2017 and, like all conferences, was limited in its size and scope, necessarily neglected some areas, and left out others entirely. That being said, the participants illuminated many major issues. David Goldfrank and Jennifer Spock raised new questions about the crucial

- 9 B.L. Fonkich, *Greko-slavianskie shkoly v Moskve v XVII veke* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskikh kul'tur, 2009); V.G. Chentsova, *Ikona Iverskoi Bogomateri: ocherki istorii otnoshenii Grecheskoi tserkvi s Rossiei v seredine XVII v. po dokumentam RGADA* (Moscow: Indrik, 2010); Nikolaos Chrissidis, *An Academy at the Court of the Tsars: Greek Scholars and Jesuit Education in Early Modern Russia* (DeKalb, IL: NIU Press, 2015).
- 10 On Orthodoxy and Judaism see Alexander Pereswetoff-Morath, *A Grin without a Cat*, 2 vols., (Lund: Dept. of Slavonic Studies, Lund University, 2002); on Islam: Paul Bushkovitch, "Orthodoxy and Islam in Russia 988–1725," *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte* 76 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 117–143.
- 11 M.A. Korzo, *Ukrainskaia i belorusskaia katekhicheskaia traditsiia kontsa XVI–XVIII vv.: stanovlenie, evoliutsiia i problema zaimstvovaniia* (Moscow, Kanon, 2007); Natalia Iakovenko, *Uposhukakh Novoho neba: zhyttia i teksty Ioannikiia Galiatovs'koho*, (Kyiv, Laurus-Krytyka, 2017).
- 12 D.S. Likhachev, *Slovar' knizhnikov i knizhnikov drevnei Rusi: XI-pervaia polovina XIV v.* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1987); idem, *Slovar' knizhnikov i knizhnikov drevnei Rusi* vyp. 2, *vtoraia polovina XIV–XVI v.* 2 pts. (Leningrad: Nauka, 1988–1989); D.M. Bulanin, O.V. Tvorogov eds., *Slovar' knizhnikov i knizhnikov drevnei Rusi* vyp. 2, *vtoraia polovina XIV–XVI v.*, pt. 3 (St. Petersburg, Dmitrii Bulanin, 2012); D.S. Likhachev, ed., *Slovar' knizhnikov i knizhnikov drevnei Rusi*: vyp. 3, *XVII vek*, pts. 1–4 (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 1992–2004); D.M. Bulanin, ed., *Slovar' knizhnikov i knizhnikov drevnei Rusi* vyp 4, *Ukazateli* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2017).
- 13 L.A. Chernaia, *Russkaia kul'tura perekhodnogo perioda ot srednevekov'ia k novomu vremeni* (Moscow, Iazyki russkoi kul'tury, 1999); M.S. Kiseleva, *Intellektual'nyi vybor Rossii vtoroi poloviny XVII – nachala XVIII veka: ot drevnerusskoi knizhnosti k evropeiskoi uchenosti* (Moscow, Progress-Traditsiia, 2011); Paul Bushkovitch, "Change and Culture in Early Modern Russia," *Kritika* 16, no. 2 (Spring, 2015), 291–316.

history of monasticism. Vera Chentsova and Nikolaos Chrissidis brought new light on the relations of the Russian and Greek Orthodox communities. Kevin Kain, Margarita Korzo, and Lidia Sazonova discussed the new trends of the later seventeenth century, including the impact of Western Catholic culture. Gary Marker's study of Feofan Prokopovich brought new issues to the fore in the case of a central figure in the church. Finally, the editor of this issue attempted to rethink the relations of church and state by examining the role of the church in Russian foreign policy.

Much remains to be done. We do not have much knowledge about many crucial topics: the evolution of the veneration of Mary the Mother of God (other than iconography, which flourishes), the canonization of saints in concrete reality, the history of the hundreds of lesser monasteries, religious experience at the level of the countryside and the small towns, to name just a few areas. It is obvious that religion was central to Russian culture in the broadest sense of the word, and one can only hope that it remains one of the central themes in the history of early modern Russia. It is the hope that this issue will contribute to the better understanding of that theme.

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