Ruthenian and Russian Innovations in the Sacrament of Penance and their Early Eighteenth-Century Consequences¹

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Abstract:

Orthodox Christian approaches to the sacrament of penance in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are a story of adaptation, reception, and sometimes unintended consequences. In the middle of the seventeenth century, Ruthenian theologians like Metropolitan Petro Mohyla, Ioannikii Haliatovs'kyi, and Innokentii Gizel' adapted what they thought useful from the confessional diversity of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth into Orthodox practice. Faced with a different set of challenges, contemporary Moscow-based clerics, including Patriarch Nikon, decided to adapt many of these confession-related changes for their own purposes. In the eighteenth century, Ruthenian hierarchs including Dymytrii Tuptalo and Teofan Prokopovych, alternately emphasized or instrumentalized such notions as the secrecy ('seal') of the confession that would become foundational in the Russian empire. The approaches to the sacrament of penance at the turn of the eighteenth century—simultaneously constitutive and transformational—are thus a curious case of histoire croisée, with shape-shifting intercrossing multiple national and confessional at levels.

Keywords:

penance, confession seal, Innokentii Gizel', Dymytrii (Tuptalo) of Rostov, Teofan Prokopovych, Peter I, Russia, Ukraine, Orthodox Church

Orthodox Christian approaches to the sacrament of penance in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are a story of adaptation, reception, and sometimes unintended consequences. In the middle of the seventeenth century, Ruthenian theologians like Metropolitan Petro Mohyla, Ioannikii Haliatovs'kyi, and Innokentii Gizel' adapted what they thought useful from the confessional diversity of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth into Orthodox practice.² Perhaps the most extensive such borrowing concerned the sacrament of penance. For the first time, Orthodox service-books like the

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David Frick, *Meletij Smotryc'kyj* (Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute Publications, 1995); Vasyl Popelyastyy, "Bohoslov'ia sviatoho taïnstva pokaiannia: skhidnyi pravoslavnyi pohliad (druha polovyna XVI-persha polovyna XVII stolit'," *Analecta of the UCU* (Series: Theology), vol. 2 (2015), 224-258; Margarita Korzo, "Pravoslavnoe nravstvennoe bogoslovie XVII v. i ego spetsifika: 'Mir s Bogom cheloveku' (Kiev, 1669)," *Eticheskaia mysl'* 18:2 (2018), 56-71; *eadem*, "'Myr z Bohom choloviku' Innokentiia Gizelia v konteksti katolyts'koi moral'noi teolohii kintsia XVI-pershoi polovyny XVII st.," *Inokentii Gizel'. Vybrani tvory u 3kh tt.*, Larysa Dovha, ed. (Kyiv: "Svichado," 2010), 3: 195-262; *eadem*, "Osvoenie katolicheskoi traditsii moskovskimi i kievskimi knizhnikami XVII veka: Innokentii Gizel' i Simeon Polotskii," in *Pravoslavie Ukrainy i Moskovskoi Rusi v XV—XVII vv: obshchee i razlichnoe*, ed. M. V. Dmitriev (Moscow: "Indrik," 2012), 290–301; *eadem*, "Pravoslavnye posobiia o podgotovke k ispovedi XVII v. i ikh istochniki: 'Nauka o taine Sv. Pokaianiia' (Kyiv, 1671)," *Vestnik PSTGU*, Ser. II: Istoriia: Istoriia Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi, vyp. 78 (2017), 9-21.

Trebnik (Book of Needs) and sluzhebnik (priest's liturgical service-book) reflected Roman Catholic theological notions like satisfaction, merits, and seven deadly sins.³ Faced with a different set of challenges, Moscow-based clerics, including Patriarch Nikon, decided to adapt many of these changes for their own purposes. This mutual borrowing and adaptation regarding the sacrament of penance continued through the eighteenth century, with Ruthenian hierarchs, including the holy Dymytrii (Tuptalo), Metropolitan of Rostov and Teofan Prokopovych, Metropolitan of Novgorod, alternately emphasizing or instrumentalizing such notions as the secrecy ("seal") of the confession that would become foundational in the Russian empire. The Russian adaptations of the Ruthenian adaptations had their own after-life: Orthodox clerics of other nationalities, including the Serbs and Romanians, made their own choices from the array of new possibilities.⁴ The approaches to the sacrament of penance at the turn of the eighteenth century—simultaneously constitutive and transformational—are thus a curious case of histoire croisée, with shapeshifting intercrossing at multiple national and confessional levels.⁵ Both the intended and unintended consequences of theology become apparent when we compare Ruthenian and Muscovite borrowings regarding the sacrament of penance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—and the political interpretations of those borrowings in years to come.

Borrowings and Adaptations in the Seventeenth Century

Perhaps the most famous borrowing is the change to the rite of absolution introduced by the Ruthenians in the first printed rubrics for confession, the Striatinskii (Ostrog)

³ For Mohyla's liturgical changes, see *Evkhologion ili Trebnik* (Kiev: izd. v sv. Velikoi Chudotvornoi Lavre, 1646; repr. Kyiv: Informatsiino-vydavnychyi tsentr Ukrainskoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi, 2004), 1:387. The *Trebnik* also reflects the 1640 Kiev Council discussion on how to confess villains, and how and whether to absolve them ("*Lifos*, polemicheskoe sochinenie, vyshedshee iz Kievo-pecherskoi tipografii v 1644 godu," *Arkhiv iugo-zapadnoi Rossii*, [Kyiv: tip. G. Korchak-Novitskago, 1893], ch. 1, t. IX: 68). Ioannikii Haliatovs'kyi, *Kliuch razumeniia s[via]shchennikom zakonnym i svetskim nalezhachyi* (Kyiv: druk. Kievo-Pecherskoi Lavry, 1659; repr. Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1985). For Gizel', see a facsimile of the 1669 edition, Archimandrite Innokentii (Gizel'), *Mir s bogom chelovieku ili pokaianie sviatoe, primiriaiushchee bogovi chelovieka ucheniem ot pisaniia sviatogo i ot uchitelei tserkovnykh* (Kyiv-Lviv: Vyd. "Svichado," 2009), t. 1, kn. 2.

⁴ The Serbs, for example, adopted the practice of annual confession, but not the undermining of confessional secrecy. See, for example, Vladislav Puzovic, "Utitsaj *Dukhovnog Reglamenta* (1721) na *Sveshtenicka i Monaska pravila* Mitropolita Beogradsko-Karlovaskog Vikentija (Jovanovica)," *Zbornik Matitse Srpske za Istoriju* 90, Novi Sad (2004), 37-54. For Romanian approaches, see Mircea Pacurariu, *Geschichte der Rumänischen Orthodoxen Kirche* [Oikonomia 33] (Erlangen: Lehrstuhl für Geschichte und Theologie, 1994), 208–14, 257–62, 321–6.

⁵ Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Beyond Comparison: *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity," *History and Theory*, 45:1 (February 2006): 30-50. For the classic pre-revolutionary study of Ruthenian influence, see K. V. Kharlampovich, *Malorossiiskoe vlianie na velikorusskuiu zhizn*' (Kazan', 1914; repr. The Hague and Mouton, 1968). For one of the first arguments for mutual influence, see Edward Keenan, "Muscovite Perceptions of Other East Slavs before 1654: An Agenda for Historians," in *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter*, eds. Peter J. Potichnyj, Marc Raeff, Jaroslaw Pelenski, and Gleb N. Zekulin (Edmonton: CIUS, 1992), 20-38. I am grateful to the two anonymous reviewers for their comments on this article.

Trebnik of 1606, followed by the Vilno (Vilnius) edition of 1618 and a Kyivan one in 1620.6 These and other printed confession rites by Ruthenian writers began to circulate in Russia from the start of the seventeenth century.7 The Muscovites first decided to adopt a combination of Greek and Ruthenian penance rubrics based on Trebniks from Vilnius and Kyiv, then the celebrated 1646 one published by Petro Mohyla. Compared to earlier expansive Moscow rubrics, the confession rite became significantly shorter. Unlike Muscovite practice but like contemporary Latin practice, the Mohyla Trebnik told the sinner to "Go, and sin no more." It insisted that the penitent ("as one accused") stand, and the father-confessor ("as judge") sit. It also changed the wording of the absolution formula from the original deprecatory formula used elsewhere in Orthodoxy ("May God forgive you"), to the declarative, giving more power to the priest ("I forgive and absolve you") introduced earlier in the Roman Catholic Church.⁸ This change moved confession in Slavic Orthodoxy away from previous Ruthenian and Russian practice, away from that which the Greek Orthodox continued to use, and closer to contemporary Roman Catholic practice.9 The Greeks would denounce this as a Latin error that shifted the emphasis away from God and His mercy; still later, Georges Florovsky condemned it as a borrowing that seemed to emphasize an all-powerful priest instead of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰

From a *practical* point of view, however, it is worth noting that Mohyla's changes did not cause alarm among the Orthodox who consulted it, at least partly because confessional rubrics had continued to evolve even after the introduction of print. Moreover, Mohyla's rite had clear advantages over those that had come before it: the clarity of the rubrics, the easy-to-follow nature of the ordo, and not least Mohyla's own high reputation. The use of the imperative formula may even have been seen as lessening a possible competitive advantage on the part of the Roman Catholic priests in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: the Council of Trent depicted the penitent as a culprit before the tribunal, the minister as a judge, and the absolution as "a judicial act in which a verdict is

⁶ Trebnik (Ostrog, n.p. 1606); A. I. Almazov, *Tainaia ispovied'v pravoslavnoi vostochnoi tserkvi. Opyt vnieshnei istorii*, 3 vols. (Odesa: tip-lit. Shtaba Odesskago Voennago Okruga, 1894), 1: 526. See the description of these revisions in "*Lifos*," op. cit., ch. 1, t. IX: 29-30.

⁷ They included Lavrentii Zyzanii Tustanovs'kyi's *Bol'shoi katekhizis* (Moscow, 1627), Meletii Smotryts'kyi's *Hrammatika* (1648), and *Kniga o vierie* (Moscow, 1648).

⁸ In the Roman Catholic context, stressing the confessor's unique juridical power of the keys reinforced the cleric's authority. See Herbert Vorgrimler, *Buße und Krankensalbung. Handbuch der Dogmensgeschichte. Band IV, Sakramente, Eschatologie*, 2nd ed. (Basel-Vienna: Herder, 1978), 171-5.

⁹ The 1439 Council of Florence required the phrase "ego te absolvo," which indicated that the absolution came from the priest. See W. David Meyers, 'Poor, Sinning Folk': Confession and Conscience in Counter-Reformation Germany (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1996), 126.

Prot. Vasilii Petrov, "Razreshitel'naia molitva v grecheskoi tserkvi kontsa XVII veka na primere knigi prep. Nikodima Sviatogortsa 'Rukovodstvo k ispovedi'," *Relihiia v Ukraini: mirkui razom iz namy. Nezalezhnyi internet-resurs*, accessed November 21, 2022, https://www.religion.in.ua/zmi/foreign_zmi/2086o-razreshitelnaya-molitva-v-%20grecheskoj-cerkvi-konca-xviii-veka-na-primere-knigi-prep-nikodima-svyatogorca-rukovodstvo-k-ispovedi.html; Georges Florovsky, *Puti russkogo bogosloviia* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1937), 49.

¹¹ Vasyl Popelyastyy, "The Post-Tridentine theology of the sacrament of penance on the basis of the Rituale Romanum (1614)," in *The Council of Trent: Reform and Controversy in Europe and Beyond (1545-1700)*, Wim François, Violet Soen, eds., 3 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 1: 192.

pronounced."¹² Perhaps because of these advantages, Mohyla's *Trebnik* was reprinted numerous times in both Lviv and Kyiv.¹³ The *Trebnik* also included a prayer of absolution to be placed in the hands of the dead, a practice shared with the Balkans and Western Europe.¹⁴

In the same year that Mohyla's *Trebnik* appeared, a new abbot named Nikon came to Moscow. Nikon impressed Tsar Aleksei, who asked him to stay to join the work of the Russian Orthodox Church reformers. This meant, among other things, new opportunities for the Ruthenian Orthodox clergy. During the 1620s, in their appeals to Moscow for protection against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's persecution, they had developed language emphasizing the unity of "Little" and "Great" Russians as part of an Orthodox East Slavic people. Moreover, unlike most of their Muscovite counterparts, these Ruthenian clerics had received an education that allowed them to compete with the skilled Roman Catholic and Protestant propagandists. From their neighbors, they could observe the importance of discipline and organization in establishing conformity to proper practice, and the necessity of getting the secular authorities to back their program. More than a few came to Moscow to work on the reforms of now-Patriarch Nikon. With their support, in 1651, the Muscovites decided to adopt a combination of Greek and Ruthenian penance rubrics based on the 1639 *Potrebnik*. In 1658, Nikon—in one of his last acts as

¹² Council of Trent, "Teaching Concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of Penance and Anointing," in Tanner and Alberigo, eds., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (London: Sheed & Ward; Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 2: 704, 707; Alfons Brüning, "Peter Mohyla's Orthodox and Byzantine Heritage: Religion and Politics in the Kievan Church Reconsidered," in *Von Moskau nach St. Petersburg: Das russische Reich im 17. Jahrhundert*, herausgegeben von Hans-Joachim Torke [Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte, Bd. 56] (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), 63–90.

¹³ One such reprint was *Evkhologion ili trebnik* (Lviv: Drukarnia Bratska, 1698).

¹⁴ "K riesheniiu voprosov iz oblasti pastyrskoi praktiki," *Rukovodstvo dlia sel'skikh pastyrei* 3: 50 (December 2, 1899), 356-8. For a more exhaustive discussion of the absolution prayer for the dead, see Iu. K. Guguev, "Obychai klast' razreshitel'nye dokumenty v mogilu umershego v drevnei Rusi, na Balkanakh, i v Zapadnoi Evrope," in *Fakty i znaki. Issledovaniia po semiotike istorii*, vyp. 4 (2020), 130-158; Nikolaos Chrissidis, "Between Forgiveness and Indulgence: Funerary Prayers of Absolution in Russia," in *The Tapestry of Russian Christianity: Studies in History and Culture*, eds. Nicholas Lupinin, Donald Ostrowski & Jennifer B. Spock [Ohio Slavic Papers, vol. 10, Eastern Christian Studies, vol. 2] (Columbus, OH: Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures, Ohio State University, 2016), 261-93. For posthumous absolution in Roman Catholicism, see Robert W. Shaffern, "Learned Discussions of Indulgences for the Dead in the Middle Ages," *Church History*, 61:4 (December 1992): 367-381.

¹⁵ Frank E. Sysyn, "Orthodoxy and Revolt: The Role of Religion in the Seventeenth-Century Ukrainian Pprising Against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth," in *Religion and the Early Modern State: Views From China, Russia, and the West*, eds. James D. Tracy & Marguerite Ragnow (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2004), 154-184.

¹⁶ Frick, Meletij Smotryc'kyj.

¹⁷ A manuscript version of the 1651 printed *Trebnik* confession rite (ll. 135-143), Nauchnho-issledovatel'skii otdel rukopisei Rossiiskoi gosudarstvennoi biblioteki, f. 304.I, ms. no. 238, ll. 1-27, contains two variants of the closing confession prayer to be read at the end of the Apostles' Fast (ll. 390b-42) and penitentials for Orthodox tsars, nobles, priests, laymen, and laywomen (ll. 53-2100b), corresponding to ll. 144-198 of the printed 1651 *Trebnik*. Kievan versions of the Lenten *Triodion* reproduced the changes of the 1640 revision till 1791; Muscovite versions of the *Triodion* were changed in 1663, 1672, and again in 1777, in accordance with the new Synodal translation of the Bible. The latter edition, *Triodion*, siest' *Tripesniets* (Moscow: Sinodal'naia tip.,

Patriarch—presented this version as the *only* acceptable one.¹⁸ Nikon was thus proceeding both in the line of those Roman Catholic reformers who attempted to impose a uniform confession rite and a single formula of absolution while rejecting other, even non-heretical versions, and the similarly exclusionary Anglican approach to the 1662 revision of the Book of Common Prayer.¹⁹

Both the changes and Nikon's intransigence caused alarm. Although changes had been made to Muscovite rubrics of confession throughout the century in manuscript and print alike, at least two master versions had existed side by side in Russia in 1650: the ones based on the 1639 version with the Ruthenian translation of the Greek supplement, and the ones based on the 1636 (without that supplement). Nikon kept the new supplement but cut the material that had followed it, rejecting the original expansive Russian variants altogether. The focus of the sacrament now became not the eliminated long penitential prayers, but new formulas of introduction and absolution which placed the center of emphasis on the priest's authority and power to absolve rather than his telling the penitent that he is a fellow sinner. A comparison of the two introductions to the confession is illuminating:

1651 version (condensed from ten pages)

"And you, my child, do not be ashamed of [speaking before] this human face [witnessing you], for we are all sinners; do not conceal within yourself a single sin you have committed from youth to this hour. Be not shamed of my face, but confess all to me, for the Lord God knows everything...confess without shame, for I am a person like you, and am more sinful than all people."²⁰

1658 (taking up less than a page)

'Behold, my child, Christ standeth here invisibly and receiveth thy confession: wherefore, be not ashamed, neither be afraid, and conceal thou nothing from me: but tell me, doubting not, all things which thou hast done: and so shalt thou have pardon from our Lord Jesus Christ. Lo, His holy image is before us: and I am but a witness, bearing testimony before him of all things which thou dost say to me. But if thou shalt conceal anything from me, thou shalt have the greater sin.'21

The difference is obvious. Even without the Mohylan formula of absolution, the priest is no longer "a person like you, and more sinful than all people," but, as in contemporary Roman Catholic rubrics, the uniquely empowered representative of Jesus Christ. This

¹⁷⁷⁷⁾ remained standard through 1917. I. A. Karabinov, *Postnaia Triod': Istoricheskii obzor eia plana, sostava, redaktsii i slavianskikh perevodov* (St. Petersburg: tip. V. Smirnova, 1910), 248-92.

¹⁸ Evkhologii, siest' molitvoslov ili trebnik (Moscow: [vo tipografii], 1658); Almazov, Tainaia ispovied', I: 534-7.

¹⁹ Timothy Rosendale, Liturgy and Literature in the Making of Protestant England (Cambridge University Press, 2007); Joris Geldhof, "Trent and the Production of Liturgical Books in its Aftermath," in Council of Trent, 175-90; Paul Meyendorff, Russia, Ritual, and Reform: The Liturgical Reforms of Nikon in the 17th Century (Crestwood: SVS Press, 1991).

²⁰ *Trebnik* (Moscow: [vo tipografii], 7160 [1651]), ll. 1470b-150. See also Natalia I. Sazonova, "Nekotorye tendentsii ispravleniia bogosluzhebnykh knig pri patriarkhe Nikone (na materialakh Trebnika)," *Bogoslov.RU. Nauchnyi bogoslovskii portal*, accessed November 21, 2022, https://bogoslov.ru/article/351158.
²¹ *Trebnik* (1658), Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov [hereafter RGADA], BMST/SPK 5651, 65.

appears also to be a step away from the idea expressed by John Climacus that the spiritual father was someone who was "able and willing to labor with you in bearing the burden of your sins."²² Moreover, Nikon insisted that the old prayers could no longer be used at all. Even as other hierarchs and clerics agreed with the overall emphasis on confession, Nikon's rigidity over the use of the new *Trebnik* sparked protest and would lead to his downfall.²³ The 1662 Trebnik shortened the confession rite even further. 24 The 1671 Trebnik version added Mohyla's absolution formula, as did the 1677 and 1688 rubrics: those remained in all subsequent Church Slavonic versions of the *Trebnik* down to the present.²⁵ Thus, as in the Roman Catholic world earlier, ²⁶ the rite of confession in Russian Orthodoxy in the second half of the seventeenth century became streamlined and standardized, with a greater emphasis on the unique power of the priest to absolve. From 1699 on, editions of the priests' service book (sluzhebnik) printed in Russia also included a text called the Uchitel'noe izviestie, which enlarged upon Mohyla's Trebnik by describing pre-communion requirements for laity as well as for ordained clerics: confession, seven days' fasting and church attendance (which could be shortened to three days, or in extreme cases, to one day), a detailed prayer rule including prayers after communion, and no eating after midnight the day before one communed. This text, outlining the sequence of preconfession, confession, and post-confession components of govienie (the term for the entire penitential process), would become the basis of lay govienie requirements in the Russian empire.27

But all Muscovites did not simply accept such Ruthenian texts and approaches passively. The Old Believer objection to them is well-known—and indeed Old Believer refusal to adopt the changes became one of the reasons Russian church councils would come to emphasize participation in the rites of confession and communion as a sign of both Orthodoxy and political submission.²⁸ Within the official "Nikonian" Church, at the heart of the matter was the degree to which practices might be consistent with Orthodoxy. In 1689, after the court coup that overthrew the supposedly "Latinophile" government of Regent Sofia Alekseevna, Ioakim (Savelov), Patriarch of Moscow (a member of the victorious faction), called a new Council which condemned Ruthenian texts, including

²² Claudia Rapp, "Spiritual Guarantors at Penance, Baptism, and Ordination," in *A New History of Penance*, ed. Abigail Firey (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 138. See also Alexis Torrance, *Repentance in Late Antiquity: Eastern Asceticism and the Framing of the Christian Life ca.* 400-650 CE (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 159-61.

²³ N. I. Sazonova, "Liturgicheskaia reforma Patriarkha Nikona 1654-1666 gg: Antropologicheskii aspect (na nateriale Nikonovskogo ispravleniia *Trebnika* i *Chasoslova*)," *Vestnik RUDN, ser. Istoriia Rossii*, No. 4 (2010): 62-74.

²⁴ Trebnik (Moscow, 7197[=1683]), 540b.

²⁵ The rites of confession in *Trebnik* (Moscow, 7197 [i.e. 1683]) and *Trebnik* (Moscow: Sinodal'naia tipografiia, 1915) are identical.

²⁶ Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 21-27.

A. V. Petrovskii, "Uchitel'noe izviestie pri slavianskom sluzhebnike," Khristianskoe Chtenie 4 (1911), 571-2.
 N. Vinogradskii, Tserkovnyi sobor v Moskve 1682 goda: opyt istoriko-kriticheskogo issledovaniia (Smolensk, 1899), 54; Georg Michels, At War with the Church: Religious Dissent in Seventeenth-Century Russia (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

Haliatovs'kyi's, for their "soul-rotting poison of Latin evil teaching and innovation." Gizel's *Mir s Bogom* was dismissed, not unfairly, as "being all translated from Latin books." In his 1690 testament, loakim enjoined the new co-Tsars, Ivan and Peter, to be true to the holy Eastern Church and to defend it from all corruption. ³¹

Still, Ioakim did not challenge any of the seventeenth-century Ruthenian changes to the rite of confession. The Mohyla *Trebnik* with the "I absolve you" formula remained the norm in the Russian Orthodox Church. Moreover, Ioakim found merit in many of the Ruthenian approaches. With the help of Evfimii, a pupil of Epifanii Slavinetskii's, he put together the *Uchitel'noe izvestie*, a text based on the 1617 *Nauka iereom do poriadnogo otpravovaniia sluzhby Bozhoe vel'tse potrebnaia* published in Lviv and the Eucharistic section in the *Trebnik* of Petro Mohyla.³² This guide to requirements for confession and communion appeared for the first time in the Muscovite *sluzhebnik* of 1699.³³ Although it is aimed mostly at clerics, reminding them that they too should confess regularly to other priests, it also includes requirements for laity: confessing and communing four times a year (i.e., during the major fasts of the Orthodox church), fasting for seven days (or three, or one) beforehand (which includes abstaining from sexual relations with one's spouse), not eating from midnight, and reading or listening to the rule before communion.³⁴ This text became a permanent fixture of Russian *sluzhebniks*.

In sum, all sides borrowed and adapted: Ruthenians adopted what they thought useful from Polish and Latin and Greek sources printed in Venice, and the Muscovites adopted what they thought useful from the Ruthenians. Each side had its own rich traditions—the first half of the seventeenth century was a particularly fertile and distinct time for both Ruthenians and Muscovites, as Isolde Thyrêt and others have shown—and neither side was a passive absorber of the other.³⁵

Borrowings and adaptations in the early eighteenth century

²⁹ N. I. Kostomarov, "Epifanii Slavinetskii, Simeon Polotskii i ikh preemniki," in *Russkaia istoriia v* zhizneopisaniiakh ee glavneishikh deiatelei, 6^{th} ed. (St. Petersburg: tip M. M. Stasiulevicha, 1912), t. 2.

³⁰ Gizel' did draw on contemporary Catholic handbooks of moral theology by Juan Azor, Hermann Busenbaum, and Mikolaj Mosicki. See Margarita Korzo, "Vneshniaia traditsiia kak istochnik vdokhnoveniia. K voprosu ob avtorstve kievskikh i moskovskikh pravoslavnykh tekstov XVII v. Dva primera," *Studi Slavisti*ci VI (2009): 59-84. For the quote, see K. Tikhomirov, "Opis' Suzdal'skogo Spaso Evfimieva monastyria v 1660 g." *Vremennik imperatorskago Moskovskago obshchestva istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh*, kn. 5 (1850), 50-19.

³¹ Zhitie i zaveshchanie sviateishego patriarkha Ioakima (St. Petersburg: tip. V. S. Balasheva, 1879), 119-138.

³² Ibid.; A. P. Bogdanov, *Russkie patriarkhi* (1589-1701) (Moscow: Terra, 1999), t. 2: 297-303.

³³ See the discussion in P. V. Gidulianov, "Vopros o tainoi ispovedi i dukhovnikakh vostochnoi tserkvi v noveishei russkoi literature," *Vizantiiskii vremennik* t. 14 (1907): 409-13.

³⁴ Petrovskii, "Uchitel'noe izviestie pri slavianskom sluzhebnike," op. cit., 571-2.

³⁵ Isolde Thyrêt, *Saint-Making in Early Modern Russia: Religious Tradition and Innovation in the Cult of Nil Stolobenskii* (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishing, 2019), 496-517. For a larger discussion of Ukrainian specificity and historiography, see Liliya Berezhnaya, "Does Ukraine have a Church History?" *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 10: 4 (Fall 2009): 897-916; Alfons Brüning, "'Kyivan Christianity' and "'Churches of the Kyivan Tradition': Concepts of Distinctiveness of Christianity in Ukraine before and after 2019," in *Orthodoxy in Two Manifestations? The Conflict in Ukraine as Expression of a Fault Line in World Orthodoxy*, eds. Thomas Bremer, Alfons Brüning & Nadieszda Kizenko (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2022), 145-172.

Confession continued to be channeled in other ways. Metropolitan Dymytrii (Tuptalo) of Rostov is particularly notable. Dymytrii admired Gizel' but placed more of an emphasis on incorporating repentance into Lenten homiletics and Lenten liturgy.³⁶ His first innovation was a series of sermons on confession for every important day in Lent. One might think there was little new here: a quarter-century earlier, Simeon Polotskii had written his own collection of homilies for every Sunday of the year, with a special section for the Sundays of the Lenten Triodion.³⁷ But, while Polotskii had treated many Lenten penitential themes, and although he discussed the need for repentance generally, he did not emphasize confession, whether during Lent or at all. Rather the opposite: it was tears and, above all, almsgiving that "rescued one from every sin and from death." Polotskii explicitly mentioned confession only twice in his homilies, and—remarkably—not as part of the Lenten cycle. Confession appeared only first in the context of the feast of Theophany, and second as the fifth, most necessary, aspect of the upbringing of children.³⁸ True, the second reference occurred on August 6, during the Dormition fast, a fasting period during which the Orthodox devout occasionally timed a second period of fasting, church attendance, confession, and communion—but still it was not Great Lent.

Dymytrii, then, seems to have been the first East Slavic Orthodox hierarch to pen something that would, in future centuries, become a staple: a series of sermons linking every pre-Lenten, Lenten, and—this was the real innovation, given that anyone who went to confession tried to go during a fasting period—post-Paschal sermon theme to the necessity of repentance and specifically of confessing one's sins. On the Saturday of the Akathist of the Mother of God, for example, Dymytrii did not interpret Mary as a merciful intercessor, but warned his listeners that every time they sinned, they trampled upon Her Son and pierced Him in the heart, so they should expect no more mercy from Her than they would from a mother whose child they killed before her eyes. Thus, he called his listeners to first make their peace with God at confession; then and only then would they find mercy with the Mother of God. On Palm Sunday, he called penitents to be like the ass on which the Savior rode into Jerusalem ("Whosoever does not confess his sins has locked the doors of his heart: Christ will not enter there and will not live with him [Matthew 4:17, Revelation 3:20])...If we confess the transgressions with which we angered our Creator and perform satisfaction for them, then He will enter our heart to live there as in a beautiful chamber.") Even on the Paschal feast itself, when liturgical texts abandon all references to penance in favor of joy, Dymytrii urged his listeners to resurrect themselves from spiritual

³⁶ Dymytrii, Metropolitan of Rostov, "Piramida ili stolp, vo blazhennoi pamiat prestavl'shagosia vysotsie k Bogu prevelebnago, ego milosti, gospodina otsa Innokentiia Gizelia," in *Sochineniia sviatago Dimitriia, Mitropolita Rostovskago*, izd. 7 (Moscow: v Sinodal'noi tipografii, 1848), ch. 3: 601-639.

³⁷ The *Trebnik* dealt with extra-liturgical individual rites that were not part of the standard communal liturgical cycle, such as confession, baptism, and house-blessings. The Lenten *Triodion* dealt with services that were served in church for the entire Lenten period. For the evolution of the *Triodion*, see Karabinov, *Postnaia Triod*'.

³⁸ Simeon Polotskii, *Obied dushevnyi* (Moscow: v tipografii verkhnei, 1681), ll. 701-2.

death "that is, repent for sins [...] just as Christ does not die again after His resurrection, so let us not return to our previous sins after our repentance."³⁹

In explicitly linking confession to the newly revised Lenten *Triodion*, Dymytrii was not maintaining an existing practice of confession during Lent; he appears rather to have been *seeking* to get his flock to go to confession during Lent, and also seeking to get them to identify with the *Triodion*'s themes. That is, although earlier hierarchs may have called their flocks to go to confession and communion during Lent, Dymytrii's sermons show that this practice had not yet become widespread. In urging his flock to make good confessions during Lent, he was both trying to impress upon his flock the thematic richness of the *Triodion* and to link observance to liturgy. Similarly, in eulogies at the funerals of noblemen, Dymytrii stressed how important it is to prepare for death by repenting of sins in a timely fashion, and for survivors to commemorate the departed: "In this way they will obtain forgiveness of sins." Thus, the first three seventeenth—early eighteenth-century changes coming from Ruthenians and embraced by Muscovites and Ruthenians alike were (1) changing the wording of the absolution in a way that resembled the Latin one, (2) insisting upon, and spelling out, the preliminary requirements for confession and communion, and (3) and explicitly linking confession to the Lenten liturgy.

One point, however, would have lasting political consequences. Besides linking confession to Lenten liturgy, Metropolitan Dymytrii insisted on the need for maintaining strict secrecy of confession. In 1704, he issued a declaration reminding his clerics of both the theological and practical need for the confessional seal.⁴¹ This insistence is striking both because it indicates that the confessional seal had not, in fact, been taken seriously, in Muscovy at least—something confirmed in at least one case—and also that his Ruthenian predecessors had not been unequivocal on this point.⁴² Gizel', after all, had told father-confessors that anyone who confessed to having written or distributed writings filled with "dishonor, ill-fame, lies, slander, or *blasphemy* against Kings, Bishops, Nobles, and other honorable authorities" must be reported to the bishop. If even one such sin has been committed, other sins could not be absolved until the bishop is informed.⁴³ True, the priest was reporting to the bishop, not to a secular authority—but this still opened a window for

³⁹ Dymytrii, Metropolitan of Rostov, "Poucheniia i propovedi," *Azbuka very. Pravoslavnaia biblioteka Sviatykh ottsov i tserkovnykh pisatelei*, accessed November 21, 2022, http://azbvka.ru/otechnik/?Dmitrii Rostovskii/poucheniia-i-propovedi.

⁴⁰ See Dymytrii's graveside sermons for the courtiers (*okol'nichii*) Timofei Borisovich Iushkov (1705) and Ioann Semenovich Griboiedov (1706) in *Sochineniia sviatago Dimitriia, Mitropolita Rostovskago*, izd. 7 (Moscow: v Sinodal'noi tipografii, 1848), ch. 3: 561-578.

⁴¹ Dymytrii, Metropolitan of Rostov, "Poslanie k iereiam," in M. A. Fedotova, *Epistoliar'noe nasledie Dimitriia Rostovskogo: issledovanie i teksty* (Moscow: "Indrik," 2005), 201-207.

⁴² V. E. Borisov, "Taina ispovedi, protsedura sudoproizvodstva, i povsednevnaia zhizn' gosudarevykh masterovykh v otdel'no vziatom dele o semi rubliakh (1666 g.): publikatsiia i issledovanie," in *Sbornik statei i publikatsii posviashchennyi Andreiu Alekseevichu Bulychevu* (Moscow: Drevlekhranilishche, 2019), 17-37. I am grateful to Paul Bushkovitch for this reference.

⁴³ Gizel', *Mir s Bogom*, 300.

instrumentalizing confession as a means of uprooting sedition that Teofan Prokopovych would soon use for Peter's purposes.⁴⁴

The 1722 "Supplement" to the Spiritual Regulation Teofan produced at Peter's behest is a monument to all these strands of cross-cultural, and even cross-confessional influence. It is aimed at reforming the adherents of the state Church along the lines that Timothy Rosendale has noted in England, that Sara Nalle identified in Counter-Reformation Spain, and that Gizel' had attempted in Orthodox Ruthenia with Mir s Bogom—that is, getting people to apply key moral notions in their own lives by using an easier-to-understand language. 45 Teofan emerges as a prototype of other eighteenth-century religious leaders who, like their Enlightenment Anglican, Calvinist, Lutheran, Catholic, and Jewish counterparts, sought to reform their respective traditions from within. Like the Protestants whom Teofan admired, like the Jansenists in contemporary Europe, and especially like Habsburg Emperor Joseph II, the Regulation took issue with anything that smelled of "superstition." ⁴⁶ But it was confession that was key to Teofan's new discipline. The Regulation began by attacking the tradition of the Kviv Caves Lavra that any person who was buried there would be saved, even if he had died without confession; this exemplified the sort of "superstition" that Peter and Teofan were trying to root out. ⁴⁷ They did not want the Orthodox to put their faith in icons, relics, holy wanderers, or visits to monasteries. Regular confession—analytical, disciplined, reasoned—was the only real means of salvation. The Regulation called for the traditional readings of St Ephraim the Syrian during Great Lent to be replaced with newly printed ABC's of the faith, "so that people coming to God's church and preparing for confession and partaking of the Holy Mysteries, by hearing God's commandments and their interpretations, could better prepare themselves for true repentance."48 Confession now required education and self-examination, rather than an emphasis on sins, tears, and compunction.

⁴⁴ S. M. Kashtanov, "Eshche raz o meste zakhoroneniia ostankov Stepana Razina," *Istoriia: nauchno-obrazovatel'nyi zhurnal*, t. 5, vyp. 8 (31), 2014, accessed November 21, 2022, https://history.jes.su/s207987840000927-8-1/.

⁴⁵ Rosendale, *op. cit.*; Sara T. Nalle, "Self-correction and social change in the Spanish Counter-Reformation," in James D. Tracy & Marguerite Ragnow, eds., *Religion and the Early Modern State: Views form China, Russia, and the West* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University, 2004), 313.

⁴⁶ For this argument, see David Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 19-22. See also Elena Smilianskaia, "The Battle against Superstition in Eighteenth-Century Russia: Between 'Rational' and 'Spiritual,'" in Paschalis M. Kitromilides ed., *Enlightenment and Religion in the Orthodox World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 141-55; and Simon Dixon, "'Prosveshchenie': Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Russia," in Richard Butterwick, Simon Davies, and Gabriel Sanchez Espinosa eds., *Peripheries of the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 233-250.

⁴⁷ Polnoe sobranie postanovlenii i rasporiazhenii po vedomstvu pravoslavnogo ispovedaniia Rossiiskoi imperii (St. Petersburg: Sinodal'naia tipografiia, 1879-1914) [hereafter *PSPR*], #1, pt. 4: 7; Gizel', *Mir s bogom chelovieku*, t. 1, bk. 2: 205; "Slovo 1," *Paterik*, accessed November 21, 2022, http://lib.pushkinskijdom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4945; V. I. Okhotnikova, comp., "Povest' o Pskovo-Pecherskom monastyre," *Biblioteka literatury drevnei rusi* (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2005), t. 13 (XVI vek): 528-30.

⁴⁸ *PSPR*, #1012, 45; *Polnoe sobranie zakonovo Rossiiskoi imperii* (St. Petersburg: II-e otd. Sobstvennoi E. I. V. kantseliarii, 1830) [hereafter *PSZ*], #4172. The emphasis on learning the ABCs of the faith, and especially the

The Regulation told bishops that "any sinner who...does not go to confession and does not receive the Holy Eucharist for more than a year without good reason," should first be enjoined by his confessor to repent. If the father confessor did not succeed in getting the person to go to confession on the nearest holiday, to accept his penance, and to receive the Holy Eucharist publicly ("so that his transformation may be made manifest and the scandal expunged"), then the bishop was to enjoin him first in the company of the father confessor, and then of others.⁴⁹ Confession also figured prominently among the Regulation's suggested topics for sermons. Preachers were to preach on the following themes in the following order: (1) repentance and confession, (2) improving one's life, and (3) respecting the powers that be. Following both Gizel' and Metropolitan Dymytrii, the Regulation stressed that father confessors should refrain from mentioning in their sermons any sins that specific people were rumored to have committed, so as to not shame them publicly.⁵⁰ In a break with previous Muscovite practice, where penances had been assigned as a matter of course, priests were now not to bar anyone from communion, even briefly, without the express approval of their bishops. Laity were to go to confession and communion "often, at least once a year." In that sense, the *Regulation* was the first Russian equivalent of the 1215 Fourth Lateran Council requiring annual confession. Recapitulating earlier legislation identifying refusal to go to confession with the Old Believer schism, the Regulation formalized the overall principle of keeping track of who went to confession:

...if some Christian appears to stay away from Holy Communion [and thus from confession] a great deal, he thereby reveals himself to be not in the Body of Christ, that is, he is not a fellow member of the Church, but is a schismatic. And there is no better sign for recognizing a schismatic. Bishops should diligently watch for this, and order parish priests year after year to report their parishioners: who among them did not receive communion during the year, who did not do so for two years, and who has never received communion.⁵¹

By emphasizing regular (annual) confession and communion, Peter and Teofan appeared to be applying contemporary Western Christian models and goals to the Russian empire. Their aims and means were consistent with those of their Western Christian neighbors and their Ruthenian predecessors. Peter and Teofan actually reproduced the language of their Roman Catholic counterparts by appointing "inquisitors" to see that its instructions were

proper observance of the commandments, rather than the prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, was repeated in a February 28, 1723 *ukaz* of Peter to Varlaam, Archbishop of Kiev and Galicia, and of Catherine I to Protopriest Evstafii Mogialinskii. See N. S. Leskov, "Velikopostnyi ukaz Petra Velikago," *Istoricheskii vestnik*, vol. 4 (1882): 233-234.

⁴⁹ *PSPR*, #1, 12-15.

⁵⁰ *PSPR*, #1, pt. 23, II-III, 23-4.

⁵¹ *PSPR*, #1, 26.

followed.⁵² In one key respect, however, Peter and Teofan went beyond Western models. In the best-known development in the political history of the sacraments in the Orthodox tradition, the "Supplement" explicitly enjoined priests to report anything they learned at confession of intended treason or attempts on the life or honor of the sovereign.⁵³

To many historians, theologians, and modern critics of Russian Orthodoxy this breaking of the confessional seal, broke with "age-old tradition" and embodied the reigning narrative of secularization, the submission of the Orthodox Church to the Emperor, and the beginning of the Church's serving as the "handmaiden of the state." ⁵⁴ If one is taking Metropolitan Dymytrii in 1704 as a point of departure, it is indeed a rupture. But if one goes back a few decades to Gizel', one sees an opening and even a continuity. Far from being an entrenched practice, the notion of the seal was hardly secure in contemporary Muscovy, and in fact entered Orthodox Christianity relatively late. Although it was generally accepted that the confession should be private, there do not seem to have been any strict penalties for breaking the seal. It was only in the twelfth-century century that the Byzantines started to worry about the seal, and that under Roman Catholic influence: in Byzantium, revealing what was said at confession did not keep you from being made a bishop; unordained monks could hear confession and give absolution until the twelfth century as well.⁵⁵ Nor is there any discussion of breaking the seal in such foundational studies of Russian confession as those of Smirnov, Almazov, or, more recently, Korogodina.⁵⁶ Thus what seems to have been such a break with previous practice on the part of Peter I and Teofan Prokopovych turns out to be part of a complex interweaving prepared both by Ruthenian adaptations of Roman Catholic practices in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and by earlier Byzantine attitudes.

⁵² PSZ VI, #3870, 496. See Alexander V. Muller, "The Inquisitorial Network of Peter the Great," in Robert L. Nichols & Theofanis George Stavrou, eds., Russian Orthodoxy Under the Old Regime (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978), 142-153.

⁵³ PSZ VI, #4012; PSPR (April 22, 1722), #557, 202-205. For a larger discussion of confession in the Russian empire, see Nadieszda Kizenko, *Good for the Souls: A History of Confession in the Russian Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).

⁵⁴. For the "handmaiden of the state" argument, see James Cracraft, *The Church Reform of Peter the Great* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971), 120-2; Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin, 1997), 241; Viktor Zhivov, *Iz tserkovnoi istorii vremen Petra Velikogo: issledovaniia i materialy* (Moscow: NLO, 2004). The charges against Peter's domination of the Church also figured prominently in nineteenth century Roman Catholic polemics against Russian Orthodoxy. Heather L. Bailey, 'The churches that call themselves *orthodox*': Nomenclature for Russian Orthodoxy in Nineteenth-Century France," *Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies* 2, no. 2 (2019): 149-77. For contemporary Roman Catholic attitudes to the seal in secular law, see Richard Mode, "Beichtsiegel und Zeugnisspflicht nach den Reichsprocessordnungen," *Archiv für Katholisches Kirchenrecht* 82 (1902): 480-486 William James Callahan & David Higgs, eds., *Church and Society in Catholic Europe of the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 1-12.

⁵⁵ A. S. Pavlov, *Nomokanon pri Bol'shom Trebnike* (Moscow: tip. G. Lissiera i A. Geshlikha, 1897), 246-50; Gidulianov, 'Vopros o tainoi ispovedi,' *op. cit.*, 409-13; Dirk Krausmüller, "Monks who are not priests do not have the power to bind and to loose": the debate about confession in eleventh- and twelfth-century Byzantium,' *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 109: 2 (2016): 739-68.

⁵⁶ Almazov, *Tainaia ispovied*'; S. I. Smirnov, *Drevnerusskii dukhovnik. Izsliedovanie po istorii tserkovnago byta* (Moscow: Sinodal'naia tip., 1914); Maria V. Korogodina, *Ispoved'v Rossii v XIV-XIX vv.* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2006) 48-90, 329-333.

Russian rulers would continue to instrumentalize confession for their own purposes, with Catherine II and Nicholas I showing particular energy in this endeavor.⁵⁷ Given that this article has focused on the unintended political consequences of the theological and liturgical adaptations of confession, however, it may be appropriate to close with a 1725 case involving Orthodox Christians who had been living in Sweden since the Great Northern War (1700-21). Some were soldiers who had been taken captive by the Swedes; others had fled after the Battle of Poltava (1709) together with the remnants of the Swedish army. After the Russian victory, the newly created Synod began to establish Orthodox churches on those territories, including Fredrikshamn (Hamina) and Nyslott (Savonlinna).⁵⁸ With the new opportunity to partake of the sacraments, some of those Orthodox soldiers (described as "Russians and little Russians") indicated their desire to go to confession and communion to the local Hieromonk Veniamin. Veniamin, however, was not sure how far his authority extended and asked the Synod for permission. The Synod agreed that Veniamin could hear the soldiers' confessions and give them communion at his own discretion—with one exception. If those who came to confession were "traitors"—that is, soldiers who had fought with Mazepa and who had fled the empire after Poltava—he should first inquire whether they considered their treason to be a grave sin. If they did, and sincerely repented of it, he could hear their confessions and give them communion. But those who did not regard their "treason" as sinful and stubbornly maintained that their actions had been justified, should not only not be allowed to confession and communion, but even refused entry into church.⁵⁹ Thus, an act of disloyalty to the now-dead Russian emperor committed nearly two decades before, by people who were now subjects of another ruler in another country, still barred them from confessing even their non-political sins in a Russian Orthodox church.⁶⁰ Russian rulers remained concerned with whether officers, soldiers, or others were involved in succession plots or other "treasonous" activity, and sought to learn of this at confession: a few years later, for example, one priest was blamed for not reporting Matviei Nikonov's sentiments at confession in favor of Ukrainian independence. Thus, a measure initially introduced by a Ruthenian bishop against superstition and as a way of measuring political loyalty turned into a weapon that could be used against soldiers with Ukrainian consciousness. It is hard to imagine a more apt expression of the principles of intercrossing and unexpected echoes across societies.

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⁵⁷ Nicholas Bujalski, "Narrating Political Imprisonment in Tsarist Russia: Bakunin, Goethe, Hegel," *Modern Intellectual History*, 3:3 (2021): 681-707; Kizenko, *Good for the Souls*, 136-7.

⁵⁸ Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv, f. 796, op. 32, d. 163, ll. 31–2, 80–800b.

⁵⁹ "O razrieshenii dopuskat' k ispoviedi i spodobliat' Sviatykh Tain Russkikh i Malorossiian, prozhivaiushchikh v Shvetsii," October 6, 1725, #1662, *PSPR*, v. 5: 195.

⁶⁰ For a discussion of the Battle of Poltava and its emphasis on Ukrainian political loyalty to the Russian empire, see Nadieszda Kizenko, "The Poltava Battle in Language and Liturgy," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 31: 1-4 (2009-2010): 227-244.

⁶¹ See the case of Priest Iakov Savich in RGADA, f. 7, op. 1, d. 2285.