Part II

The Imperial Myth in Artistic Texts



5. Alexei Olenin, Fedor Solntsev, and the Development of a Russian National Esthetic

D uring the reign of Nicholas I (1825-1855), the idea of nationality (*narodnost'*) represented far more than an ideological justification for absolutism in Russia. Nicholas sought to present the monarchy as an embodiment of Russian culture, to discover and foster an indigenous artistic tradition that would elevate his rule. Just as he brought the political police and the work of codification under his personal purview in his chancellery, he watched over and directed artistic creativity. His decree of February 9, 1829 announced that he was taking the Academy of Arts under his "special most gracious patronage" (*osoboe vsemilostiveishee svoe pokrovitel'stvo*). The Academy was removed from the Ministry of Education and placed under the authority of the Ministry of the Court, whose Minister reported directly to him.¹

Two of Nicholas's servitors—Alexei Olenin (1763-1843) and Fedor Solntsev (1801-1892)—played seminal roles in the process of creating a national esthetic. Olenin, a wealthy and eminent noble official, was an accomplished artist, archaeologist, and ethnographer.² Solntsev was the son of a peasant born on the estate of Olenin's friend and distant relative Count A. I. Musin-Pushkin. The count, recognizing the young peasant's talent, sent him to study

The first Minister of the Court was Peter Volkonskii, a cousin of Alexei Olenin. Imperatorskaia sanktpeterburgskaia akademiia khudozhestv, 1764-1914: kratkii istoricheskii ocherk (St. Petersburg: Akademiia Khudozhestv, 1914), 38; Mary Stuart, Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar: Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin and the Imperial Public Library (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1986), 137.

See the two excellent biographies of Olenin, Mary Stuart's and V. Faibisovich, Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin: Opyt nauchnoi biografii (St. Petersburg: Rossiiskaia natsional'naia biblioteka, 2006).

at the Imperial Academy of Arts. Solntsev proved a virtuoso draftsman and watercolorist, and Olenin made him his protégé.³

For Nicholas, the Byzantine Empire came to represent the supreme example of absolute monarchy, and Byzantine art and architecture the true source of Russia's artistic and architectural heritage, as evidenced in the Kievan and Muscovite epochs. As a twenty-one year-old Grand Duke, he revealed his concern for early Russian church architecture in 1817, when he visited Patriarch Nikon's New Jerusalem Monastery near Moscow, built from 1658 to 1685, and encouraged plans for its restoration. Three years later, the artist M. N. Vorob'ev was dispatched to Constantinople and the Holy Land to gather intelligence on the Ottoman Empire. Alexei Olenin, as Director of the Academy of Arts, suggested that he also paint watercolors of Byzantine churches. When these were exhibited at the Academy from 1823 to 1827, Nicholas viewed them approvingly and visited Vorob'ev in his studio.⁴

Once he ascended the throne. Nicholas hoped to promote a national style of architecture by constructing copies of early Russian churches that incorporated principles of Byzantine architecture. Early Russian churches came in many shapes and sizes, and Nicholas lacked a clear idea of which represented the true national style. At the outset of his reign, he directed the architect V. N. Stasov to design examples for the Church of the Tithe in Kiev and for the Russian colony in Potsdam and Kiev, but they did not meet the emperor's unspoken requirements.⁵ In 1827, Nicholas began seeking designs for St. Catherine's church in Petersburg and for the Christ the Redeemer

In his memoir, Solntsev wrote that his father was "a peasant on the estate (pomeshchichii krest'ianin) of Count Musin-Pushkin, who, however, never considered him a serf" (Academic F. G. Solntsev, "Moia zhizn' i khudozhestvennoarkheologicheskie trudy," Russkaia starina vol. 16 [1876], 110). Most accounts suggest that his father nonetheless had the status of a serf. Richard Stites, Serfdom, Society and the Arts in Imperial Russia: The Pleasure and the Power (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 290-1, 293.

⁴ Nicholas included him in his suite to paint landscapes and battle scenes during the Russo-Turkish War of 1828. On Olenin's role in Vorob'ev's assignment as a spy in these areas, and the detailed instructions he gave him, see Stuart, *Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar*, 105-6; See also P. N. Petrov, "M.N. Vorob'ev i ego shkola," *Vestnik iziashchnykh iskusstv* vol. 6 (1888): 297-303; E. A. Borisova, *Russkaia arkhitektura vtoroi poloviny XIX veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), 95.

E. I. Kirichenko, Russkii stil' (Moscow: Galart, 1997), 92; Karl Friedrich Schinkel: Führer zu seinen Bauten (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2006), 120-1; V. I. Piliavskii, Stasov-arkhitektor (Leningrad: Izd. literatury po stroitel'stvu,

Cathedral in Moscow, which the architect Alexander Vitberg had designed in neoclassical style for Alexander I. Nicholas asked for a building that "would attest to compatriots as well as to foreigners of the zeal of Russians for the Orthodox faith." But the projects he received, nonetheless, followed neoclassical prototypes. Solntsev recalled the tsar's angry exclamation, "They all want to build in the Roman style. In Moscow we have many splendid buildings completed to the Russian taste."

Nicholas had only a vague sense of a "Russian taste," and his architects could not fathom his intent. Although he was considerably more certain in his views than most Russian rulers, he too needed guidance in this sphere. He sought an official of high standing, knowledgeable in the arts, who also had insight into the tsar's inclinations and was deft in his manner of discourse, who could "divine the imperial will." The official who possessed such talents and shared the tsar's predilections for a national art was Alexei Olenin. By the time the twenty-nine year-old Nicholas ascended the throne in 1825, Olenin was a sixty-two year-old eminent and venerable figure among the cultural and political elite of the capital. He had served since 1808 as acting State Secretary to Alexander I and as well as Director of the Imperial Public Library. In 1817 Alexander appointed him Director of the Academy of Arts. Olenin continued to serve as director of both institutions after Nicholas's accession in 1825. On the day of his coronation, August 22, 1826, Nicholas confirmed Olenin in the position of State Secretary. A year later he appointed him to the State Council.8

Olenin was known as an expert in the artifacts of early Russia and sought to revive their memory in order to introduce them into current art

arkhitekture i stroitel'nym materialam, 1963), 209-10; Elena Simanovskaia, Russkii aktsent garnizonnogo goroda (Potsdam, P.R. Verlag, 2005), 44-7.

Borisova, 100-1, 127; Academic F. G. Solntsev, "Moia zhizn' i khudozhestvenno-arkheologicheskie trudy," *Russkaia Starina* vol. 16 (1876): 278.

Mikhail Dolbilov has described the practice of "divining the imperial will" (ugadyvat' vysochaishuiu voliu), which all tsar's ministers and advisors endeavored to master in the nineteenth century. "Divining the imperial will" could also involve subtle manipulation, planting ideas in the tsar's mind while making him believe they were his own (M. D. Dolbilov, "Rozhdenie imperatorskikh reshenii: monarkh, sovetnik i 'vysochaishaia volia' v Rossii XIX v.," Istoricheskie zapiski, No. 9 [127] [2006]: 5-48).

Faibisovich, Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin, Chapters 2 and 3; Stuart, Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar, 12-17, and Chapter 3.

and architecture. He also shared Nicholas's belief that indigenous styles could be fused with classical and western forms to create an eclectic art that was at once both native and belonging to the universal artistic heritage of classicism. Unhappy with the projects submitted for the St. Catherine church, Nicholas turned to Olenin for advice. Olenin recommended a young architect, Constantine Thon, whose earlier work had been entirely in the spirit of neoclassicism. Thon too was bewildered by the tsar's instructions. Divining the tsar's vague intentions, Olenin directed him to sketches executed by his own protégés, Fedor Solntsev and the architect N. E. Efimov. These served as guides for the plans Thon drafted for the St. Catherine Church, which he submitted to the tsar to the tsar in 1830. Nicholas was pleased, and the church became the exemplar of the "Thon style," which in 1841 would be decreed the official model for Russian church architecture.

The "Thon style" combined neoclassical structural elements with the Russian-Byzantine design exemplified in the five-cupola structure of the Assumption Cathedrals in Vladimir and Moscow. Thon's Christ the Redeemer Cathedral and New Kremlin Palace both begun in the 1830s unveiled the features of a new eclectic, neo-Byzantine style. The cathedral's proportions and arcades as well as its cupolas were typically neoclassical; the exterior design asserted its Russian character. The New Kremlin Palace also followed the principles of neoclassical design and proportions. The interlace embellishments around its windows lent a national touch. The juxtaposition of Western and Russian styles evoked the desired sense of connection Nicholas sought between the westernized monarchy and Russia's distinctive past. 10

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The fusion of the heritage of classical art with the motifs of Russia's own national traditions had been Olenin's lifelong goal. He had grown up as an admirer and exponent of the classical tradition. The "Greek Project" of Catherine the Great and Grigorii Potemkin had shaped the tastes of the

Thon had graduated from the Academy in 1815. His early projects had won Olenin's admiration and he had recommended him for a stipend to travel abroad and study in Italy. Ton was well known for his project to restore the imperial palace on the Palatine hill in Rome (V. G. Lisovskii, "Natsional'nyi stil" v arkhitekture Rossii [Moscow: Sovpadenie, 2000], 70-1).

¹⁰ See Scenarios of Power, 1: 381-7.

imperial court during his formative years. ¹¹ A ward of the President of the Academy of Sciences, Princess Dashkova, and a pupil in the Page Corps, Olenin numbered among the elite, and as such, he was dispatched to Dresden, ostensibly to study artillery. There he could view the renowned collections of Renaissance and Baroque art in the Zwinger Palace and the Green Vault and read the works of Johann Winckelmann as well as other eighteenth-century German scholars. When he returned, he propounded the ideas of "the father of art history," so much that he became known as "the Russian Winckelmann." ¹²

In the first decade of the nineteenth century, Olenin sought to establish a historical link between indigenous Russian art and the art of Greece and Rome. The discovery of early Russian artifacts in Crimea in the last decades of the eighteenth century provided evidence of direct contacts between ancient Greece and early Russian towns. Olenin soon became engaged in the publication and analysis of these findings.¹³ At the same time, German scholars were extending Winckelman's concept of the range of ancient art to include monuments and everyday objects unearthed during archaeological excavations.¹⁴

Olenin followed their example, seeking and collecting objects that could reveal details about the culture and mores of past times in addition to their artistic achievements, and, as Director of the Academy of Arts, introducing

Faibisovich links his views with Catherine the Great's "Greek Project," her plans to create a Greek empire, allied with Russia, which she promoted during Olenin's formative years at the end of the eighteenth century. Faibisovich, *Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin*, 241-6; Stuart, *Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar*, 5-6).

Stuart, Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar, 8-9; He also frequented the salon of the Russian ambassador, A. M. Belosel'skii, an art and music lover who befriended Voltaire, Beaumarchais, and Marmontel, and authored works on poetry and music. Faibisovich, Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin, 32-43.

The Tmutorokan stone, discovered in 1792 by Musin-Pushkin, bore an inscription from the year 1036 indicating the proximity of the Russian town of Tmutorokan to "territories of the Greeks." In 1806, Olenin published *A Letter to Count A. I. Musin-Pushkin*, which confirmed Musin-Pushkin's conclusions with the use of sophisticated comparative materials from chronicles and artifacts such as coins and helmets as well as the "Lay of the Host of Igor," which had also been discovered by Musin-Pushkin (Faibisovich, *Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin*, 246-9; Stuart, *Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar*, 18-19).

Suzanne L. Marchand, Down From Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 10-11, 40-53.

courses in archaeology and ethnography. He developed a special passion for ancient "beautiful and manly weapons," as well as coats of armor and helmets, which he collected in large numbers and recorded in skillful drawings. In 1807, when Alexander I appointed him to serve in the Kremlin Armory, he began a lifelong study of the objects assembled in the building. He and the artists he supervised produced illustrations that publicized these articles as artistic symbols of Russia's past, national memorabilia (dostopamiatnosti). 15

Olenin then singled out early Russian helmets as objects of antiquity that could lend a distinctly Russian character to neoclassical works, both artistic and literary. He convinced painters and sculptors to depict Russian helmets in what his biographer Victor Faibisovich described as "a Russian empire style." He persuaded the painter O. A. Kiprenskii to include the helmet of Prince M. M. Temkin-Rostovskii, a sixteenth century boiar, in his painting of 1805, "Dmitrii Donskoi on the field of Kulikovo." The helmet, once again based on a sketch of Olenin, also appeared in I. Ivanov's illustration for the frontispiece of the first edition in 1821 of Pushkin's *Ruslan and Ludmilla*. ¹⁶

A newly discovered helmet thought to belong to Alexander Nevskii brought the exploits of the Vladimir-Novgorod prince into the post-1812 patriotic discourse and became a favorite of illustrators later in the nineteenth century. With Olenin's encouragement, the sculptor Ivan Martos included the helmet in his monument to Kuzma Minin and Prince Pozharskii on Red Square, begun in 1804, but completed in 1818. The two heroes of the Time of Troubles strike grandiloquent classical poses in tunics modified with Russian details.¹⁷ The Nevskii helmet is to be found under Pozharskii's right arm, visible only from the rear. The helmet, however, proved not to be Nevskii's after all: it was later identified as a work produced in 1621 for Mikhail Fedorovich, the first Romanov tsar.¹⁸

Olenin's efforts expressed a rising historicist sensibility among the educated public to artifacts of Russia's past. In an article of 1820 about the Kremlin Armory, the artist and travel writer Pavel Svin'in wrote:

¹⁵ Faibisovich, Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin, 258-9.

¹⁶ Ibid., 270-3.

¹⁷ Ibid., 339-42; Janet Kennedy, "The Neoclassical Ideal in Russian Sculpture," in *Art and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, ed. Theofanis George Stavrou (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1983), 203.

¹⁸ Gosudarstvennaia oruzheinaia palata (Moscow: Sovietskii Khudozhnik, 1988), 162-3.

A Russian cannot view the treasures of the Kremlin Armory only with a feeling of astonishment about something fine and valuable.... Each thing also reaffirms the unwavering glory and might of his Fatherland. Each piece of armor may have been stained with the blood of those close to him!¹⁹

For Nicholas, such objects demonstrated Russia's parity with European monarchies, which were enshrining their own medieval traditions. In 1843, when he and the Moscow Metropolitan Filaret were examining the recently discovered frescoes in the Kiev Sofia Cathedral, Filaret voiced doubt about the wisdom of further exposure of the frescoes, which might reveal the practice of current old-believer rituals in Kievan Russia. Nicholas retorted, "You love ancient times (*starina*), and I love them too. In Europe now the tiniest ancient thing is cherished... Nonsense. Do not contradict me." ²⁰

Antiquities now assumed a sacral status defined as national, hallowed with the term *starina*, a word uttered reverentially but difficult to translate: olden times, olden things that hearkened back to early Russia and therefore were to be regarded as authentic and eternal signs of Russia's distinctiveness. The same high valuation of the old began to affect the consciousness of the high clergy, who envisioned "the resurrection of ancient religious life." Antiquities were identified as virtual relics: the authenticity of an item as something ancient was sufficient to make it representative of "the spiritual experience of Russia." The next step then became to discover these objects and to make them known in Russia and Europe.

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Fedor Solntsev came to Olenin's attention as an outstanding student and laureate of the Academy's gold medal in 1824 and 1827. If Olenin excelled in exercising authority effectively to realize cultural goals, Solntsev excelled in obedience to his patron, and did so with a flair that impressed both his mentor and the tsar. After Olenin's death, Nicholas took Solntsev under his

P. P. Svin'in, "Oruzheinaia Palata," Otechestvennye zapiski (1822): Part 3, 1. I thank Elena Vishlenkova for this reference. Faibisovich, Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin, 344-5.

Solntsev, Russkaia starina vol. 16 (1876): 290.

A. L. Batalov, "Istorizm v tserkovnom soznanii serediny XIX v.," in *Pamiatniki* arkhtektury v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii: Ocherki istorii arkhtekturnoi restavratsii (Moscow, 2002), 148-9.

direct patronage and announced that all future assignments would come from himself, "as imperial commands" (vysochaishie poveleniia).²²

Solntsev's first major assignment, in 1829, was to depict the "hoard of Riazan," gold and bejeweled items of princely provenance that had been unearthed in the town of Old Riazan in 1822. Next, in 1830, a petition of Olenin prompted a Supreme Command of Nicholas to dispatch Solntsev to the Kremlin Armory in Moscow in order to "depict our ancient (*starinnye*) customs, dress, weapons, church and imperial paraphernalia, household goods, harness and other items belonging to the categories of historical, archaeological, and ethnographic information." The command went on to specify: "Everything that is worthy of attention and that constitutes historical material or an object of archaeological interest for scholars and artists shall be described in all detail and published." 24

Only six weeks later, Solntsev provided Olenin with nine drawings, several of them watercolors. Olenin was delighted. He wrote to Solntsev of his "great pleasure" in seeing "this new example of your diligence and especially of your art in the faithful and at the same time pleasant depiction of objects that are in essence so dry but at the same time so interesting and useful for the historian, the archaeologist, and, most important, for the artist." Solntsev then undertook numerous trips to the sites of early Russian history, such as Vladimir, Iur'ev-Pol'skii, Riazan, and Novgorod, though his major efforts still took place at the Kremlin in Moscow. He completed nearly 5,000 drawings and watercolors, which G. I. Vzdornov described as "a kind of encyclopedia of Russian medieval and national life in its concrete monuments." ²⁶

However, Olenin had more in mind than an encyclopedia. He envisioned a vast project that would use these artifacts to begin an ethnographical study that would integrate a Russian national esthetic into the classical heritage. He began to outline his plans in a small volume, published in 1832, as the

²² Solntsev wrote of Olenin's "fatherly concern"—watching over his work, giving him instruction and treating him as a member of his family (Solntsev, *Russkaia starina* vol. 15 [1876]: 311; vol. 16 [1876]: 286).

²³ Ibid., vol. 15 (1876): 634; Stuart, Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar, 107.

²⁴ A. N. Olenin, *Arkheologicheskiia trudy* (St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1881), 1: xxvii-xxviii.

²⁵ Solntsev, Russkaia Starina vol. 15 (1876): 635.

²⁶ G. I. Vzdornov, Istoriia otkrytiia i izucheniia russkoi srednevekovoi zhivopisi: XIX vek (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1986), 29.

first part of a multi-volume work meant to prepare a "course of History, Archaeology and Ethnography," for students at the Academy of Arts.²⁷ The volume, the only one published, covered the period "from the time of the Trojans and Russians until the Tatar invasion." It was devoted principally to a description of the clothing of the period and meant as a guide to professor Peter Vasil'evich Basin, who was preparing to paint a scene from 989 of St. Vladimir and the baptism of Rus'. Olenin asserted that "as an enlightened Artist," Basin should "present the principal figures in authentic ancient Russian costume" and commit himself to diligent and precise study of its historical origins.²⁸

Dress, like weapons, represented a sign of a people's culture for Olenin. He believed that pagan Russians wore scant attire similar to the primitive peoples of the Americas or the Pacific islands and adorned their skin with tattoos; but with the advent of Norman princes and the conversion to Christianity, Russians adopted items of dress from the Normans and their Byzantine allies. He observed that in all eras, peoples tend to adopt the customs, rites, and fashion of the peoples "dominating by force of arms, trade and enlightenment." To illustrate the extent of the change after the conversion, he referred to a miniature in the *Izbornik* of 1073, which showed Prince Sviatoslav Iaroslavich, his family, and entourage in Byzantine robes and headdress.²⁹

A manuscript version of this volume, inscribed with the date 1834, contains illustrations by Solntsev of pre-Christian Russian princes outfitted as savage warriors and eleventh-century princes and their families in Norman, west Slavic, and Byzantine attire. Olenin concluded that the examples of dress he had found in illustrations of a seventeenth-century *khronograf*—a history derived from Byzantine sources that placed Russia in a world context—revealed the emergence of a distinctive national style of dress. He asserted that "the clothing of Russian princes, boiars, and boiar wives of the sixteenth century" showed that "the use of *epanchi* (long and highly decorated mantles and furs with hanging sleeves, *otkladnye ruki*) became general and a genuine national

²⁷ [A.N. Olenin], Opyt ob odezhde, oruzhii, nravakh i obychaiakh i stepeni prosveshcheniia slavian ot vremeni Traiana do nashestviia tatar; period pervyi: Pis'ma k G. Akademiku v dolzhnosti Professora Basinu (St. Petersburg: n.p., 1832).

²⁸ Ibid., 2.

²⁹ Ibid., 3-4, 13-19, 71. In the text, Olenin referred to a volume of accompanying illustrations, which I have not been able to locate.

dress."³⁰ He did not indicate the sources of these items or their relationship to the earlier Byzantine models.

The program of requirements that Olenin drafted in 1835 for Solntsev's promotion to the rank of Academician in the Academy of Arts reflected the director's determination to find and make known examples of a national art that was linked to classical antiquity. The requirements demanded execution in both classical and indigenous styles. In addition to Russian antiquities, armaments, and "especially ancient clothing," Solntsev was to draw classical statues of "Venus Triumphant" and "Weeping Faun," works that had been unearthed on the estate of Princess Belosel'skaia-Belozerskaia. The assignment called for the rendering of all these diverse objects and particularly ancient Russian dress in a single painting. "In order to combine ancient Greek art with our own ancient Russian in a single picture," Solntsev wrote, "I decided to paint a watercolor depicting the meeting of Prince Sviatoslav Igorevich (964-972) with the Greek Emperor John I Tzimisces (969-976)."³¹

Olenin not only dictated the requirements, but also influenced the composition of the painting.³² "He helped me with advice and directions, assisting me in any way he could," Solntsev recalled. The watercolor that resulted was a visual expression of his belief in the Byzantine roots of monarchical authority in Russia and his theory that clothing and weapons represented concrete expressions of national identity. (Figure 1) Solntsev places the haughty Emperor John Tzimisces and the half-naked Prince Sviatoslav, whom he defeated in 971, in the same frame, and thus juxtaposes and associates them. The emperor is on horseback in equestrian pose. He wears a crown and shoulder piece and brandishes a scepter. His face, firm and determined, expresses his authority and resolve. The presumably fierce Prince Sviatolav, in simple pagan dress, looks back submissively, chastened by this display of authority. One of the emperor's servitors and a Russian hoist the sail together. The image attached to the lower edge of the proscenium frame, foreshadows the future of Rus'. A copy of the title page of the Izbornik of 1073 shows Prince Sviatoslav Iaroslavich (1073-1076), Sviatoslav Igorevich's great

A. N. Olenin, "Opyt o russkikh odezhdakh i obychaiakh s IX po XVIII stoletiie; Odezhda russkikh, svetskaia i voennaia. Ch. II, Odezhda svetskaia," Biblioteka Oruzheinoi Palaty, Inv. No. Gr-4441/1-26, 47591 kp. I thank Irina Bogatskaia for recommending this manuscript to me.

³¹ Solntsev, Russkaia Starina vol. 16 (1876): 269-71.

³² Ibid., 271.



Figure 1—Fedor Solntsev—Meeting of Prince Sviatoslav Igorevich with Byzantine Emperor John I Tzimisces. Copyright © 2013, State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

grandson, with his retinue, displaying Byzantine type robes, thus demonstrating the adoption of Christian imperial culture by the Kievan dynasty.

The elaborate frame acts as a proscenium enclosing not only a dramatic scene, but also an assemblage of actors with their armaments and dress identifying them with particular periods and their artistic styles. The embellishments on the frame include Russian and Greek articles of attire, weapons, and saddles discovered in previous decades that attest to the diverse traditions of Russia's past. Shoulder crosses hang above the top, making it clear iothat we are viewing the past from a current Christian perspective. The frame is decorated with Scythian and Greek arms, some of them unearthed during recent excavations. The figures of Venus and the faun "from the Belosel'skaia-Belozerskaia estate" stand as if on guard at the sides, symbols of Russia's reception of the classical heritage.

Solntsev's watercolor won him an appointment to the Academy. It also introduced the idiom that identified his most important works—a composite of images and motifs drawn from artifacts that associated them metonymically as an expression of a national artistic tradition. Solntsev was not a creative artist:

his talent was to reproduce objects exactly, as if a photographer, and to do so with a measure of enhancement of color and design that made them, as Olenin observed, "pleasant" to the eye.³³ Solntsev applied his techniques in three projects of the 1830s that were intended to advance Nicholas's efforts to make the Moscow Kremlin a principal symbol of Russia's national past: the renovation of the Terem Palace in 1837, the Kremlin Table Service, commissioned in 1837, and the floors and carpets of the New Kremlin Palace in 1838.

The first and most important project was his work on the renovation of the seventeenth century Terem palace. The wall paintings demanded a creative adaptation of old themes since the originals had not survived. Employing motifs from various artifacts, Solntsev tried to capture the spirit of the originals. Solntsev produced this spirit by montage, by bringing together objects of varied provenance and character to associate them with a national historical theme. He borrowed motifs from different sources: decorations from the surviving window frames of the palace (Figure 2), copies of icons, illustrations of regalia, weapons, and other artifacts, and images of lions and imperial eagles. All of these covered red walls that were brightened with gilded interlace and floral designs. Solntsev patterned the dress of the saints he depicted on the walls on colorful miniatures in old manuscripts and carvings on wooden churches and peasant huts, early Russian furniture, and tiled ovens. He covered the entire expanse of the walls with designs, an effect that the art historian Evgenia Kirichenko called "kovrovost"—a carpet-like figuration she traces to Byzantine influences. The vaults and religious paintings of the palace gave the impression of early Russian church interiors, a merging of ecclesiastical and political symbols.³⁴ His work evoked what a contemporary critic described as "a poetic mood of the soul, a hypothetical effort to convey [the distinctive features of the building] not only with archaeological exactitude but with the exalted feeling that moved the architect at the moment of creation and gave it the imprint of true beauty and creativity."35

Nicholas inspected the work and was delighted. That same year, in 1837, he commissioned Solntsev to design the Kremlin dinner service, which

As a child, Solntsev had difficulty in school with reading and arithmetic, while he displayed an astounding ability to draw objects with great verisimilitude (Ibid., vol. 15 [1876]: 111).

Kirichenko, Russkii stil', 120, 136-8; Solntsev, Russkaia starina vol. 16 (1876): 272-4, 279-80.

³⁵ Cited in Kirichenko, Russkii stil', 137.



Figure 2—Fedor Solntsev—Window Frame from the Terem Palace. *Drevnosti rossiiskago gosudarstva* (Moscow: Tipografiia Aleksandra Semena, 1849).

became a mainstay of banquets celebrating important events in Moscow, such as coronations and the Tercentenary of 1913. As Anne Odom has shown, Solntsev used many items from the Kremlin armory as prototypes for the decoration of the service. The rims of the dishes were embellished with interlacing floral patterns from wood and stone carvings, and motifs from metal utensils, embroidery, illuminated manuscripts, and gospel covers. On the dessert plates, floral motifs cover the surface and surround the Russian imperial eagle, producing the effect of *kovrovost*'. One thousand of these dessert plates were produced for the service, which was completed only in 1847. Nicholas was also pleased with Solntsev's sketches for the parquet floors and carpets of Thon's New Kremlin Palace.³⁶

Anne Odom, Russian Imperial Porcelain at Hillwood (Washington, D.C.: Hillwood Museum and Gardens, 1999), 57-61; and "Fedor Solntsev, the Kremlin Service, and the Origins of the Russian Style," Hillwood Studies, No 1 (Fall 1991): 1-2; Kirichenko, Russkii stil', 138-9.

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The inclination to use art to bring together the diverse, to make the mutually exclusive complementary in the name of nation, culminated in the great compendium of Solntsev's drawings and watercolors, the *Antiquities of the Russian State* (*Drevnosti rossiiskago gosudarstva*). Olenin and Nicholas had intended such a publication as early as 1830, but other projects and technical obstacles delayed the project. In 1841, Olenin submitted a proposal for a publication with broad ethnographical and historical parameters, supplemented with extensive scholarly commentaries. Its title indicated that it was meant "for artists," suggesting that it would also provide models for them to follow in developing a national artistic idiom.³⁷

Olenin's vision of a national artistic summa with a scholarly apparatus was not to be realized. He died in 1843, and Nicholas appointed a committee under his own supervision to direct the project, which he supported with a grant of approximately one hundred thousand rubles. The six volumes of Solntsev's illustrations that resulted appeared between 1849 and 1853 in an edition of six hundred copies in both Russian and English. Owing to the emperor's generosity, they were produced with the latest techniques of color lithography. The introduction noted that the committee had abandoned Olenin's plans for "scholarly investigations" and "a purely ethnographic compilation of the antiquities of Slavonic tribes in contact with other peoples." Its members also wanted to publish the illustrations without Solntsev's signature and not to acknowledge his authorship, but Nicholas ruled otherwise. The introduction acknowledges Solntsev's authorship and many of the illustrations carry his signature.

The emphasis of the *Drevnosti* shifted to ethnographic materials that glorified the ruling house as an incarnation of the national past. The compendium provided proof that due to the efforts of the monarchy, Russia, like European countries, could boast artifacts revealing a native artistic

The purpose was "to make known, in all their detail and idiosyncratic aspect our ancient mores, customs, rites, ecclesiastical, military and peasant dress, dwellings and buildings, the level of knowledge or enlightenment, technology, arts, trades, and various objects in our society" (Olenin, Arkheologicheskiia trudy, 1: xxviii; Stuart, Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar, 108; Solntsev, Russkaia Starina vol. 16 [1876]: 280-1).

³⁸ Drevnosti rossiiskago gosudarstva (Moscow: Tipografiia Aleksandra Semena, 1849), III. (Separate paginations for several introductory sections of the book); Stuart, Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar, 108-9.

tradition. The change is indicated by the title—Antiquities of the Russian State Published by Imperial Command of Sovereign Emperor Nicholas I (Drevnosti rossiiskago gosudarstva izdannyia po vysochaishemu poveleniiu Gosudaria Imperatora Nikolaia I). The introduction traced the achievements of Catherine the Great in initiating archaeological expeditions and Alexander I in discovering the treasures from the pre-Petrine Great Treasury Chancellery (Prikaz bol'shoi kazny) and creating a repository of antiquities in the Kremlin. It stressed that antiquities had been left to deteriorate across Russia and that "the time of the preservation of monuments began with the accession and the all-embracing solicitude of the reigning Tsar and Emperor Nicholas I." Just as the codification and the publication of The Complete Collection of Laws, published by imperial command during the previous decade, brought together and made known laws issued by the Russian monarchy and thus defined a national legal tradition, the Antiquities assembled the artistic works of Russia's past to make known an artistic heritage for the dynasty.

The illustrations are divided by category—religious objects, regalia, weapons, portraits and clothing, artistic versions of household implements, and examples of early Russian architecture—with brief commentaries on the individual items. The dominating presence throughout is the dynasty and its predecessors. The commentaries invoke legend to set the antiquities in a narrative of dynastic continuity that linked the tsars of Moscow with their Kievan ancestors and the emperors of Byzantium. The members of the committee, Mikhail Zagoskin, Ivan Snegirev, and Alexander Vel'tman, who supervised the work and wrote several of the commentaries, were adepts of Official Nationality and known authorities on early Russian history and archaeology.

The *Antiquities* restored the Muscovite royal insignia to the dynastic narrative by including numerous renderings of "the regalia of Monomakh"—the

³⁹ Drevnosti rossiiskago gosudarstva, II.

See my article, "The Fundamental State Laws of 1832 as Symbolic Act," in F. B. Uspenskii, ed. Miscellanea Slavica: Sbornik statei k 70-letiiu Borisa Andreevicha Uspenskogo (Moscow: Indrik, 2008), 398-408, and Tatiana Borisova, "The Russian National Legal Tradition: Svod versus Ulozhenie in Nineteenth-century Russia," Review of Central and Eastern European Law vol. 33, No. 3 (July 2008): 295-341.

The first volume includes religious objects—icons, pectoral crosses, vestments of the clergy, and chrism dishes. The second is devoted to regalia and articles figuring in the sacralization of the tsar, the third to weapons, armor, carriages, and saddles, the fourth to portraits and clothing, the fifth to household items such as cups, wine bowls, and flasks, and the sixth to old Russian architecture.

Crown or Monomakh Cap, the orb and scepter—which were replaced by Peter the Great at his coronation of Catherine I in 1724. Eight of the watercolors show variants of the Monomakh cap, which, according to the sixteenth century "Legend of Monomakh," had been received by Prince Vladimir Monomakh (1113-1125) from his grandfather, the emperor Constantine Monomakh (1042-1055), who had died long before the reign of his grandson. The original Monomakh Cap, shown in the illustration, is thought to be of fourteenth-century and possibly Tatar origin⁴² (Figure 3). The commentary tried to prove the substance of the "Legend" by contending that Saint Vladimir received a golden "cap" after his conversion in 989 from the Byzantine emperor, and that Constantine Monomakh had made a gift of regalia to the Russian princes.⁴³



Figure 3—Fedor Solntsev—The "Monomakh Cap." Drevnosti rossiiskago gosudarstva.

After the election of Tsar Mikhail Fedorovich in 1613, new "grand regalia" (bol'shoi nariad) displayed symbolic lineage to the defunct dynasty of Riurik, which had begun with the "invitation to the Varangians" or Vikings in 862,

On the oriental origin of the cap, see G. F. Valeeva-Suleimanova, "Korony russkikh tsarei—pamiatniki tatarskoi kul'tury," in *Kazan, Moscow, St. Petersburg: Multiple Faces of Empire*, ed.Catherine Evtuhov, Boris Gasparov, Alexander Ospovat, and Mark Von Hagen (Moscow: O.G. I., 1997), 40-52.

⁴³ Drevnosti, viii-ix.

and ended with the death of the tsarevich Dmitrii in 1598. The *Antiquities* included pictures of the orb and scepter of Mikhail's regalia, which were fashioned by European craftsmen in the style of the Baroque "treasury art," exhibited in European palaces during in the seventeenth century. However, the authors of the commentary did not know this, and explained the orb and scepter as "Greek work" and "a valuable memento of the tenth century." In 1627, European craftsmen working in the Kremlin produced a Baroque version of the original Monomakh cap.⁴⁴

Solntsev's illustrations accentuate the decorative richness of the individual objects, creating an esthetic unity out of artifacts of diverse character and historical origin. His watercolors highlight the intricate design and vivid color of the individual antiquities, revealing each to be an object of art, and also furthering Olenin's goal to provide a guide for future artists. Solntsev's depiction of the original Crown of Monomakh reveals the intricate floral designs covering the entire gold surface (Figure 3). He includes black and white insets that make clear the intricacy of the decoration. The watercolor captures the gold of the conical form, the brightness of the emeralds and the rubies adorning the sides, and the shades of the pearls at the points of the cross.

Solntsev brings out the rich decoration of "The Grand Regalia" of Tsar Mikhail. The illustration of the scepter provides three views, one in black and white to articulate the design. The artist devotes three separate plates to the orb, a frontal view, copies of the four triangular pictures on the Hebrew kings, and details from the top and the base (Figure 4).

The *Antiquities* also provide numerous illustrations of weapons and particularly helmets that belonged to Russian princes and tsars. Four illustrations are devoted to views of the purported helmet of Alexander Nevskii⁴⁵ (Figure 5). Two views show the gold engraving of imperial crowns on the surface, the gems, and the enamel figure of the Archangel Michael on the nose piece. The cuirass in the rear, which follows West European examples, is covered with etched interlace of vegetal designs around a figure of Hercules subduing the Hydra of Lernaea. ⁴⁶ The breast plate of Alexei Mikhailovich, called "mirror" (*zertsalo*)

Gosudarstvennaia oruzheinaia palata, 347-9; Drevnosti rossiiskago gosudarstva, Section 2, 34, 51.

Faibisovich, *Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin*, 296. The commentary refers to the mention of the helmet in a seventeenth-century listing, but links it to Georgian kings. It characterizes the attribution to Nevskii as a "tradition" (*Drevnosti*, Section 3, No. 7).

⁴⁶ Drevnosti, Section 3, 7; Gosudarstvennaia oruzheinaia palata, 162-3.

PART II. THE IMPERIAL MYTH IN ARTISTIC TEXTS



Figure 4—Fedor Solntsev—Orb from the "Grand Regalia" of Tsar Michael. *Drevnosti rossiiskago* gosudarstva.



Figure 5—Fedor Solntsev— "Helmet of Alexander Nevskii." Drevnosti rossiiskago gosudarstva.

armor, is made up of shining polished steel with alternating sheets imprinted with gold. Solntsev also provides separate renderings of the details, as he does with the leather bow case and quiver, decorated with enameled gold and gems.

Solntsev pays the same close attention to the lavish embellishment of the household and religious belongings of members of the ruling family. An inkwell of Tsar Michael and Gospel Cover of Natalia Naryshkina, the mother of Peter the Great, are striking examples. The inkwell is studded with great emeralds and rubies and pearls, which are rendered from different views. The gospel cover glitters with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, interspersed the images of God the Almighty, the Mother of God, John the Baptist and four of the apostles. "The entire surface of the front cover is so lavishly studded with gems that it seems they merge into a single mass," the commentary reads. ⁴⁷

Solntsev gave a particularly vivid rendering of an onyx chrism dish— a vessel that contains the sacramental oil for anointment in Eastern Orthodox services. The gold enameled handle in the form of a snake curled in a circle is a symbol of wisdom and health according to the commentary, which cites a legend that it belonged to Augustus Caesar, "whom [Russian rulers] considered an ancestor of Riurik." It emphasized, however, that the name Augustus Caesar was often assumed by Byzantine emperors as well. The commentary also repeated a legend that the dish was among the items that the Emperor Alexis Komnen (1081-1118) sent to Prince Vladimir Monomakh in 1113.⁴⁸

Olenin had argued that the sixteenth century marked the appearance of a Russian national dress, and the garments of tsars, boiars, and peasants make up the fourth volume of the compendium. There are four illustrations of the attire of tsars and tsaritsas of the seventeenth century, and eight of boiars, several showing the robes and long loose sleeves that Olenin had singled out as particularly Russian. Twelve of the watercolors depict peasants in folk dress from Torzhok, Tver, and Riazan. These of course were not antiquities, but by appearing in the collection were marked as national and authentic and also associated with the monarchy and state.

The dense and ornate design of the attire shown in the *Antiquities* establishes a connection between diverse social classes and distant historical periods. The luxurious clothing of the tsars and boiars shares the decorative richness of the holiday costumes of peasant women. Both groups are placed within elaborate interlacing frames reproducing motifs from ancient

⁴⁷ Drevnosti, Section 1, 118-9.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Section 1, 69-70.

manuscripts. The artistic style overcomes the great social distance imposed by the western dress adopted and imposed by Peter the Great. On the other hand, the scene of Torzhok peasants before a peasant hut, a church with a tent roof in the background, presents them in everyday dress. However, they too are surrounded by interlacing decorative motifs. The exuberant, lush colors recall the decorative vegetation Valerie Kivelson has discerned in early Russian cartography, which derived from folk embroideries, carvings, and icons.⁴⁹

If the *Drevnosti* demonstrate the ties of nineteenth-century monarchy with Muscovite past, the esthetic idiom of "Russianness" devised by Solntsev brought together everything from a jewel-studded imperial crown to peasant folk costumes in a single visual statement of "Russianness"—a symbol uniting state, monarchy and people. Associating the diverse objects was a style of dense, lush decoration, what William Craft Brumfield has called "Muscovite ornamentalism." The artistic model for all the illustrations remained the surviving window frames of Alexei Mikhailovich's Terem Palace, four of which were reproduced in the *Antiquities* (Figure 2).

The Russian style promoted by Nicholas I typified the pattern of borrowing by Russian monarchy—the appropriation of a dominant intellectual and artistic mode from the West to enhance its political and cultural standing. The national esthetic complemented but hardly supplanted neoclassicism as an artistic expression of the monarchy. In St. Petersburg, Nicholas favored neoclassicism, as attested by the rows of stately governmental buildings that went up during his reign. He continued to commission table services in other styles, like the Etruscan service he ordered for the empress's Roman pavilion at Peterhof. His imperial scenario, in this respect, as in others, was highly eclectic. The Antiquities and other works of Solntsev focused primarily on Moscow and enhanced Nicholas's credentials as the successor to the Romanov tsars of the seventeenth century and their predecessors in ancient Rus'. St. Petersburg and Peterhof, on the other hand, showed him as heir to the classical traditions of Rome. Olenin's aspiration to unite classical and native traditions had its perhaps unforeseen outcome in Nicholas I's presentation of the Russian monarchy as the paradigm of eastern as well as western Roman imperial heritages.

⁴⁹ Valerie Kivelson, Cartographies of Tsardom: The Land and Its Meanings in Seventeenth Century Russia (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 116.

William Craft Brumfield, A History of Russian Architecture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 149-50.

Solntsev's work was a Russian expression of a European-wide movement of historicism in art. The distinctive feature of Russian historicism was the prominent role of the monarchy in shaping its subject matter as an elaboration of the mythology and ideology of the state. The works of Solntsev epitomized the eclectic spirit of "Official Nationality": an absolute monarchy purporting to enjoy the love of the people and reflect the idea of nationality (narodnost') while it maintained the tastes and manner of European royalty. The monarch initiated the project of creating a national esthetic and ensured that the dynasty appeared as the principal subject of its art. The dominant role of the monarchy in shaping the historicist esthetic distinguishes the work of Solntsev from such European counterparts as A. W. N. Pugin and Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, who took their own initiative to discover native artistic traditions in medieval objects of art that would express the spirit of a nation as a whole.

The editor of *Russkaia starina*, M. I. Semevskii, wrote in a tribute to Solntsev that his works "awakened Russian artists' feeling of national self-consciousness and respect for models bequeathed to us by our forefathers." Solntsev's resplendent array of intricate and dense multicolored design gained broad appeal as an expression of a distinctively Russian esthetic, which later provided the basis for the emergence of *le style russe*, the ultimate miniaturization of the Baroque. Only in the last decades of the century, under the influence of Slavophile and other doctrines, did the monarchy begin to escape its earlier ideological and artistic eclecticism and purport to be one spiritually and even ethnically with the Russian people. But that is another story.

During Nicholas's reign, adherents of Schellingian philosophy regarded Solntsev's works as expressions of the "national spirit" they were seeking. One of their number was Mikhail Pogodin—the principal historian of Official Nationality. While witnessing the pageant celebrating the opening of New Kremlin Palace in 1849, Pogodin marveled at the Russian costumes, several of them designed by Solntsev. "Our travelers," he wrote, "were captivated only when the Russian spirit was realized before their eyes, when they saw the way our pretty Russian girls and our fine fellows (molodtsy) were dressed. They appeared before us in their grandfathers' kaftans—staid boiars, majestic boiarins. What delight, what splendor, what variety, what beauty, what poetry!"52

⁵¹ Cited in G. V. Aksenova, "Fedor Solntsev—sozdatel' arkheologicheskoi zhivopisi," Slovo: pravoslavnyi obrazovatel'nyi portal, www.portal-slovo.ru/rus/history/84/55/.

Nikolai Barsukov, Zhizn' i trudy Pogodina (St. Petersburg: M. M. Stasiulevich, 1896), 10: 209.

6. Cultural Metamorphoses of Imperial Myth under Catherine the Great and Nicholas I



▲ s the papers in this conference have indicated, high culture in the form **A** of theatrical presentation assumed great importance for the Hapsburg Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. 1 Monarchies took on the role of Kulturträger, bringing civilization to their subjects, encouraging the arts as well as science and literature, and asserting their membership in the community of nations that were heirs to great classical cultures of antiquity. In this way, they legitimized their sovereignty with a cultural genealogy reaching back to Greece and Rome, uplifting their subjects in the name of the general welfare.² Russian monarchs followed the example of the Kulturstaat. However, to a far greater degree they employed the various cultural modes, theater, art and architecture, and music as frames of presentation of the mythology of autocratic power. They served as modes of display of each ruler's scenario, lending his authority cachet and grandeur. This paper focuses on two such examples: Catherine the Great's opera, The Primary Reign of Oleg (Nachal'noe upravlenie Olega) and Nicholas I's publication of the Antiquities of the Russian State (Drevnosti rossiiskogo gosudarstva). Both works furthered institutions of regulation and direction to advance the goal of state monopolization of public representation; both used cultural modes to shape conceptions of the truth of Russia's past as well as its mission.

¹ This paper was presented to the Conference "Kulturpolitik in Imperien," Vienna, November 19-20, 2010.

See the discussion of the Hapsburg effort in this respect in the paper by Franz Leander Fillafer, "Imperium oder Kulturstaat?" in Kulturpolitik und Theater: Die kontinentalen Imperien in Europa im Vergleich, ed. Philipp Ther (Vienna, Böhlau, 2012), 23-53.

Impressed with his visit to Versailles in 1717, Peter the Great adorned his newly laid out Summer Garden with more than ninety statues acquired for him by his European ambassadors, including busts of Alexander the Great, the Roman Emperor Trajan, several European kings, and numerous figures of seminude women, symbolizing the secular virtues. Among them stood a statue of Venus, later called the Tauride Venus, which Peter obtained with great effort, to rival Louis XIV's Venus of Arles. Peter's taste was for the practical and technical achievements of the West, not high culture. However, culture was a sign of empire and the power to think, create, and change. The ensemble made clear his determination both to appear as a Western absolute monarch and to mount an affront to Orthodox moral and religious sensibilities. His emblem was the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea: Peter as sculptor creating beauty out of stone.

This display demonstrated to his nobility, at that point defined by service to the tsar and the state, that standing and power would be demonstrated by European appearance, behavior, and culture, which set nobles above the subject population and presented them as inhabitants of a higher world of grace and refinement. They would be known as the "well-born" Russian nobility (blagorodnoe Rossiiskoe dvorianstvo), different in appearance and behavior from the peasants they were destined to rule. Their power derived not from feudal laws or privilege, but their service to the tsar and, as representatives of his authority, their performance as cultivated westernized noblemen that distinguished them from the other estates of the realm.

In this respect, Russia preserved the Baroque form of representation, the "representational culture" explored in the work of Jürgen Habermas and T. C. W. Blanning, a presumed initial stage of public expression that would evolve in the west into a public sphere. Festivities, Habermas wrote, "served not so much the pleasure of the participants as the demonstration of grandeur, that is the grandeur of the host and guests." Aristocratic society "served as a vehicle for the representation of the monarch." For both Habermas and Blanning, Louis XIV's Versailles exemplified Baroque representation. Blanning concludes, "the representational display expressed in palaces, academies, opera houses, hunting establishments, and the like was not pure self-indulgence, nor was it deception; it was a constitutive element of power itself."

Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 9-10.

⁴ T. C. W. Blanning, The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660-1789 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 59.

In Russia, culture remained a constitutive element of monarchical power until the demise of the tsarist regime. The adoption of western cultural forms maintained the images of transcendence that ensured the supremacy of the monarchy and the noble elite and the distance between them and the subject population. The act of borrowing and imposing forms of western representation produced what Louis Marin described as a "doubling effect," removing the monarch from his local confines and locating him in a universal sphere of irresistible and efficacious enlightened rule.⁵ The representation of the monarch remained paramount, transcending considerations of law, prudence, or rational argument, and shaping the practices and attitudes of governmental officials to accommodate a culture of power. As a result, rather than give way to an embryonic public sphere, representational culture preserved a dynamic of monopolizing public space and inhibited the spread of public discourse.

Culture was put at the service of myth. Peter's image was that of conquering hero, destroying the old and bringing new into being by acts of power and will. The past was submerged. Peter presented himself as Roman conqueror, an emperor in the images of Julius or Augustus Caesar or Emperor Constantine, though these were metaphors and not grounds of descent or inheritance. His succession law replaced a disposition to hereditary succession with the monarch's own designation, not subject to legal constraint. Indeed, the weakness of a dynastic legal tradition, or dynastic legend after Peter, no matter how fanciful, created a need for new mythical genealogies, attesting to the power of the transcendent monarch to conjure a dynastic national past suitable to absolute rule.⁶ The Hapsburgs' legend, "The Last Descendants of Aeneas," persisted as a backdrop to their claims to imperial dominion. Russian monarchs engaged in an ongoing search for origins, whether in Rome, Byzantium, Ancient Greece, or among invading princes from Scandinavia, to provide renewed historical grounds for dynamic mythical reassertions of the right to absolute rule.

The princes of Moscow had claimed the heritage of the Eastern Roman empire, Byzantium. Symbols and imagery of empire announced their parity with the West, the Holy Roman Empire. To match the seal of the Holy

Louis Marin, *Le portrait du roi* (Paris: Les éditions de minuit, 1981), 10.

Richard Wortman, "The Representation of Dynasty and the 'Fundamental Laws' in the Evolution of Russian Monarchy," *Kritika* vol. 13, No. 2 (Spring 2012): 265-300. Article 2 in *Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule*.

Roman Empire—a double-headed eagle—Ivan III introduced his own imperial seal—a crowned Byzantine double-headed eagle, with lowered wings.⁷ Ivan assumed the titles of tsar, from the Greek (tsesar) and autocrat (samoderzhets, from the Greek autocrator), declaring himself a monarch independent of other earthly authorities. From the start, supreme imperial sovereignty represented the only true sovereignty for Russian monarchs. Ivan rejected the crown of king from Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III in 1489, replying that he "had never wanted to be king by anyone, and that he did not wish it." A king's crown signified mediated sovereignty, or in the eyes of Russian rulers and their servitors, no sovereignty at all.⁸ In the sixteenth-century, Russia adopted rituals of the late Byzantine coronation and devised "the legend of Monomakh," which evoked Vladimir Monomakh's acquisition of the imperial Byzantine regalia from the Byzantine emperor Constantine Monomakh, who in fact had died long before the prince's reign.

Peter the Great's acceptance of the title of emperor (*imperator*) in 1721 indicated that he had assumed the attributes of a western emperor. He elevated his role as emperor with Baroque allegories and imagery that identified him with emperors of the Roman Empire, Eastern and Western, as well as pagan gods. Peter cast himself as founder, thus consigning the past to oblivion and leaving his successors without an origin tale for imperial authority. Both Catherine the Great and Nicholas I sought to provide Russian monarchy with narratives that linked Russian Monarchy and the ancient world and present Russia at the forefront of western civilization. They drew on the cultural resources of Russian resources of the monarchy to produce narratives of origin that would define the heritage and mission of empire.

Gustave Alef, "The Adoption of the Muscovite Two-Headed Eagle: A Discordant View," in his *Rulers and Nobles in Fifteenth-Century Muscovy* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1983), Section IX.

Dimitri Stremoukhoff, "Moscow the Third Rome: Sources of the Doctrine," in *The Structure of Russian History: Interpretive Essays*, ed. Michael Cherniavsky (New York: Random House, 1970), 112.

Olga Ageeva suggested that at the end of Peter's reign, empire meant little more than a state ruled by a monarch with the status and cultural pretensions of an emperor (O. G. Ageeva, "Imperskii status Rossii: k istorii politicheskogo mentaliteta russkogo obshchestva nachala XVIII veka," in *Tsar' i tsarstvo v russkom obshchestvennom soznanii* [Moscow: In-t rossiiiskoi istorii RAN, 1999], 123).

THEATRICAL CULTURE AND THE GREEK PROJECT

Although entrepreneurs, both foreign and Russian, founded many of the first theaters in Russia, the Empresses Elizabeth and Catherine II assumed growing control over theatrical productions and took over or eliminated independent theaters. In 1756, Elizabeth brought the highly successful Iaroslavl company of the merchant and actor Fedor Volkov to Petersburg and amalgamated it with the theater of the Noble Cadets Corps, establishing a Russian Imperial Theater under the direction of the playwright and poet Alexander Sumarokov. A Directorate established in 1766 exercised administrative control over the theaters. By the end of the century, aside from foreign troupes visiting the capital and Moscow, theater in Russia consisted of the Imperial Theater in Petersburg, which performed both for the court and public audiences and estate theaters of wealthy noblemen, their companies made up of serf actors. ¹⁰

Centralization of bureaucratic control continued during the reigns of Paul I and Alexander I, though commercial theaters were permitted in provincial towns. During the 1840s and 1850s, when theatrical events and charitable concerts in gentry, merchant, and artisan clubs of the capital escaped the Directorate's control, Nicholas I issued measures to eliminate these undertakings. A law of 1854, confirmed in 1862 by Alexander II, gave the Directorate an absolute monopoly of administrative control over theatrical performances.¹¹

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, theater became the cultural medium par excellence of the Russian autocracy and serf-holding nobility, what Richard Stites has described as an "empire of performance." The ethos of performance originating in the Baroque court assumed the character of an imperative. The monarch performed the role of a European monarch as a representation of absolute power. Russian noblemen, proving their status by their western behavior and tastes, reproduced their own images of grandeur and power, what Iurii Lotman described as the "theatricality" of official life in Russia. The Directorate and the estate theaters were closely linked. Stites

Murray Frame, School for Citizens: Theatre and Civil Society in Imperial Russia (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 22; Richard Stites, Serfdom, Society and the Arts in Imperial Russia: The Pleasure and the Power (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 132.

Frame, School for Citizens, 42-43, 48-50, 79-82; Stites, Serfdom, Society and the Arts in Imperial Russia, 398-9.

observed: "The Directorate leaders as serf-owners and owners of serf-theaters, tended to transfer the social hierarchies and disciplinary culture of regiment or estate to their serf-like underlings. In an interlock of state and manor house, performers flowed from the seigniorial home to the imperial stage and back again, blurring the distinction between a public and a private sphere." 12

Article 6 of Catherine's Instruction (Nakaz) to the codification commission she convened in 1767 proclaimed that "Russia is a European State," and theater became her means to train the Russian nobility in western sociability and ideas. Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter has argued that the theater succeeded in playing an educational role and created a "pre-political literary public sphere" among the Russian nobility. The themes of moral betterment dramatized on the stage led to the appearance of what she describes as a "civic society," devoted to civic engagement, but not "a politically organized 'civil society' independent of the state." The purpose of eighteenth-century theater was not political but didactic, demonstrating common principles of behavior based on reason, reflected in personal virtue, shown to triumph over the snares of the vices, the products of desire. In this way, cultural modes "served an integrative function" and "the shared experience of Russian theater helped to institutionalize civic society." Rather than breed criticism and discontent, the ideas professed in plays reconciled the elite audience with the existing monarchical order. Plays satirized individual greediness and the vanity of fashionable sociability, praised devotion to the patriarchal family, and above all service to the monarch and the fatherland. "The good monarch of the eighteenth century Russian stage displayed not only the uncommon virtue and courage need to justify heroic stature but also the personal shortcomings and emotions of any human being."13

Catherine actively participated in this culture, writing journal articles and plays professing the dominant principles of personal virtue. She also tried her hand at history, composing *Notes on History* and a history primer. As a playwright, she could project her ideas into the past and create her own origin tales that would substantiate her dreams of imperial expansion and

¹² Stites, Serfdom, Society and the Arts in Imperial Russia, 135.

Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, The Play of Ideas in Russian Enlightenment Theater (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003), ix-x, 18, 29-30, 148-9, 172-3, 178-9; on advice literature concerning the good and bad monarch, see Cynthia Hyla Whittaker, Russian Monarchy: Eighteenth Century Rulers and Writers in Political Dialogue (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003), 141-81.

cultural parity of Russia with Europe. In 1786, after the victories over Turkey, J. J. Eschenburg's German translations of Shakespeare inspired her to write two plays with historical themes, entitled A Historical Performance, Without observing the usual Rules of Theater, from the Life of Riurik: An Imitation of Shakespeare and The Primary Reign of Oleg: An imitation of Shakespeare, Without Observing the Usual Rules of Theater.¹⁴

Shakespeare's plays emboldened Catherine to ignore the classical unities of time, place, and action. The Life of Riurik recounts the founding episode of the Russian state—the summons by the leaders of Russian tribes to the Varangians from the years 860-862 in the Primary Chronicle, "Our land is great and rich, but there is no order in it. Come to rule over us." Catherine's play glorifies Riurik, the first Russian prince, as a model of decisive action and efficacy. Riurik proves an energetic and able ruler in contrast to the Russian princes, who squabble amongst themselves and seem unable to exercise forceful rule. "Reason and courage overcome difficulties and obstacles," says his stepson, Askold. Riurik replies, "My concern is to rule the land and to administer justice...for that reason I am dispatching the princes accompanying me as authorities to the towns," a step that recalled Catherine's provincial reforms of the previous decades. The plot dramatized the conquest motif of foreign rule according to the "Norman interpretation," advanced by one school of Russian historians at the time in a way that repeated Catherine's own ascent as a foreign ruler, taking power at a moment of political turmoil. The action also substantiated the premise of Peter's Law of Succession: that an heir to the throne should be appointed by the reigning monarch according to qualifications rather than determined by hereditary right.¹⁵

Riurik was never performed. On the other hand, Catherine took great pride in *The Primary Reign of Oleg (Nachal'noe upravlenie Olega)*. She staged lavish operatic productions with great largesse and flair in 1791 and 1795, and had three editions of the text published in 1787, 1791, and 1793. The word *nachal'noe* here carries the connotation of foundational or primary, as in the Primary Chronicle—*Nachal'naia letopis'*—not "early" as it has

Lurana Donnels O'Malley, The Dramatic Works of Catherine the Great: Theatre and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Russia (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 12; Sochineniia Ekateriny II (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Akademiia Nauk, 1901), 2: 219, 259.

O'Malley, The Dramatic Works of Catherine the Great, 140-2; Sochineniia Ekateriny II, 2: 232, 241-2.

¹⁶ O'Malley, The Dramatic Works of Catherine the Great, 209.

been translated; indeed, the events described took place in the middle, not the beginning of Oleg's reign (892-922).¹⁷ Specifically, it presented Prince Oleg's invasion of Constantinople, recorded in the Primary Chronicle under the years 904-907, and the capitulation of the Byzantine Emperor Leo as establishing the foundation of Russian culture in Greece. However, it was not religious Byzantium but pagan Greece that appears in *The Primary Reign of Oleg*.

Catherine and Potemkin had in mind more than a justification for territorial expansion to the South. They had discovered a new destiny for Russia that they sought to anchor in a re-imagined narrative of Russia's past. The conquest of Constantinople had been on Catherine's mind from the beginning of her reign, encouraged by Voltaire in their correspondence. At first, Catherine had identified Greece and Constantinople with Byzantium, referred to it as Stambul, and had little inclination to favor the religious roots of imperial authority. By the 1780s, she had become entranced with Russia's destiny as the heir to the pagan culture of ancient Greece. The Greek city states Sparta and Athens replaced the Byzantine capital as the sources of a Greek heritage for Russia.

As Andrei Zorin has shown, this change reflected the influence of a group of noble poets and playwrights close to the throne, who extolled the civilization of ancient Greece after the initial victories over the Turks. Vasilii Petrov, a friend and protegé of Grigorii Potemkin, greeted Alexei Orlov's naval victory with verse evoking the triumphs of the ancient Spartans, anticipating the revival of their martial virtues, and evoking the worship of Catherine as Pallas in a Greek temple. Petrov's rival, Vasilii Maikov, looked to the restoration of Greece's golden age. Catherine would expel the Muslims, and restore ancient Greece, "Russia shares a faith with Greece, Her laws too shall be the same." The poet and playwright Kheraskov wrote that Russian victories had reawakened the Greeks' dormant valor: "There it seems Achilles and Miltiades arise, Now courage flames in Greek hearts, Greece will see Parnassus renewed." Pavel

The word is also used in article 603 of Catherine's Nakaz, "nachal'nye osnovaniia" translated as "first foundations." Slovar' russkovo iazyka XVIII veka (Leningrad: Nauka, 1984), 14: 101; W. F. Reddaway, Documents of Catherine the Great (New York: Russell and Russell, 1971), 303. I thank Andrei Zorin and Ernest Zitser for their advice on this question.

Andrei Zorin, Kormia dvuglavogo orla...: literatura i gosudarstvennaia ideologiia v poslednei treti xviii-pervoi treti xix veka (Moscow: NLO, 2001), 45-8.

Potemkin, a cousin of Grigorii, presented a similar theme in a verse drama, "Russians in the Archipelago." The Greeks had "endured Christianity," the character of Alexei Orlov pronounces. The Spartan general Bukoval replies, "We, my lord, are the same as the Greeks once were, Your kindness and the heroism of Russian arms, Inspire in us all of our old traits." Zorin suggests the likelihood that Pavel Potemkin's work was known to his cousin, Grigorii, who shaped a political program for the project from the "system of metaphors" devised by these poets.¹⁹

In this way, a noble literary elite served as cultural interlocutors to channel the western neoclassical topos to the throne to provide the basis for a new mythical configuration. "The Greek Project" not only justified and glorified the expansion to the south: it evoked a mythical landscape that Catherine and Potemkin believed they inhabited and ruled. In 1774, they established a School for Foreign Youths in Petersburg for young Greek men, which in 1777 moved to the newly acquired Kherson on the Black Sea. Sites in the new territories received new names—Khersones, after the Greek, Odessa after Odysseus; Tauris, the Greek name for the district of Crimea. The imperial theme was displayed repeatedly during Catherine's journey through the conquered lands in 1787. The newly-founded city of Ekaterinoslav was to be a counterpart to Petersburg, a perfect imperial city, to show the monarch's creation of a realm of cultivation and political order in Russia's south, a "new Russia." 20 Potemkin began construction on a cathedral that would be a replica of St. Peter's in Rome. He intended to transport a gargantuan statue of Catherine from Berlin. Building materials had been assembled to construct court houses on the model of ancient basilicas, a propylaeum like that of Athens, and twelve factories. He appointed the Italian conductor and composer Giuseppe Sarti the director of a new musical conservatory in Ekaterinoslav. Russia, the bearer of civilization, was going to restore classical culture to the southern steppes.

Catherine envisioned a restored Eastern Roman Empire that would rule the Mediterranean under Russian guidance. The scheme advanced a claim to parity with the Holy Roman Emperor, Joseph II, and lent a historical and sacral aura to the alliance between the two states that made possible the

¹⁹ Ibid., 53-9.

A. M. Panchenko, "'Potemskie derevni' kak kul'turnyi mif," in XVIII vek (Leningrad: Ak. Nauk SSSR, 1983), 14: 93-104.

annexation of parts of New Russia and Crimea.²¹ Catherine baptized her two grandsons Alexander after Alexander the Great, and Constantine after the Emperor Constantine, over the objections of their parents. Her expectation was that Alexander would become emperor of Russia and Constantine of a resurrected Greek Empire centered in Constantinople.

The Primary Reign of Oleg was a theatrical confirmation of Catherine's vision of cultural affiliation with ancient Greece. She assured the reader of the historical truth of her play. "In this Historical presentation there is more truth (istina) than invention (vydumka)." She then went on to cite various historical sources at hand that freed her to embroider on the past.²² The play gives the struggle in the south and Catherine's appropriation of the heritage of ancient Greek an aura of historical inevitability and therefore of truth.

Catherine portrays Prince Oleg's invasion of Constantinople, recorded in the Primary Chronicle under the years 904-907, as a cordial meeting between prince Oleg of Kiev and Emperor Leo. The play first recounts Oleg's exploits—his alleged founding of Moscow, his marriage to a Kievan Princess, Prekrasa ("most beautiful"), and finally his foray into Constantinople.²³ Oleg's triumph occasions exultant pagan festivities. The emperor Leo rejoices at his own defeat and welcomes Oleg. "In this capital, with so renowned a guest, only happy celebrations shall occur, joyous exclamations, endless games, singing, dancing, merriment, and gala feasts." Prince Oleg watches martial games in the Hippodrome on a dais next to Emperor Leo and Empress Zoya. Hercules and the Emperor of Festivals appear before the celebrations, which are portrayed in dance and choruses, the music composed by Sarti. A performance of an episode from Euripides, "Alcestis," a Shakespearian play within a play, begins the final scene. King Admetus of Thessaly graciously receives Hercules after the loss of his wife, a generous act of hospitality at a moment of loss, like Leo's reception of Oleg. The play closes with Oleg's leaving the shield of Igor in the Hippodrome for his descendants. The Emperor Leo declares him a wise and courageous prince. The shield of Igor is emblazoned with the iconic figure of St. George killing the dragon—the shield of Moscow that would appear

²¹ Zorin, Kormia dvuglavogo orla..., 37-8; on the alliance between Catherine and Joseph II see Isabel de Madariaga, Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), 387-90.

²² Sochineniia Imperatritsy Ekateriny II, 2: 261.

²³ Sochineniia Imperatritsy Ekateriny II, 2: 259-304.

on the breast of the Russian imperial double-headed eagle in the center of the Imperial Coat-of-Arms. 24

In 1791, a cast of more than six hundred performed the extravaganza three times at the Hermitage Theater before the court and the public, and again in a 1794/5 revival. The production combined drama, music, and ballet, and, as contemporaries and critics have pointed out, was more of a lavish Baroque pageant than a Shakespearian drama. Heinrich Storch wrote:

The magnificence of the performance far exceeded everything I have ever beheld of this kind in Paris and other capital cities. The sumptuousness of the dresses, all in the ancient Russian costume and all the jewelry genuine, the dazzling luster of the pearls and diamonds, the armorial decorations, implements of war and other properties, the ingenuity displayed in the ever-varying scenery, went far beyond even the boldest expectation.²⁵

The Baroque luster asserted the reality of the narrative performed on the stage. Carl Masson admired "the great events of history...introduced as in a picture on the stage." The pastiche of drama, dance, and particularly music permitted a blanket assertion of a common culture linking the ancient Greeks with contemporary Russians. The sumptuousness of the "ancient Russian costume," the overture by Carlo Cannobio based on Russian folk songs, Sarti's score for the Greek choruses reciting verses by Lomonosov and the musical accompaniment to Alceste, all attested to a Russian national culture akin to the Greeks. Before he arrived in Russia, Sarti had served as Kappelmeister in Copenhagen, where he helped to establish the Danish Royal Opera, and he was clearly brought to Russia with a similar assignment in mind. *The Primary Reign of Oleg*, Maria Maiofis has shown, aspired to be a Russian national opera that would place Petersburg among the great European capitals. ²⁷

The artist, poet, and folk song collector Nikolai L'vov asserted, in his introduction to Sarti's explanation of his music, that Russians must have borrowed their musical sophistication from the Greeks. "The voice of the

Sochineniia Imperatritsy Ekateriny II, 2: 294-304.

²⁵ O'Malley, The Dramatic Works of Catherine the Great, 158.

²⁶ Ibid., 166.

Maria Maiofis, "Myzykal'nyi i ideologicheskii kontekst dramy Ekateriny 'Nachal'noe upravlenie Olega'," Russkaia filologiia, no. 7 (1996): 66-71; O' Malley, The Dramatic Works of Catherine the Great, 156.

passions served our untutored singers instead of knowledge. This notion is only in regard to melody. How without study, guiding themselves only by ear, did they learn Harmony?" This, he explained, could come to them only by imitation. The similarity of these songs to the remnants of Greek music led him to conclude that they were borrowed from the ancient Greeks. "The Primary Reign of Oleg portrays nothing other than the moment of this borrowing—leaving the shield of Igor as a sign of his stay in the Greek capital, Oleg at the same time preserved the memory of everything he saw there, of the Olympic games, the performance of 'Alceste,' and of the music for it." In his accompaniment to Alceste, Sarti sought both to follow Greek harmonic modes and yet to break with tradition in a way to show distinctive Russian variations. Instead of employing the two modes the Greeks required for tragedy, Doric and Phrygian, Sarti utilized all seven that he knew, so that his music would not be "gloomy and sad." ²⁸

Although hardly a lover of music, Catherine admired Russian folk songs and dances, as well as "ancient Russian dress," which demonstrated a cultural identity that could be admired, if not adopted by her multi-national nobility. She often quoted the saying, "A people who sing and dance do no evil." 29 Catherine was proud of the many nationalities of her empire, which substantiated the imperial myth of ruler of savage peoples—what Victor Zhivov describes as the "ethnographic myth" of empire. 30 Johann Gottlieb Georgi's landmark four-volume Description of All the Peoples Inhabiting the Russian Empire (Opisanie vsekh obitaiushchikh v Rossiiskom gosudarstve narodov), compiled under Catherine's sponsorship, confirmed that the Russian empire was the most diverse of empires. 31 However, enlightenment would bring

Maiofis, "Myzykal'nyi i ideologicheskii kontekst dramy Ekateriny 'Nachal'noe upravlenie Olega'," 68-70; O'Malley, *The Dramatic Works of Catherine the Great*, 154

²⁹ Maiofis, "Muzykal'nyi i ideologicheskii kontekst dramy Ekateriny 'Nachal'noe upravlenie Olega'," 66.

[&]quot;In geographical space the monarch emerges as the hypostatization of Mars, while in ethnographic space, the monarch appears as the hypostatization of Minerva" (V. M. Zhivov, "Gosudarstvennyi mif v epokhu Prosveshcheniia i ego razrushenie v Rossii kontsa XVIII veka," in Vek Prosveshcheniia: Rossiia i Frantsiia; Vipperovskie chteniia [Moscow: GMII im. A. S. Pushkina, 1989], 22: 150).

Opisanie vsekh obitaiushchikh v Rossiiskom gosudarstve narodov... (St. Petersburg: Imp. Ak. Nauk, 1799), 4 vols; S. A. Tokarev, Istoriia Russkoi Etnografii (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 103.

the elimination of national traits. Those at earlier stages, Georgi wrote, such as the Tungus, the Chukchhi, were ignorant, simple, and possessed a beguiling innocence. It was "the uniformity of State organization" that could transform all nationalities into educated, Europeanized Russians. Catherine admired the illustrations of the varied native costumes in Georgi's books by C. W. Müller, and had them reproduced as porcelain figurines. But the dancers in *The Primary Reign of Oleg*, wearing only Russian costumes, made clear that it was Russians who would lead the others along the path of civilization.³²

A NATIONAL OPERA AND A RUSSIAN NATIONAL ESTHETIC

When Nicholas I ascended the throne in 1825, he openly repudiated the cosmopolitan ethos expressed in Article 6 of Catherine's Instruction and embraced by Alexander I, that Russia was a European state. Nicholas's decrees and ceremonies presented the dynasty as a national institution. His manifesto on the sentencing of the Decembrists announced that the failure of the uprising had demonstrated that the monarchy enjoyed the devotion of the Russian people. Nicholas sought to distinguish Russian monarchy, which he regarded as the supreme example of absolutism from European states that went astray, seduced by liberalism and revolution. He too looked back to the summons to the Varangians as a foundational model of monarchical rule, one that provided popular grounds of absolute monarchy in Russia in response to the doctrines of popular sovereignty introduced by the French revolution. In a lecture, delivered in 1832, the historian Mikhail Pogodin declared, "The Varangians came to us, but voluntarily chosen, at least from the start, not like Western victors and conquerors—the first essential distinction in the kernel, the seed of the Russian State."33 The Russian people had invited their rulers, had obeyed and loved them: autocracy had popular roots. Sergei Uvarov provided this narrative with its ideological formulation of "Official Nationality," expressed in the triad, "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality."

On the different images of "Russianness" in visual sources, see Elena Vishlenkova, "Vizual'noe narodovedenie imperii ili "Yvidet' russkogo dano ne kazhdomu" (Moscow, NLO, 2011).

³³ M. P. Pogodin, Istoriko-kriticheskie otryvki (Moscow: A. Semen, 1846), 6-8.

Nicholas realized Catherine's dream of a national opera glorifying Russian monarchy. The composer Mikhail Glinka had intended to write an operatic version of the patriotic myth of the Russian peasant, who sacrificed his life to save tsar Mikhail Feodorovich's life by leading Polish troops astray. His initial title was *Ivan Susanin*, a Patriotic Heroic-Tragic Opera. He wanted the opening chorus to express the "strength and carefree fearlessness of the Russian people" and to achieve this sense musically, in "Russian measure and approximations" that were drawn from rural subjects." But Nicholas succeeded in having the librettist, Baron Egor Rosen, reshape the work into a story of personal devotion of the peasant to the tsar. Nicholas took an active interest in the opera and appeared at rehearsals. Instructions came from high circles in the government, probably from Nicholas himself, to change the title from *Ivan Susanin* to *A Life for the Tsar*.

Glinka's opera lifts the tale of Susanin from the level of heroic adventure to tragedy. Susanin's noble sacrifice reflects the selflessness of the Russian peasant, passionately devoted to his tsar, according to official ideology. The libretto centers on the peasant's need for a tsar and his feelings of desperation when deprived of one. Though Glinka was hardly the first composer to introduce Russian folk melodies into an opera, he was the first to integrate them successfully into one of European stature. *Life for the Tsar* opened every season at Imperial Opera Houses and was performed at gala performances during imperial coronation celebrations and other festive occasions.³⁴

Nicholas's principal esthetic interests were art and architecture, not theater. As Grand Duke, he showed an interest in early Russian church architecture. In 1817, at age twenty-one, he visited Patriarch Nikon's New Jerusalem Monastery near Moscow, built from 1658 to 1685, and encouraged plans for its restoration. "Once on the throne, he centralized and directed the study and production of art, just as he brought the political police and the work of codification under his personal purview in his chancellery. A decree of February 9, 1829 announced that he was taking the Academy of Arts

See Scenarios of Power, 1: 390-5; Richard Taruskin, "M. I. Glinka and the State," in his Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 25-47. It is interesting that the critic, Vladimir Stasov, detected a similarity between Russian folk melodies and Russian and Greek "medieval plagal cadences" in the famous Slav'sia chorus at the finale, much as L'vov had in Sarti's score. Taruskin dismisses this contention as "pure tendentious invention" (45).

under his "special most gracious patronage" (osoboe vsemilostiveishee svoe pokrovitel'stvo). The Academy was removed from the Ministry of Education and placed under the authority of the Ministry of the Court, whose Minister reported directly to the emperor.³⁵

Like Catherine, Nicholas looked to the Eastern Roman Empire for the cultural origins of Russian autocracy and the derivation of his own myth of foundation. But Byzantium represented for him not the traditions of pagan Greece, but the purest form of absolute monarchy, supported by the Russian Orthodox Church, an alternative to the western political tradition. He too endeavored to construct an esthetic genealogy that would link the Russian state with Byzantium. He sought concrete expressions of such a genealogy in art, specifically in early Russian art and architecture. He hoped to promote a national style of architecture by constructing copies of early Russian churches that incorporated principles of Byzantine architecture. Early Russian churches came in many shapes and sizes, however, and Nicholas lacked a clear idea of which style represented the true national tradition. In 1827, he began to seek designs for St. Catherine's church in Petersburg and for the Christ the Redeemer Cathedral in Moscow, which the architect Alexander Vitberg had planned in neoclassical style for Alexander I. Nicholas asked for a building that "would attest to compatriots as well as to foreigners of the zeal of Russians for the Orthodox faith."

The projects he received were designed in the spirit of neoclassicism. He had only a vague sense of "Russian taste," and most of his architects could not fathom his intent. Although he was considerably more certain in his views than most Russian rulers, he too needed guidance in this sphere. It required an official of high standing, knowledgeable in the arts, but also with insight into the tsar's inclinations and deft in his manner of discourse, an official who could "divine" and influence the imperial will.³⁶ The person who had such

The first Minister of the Court was Peter Volkonskii, a cousin of Alexei Olenin. Imperatorskaia sanktpeterburgskaia akademiia khudozhestv, 1764-1914: kratkii istoricheskii ocherk (St. Petersburg, 1914), 38; Mary Stuart, Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar: Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin and the Imperial Public Library (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1986), 137.

Mikhail Dolbilov has described the practice of "divining the imperial will" (ugadyvat' vysochaishuiu voliu), which all tsar's ministers and advisors endeavored to master in the nineteenth century. "Divining the imperial will" could also involve subtle manipulation, planting ideas in the tsar's mind while making him believe

talents and shared the tsar's predilections for a national art was the President of the Academy of Arts as well as the Imperial Public Library, Alexei Olenin.³⁷

Like the poets and playwrights of Catherine's court, Alexei Olenin served as an interlocutor, providing the cultural idiom to represent monarchical power. As a young man, he had been a fervent adept of the Greek Project and an admirer of the great German historian of ancient Greek art, Johann Winckelmann, so much so that he earned the sobriquet "the Russian Winckelmann." When the discovery of early Russian artifacts in Crimea in the last decades of the eighteenth century provided evidence of direct contact between ancient Greece and early Russian towns, Olenin became engaged in the publication and analysis of these findings. The Tmutorokan stone, discovered in 1792 by Count A. I. Musin-Pushkin, bore an inscription from the year 1036 indicating the proximity of the Russian town of Tmutorokan to "territories of the Greeks." In 1806, Olenin published A Letter to Count A. I. Musin-Pushkin, which confirmed Musin-Pushkin's conclusions with the use of sophisticated comparative materials from chronicles and artifacts such as coins and helmets as well as the "Lay of the Host of Igor," which had also been discovered by Musin-Pushkin.³⁸

Olenin pursued his archaeological interests during the first decades of the nineteenth century, when German scholars extended Winckelmann's concept of the range of ancient art to include monuments and everyday objects unearthed during archaeological excavations.³⁹ He looked to articles of clothing to confirm the esthetic link to Greece. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, Olenin seized especially on old Russian helmets as symbols of Russia's past that could lend neoclassical works of literature and art a Russian accent. He introduced helmets into his illustrations for such literary works as the plays of V. A. Ozerov, and the first edition of Pushkin's *Ruslan*

they were his own (M.D. Dolbilov, "Rozhednie imperatorskikh reshenii: monarkh, sovetnik i 'vysochaishaia volia' v Rossii XIX v.," *Istoricheskie zapiski*, No. 9 (127) (2006): 5-48.

³⁷ For a more thorough discussion of Olenin and Fedor Solntsev, see Article 5 in this volume.

Stuart, Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar, 12-19; V. Faibisovich, Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin: Opyt nauchnoi biografii (St. Petersburg: Rossiiskaia natsional'naia biblioteka, 2006), 246-9.

³⁹ Suzanne L. Marchand, *Down From Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany*, 1750-1970 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 10-11, 40-53.

and Ludmilla. Olenin convinced painters and sculptors to depict Russian helmets in their works in the classical style, creating what his biographer Victor Faibisovich describes as "a Russian empire style."⁴⁰

Olenin's efforts expressed a historicist sensibility that found national meaning in objects retrieved from the nation's past. For Nicholas, such objects demonstrated Russia's parity with European monarchies that enshrined their own medieval traditions. In 1843, when he and the Moscow Metropolitan Filaret were examining the recently discovered frescoes in the Kiev Sofia cathedral, Filaret voiced doubt about the wisdom of further exposure of the frescoes, which might reveal the practice of current oldbeliever rituals in Kievan Russia. Nicholas retorted, "You love ancient times (starina), and I love them too. In Europe now the tiniest ancient thing is cherished... Nonsense. Do not contradict me."41

Nicholas turned to Olenin for help in finding an architect who could design an early Russian church. Olenin recommended Constantine Ton, whose earlier work had been entirely in the spirit of neoclassicism. Ton too was bewildered by the tsar's instructions. Divining the tsar's vague intentions, Olenin directed him to sketches executed by his protégés, Fedor Solntsev and the architect N. E. Efimov.⁴² These served as guides for the plans Ton drafted for the St. Catherine's church and submitted to the tsar in 1830. Nicholas was pleased, and the St. Catherine Church became the exemplar of the "Ton style," which in 1841 would be decreed as the authorized style of Russian church architecture.

Olenin had been consistent in his determination to find a Greek heritage for Russian monarchy and for a Russian art. Now in Nicholas's scenario, he proved adaptable enough to submerge the original vision of the Greek Project to seek the sources of national art in the artistic heritage of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The "Ton style" combined neoclassical structural

Faibisovich, Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin, 270-3, 274-5, 279, 282-6, 339-42; Gosudarstvennaia oruzheinaia palata (Moscow: Sovietskii Khudozhnik, 1988), 162-3.

Solntsev, Russkaia Starina vol. 16 (1876): 290.

Ton had graduated from the Academy in 1815. His early projects had won Olenin's admiration and he had recommended him for a stipend to travel abroad and study in Italy. Ton's work had been entirely in the spirit of neoclassicism; he was well known for his project to restore the imperial palace on the Palatine hill in Rome (V. G. Lisovskii, "Natsional'nyi stil'" v arkhitekture Rossii [Moscow: Sovpadenie, 2000], 70-1).

elements with the Russian-Byzantine design, exemplified in the five-cupola structure of the Vladimir and Moscow Assumption Cathedrals. Ton's Christ the Redeemer Cathedral and New Kremlin Palace, both begun in the 1830s, revealed the features of a new eclectic, neo-Byzantine style. The cathedral's proportions and arcades, as well as its cupolas, were typically neoclassical: it was the exterior that asserted its Russian character. The New Kremlin Palace also followed the principles of neoclassical design and proportions. The interlace embellishments around its windows gave it a national touch. The juxtaposition of Western and Russian styles evoked the desired sense of connection Nicholas sought between the westernized monarchy and Russia's distinctive past.⁴³

As director of the Academy of Arts, Olenin actively pursued the search for archaeological remnants of Russia's archaeological heritage and the visual presentation as signs of the narrative of descent from Byzantium. He found in Fedor Solntsev, the son of a serf, an artist who could exactly and effectively copy these artifacts. Solntsev's first assignment, in 1829, was to depict the "hoard of Riazan," gold and bejeweled items of princely provenance that had been unearthed in the town of "old Riazan" in 1822. In 1830, a petition of Olenin prompted a Supreme Command of Nicholas, dispatching Solntsev to the Kremlin Armory in Moscow in order to "depict our ancient (starinnye) customs, dress, weapons, church and imperial paraphernalia, household goods, harness and other items belonging to the categories of historical, archaeological, and ethnographic information."44 The command went on to specify that "everything that is worthy of attention and that constitutes historical material or an object of archaeological interest for scholars and artists be described in all detail and published."45 Solntsev undertook numerous trips to the sites of early Russian history such as Vladimir, Iur'ev-Pol'skii, Riazan, and Novgorod, though his major efforts took place at the Kremlin in Moscow. He completed nearly 5,000 drawings and watercolors, what G. I. Vzdornov described as "a kind of encyclopedia of Russian medieval and national life in its concrete monuments."46

⁴³ See Scenarios of Power, 1: 381-7.

⁴⁴ Solntsev, Russskaia Starina vol. 15 (1876): 634; Stuart, Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar, 107.

⁴⁵ A. N. Olenin, *Arkheologicheskiia trudy* (St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1881), 1: xxvii-xxviii.

⁴⁶ G. I. Vzdornov, Istoriia otkrytiia i izucheniia russkoi srednevekovoi zhivopisi: XIX vek (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1986), 29.

Olenin had more in mind than an encyclopedia. He envisioned a multivolume work that would use ethnographical materials, especially examples of dress and arms, which would integrate a Russian national esthetic into the classical heritage. He began to outline his plans in a small study, published in 1832, as the first part of a multi-volume work meant to prepare a "course of History, Archaeology and Ethnography," for students at the Academy of Arts. ⁴⁷ The volume, the only one published, covered the period "from the time of the Trojans and Russians until the Tatar invasion." It was devoted principally to a description of the clothing of the period. He observed that in all eras, people tend to adopt the customs, rites, and fashion of the peoples "dominating by force of arms, trade and enlightenment." To illustrate the extent of the change after the conversion, he referred to a miniature in the *Izbornik* of 1073, which showed Prince Sviatoslav Iaroslavovich, his family, and entourage wearing Byzantine robes and headdress. ⁴⁸

The inclination to use art to bring together the diverse, to make the mutually exclusive complementary in the name of nation, culminated in the great compendium of Solntsev's drawings and watercolors, the *Drevnosti rossiiskogo gosudarstva*, or *Antiquities of the Russian State*. Olenin and Nicholas had intended such a publication as early as 1830 as suggested in the tsar's Supreme Command of May 9, 1830. But other projects and technical obstacles delayed the project. In 1841, Olenin submitted a proposal for a publication with broad ethnographical and historical parameters, supplemented with extensive scholarly commentaries. The title indicated that it was meant "for artists," suggesting that it would also provide models for them to follow in developing a national artistic idiom.⁴⁹

Olenin's vision of a national artistic summa with a scholarly ethnographic commentary was not to be realized. After his death in 1843, Nicholas

⁴⁷ [A.N. Olenin], Opyt ob odezhde, oruzhii, nravakh i obychaiakh i stepeni prosveshcheniia slavian ot vremeni Traiana i russkikh do nashestviia tatar; period pervyi: Pis'ma k G. Akademiku v dolzhnosti Professora Basinu (St. Petersburg, 1832).

⁴⁸ Ibid., 3-4, 13-19, 71.

The purpose was "to make known, in all their detail and idiosyncratic aspect our ancient mores, customs, rites, ecclesiastical, military and peasant dress, dwellings and buildings, the level of knowledge or enlightenment, technology, arts, trades, and various objects in our society" (Olenin, Arkheologicheskiia trudy, 1: xxviii; Stuart, Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar, 108; Solntsev, Russkaia Starina vol. 16 [1876]: 280-1).

appointed a committee under his own supervision to direct the project, which he supported with a princely grant of approximately 100,000 rubles. The six volumes of Solntsev's illustrations that resulted appeared between 1849 and 1853, in an edition of six hundred copies in both Russian and English. Owing to the emperor's generosity, they were produced with the latest techniques of color lithography. Just as the codification and the publication of *The Complete Collection of Laws*, issued by imperial command during the previous decade, brought together and made known laws issued by the Russian monarchy and thus defined a national legal tradition, the *Drevnosti* assembled the artistic works of Russia's past to make known the artistic heritage of the dynasty.

However, the work that appeared was not the scholarly study that Olenin had contemplated. The members of the committee, Mikhail Zagoskin, Ivan Snegirev, and Alexander Vel'tman, who supervised the introduction and commentaries of the text, were prominent authorities on early Russian history and archaeology and adepts of the doctrine of Official Nationality. The introduction noted that the committee had abandoned Olenin's plans for "scholarly investigations" and "a purely ethnographic compilation of the antiquities of Slavonic tribes in contact with other peoples."50 The commentaries resurrected the scheme of the sixteenth-century "Legend of Monomakh"—which according to the legend had been received by Prince Vladimir Monomakh (1113-1125) from his grandfather, the emperor Constantine Monomakh (1042-1055), who had died long before the Prince's reign. (The original Monomakh Cap is thought to be of fourteenth-century and possibly Tatar origin.)51 They modified the tale by adducing vague references to gifts of the emperor to Russian princes, thereby setting the paintings of the antiquities in a narrative of dynastic continuity that linked the tsars of Moscow with their Kievan ancestors and the emperors of Byzantium.

The illustrations are divided by category—religious objects, regalia, weapons, portraits and clothing, artistic versions of household implements, and examples of early Russian architecture—with brief commentaries on the

Drevnosti rossiiskago gosudarstva (Moscow: Tipografiia Aleksandra Semena, 1849), III. Separate paginations for several introductory sections of the book. Stuart, Aristocrat-Librarian in Service to the Tsar, 108-9.

On the oriental origin of the cap, see G. F. Valeeva-Suleimanova, "Korony russkikh tsarei—pamiatniki tatarskoi kul'tury," in *Kazan, Moscow, St. Petersburg: Multiple Faces of Empire*, ed. Catherine Evtuhov, Boris Gasparov, Alexander Ospovat, and Mark Von Hagen (Moscow: O.G. I., 1997), 40-52.

individual items.⁵² But the dominant presence throughout is the dynasty and its predecessors. The *Drevnosti* include numerous renderings of "the regalia of Monomakh"—the Monomakh Cap, the orb and scepter—which were replaced by Peter the Great at his coronation of Catherine I in 1724. Eight of the watercolors show variants of the Monomakh cap (Article 5, Figure 3). The commentary tries to prove the substance of the "Legend" by contending that Saint Vladimir received a golden "cap" after his conversion in 989 from the Byzantine emperor and that Constantine Monomakh had made a gift of regalia to the Russian princes.⁵³

After the election of Michael Fedorovich tsar in 1613, new "Grand Regalia" (bol'shoi nariad) displayed symbolic lineage to the defunct dynasty of Riurik, which had begun with the "invitation to the Varangians" in 862, and ended with the death of the tsarevich Dmitrii in 1598. The Drevnosti include pictures of the orb and scepter of Michael's regalia, which were fashioned by European craftsmen in the style of the Baroque "treasury art," exhibited in European palaces during in the seventeenth century (Article 5, Figures 3 and 4). Nonetheless, the authors explained the orb and scepter as "Greek work" and "a valuable memento of the tenth century." In 1627, European craftsmen working in the Kremlin produced a Baroque version of the original Monomakh cap.⁵⁴

Just as Catherine's lush pageantry embellished the tale of Oleg as historical truth, the Baroque extravagance and mixture of classical and national elements impart an esthetic force to the legends of the Byzantine origins of Russian monarchy. The idiom associating the diverse objects was a style of dense, lush decoration, what William Craft Brumfield has called "Muscovite ornamentalism," which owed much in inspiration to the East and Central European Baroque.⁵⁵ As in Catherine's play, the magnificence is expressed

The first volume includes religious objects—icons, pectoral crosses, vestments of the clergy, and chrism dishes. The second is devoted to regalia and articles figuring in the sacralization of the tsar, the third to weapons, armor, carriages and saddles, the fourth to portraits and clothing, the fifth to household items such as cups, wine bowls, and flasks, and the sixth to old Russian architecture.

⁵³ Drevnosti, viii-ix.

Gosudarstvennaia oruzheinaia palata, 347-9; Drevnosti rossiiskago gosudarstva, Section 2, 34, 51.

William Craft Brumfield, A History of Russian Architecture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 149-50.

as artistic profusion or excess. In this respect, excess was not only a prerogative of absolute power: its unapologetic display indicated the power of the ruler to define the culture, the past, and therefore the future of the monarchical state.⁵⁶

Solntsev's renderings accentuate the decorative richness of the individual objects, creating an esthetic unity out of artifacts of diverse character and historical origin. His watercolors highlight the intricate design and vivid color of the individual antiquities, revealing each to be an object of art, and also furthering Olenin's goal to provide a guide for future artists. Solntsev's depiction of the original Crown of Monomakh reveals the intricate floral designs covering the entire gold surface (Article 5, Figure 3). He includes black and white insets that make clear the decorative details. The watercolor captures the gold of the conical form, the brightness of the emeralds and the rubies adorning the sides, and the shades of the pearls at the points of the cross.

The *Drevnosti* also provide numerous illustrations of weapons and helmets that belonged Russian princes and tsars. Two views of what was known then as the "helmet of Alexander Nevskii" reveal the gold engraving of imperial crowns on the surface, the gems, and the enamel figure of the Archangel Michael on the nose piece (Article 5, Figure 5).⁵⁷ The helmet, however, was not Nevskii's: it has been identified as a work produced in 1621 for Mikhail Fedorovich, the first Romanov tsar.⁵⁸ The cuirass in the rear, which follows West European examples, is covered with etched interlace of vegetal designs around a figure of Hercules subduing the Hydra of Lernaea.⁵⁹

From the reign of Peter the Great, westernized culture served as a means to unite the westernized multinational elite of Russia and enhance the power and advance the designs of the absolute monarch as the exercise of a transcendent power dramatized as imperial myth. The nationalities of the empire appeared only as ornaments to the myth, subjects who would

See the suggestive remarks on excess in monarchical art in Randolph Starn and Loren Partridge, Arts of Power: Three Halls of State in Italy, 1300-1600 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 166-74.

Faibisovich, *Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin*, 296. The commentary refers to the mention of the helmet in a seventeenth-century listing, but links it to Georgian kings. It characterizes the attribution to Nevskii as a "tradition." *Drevnosti*, Section 3, No. 7.

⁵⁸ Gosudarstvennaia oruzheinaia palata (Moscow: Sovietskii Khudozhnik, 1988), 162-3.

⁵⁹ Drevnosti, Section 3, 7; Gosudarstvennaia oruzheinaia palata, 162-3.

PART II. THE IMPERIAL MYTH IN ARTISTIC TEXTS

be transformed in the image of European culture advanced by the All-Russian monarch and his nobility. Culture afforded the idioms that lent coherence, stature, and even verisimilitude to myth. Catherine found her medium in eighteenth-century theater; Nicholas in early Russian art and architecture. In this way, their mastery of the esthetic realm enhanced their mastery of the political realm, displaying their transcendence as absolute rulers and maintaining the domination of a public sphere controlled by the state. It is indicative that both the opera of Catherine and the plates of the *Drevnosti*, though seeking to capture different loci of origin of the monarchy resulted in works adopting the idiom and carrying the magic aura of the European Baroque. Both rulers shaped their scenarios by relying on figures close to the court—cultural interlocutors—poets, artists, architects, who served to inspire and then to shape the form of the imperial myth according to the cultural idiom of the day. Petrov, Maikov, Pavel Potemkin, through his cousin Grigorii, Olenin, and Solntsev provided the sophistication and talent that enabled the monarchy not only to dominate the public sphere, but to do so with conviction and force.

7. Myth and Memory—Imperial Evocations of 1812. Alexander I and the Russian People

The victorious struggle against the most powerful army in Europe, led by its seemingly invincible commander, a momentous event giving rise to visions of a glorious if uncertain destiny, was darkened by the fear of defeat and disintegration of the imperial order as Napoleon took Moscow. The greatest battle of the war, Borodino, inflicted colossal losses with an indeterminate outcome. There were ambiguities about the significance of the ultimate victory and about who brought it about. Was it, as Dominic Lieven has argued, a triumph of the monarchical state and its military elite that proved the resilience of the established order of estates and serfdom in resisting the onslaught of Napoleon's army and destroying his empire? Or was it a victory of national dimensions involving all layers of the Russian population in the cause of liberation?

These ambiguities beset all later evocations of 1812: personal, literary, and artistic. Here, I am concerned with the incorporation of the memory of 1812 into the imperial myth. Political myth abhors ambiguity and reduces memory to fit its own overarching narratives: mythic narratives would change to suit the scenario of each ruler and would shape the evocations to advance his own goals. The evolution of imperial representations of 1812 reveals the interplay between myth and memory, the imperial myth striving to submerge

Lieven suggests that the combined Russian losses of the battles of Shevardino and Borodino amounted to between 45,000 and 50,000 men (Dominic Lieven, Russia against Napoleon: The True Story of the Campaigns of War and Peace [New York: Viking, 2009], 209). For a description of the Borodino battle, see ibid., pages 197-210.

or fashion the wayward memories of the year until it faded into a distant legendary past.²

From the beginning of his reign, Alexander I had presented himself in the framework of what I call the European myth, originating in "the representational culture," as T. C. W. Blanning termed it, of the European Baroque and neoclassicism.³ The monarch appeared as supreme westernized ruler, above the particular interests of the estates, introducing European culture and rational civic values to the Russian elite and society. Peter the Great's successors presented themselves as mythical heroes, breaking with the previous reign, transcending human limits, and bringing enlightenment and order to the Russian state.

Alexander I took on the persona of an angel, the leitmotif of his scenario. It expressed a refined, otherworldly character that set him above his subjects. His scenario presented him as reformer, implementing the lofty ideals of the enlightenment for the good of Russia. His endearing manner evoked love. While on occasion he allowed himself to receive expressions of affection

See T. C. W. Blanning, The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660-1789 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002), 59 and passim; Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 7-10.

By myth, I mean an idealization or sacralization that takes the form of a dominant fiction realized in narratives, in this case to elevate the authority of the monarch and his state. Collective memory is a notoriously fuzzy concept, but it suggests the endowment of a significant event in the past by a process of retrieval by a group or a people. "National memory," John R. Gillis writes, "is shared by people who have never seen or heard of one another, yet who regard themselves as having a common history." It was a characteristic of the spread of nationalism following the French Revolution (John R. Gillis, "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship," in John R. Gillis, ed., Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996], 3-4, 7). Pierre Nora, the father of the recent study of memory characterizes it as a search for the sacred, for eternity, in an increasingly receding and meaningless past experience. "Memory installs remembrance within the sacred; history, always prosaic, releases it again." The retrieval of memory involves a program of institutions and sites. "Museums, archives, cemeteries, festival anniversary, treaties, depositions, monuments, sanctuaries, fraternal orders—these are the boundary stones of another age, illusions of eternity." This is a conscious search. "Lieux de mémoire originate with the sense that there is no spontaneous memory" (Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoir," Representations 26 [Spring 1989]: 9, 12). In my study, memory figures as an element of myths, created with political animus that highlights events or aspects of events.

from the elite or the people, he rarely asserted or displayed his love for them. He especially avoided displays that might hint at the popular basis of his sovereign power.

However, the threat of Napoleon's armies made this distant posture untenable and led him to seek popular support and make public appearances. Alexander appointed the conservative, nationalist poet Alexander Shishkov State Secretary to replace Michael Speranskii when invasion threatened. In subsequent months, Shishkov composed manifestos signed by Alexander that appealed to patriotic and religious feelings of the people and called upon them to support the struggle against the invader. When news came of the invasion, in June 1812, Alexander issued a rescript in the name of Field-Marshall Saltykov, concluding with his famous words, "I will not lay down arms while the last enemy soldier remains in my empire." Alexander indicatively referred to the empire as "my" and said nothing about the Russian people. Despite the importuning of his advisors, he felt obliged to play the role of military leader and remained at the front, close to his armies.⁴

Shishkov wrote a letter to the emperor imploring him to leave his armies and to appear in Moscow. His letter was transmitted by Alexander's adjutant, Alexei Arakcheev, who joined his signature to Shishkov's. Shishkov expressed his fear for Alexander's life and advanced arguments that drew sharp distinctions between the tsar's obligations as military leader and as ruler of Russia. He claimed that Alexander's circumstances differed fundamentally from the monarchs he was emulating—Peter the Great, Frederick II of Prussia, and Napoleon, "the first because he was instituting regular military forces, the second because his entire kingdom had, so to speak, been turned into armed forces, the third because it was not birth, but chance and luck that brought him to the throne. None of these circumstances pertain to Alexander the First."5 "The tsar and the Fatherland are the head and the body," he continued. "One without the other cannot be healthy, sound, or safe." Selfless courage in the face of death was reprehensible for a tsar, who, risking death or imprisonment, would leave his state without a head in a time of troubles. Rather, he urged Alexander to rally his subjects, "to summon the nobility and the people for the arming of new forces, who would, under an appointed leader, form a second

⁴ See Scenarios of Power, 1: 217-8.

⁵ A. S. Shishkov, Zapiski, mneniia i perepiska admirala A. C. Shishkova (Berlin: B. Behr, 1870) 1:140-4.

defensive force." If he agreed to this, he would "without doubt be met with joyous enthusiasm, and the people, inspired by his presence, would all rise with unprecedented courage."6 Alexander yielded to Shishkov's entreaties and in July 1812 traveled to Moscow, where he sought to mobilize the estates to support the war. He addressed the estates separately; as Alexander Martin has observed, Russia lacked an Estates General that could represent a Russian nation. The tsar summoned the nobles to recruit serfs from their estates for the militia and called upon merchants to donate large sums to the war effort. The response in both assemblies was enthusiastic. Shishkov composed an imperial rescript on the forming of a militia, hearkening back to the Time of Troubles of the early seventeenth century and evoking the imagery of a people's war, which had been advanced earlier in the decade by conservative poets and playwrights. His people's war would not jeopardize the social hierarchy: it would be led by the military, merchant, and clerical estates personified in their heroic leaders. His views reflected the ideas of many conservative officials, including Fedor Rostopchin, the Governor General of Moscow.⁷

The foe will meet a Pozharskii in every nobleman, in every clergyman a Palytsin, in every citizen a Minin. Noble gentry estate [blagorodnoe dvorianskoe soslovie]! You at all times were the savior of the Fatherland! Holy Synod and clergy! Your warm prayers always summoned blessing on the head of Russia; Russian people [Narod Russkoi]! Descendants of the brave Slavs! You destroyed the teeth of the lions and tigers advancing on you many times. All should unite: with a cross in your hearts and weapons in your hands, no human force will overcome you.8

The image of a united people joining the struggle appeared only in the writings of Sergei Glinka, editor of the journal *Ruskoi vestnik* and a member of the Moscow militia. Glinka understood the enthusiasm greeting Alexander as the counterpart of the national upsurge of 1613 and the rising of the French

⁶ Ibid., 1:144-5.

Andrei Zorin, Kormia dvuglavogo orla...: literatura i gosudarstvennaia ideologiia v poslednei treti xviii-pervoi treti xix veka (Moscow: NLO, 2001), 158-86, 243-4; Alexander M. Martin, Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries: Russian Conservative Thought and Politics in the Reign of Alexander I (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997), 127-42.

⁸ Cited in L. G. Beskrovnyi, Narodnoe opolchenie v otechestvennoi voine 1812 goda; sbornik dokumentov (Moscow: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1962), 14-5.

nation in the first years of the revolution. His account of Alexander's visit to Moscow, ostensibly written in 1812 and published in 1814, described the tsar's welcome in the Kremlin as an expression of a bond of affection between tsar and people. The rapture (*vostorg*), the pity, "the love for the gentle tsar," and anger at the enemy inspired the people, creating a "spiritual outpouring." "Lead us Tsar-Sovereign! We will die or destroy the villain!"9

Glinka tried to bring an element of reciprocity into his account, a sign that the tsar recognizes the devotion of the people. To the shouts of enthusiasm, Alexander came out onto the Red Staircase and paused. "For a few minutes, his eyes and heart took in (obtekali) the throngs of his loyal people." There is an intimation of reciprocity, but no more. Alexander stops to consider the spectacle, but his eyes remain dry. Alexander's appearances at the Kremlin represented a milestone, inaugurating imperial visits to Moscow at moments of crisis during the nineteenth century. However, there was little in the initial ceremonies to present Alexander as leader of a united nation. It was the advance of Napoleon's armies that drove him to appeal to the sentiments of the Russian people as a whole. On September 8, 1812, he signed a manifesto, written by Shishkov, calling upon the Russian people to take up the cause of all peoples united in the struggle against the aggressor. The Russian people, led by the Orthodox Church, were presented for the first time as a force for salvation and liberation.

It is pleasant and characteristic of the good Russian people to repay evil with good! Almighty God! Turn Thy merciful eyes on the Orthodox Church, kneeling in prayer to Thee! Bestow spirit and patience upon Thy faithful people fighting for justice! With this may they triumph over their enemy, overcome them, and, saving themselves, save the freedom and the independence of kings and kingdoms!¹¹

On Christmas day, 1812, Alexander issued Shishkov's famous manifesto proclaiming the expulsion of the invader from Russian territory. This began with ringing praise of the Russian people, who had fulfilled the promise

S. Glinka, "Vospominanie o Moskovskikh proizshestviiakh v dostopamiatnyi 1812 god, ot 11 iulia do izgnaniia vragov iz drevnei Ruskoi Stolitsy," *Ruskoi vestnik* 9 (1814): 11-12.

¹⁰ Ibid., 12-13, 19.

Shishkov, Zapiski, 1: 156-9; V. K. Nadler, Imperator Aleksandr I i ideia sviashchennogo soiuza (Riga, 1886-1892) 2: 54-7.

not to lay down arms until the foe no longer remained on Russian soil. "We took this promise into Our heart, relying on the powerful valor of the people entrusted to Us by God, and we were not disappointed. What an example of daring, courage, piety, endurance and strength was shown by Russia!" But Alexander, wary of these addresses to the people, was careful to emphasize divine intervention as well. The achievement was so staggering, the decree asserted, as to be beyond human powers. "In this deed we recognize Divine Providence itself." Salvation was to be found in religion, which the enemy had scorned. "We will learn from this great and terrible example to be the mild and humble executor of the laws and will of God, not like those who have fallen away from the faith, those desecrators of the temples of God." Alexander then summoned all to give thanks to God in the cathedrals. On the same day, he issued another decree, vowing to build a Cathedral to be named Christ the Redeemer to show thanks to Divine providence for Russia's salvation. ¹²

THE SYMBOLIC INCLUSION OF THE PEASANTRY

The mention of Providence was scarcely formulaic. The involvement of the people in the symbolic triumph of autocracy was Alexander's answer to Napoleon's claims to represent the French nation. However the circumstances that drove the autocratic monarch into an alliance with the masses confronted him with the dilemma intrinsic to reconciling autocratic rule with a principle of popular sovereignty. First, a problem of representation: the involvement of the people in the imperial scenario threatened the image of the tsar as a superordinate force whose title to power came from beyond or above-from foreign imposition, divine mandate, or the emanations of reason. Secondly, it was impossible to present the people as a historical agent while denying them an independent role so as to defend an estate system based on serfdom. As Dominic Lieven has argued, Alexander used the discipline of the established social and political system to maintain the order, cohesion, and swift movement of his armies that made victory possible. The monarchy "triumphed by exploiting all the potential of old-regime states and military systems to their utmost limits." The authorities carefully avoided mobilizing

Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii, Sobranie 1, no. 25,296, December 25, 1812.

the Russian peasantry as an independent force, or giving any indication that would jeopardize the stability of the serf order. Peasants were recruited into militias and partisan units under the command of noble army officers, and by the end of the war, Lieven points out, most militiamen had been merged into the regular army.¹³

The peasants' participation took the form of verbal and visual representation that brought them within the ambit of the myth. Once the French army abandoned Moscow, a group of intellectuals close to the court, among them Alexei Olenin, Alexander Turgeney, Sergei Uvarov, and Vasilii Zhukovskii, gathered around the Petersburg journal Syn otechestva, founded by N. I. Grech in October 1812, and sought to stir national feeling against the French. To achieve this goal, they composed tales of peasant heroism, which presumably occurred in Moscow and Smolensk province as the foe retreated, and thus substantiated the belief in mass popular participation in the struggle. Alexander Turgenev wrote in October 1812 that the purpose of the journal was "to encourage the people and to acquaint them with themselves"; in other words, Elena Vishlenkova commented, to show the people what Russian character was "and to urge their compatriots to show these qualities." Their tales "were taken as true," Mikhail Dmitriev wrote in his memoirs, "they were believed and produced the desired effect—that is hatred for the people that had wounded our national pride."14

The episodes were illustrated in the widely acclaimed series of *lubki*, many of which were republished and would figure in the national memory of 1812, what Stephen Norris in his pioneering study described as "visual nationalism." The medium of *lubki*, originally crude but affecting wood block prints, lent a popular aspect to the appeals of the regime. However, these were works not of peasant craftsmen, but of trained academic artists who put their talents at the service of the national effort. Graduates of the Academy of Arts, Ivan Terebenev, Alexei Venetsianov, and Ivan Ivanov drew upon popular imagery to create scenes ridiculing the enemy and glorifying the shrewdness, power, and

Dominic Lieven, "Russia and the Defeat of Napoleon," *Kritika* vol. 7, No. 2 (Spring 2006): 293-5; Idem, *Russia Against Napoleon*, 218.

Elena Vishlenkova, Vizual'noe narodovedenie imperii, 161-6; M. Dmitriev, Glavy iz vospominanii moei zhizni (Moscow: NLO, 1998), 85.

Stephen M. Norris, A War of Images: Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and National Identity, 1812-1945 (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006).

heroism of Russian peasants. *Lubki* gave the impression of peasant participation by characterizing and stereotyping legendary exploits in conventional popular storybook type imagery, without suggesting that the peasantry as a group could be an agent of the struggle. The popular idiom in this way contributed to the image of a nation united against the foe.

Two principal motifs of the *lubki* issued in 1812 were the evil, effeteness, and ineptitude of the French, particularly Napoleon, and the courage of the peasants and the Cossacks. Several of the *lubki* drew on upon classical themes, seized upon by the Petersburg writers to identify the peasants with classical examples of valor. Terebenev draws on classical imagery to depict the peasants as a gigantic Hercules. The peasant is a colossal intimidating force, dispatching French soldiers with ease, "driving them into the woods and crushing them like flies," as the caption indicates (Figure 1). Ivanov's "Russian Scaevola" shows a peasant repeating a heroic act of a Roman soldier who placed his hand in a fire when brought before the Etruscan king Porcenna. The Russian peasant captive of Napoleon betters Scaevola, chopping off his own arm, which



Figure 1—Ivan Terebenev—The Russian Hercules. 1812 v karikature (Moscow: Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War, 1999).

had been branded with the letter "N"; the French, cast in effete and awkward postures, look on with amazement. 16

Many of the more vivid images of Terebenev, Ivanov, and Venetsianov were collected in Terebenev's *Alphabet of 1812*, which was later reprinted many times to instruct and amuse generations of Russian children. V is for *Vorona*—crow, and the French are "eating crow," so to speak, chewing on the bones: "What a tasty dish is crow! Could I have a leg, please, and why not?" (Figure 2). D is for *domoi pora*, time to go home, and we see the bedraggled soldiers of the grand armée approaching the Arch of Triumph. "Time to go home! March! At last our stay is over. We go with nightcaps whole, but with noses, arms, and legs gone."

Women show no more mercy to the invader. For F, the French are like mice, they are caught in a trap: "I will not free them," the *baba* cries, "but will burn them up. Fie! I've caught the Frenchmen just like vermin. To rid Russia of their stink I guess we'll just have to burn them" (Figure 3). A gigantic peasant holds Napoleon by the scruff of the neck, Napoleon declaring, "I was a hero, but in the hands of the *muzhik*, I play the fool." And the *Alphabet* also took into account Napoleon's real problem with horses: he is shown being pulled on a sleigh by a pig. "There's nothing to be done but to beg the help of swine." Several *lubki* depict Cossack exploits. One swings his *nagaika* to cut down the enemy. "A Frenchman has broad shoulders and a good strong back. Well, what do you know, just the thing for my whip."

For all the glorification of peasant heroism and vilification of the foreigner, I would describe this not as "visual nationalism," but "visual patriotism." The *lubki* sought to mobilize popular sentiment, drawing upon and encouraging antagonism toward the aggressor and everything they represented. They sought to displace the serfs' distress and antagonism onto the image of the foe, the invader. They glorified peasant heroism in legendary space without chancing their mobilization.

Once the invader had been repulsed, *lubki* no longer portrayed these scenes of violence and ridicule. Rather, they, like official rhetoric, increasingly focused on the tsar and his divine mission. They set the imperial scenario in a popular frame by characterizing the Emperor in the conventional *lubok*

Norris, 20-2; Gosudarstvennyi muzei-zapovednik "Borodinskoe pole" (Moscow: Belyi Gorod, 2007), 45. For a detailed explication and semiotic analysis of the genre see Vishlenkova, Vizual'noe narodovedenie imperii, Chapter 3.



Figure 2—Russkaia Azbuka-Letter "B"—The French Eat Crow. http://www.museum.ru/museum/1812/English/Library/Azbuka/index.html



Figure 3—Russkaia Azbuka-Letter "F"—The French like Mice are Caught in a Trap. http://www.museum.ru/museum/1812/English/Library/Azbuka/index.html

image of military leader on horseback leading his troops. In a depiction of the victory over Napoleon outside Paris on March 18, 1814, Alexander rides in the foreground as if he were commanding. Another shows Alexander's triumphal entry into Paris, the conqueror triumphant (Figure 4).



Figure 4—Alexander I's triumphal entry into Paris. Otechestvennaia voina 1812 goda v khudozhestvennykh i istoricheskikh pamiatnikakh iz sobranii Ermitazha (Leningrad: Gos. Ermitazh, 1963).

Alexander continued to view himself as transcendent Western ruler, now governing Russia according to the universal dictates of Christian Providence. He viewed the invasion as punishment for his error of seeking guidance in reason and law. The burning of Moscow was a sign of his transgressions, revealing that his efforts on behalf of mankind had been in vain, and had opened him to knowledge of God. He realized at this point that he lacked the power to transcend his individual interest and attain the general good. The Bible replaced philosophy as the source of the ethical ideas that justified his imperial authority. With his friend Prince A. N. Golitsyn, the Chief

Procurator of the Holy Synod, Alexander read the ninetieth psalm and experienced a revelation. He listened intently to Admiral Shishkov reading passages from Jeremiah about the downfall of Jerusalem.¹⁷

Alexander's conception of 1812 and of Russia's destiny did not accord with Shishkov's, Shishkov wrote about the defense of the Fatherland; he did not dream of conquering France and reforming the French. Quite the contrary; along with Kutuzov, he urged Alexander not to cross the Rhine, but to return and devote himself to "the healing of inner wounds and the restoration of broken forces." Unlike most of the war rhetoric, Shishkov's writings did not demonize Napoleon, and he argued that in the event of Russian victory he should be allowed to retain power. Instead, Shishkov demonized the French people as a whole as profligate and incorrigible. "Could Napoleon have instilled the spirit of rage and evil fate in millions of hearts, if the hearts themselves were not corrupt and breathed depravity?" The differences between the two nations were epitomized by the rulers they "elected." In a project of 1814, which he did not publish or share with the emperor, he asserted that a nation, belonging to the divine order, had elected an anointed of God to begin a great dynasty. A nation living by the laws of the devil "places above themselves a tsar, or more accurately an ataman, a commoner born in Corsica, exceeding all in dishonor, perfidy and malice."18

Alexander rather conceived of himself as redeemer of all mankind as he led Russian armies across Europe. He looked back on 1812 with shame and sought to obliterate the sorry events of that year from his memory as he looked forward to the spiritual liberation of Europe. He could not bear to hear mention of the battle of Borodino with its massive losses, and refused to celebrate its anniversary. To give cultural expression to his vision, Andrei Zorin has shown, he availed himself of the talents of two figures with literary talent, cultural cultural interlocutors: the young and brilliant archimandrite of the Nevsky monastery, Filaret-Drozdov, later the Metropolitan of Moscow, and the poet Vasilii Zhukovskii. Filaret and Zhukovskii gave voice to Alexander's own feelings about the war, the desire to obliterate the memory of the Russian campaign and look forward to the liberation of Europe.

N. K. Shil'der, *Imperator Aleksandr Pervyi*, ego zhizn' i tsarstvovanie (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1897-1898) 3: 117; Nadler, *Imperator Aleksandr I*, 2: 124-33.

¹⁸ Zorin, Kormia dvuglavogo orla..., 250-1

In 1811, Filaret became a close associate of Prince Golitsyn who had built a church in his home, a "secret temple," where Alexander worshipped. Filaret's sermon at the consecration of the church propounded the doctrine of an inner church, an invisible church. He gave ecclesiastical confirmation to Alexander's narrative of evangelical triumph. The defeat of Napoleon was only the first step to the realization of a Christian order in all of Europe. Vasilii Zhukovskii found consolation for romantic disappointment by yielding to the dictates of Providence and extolling Alexander in his poems of 1813, "The Bard in the Russian Camp" and "Epistle to Emperor Alexander." Zhukovskii expressed Alexander's own feelings about the war. He devoted only one tenth of the lines of "To Emperor Alexander" to 1812; the rest extolled the emperor's triumphal campaign across the Europe. While twenty lines rhapsodize on the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig, only one is devoted to battle of Borodino. The burning of Moscow was a prelude to resurrection:

In flames, chains turn to dust, peoples are resurrected! Your shame and the captivity, Moscow, collapsing was buried, And from the ashes of vengeance freedom arose to life.²¹

For Alexander, the military victory was a sign of a dawning universal rebirth. He wrote of his conversion, "From that time, I became a different person. The salvation of Europe from ruin became at once my salvation and my liberation." Alexander assumed the role of the leader not of Russia alone but of world Christendom. The office of Russian emperor was filled with appropriate meaning—the instrument of God, the redeemer of humanity, and the defender of the legitimacy of monarchical government throughout Europe. Alexander continued to present himself as an agent of reform, but as redeemer of souls more than as institutional reformer. He understood the success of the Russian armies in terms of his own drama of personal resurrection. His Christian mission now construed "the general welfare" as a spiritual goal. The victorious battles over Napoleon as the Russian armies crossed Europe assumed the meaning of a prelude to a scenario

¹⁹ Ibid., 265-6.

²⁰ Ibid., 290-1.

V. A. Zhukovskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii V. A. Zhukovskogo v 12 tomakh* (St. Petersburg: Marks, 1902) 2: 73.

of redemption, which he performed in grandiose military spectacles staged in France in 1814 and 1815.

The first took place in Paris on Easter Sunday, March 29, 1814, on the square recently renamed Place de la Concorde. With the Prussian king Frederick Wilhelm III and Prince Karl-Philip Schwartzenberg, representing the Hapsburg court, at his side and a large suite, he reviewed 80,000 troops from the allied armies and the Paris National Guard. Seven regimental priests in "rich vestments" stood at an altar erected on the site of Louis XVI's execution to lead the singing of the Te Deum. Alexander knelt at the altar for the prayer service. The French marshals and generals pressed forward to kiss the Russian cross. Then, once a prayer for the long life of the leaders of the alliance was pronounced, salvos sounded and the crowd shouted "Hoorah!"²² A contemporary print showed Alexander at the altar, Louis XVI in the heavens above bestowing his blessing²³ (Figure 5).

Alexander was deeply moved. He felt inspired with the providential mission of absolution of the French for their misdeeds. He recalled, "This moment was both touching (*umilitelen*) and awesome for me." He was convinced that he had come with his Orthodox army "by the inscrutable will of Providence" to Paris to bring a "purifying and solemn prayer to the Lord." The army now represented the Russian people as the instrument of Providence. He believed that his prayer had achieved its goal and "instilled veneration in the hearts of the French." It had also demonstrated the triumph of Russia as the leader of the alliance. "I strongly sensed the apotheosis of Russian glory among the foreigners, and I myself even won their enthusiasm and forced them to share our national triumph with us." ²⁴

The final events took place on the plains of Champagne near the town of Vertus in August 1815, after the hundred days. With the Prussian king and the Austrian Emperor, Alexander viewed his armies from the hill, Mont Aimé, with admiration. External appearance was indeed the emperor's principal concern, for beauty and symmetry signified order and now the squares formed by the armies gave almost mystical confirmation to the divine source of his power. The displays had been scheduled to include Alexander's name-

²² Russkii invalid, August 25, 1814, 243.

I am grateful to the art historian Guillaume Nicoud for the identification of the figure of Louis XVI in the bubble.

Nadler, Imperator Aleksandr I, 5: 184-6.

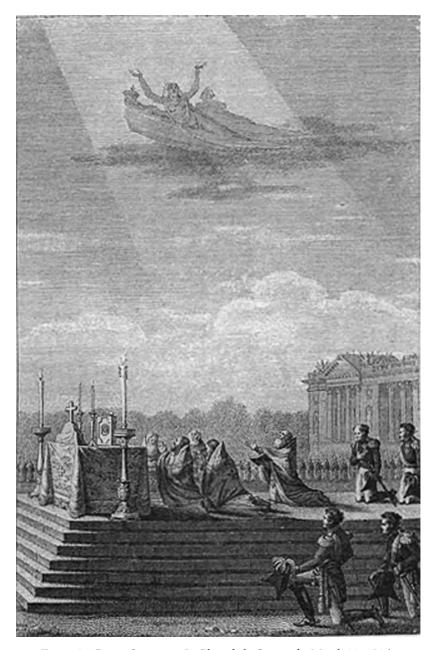


Figure 5—Prayer Service on La Place de la Concorde, March 29, 1814. N. K. Shil'der, *Imperator Aleksandr Pervyi*, vol. 3 (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1899), 289.

day, August 30, the feast of Alexander Nevskii and provided the occasion for an immense religious ceremony, held a few miles from the site of the previous day's activity. Prayer services for the monarchs and the generals and the armies proceeded before seven field chapels. The troops, over one-hundred and fifty thousand, lined up without arms in a pattern of open squares pointing toward a nearby promontory, Mont Cormant. Each unit moved in formation toward its altar. The field was silent as the tsar knelt in prayer with the immense army lined up in symmetrical patterns before him. Two days later the Russian armies began their return home.²⁵

The Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer, which Alexander had promised to build on Christmas Day, 1812, was to be the principal monument to the spiritual truths he had discovered. The cathedral, designed by Alexander Vitberg, would be a soaring statement of eternal spiritual values, a demonstration that the emperor and the Russian people had conquered the beyond as well as the world. Like Alexander, Vitberg believed that harmonious shapes and classical geometrical forms, realized in the proper mass, could express spiritual truths. He designed the cathedral in three levels, the lowest a square, the middle, a circle, the top, a cupola crowned by a cross. The levels expressed three principles—body, soul and spirit—and moments in the life of Christ: Birth, Transfiguration, Resurrection (Figure 6). However, the cathedral, like Alexander's spiritual vision of a redeemed humanity, was destined to remain unrealized, thwarted by human imperfections and the limits of contemporary technology. The tale of the first attempt to build a Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer encapsulates the sorrowful last years of Alexander's reign.²⁶

Alexander I submerged the memory of 1812 in a spiritual affirmation of the universalistic myth of eighteenth century monarchy. It would be his younger brother Nicholas Pavlovich who made the events of 1812 an epic demonstration of the national spirit of the Russian people and their dedication to their westernized ruler and the principle of autocracy. Nicholas's scenario began to take form during the war in the court of the dowager Empress Maria Fedorovna, who gathered and encouraged the advocates of a national monarchy, including not only Shishkov and Sergei

Lieutenant-General Khatov, Dva znamenitye smotra voisk vo Frantsii (St. Petersburg, 1843), 50, 58, 61.

²⁶ Scenarios of Power, 1: 236-8.



Figure 6—Alexander Vitberg—Project for Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer, Moscow. *Zhivopisnoe obozrenie*, Vol. 4, 1838.

Glinka, but Nicholas Karamzin, Vasilii Zhukovskii, and Sergei Uvarov, intellectuals who sensed the shifting winds. The key event was Alexander's visit to Moscow in the fall of 1817 and early 1818, timed to coincide with the birth of an heir to the throne, Grand Duke Alexander Nikolaevich, in the Moscow Kremlin, in order to identify the dynasty with a national symbol. Emperor Alexander honored the inhabitants of the city by bowing to them three times from the Red Staircase, the first recorded occurrence of what became a tsarist tradition. But this prefiguring of a national scenario, clearly under the dowager's influence, did not suggest a conversion of Alexander, who in his last years remained aloof and true to his devotion to a universalistic spiritualism.²⁷

N. N. Mazur, "Iz istorii formirovaniia russkoi natsional'noi ideologii (pervaia tret' XIX v.)," in V. A. Mil'china, A. L. Iurganov, ed., "Tsep' nepreryvnogo predaniia...": Sbornik pamiati A. G. Tartakovskogo (Moscow: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2004), 217-9.

OFFICIAL NATIONALITY AND THE CULT OF 1812

If Alexander I wished to consign the memories of 1812 to oblivion as reminders of his fall from grace, transcended by a universal mission to redeem humanity, Nicholas I sought to resurrect the memories of war, and make them part of a scenario of national rebirth, demonstrating the dedication of the Russian people to the system of autocracy, which had saved Russia from revolution and invasion. The ideas of national identity and distinctiveness, emanating from German idealistic philosophy, were now incorporated into a scenario that presented the absolute monarchy as the expression of the will of national feeling and history. 1812 proved that monarchical Russia supported by the devoted Russian people had defeated the forces of liberalism and revolution, which had defiled and weakened the monarchies of the West. The doctrine of "Official Nationality" evolved during the first decade of his reign and was formulated in Sergei Uvarov's triad, "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality" (Pravoslavie, Samoderzhavie, Narodnost'), which defined the nation and the Russian people by their historical devotion to monarchy. However great the social, cultural, and ethnic division in the empire, Russians displayed unquestioning obedience to a system of absolute monarchy, ruled and embodied by their tsar.²⁸

The theme was introduced in the manifesto announcing the sentencing of the Decembrists, issued on July 13, 1826. The failure of the Decembrist uprising was itself proof of the national character of the monarchy. The Decembrists' design was alien to the Russian people. "Neither in the characteristics nor the ways of the Russian is this design to be found.... The heart of Russia was and will be impervious to it." The manifesto went on "In a state where love for monarchs and devotion to the throne are based on the native characteristics of the people, where there are laws of the fatherland and firmness in administration, all efforts of the evil-intentioned will be in vain and insane." ²⁹

Ceremony, history, and church architecture demonstrated the historic devotion of the Russian people to their westernized conquerors and rulers, setting Russian monarchy apart from its European counterparts. The

See Scenarios of Power, 1: 255-95.

N. K. Shil'der, *Imperator Nikolai Pervyi: ego zhizn' i tsarstvovanie* (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1903), 1: 704-6.

representations of the monarchy showed that the Russian people loved those rulers who had come from outside or appeared to come from outside to govern them. The coronation of Nicholas was exemplary in this respect.³⁰ It was the first "national coronation," which presented the people as an active agent of acclamation. The triple bow that Nicholas performed from the Red Staircase before the people gathered on Kremlin square on August 22, 1826 displayed the mutual bond between tsar and people. Pavel Svin'in, the author of official accounts of the coronation rituals and festivities, acclaimed after the explosion of praise, "I will say that this alone would be enough to win the hearts of the good Russian people, if they did not already belong to the Anointed of God."³¹ It became a ceremony fixed in the tsarist repertoire and regarded as an "ancient Russian tradition" linking nineteenth-century monarchy to the ceremonies of Muscovite Rus'.

The Polish Revolution of 1830 posed a new threat, not to the independence or sovereignty of the monarchy, but to the territorial integrity of the empire. The rapid spread of the insurrection, the difficulties the Russian armies faced in defeating small numbers of Polish resistance, the claims of the revolutionaries to territories reaching into Belorussia and the Ukraine, showed the dangers of bestowing even limited freedoms on a nationality. At the same time, European public opinion, particularly in France, rallied to the Polish cause. In facing the hesitancy of local officials and Russian generals to crush the opposition, Nicholas called upon the memory of the Napoleonic war. He wrote to Field-Marshall Count I. I. Diebich in April, 1831: "For God's sake be firm in your decisions, stop beating around the bush all the time, and try, through some brilliant and daring attack, to prove to Europe that the Russian army is still the same as the one that marched twice to Paris." 32

In 1831, an officially sanctioned brochure, On the Taking of Warsaw, celebrated the victory on August 26, the anniversary of Borodino, with poems by Pushkin and Zhukovskii. Pushkin's "The Anniversary

On Nicholas I's coronation, see *Scenarios of Power*, 1: 279-95.

Pavel Svin'in, "Istoricheskoe opisanie Sviashchennogo Koronovaniia i Miropomazaniia ikh Imperatorskikh Velichestv Gosudaria Imperatora Nikolaia Pavlovicha i Gosudaryni Imperatritsy Aleksandry Feodorovny," Otechestvennye zapiski, 31 (1827): 375.

W. Bruce Lincoln, *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1978), 142-3.

of Borodino" reminded Europe of the fate of those who threatened Russia in 1812: "For them blood of Slavs is heady, but the morning after will be painful." Pushkin's second poem, "To the Slanderers of Russia," responded angrily to the outcry in France in defense of the Poles, as if Poland were a separate nation. Pushkin described the uprising as "a family quarrel" between Slavs and the protests from West expressions of their hatred of Russians. "Won't the Russian Land (russkaia zemlia) arise," he warned. His description of the Russian Land evoked the vast reaches of the empire from Perm to the Crimea, from Finland to Colchis, from the Kremlin to the Chinese border. "So bards send us your embittered sons: there is room for them in the fields of Russia, amongst the graves of their kinsmen." He asked with irony, where Russia should fortify its borders, at the Bug, the Vorsla, the Liman. Who would receive Volynia, the legacy of Bogdan Kmelnitskii? Would Lithuania be torn from them, Kiev? Pushkin extended the heroic defense of the homeland against subjugation in 1812 to the defense of the entire empire against foreign incursion.³³ The poem, Olga Maiorova wrote, inscribed "the suppression of the Polish rebellion of 1830 and the memory of 1812 into a paradigm of ethnic heroism."34

After a dearth of publications in the 1820s about the Napoleonic war, a spate of articles appeared in the pages of the newspapers Severnaia pchela, Russkii invalid, and other periodicals. Works of fiction, memoirs, and diaries gave colorful accounts of the war. In the first draft of a letter, Pushkin wrote, "the noise of 1812...the Moscow fire and Napoleon's flight...overshadow and drown out everything." In this setting, Nicholas introduced the ceremonial and symbolic expressions of victory that would consecrate the war against Napoleon in the national memory. During the 1830s, he marked the events, first by spectacular military reviews, second by beginning the construction of the Christ the Redeemer Cathedral in a "national" style, third with the publication of a massive history of the war, and fourth with the opening of a memorial battlefield at Borodino.

A. S. Pushkin, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii (Leningrad: Akademiia Nauk SSSR, 1948), 3: 269-70.

Olga Maiorova, From the Shadow of Empire: Defining the Russian Empire through Cultural Mythology, 1855-1870 (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 32-3, 201.

A. G. Tartakovskii, 1812 god i russkaia memuaristika (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 186-92.

It proved not so simple to accommodate the tumultuous memories of 1812, as significant as they were, to the imperial myth, even in its national scenario. At first, Nicholas avoided the apprehensions and ambiguities of 1812, and like Alexander focused on the triumphal march across Europe from 1813 to 1815. He staged great military ceremonies in the tradition of Vertus, glorifying Alexander as military leader, the agent of Providence. Massive maneuvers and parades celebrated Russia's invincibility at the unveiling of the Alexandrine column in 1834, the meeting of Russian and Prussian armies at Kalish in 1835, the twenty-fifth anniversary of 1812 at Voznesensk in Kherson province in 1837, and the opening of the Borodino monument in 1839. The spectacles confirmed the theme of official nationality by displaying Russia's devotion to the monarch whose leadership brought victory.³⁶

The dedication of Auguste Ricard de Montferrand's column to Alexander I was the most lavish and magnificent of these events. On August 30, 1834, Alexander I's name day, 120,000 troops massed on or near Palace Square for a ceremony that marked the column as a votive object in the scenario of a national dynasty. The principal published accounts, a brochure by Ivan Butovskii and an article by Vasilii Zhukovskii, described the spectacle as an epitome of the political order that had lifted Russia to height of power and international prestige. At 11 a.m., Nicholas appeared on the square, cannon salvos sounded, and, at the third blast, columns of troops marched toward him. They quickly covered the entire vast expanse (Figure 7). Zhukovskii presented the parade as an emanation of the sovereign's power:

The heavy measured step, shaking the soul, the calm approach of a force that was at once invincible and obedient. The army poured in thick waves and submerged the square. But there was amazing order in this flood. The eyes beheld an innumerable and immense moving mass, but the most striking thing in this spectacle was something the eyes could not see: the secret presence of a will that moved and directed by a mere nod.³⁷

It was in the spirit of monarchical triumphalism that Nicholas conceived the design of his version of the Christ the Redeemer Cathedral in 1832 to memorialize 1812. The architect Constantine Ton provided him with

³⁶ Ibid., 199-210.

V. A. Zhukovskii, "Vospominanie o torzhestve 30 avgusta 1814 goda," Severnaia pchela, September 8, 1834, 807.



Figure 7—Dedication of Alexandrine Column, August 30, 1834. A. Ricard de Montferrand, *Plans et détails du monument consacré à la mémoire de l'Empereur Alexandre* (Paris: Thierry, 1838).

a design that realized his vision of a cathedral not expressing universal values, but embodying the spirit of the Russian past and the influence of Byzantium. The cathedral was constructed not at the distant site of the Sparrow Hills, but near the Kremlin.

Nicholas regarded Byzantium as the supreme example of absolute monarchy and Byzantine art and architecture as the true source of Russia's artistic and architectural heritage. He hoped to promote a national style of architecture by constructing facsimiles of early Russian churches that resembled a Byzantine prototype. When he determined to build a Redeemer Cathedral to memorialize 1812, it would not appear as a grandiose neoclassical edifice with symbolic meaning, but as a new Russo-Byzantine style church that attested to Russia's distinctive artistic heritage. The "Ton style" combined neoclassical structural elements with the Russian-Byzantine design, exemplified in the five-cupola structure of the Vladimir and Moscow Assumption Cathedrals. The cathedral's proportions and arcades, as well as its cupolas, were typically neoclassical, while its exterior design asserted its Russian character. (See Article 9, Figure 1.)

The cathedral assumed the contours of the five-cupola form of the Moscow-Vladimir style, but the resemblance was superficial. The most striking difference was in proportions. Nicholas abandoned Alexander's grandiose dreams of a gigantic temple to dwarf all other buildings. However, he too associated grandeur with size, and as a monument to the 1812 war its proportions had to be monumental. The height from base to the cross was about 340 feet. This meant that it stood over one hundred feet higher than St. Sofia in Constantinople. Ton's neoclassical rendering of a Russian original more than any other building expressed what was meant by "national."

The composition of the initial volumes of the official history of the Napoleonic wars focused on the triumphal march across Europe. Nicholas vested the author, Alexander I's adjutant, Nikolai Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, with the authority to scour archives in the capitals and provinces for documents relevant to the subject, and even allowed him to consult forbidden foreign books on the subject. The first volume published covered the year 1814, as A. G. Tartakovskii has observed, revealing Nicholas's determination to glorify Alexander I as military leader in the European campaign.³⁸ The volume on 1812 appeared only in 1839, and the tsar permitted publication only after closely examining and demanding alterations in the text, eliminating the role of the militias and making sure that Kutuzov did not figure in a favorable light, while generals who served in Nicholas's entourage were singled out for praise.³⁹ The work served as the basis for all later writings on 1812, including Tolstoy's War and Peace, which sought to refute the history's premise that the victory was the achievement of the tsar and his generals. Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii was hailed as the successor to Karamzin, deserving of the title "historiographer." The author received many honors, was promoted to Lieutenant-General, appointed to the Senate, and designated a member of the Academy in the division of Russian Language and Literature. Criticisms of the work could appear only after Nicholas's death. 40

A. Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, Opisanie pokhoda vo Frantsiiu v 1814 g. (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Shtaba Otdiel'nago Korpusa Vnutrennei Strazhi,1836); Tartakovskii, 1812 god i russkaia memuaristika, 203-4.

³⁹ A. I. Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, *Opisanie voiny v 1812 godu po vysochaishemu poveleniiu* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Shtaba Otdiel'nago Korpusa Vnutrennei Strazhi, 1839); Tartakovskii, *1812 god i russkaia memuaristika*, 204-8.

⁴⁰ Tartakovskii, 1812 god i russkaia memuaristika, 208-12.

The culmination of the anniversary celebrations took place in 1839, the anniversary of the victory in Europe. On August 26, 1839, Alexander's name day, Nicholas opened the Borodino Battlefield as a site of commemoration, the first such battlefield memorial in history. It was perhaps the most significant act of his dramatization of 1812, commemorating a battle that was hardly a victory, costing tens of thousands of Russian lives, with a national shrine. The center of the field was marked by a monument, the work of A. U. Adamini. An octagonal column, crowned by a sphere resembling a church cupola below a cross, it appeared as "something between a column and a church bell tower," thus evoking the union of state and Orthodox Church proclaimed by the Official Nationality doctrine. The image of Christ appeared on the front of the octagonal base, with the words "Salvation is in him. The battle of Borodino August 26, 1812." Inscriptions on the seven other sides described the actions of the Russian and French armies. 41 The Borodino Savior Monastery, founded by the Abbotress Maria Tuchkova, whose husband lost his life during the battle, was built on the field and dedicated at the ceremonies. 42

The celebrations included a procession of the cross, a parade, and a reenactment of the battle. One-hundred-fifty thousand soldiers stood in three columns on slopes leading down to the new Borodino monument at the scene of what had been the most ferocious clashes. Nicholas was enraptured by the spectacle of battle, but was unhappy with the defensive tactics of the Russian forces and commanded them to "go on the offensive." Afterward, he asked the general at his side, "don't you think that if Field Marshal Kutuzov had acted as we did today, the outcome of the battle would have been different?" Most of the generals remained silent, but someone remarked, "The tsar forgets that today there were no cannon shells or bullets, and that he was not facing Napoleon."⁴³

THE CRIMEAN WAR AND THE MEMORY OF 1812

The Crimean War burst the illusions of 1812. The war itself began under the assumption by Nicholas I and Alexander II of the invincibility of Russian

⁴¹ K. G. Sokol, *Monumenty imperii* (Moscow: GEOS, 1999), 120-21.

Inokinia Ol'ga (Sergeeva), "Borodino i russkaia sviatost'," in *Borodinskoe pole: istoriia, kul'tura, ekologiia*, Vyp. 2 (Borodino: Mozhaisk-Terra, 2000), 101-11.

⁴³ Tartakovskii, 1812 god i russkaia memuaristika, 201.

armies when called upon to defend the boundaries of the empire. In February 1854, when Nicholas I announced that Russia was severing relations with France, he evoked the parallel with 1812. "If the enemies attack Russia's borders, we will be ready to meet them with the severity bequeathed us by our ancestors. Are we not the same Russian people whose valor is attested by the memorable events of 1812?"44 Such claims were repeated in newspaper accounts and sermons during the war. The newspaper Russkii invalid printed an account of the siege of Odessa, noting that "merry souls sang the native legends of the year twelve." Archbishop Inokentii of the Tauride-Kherson interpreted the allies' attack on Crimea as a repeat of Napoleon's 1812 invasion, and warned them that they would confront the great expanses, harsh climate, and wild animals of Russia, suggesting they would seek to advance to the interior. Popular poets took up the theme of Pushkin's "To the Slanderers of Russia," one concluding his verse like Pushkin, "We will lay your bones to rest, among the bones of your kinsmen." After Nicholas realized that the war was going badly, he issued a manifesto, which proved to be his last, on December 25, 1854, the very day that Napoleon's armies had left Russian soil in 1812. The manifesto sought to reinforce determination in the midst of setbacks. He declared "When necessary, we all, tsar and subjects to repeat the words Emperor Alexander spoke in a time of trial similar to this—stand before the ranks of our enemies with sword in hand and the cross in our hearts to defend the most precious blessings in the world: the defense of the Fatherland."45

Terebenev's *lubki* were circulated along with others adapted to the current scene. They showed the bravery of the peasants and Cossacks and presented derisive images of foreigners, especially of the British and Turks. They reproduced the manner of 1812, presenting the conflict in folk characterization to give the conflict a popular resonance. However, the emphases were new. They focus on the army and Cossack units as the bearers of the struggle, rather than on legendary, archetypical evocations of peasant exploits. The emperor does not appear; the struggle is waged by his loyal armies. One *lubok* depicts a famous encounter between Cossacks and Turks in the Caucasus near Peniak. The Turks replace the French as symbols of cowardice and ineptitude, though they are not demonized as in the

⁴⁴ Maiorova, From the Shadow of Empire, 30-1

⁴⁵ Ibid., 31-4.

1812 caricatures. There are depictions of the taking of the fortress of Kars and sorties at Sevastopol, the Russian soldiers appearing as mighty figures subduing the craven Turks. Official rhetoric suggested that other nationalities such as Tatars engaged in the battle. *Russkii invalid* quoted the words of an imam serving as an army chaplain summoning his coreligionists to follow the example of 1812 and defend their homeland "in whose depths reposed...the bones of their fathers." ⁴⁶ A *lubok* shows Ukrainians joining in defense of what was presumably their homeland as well.

Two innovations, observed by Norris, were scenes of exploits of actual individuals and the appearance of clergymen. A scene of the "podvig (exploit) of ensign (Praporshchik) Shchegolev, later promoted to Staff Captain" showed the ensign heading a battery that scored a hit on an allied ship shelling Odessa, then under siege. In the lubok, "The Praiseworthy Podvig of Ensign Kudriavtsev," an ensign assails Turkish soldiers after they had killed a priest and were about to violate his church. The victory of Father Savinov depicts the tale of a priest bearing a cross during a battle in the Kamchatka campaign and attributes the victory to his intervention. The caption explains that the priest appeared at the moment of a fierce counterattack of the enemy and "raising the cross and singing the troparion 'The Glory of God is with Us,' inspired the troops to victory." Turkish atrocities are shown to result from their Islamic religion, while the Russians' victory is ensured by their Orthodox faith. Orthodoxy is thus incorporated into the struggle, but without the suggestion of a holy war, as would be the case during the Russo-Turkish war of 1876-77.⁴⁷ It is the defense of homeland and faith, not the struggle against the infidel, that was at stake.

The triumphalist bravado of the propaganda was punctured by the fall of Sevastopol, the major Russian fortress on the Black Sea, at the cost of thousands of lives. The events of 1812 had inflicted a wound to the Russian national psyche, the invader sweeping through Russia and seizing Moscow. Only Borodino provided heroic redemption, though with colossal losses. The wound of 1855 was to the image of Russia as an empire united in defense of the homeland. Alexander Herzen wrote that the landing of foreign troops in Crimea was perceived as a threat to Russian territory, arousing fears that they would advance into the heartland of Russia, which necessitated a defense

⁴⁶ Ibid., 31.

Norris, A War of Images, 57-63.

of Russia itself, "saving the wholeness, *tselost*' (integrity) of the state."⁴⁸ Tolstoy's *Sevastopol Sketches* revealed the horrible suffering and deaths at the scene, the social divisions that emptied the heroic bravado of patriotic meaning for those who were truly heroic, calling into question the unity of the Russian people. "The hero of my tale," Tolstoy wrote in the last lines of one of his sketches, "is Truth."

Even after the fall of Sevastopol, Alexander II remained captive of Nicholas's triumphalist scenario. In September and October 1855, he traveled to Moscow, New Russia, and Crimea. He clearly understood his visit to Moscow as a repeat of Alexander I's in July, 1812. He wrote to General Mikhail Gorchakov, who was commanding troops in the Crimea, "Two years after the Moscow fire our victorious troops were in Paris. We are the same Russians and God is with us!" He sent Gorchakov the icon of St. Sergei carried by the Moscow militia in 1812. Severnaia pchela reported that in Moscow, "where the Russian element is even denser," the feeling of vengeance was even stronger than in St. Petersburg. The correspondent explained how Alexander prayed at the Iberian Chapel, not for himself but for Russia. People of all estates, many of them in Russian costume, swarmed around the tsar, giving him their support. Alexander took the displays of popular enthusiasm as a sign of support for himself and the dynasty. 49

Despite the seemingly hopeless situation in Crimea and Austria's warning to enter on the side of the England and France, he determined to fight on. His visit to the armies in the Crimea only strengthened this resolve. He helped to formulate campaign plans and expected that disorders among the French lower classes would force France to withdraw from the conflict. At first, he confidently rejected terms proposed by the allies. It was only after Austria issued an ultimatum and even Prussia hinted at intervention that Alexander relented and sued for peace.⁵⁰

At this point, the scenario of invincible union of triumphal monarch and devoted people collapsed, and Alexander, abashed by the terms of the Peace of Paris, began to display humility, broke with his father's narrative

Tartakovskii, 1812 god i russkaia memuaristika, 230; on the concept of tselost' see my article "The 'Integrity' (tselost') of the State in Imperial Russian Representation," in Ab Imperio, No. 2 (2011): 20-45. Article 11 in Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule.

⁴⁹ See Scenarios of Power, 2: 25.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 2: 25-6.

and performed his own scenario, one of mutual love and gratitude between tsar and people. He opened the regime to talk of reform, and demonstrated his generosity to his people, who, he expected would respond with gratitude. He thus perpetuated the official nationality myth, but now on the basis of mutual devotion and sacrifice, rather than reverent submission.

The relaxation of the censorship and the talk of reform permitted the emergence of a popular discourse on 1812. The representation of 1812 as the awakening of a sense of national consciousness apart from the state appeared in educated society, expressed most powerfully in the writings of Alexander Herzen in London. Herzen elaborated a civic tradition, exemplified by the Decembrists and the circles of young intellectuals of the 1840s, the remarkable generation who represented the seeds of a new Russia. For educated society, the misery of war and the suffering of the common soldiers captured by Tolstoy's *Sevastopol Sketches*, and Ilarion Prianishnikov's "The Year 1812," painted in 1873, a grim realist answer to the merry *lubki* of 1812.

THE CONSECRATION OF THE CATHEDRAL OF THE REDEEMER AND THE CENTENARY OF 1912

After the Crimean defeat, the memory of 1812 figured little in official presentations. In 1862, the Holy Synod issued a decree barring military ceremonies to commemorate victories other than the battle of Poltava, declaring that those "held significance only for their own times."⁵¹ The field of Borodino fell into neglect until 1885, when Alexander III conducted large-scale maneuvers to mark the battle and ordered repair of many of the monuments.⁵²

The last official celebration of 1812 in the nineteenth century took place at the consecration of the Christ the Redeemer Church after Alexander III's coronation on May 26, 1883, the Feast of the Ascension. The consecration

⁵¹ In 1864, in the wake of the crushing of the Polish rebellion of 1863, Alexander II did stage a parade of the Petersburg guards' regiments in the capital to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the taking of Paris. But Moscow journalists covering the event, while remarking upon Alexander I's role as savior of nations, remarked that the parade glorified only the emperor without taking into account the participation of the Russian people in the struggle against Napoleon (Maiorova, From the Shadow of the Empire, 223, n.86, 114-16).

⁵² S. A. Malyshkin, "Iz istorii muzeefikatsii Borodinskogo polia, 1839-1911," in Borodinskoe pole: istoriia, kul'tura, ekologiia, 172-3.

had been intended for the late 1870s, but had been postponed due to the revolutionary movement. The ceremonies recalled 1812 but now presented it less in terms of glorious military triumph, and more of relief at the defeat of the revolutionary movement: the feat of Alexander III, pictured as an ethnic Russian tsar, reflected the force and spirituality of the Russian people. It was an expression of civic peace, as the Russian tsar showed himself in union with the Russian people, represented by the Orthodox Church.⁵³

The imperial manifesto on the dedication of the cathedral incorporated the triumph of 1812 into the new national myth evoking an ancient union of tsar and people. In the words of his mentor, Constantine Pobedonostsev, Alexander III had fulfilled Alexander I's vow to build a cathedral as an expression of thanksgiving to God for the salvation of the fatherland. The consecration of the church in the midst of Russians gathered for the coronation attested to "how holy and fast is the centuries old union of love and faith tying the Monarchs of Russia with the loyal people." The monument was to "merciful Divine Providence for Our beloved Fatherland, a monument to peace in the midst of painful trial after cruel combat, undertaken by the humble and pious Alexander (the First) not for conquest, but for the defense of the Fatherland against the foe." ⁵⁴

Bearing miracle icons, the clergy moved from various churches to the Kremlin and then to the Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer. The processions enacted a succession from the Assumption Cathedral, ancient but miniscule, to the immense and ornate new edifice that could hold nearly 10,000 worshipers and the cupolas of which were visible across Moscow. The succession between churches established the spiritual continuity between Muscovy and Imperial Russia proclaimed in the new national myth.

The clergy then arrayed themselves around the cathedral, the priest of each church facing the building before the gonfalons. At ten, the emperor, wearing a general's uniform and mounted on a white horse, followed by the imperial family in a carriage, made his way from the Kremlin palace to the cathedral.

⁵³ E. I Kirichenko and A. M. Denisov, Khram Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve: Istoriia proektirovniia i sozdaniia sobora; Stranitsy zhizni, gibeli i vozrozhdeniia, 1813-1997 (Moscow: Planeta, 1997), 140-3.

V. Komarov, V pamiat' sviashchennago koronovaniia Gosudaria Imperatora Aleksandra III i Gosudaryni Imperatritsy Marii Fedorovny (St. Petersburg: V. V. Komarov, 1883), 445-6; Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii, Sobranie 3: No. 1602, May 26, 1883.

The bands along the way played "God Save the Tsar!" other military music, and Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture," to the accompaniment of cannon salvos and clouds of smoke. It was a ceremony of merger and inclusion, the Muscovite past with the huge revival Cathedral, the military glory of 1812 with the faithful Orthodox Church hierarchy, a statement of the solidarity of a regime threatened within and without.

After the sanctification of the altar, the imperial family, the suite, high officials, and foreign guests joined the clergy in the first procession of the cross around the cathedral, which completed the consecration. The procession moved between the lines of the clergy and the standards of the regiments participating in the event. To the strains of the hymn "Kol' slaven" and the ringing of church bells, the artillery launched into a salvo that continued throughout the procession. As one account observed, the music, the parade, and the cannons recalled that "a cathedral was being consecrated that had been erected in memory of the glorious deeds of the Russian army."55

The procession then returned to the cathedral for the holding of its first mass. At the conclusion, the emperor kissed the cross, whereupon Bishop Ambrosii of Kharkov declaimed a speech emphasizing that Alexander III had completed the work of his forbears, "who sowed that others may reap." With the coronation, the bishop concluded, Alexander took up his labor of caring for the fate of "the great Russian people." Then, addressing the empress, he characterized the emperor in terms of his scenario, as a tsar at one with his laboring subjects. "The tiller of the soil, working in the field, weary and needing replenishing of his force awaits his food from his home, from his wife: may Your love, with all the treasures of the loving heart, be the bread replenishing the forces of the Most August Toiler of Your Russian land (*Avgusteishii Truzhenik zemli Russkoi Tvoei*)." 56

Peter Il'ich Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture, commissioned for the occasion, presented the war against Napoleon in the triumphalist spirit of the resurgent autocracy. Tchaikovsky juxtaposed two national anthems that were not in use in 1812. The rousing, triumphal cadences of "God, Save the Tsar," composed in 1834, play against the fanfares of the Marseillaise, which Napoleon had banned as "a summons to rebellion." Tchaikovsky himself initially had contempt for a work that he had put together in less than a week and considered

Komarov, V pamiat' sviashchennago... Aleksandra III, 436-41.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 441-4.

"very loud and noisy." ⁵⁷ Like the Redeemer Cathedral, which he also disliked, it was an eclectic combination of disparate motifs. At the same time, the medley of an Orthodox hymn, *tropar*, a Russian folk dance, and "God Save the Tsar" in tribute to the memory of 1812, lifted it into an legendary patriotic space, where faith, nationality, and authority were conjoined in a melodic union that transcended social and intellectual differences and the terrible losses that accompanied 1812 and Russia's later wars.

* * *

The final tsarist celebration of 1812, the Borodino centenary of August 1912, took place in a different political and symbolic context. Along with the Poltava bicentenary in 1909 and the tercentenary of the Romanov Dynasty in 1913, it figured as Russia's entry into the rivalry of European monarchs displaying enthusiastic popular consensuses for their regimes. To display the grandeur of the setting and the significance of the event, the government undertook a major transformation of the battlefield. Nicholas I may have constructed the first battlefield museum in history, but decades of neglect had left a sprawling derelict landscape of forest and swamp. A new road provided access to the field. Redoubts and fleches were repaired, dozens of monuments built to mark the location of the position of the regiments.⁵⁸ Of the thirty-three monuments we see on the field today, all but a few arose to celebrate the centenary.

Nicholas II did not seek consensus. Rather, the centenary proved to be an episode in the ongoing political struggle that would culminate in 1917. As I have argued, Russia lacked a legal tradition of dynastic succession, obliging each ruler to justify his power by the representation of heroic acts of transcendence for the defense, expansion, and welfare of the fatherland.⁵⁹ The great historical events celebrated the triumph of the dynasty, Poltava and Borodino, and the election of Michael Romanov in 1913. In the aftermath

⁵⁷ Alexander Poznansky, *Tchaikovsky: The Quest for the Inner Man* (New York: Schirmer, 1991), 380; Anthony Holden, *Tchaikovsky: A Biography* (New York: Bantam, 1995), 203-5.

G. N. Ul'ianova, "Natsional'nye torzhestva," in Rossiia v nachale XXogo veka: issledovaniia, ed. A. N. Sakharov (Moscow: Novyi Khronograf, 2002), 552-4.

⁵⁹ See Article 2 in Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule, or "The Representation of Dynasty and the "Fundamental Laws" in the Evolution of Russian Monarchy," Kritika vol. 13, No. 2 (Spring 2012): 265-300.

of the revolution of 1905, Nicholas and Alexandra performed the ultimate dynastic scenario in a replica of a seventeenth century village at Peterhof. He envisioned himself as a tsar with divine mandate enjoying a spiritual bond with the masses and leading a recrudescence of Russian monarchy, reenacting its resurgence like the early Romanovs after the Time of Troubles.

Rather than seeking to mobilize consensus, the Borodino Centenary followed a narrative of exclusion, displaying the tsar's personal bond with the peasantry and banishing the elements of the new political classes. The names of the deputies of the Duma were omitted from the guest list on the field of Borodino where the ceremonies took place: Only the chairmen of the Duma and of the State Council could attend. To deepen the insult, members of the half-appointive State Council received invitations to the subsequent events in Moscow, but not the deputies of the Duma. In response, Mikhail Rodzianko, the Chairman of the Duma and a chamberlain of His Majesty's Court, left the celebration after the dedication of a monument and boycotted the Moscow celebrations.

The symbolic continuity of the monarchy of 1812, the sharing in a triumphal union of emperor, state, and the estates, evoked in previous celebrations, now was replaced by an effort to establish association by descent. Evocations of images of Nicholas's and the celebrants' forbears presented him, the army, and people as descendants of the participants in the battle of Borodino, blessed by the Orthodox Church and led by his forefather, Alexander I, whose glory now redounded upon him. The regimental monuments erected across the field honored the ancestors of the members of the regiments.

On August 22, he chatted with several old men who he was told had participated in the events. One of them claimed to be 122 years old. Nicholas wrote to his mother, "Just imagine to be able to speak to a man who remembers everything, describes details of the action, indicates the place where he was wounded etc., etc.! I told them to stand next to us at the tent during the prayer service and watched them. They all were able to kneel with the help of their

Rodzianko explained his absence to the the Minister of Interior, Kokovtsev, and the Master of Ceremonies Baron Korff. According to Rodzianko, the latter replied "Members of the Duma do not enjoy the right of access to the Court." Rodzianko retorted, "This is not a Court, but a national celebration. Besides, Russia was saved, not by masters of ceremonies, but by her people" (M. V. Rodzianko, *The Reign of Rasputin: An Empire's Collapse* [London: A. M. Phillpot, 1927], 65-6).

canes and then stood up!" Vladimir Dzhunkovskii, the governor of Moscow, described meeting with the old soldiers on August 22 and recalled that they remembered little about the battle, but were accorded special treatment. They rode about in carriages and received the best accommodations and places at the ceremony. One even described Napoleon, as a "fine fellow" with a "beard down to his waist"⁶¹ (Figure 8).



Figure 8—"Veterans of 1812" at the Borodino Centennial. L'Illustration.

On August 25, Nicholas joined a procession of the cross, which had borne the icon of the Smolensk Mother of God that had blessed Kutuzov's army all the way from Smolensk to Borodino, a distance of more than 140 miles. He did not look like a commander: his father had never promoted him to general and he wore the uniform of an officer of the Horse-Guards regiment, a unit that had distinguished itself at Borodino. To the strains of the hymn "Kol' Slaven," he met the procession and followed it to the Campaign Chapel of Alexander I for a prayer service (Figure 9). Then the icon was carried past the lines that extended nearly three miles of those units whose predecessors had fought at Borodino, reenacting a ceremony of 1812.

V. F. Dzhunkovskii, *Vospominaniia* (Moscow: Izd. Im Sabashnikovyhkh, 1997), 2: 19; Ul'ianova, "Natsional'nye torzhestva," 553-4.



Figure 9—Nicholas II following Procession of the Cross at the Borodino Centennial, August 25, 1912. *L'Illustration*.

On August 26, the anniversary of the battle, Nicholas addressed 4,550 peasant elders, identifying them with their forbears' feats of heroism. He spoke to them of the battle "where your grandfathers and great-grandfathers fought against the courageous foe and defended the native land with the help of faith in God, devotion to the Tsar and Love for the Native land." The elders represented the peasantry as a whole for Nicholas. The monarchist newspaper Moskovskie vedomosti predicted that their memories of the event would "meet a warm response in all villages and hamlets where they will be transmitted by the fortunate participants in the Borodino festivities."

Liberal opinion did not fail to note that ceremonies focusing on the monarch, the army, the church, and official delegates from the peasantry left out the Russian nation. The centenary did not enjoy the assumptions of the totalizing myth that had informed earlier celebrations. The identification of the sovereign with the state had been thrown into doubt by Alexander III, who asserted the principle of personal rule, a national autocracy centered in the

 ^{62 &}quot;Dnevnik Nikolaia II," (August 25, 1912- May 6, 1913), GARF, 601-1-259,
 3-4; Dzhunkovskii, Vospominaniia, 2: 35-36; Niva, September 8, 1912, 722-3;
 Moskovskie vedomosti, September 8, 1912, 2.

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Ministry of Interior, obedient to his will and unencumbered by rule and law. Nicholas had extended this distrust to all the institutions of the Russian state, a tendency that became even more pronounced after the creation of the Duma, and extended to the educated elements in Russian society. By this time, a broad swathe of the educated population had come to regard the nation in terms of a Russian state representing the people and 1812 as a struggle of the Russian people, not merely the tsar and his armies. This view was elaborated in an article written by an Ufa school teacher, V. Efremov, entitled "Why is the War of 1812 Called the War for the Fatherland?" which appeared in a brochure, Love for the Fatherland: the Source of National Strength. The united people and the fatherland were the two main components of Russian nationality for Efremov; the emperor was in the background. It was not only the army but "the entire people who defended the freedom, independence and unity of their land." At this time, "the native inhabitants of the Russian state felt immediately that they were Russian, that they formed one people who were ready to sacrifice all for the good of their fatherland." The union was not only between tsar and people but "the close union of all estates" for the purpose of attaining the general welfare."63 The 1912 centenary put on display not the devotion of the people to the dynasty and the person of the tsar that Nicholas I and his interlocutors had proclaimed but the great chasm between the tsar and his visions and the wishes of the vast majority of the Russian people he claimed the title to rule.

V. Efremov, "Otchego voina 1812 goda nazyvaetsia 'Otechestvennoi'?" in V. Efremov and P. D. Zhukov, *Liubov' k otechestvu: istochnik sily narodnoi* (Ufa, 1912), 11, 20-21. I thank Charles Steinwedel for providing me with a copy of this brochure.

8. "Glas naroda": Visual Representations of Russian Monarchy in the Era of Emancipation



In the months following the emancipation of the serfs in February, 1861, there appeared a number of unusual visual representations of the Russian monarchs, popular prints, *lubki*, celebrating the emancipation and the dedication of Monument to the Millennium in Novgorod. The *lubki* were meant to mark the beginning of an era of good feeling and progress to begin with the emancipation of the serfs. Pictures and sculpture expressed the vision of a renewed autocracy united with the Russian people and educated society by bonds of mutual loyalty and devotion and engaged in a common effort to advance Russia along the path of economic and intellectual progress. The vision was also a reaffirmation of the dominant myth of transcendence and dominance that ensured the supremacy of the imperial will—the scenario or contemporary enactment of the myth that elevated the present ruler as the central figure, the hero in a drama of transformation and progress.

Art, as well as rhetoric, sought to reconcile these two divergent goals, intimacy and distance. The iconography of the monarch in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century sought to distance him from the everyday and the people—to project him into what I will refer to as "heroic space," where prodigies of beauty, achievement, and power were wrought. The monarch appeared as warrior, as legislator, as figure in Arcadia, as bearer of the regalia of Russian monarchy. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the relationship between monarch and people required different forms of representation. Responding to the ideas of nationality and popular sovereignty, ceremony and official art were employed to bring the people into the picture, to give the sense of the inclusiveness of monarchy. This tendency

reached its culmination during the era of emancipation, when official art strove to depict the warm rapport that presumably existed between the emperor and the Russian people.

* * *

The word lubok refers to popular prints, originally produced by wood blocks or later copper plates that became widespread in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Lubki were printed on individual sheets that appealed to the common people. Their subject matter varied—religious figures, folklore heroes from byliny, conquerors like Alexander the Great and Ermak, popular generals, as well as satirical and moral tales.² The term also has been used, correctly or incorrectly, to describe pictures produced commercially from more sophisticated techniques, including lithography. All of these works employed simplified forms, techniques partly borrowed from icon painting, partly from primitive folk art. They ostensibly reflected a folk spirit, though some scholars argue that the increasing influence of commercialization and formal art deprived later lubki of their popular character and force. In any case, all of these works strove to produce the effect of the wood-block pictures—to capture the folk spirit and imagination. Iurii Lotman pointed out the playful, theatrical nature of lubok art, viewing it as an aspect of carnival and festival, involving the active participation of the viewer.³ M. A. Alekseeva also observed the heroic side of *lubok* art, which produced a mood of "epic festivity, joyous tranquility" (nastroenie epicheskoi prazdnichnosti, radostnogo spokoistviia). In a world without perspective and

On the meanings and development of *lubok* prints, see M. A. Alekseeva, "Russkaia narodnaia kartinka: Nekotorye osobennosti khudozhesvennogo iavleniia," in *Narodnaia kartinka XVII-XIX vekov: materialy i issledovaniia*, ed. M. A. Alekseeva and E. A. Mishina (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 1996), 3-14; E. A. Mishina "Terminy 'lubok'i 'narodnaia kartinka' (k voprosu o proiskhozhdenii i upotreblenii)," in idem, 15-28.

For a concise summary of the production and reception of *lubok* prints in the nineteenth century as well as their dominant themes, see Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature*, 1861-1867 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 62-7.

Ju. Lotman, "Khudozhestvennaia priroda russkikh narodnykh kartinok," in Narodnaia graviura i fol'klor v Rossii XVII-XIX vv. (Moscow: Sov. khudozhnik, 1976), 227-47; See also B. M. Sokolov, Khudozhestvennyi iazyk russkogo lubka (Moscow: Russian Humanities University, 1999).

great detail, figures were depicted as wondrous or grotesque, and their size was a measure of their greatness, prowess, and standing.⁴

In the eighteenth century, *lubki* were held in contempt as a lower form of art in official circles, though Catherine the Great circulated several occasionally, for example, to ridicule monks and Old Believers. In the first years of Alexander I's reign, *lubki* spread knowledge of the horrors of smallpox.⁵ The use by the government of lubki as a means to arouse patriotic sentiment among the people and to represent the emperor as a leader began with Napoleon's invasion in 1812. Prints by formally trained artists, namely Ivan Terebenev, Ivan Ivanov, and Aleksei Venetsianov, borrowed techniques of the *lubki* to characterize peasants and others routing Napoleon and his troops and subjecting them to comic indignities (See Article 7).⁶

After the victory, popular prints were used, for the first time, to glorify the emperor as heroic leader of the struggle (See Article 7). These prints borrowed several features of the *lubok*, the standardized characterization of the soldiers. the simplified features of the chief figures. But, retaining perspective and elements of classical iconography, they did not seek to imitate lubok artistic style and composition. A. K. Sakovich described such pictures as "political graphics" (politicheskaia grafika), executed by professional artists. It was a Russian counterpart to European broadsides, "an eclectic pseudo-popular style of pictures for the people," rather than work by the people themselves.⁷ These pictures did not breach the emperor's heroic space. Alexander is shown commanding his guardsmen, or flanked by the triumphal leaders led by allegorical figures below. He tolerated expressions of nation and popular support only under the duress of the invasion, and the people did not figure in the scene. At the same time the market in lubki continued to flourish, the subject matter of folk tales and saints' lives remaining dominant without intruding into delicate political matters.

⁴ Alekseeva, "Russkaia narodnaia kartinka," 10.

Dmitrii Rovinskii, *Russkie narodnye kartinki*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg: R. Golike, 1900), 489-90.

See Article 7 and Stephen M. Norris, A War of Images: Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and National Identity, 1812-1945 (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 11-35.

⁷ A. G. Sakovich, "Moskovskaia narodnaia graviura vtoroi poloviny XIX veka (K probleme krizisa zhanra)," in Narodnaia kartinka XVII-XIX vekov: materialy i issledovania, 139.

This state of equilibrium, however, did not continue through the reign of his successor, his brother Nicholas I. Under the threat of revolution, Nicholas sought a redefinition of the relationship between monarch and people, emphasizing the close national and popular roots of the autocracy. Russian monarchy was presented as the expression of the wishes of a historically obedient and devoted Russian people. The lubki, which had been largely ignored and produced and distributed freely, now represented a sphere of independent and unconstrained creativity that clashed with the presumably monarchist spirit of the population. A decree of 1839 introduced censorship for all prints and print books. The widespread availability of wood blocks and copper plates, however, made it difficult to control the production of lubki, and during the reaction to the revolution of 1848, the government instituted more vigorous measures to curb them. The minister of education, Platon Shirinskii-Shikhmatov deplored the "harmful influence...on educated village inhabitants" of lubki, which "quite often concern subjects of spiritual matters." He particularly feared lubki produced by Old Believer communities. The result was a law of January 2, 1851 that codified the rules about the *lubki*, recommended the destruction of previously existing plates, and placed the production of new ones under government supervision. For the great historian and collector of lubki, Dmitrii Rovinskii, 1839 represented the end of the independent production of folk pictures (narodnye kartinki), and he concluded his massive work on the subject with that year.8 Indeed, the policy drove many of the independent cottage artisans out of business and promoted the concentration of the *lubok* trade in Moscow, where publishing entrepreneurs adopted the new process of lithography. Stephen Norris has shown how the publishing companies reached a modus vivendi with the government, producing lubki of a patriotic character and avoiding serious clashes with the censors.9

Popular prints of the emperor began to appear, appropriating the artistic idiom of the *lubki* and seeking to capture their spirit of the fantastic and otherworldly. They certainly can be described as political graphics, but I shall continue to follow the conventional usage and refer to them as *lubki*. They depict Nicholas I in various poses during the Danube campaign. One *lubok*

⁸ Alekseeva; "Russkaia narodnaia kartinka," 7; Rovinskii, *Russkie narodnye kartinki*, vol. 1, 82; Norris, *A War of Images*, 44-8.

⁹ Norris, A War of Images, 48-50 (54-79.)

portrays him at the bivouac near a campfire with his suite at his side. In the background, there are other tents and campfires. Nicholas stands in a pose of implacable fortitude, a counterpart of Napoleon, while an adjutant salutes. Others show him reviewing positions with his suite. We see him standing in a boat, his arm outstretched, rowed across the Danube by ten Zaporozhets Cossacks who had just gone over to the Russians. The exaggeration gives him the proportions of a giant, dwarfing the row of the Cossacks' heads, and dominating the landscape in the rear (Figure 1). He carries the allure of the bogatyr', towering over the subjects who have recognized his suzerainty and ascendancy.¹⁰

Lubki also served to convey the image of the imperial family as symbol of the moral preeminence of the imperial family. They depicted the heir, Alexander Nikolaevich, striking various poses. He is shown in military uniform at his mother's side, near a bust of Alexander I, proudly holding a rifle, on horseback alone. Lubki published in the first years of Alexander II's reign reproduced the images of the imperial family. The heir, Nicholas Aleksandrovich, joins his father with other Grand Dukes on horseback (Figure 2). He stands with the emperor and the empress in the presence of the regalia after the coronation (Figure 3). Alexander, the empress Maria Aleksandrovna, and the heir, the Grand Duke Nicholas Aleksandrovich pose, framed by a proscenium, which reinforces the sense of distance between viewer and the figures in the scene. The faces are not likenesses, but conventional characterizations, distinguished by particular features, such as Alexander II's mustache. 12

The *lubki* of the first years of Alexander II's reign preserved the heroic space of the monarchy, displaying hierarchy and presenting guards regiments in legendary form: the emphasis is on uniformity and order, strict, stiff, and

Stoletie Voennogo Ministerstva: Imperatorskaia glavnaia kvartira; istoriia gosudarevoi svity; tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia I (St. Petersburg: M. O. Vol'f, 1908), 250-1, 261, 264.

¹¹ See my article "The Imperial Family as Symbol," in *Imperial Russia: New Histories* for the Empire, ed. Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 60-86. Article 5 in *Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule*.

Imperatorskaia glavnaia kvartira; istoriia gosudarevoi svity; tsarstvovanie Imperatora Aleksandra II (St. Petersburg: R. Golike and A. Vil'borg, 1914), 12, 13, 16, 29, opp. 32; Stoletie Voennogo Ministerstva... tsarstvovanie Nikolaia I, 217; GARF-678-1027.



Figure 1—Nicholas I Crossing the Danube. Stoletie Voennogo Ministerstva: Imperatorskaia glavnaia kvartira; istoriia gosudarevoi svity; tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia I (St. Petersburg: Voennoe Ministerstvo, 1908).



Figure 2—Alexander II followed by Grand Dukes Nicholas Aleksandrovich and Alexander Aleksandrovich. RNB, Print Division.



Figure 3—Alexander II, Maria Aleksandrovna, and Grand Duke Nicholas Aleksandrovich. GARF.

unquestioned. Alexander II shared his father's view that the Russian people were distinguished by a historical devotion to the autocracy. In the aftermath of the Crimean War and era of reform, *lubki* sought to display a bond with the people, but without suggesting proximity to them. Alexander presented the bond with the people as one more of affection than of awed obedience, a reciprocal affection, shown by the benefactions bestowed on the people by their ruler, which elicited ardent expressions of their gratitude and love. This variant of the Russian monarchical myth was represented in what I have described as a scenario of love—ceremonial demonstrations of the feelings that prompted the emperor to bestow reforms on the people, with the expectation that they would respond to his largesse with gratitude and renewed affection.¹³

It was this expectation of a reciprocity of feeling that enabled Alexander to venture on changes to the social system with a confidence that it would not challenge his prerogatives as absolute monarch or the symbolic distance between ruler and ruled. The fiction that the nobility voluntarily undertook to free their serfs enabled Alexander to include them in their scenario and lent the emancipation a personal and moral, rather than legal character. The fiction dramatized the emancipation as the selfless initiative of the nobility to free their serfs, which the peasants would greet with shows of gratitude to them and the tsar. Feelings of gratitude presumably would prevail over their widespread disappointment with the terms of the emancipation. The Emancipation Manifesto of February 17, 1861, written by the Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow, praised the emancipation as the realization of the tsar's oath "to embrace with our tsarist love and care all our loyal subjects, of every calling and condition, from the noble wielding the sword in defense of the fatherland to the humble person working with the tool of his trade, from one reaching high state service to the person making a furrow on the field with his sokha or plough." On February 17, the Holy Synod despatched a secret circular to rural priests, also the work of Filaret, to summon the peasants to resolve their individual misunderstandings with the landlords "by legal means" and "to instruct their parishioners as much in piety as in good deeds, in both moral and civic relations."14

Although the announcement of emancipation was met with skepticism and disappointment among the peasantry in many parts of Russia, the Ministry of Interior issued descriptions of peasants gathering to express their joy and

See Scenarios of Power, 2: 19-57.

P. A. Zaionchkovskii, Otmena krepostnogo prava (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1968), 156.

gratitude. At the instance of the Minister Peter Valuev, the ministry began publishing *Severnaia pochta*, a newspaper designed to influence public opinion patterned on the French, *Moniteur Universel*. Its pages evoked the image of a grateful peasantry, adoring of their tsar. The peasants responded with simple, touching prayers: "Attentive eyes could note how great was the love of the tsar in the simple hearts of the people, expressed powerfully in one elegant prayer." ¹⁵

The Ministry's rhetoric emphasized the feeling of reciprocity, which was a principal theme of the ceremonies of thanksgiving staged for the emperor in Petersburg and Moscow. Workers, legally still classified as peasants, made up most of the audience. The first took place before the Winter Palace one week after the issuing of the manifesto. Alexander, on his way to his weekly review of the guards, met a crowd of chosen peasants and workers on the Palace Square. A delegation of specially designated artisans and factory workers presented him with bread and salt. Alexander asked them whether they understood what he had done for their "general welfare." They answered obediently, "We thank your imperial majesty with feeling for your great deeds by which you have renewed our life." Alexander replied, "This task had already been started by my parent, but he did not succeed in finishing it during his lifetime." He urged them to thank God and pray for Nicholas's eternal memory, then called upon them to be useful for the well-being of society.

A similar meeting was organized in Moscow in May. A delegation of factory workers approached Alexander with the traditional bread and salt and declared their gratitude. He described the scene and his feelings in a letter to the heir, Nicholas Aleksandrovich. "Nearly four thousand of them gathered and when I went out before them in the courtyard before the palace they fell to their knees and responded to a few words with unceasing hoorahs." When the empress appeared on the balcony, there were more hoorahs. "You understand that it is impossible to look upon such scenes coolly, and inside I thanked God with all my heart for the consolation and reward for our cares." Many of those close to the tsar shared his feelings. Dmitrii Miliutin, then an adjutant-general and assistant minister of war shared Alexander's feelings. "The sensitivity and authenticity of the enthusiasm shown to the Tsar in Moscow, particularly among the common peoples leaves no doubt, though the incorrigible defenders

Severnaia pochta, September 16, 1862: 805, September 19, 1862: 813, September 22, 1862: 829.

¹⁶ GARF, 665-1-13, 26 (Letter of May 21, 1861).

of serfdom assure us that all the manifestations of enthusiasm were prepared by the authorities. By the testimony of eyewitnesses that is definitely untrue." A friend wrote to him that "the bringing of bread and salt was the idea of the peasants themselves, not prompted by anyone."¹⁷

* * *

The visual representations depicting these expressions of mutual love and gratitude sought to publicize these feelings and to generalize them as the response of the Russian people as a whole to emancipation. They appeared over the names of the leading print entrepreneurs of Moscow, Peter Sharapov, A. V. Morozov, and D. A. Rudnev, and all bore the names of the supervising censors. Though I have found no indication of specific directives from the authorities, the entrepreneurs, as Norris suggested, were quite responsive to the wishes of the monarchy, and the depictions of popular love were very much in keeping with official rhetoric.¹⁸

To depict the love of tsar and people a single frame posed a serious iconographical problem for the artist: how were reciprocal feelings between tsar and people to be depicted without violating the heroic space that had expressed the tsar's distance and supremacy in pictures and statuary? The distinguished art historian E. I. Kirichenko discovered the first such attempt, which signaled a transition to a new iconography—Vasilii Demut-Malinovskii's statue of the peasant Ivan Susanin in Kostroma, which was completed in 1851¹⁹ (Figure 4). Susanin, rendered realistically, kneels in reverence at the base of a long column, upon which rests a neoclassical bust of Tsar Michael Fedorovich. The two figures are not of the same universe. They are separated by distance—the column—and style—the realistic figure of a peasant and the idealized countenance of the tsar. One is the worshipper on earth; the other the worshipped in the heavens.

A second precedent is suggested by the illustrations in Alexander II's coronation album, which sought to incorporate the audience, responding with joy and enthusiasm, into the rites and festivities of the court. The plate

D. A. Miliutin, Vospominaniia general-fel'dmarshala grafa Dmitria Alekseevicha Miliutina, 1860-1862, ed. L. G. Zakharova (Moscow: Studiia "TRITĖ" Nikity Mikhalkova, 1999), 104-5.

Norris, A War of Images, 48-53.

¹⁹ E. I. Kirichenko, Zapechatlennaia istoriia Rossii (Moscow: Zhiraf, 2001), 2: 279-80.

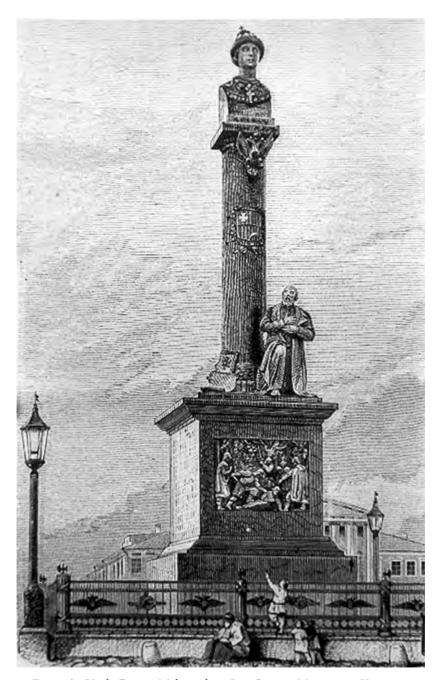


Figure 4—Vasilii Demut-Malinovskii—Ivan Susanin Monument, Kostroma. *Vsemirnaia illiustratsiia*, No. 2, 1883.

by the court artist M. A. Zichy of the entry procession to Moscow gives a vivid rendering of the ecstatic welcome of the tsar and the court by the populace (Figure 5). Both educated society and the people are encompassed in the frame. Famous writers, among them Fedor Tiutchev and Ivan Turgenev, welcome him from the grandstand. In the foreground of the scene, a peasant woman in folk dress and a tiara hat faces the tsar, and a man raises his arms in greeting.



Figure 5—M. A. Zichy—Alexander II's Coronation Entry into Moscow. Alexander II Coronation Album. Opisanie sviashchenneishago koronovaniia... imperatora Aleksandra Vtorago i imperatritsy Marii Aleksandrovny vsei Rossii.

Both the statue and the watercolor preserve the distance between tsar and people, allowing the display of devotion without encroaching on heroic space. The *lubki* of emancipation preserve heroic space in two ways: rendering the figures of emperor and people in different artistic idioms, and placing them on different planes. First, the tsar appears as an image, a picture in a picture, and therefore not of the ordinary world; further, this image is set above the peasants, who look up at it devoutly. An example of this type of composite, Vasilii Timm's lithograph, "The Emancipation of the Peasants," in *Russkii*

khudozhestvennyi listok (Figure 6), makes this relationship explicit, showing a peasant rendered realistically, crossing himself before icons beneath a portrait of Alexander II with the words "February 19, 1861."²⁰



Figure 6—Vasilii Timm—"The Emancipation of the Peasants." Russkii khudozhestvennyi listok, 1862.

Timm's lithograph is not in *lubok* style, but the *lubki* utilize the same devices. "The Voice of the Russian People" (*Glas ruskogo naroda*) shows the response of the people (Figure 7). The people stand before a raised portrait of Tsar Alexander again in full regalia, but rendered in a simplified *lubok* manner. The stylized identical peasants gaze upon him with amazement and reverence. The caption places the expected words in peasants' mouths: "We all

Russkii khudozhestvennyi listok, No. 28, September 20, 1862, 108-9.



Figure 7—"The Voice of the Russian People." New York Public Library, Miriam and Ira Wallach Division of Arts, Prints, and Photographs.

appeared before the TSAR, Burning with ardent love for him, Well fellows, it is time, it is time Together, and quite soon, we will shout Hoorah!" The *lubok* "The Unforgettable day of February 19" (Nezabvennyi den' 19 fevalia 1861 goda) (Figure 8) presents a figure of the tsar on the platform. The tsar appears not as an image in an image, but as the tsar himself. He is shown as an intermediary in the hierarchy between the people and Christ, raising his hands in a blessing. The people fall to their knees worshipping him as they worship Christ.²¹ At Alexander's right are military symbols, on his left other signs of culture and enlightenment, and a scroll with the words "law and justice." The peasant men kneel below, some holding their hands in prayer. The verses below again express the expected feelings of gratitude and devotion. They say that they kneel to praise their "blessed Father" (Otets blagoslovennyi). They call upon him to see their "tears of tenderness" and their joy. "You, our powerful Ruler, have given us a new life."

Two lubki were issued of Alexander's meeting with Moscow workers. Depicting an actual event, they can no longer show the tsar as an image in the midst of the people. Now his figure is brought into the context of the lubok. Distance is expressed by differences of height, dress, and bearing. In the lubok entitled "The Presentation of Bread and Salt to the Tsar and Emperor by Peasants, Factory Workers, and Artisans, about 10,000 Persons" (Figure 9), the emperor stands in guards uniform, towering over the peasants and workers, his face solemn and austere, an expression of strength and authority. The empress looks down on the people from her balcony, more realistic in style, but also more remote. The peasants are lower, kneeling except for their "elected leaders" (vybornye) presenting the bread and salt. They are rendered in conventional lubok form with identical features, except for the starosta, Zakharov. In the second version, "The Solemn Presentation of Bread and Salt" (Torzhestvennoe Podnesenie Khleba-Soli) (Figure 10), the workers kneel humbly while their leaders face the emperor and heir. Both emperor and heir stand stiffly impassive in the lubok style, wearing guards' uniforms, apart from and taller than the workers. The empress, whose figure is suggested in the upper left of the picture, views the scene with a rather detached expression.²²

The *lubki* of 1861 were literal realizations of the feelings expressed in the statements and the ceremonies comprised in Alexander II's scenario of love.

²¹ GARF, 678-1-1027.

²² GARF, 678-1-1027.



Figure 8—"The Unforgettable Day of February 19, 1861." GARF.

PART II. THE IMPERIAL MYTH IN ARTISTIC TEXTS



Figure 9—"The Presentation of Bread and Salt to the Tsar." New York Public Library, Miriam and Ira Wallach Division of Arts, Prints, and Photographs.



Figure 10—"The Solemn Presentation (torzhestvennoe podnesenie) of Bread and Salt to the Tsar." GARF.

The words of the captions repeated official notions of the peasants' appropriate responses. The artists brought tsar and people in the same frame, but kept them apart. The people appear as simple, folk-type images, of obedience and reverence. The ruler remains in his own heroic space, either in the form of "the portrait of the king," or in the rigid, aloof poses attached to figures of authority in the *lubok*. The renderings give no sense of unity, rather making obvious the incongruity and the artificiality of the composite. The feelings of benevolence and gratitude could not conceal the great distance between sovereign and subject intrinsic to the imagery of Russian monarchy that could be obscured in flights of sentimental rhetoric characteristic of the scenario of love.

* * *

The Monument to the Millennium of Rus' in the Novgorod Kremlin and its dedication ceremonies on September 8, 1862 were also meant to convey the sense of an affective unity between the emperor and the Russian people. Alexander took an active part in the preparations and decisions about the monument and the celebration. The monument and the celebration marked the progress of the Russian state under leadership of its monarchs from the date of the legendary founding of Rus', in 862, when the leaders of Novgorod issued an "invitation" to the Varangians come and rule over them and establish order in their land.

The monument was explicitly intended to present not only the monarchs who ruled Russia but the Russian nation as a whole, a unity of all Russians in the march of progress. The initial plans had been merely for a statue of Riurik, which would have expressed the theme of the official nationality—the Russian people beholden to and devoted to their foreign rulers. But in 1857, the Committee of Ministers decided to build, a "a national (narodnyi) monument to the MILLENNIUM of the Russian state." The terms also specified that the monument clearly depict Orthodoxy "as the principal basis of the moral grandeur of the Russian people." It was to commemorate six principal events of the Russian past: the founding of Rus' in 862, with the figure of Riurik; the conversion of Prince Vladimir, 989; the battle of Kulikovo in 1380; the founding of the unified Russian state by Ivan III; the election of Michael Romanov in 1613; and the reform of Russia and founding of the empire by Peter the Great in 1721.²³

E. N. Maslova, *Pamiatnik "Tysiacheletiiu Rossii"* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1977), 14-17.

The official description of the monument, written by P. N. Petrov, defined progress as the central force uniting the tsar and people. The monument would reflect the common dedication to progress—"those feelings that the Russian people always shared and will share, in the present case with His Majesty." The winning project interpreted the requirements literally (Figure 11). The painter M. O. Mikeshin won the competition because his design reproduced the six scenes requested by the Committee and provided a pictorial synopsis of the Russian past showing the ruling house as the builders of the Russian state. Mikeshin gave the statue the general shape of a bell. The upper section, above the six scenes, was in the form of an orb, the symbol of monarchical rule. Above the orb, the figure of an angel held a cross, showing the primacy of, and according to Petrov's account, indicating the providential character of the Russian past. The angel blesses an allegorical figure of Russia, and "points to her glorious future under the protection of orthodoxy." ²⁴

The succession of episodes showing the progress of the Russian state, the ensemble of historical scenes blurs the vast differences of the parts of the empire and the sharp discontinuities of Russia's past. Riurik and Vladimir face south to Kiev, Donskoi to the southwest, the Tatar frontier, Ivan III east to Moscow, Minin and Pozharskii to the west against the Polish threat. Peter the Great faces north to Petersburg. He is shown stepping forward into the future; behind him an angel points the way. The monument thus presents a continuous development from the ninth century to the present; shifts of capital, cultural style, and political orientation were encompassed in an overall political unity. The harmonizing of disparity is exemplified by the form of the bell, which could represent either the Novgorod bell, a sign of the town's freedoms until the fifteenth century, or the great Tsar-bell, a sign of central domination by the prince of Moscow.²⁵

The theme of the ineluctable progress of the Russian state held great appeal for governmental officials. The Minister of Interior, Peter Valuev, who attended the dedication ceremonies, particularly liked the figures of Riurik and Peter the Great, who he imagined foresaw and created the greatness of Russia. Riurik seemed tranquil and still, to be looking into the distance, and from the distance.

²⁴ Ibid., 23-9; P. N. Petrov, *Pamiatnik tysiacheletiiu gosudarstva rossiiskogo v Novgorode* (St. Petersburg: Tip. II Otd. Sobstvennoi E.I.V. Kantseliarii, 1862).

²⁵ See Buslaev's sardonic observations on this ambiguity: Fedor Buslaev, *Moi dosugi: sobrannyiia iz periodicheskikh isdanii, melkiia sochineniia Fedora Buslaeva* (Moscow: Synod Press, 1886), 2: 208.



Figure 11—M.O. Mikeshin—Monument to Millennium of Russia, Novgorod. Niva, 1872.

"Centuries are before him. He personifies the inception, in the cloudy depths of these centuries, of the Rus' that was destined slowly to develop, strengthen, solidify, and expand before Peter." Peter on the other hand was in movement, scepter in hand, representing the triumph of Riurik's vision. He personified "the renewed, transformed Russia, finally subduing her neighbors and together with Peter submissively stepping out onto the terrain of universal history." ²⁶

Like the *lubki*, the statue distinguishes between heroic and ordinary figures by placing them on different planes, rendering them in different sizes and in different idioms. The grandiloquent poses struck by the almost identical figures sculpted by Shreder give the statue something of the contrived, legendary manner of the *lubok*; it was no accident that Mikeshin was a painter. The heroes are large and burley; they seem to be in movement. But the statue was supposed to be inclusive and to depict ordinary mortals along with the rulers as part of a Russian nation. All those who contributed to the progress of the Russian state were to appear on the statue, including figures from educated society. If the bond between the emperor and the peasants was shown by pictures of rapt deference of peasants for the tsar, the bond with educated society took the form of the inclusion of "leading figures of the Russian land" (*deiateli russkoi zemli*) on the bas-relief circling the monument. Among them were writers, composers, artists, and scientists, as well as military leaders, officials, and saints, and Ivan Susanin, the only peasant.

The bas-relief is narrow, and the number of creative figures accounted for only sixteen of one-hundred and nine individuals represented. The space allotted to them beneath the monumental statues of the great rulers is limited, almost grudging. Crowded into one segment of the relief, they serve as minor embellishments to the main narrative, the heroic struggles and achievements of Russian monarchs, who continued to represent the Russian nation. The pretense of representing the nation, moreover, prompted sharp criticisms about why the nation had received such niggardly attention. Writers of a Slavophile persuasion insisted that the Russian people, not the Russian state, represented the nation, and that the monument did not reflect their spirit or desires. When a lithograph of the monument appeared in the official calendar, the Mesiatseslov, for 1862, the philologist Fedor Buslaev wrote an angry critique reflecting some of their views. "This is a monument to the millennium not of Russia in general,

P. A. Valuev, "80go sentiabria 1862 goda," Russkaia starina vol. 57 (January 1888): 8-9.

but of Russian state life, Russian politics." To be true to the spirit of the era, he asserted, a statue should satisfy the principal demands of the era, which were demands for nationality (*narodnost'*). Even the figures chosen on the bar-relief, he argued, had advanced only the glory of the Russian state. From the top to the bottom, Buslaev found the monument incomprehensible to the common people and in conflict with Russia's national past.²⁷

* * *

The ceremony of dedication of the Millennium Monument took place on September 8, 1862, the birthday of the heir, Nicholas Aleksandrovich, and the anniversary of Dmitrii Donskoi's victory over the Tatars on the Don—the symbolic liberation from the Tatars yoke. An article in the official newspaper *Russkii invalid* in 1859 had emphasized the new significance of the victory. It was presented not as a sign of military power, as in the past, but of liberation, the day "when Russia cast off the last survivals of error, and readied herself by the summons and direction of the worshiped Tsar to move along the path of citizenship (*grazhdanstvennost*')." Citizenship suggested the appearance of a civil society, of educated individuals, equal under the law, who were taking part in the life of the people. The struggle now was to be waged against "ignorance, and its direct heritage, intolerance and fanaticism." The ceremony was meant to reaffirm the unity of the emperor now with an emergent nation, made up of citizens accepting the benevolent leadership of the monarch.

The political circumstances in Novgorod in the preceding months had not been propitious. Indeed, the atmosphere was tense. The nobility made known their intention to refuse to address the tsar and give a ball in his honor. The Ministry of Interior, apprehensive about the situation, sent ahead the Director of the Department of Police, Dmitrii Tolstoi. But the nobility

Buslaev, *Moi dosugi*, 187-208. Buslaev pointed out that the religious "enlighteners" such as Saint Sergei of Radonezh and Antony and Feodesii of Pechersk were presented as ordinary historical figures, yet the people would not recognize them without their halos, nor would Alexander Nevskii, Dovmont of Pskov, or Michael of Tver be recognized without their crowns. Andrei Rublev and Simon Ushakov were not numbered among the artists; Ivan the Terrible, much admired by the people in their byliny, was not included. For a thorough discussion of the symbolism of the statue and its critics, see Ol'ga Maiorova, "Bessmertnyi Riurik: Prazdnovanie 'Tysiacheletiia Rossii' v 1862," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* vol. 43, No. 3 (2000): 137-65.

²⁸ Russkii invalid, September 8, 1859, 790-1.

underwent a strong change of heart when they saw the emperor on board the boat approaching along the Volkhov river. The noblemen awaited the opportunity to express their oppositional sentiment. However, as the tsar's boat approached, their hostility melted, to Tolstoi's great delight. The emperor's appearance brought out what he believed were the true feelings of rapture and devotion of the Russian nobility. "So much for the opposition of our nobility!" he added triumphantly.²⁹

The next day, the Novgorod nobility showed their sentiments at a reception before morning mass. The Provincial Marshal, Prince Myshetskii, welcomed Alexander with bread and salt to "the cradle of the Russian tsardom" and declared the Novgorod nobility's "unswerving feelings of warm love and devotion, about which they have always prided themselves and always will pride themselves." The tsar then spoke of the emancipation as "a new sign of the indestructible bond of all the estates of the Russian land with the government, with one goal, the happiness and well-being of our dear fatherland." Alexander thus identified himself with the government and took the feelings for himself as feelings for the government as a whole.³⁰

After a service in St. Sofia Cathedral, the clergy and the emperor proceeded to the monument. Before lines of troops and spectators who filled the stands, Isidore, the Metropolitan of Petersburg and Novgorod, blessed the statue with holy water. All present fell to their knees and, in a booming voice, the court deacon, Vereshchagin, delivered thanksgiving and memorial prayers written by the Metropolitan Filaret. At Alexander's request, the prayer expressed the inclusive message of the ceremony. The Metropolitan thanked not only members of the ruling house, but "all chosen sons of Russia" who "over the course of centuries loyally worked for her unity, well-being, and glory, on the fields of piety, enlightenment, government, and victorious defense of the fatherland." He concluded with an allusion to the spirit of rebirth and reform. "May the ancient plant of good not wither and may the new stem of good be grafted onto it and from it grow a new flower of beauty and fruit of perfection." 31

²⁹ Graf D. N. Tolstoi, "Zapiski," Russkii arkhiv, 1885, 2: 56-9.

S. S. Tatishchev, *Imperator Aleksandr II: ego zhizn' i tsarstvovanie* (St. Petersburg: S. A. Surovin, 1902), 1: 403-4.

N. V. Sushkov, Zapiski o zhizni i vremeni sviatitelia Filareta, Mitropolita Moskovskogo (Moscow: A. I. Mamontov, 1868), Appendix, 88; N. P. Barsukov, Zhizn' i trudy M. P. Pogodina (St. Petersburg: M. M. Stasiulevich, 1905), 19: 268, 275-6; Tatishchev, Imperator Aleksandr II, 1: 404.

Deeply moved, Alexander wrote to his brother, Constantine, "The reception by all the estates was exceedingly joyous. The dedication of the monument could not have been more marvelous or touching; especially the three prayers, composed specifically for this occasion by Filaret at my instance, which were pronounced so clearly by our Vereshchagin that the words were heard over the whole Kremlin square." In an article in Severnaia pochta, Valuev wrote that he was overcome with emotion. "This prayer breathes such spiritual warmth, such pure heartfelt loving tenderness (umilenie), such deep religious moral feelings that reading it, you unconsciously forget your surroundings and are transported into another world, a celestial world." 33

In the evening, the emperor had heartfelt meetings with peasants. At the *gorodishche* on the edge of lake Ilmen, where Riurik presumably had lived, according to *Severnaia pochta*, "the people met their beloved monarch with unbelievable joy and enthusiasm." Since the ground was damp, several peasants spread their caftans on the ground before the tsar's carriage. They called the tsar "heavenly angel." "One might say that the air trembled with the sound of 'Hoorah'." The emperor wrote to his brother Constantine that this joy appeared "unfeigned." "The peasants' zeal deeply touched me," the empress remarked to Count M. V. Tolstoi.³⁴

On the next day, another show of affection between emperor and peasants took place. Alexander admonished official deputations from the peasantry about the widespread rumor that the emancipation did not represent the true emancipation. "Do you understand me?" he asked. "We understand," they replied obediently. Valuev described the scene in his newspaper report. "We saw the rapturous tenderness (*vostorzhennoe umilenie*) of the Russian peasant when he crossed himself at the sight of his tsar. We saw women falling to their knees and kissing the spot where the tsar walked. We heard the following words from old men. 'Just to see our Little Father the Tsar, then I don't mind dying!""³⁵

[&]quot;Perepiska Aleksandra II s Velikim Kniazem Konstantinom Nikolaevichem," Dela i dni vol. 3 (1920): 82.

³³ Severnaia pochta, September 14, 1862, 801.

Barsukov, Zhizn' i trudy M. P. Pogodina, 19: 277; Tatishchev, Imperator Aleksandr II, 1: 405; "Perepiska Aleksandra II s Velikim Kniazem Konstantinom Nikolaevichem," 3: 82

³⁵ "Perepiska Aleksandra II s Velikim Kniazem Konstantinom Nikolaevichem," 3: 82; *Severnaia pochta*, September 16, 1862: 805.

Those responsible for the organization deemed the celebration a great triumph. Valuev, who had worried about both the noble sentiment and the threatening weather, wrote that "everything was fine and successful." In *Severnaia pochta*, he recorded his feelings, the appropriate ones for a loyal official devoted to authority. As the boat disappeared from view to the accompaniment of the tolling of bells and band music, the inhabitants stood on the wharf. "Everyone was deep in tender and warm feelings for the Father-Tsar, for his August Family." Novgorod, he believed, would long remember the visit of Alexander, "The Monarch-Emancipator, the Monarch-Benefactor, the Monarch-Friend of Humanity." 36

Those who understood the nation in a broader sense were less happy with the ceremony. Tiutchev found the Millennium celebrations "very beautiful," but admitted that "the one thing that was lacking for me, as for many others, was a religious feeling of the past and only it could give true meaning to this festival. The millennium did not look down upon us from the summit of this monument, otherwise quite successful." In an article titled "Moscow, September, 8," the Slavophile Ivan Aksakov observed that the Millennium had been an official celebration that had excluded the common people. "They do not know our archaeological calculations. They do not share western jubilee sentimentality." Aksakov concluded that the celebration had raised hopes that the state represented more than an external presence and had bonds with the traditions of the Russian people, but these ideas had been expressed neither by the monument nor the dedication ceremony. It is interesting that Alexander himself noted on a copy of Aksakov's article, "Much is just." ³⁷

Valuev, "80go sentiabria 1862 goda," 1: 12-13; P. A. Valuev, "Pis'ma k A. G. Troinitskomu," *Russkaia starina* vol. 2 (1898): 212-13; *Severnaia pochta*, September 18, 1862: 808.

^{37 &}quot;Lettres de Th. I. Tjutsheff a sa seconde épouse nee Baronne de Pfeffel," Starina i novizna, XXI (1916): 197; Barsukov, Zhizn' i trudy M.P. Pogodina, 19: 280-4; Aksakov's remarks correspond to those of the anonymous correspondent from Moskovskie vedomosti, No. 199 (September 12, 1862), 1597, who concluded that the peasants understood nothing about the celebration except the immensity of the number 1,000, when indicating the longevity of the Russian state.

* * *

Two *lubki* of the celebration in 1866 and 1867, hardly confirm Valuev's sense of the ceremony. Again the monarchy is placed in the same frame as the spectators, suggesting that there should be interaction or some kind of bond, but these scenes make clear rather the absence of reciprocity and unity. In the first (Figure 12), we see not a ceremony with a rapt audience, but a parade displaying order and solemnity (*torzhestvennost*'). Alexander on a white horse leads members of the suite and guardsmen with scant attention from the spectators. However, the parade seems to proceed with scant attention from spectators. A crowd of townspeople mills in the foreground, some looking at the monument, others ignoring it, engaging in conversation or going about their business. Members of the clergy do not appear at all. The feeling is one of disconnection.

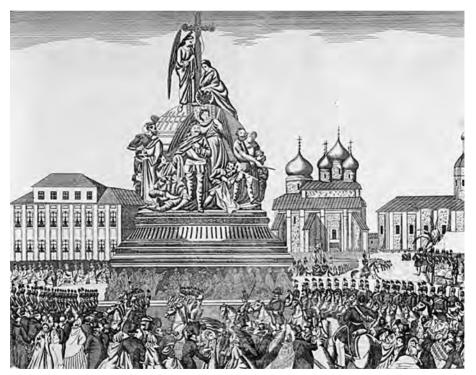


Figure 12—"The Dedication of the Millennium Monument." New York Public Library, Miriam and Ira Wallach Division of Arts, Prints, and Photographs.

Most notably, the figure of Peter the Great is set above the melee of the celebration. Peter's gaze is fixed ahead with the angel behind, pointing to the future. The artist working in the atmosphere of the second half of the 1860s, when the spirit of reform had ebbed, now exaggerates the incongruity between tsar and people that we have seen in the earlier *lubki* and produces a representation that verges on parody. The statue, the ceremony, the townspeople seem to have nothing to do with one another. Instead of reverence for Peter and the glorious past of Russian monarchy, and love for the sovereign, there is indifference, each group focused on its own concerns. Instead of unity, there is a a sense of disconnection, and Peter's heroic stance seems a stage posture.

The second *lubok* (Figure 13) turns the parody into a social critique of the celebration. Issued in 1864 by the house of Rudney, it seems to have slipped

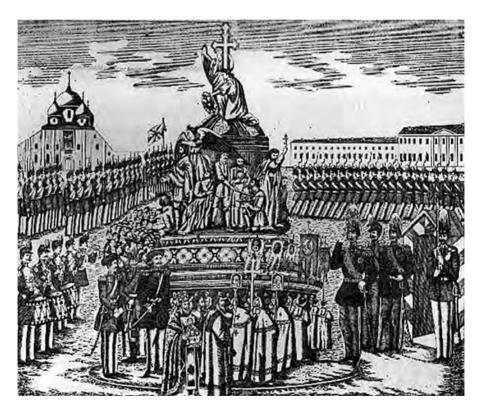


Figure 13—"The Festive Dedication of the Millennium Monument." New York Public Library, Miriam and Ira Wallach Division of Arts, Prints, and Photographs.

by the censor. The view is from the west side of the stature, where Minin offers the crown to Michael, thus indicating a focus on the pre-Petrine origins of the monarchy. In the foreground, the emperor stands tall, saluting; behind him are Grand Dukes of almost the same height. The guardsmen parading in the rear are somewhat shorter. The clergy, marching in the procession of the cross before the emperor, are dwarflike. The people, miniscule figures, are crowded to the left of the monument that overshadows them, which they strain to see. The anonymous artist thus represents the hierarchy of the celebration in a grotesque visual hierarchy of size, making clear the predominance of the ruler and the military elite, and the insignificance of the people, the nation, who presumably were to be included in the celebration.³⁸

The lubki of emancipation and the Millennium celebration and monument sought to express a bond between of the Russian people and their ruler—achieving civic progress without the encumbrance of representative institutions. In the eyes of the monarch and officials at the head of the government, these works confirmed the success of the reforms and the realization of the image of a people united with their monarch by bonds of gratitude and love. However, lubok and sculpture proved less yielding to the demands of the tsar's scenario than sentimental rhetoric. The artistic representations of a mythical nation only made clear the distance between the monarchy and the people, and between the monarchy and educated society: they brought out the incongruities estranging a majestic ruler from his abject subjects. The Millennium monument meant to include the nation expressed the domination of the people by the monarchy, and the responses to the monument and celebration made clear that the monarchy had not accepted the existence of a separate Russian nation. Nonetheless, this scenario, reflected in visual expressions and in future policies, dominated the mentality and policies of high Russian officials until the end of the 1870s. It continued to close out the realities of peasant attitudes and the demands in educated society for a nation with political rights.

Print and Photograph Division of the New York Public Library, MEWG, 143.

9. The "Russian Style" in Church Architecture as Imperial Symbol after 1881



Dimitryi Shvidkovskyi, and James Cracraft's study of Petrine architecture), have made clear the clear the declaratory role of architecture in the representation of Russian monarchy. The style and magnificence of thrones, buildings, and parks were meant not only to awe the population and foreign dignitaries, but also to give each reign its own characteristic aspect, to set each ruler apart as a distinctive ruling presence embodying specific transcendent attributes of power. Ivan the Terrible, Boris Godunov, Peter the Great, and Catherine the Great sought to create their own landscapes, which provided settings for the presentation of their political personae, what I have called their scenarios of power. From 1881, church architecture in "the Russian style" became an important means to display a national identity for Russian monarchy that distinguished it from the goals and practices of the previous reign.

A national style in church architecture first appeared during the reign of Nicholas I (1825-1855) as an expression of Nicholas's doctrine of "Official Nationality," which located national distinctiveness in the Russian people's devotion to their rulers, to the Westernized absolutism that ruled since Peter the Great. Nicholas sought an architecture that would set Russia apart from the contemporary West, which he believed had fallen prey to constitutionalism and revolution. He wished to show the Russian people's piety and loyalty, without denying the universalistic, Western character of Russian absolutism. He found the answer in a Byzantine cultural tradition that glorified Russia as the highest realization of the principle of absolute monarchy. Architectural

The volume is Architectures of Russian Identity: 1500 to the Present, ed. James Cracraft and Dan Rowland (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

design, the Russian art historian E. A. Borisova has pointed out, became a narrative medium, displaying motifs that recalled particular themes of Russia's historical development.²

The architect who divined the emperor's intentions and found the appropriate architectural idiom was Constantine Ton. Ton's project for the St. Catherine's Church in Petersburg (1830) presented a five-cupola design whose exterior recalled the Moscow-Byzantine style of the Dormition Cathedrals of Vladimir (1158-61) and Moscow (1475-79). His design, grafting the five-cupola form onto a nineteenth-century neoclassical structure, typified the eclectic spirit of Nicholas's "Official Nationality" doctrine, which, while claiming national distinctiveness, sought to defend the Petrine cultural and institutional heritage.³ Its most prominent example was the immense Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer in Moscow (1837-1882), which has recently been reconstructed⁴ (Figure 1).

While the proportions, the arcades, and the structure of the cupolas of the cathedral were typically neoclassical, the exterior decorative elements asserted the building's Russian character. The five-cupola silhouette, like the tracery and icons on the facade, identified a Russian church.⁵ The Redeemer Cathedral set the pattern for similar churches that would provide specific visual references both to the national past of autocracy and to the universalistic context of empire derived from Byzantium. Published explanations of the buildings spelled out these references, disclosing the meaning of Russia's architectural heritage to all. Nicholas made "the Ton style" official. A decree of March 25, 1841 ordained that "the taste of ancient Byzantine architecture should be preserved, by preference and as far as is possible" in the construction of Orthodox churches. "The drawings of Professor Constantine Ton composed for the construction of Orthodox churches may prove useful in this regard."

² E. A. Borisova, *Russkaia arkhitektura vtoroi poloviny XIX veka*, 174-75. (Cited in earlier article).

Ibid., 100, 101; Konstantin Ton, Tserkvi, sochinennye arkhitektorom Ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Professorom Arkhtektury Imperatorskoi Akademii Khudozhestv i chlenom raznykh akademii Konstantinom Tonom (St. Petersburg: n.p., 1838).

The most thorough treatment of the history of the building is E. Kirichenko, *Khram Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve* (Moscow: Planeta, 1997).

⁵ Ibid., 61-3; Borisova, Russkaia arkhitektura vtoroi poloviny XIX veka, 106-9.

⁶ Svod Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii (St. Petersburg: Tip. II Otd. Sobstvennoi E. I. V. Kantseliarii, 1857), 12: 49. The provision is article 218 of the Stroitel'nyi ustav.

PART II. THE IMPERIAL MYTH IN ARTISTIC TEXTS



Figure 1—Constantine Thon—Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer, Moscow. *Vsemirnaia Illiustratsiia*, 1879.

The national myth introduced by Alexander III in 1881 revealed images of the nature and past of Russian autocracy that were quite different from those of "Official Nationality." The national myth evoked a religious and ethnic bond between the tsar and the Russian people, who had presumably survived the processes of Westernization and provided the basic foundations of Russian monarchy and state. The Russian tsar strove to embody not the existing state, contaminated by Westernized accretions, the reformed courts, and *zemstva*, but the ancient traditions persisting after the Petrine reforms in the people and the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church preserved the faith of the Russian people that permitted a union of tsar and people. The churches

For a discussion of the differences, see my articles, "National Narrative in the Representation of Nineteenth-Century Russian Monarchy," in Extending the Borders of Russian History: Essays in Honor of Alfred A. Rieber, ed. Marsha Siefert (Budapest and New York, Central European University Press, 2003), 51-64. Article 7 in Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule and N. N. Mazur, ed., Rossiia/Russia: kul'turnye praktiki v ideologicheskoi perspektive, Rossiia, XVII—nachalo XX veka No. 4 [11] (1999): 233-44.

erected in this period were meant to be concrete expressions of this union, evoking not Byzantine architecture, but an idealized seventeenth century that would replace the reign of Peter the Great as the mythical founding period of the Russian state. Churches would be monuments to the historical past, which demonstrated the persistence of the culture of seventeenth-century Rus'. Church construction intensified, and architects were expected to build thoes resembling those of early Russia: they were to recreate Muscovite scenes in Russia, particularly in Petersburg, to resurrect the national past by designing artifacts attesting to its persistence.⁸

The church architecture of Alexander III's reign sought to capture a culture rooted in the people that reflected a national spirit, rather than to display the Byzantine roots of Russian culture. For this purpose, it drew on the architectural theories of the 1860s and 1870s, which advocated a democratic national style in opposition to both neoclassicism and the Ton churches. Champions of a popular national Russian architecture, such as Lev Dal', Victor Butovskii, Ivan Zabelin, Vladimir Shervud, sought an architecture that would organically unite form and function in ways that reflected indigenous traditions and climatic conditions. Like A. W. N. Pugin in England and Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc in France, they used the "realist" principle in architecture to interpret popular forms as structures that answered the practical needs of the people. The peasant hut, pre-Petrine wooden churches, and churches that reflected popular tendencies of innovation and ornamentation provided possible sources for a Russian national style.9 In the 1870s and the 1880s, the national style gained popularity, particularly among merchants, who favored old Russian motifs in their churches. 10

From 1881-1894, the number of churches rose from 41,500 to 46,000. A. Iu. Polunov, *Pod vlast'iu ober-prokurora: gosudarstvo i tserkov' v epokhu Aleksandra III* (Moscow: AIRO-XX, 1996), 52; from 1870-1890, the number of churches increased from 38,613 to 45,037 and the number of chapels from 13,228 to 18,979. The figure for churches for 1898 is 46,000. Igor Smolitsch, *Geschichte der russischen Kirche*, 1700-1917 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), 1: 709.

On the architectural theorists of the 1870s, see E. I. Kirichenko, Arkhitekturnye teorii XIX veka v Rossii (Moscow: 1986), 152-278; on Pugin and architectural realism, see Robert Macleod, Style and Society: Architectural Ideology in Britain, 1835-1914 (London: RIBA, 1971), 9-12; also Catherine Cooke, "Russian Perspectives," in Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le Duc, 1814-1879 (London: Academy Editions, 1980), 60-3.

B. M. Kirikov, "Khram Voskreseniia Khristova (k istorii russkogo stilia v Peterburge)," Nevskii arkhiv: istoriko-kraevedcheskii sbornik 1 (1993): 216-7.

Butovskii and others sharing his views succeeded in convincing Violletle-Duc to write a study of Russian art. Viollet's L'Art russe expressed many of the principles of the national school in terms of his own general theories of architectural development. The author, who had never visited Russia, marveled over the corbelled vaults and tent roofs of sixteenth and seventeenthcentury Russian churches, which he thought were structurally well-adapted to lavish ornamentation reflecting popular tastes. As Lauren O'Connell has shown, Viollet's notion of Asiatic influence and his sometimes fanciful explanations of the structure of old Russian buildings prompted angry recriminations from many Russian art critics. However, his book gave the confirmation of a renowned authority to the belief that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the true period of national creativity in Russian architecture.¹¹ Russians, Viollet asserted, had to restore the link with this time broken by Peter the Great and "to repossess the national art dominated for so long by Western arts!" The "reinstallation of Russian art in Russia ... would be met with favor by the immense majority of the nation and would become the corollary of the emancipation of the serfs."12 The monarchy appropriated this cultural idiom and invested it with specific political meaning. It utilized revival architecture, as it had been conceived in nineteenth century Europe, as a means to shape attitudes. Visual imagery could restore a lost purity, change attitudes, and reshape society.¹³ After 1881, this type of thinking encouraged a kind of inverted archaeology: monuments were constructed to resurrect an invisible national past, particularly in regions deemed in need of admonition and edification.

The building announcing the new official national style was the Resurrection Cathedral erected on the site of Alexander II's assassination—in

On Viollet and the controversy around his books, see Lauren M. O'Connell, "A Rational, National Architecture: Viollet-le-Duc's Modest Proposal for Russia," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* vol. 52, No. 4 (December 1993): 436-52; Idem, "Viollet-le-Duc and Russian Architecture: The Politics of an Asiatic Past," in *Architectures of Russian Identity*, 101-16; E. Viollet-le-Duc, *L'Art Russe* (Paris: Ve A. Morel, 1877), 164-71, 178.

¹² Viollet-le-Duc, L'Art Russe, 8, 148-9.

See, for example, Margaret Belcher, "Pugin Writing," in Pugin: A Gothic Passion, ed. Paul Atterbury and Clive Wainwright (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 115-6; Thomas R. Metcalf, An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 139-40.

popular parlance, "the Savior on the Blood."¹⁴ The initiative for the church belonged to the St. Petersburg City Duma, which opened a public subscription for the structure. The decision on the plans was quickly taken over by the tsar, and most of the cost was assumed by the treasury. Again the architect was chosen for his ability to conform to the image in the mind of the emperor, an image which Alexander III, like Nicholas I, did not trouble to make clear.

The first competition, completed in April of 1882, yielded projects in the Ton style decreed by Nicholas I in his Construction Statute, which continued to regulate the building of Orthodox churches. But the emperor found none to his liking. A report in *Moskovskie vedomosti* on April 9, 1882 stated that Alexander III believed that the best eight projects in the competition did not suit the taste of "Russian church architecture." He indicated to various individuals that he wanted the church to be in "Russian style," and "in the style of the time of the Muscovite tsars of the seventeenth century." The journal *Nedelia stroitelia* reported that he announced that he wished a "purely Russian style of the seventeenth century." A comment added that models of these were to be found "in Iaroslayl." In Iaroslayl.

Architects groped for designs in the new style. The submissions for the second competition, completed only five weeks after the first, incorporated a great variety of pre-Petrine church motifs, none of which seem to have pleased Alexander. He preferred a submission not from a distinguished architect, but from a person close to the court. The hegumen of the Trinity-

Three recent studies have provided excellent discussions of the church's architecture and significance: Kirikov's article cited in footnote 6 and two articles focusing on the history and the iconography of the church by Michael S. Flier: "The Church of the Savior on the Blood: Projection, Rejection, Resurrection," in *Christianity and the Eastern Slavs*, ed. Robert P. Hughes and Irina Paperno (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1994), 2: 25-48; Idem, "At Daggers Drawn: the Competition for the Church of the Savior on the Blood," in *For SK: In Celebration of the Life and Career of Simon Karlinsky*, ed. Michael S. Flier and Robert P. Hughes (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 97-115.

In April 1882, the mayor of St. Petersburg informed the City Duma that he had received a notification from the St. Petersburg Governor of the tsar's wish, conveyed by the Minister of the Interior, that the cathedral be built "in Russian style" (Moskovskie vedomosti, April 9, 1882); A. A. Parland, Khram Voskreseniia Khristova sooruzhennyi na meste smertel'nogo poraneniia v Boze pochivshego Imperatora Aleksandra II na Ekaterininskom kanale v S-Peterburge (St. Petersburg: R. Golike and S. Vil'borg, 1909), 2.

¹⁶ Flier, "The Church of the Savior on the Blood," 27; Flier, "At Daggers Drawn," 98.

Sergius Hermitage near Peterhof, Arkhimandrite Ignatii Makarov, contributed a project at the instance of the tsar's cousin, Grand Duchess Ekaterina Mikhailovna. Makarov had drawn the sketch of a church, he claimed, "almost automatically," on the day of Annunciation. After considerable reworking by the architect Alfred Parland, the project, submitted after the deadline of the competition, received the emperor's approval. The final form of the cathedral, Michael Flier has shown, was a composite of the plans of the many architects who were struggling to find a seventeenth-century national style that suited the emperor's taste. ¹⁷

At first sight, Parland's cathedral recalls the kaleidoscopic forms of Vasilii the Blessed on Moscow's Red Square. Parland himself noted the resemblance (Figure 2). The flamboyant decorations, the tent roof, the onion cupolas became signatures distinguishing the building from the Ton model. However, as B.M. Kirikov has convincingly argued, the resemblance is deceptive. The new church's five-cupola cruciform structure, with a large central basilica-like hall, has little in common with the intricate warren of Vasilii the Blessed. The external devices—the tracery, kokoshniki, and shirinki—borrow from a great number of seventeenth-century churches in the Moscow-Iaroslavl style. 18 Although the cathedral was not consecrated until 1907, its amalgam of the fivecupola form with pre-Petrine ornamentation became the dominant model for church design in the official Russian style from 1881 to 1905. The new national churches provided a backdrop for the "union of tsar and people" extolled in official statements after March 1. The monarchy, claiming popular national roots, now took up the same undisciplined and flamboyant decorative forms that had been condemned by Nikon and other members of the seventeenthcentury church hierarchy.

The "Savior on the Blood" was one of five Resurrection churches erected after 1881 in St. Petersburg. Flier has given a close analysis of its iconology of Resurrection. The theme of Resurrection is elaborated on the exterior

For the projects of the second competition, see the volume of *Zodchii* for 1884. Ignatii's account is cited in *Zhizneopisanie arkhimandrita Ignatiia* (Malysheva), byvshego nastoiatelia Troitse-Sergievoi pystyni (St. Petersburg: V. V. Komarov, 1899), 84.

Kirikov, "Khram Voskreseniia Khristova," 230-3; I. Grabar', Istoriia Russkogo Iskusstva, vol. 9, Book 2 (Moscow: Ak. Nauk SSR, 1965), 269. Kokoshniki are decorative arches that resemble the Russian woman's hat, the kokoshnik. Shirinki are oblong panels recessed in exterior walls.



Figure 2—Alfred Parland—The Cathedral of the Resurrection (Christ on the Blood), St. Petersburg. A. A. Parland, *Khram Voskreseniia Khristova* (St. Petersburg: R. Golike and S. Vil'borg, 1909).

mosaics, which represent Christ carrying the cross, the Crucifixion, the Deposition, the Descent into Hell, and, on the southern pediment, the Resurrection itself. "Resurrection" referred not only to the Savior; it signified the rebirth of a political and religious heritage long moribund and the repudiation of the symbolic traditions of the previous reigns. The central theme of the church's interior, Flier shows, displaced the mythological point of origin from Rome to Jerusalem. The model for the layout of the cathedral was the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, also named for the Resurrection.¹⁹

The interior presents Russia's beginnings not in the Roman Empire—as in the legends of Andrew the First-Called—or Byzantium, as claimed in the legend of Monomakh. Rather, the origins are set at Golgotha itself, now transposed to Russia, with national and messianic implications. The symbolism has a negative thrust—one of rejecting, of clearing away the previous historical narrative, of removing Rome and even Byzantium as forerunners of Russia. The cathedral expresses the determination to do away with foreign mediation of the divine, to overcome the derivative character of Russian religious doctrine and to identify Russia with the source of Christianity itself. The true Russian spirituality could be manifested only after Russia had thrown off some of its Byzantine trappings, but before it had fallen under the domination of western culture in the eighteenth century—as the national school, echoed by Viollet, had suggested.

The references to Jerusalem, like the popular Resurrection motifs on the exterior, were signs of a new state mythology that conveyed a powerful admonition regarding the evils supposedly besetting Russia. The building of the cathedral was to be seen as an act of expiation to atone for the assassination of Alexander II, the shame of which branded the entire people.²⁰ Thus, Parland placed "the prayer of Vasilii the Blessed" beneath the central cupola. The prayer

¹⁹ Flier, "The Church of the Savior on the Blood," 32-43.

This theme was made explicit in sermons and official statements in the months after assassination. For example, Father Ignatii, in an appeal for contributions for the building of the church, emphasized that the entire people bore the shame, and to a large degree the responsibility, for the death (*Zhizneopisanie arkhimandrita Ignatiia*, 92). When betrayed by the Jews, Ignatii explained, Christ cried out, asking what the people had done. "Alexander's blood also cried out, My people what have you done? For my whole life, I have cared for you and your well-being, and you condemned me to death. My thoughts and heart were devoted to you... I made the expiatory sacrifice—the body and blood of Christ cleansing every sin, and you murdered me."

begged God to forgive the people for their sins. The many icons of Ss. Boris and Gleb, the Kievan princes who had died passively to expiate the sins of the Russian land, recalled others martyred for their fatherland's transgressions.²¹ The sins comprised more than the mere act of assassination; they included the weakness, the tolerance, and the laxity presumably responsible for the murder. The cathedral was an act of repentance for Western culture, and the mosaic icons on the exterior were meant to remind Petersburg of its shame. The final lines of Fet's "March 1, 1881" pronounced the transformation of the blood into a shrine.²²

Nicholas I's 1841 decree encouraging Byzantine-style churches remained on the books, and such churches continued to be built, mainly in non-Russian regions.²³ Most official churches erected after 1881 incorporated the national motifs of the Savior on the Blood, seeking to evoke the spirit of the seventeenth century.²⁴ The abundance of bulbous onion domes and floral *kokoshniki*, *girki*, and *shirinki* particularly distinguished new churches based on the

Oh beloved Tsar! Oh remain after death Our protector! May Your bloody image show us our emptiness Our vacillating and weakness for all time!

A. A. Parland, "Khram Voskreseniia Khristova," Zodchii (1907): 375-6; Parland, Khram Voskreseniia Khristova, 3; Flier, "The Church of the Savior on the Blood," 43-5; George P. Fedotov, The Russian Religious Mind (Belmont, MA: Nordland, 1975) 2: 110.

A. A. Fet, Polnoe sobranie stikhotvorenii (St. Petersburg: Marks, 1912), 397.

The snares of the Pharisee are powerless,

What was blood, has become a cathedral,

And the site of the horrible crime,

Has become our eternal shrine!

For example, The Cathedral of the Transfiguration, built in 1888 in Tashkent, most Orthodox Churches in Poland, and Fedor Shekhtel's 1898 Church of the Savior in Ivanovo-Voznesensk.

A. I. Vlasiuk has shown that architectural practice in the second half of the nineteenth century developed its own momentum and was hardly constrained by the 1841 Construction Statute (Vlasiuk, "Evoliutsiia stroitel'nogo zakonodatel'stva Rossii v 1830-e—1910 gody," in *Pamiatniki russkoi arkhitektury i monumental'nogo isskustva* [Moscow: n.p., 1985], 226-46).

Apollon Maikov's poem, "March 3, 1881," published in *Moskovskie vedomosti_*(March 12, 1881), 3, also expresses a sense of collective shame.

Moscow-Iaroslavl style. These included the Petersburg church named after its miracle icon, The Mother-of-God of the Joy of All the Grieving (*Materi vsekh skorbiashchikh radosti*), designed by Alexander Gogen and A. V. Ivanov, and erected from 1894 to 1898, and M. Preobrazhenskii's Alexander Nevskii Cathedral in Reval (Figure 3).²⁵ Viollet had emphasized that the type of corbelled vaulting of seventeenth-century Russian churches lent them to elaborate decoration of the *kokoshnik* type; he especially admired the famous Moscow church at Putynki with its profusion of tent and *kokoshnik* forms.²⁶

The architect Nikolai Sultanov, the translator of *L'Art russe* and an exponent of the new official style, declared Moscow-Iaroslavl churches to be exemplary of seventeenth century church architecture as a whole. He singled out the Church of the Icon of the Georgian Mother of God in Moscow and the Church of the Trinity in nearby Ostankino as the highest achievements of the type, and based his submission for the second competition for the Resurrection Church on them. Sultanov also did considerable archaeological work on the Trinity Church and assisted in its restoration.²⁷ His Peter-Paul Cathedral at Peterhof, completed in the late 1890s, brought the images of the Resurrection Cathedral to the playground of the court. Set on a pond, it reproduced the tent forms and *kokoshniki* of the seventeenth century in brick, which Sultanov considered the building material most suitable for Russian churches. The church provided a stark contrast to the Rococo elegance of the palaces of Peterhof.

The new churches were acts of visual provocation—flagrant repudiations of the esthetic, and by implication, the political and spiritual, premises of Russian autocracy before 1881. The organic motifs of these churches, springing mushroom-like from their surface, defy the order and restraint of neoclassicism and even the eclecticism that had succeeded it, the entwining designs verging on the lushness of Art Nouveau. The profusion of decoration exemplifies what Randolph Starn and Loren Partridge have identified as the

S. Shul'ts, Khramy Sankt-Peterburga: istoriia i sovremennost' (St. Petersburg: Glagol, 1994), 177-8; M. Preobrazhenskii, Revel'skii Pravoslavnyi Aleksandro-Nevskii Sobor (St. Petersburg; A. E. Vineke, 1902).

Viollet-le-Duc, L'Art Russe, 115-17.

N. Sultanov, "Vozrozhdenie russkogo iskusstva," Zodchii 2 (1881): 9; Borisova, Russkaia arkhitektura vtoroi poloviny XIX veka, 308.

Iu. V. Trubinov notes this resemblance; *Khram Voskreseniia Khristova (Spas na Krovi)* (St. Petersburg: Beloe i chernoe, 1997), 40-1.



Figure 3—M. Preobrazhenskii—Alexander Nevskii Cathedral, Reval. M. Preobrazhenskii, *Revel'skii Pravoslavnyi Aleksandro-Nevskii Sobor* (St. Petersburg: A. E. Vineke, 1902).

use of redundancy to enhance the totality and expressiveness of monumental architecture: excess as a prerogative of absolute power.²⁹ The excess was made conspicuous at prominent places so as to admonish the population. Expressing the autocrat's growing dissatisfaction with the western imperial capital, these churches administered an open rebuke to the city itself, constituting an effort to Muscovitize St. Petersburg.³⁰

The Resurrection Cathedral, built on the site of Alexander II's assassination on Catherine Canal, is easily visible from Nevskii Prospect. There is nothing understated in its appearance; it is a declaration of contempt for the order and symmetry of the capital, producing what Louis Réau, the noted French student of Russian art history, described as "a troubling dissonance." A prominent building in Moscow style set in the middle of classical Petersburg was meant to express this rejection. It was, Flier writes, "old Muscovy plunged into the heart of European Petersburg."31 More than twenty official Russianstyle churches went up in St. Petersburg from 1881-1914. At least eighteen of these were demolished or transformed beyond recognition after the revolution. Constantine Pobedonostsev reported that eight such churches were consecrated in the years 1893-95 alone.³² The Assumption Cathedral of the St. Petersburg branch of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves (1895-1900) looks out over the Neva from the Nikolaevskii embankment, a five-cupola church with elaborate seventeenth-century decoration. The Resurrection Cathedral on the Obvodnyi Canal (1904-08), within view of the Warsaw Railroad Station, combines a Byzantine central basilica with kokoshniki and a tent belfry.³³

See the suggestive remarks on inflation and copiousness in the art of monarchy in Randolph Starn and Loren Partridge, *Arts of Power: Three Halls of State in Italy,* 1300-1600 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 166-74.

L. N. Benois wrote that during Alexander III's reign, "Petersburg, Peterhof, Warsaw, etc., were graced with new churches, the lack of which was felt acutely, especially in the capital" ("Zodchestvo v tsarstvovanie Imperatora Aleksandra III," Nedelia stroitelia, November 27, 1894, No.48: 245). On the increased emphasis on Moscow as the political center of autocracy, see Article 8 in Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule.

Louis Réau, Saint Petersburg (Paris: H. Laurens, 1913), 67-8; Flier, "The Church of the Savior on the Blood," 30.

³² Utrachennye pamiatniki arkhitektury Peterburga-Leningrada; katalog vystavki (Leningrad: Khudozhnik RSFSR, 1988), 31-9; Shul'ts, Khramy Sankt-Peterburga, 52, 79-82, 104, 106, 119-21, 173-4, 177-80, 200, 203-4, 212, 218; Polunov, Pod vlast'iu ober-prokurora, 76.

³³ Shul'ts, Khramy Sankt-Peterburga, 81-2, 120-1.

* * *

By bringing forth a forgotten national past, the new Russian style churches of the late Imperial period sought to exert an edifying influence on the masses. Since the 1870s, the Orthodox Church had been engaged in a campaign to broaden its moral influence by adopting Protestant and Catholic practices of addressing the people through sermons, lectures, and literature.³⁴ Churches were built to accommodate large numbers of worshipers and to provide amenities needed to attract a contemporary population. The celebratory literature about the churches dwelled on their size, convenience, and comfort. The Savior on the Blood held 1,600 people. Parland boasted that he used modern technology to light and heat his cathedral. Large stained glass windows, white at the bottom and rising to light blue at the top, allowed natural light to bring out the colors of the mosaics. His design thus was remote from the appearance of early Russian orthodox churches, whose thick walls with few, small windows kept out the light and turned the interior into a sanctum separate from the outside world. In the evening, the great expanse of Parland's church was lit by 1589 electric lights, creating a magical effect. He wrote, "Whatever the weather, whatever the color of the sky, cloudy or threatening, it seems blue in the cathedral, clear, bright, harmonizing with the mood of prayer." The light from the chandeliers flooded the walls "as if bringing to life the severe physiognomies of the saints, as if filling the air of the cathedral to its top." The cathedral was also equipped with steam heat.³⁵ The attempt to return to the simple spirit of early Russia had resulted in splendor and show: in Réau's words, it "surpasses all the churches of Petersburg in its sumptuousness." The Resurrection Church on Obvodnyi Canal could hold 4,000 worshippers under its large central dome of reinforced concrete.³⁶

Combining function and amenities with beauty was presented as a confirmation of the principle of "realism" in Russian national architecture.

See Nadieszda Kizenko, The Making of a Modern Saint: Father John of Kronstadt and the Russian People (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); Simon Dixon, "The Church's Social Role in St. Petersburg," in Church, Nation and State in Russia and Ukraine, ed. Geoffrey A. Hosking (London: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 167-92; Jeffrey Brooks, When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 300-1, 306-11.

³⁵ Parland, *Khram Voskreseniia Khristova*, 14; Grigorii Moskvich, *Petrograd i ego okrestnosti* (Petrograd: G. Moskvich, 1915), 62-3.

³⁶ Réau, Saint Petersburg, 68; Shul'ts, Khramy Sankt-Peterburga, 121.

PART II. THE IMPERIAL MYTH IN ARTISTIC TEXTS

Nikolai Sultanov lauded the comfort and convenience of his Peter-Paul Cathedral in Peterhof, which had room for 800 worshipers. He observed that many members of the propertied classes avoided parish churches and prayed at home because they had to wear coats indoors, or because the churches became crowded and overheated. His church, on the contrary, was spacious, and provided good ventilation, cloak rooms, and seats for the old and infirm. A gallery outside was to protect processions of the cross from inclement weather. Indeed, the official Slavic-revival churches were monumental buildings full of light and comfort that had little in common with the smaller, darker, and colder churches of early Russia.³⁷

Like the Savior on the Blood, other churches were placed at sites for demonstrations of spiritual purification and contrition.³⁸ A fanciful single-domed Church of the Savior covered with *kokoshniki* and other decorations, accompanied by a tent-shaped bell tower, went up at Borki near Kharkov, the site of the wreck of the emperor's train in 1888, as a sign of miraculous salvation³⁹ (Figure 4). Churches built near factories promoted efforts by the government



Figure 4—Church and Bell Tower, Borki. Niva, 1894.

³⁷ Stroitel' (1896): 559-66, 667-95; Kirichenko, Arkhitekturnye teorii XIX veka v Rossii, 254-5.

These edifices as well as others in the national style are discussed in V. G. Lisovskii, "Natsional'nyi stil'" v arkhitekture Rossii (Moscow: Sovpadenie, 2000), 197-211.

³⁹ Niva 24 (1894): 569.

and church to awaken the religious faith of industrial workers. At the beginning of the 1890s, Leontii Benois designed a church for 2,000 people near the textile factory of the Hof-meister, N.C. Nechaev-Maltsov, in the town of Gusev, near Vladimir (Figure 5). This massive edifice was surmounted by a great tent roof and bell tower at one end, and by cupolas and *kokoshniki* in the Iaroslavl style at the other. The mosaic of St. George, the patron saint of Moscow, placed over the portal was probably the work of Victor Vasnetsov, who executed the paintings on the interior walls. From 1901 to 1907, a two-story church erected at the Putilov Factory in St. Petersburg was funded by workers' "contributions" as a memorial to the plant's founder, N. I. Putilov. A drawing of this church, which has since been destroyed, recalls the tent and cupola forms of Vasilii the Blessed. Fedor Shekhtel's large Church of the Savior in the textile center at Ivanovo-Voznesensk, completed in 1898, was built in neo-Byzantine style.⁴⁰

Officials and noblemen close to the court built Russian-style churches on their estates. In the 1880s, Sultanov designed a Moscow-Iaroslavl church with a brick exterior for I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov's estate at Novotomnikov in Tambov *guberniia*. Vorontsov-Dashkov helped shape the national myth and governmental policy at the beginning of Alexander III's reign and served as the head of his palace guard and Minister of the Court.⁴¹ Leontii Benois' church on the estate of A. D. Sheremet'ev, the prominent choral director and composer, in Smolensk *guberniia*, was also in Moscow-Iaroslavl style with a tent bell tower. A flamboyant Moscow-Iaroslavl church with four altars was built from 1886 to 1892 on Sheremet'ev's tract near Peterhof.⁴²

The specific means by which the new style was suggested or imposed by the Imperial government are difficult to determine from the available sources. It seems evident that the procedures for state approval of official projects ultimately required the consent of those close to the emperor, or of

Zodchii (1893): 8, Plates, 1, 2, 6 (1903), 30-1. Shul'ts, Khramy Sankt-Peterburga, 180. William Craft Brumfield, The Origins of Modernism in Russian Architecture (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 129.

⁴¹ Zodchii (1889): 74-7; On Vorontsov-Dashkov, see B. V. Anan'ich and R. Sh. Ganelin, "Aleksandr III i naslednik nakanune 1 marta 1881 g.," in *Dom Romanovykh v Rossii: istoricheskii opyt russkogo naroda i sovremennost*', 2 (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg University Press, 1995), 205.

⁴² Zodchii (1893): Plates 21-23; Shul'ts, Khramy Sankt-Peterburga, 173-4. I thank Priscilla Roosevelt for drawing my attention to the nobility's reproduction of the official Russian style on their estates.



Figure 5—Leontii Benois, Church for 2000 people, Gusev. Zodchii, 1893.

the emperor himself, creating a disposition to conform with their tastes. The construction of Orthodox churches, for instance, required the permission of either the Holy Synod or the local diocese. In St. Petersburg, initiatives from monasteries, religious societies, or even institutions of the government were submitted to the Synod, which was of course dominated by its chiefprocurator, Constantine Pobedonostsev. Many churches were dedicated to events in the lives of members of the Imperial family, an act that both required the emperor's approval and won his favor. The church built to house the icon, The Mother-of-God of the Joy of All the Grieving, at the Imperial St. Petersburg Glass Factory commemorated the tenth anniversary of the emperor's survival of the Borki disaster. The proposal came to the Synod from the Minister of the Interior. The 1904 church built on the Obvodnyi Canal was sponsored by the St. Petersburg Temperance Brotherhood to commemorate the birth of an heir to Nicholas II. The Brotherhood's proposal, submitted by the St. Petersburg Metropolitan, received the approval of the Synod and the emperor.⁴³

Churches built in the national style symbolized Russian domination of regions that retained elements of religious and political autonomy. 44 In the Baltic provinces and Poland, new churches and cathedrals ensured that the inhabitants would not forget who ruled their land. Cathedrals in Riga and Warsaw carried the name of Alexander Nevskii, Alexander III's namesake, and the traditional defender of Russia against Western Christendom. Publications celebrated their construction, providing conspicuous statements

The requirements are indicated in articles 205 and 206 of the "Stroitel'nyi Ustav." Svod Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii (St. Petersburg: Tip. II Otd. Sobstvennoi E.I.V. Kantseliarii, 1857), 12: 47. The procedures are suggested in the memoranda: "Po otnosheniiu Ministerstva Vnutrennikh Del o postroike tserkvi vo imia Skorbiashchei Bozhiei Materi v selenie Imperatorskogo steklannogo zavoda na naberezhnoi r. Bol'shoi Nevy," RGIA, 797-63-225; and "O postroike kamennoi tserkvi na naberezhnoi Obvodnogo kanala bliz Varshavskogo Voksala v S-Petersburge," RGIA, 799-25-1289 (1903). The first church on the Obvodnyi Canal, completed in 1894, was dedicated to the marriage of Nicholas and Alexandra; the present church, begun in 1904, marked the birth of Tsarevich Aleksei (Shul'ts, Khramy Sankt-Peterburga, 121).

The most comprehensive study of the use of church architecture to express Russian imperial dominion is Piotr Paszkiewicz, W sluzbie Imperium Rosyjskiego 1721-1917: funkcje i tresci ideowe rosyjskiej architektury sakralnej na zachodnich rubiezach Cesarstwa i poza jego granicami (Warsaw: Inst. of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, 1999).

of domination. A large orthodox cathedral in Russian-Byzantine style had been built in the center of Riga from 1876-1884. In 1888, the Imperial government commemorated the Borki disaster there with an elaborate Russian-style votive chapel of marble shaped in tent form, its surface covered with innumerable icons and mosaics, placed on the square before the city's railway station.⁴⁵

Church construction in Estland *guberniia* was actively promoted by its governor, S. V. Shakhovskoi, an ally of Pobedonostsev and active supporter of Russification. Shakhovskoi won central government support for the spread of Russian Orthodox religion and education among the population.⁴⁶ His pride was the massive Alexander Nevskii Cathedral (1894-1900) designed in Moscow-Iaroslavl style, which its architect M. Preobrazhenskii described as "the most characteristic of Russian church architecture" (Figure 3). It was placed, Preobrazhenskii wrote in the dedicatory volume, at the "best site," which allowed the cathedral on its commanding heights "to dominate the city." This was Reval's most prominent square, the Domberg, called by Toivo Raun "the traditional bastion of the Baltic German elite."

The acquisition of the property adjacent to the cathedral involved the confiscation of private lands and required considerable pressure from Petersburg authorities and the emperor himself. A recommendation by a committee chaired by the deputy Minister of the Interior, Viacheslav Plehve, prompted a lengthy inter-ministerial correspondence. The Minister of Justice, Nikolai Manasein, considered the legal grounds for seizure weak, but he concluded that the alternative—building the church at another, lower site, where it would stand beneath Lutheran churches—was inadmissible. Laws, however troublesome, could not deter the symbolic solution: "an Orthodox cathedral, rising above numerous Lutheran churches, will occupy a beautiful, dominating location that is suitable for an Orthodox shrine in a Russian state."

Parish churches constructed between 1887 and 1889 in Estland displayed the motifs of Muscovite architecture. They fit a standard plan: a tent-form

⁴⁵ Riga und seine Bauten (Riga: P. Kerkovius, 1903), 181-4.

Edward Thaden, "The Russian Government," in Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914, ed. Edward Thaden (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 67-70; Toivo U. Raun, "The Estonians," in idem, 323-5.

⁴⁷ Preobrazhenskii, Revel'skii Pravoslavnyi Aleksandro-Nevskii Sobor, 3-4; Raun, "The Estonians," 325.

^{48 &}quot;Po voprosu o postroike sobora v g. Revele, Estliandskoi gubernii," RGIA, 797-91-6.

belfry beneath an onion cupola was attached by a passageway to the main cubiform church corpus, itself surmounted by a central onion cupola and with four small cupolas at the corners. *Kokoshniki* decorated the bases of the central cupola, and, in several churches, the tent roofs themselves (Figure 6). A luxury album containing photographs of seven of the churches celebrated the achievement. The album was issued by the commission supervising the construction, which was chaired by a member of the Provincial Bureau (*gubernskoe pravlenie*), A. A. Shirinskii-Shikhmatov, and consisted of Russian officials and priests.⁴⁹

The use of ecclesiastical architecture as a statement of symbolic conquest was most apparent in Warsaw, where almost twenty Russian-style Orthodox churches were built in the 1890s. In Warsaw, as in Riga, the Moscow-Byzantine style remained prevalent, signifying imperial domination. The principal cathedral, Leontii Benois' immense Alexander Nevskii Cathedral (1894-1912), combined the classical Moscow-Byzantine form with abundant kokoshniki on the roof affirming the national character of imperial rule. Its 70-meter bell tower made known the Russian presence by dwarfing surrounding buildings. It became "the most conspicuous accent of the city skyline," prompting lewd comparisons from the city's residents.⁵⁰ Initiative belonged to the Governor-General, I. V. Gurko, who solicited contributions from Russian donors. The chancellery of the Governor-General appealed to residents of Moscow: "By its very presence ... the Russian Church declares to the world ... that in the western terrains along the Vistula, mighty Orthodox rule has taken root ... the appearance of a new ... church in Warsaw as a boundary and pillar of Orthodox Russia will animate the hopes of the Orthodox Slavs for unification under the Orthodox cross." The journal of the Warsaw Eparchy boasted in 1912, "Under the dome of this magic temple, we find ourselves as if on Russian soil."51

⁴⁹ Al'bom vidov tserkvei Estliandskoi gubernii, sooruzhennykh pod vedeniem Revel'skogo nabliudatel'nogo komiteta po postroike tserkvei, prichtovykh i shkol'nykh zdanii (Reval: n.p., 1889?); Adres-kalendar' na 1889 g. (St. Petersburg, 1889), 285. Shirinskii-Shikhmatov later rose to the positions of provincial governor, member of the State Council, official in Nicholas II Court, and Chief-Procurator of the Holy Synod (A. A. Mosolov, Pri dvore poslednego Rossiiskogo imperatora [Moscow: Ankor, 1993], 244, 273).

Piotr Paszkiewicz, "The Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Saint Alexander Nevsky in Warsaw," *Polish Art Studies* vol. 14 (1992): 64-5, 67.

⁵¹ Ibid., 65-6.



Figure 6—Parish Church, Estland. Al'bom vidov tserkvei Estliandskoi gubernii, sooruzhennykh pod vedeniem Revel'skogo nabliudatel'nogo komiteta po postroike tserkvei, prichtovykh i shkol'nykh zdanii. (Reval: n. p., n.d.)

Imposing Orthodox churches also announced imperial rule over Central Asia. The Cathedral of the Transfiguration, a large neo-Byzantine church completed in 1888, towered over the governor's house on the principal square of Tashkent. It was the most prominent building in the center of the new Russian city, which Robert Crews has analyzed as an expression of the imperialist and colonial mentality of late nineteenth-century Russian expansion. The Teachers' Seminary, on the other hand, was designed in the 1880s in Muscovite style. In 1898, a tall five-cupola tent-style brick church, designed by A. L. Benois, was built into the walls of the seminary compound, signifying the particular national and ethnic character of the Russian presence in Tashkent.⁵² A similar tent-style church went up in Baku in the 1880s.⁵³ Russian missionaries and officials in the Caucasus pointed out the symbolic role of Orthodox churches in the religious guidance of mountain peoples. The Viceroy of the Caucasus, Prince Alexander Dondukov-Korsakov, wrote that the "external" aspects of the faith were most important for "Eastern peoples."54

Russian-style churches carried the image of Orthodox autocracy abroad.⁵⁵ Construction of a Russian cathedral in Port Arthur, designed by Alexander Gogen, began in 1902. Its character, announcing Russian ambitions in the Far East, was to be "purely Muscovite, without admixture of Byzantine or other style." The architect gave the cathedral the form of a ship, appropriate for a naval base, with seven gilded cupolas and a high, tent-shaped bell tower. He placed it high above the city so that the cupolas would impress those viewing from the sea⁵⁶ (Figure 7). Similar churches were built in Carlsbad, Vienna, and Copenhagen.⁵⁷ The spiritual significance of the new national myth was announced by the church of Maria Magdalena, which Alexander III

Robert D. Crews, "Civilization in the City: Architecture, Urbanism, and the Colonization of Tashkent," in *Architectures of Russian Identity*, 123; V. A. Nil'sen, *U istokov sovremennogo gradostroitel'stva Uzbekistana: xix-nachalo xx vekov*, 49-52, 64-5; Robert Crews, "Civilization in the City," conference paper, 5.

⁵³ Zodchii (1889): Plates 35-38.

Austin Jersild, "From Frontier to Empire: The Russification of the Causasus, 1845-1917," unpublished mss., Chapter 12, 493 note 124.

On Russian national churches abroad see Piotr Paszkiewicz, W sluzbie Imperium Rosyjskiego 1721-1917, passim.

⁵⁶ Stroitel' (1900): 536.

⁵⁷ Podvor'e russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi v Karlovykh Varakh (Prague: Ústrědní církevní nakladatelství, 1987); Zodchii (1881): 21, Plates 49-50.



Figure 7—Alexander Gogen—Orthodox Church, Port Arthur. Stroitel', 1902

commissioned in 1883, set prominently on the Mount of Olives at the Orthodox Gethsemane. The *kokoshnik* decoration and tent-shaped bell tower are visible from afar, identifying old Russian imagery and Orthodoxy for all to see across Jerusalem.

* * *

The new official style of church architecture repeated the pattern of earlier reigns, using buildings as imposing declarations of visions of change contemplated by the emperor and his entourage. The symbolic break with the past, however, was now sharper and more thoroughgoing, repudiating the Western cultural tradition that had elevated monarchs since Peter the Great and giving the autocracy a specific ethnic identity. It was an architecture alien to compromise, stating the absolute truth of the new myth. The flamboyance of the buildings, their redundancy of forms, their siting, and the proud and self-congratulatory texts that accompanied many of them indicated that the style was a celebration of power, showing the efficacy of the state in shaping the spiritual and cultural life of the nation. The writings that surrounded the design and construction of the churches set them in an ongoing narrative of power. They demonstrated the reality of the myth, the government's capacity to embody the spirit of the nation as enshrined in a particular architectural design.

The buildings themselves announced the resurrection of purportedly forgotten traditions. Manasein's description of the Reval Alexander Nevskii Cathedral as "an Orthodox shrine in a Russian state" characterizes the thinking of the officials sponsoring the new national-style churches. Architecture could resurrect the past and shape attitudes. A shrine, *sviatynia*, a sacred object, designated not a revelatory religious event or person, but an immanent national identity, made into a dominating visual presence. The symbols of Muscovy would command the belief in state and Orthodoxy that officials believed would make Estland part of a Russian state.

The appeal to nationality in architecture represented a reaffirmation of the preeminence of state and empire. To be sure, the new official style responded to the search for native artistic expression of the democratically inspired revival architecture of the 1860s and 1870s. But this style was an official construction, a created architecture—the attempt of an imperial regime to find a grounding in the ruled population by claiming their history. In this respect, it resembles the British colonial administration's creation of a national revival style in India,

the Indo-Saracenic style. Like the Russian official national style, introduced after the terrorists' assassination of a tsar, the "Indo-Saracenic" style was invented after a traumatic revolutionary event—the Sepoy mutiny of 1857—which had thrown the premises of imperial rule into doubt.⁵⁸ In both cases, the ruling elites claimed the spirit of the nation by using architecture to assert mastery over its past.

The Russian emperor was asserting a claim to an ethnic Russian past, one that previous monarchs had avoided. He evoked a solidarity between rulers and ruled in the Russian provinces and claimed a national mission in non-Russian territories. In this respect, the new official style enjoyed somewhat greater popular appeal than did the Indo-Saracenic in India, which apparently was ignored by the native population. "Society," particularly conservative officials, noblemen, and merchants, liked the elaborate decorations on old Russian churches. However, with the revolution of 1905. critical voices, especially among the architects themselves, pointed out the flaws and anomalies in the style. Writing in 1905, V. Kurbatov lamented the transformation of churches into "a kind of architectural museum." "In the construction of nearly all contemporary churches, the Russian style has become the unavoidable requirement. One cannot say, though, that this requirement has been successfully fulfilled anywhere." It was based on the erroneous notion that before Peter a single style had prevailed, "all the forms of which could be realized within a single building."59

Andrei Aplaksin, an architect attached to the St. Petersburg eparchy, deplored the triteness of national church architecture in a speech delivered to the Fourth Congress of Russian Architects in January 1911. The imperative to follow the prescribed style, Aplaksin declared, cost the architect his professional integrity. "The role of the architect, being reduced to a minimum, amounts to composing a rough draft in the process of planning." He blamed this situation on government restrictions and public taste, but above all on the architects themselves, whom he called upon to go beyond the "crude tastes of the crowd" to study the architecture of the past and struggle against the

⁵⁸ Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision*, 24, 57, 86-8, 113-15, 128, 140, 245, 249-50. It is interesting to note that the favorite building style of the indigenous merchant elite in Bombay was the English Gothic, which they thought would bring them closer to their colonial rulers (Ibid., 90-98).

⁵⁹ Zodchii (1905): 497-8.

ignorance of the clergy. Aplaksin observed that some architects had already begun to work creatively with historical forms and to allow more play to their imagination. This "neo-Russian" style, which Aplaksin himself practiced, resulted in innovation and imaginative and tasteful use of the national forms, several of them in churches beyond the jurisdiction of official Orthodoxy.⁶⁰

Many of these churches continued to promote the national mission of Russia in the borderlands. Aleksei Shchusev's striking Trinity Cathedral, at the Pochaev Monastery in Kremenets in the Ukraine, followed the prototype of the twelfth century Iur'ev monastery, with its spare white walls, prominent *lesenes* that articulate the internal structure of the church, and a central dome with a helmet cupola. The Pochaev Monastery was an outpost of Orthodoxy and empire in Volynia province, about five miles from the Austrian border. It was known both for the Pochaev Miracle Icon, which attracted many pilgrims, and the anti-Duma, anti-Semitic weekly, *Pochaevskii listok*, edited there by the monk, Iliodor. The Trinity Cathedral was an esthetic national riposte to the eighteenth-century Baroque Dormition Cathedral in the monastery.⁶¹

The seventeenth century remained a model for churches associated with autocracy especially in and around St. Petersburg. Stepan Krichinskii's "Tercentenary Church" was built to mark the 1913 celebration of the three-hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the Romanov dynasty (Figure 8). The initiative had been taken by the Fedorovskii Gorodetskii Monastery in Nizhegorodskii *guberniia*. The monastery's hegumen, the Arkhimandrite Aleksii, had worked actively to turn the monastery's small chapel in the Nikolaevskii (Moscow) Railroad Station into a church. He succeeded in gaining the patronage of Grand Duke Michael Aleksandrovich and secured

⁶⁰ Ibid. (1911): 23-4; William Craft Brumfield, "The 'New Style' and the Revival of Orthodox Church Architecture, 1900-1914," in William C. Brumfield and Milos M. Velimirovic, Christianity and the Arts in Russia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 105-23; Brumfield, The Origins of Modernism, particularly Chapters 4 and 6; one of Aplaksin's neo-Russian churches is shown in Shul'ts, Khramy Sankt-Peterburga, 106-7; two are mentioned in Utrachennye pamiatniki..., 36.

The monastery had been a center of the Uniate faith. In 1831, after the monks had joined the Polish insurgents, Nicholas I had placed it under the "Orthodox Church administration" (Brumfield, *The Origins of Modernism*, 105-7); Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar' Brokgauza-Efrona (St. Petersburg: I. A, Efron, 1898), 48: 767; John Curtiss, Church and State in Russia: The Last Years of the Empire (New York: Octagon, 1940), 255.

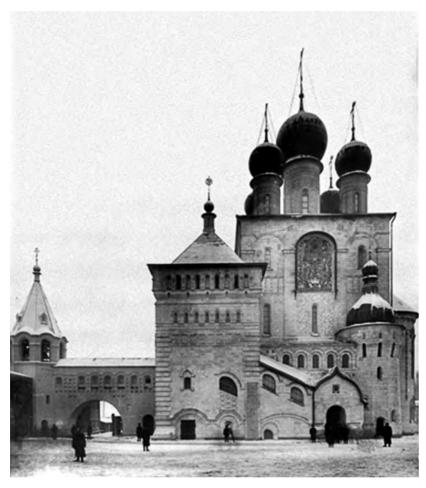


Figure 8—Stepan Krichinskii—Tercentenary Church, St. Petersburg. GARF, fond 601.

funds from a national subscription, the St. Petersburg City Duma, church and governmental institutions, and from the emperor himself.⁶²

The Tercentenary Church was an exact copy of Rostov wall churches of the seventeenth century, which, Krichinskii asserted, exemplified the true Russian style. It was considerably more elaborate—built in reinforced concrete—larger, nearly as high as Kazan Cathedral, and accommodated over 4,000 worshipers. When completed in 1914, it cost one million rubles, several times the original estimate. The north wall had a large majolica icon of the Fedorov Mother of God, based on Iaroslavl frescoes and a genealogical tree of the Romanov house. The church bells were cast with reliefs of members of the ruling family and their patron saints. A kremlin was to be built around the church. "The idea was to create an entire corner of the seventeenth century," Krichinskii wrote. It would transplant a bit of Muscovy to St. Petersburg, where many, including the art critic George Lukomskii, believed it did not belong.⁶³

Krichinskii's design answered the needs of an era in which religion retreated from public view to sequestered spaces behind the walls of monasteries, to provide a model of the spiritual life. The purpose of the new buildings was exemplary, rather than admonitory, showing the persistence and revival of old-Russian piety among those forswearing the contestation and distraction of contemporary society. Among these were the emperor and empress, who created their own replica of seventeenth-century spirituality at the Fedorov village at Tsarskoe Selo, which was built for the tsar's Convoy and His Majesty's Rifles. The village was to provide a spiritual model shaped by the tsar of a reborn autocratic nation. Krichinskii designed a kremlin wall of elaborately decorated white Staritskii limestone to surround the village.⁶⁴

⁶² Istoriia Fedorovskogo Gorodetskogo monastyria (Nizhegorodskaia guberniia) i postroenie v S-Peterburge khrama v pamiat' 300 iubileiia tsarstvovaniia imperatorskogo Doma Romanovykh (St. Petersburg, 1913), 113-24.

⁶³ S. Krichinskii, "Khram v pamiat' 300-letia doma Romanovykh," *Zodchii* (1914): 122-3; *Niva* 5 (1914): 97; "Snimki vidov tserkvi postroennoi v pamiat' 300-letiia tsarstvovaniia Romanovykh," GARF, 601-1-1841; Georgii Lukomskii, "Khram v pamiat' 300-letia tsarstvovaniia goma Romanovykh," *Appolon* 5 (1914): 47-9; "Zhurnaly komiteta dlia ustroistva prazdnovaniia trekhsotletiia Doma Romanovykh," RGIA, 1320-1-30, 5-6, 43-5.

Pamiatniki arkhitektury prigorodov Leningrada (Leningrad: Stroiizdat', 1983), 126 Vladimir Pokrovskii's unrealized project for a Military-Historical Museum in St. Petersburg is an example of this (Ekaterina Abrosova, "Arkhitektor Vysochaishego

The centerpiece was the Fedorov Cathedral (1908-1912), dedicated to the protectress of the dynasty, the Fedorov Mother-of-God. The architect Vladimir Pokrovskii took the model of the fifteenth-century Annunciation Cathedral in the Moscow Kremlin, which had served as the private chapel for the tsar's family before Peter the Great, but he added seventeenth-century elements—tent-shaped roofs over the main entrance and covered vestibules. He also drew on Novgorod motifs for the bell tower.⁶⁵

The cathedral was intended as a museum of early-Russian religious art that would attest to the rebirth of a national religious esthetic and hold numerous icons and other religious treasures. For Alexandra, Pokrovskii's assistant, Vladimir Maksimov, constructed a "cave church" in honor of Serafim Sarov below the cathedral, where the imperial family could worship before communion. The walls were painted with motifs from the *terems*, the chambers where women had been kept sequestered in old Russia. The vestibules were decorated with scenes of Hell and Paradise and above, the fortress of heaven. The chapel held a pitcher of water from the stream at Sarov, in which the imperial family had bathed, an icon of Serafim, a box with a relic, and a copy of the "Tenderness" icon, which Serafim had kept in his cell, and

Dvora Vladimir Aleksandrovich Pokrovskii," in *Tsar'ino: Pravoslavnyi istoriko-kraevedcheskii almanakh*, vol. 98, Vyp. 4: 44-46). Also see Vladimir Maksimov's unrealized projects for the building complex of the Railroad Guards' regiment and a hotel complex at Tsarskoe Selo (Arkadii Krasheninnikov, "Russkii zodchii Vladimir Nikolaevich Maksimov, [1882-1942]," *Tsar'ino: Pravoslavnyi istoriko-kraevedcheskii almanakh*, vol. 98, Vyp. 4, 74).

⁶⁵ Kirichenko, Russkii stil', 305-8, 310-1, 366-8.

⁶⁶ Abrosova, "Arkhitektor Vysochaishego Dvora Vladimir Aleksandrovich Pokrovskii," 55-6; One of the principal sponsors of the church was the chief of the Tsarskoe Selo Palace Administration, Mikhail Putiatin, a former officer of the Preobrazhenskii Guards and Marshal of the Court. Putiatin was a lover of Russian antiquities, who had helped organize the tsar's visit to Sarov and had designed the shrine for the saint's remains. He closely supervised the decoration of the church and insisted that the iconostasis be in Old Russian style. The church warden was Captain N. Loman, the author of the popular account of Nicholas II's coronation and a popular biography of Alexander II, and an associate of Rasputin (Général Alexandre Spiridovitch, Les dernières années de la cour de Tsarskoe-Selo [Paris: Payot, 1928-1929], 1: 352, 2: 253-62); Mosolov, Pri dvore poslednego Rossiiskogo imperatora, 28, 118.

On Maksimov, his buildings, and his tragic fate under Stalin see Krasheninnikov, "Russkii zodchii Vladimir Nikolaevich Maksimov (1882-1942)," 63-83.

his pectoral cross.⁶⁸ The cathedral thus incorporated the symbols of popular charismatic religion into the artistic motifs of early Russia.

The town was to represent a spiritual model of a monarchist nation taken from Russia's distant past. The officers and soldiers of the Convoy and Sharpshooter Regiments worshiped in the church and lived in the old-Russian-style barracks. Dressed in Russian costumes resembling early prototypes, designed by Victor Vasnetsov, they enacted an imagined seventeenth century, on a stage set of early Russia, to set the military-religious entourage of the imperial family apart from the court, state, and Orthodox Church.⁶⁹

The revival of seventeenth-century architectural forms by the monarchy both expressed and sustained a myth that set Russian autocracy apart from the monarchies of the West and gave the Russian emperor a religious mandate for the preservation of his absolute power. The building of revival churches after 1881 sought to demonstrate the vitality of the historical spirit of Muscovite Rus' and affirm the autocrat's title to the national past. After the revolution of 1905, the recreation of the past withdrew behind monastery walls to sustain illusions of omnipotence and mass support that allowed Nicholas II to believe that he still represented and spoke for a Russian nation.

Fedorovskii gosudarev sobor v Tsarskom Sele: Vyp. I, Peshchernyi Khram vo imia prepodobnogo Serafima sarovskogo (Moscow: A. A. Levenson, 1915); Rodina, September 16, 1912, 538; Spiridovitch, Les dernières années de la cour de Tsarskoe-Selo, 2: 253-60; Maurice Paléologue, Alexandra-Féodorowna, impératrice de Russie (Paris: Plon, 1932), 51-2; A. N. Naumov, Iz utselevshikh vospominanii, 1868-1917 (New York: A. K. Naumova and O. A. Kusevitskaia, 1954-1955), 2: 226.

⁶⁹ S. Ia. Ofromisova, "Tsarkaia sem'ia (iz detskikh vospominanii)," Russkaia Letopis' (Paris, 1925), 7: 240-1; I. M. Shadrin, "Pridvornaia Pevcheskaia Kapella i Imperatorskii Dvor do Velikoi Voiny 1914-1917 gg.," Bakhmeteff Arhive, Columbia University, Shadrin Collection, 55. On the theatricalization of church architecture in the neo-Russian style and particularly in Pokrovskii's Fedorov Sobor, see A. V. Ikonnikov, Istorizm v arkhitekture (Moscow: Stroiizdat, 1997), 304, 310.

10. St. Petersburg the Imperial City and Peter Tchaikovsky ¹



Jon his death in 1893, Peter Tchaikovsky's Moscow friends and admirers argued that he should be buried in Moscow, where he had lived and taught for many years. His brother Modest insisted that he be laid to rest in Petersburg: "He received his education here, first at the School of Jurisprudence, then at the conservatory. Here his operas and symphonies enjoyed their first successes, here he had so many artistic attachments!" We can understand the dilemma. Peter Tchaikovsky had no real home, not Moscow, not Petersburg. I will return to this question later. But St. Petersburg was Tchaikovsky's city in many ways. He was a product of Petersburg society and the rich cultural life that had evolved in the capital. Most important, his music captures the spirit of Petersburg the imperial city, its mystique, aura, power, and pervasive sadness.

Imperial Petersburg was a symbol of the westernized Russian monarchy of Peter the Great, displaying the irresistible power of his will, creating beauty out of nothingness. St. Petersburg would be a demonstration that Russia was a European state. Not only would Petersburg be a European city; it would be the most European of cities. Petersburg rivaled European cities by incorporating variations on western architectural styles: from the mansions and gardens of Amsterdam, the palaces and gardens of Versailles, the canals of Venice, and the vast neoclassical squares of Napoleonic Paris.

Petersburg is a European city, but its appearance is strikingly Russian. The size, the variety, and the flamboyance of the borrowed forms give it a particularly Russian look. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the

Keynote Address, Carnegie Hall Tchaikovsky Festival, October 15, 2012.

Alexander Poznansky, *Tchaikovsky: the Quest for the Inner Man* (New York: Schirmer, 1991), 594.

capital had become a city so western that it was not western at all, a distillation, an ideal western city. Alexander Herzen wrote in 1842, "St. Petersburg is different from all European cities in that it resembles them all."

The palaces and drill fields of Petersburg provided a setting for performances of the ceremonies of the westernized absolute monarchy, the most absolute of absolute monarchies. It preserved the representational culture of early modern absolutism long after that had declined in most of Europe. Processions and balls in the palaces and massive reviews on the Palace Square and Field of Mars displayed again and again the preeminence and power of the ruler and his elite. St. Petersburg was also the center of the vast tsarist administration, and leading officials—ministers and state secretaries, as well as the tsar's suite—joined in the presentations of the Russian imperial court.

Petersburg was the setting where the tsar and the most prominent figures in the Russian court performed their roles in the drama of autocratic power. In many respects, Russian monarchy accords with Clifford Geertz's model of the "theater state" and the "theatricality" *teatral nost*' that characterized the political culture of Russian monarchy until its demise.⁴ In St. Petersburg, the monarch brandished the symbols of power to produce the effects of what was described by the word *torzhestvennost*', the solemn festivities of power that exalted the monarch before his subjects. (See the introductory essay to this volume.)

The vast palace square, with the monumental buildings enclosing it epitomized the spirit of *torzhestvennost*' (Figure 1). The immense rococo Winter Palace, the work of Bartollommeo Rastrelli, symbolized the expanse and power of the autocracy. The architectural historian John Summerson described the Winter Palace as "a brutally literal Bilbiena stage design," which could be tolerated only in Russia, where it gave "an effect of absolute, grim, and careless dominion."⁵

³ A. I. Gertsen, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem* (Petrograd: Literaturno-izdatel'skii otdel Komissariata po prosveshcheniu, 1919), 3: 11; see also Iu. M. Lotman, "Simvolika Peterburga i problemy semiotiki goroda," in *Semiotika goroda i gorodskoi kul'tury Peterburga*, *Trudy po znakovym sistemam XVIII* (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 1984), 31-5.

On the theater state, see Clifford Geertz, Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 121-36; On the theatricality of Petersburg, see Lotman, "Simvolika Peterburga," 37-41.

John Summerson, *The Architecture of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 34.



Figure 1—A. Ricard de Montferrand—The Alexandrine Column on Palace Square, St. Petersburg. Montferrand, *Plans et détails du monument consacré à la mémoire de l'Empereur Alexandre* (Paris: Thierry, 1838).

In the center of the square stands the Alexandrine column, dedicated in 1834, which served as "one of the primary visual foci of the classical center of the city." The column memorialized the triumphs of the reign of Alexander I. Designed by the architect Auguste Montferrand, it incorporated the models of the Trajan Column in Rome and the Vendôme column in Paris, but, as Montferrand boasted, was taller than either. The figure of the angel hovers over the square. Its face, almost invisible from the ground, is that of Tsar Alexander (Figure 2). However, Alexander is a militant, not a gentle and endearing angel, the instrument of Providence in defeating Napoleon, a symbol of power and destiny. The reliefs on the base celebrate his military victories. Garlands, eagles, and laurel wreathes resemble those on the Trajan column. Russian military insignia included helmets that at the time were thought to belong to the princes Oleg and Alexander Nevskii.

The great arc enclosing the square by Carlo Rossi took form during the 1820s (1819-1828). The headquarters of the Russian General Staff and the center is flanked by the buildings of the former Ministry of Finances and

George Heard Hamilton, *The Art and Architecture of Russia* (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1983), 333.

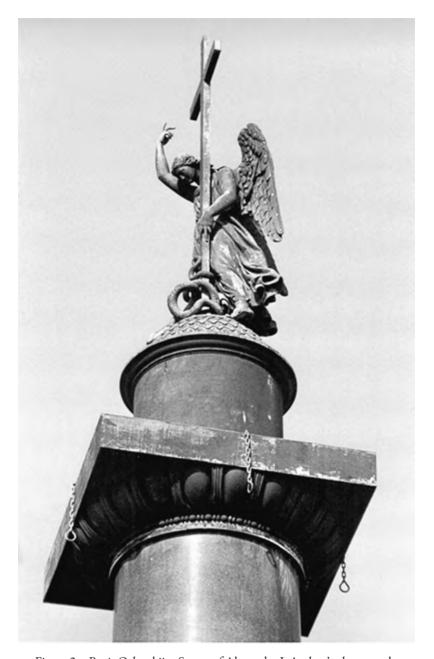


Figure 2—Boris Orlovskii—Statue of Alexander I. Author's photograph.

Foreign Affairs, both of which Alexander I had established during the first years of the nineteenth century. Atop the arch is a chariot, the classical ensemble of a chariot driven by the figure of winged victory (Figure 3). It is clearly patterned on the models of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin (1791) and L'Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel in Paris (1808), though its chariot is drawn by six horses rather than the classical quadriga. The square provided the setting for massive reviews of brightly dressed guardsmen marching in unison to their commander's will.



Figure 3—Chariot with Figure of Winged Victory. Author's photograph.

The celebration of the dedication of the column in 1834 gives a sense of the grandeur and sweep of tsarist ceremony. Nicholas I, his brother-in-law, Prince William of Prussia, at his side, prayed together with his entire army. "A spectacle that was at once touching and instructive," Ivan Butovskii wrote in a brochure describing the spectacle. Nicholas fell to his knees, followed by the entire army. When the Protodeacon uttered the prayer of Eternal Memory, the cloth fell, bearing the column to public view. Nicholas then took command of the guard, and saluted the monument to the strains of band music, with loud shouts of "Hoorah" from the crowd. The thunderous 248

gun salute that followed, accompanied by blaring music, struck Butovskii as a "frightening dream." The people crossed themselves and shed tears of tender pity (*umilenie*) while they gazed intently at the monument and Nicholas I standing before the column with lowered sword.⁷

The poet Vasilii Zhukovskii was struck dumb by the scene:

The miraculous fusion of earthly power reduced to dust, with the mysterious power of the cross, rising above it and the invisible presence of that without name, expressing everything that is dear to us, something whispering to the soul, "Russia, your past glory is your future glory" and finally the touching word eternal memory and the name ALEXANDER, whereupon the drape fell from the column, followed by a thunderous prolonged Hoorah, combined with sound of five hundred cannons, from which the air was transformed into a festive storm of glory ... For the depiction of such moments there are no words and the very recollection of them destroys the gift of the one who describes.⁸

Tchaikovsky was an imperial composer in several respects. First, he shared the imperial mystique, and many of his compositions shared an imperial idiom epitomized by St. Petersburg with its characteristic modes of expression. Like the architects of Petersburg, Tchaikovsky engaged in a process of incorporation, by introducing into his compositions Russian folk themes, or melodies of his own creation that recalled folk themes, into western, German, formal structures. His genius for doing so was astonishing. Rather than lowering orchestral genres to level of the popular tunes, he lifted the popular to the stature of the symphonic. He was considered the most European of the Russian composers of the late nineteenth century and endured the obloquy of critics who favored reproducing indigenous national themes and modes.

Tchaikovsky's manner of incorporation was the counterpart to the doctrine of Official Nationality that prevailed during most of his life. The doctrine proclaimed a unity of the many nationalities in the all-Russian multinational empire, the *Rossiiskaia Imperiia* whose westernized noble elites,

⁷ Ivan Butovskii, Ob otkrytii pamiatnika Imperatoru Aleksandru Pervomu (St. Petersburg, 1834), 21-3.

⁸ Vasilii Zhukovskii, "Vospominanie o torzhestve 300go avgusta 1834 goda," *Severnaia pchela*, September 8, 1834: 807.

and by extension their peasant populations, were devoted to the Russian Emperor, *Rossiiskii Imperator*, who served himself as symbol of European statehood. Ukraine, termed "Little Russia," was regarded as part of Great Russia, its inhabitants as Little Russians, and the Ukrainian language as a dialect of Russian. Tchaikovsky's music expressed the "Little Russian" assumptions of state ideology. Many of his compositions, such as his First Piano Concerto and his Little Russian Symphony, Number Two, incorporated renditions of three Ukrainian melodies into the European symphonic idiom. His operas, *Cherevichki* (*The Slippers*) and *Mazeppa*, drew upon Ukrainian folk songs. *Mazeppa*, based on Pushkin's poem *Poltava*, portrayed the horrific fate of a Cossack leader who betrayed the Emperor Peter the Great by seeking independence for Ukraine.

Other orchestral works combined official and folk motifs in an eclectic mix that expressed the nationality of the westernized empire. The 1812 overture incorporates an Orthodox hymn, a Russian folk dance, and of course the national anthem, "God Save the Tsar." Marche Slav combines Serbian and Russian folk melodies with the national anthem. It is a musical statement of an envisioned pan-Slavist empire. "God Save the Tsar," written by Prince Alexei L'vov in 1834, when the doctrine of Official Nationality was dominant, concludes six of Tchaikovsky's compositions, and represents perhaps the most powerful musical expression of the spirit of torzhestvennost'.

Valery Gergiev has remarked that Tchaikovsky's symphonic works, like his music for opera and ballet, were written for theatrical performance. They evoke a sense of theatricality, you can almost see the stage while listening. They ring with the exalted grandeur of Petersburg; they overwhelm and enthrall, elevating and romanticizing authority, so much so that they won the admiration of Tsar Alexander III, who helped Tchaikovsky with grants of money and a pension and even attended his funeral accompanied by the imperial family. But it would not be accurate to describe Tchaikovsky as a court or even as an official composer. He was officially honored only in the last decade of his life and was never in attendance at court. In this respect, he remained independent, on his own, but always dependent on patronage, most notably on the part of Madame von Meck. Tchaikovsky's music expresses, at once, the mystique of imperial grandeur and his apartness from that grandeur: his characteristic sadness, a melancholy longing for something closer, human, and permanent, alternates with resounding moments of the solemn and festive.

Tchaikovsky's relationship to the state and his personal identity were largely. defined by his social background. He and his forebears belonged to the service nobility established by Peter the Great in the first decades of the eighteenth century. Two imperatives defined membership in the Russian nobility: an imperative of service to the throne, at first obligatory for life, after the emancipation of the nobility from service in 1762, an ethos governing the nobleman's life. The second imperative involved the nobility's adoption of the forms of European conduct and culture, a western identity that distinguished them from the serfs and other estates. To display their status, they wore European dress, learned European polite conduct, and acquired a taste for the culture of the west, particularly literature and theater, which created the basis for the illustrious Russian literary heritage we know today.

Agents of the centralized state, many of the noblemen lacked local attachments and a sense of home, which gave rise, Marc Raeff has written, to feelings of "alienation and rootlessness," expressed most eloquently in Peter Chaadaev's "Philosophical Letter," published in 1836.9 Chaadaev wrote:

Look around you. Everyone seems to have one foot in the air. You would say we are all travelers on the move. No one has a fixed sphere of existence; there are no good habits, no rules that govern anything. We do not even have homes; we have nothing that binds, nothing that awakens our sympathies and affections, nothing that endures, nothing that remains. Everything passes, flows away, leaving no trace either outside or within us. We seem to camp in our houses, behave like strangers in our families; and in our cities we appear to be nomads, more so than the real nomads who graze their flocks in our steppes, for they are more attached to their desert than we are to our towns. 10

In many ways, Peter Tchaikovsky's life conformed to this pattern. His father, Ilia, was educated as an engineer and served as the manager of an ironworks at the town of Votkinsk in the Ural Mountains, where Peter

Marc Raeff, Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia: The Eighteenth-Century Nobility (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1966), 79-80 and passim.

Peter Iakovlevich Chaadaev, "Letters on the Philosophy of History: First Letter," in Marc Raeff, Russian Intellectual History: An Anthology (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1978), 162-3.

was born. Later Ilia would be appointed director of the St. Petersburg Technological Institute. Peter attended a private boarding school in Petersburg, then the elite Imperial School of Jurisprudence, where his two younger brothers, the twins Modest and Anatole, later studied. Modest became a collaborator on the librettos of several of Peter's operas and his brother's first biographer. Anatole went on to a career in the judicial administration, serving as a prosecutor in Tbilisi and later a member of the Senate. The family did not own a hereditary estate.

Tchaikovsky served as an official in the central apparatus of the Ministry of Justice in Petersburg for four years (1859-1863). Alexander Poznansky, Tchaikovsky's biographer, suggests that only after a disappointment over the loss of a promotion and a fortuitous meeting did he decide to devote himself to music.11 The promotion may have qualified him for advancement from the ninth rank in civil service to eighth, from tituliarnyi sovetnik to kollezhskii assessor. The eighth brought membership in the hereditary nobility, which Tchaikovsky of course already enjoyed, but it also represented a symbolic divide between the higher and lower levels of administration. The choice, in any case, was not predetermined or easy. Music was not regarded as a respectable occupation for a member of the Russian nobility. The St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music had been established only in 1858. Anton Rubinstein, its first director, wrote, "It was obvious that in Russia the profession of musical artist, a profession that defined the position in society of a person who has devoted his whole life to his art and music did not exist."12 Tchaikovsky belonged to that brilliant first generation of dedicated Russian composers whose works we know today. He began serious study of music in 1863 and his progress was amazing. By 1866, he had completed his beautiful First Symphony, "Winter Dreams."

In 1861, Tchaikovsky took the first of many European tours. Indeed, he was nearly always on the go; Poznansky writes of his "nomadic wandering." Whether in Russia, Europe, or the United States, he could never stay long in one place, and only late in life (1885) did he establish a more or less permanent home at Klin, near Moscow. Tchaikovsky felt that

Poznansky, Tchaikovsky, 50-66.

James Loeffler, The Most Musical Nation: Jews and Culture in the Late Russian Empire (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 27.

Poznansky, *Tchaikovsky*, 357.

sense of rootlessness expressed in the poignant strains of his music. I suggest that much of the haunting quality of Tchaikovsky's music results from the interplay of official, monarchical grandeur embodied in Petersburg with his drama of the wandering, yearning soul, all of this sublimated in the realm of performance. This interplay often comes about through the device of what Richard Taruskin has called the "triumphal polonaise," which injects the element of *torzhestvennost*' into the performance. Taruskin writes that "Tchaikovsky's 'imperial style' was virtually defined by the polonaise." ¹⁴

The Russian court appropriated the triumphal polonaise at the end of Catherine the Great's reign, signaling the conquest of Poland lands and their incorporation into the empire. After Catherine's death, the dance accompanied stately processions through the halls of the imperial palace. Taruskin has shown how Tchaikovsky's polonaises brought the element of official grandeur into orchestral works such as the fourth movement of the Third Orchestral Suite, the fourth movement of the Third "the Polish" Symphony, and the first movement of the Fourth Symphony.¹⁵

It is in Tchaikovsky's operas that polonaises create their most striking psychological effect, particularly in *Eugene Onegin* and the *Queen of Spades*. The eighth chapter of Pushkin's novel, *Eugene Onegin*, takes place in a Petersburg mansion, where Onegin sees Tatiana. She is no longer the rural maiden he had rebuffed, but a grand dame married to a general. Pushkin's text only vaguely suggests the setting of the action. However, in Act 3 of the opera, Tchaikovsky seizes the opportunity to introduce *torzhestvennost*'. The scene takes place in the lavish mansion of Tatiana and her eminent husband, Prince Gremin, whose character the composer introduces into the drama.

The Act opens with the slow beats and mounting strains of the polonaise, evoking the grandeur and majesty of power. Then Prince Gremin, the imposing "grey headed warrior," sings his aria, assuring us that old men too can experience love. Taruskin notes the contrast between the solemn polonaise and the cheerful waltz that had been performed in the Larin's country house in Act 2; the waltz, the lower form, here is the melody of the provincial picturesque. ¹⁶

¹⁴ Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 286.

Natalia Ogarkova, Tseremonii, prazdnestva, muzyka russkogo dvora XVIII-nachala XIX veka (St. Petersburg: Rossiiskii Institut istorii iskusstv, Dmitrii Bulanin, 2004); Taruskin, Defining Russia Musically, 278-84, 290.

¹⁶ Taruskin, Defining Russia Musically, 287-90.

It is not only the humiliation of love rebuffed that the hapless, nomadic Onegin suffers: it is a social indignity inflicted by the majesty of power, discomfiting a person whose bravado concealed the inner weakness of the superfluous man, which Boris Gasparov has shown was central to the composer's rewrite of Pushkin, and quite remote from the Onegin Pushkin had in mind.¹⁷ It is no wonder that Onegin was the favorite opera of Tsar Alexander III. In a recent production at the Metropolitan Opera, with Renée Fleming and Dmitrii Khvorovstovskii the polonaise was reduced almost to background music at the beginning of the act, as Onegin, the dandy, dresses himself and prepares his toilet with the aid of valets. The focus is heavily on the tragic love story, appealing to our own reflexive impulses, but dispelling the dramatic tension between the official and the personal.

Tchaikovsky's fascination with the *torzhestvennost*' and éclat of the reign of Catherine the Great is evident in two other operas: *The Slippers* (*Cherevichki*) and, most notably, in the ball scene of Act 2 of *Queen of Spades*. Pushkin's short story about Ghermann, a guards' officer obsessed with the goal of a big win at cards, takes place presumably in the 1830s. For Tchaikovsky, it provided an opportunity to call forth the grandeur of Catherine's court in the 1790s. Gasparov has observed the hallucinatory effects of the changing chronotopes, prefiguring the devices of modernism. The polonaise motif pursues Ghermann, alien both in name and social standing to the illustrious milieu, throughout the opera and rises to its culmination at the end of the ball scene.¹⁸

The climax of the scene is the polonaise by Josef Kozlovskii, set to Gavriil Derzhavin's verse "Thunder of Victory, Resound," and the singing of "Glory to Catherine" in preparation for the expected arrival of the empress herself, who, depending on the performance, appears or is even more present by her absence. The majestic polonaise dwarfs the wretched hero, punishment as it were for his amorality and love of one above his station (the romantic theme was added by Tchaikovsky). Like Onegin, Ghermann is cast down and perishes, a pitiful figure unworthy of the transcendent presence of the imperial order. Tchaikovsky thus evoked the emanations of St. Petersburg, the city of Peter the Great and his successors, who strove to live up to his example.

Boris Gasparov, Five Operas and a Symphony: Word and Music in Russian Culture (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 58-94.

¹⁸ Ibid., 156-60.

The city at once exalted its servitors as emanations of sovereign power and crushed those willful and reckless with brutal indifference, demonstrating the distance between the majesty of power and the hapless individual.

The sacred aura of the imperial city had begun to dim even in Tchaikovsky's lifetime. Petersburg, and all it represented, increasingly became witness to scenes of the vulnerability and even helplessness of the monarchy. The assassination of Alexander II on March 1, 1881 revealed the inability of the Russian state to protect its sovereigns. It attested to the penetration of St. Petersburg by foreign elements alien to the Russian people who presumably loved their tsars. An article appearing in a Petersburg newspaper a few days after the assassination described St. Petersburg as a nest of "foreigners thirsting for the disintegration of Russia.... In St. Petersburg, you meet many people who seem to be Russians but think like enemies of their native land, like traitors to their people." 19

The assassination brought forth a new myth of autocracy, a neo-Slavophile myth that looked back to Muscovy, rather than to Petersburg, as the founding period of a Russia in which the Russian people were united with their tsar in faith and feeling. Alexander III appeared as little as possible in Petersburg, living instead at the suburban estate at Gatchina. Nicholas II shared his father's aversion for the capital. In the first years of his reign, he resided there, but the revolutionary events of the early twentieth century forced him to retreat to Tsarskoe Selo.

The imperial city itself changed with the economic development of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. St. Petersburg grew from a population of a half million in 1856 to one and one half million in 1910. It was the largest city in the empire. Many of the new urban dwellers were peasants, fresh off the land, and not used to urban life, experienced it as alien and traumatic. The Russian working class was small compared to that of other European countries, but more concentrated in large factory towns and cities, which at moments of political and social crisis this created an explosive mix. Most national capitals were not also major centers of heavy industry. The squares and boulevards of Petersburg became scenes of open confrontations between the monarchy and a disgruntled working class. In the pages of the increasingly assertive periodical press, Russian and foreign readers followed the challenges to the autocracy and the defiling of the imperial city.

¹⁹ Moskovskie vedomosti, March 11, 1881, 3.

On January 6, 1905, the Blessing of the Waters took place, the most important public religious ritual for the Petersburg court, on the Neva before the Winter Palace. During the ceremony, a gunshot rang out, shattering several of the panes of the windows of the Winter Palace where the members of court stood viewing the ceremonies. The shooting was not explained, but remained an omen of things to come. Three days later, Father Gapon, the leader of a "police union" originally sponsored by the government, led a peaceful movement of workers to the Winter Palace to petition for the rectification of grievances and for a constitution. The troops confronting them on Palace Square opened fire, killing hundreds.

The result was a desecration of power, of authority. Bloody Sunday undermined the myth of the benevolent tsar in the eyes of many workers and peasants—their fundamental faith in the monarchical order. Gapon himself, it is said, cried out "There is no God any longer! There is no Tsar!" It discredited Nicholas II in the eyes of educated opinion, both in Russia and Europe, where the tsar struggled to be seen as one of the leaders of civilized states of the west. It marked the beginning of the Revolution of 1905.

In first years of the twentieth century, St. Petersburg would provide a backdrop for events that revealed the helplessness and desperation of the monarchy—a city that had lost its meaning, a signifier without a signified, its austere beauty a phantasmic presence conjured by the poets of the silver age. In subsequent decades, the capital provided the setting for a new myth of revolutionary Petrograd, Leningrad, a myth elaborated in speeches, the press, and most vividly in film. Today, St. Petersburg appears as a magnificent relic, a monument to the somber course of Russia's broken history.

Abraham Ascher, The Revolution of 1905: Russia in Disarray (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988) 1: 91.