The main purpose of this article is to trace chronologically and analyze historically the special efforts of Prince Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin (1814-1882) and August Freiherr von Haxthausen (1792-1866) to achieve the reconciliation of the Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches on the basis of hitherto unpublished documents discovered in archives in France and in Germany, consisting of their unpublished correspondence written during the critical years of their church-reconciliation plan from 1857 to 1860. The new

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documentation not only clarifies some previous historical errors concerning the timing of their efforts but also proves that, though one of them was Russian-born and the other German, they both deeply shared similar means and goals for the reconciliation of the Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches. No one has ever traced in detail their special efforts as they developed on the basis of these letters which are reproduced extensively in the following foot-notes below, since this correspondence has never been published. Furthermore, both Gagarin and Haxthausen can be characterized as Catholic Slavophiles, because they both loved the ancient Russian ways and wished to preserve the Greek-Slavonic liturgy, while acknowledging the primacy of the papacy.

No claim is being made in this article that Gagarin’s and Haxthausen’s proposals in favor of church reconciliation were highly original, but it is important to note that Haxthausen was able to present his ideas to the tsar Alexander II due to his special relationship not only with the Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna (1807-1873) and the Grand Duke Konstantin, but also especially with Editha von Rahden, Elena Pavlovna’s Lady-in-Waiting.2

A few words should suffice to place this new evidence in its proper historical context: August Franz Freiherr von Haxthausen first became well known in the field of Russian studies due to his insistence upon the importance of the survival of the Russian village commune (often called the mir or the obshchina), though the terms actually meant different institutions in dif-
