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Au service de la réconciliation des Églises: Jean Gagarin, Jean Martynow et Victor de Buck: Correspondance. Tabularium hagiographicum, 7. Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 2014. Pp. 79 + 1284. Pb + CD-ROM, 45 euros.

In the fifteenth century, the emerging Muscovite state established itself ideologically as the last sovereign defender of Eastern Orthodoxy in Europe. In 1441, Isidore of Kiev, the fervently uniate metropolitan who represented Russia at the Council of Florence, was imprisoned and then chased out of Muscovy when he came to announce that a church union had finally been signed. Since that point, a succession of Catholic attempts to reunite the churches have ended in failure. In the 1680s, during the Polish-influenced rule of Regent Sofia, Jesuit missionaries assiduously cultivated the friendship of the favorite Prince Golitsyn—but when Peter the Great toppled her in 1689, they were banned from the country. In the 1790s, Emperor Paul was assassinated in part, it is thought, because of his crypto-Catholicism. In the 1820s, as Marie-Pierre Rey has argued (*Alexandre 1er* [Paris: Flammarion, 2009]) and as some of the letters in this volume confirm, Alexander I sent an emissary to the pope in the hopes of establishing a union, but died before his mission could be completed.

The Bollandists' publication of the letters of Jean [Ivan Sergeevich] Gagarin, Jean [Ivan Matfeevich] Martynov, and Victor de Buck follows the progress of another attempt at reconciliation, this one taking place over the course of the 1850s and 1860s. It was a product of the unique political circumstances of the Russian Empire in the reigns of Nicholas I and Alexander II. While historians have rightly challenged the notion that Nicholaevan Russia was stagnant and unchanging, the famous motto of "autocracy, Orthodoxy, nationality" had clearly set the tone for the intellectual life of the empire. In 1836, Pëtr Chaadaev dramatically violated this consensus by publishing the first of his "Philosophical Letters," and arguing that Russia had left itself outside of the civilizational transformation then happening in the West. Chaadaev's notion of progress was not technological or political but rather moral, and specifically Catholic (although the "Slavophile"/"Westernizer" debate, which his essay inspired, largely ignored the religious question). Meanwhile, as a result of Nicholas's policies elsewhere in the empire, existing Uniate communities, primarily in Right-Bank Ukraine, were forcibly absorbed into Orthodoxy and their official organizations dismantled. Catholicism was under suspicion. However, after Russia's disastrous performance in the Crimean War and the ascension of Alexander II in 1855, all sorts of reform projects seemed to be within reach—even religious ones. One such was the reunion of churches, for which Gagarin argued in his book *Will Russia*

become Catholic? (*La Russie sera-t-elle catholique* [Paris: Charles Douniol, 1856]) first published in French and translated into Russian soon after.

Gagarin, born to a distinguished princely family, converted to Catholicism in 1842 and almost immediately joined the Society of Jesus. Unlike other “Westernizers,” such as the socialist-leaning literary critic Vissarion Belinskii, Gagarin subordinated liberal political goals to the overriding mission of church union under papal auspices. Liberty of conscience, for instance, could and should be used for Catholic ends as long as Orthodoxy remained the state religion. As Gagarin argued in some of the letters presented here, such a reunification would not only help the Russian church, “isolated from the West, betrayed by the East” (99) but would represent a triumph for Catholicism that would bring vast numbers of Protestants and Asians into the fold.

Gagarin’s correspondent, the Belgian Jesuit and Bollandist Victor de Buck, was less radical than his Russian colleague. In place of a wholesale reconfiguration of the spiritual life of the empire, he proposed to “grant the Russian emperor a protectorate and leave the Holy Synod in place, but return matters approximately to how they were when Charlemagne reigned in the West” (97). De Buck thus exhorted Gagarin to be less vitriolic in his treatment of Orthodoxy. Martynov, an ecclesiastical historian who converted a few years after Gagarin, took the even more indirect route of incorporating Orthodox hagiography and church history into the Catholic historical project, promoting an intellectual if not a religious reunion.

The published letters are in a somewhat unusual format: a small volume containing a useful introduction by the editors, together with some reference materials, but with the 1,200 pages of actual correspondence on an enclosed CD-ROM. This not only allows the book to escape the bulk and expense of a large hard-bound edition but, crucially, provides readers with a keyword-searchable PDF. Unlike some editions of this kind, it does not come in the form of page images or individual files but as a single bookmarked document. This is clearly an excellent solution, although in future editions an alternate medium less dependent on the use of a disc drive, such as a USB stick, might be preferable.

What makes the keyword-searchable format particularly useful in this case is the variety of the correspondents’ interests. Beyond Russia, Gagarin was actively interested in Belgian and Austrian politics, studied Arabic, and communicated with Cossacks who had defected to the Ottoman Empire. His observations on Russian, Polish, and Ukrainian affairs are thoughtful and point to how immersed this aristocrat continued to be in the intellectual climate of imperial Russia—and how blinkered he was by its assumptions. A rare and unexpected Russo-Catholic perspective, this collection, despite its somewhat narrow scope, will undoubtedly prove to be a valuable resource for anyone interested either in the

transformations that Catholicism experienced in the middle of the nineteenth century or in the early years of Russia's émigré intelligentsia.

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