Patriarch Nikon's Image in Russian History and Culture

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PATRIARCH NIKON'S IMAGE IN RUSSIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

by

Kevin Kain
Dr. John O. Norman, Advisor

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of History

ADVISOR: DR. JOHN O. NORMAN

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
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Kevin Kain
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Problem and Its Significance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historiography</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikon-Related Art and Material Culture: The Scholarly Literature</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical and Methodological Paradigms: Visual Imagery</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical and Methodological Paradigms: The New Cultural History</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical and Methodological Paradigms: Tracking Images of Russian Historical Figures</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical and Methodological Paradigms: New Studies of Old Belief</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methodology</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Sources</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dissertation’s Objectives</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. NIKON’S “KII CROSS SYSTEM OF IMAGERY”</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moscow as the “Third Rome” and “New Jerusalem”</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriarch Nikon and the Constantinian Inheritance</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich as the New Constantine</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vi
Table of Contents—continued

CHAPTER

The Kii System Prototype ................................................................. 40

Patriarch Nikon's “Golgotha” Iconography: A Modification of the Imagery .................................................................................. 48

Patriarch Nikon's System of Imagery and the Romanov Legacy ...... 52

Women in Patriarch Nikon's System of Imagery ................................ 57

The Eighteenth Century ..................................................................... 61

The Long Nineteenth Century ............................................................ 65

The Romanov Tercentenary ............................................................... 71

The Soviet Period ............................................................................... 76

Conclusions ...................................................................................... 78

III. THE PARSUNA “PATRIARCH NIKON WITH CLERGY” .............. 81

The Parsuna’s Place in the Seventeenth-Century Russian Artistic Culture ...................................................................................... 86

Debates About the Parsuna’s Provenance ........................................... 89

The Parsuna and Nikon on His Status as Patriarch After His Departure from Moscow in July 1658 ..................................................... 95

Interpretation and Deconstruction of the Parsuna .............................. 111

The Parsuna’s Early Display and Interpretation ................................ 116

“Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” in the Late Imperial Period ............... 119

Original Paintings Based on “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” .......... 130

Mass-Produced Artistic Images: Engravings, Lithographs and Photographs ...................................................................................... 132

Conclusions ...................................................................................... 146
Table of Contents—continued

CHAPTER

IV. NIKON’S IMAGE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY HISTORICAL REALIST PAINTING ................................................................. 150

Society and Realist Art in Nineteenth-Century Russia During the Period of Reform and Reaction ........................................ 152

Patriarch Nikon’s Place in Nineteenth-Century History, Society and Culture ........................................................................ 162

Nikolai Vasil’evich Nevrev ................................................................................................................................. 174

Historical Sources of Nikon’s First Appearance Before the Church Council, December 1, 1666 .................................................... 176

Display and Reception of Nevrev’s “Patriarch Nikon Before the Court December 1, 1666” ......................................................... 182

Aleksandr Dmitrievich Litovchenko .................................................................................................................. 191

Sources of Nikon’s Acceptance of the Patriarchal Chair on July 22, 1652 .................................................................................. 192

Litovchenko’s Depiction of Nikon and Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich Before Metropolitan Philip’s Shrine: The Genesis of the Idea ........................................................................................................ 196

“Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and Nikon, Archbishop of Novgorod, at the Grave of Miracle-Maker Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow”: Description and Analysis ........................................................................... 203

“Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and Nikon, Archbishop of Novgorod, at the Grave of Miracle-Maker Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow”: Display and Reception ........................................................................... 208

Sergei Dmitrievich Miloradovich .......................................................................................................................... 215

The Final Day of Nikon’s Trial, December 12, 1666 ............................................................................................... 216

Miloradovich’s Depictions of Nikon’s Trial: Inspirations ............................................................................. 221

Miloradovich’s Depictions of Nikon’s Trial: Early Efforts ........................................................................... 223
### Table of Contents—continued

**CHAPTER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Patriarch Nikon”: Announcement of the Charges</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Patriarch Nikon on Trial”: Nikon’s Response</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**V. OLD BELIEVER IMAGES OF NIKON IN THE LATE-SEVENTEENTH AND EARLY-EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES** | 246 |
| Analysis of the “Testimonies” | 261 |
| The Vyg Community of Old Believers | 278 |
| Analysis of the Vyg Redaction of “Life of Kornilii” | 280 |
| Pakhomii’s Text | 284 |
| The “Notes” | 287 |
| Analysis of “Story About Nikon” | 290 |
| Nikon’s Early Life, Rise to Power, and Implementation of Church Reforms in the “Story About Nikon” | 295 |
| Evidence of Nikon’s Transgressions in Addition to His Innovations | 304 |
| Conclusions | 316 |

**VI. OLD BELIEVER IMAGES OF NIKON IN THE MODERN ERA** | 322 |
| Long Nineteenth Century Contexts and Sources of the “History” | 326 |
| The Written Texts | 331 |
| The Artistic Images | 337 |
| Analysis of the “History’s” Written and Artistic Texts | 343 |
| Nikon’s Youth | 343 |
| Nikon’s Early Career | 348 |
Table of Contents—continued

CHAPTER

Nikon’s Rise Through the Church Hierarchy ......................... 352
The Reforms and Iconoclasm ............................................. 358
Nikon’s “New Jerusalem” .................................................. 380
Nikon’s Retreat from Moscow ............................................ 387
Nikon’s Trial ........................................................................ 394
Exile and Death ................................................................... 398
Conclusions ......................................................................... 401

VII. CONCLUSION .................................................................. 407

New Findings on Patriarch Nikon ........................................ 412
The Resonance of Patriarch Nikon’s Image in Russian History
and Culture ........................................................................ 416
The New Jerusalem Monastery ............................................ 419
Old Believer Images of Nikon ............................................. 422

APPENDICES

A. GLOSSARY OF RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS TERMS .................... 429
B. LIST OF RUSSIAN ABBREVIATIONS ................................. 431
C. ILLUSTRATIONS ............................................................ 433

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..................................................................... 436

x
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In a series of portraits professing to represent the hierarchy of ancient Russia, Nikon’s is the first that imprints itself in our minds with the stamp of individual originality.

- Arthur Stanley, History of the Eastern Church

This dissertation investigates representations of Nikon, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia (1652-1666). Born Nikita Minin (1605), Nikon is one of the most well known and controversial figures in Russian history. His life was one of extremes. He rose from the peasantry to become, in Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich’s absence, the most powerful figure in the Muscovite State. Capable of pious acts of charity and humility, daring political maneuvers and dazzling displays of authority, his tenure in the Russian ecclesiastical hierarchy coincided with major legal and religious reforms, which tore the traditional fabric of Russian society. The re-codification of Russian law, manifest in the Ulozhenie [Law Code] of 1649, included the legalization of serfdom and established the secular hegemony over many spheres traditionally under church authority. The reform of the Russian Church during Nikon’s patriarchate involved the revision of church books and the alteration of everyday practices such as making the sign of the cross.

In such an atmosphere of transformation and trial, Nikon’s actions, and in some cases, alleged responsibility for events not under his control, evoked strong resentment among powerful elements in Muscovite society. As a result, in 1666 the Patriarch was tried before a state-sanctioned clerical tribunal composed of Russian churchmen and headed by two foreign Orthodox patriarchs. The result was Nikon’s condemnation,
removal from the patriarchal throne, reduction to the rank of “simple monk,” and a sentence of exile in a remote northern monastery. In 1667, the same church council reconfirmed the “Nikonian reforms,” (i.e., the liturgical reforms introduced during Nikon’s patriarchate), anathematizing and subjecting to severe secular punishments those who refused to adopt these initiatives. The result was the raskol or Great Schism of the Russian Church -- a division between starovery [Old Believers], also referred to as raskolniki [schismatics], and those who followed the official post-reform Church.

Research Problem and Its Significance

I contend that Nikon’s resonance in Russian cultural life remains largely unrecognized because traditional histories -- based on written sources and limited to Nikon’s tenure as Patriarch -- fail to reveal his broader significance in Russian artistic, political and religious culture by omitting analysis of art and material culture. The dissertation seeks to advance the study of Patriarch Nikon by tracing and analyzing his pervasive and malleable image in Russian history and culture from the mid-seventeenth century forward. My goal is to explicate how Nikon represented himself, how and why his contemporaries and later artists, historians, churchmen, rulers, intellectuals, and ordinary people depicted him and appropriated Nikonian images to support divergent agendas.

Nikon’s image reflected and shaped attitudes towards salient political and religious issues in Russian history, including the central themes of autocracy, Orthodoxy, empire and nation, as well as important processes such as legal, judicial, religious and educational reforms. My purpose is neither to “rehabilitate” Patriarch Nikon not to vilify

1 Throughout this dissertation I use Russian terms whose translations and meanings appear in
him. On the contrary, I will show that, despite his deposition from the patriarchal throne and the overwhelmingly negative image provided in standard histories, Nikon occupies a central place in Russian political and religious cultures, both official and dissenting, and that his image has become a inextricably linked to Russian national discourse and culture.

Inspired by the recent theoretical and methodological shifts in cultural studies and facilitated by access to an array of primary sources now available in Russian archives, the dissertation departs from traditional studies of the Patriarch in several ways. First, it is neither a biography of Nikon nor another study of his patriarchate or the Nikonian reforms. Second, although I believe the dissertation offers insights on the Patriarch and his patriarchate, it is not primarily about Nikon. Rather, I am equally interested in what people thought about the Patriarch, how they expressed their ideas about him in writing, visual art and material artifact as well as how those representations were received by others in the three hundred years since Nikon's death. Finally, my intention is to demonstrate the impact of institutions, ideas and discourses in shaping conceptions of Nikon and the power of human agency in negotiating, personalizing, transmuting, and/or resisting these forces.

Historiography

There is a substantial body of historical literature on Patriarch Nikon. However, it rather repetitively addresses a number of the same questions.² Did Nikon conceive the reforms of the Russian Church? Was the Patriarch responsible for the Great Schism of the Russian Church? Was Nikon's aim to subject the state to the church or to restore the

Appendix A.
² There are two thorough, albeit dated surveys of the historical literature on Patriarch Nikon. V. S. Ikonnikov, Novye materialy i trudy o patriarkhe Nikone (Kiev: Tipografia Imperatorskogo universiteta sv. 3
traditional notion of church-state symphony? Why did Nikon fall from power? Was he himself responsible, or did others namely, the Russian nobility conspire against him? Did his actions lead to the abolition of the Russian Patriarchate by Peter I? The answers to these and other questions depend upon and reflect authors' positions on broader issues of Russian history including the church-state relationship, conception of the Russian autocracy, and how the Great Schism is viewed. While there are different opinions concerning the Church reforms, there is broad consensus in regards to the Patriarch's character and his vision and initiatives regarding the church-state relationship.

The dominant scholarship on Nikon in both Russia and the West should be understood within paradigms of the nineteenth-century “statist school” of Russian history headed by S. M. Solov’ev, and official Church historians, most notably, N. F. Kapterev. The issues primarily dealt with are political, institutional and doctrinal. The central focus is on Nikon’s relationship with Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and the reform of the Russian Orthodox Church imposed during Nikon’s patriarchate. Because of this focus, the historiography is highly politicized, schematic, tendentious, and often polemical. The Patriarch is most often represented as a ruthless power monger intent upon usurping secular power and/or as a scapegoat responsible for the Great Schism of the Russian Orthodox Church.

S. M. Solov’ev’s authoritative multi-volume History of the Russian State (1866-1879) is central to Nikon’s representation in Russian historiography in the second half of the nineteenth-century and beyond. Solov’ev was highly critical of the Patriarch, arguing that he was a power-lusting upstart who overstepped the traditional boundaries of the

Vladimira, 1888); and M. V. Zyzykin, Partiarkh Nikon. Ego gosudarstvennaia i kanonitcheskaia ideia vol. 3 (Warsaw: Sinodal’naia Tipografia, 1938), 295-365.
Church-State relationship. In short, Nikon posed a dangerous threat to the Russian autocracy. Other classic surveys of Russian history authored by leading Russian historians proceeded from Solov'ev’s primary contentions. They were reflected in the work of Nikolai Kostomarov as well as in the scholarship of the two most famous and influential Russian historians of the late imperial period, V. O. Kliuchevsky and S. F. Platonov.\(^3\)

N. F. Kapterev, church historian and professor at the Moscow Theological Academy, was the most prolific writer on Patriarch Nikon. Accepted by many as the authority on Nikon and his patriarchate, Kapterev produced two major works on Nikon. In the first, *Patriarch Nikon and His Opponents in the Matter of Reforming Church Rituals* (1887), Kapterev refuted the claim that the schism resulted from Nikon’s reforming the church books by asserting that the Patriarch had little to do with the formulation of the reforms. In his second, *Patriarch Nikon and Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich* 2 vols. (1909, 1912), Kapterev reiterated his earlier claims and argued that Nikon’s primary objective was to free the church from secular control. He concluded that Nikon’s energies were directed towards establishing the Patriarch’s preeminence. Nikon equated ecclesiastical power with the soul and monarchical power with the body and surmised that as the soul is superior power that controls and guides the body so the spiritual power must guide the secular power, which, as inferior, must obey. These opinions on church-state relations were so original and divergent from Byzantine and Russian historical precedence, not to mention, distant from contemporary structures that they were unpopular. Although many Russian prelates favored Nikon’s (alleged) claims of

ecclesiastical supremacy, they became alienated by his policy of personal dominance and retracted their support. As a result, Nikon fell from power. 4

Solov’ev’s and Kapterev’s representations of the Patriarch became standard in histories of the Russian state and church. They are presented in more recent histories of the Russian state by Longworth, Lupinin, and Fuhrman and in church histories by G. Florovskii, N. M. Zernov, A. V. Kartashev. Even Paul Meyendorff’s otherwise innovative study, Russia, Ritual & Reform (1991), repeats this notion, concluding that “nearly all historians of the Russian church have accepted this assumption.” 5

It is highly significant that the line of representation forwarded by Solov’ev and his disciples who in theory, championed the state, in actuality, contradicted what the state and church practiced in regards to Nikon. In short, the representations of the Patriarch offered by nineteenth-century Russian historians were at odds with the practice of the Russian State and church. Why, if Nikon was truly the threat presented in the dominant historiography, did the Romanov dynasty and the Russian Church actively associate

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themselves with the Patriarch and promote his image across all levels of Russian society.\footnote{Within a year of Solov’ev’s work on Nikon (1862), Tsar Alexander II visited New Jerusalem and signed his name under a portrait of Nikon displayed at the Patriarch’s hermitage [skit]. The same year Kapterev published his capstone book on the Patriarch (1912) preparations were well under way to include art depicting and artifacts belonging to Nikon in the tercentenary celebration of the Romanov Dynasty. Indeed, Kapterev’s article in the commemorative Tri Veka 9 vols. (Moscow: Tipografiia I. D. Sytina, 1912) appears out of place amongst the many examples of art depicting Nikon published in its volumes. See especially vol. 1, 271.}

This happened not only because historians neglected art and artifacts, but because they accepted the accusations raised against and the judgments passed on Nikon at his trial in 1666 as if these sources were was the final word on the Patriarch, when, in reality, they were not. The facts that Nikon’s patriarchal title was restored and that he was commemorated as Patriarch shortly after his death in 1681, a process begun Aleksei Mikhailovich in the early 1670s, further by Tsar Fedor Aleskseevich in the late 1670s, and confirmed by four Orthodox Patriarchs in 1682, appears, if at all, as a mere footnote.\footnote{See N. Subbotin, Delo patriarkha Nikona (Moscow: Tipografiia V. Grachev i komp., 1862), 171-172. Subbotin (1827-1905) was a member of the Moscow Ecclesiastical Academy and a close advisor to Konstantin P. Pobedonostsev, Director General of the Most Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. In addition to his work on Patriarch Nikon, Subbotin published four hundred articles and forty books on Old Believers. See R. F. Byrnes, Pobedonostsev. His Life and Thought (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), 178-186.}

While clearly the most well known and widely accepted conceptions of Nikon among scholars today, especially those working in the West, statist interpretations faced serious rebuttals. N. I. Subbotin and N. Gibbenet both countered what they contended to be Solov’ev’s narrow use of primary sources, especially records of Nikon’s trial, his denigration of the Patriarch’s character in general and his representation of Nikon’s relationship with Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich in particular.\footnote{See Subbotin, especially 1-8 and 169-177; N. Gibbenet, Istoricheskoе issledovanie dela patriarkha Nikona 2 pts. (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia ministerstva vnitrnних del, 1882-1884). See also S. V. Mikhailovskii, Zhizn’ sviатеishего Nikona patriarkha vserossiiskого (Moscow: Tipografiia i Khromolithografia I. Efimova, 1878); P. F. Nikolaevskii, Obstojatel’stva i prichiny udalenija patriarkha Nikona s prestola (St. Petersburg, Tipografiia F. Eleonskogo i ko. 1883); and P. F. Nikolaevskii, Zhizn’ patriarkha Nikona v sylke i zakluchenii posle osuzhdeniia ego na moskovskom sobore 1666 goda, Istoricheskoе
The Patriarch and the Tsar (1871-1876) and V. Zyzykin’s three volume Patriarch Nikon (1931-1938) represent even stauncher pro-Nikon positions. In addition to faithfully publishing, and in Palmer’s case translating, massive amounts of primary sources, they defended the Patriarch against charges that he recklessly sought to expand patriarchal power beyond its traditional limits. On the contrary, pro-Nikon historians contended that Nikon’s political and religious ideas were thoroughly canonical, if ahead of their time, and strengthened the Russian state, church, and society. However, these authors injected their own political and religious agendas, namely, harsh critiques of the autocracy, thereby substituting anti-Nikonian historiographical bias with historicist anti-autocratic discourse. The largely neglected works by M. Spinka, Alexander Stacy and R. Salomon, as well as the more widely recognized and balanced scholarship of William Medlin, followed in the footsteps of Palmer and Zyzykin.

Nikon-Related Art and Material Culture: The Scholarly Literature

The sparse scholarship dealing with Nikon-related art and material culture largely parallels the traditional historiography. With rare exceptions, those studying artistic depictions of the Patriarch, like their counterparts studying written documents pertaining to him, have limited their investigations to select products of elite culture, namely, icons

issledovanie po neizdannym dokumentam podlinnogo sledstvennogo dela patriarkha Nikona (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia F. Eleonskogo i ko., 1886).

Palmer’s pro-Nikon work was preceded in English by R. Thornton, Lives of Eminent Russian Prelates: I. Nikon, Sixth Patriarch of Moscow II. Saint Demetrius, Metropolitan of Rostoff. III. Michael, Metropolitan of Novgorod and S. Petersburg (London: Joseph Masters, 1854) and A. Stanley, Lectures in the History of the Eastern Church (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1862).

and *parsuna* [early portraiture], created in the seventeenth century. As a consequence, the majority of artistic images of Patriarch Nikon, especially those produced since the seventeenth century and those in other genres, especially folk art and mass-produced images, remain completely neglected.

Major surveys of Russian art history, including classic studies by I. E. Grabar’, V. G. Brusova, and, more recently, James Cracraft, highlight the prominent place of seventeenth-century portraits of Nikon in the development of secular painting in Russia. The artistic merits of individual portraits, their provenance, and the efforts to preserve and restore them have received detailed attention in works by N. Romanov, O. S. Evangulova, E. S. Ovchinnikova, and N. M. Mikhailova.

As regards the built environment, Nikon’s New Jerusalem Monastery and other projects have been recognized since the early nineteenth century for their architectural, religious and historical significance. While Archimandrite Leonid Kavelin’s *Historical Descriptions* remain the classic works on New Jerusalem, publications by contemporary scholars, such as Lev Lebedev, William Craft Brumfield and Daniel Rowland, have moved beyond discrete discussions of the Monastery’s import in Russian history and rejection of the dominant historiography, see C. Hemer, *Herrschaft und Legitimation in Russland des 17. Jahhrunderts: Staat u. Kirche zur Zeit d. Patriarchen Nikon* (Frankfurt: Haag und Herchen, 1979). The only exceptions I am aware of are O. P. Pasternak, “Ikonografija ‘Kiiskogo kresta’ i ego povtoreniia,” in *Original i povtorenie v zhivopisi* (Moscow, 1988): 47-60 and T. M. Kol’tsova, “‘Krestovyi obraz’ Kiiskogo Krestnogo’ monastyria,” in *Nauchno-issledovatel'skaja rabota v khudozhestvennom muzee* (Arkhangelsk, 1998), 14-30. Both these works, which are discussed in the second chapter of the dissertation, investigate copies of Patriarch Nikon’s Kii Cross system of imagery.


culture explicating it in terms of Nikon’s and/or broader conceptions of Russia as a “New Israel” and “New Jerusalem.”

Most noteworthy are the scholarly initiatives of Galina M. Zelenskaia, the current Director of Research at New Jerusalem. Her path-breaking monograph, Holy New Jerusalem (2002), which updates and expands Javelin’s classic, is the most comprehensive work on the New Jerusalem Monastery and its rich holdings of Nikonian art and artifacts in more than a century. Together with her numerous articles, Zelenskaia’s scholarship marks a new direction in the study of Nikon that explains select aspects of the Nikonian iconography, both architectural and artistic, by connecting them with and interpreting it in terms of the Patriarch’s thought, especially his integrative conception of New Jerusalem. Also important is her research into the history of the museum dedicated to the Patriarch’s commemoration which was founded at the Monastery in the mid-nineteenth century. An important collection of essays edited by Zelenskaia, Nikonian Readings in the Museum “New Jerusalem” (2002), brings together the most recent research on Nikon-related art and material culture and features updates on their restoration and preservation.

Zelenskaia’s pioneering scholarship attests to the significance of Nikon-related art and artifacts in the context of New Jerusalem. It also points to the urgent need for broader

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inquiries into art and material culture associated with Nikon and the plethora of artistic representations of the Patriarch executed in a wide variety of genres since his demise. This dissertation should be seen in that context.

Theoretical and Methodological Paradigms: Visual Imagery

I embrace the recent theoretical shifts in art history that have led scholars to move beyond the traditional emphasis on aesthetics in order to interpret more broadly the content and meaning of art and to analyze its effect on viewers. These new paradigms highlight visual images as significant primary sources of historical and cultural information. They are complemented by hybrid methodologies, especially syntheses of iconography, and semiology, the systematic study of signs.¹⁶

Volumes edited by Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey have been especially useful for the cultural historical investigation of Patriarch Nikon’s image. Particularly important is these authors’ conception of a “history of images.” This theoretical turn is marked by a “a general tendency to move away from the history of art as a record of the creation of aesthetic masterpieces … towards a broader understanding of their cultural significance for the historical circumstances in which they were produced” as well as in later periods. The new approach focuses on the “work” performed by an image in the life of a culture and emphasizes the cultural meanings and significance of art at both the points of production and reception. In sum, visual art not only reflects the circumstances of its production, but also engenders political, social and

¹⁶E. Panofsky outlined iconography as a three-tiered investigation intended to explain and decipher the content or meaning of the “symbolic values” in works of art by contextualizing them with literary sources and other “documents of civilization” in his classic Studies in Iconology (New York, 1939).
cultural meanings. In other words, artistic images both embody and shape discourse. Since, according to the new paradigm, art does not possess intrinsic value, what a culture brings to a work is just as important as what it finds in it. In the broadest sense, the “history of images” calls for the study of visual imagery excluded from the traditional aesthetic-centered canon.¹⁷

Studies of popular artistic imagery of the European Reformations by Keith Moxey, R. W. Scribner and Thomas Fudge are particularly attractive models for the historian investigating the representations of “the Russian Luther.” They combine qualified use of iconography, as defined by Panofsky, with semiology in order to interpret and to determine the impact of popular artistic images. Moving past the distinctions between “high” and “low” culture and art, they stress the interaction of elite and popular ideas in the creation and reception of Reformation imagery. On balance, these scholars argue that an image’s effectiveness depends on a culture’s/person’s familiarity with its content/discourse.¹⁸

Theoretical and Methodological Paradigms: The New Cultural History

In her classic introduction to The New Cultural History (1989), Lynn Hunt explains that history deals with the same questions posed by the new breed of art historians and literary critics: “What does a picture or novel do and how does it do it? What is the relationship between the picture or novel and the world it purports to


represent?” In short, Hunt establishes “representation as a problem which historians can no longer avoid.” According to her, representations are significant because “rather than simply reflecting social reality, [they] could actively be an instrument of (or constitute) power.” Hunt offers sound advice for those grappling with the complexities of historical representations. She concludes that “historians of culture really do not have to choose (or really cannot choose) … between meaning and working, between interpretation and deconstruction …; neither must they choose between interpretive strategies based on uncovering meaning on one hand and deconstructive strategies based on the text’s mode of production on the other.”

This trend is also found in recent volumes edited by Samuel H. Baron and Nancy Kohlman, and V. Kivelson and R. H. Greene stressing the significance and utility of cultural approaches for historians of Russian Orthodoxy. Employing cultural historical theories and methods, historians of Russian culture have departed from more traditional studies in two complementary directions. First, the new conceptual frameworks allow historians to destabilize or blur, and thus move beyond, the familiar dichotomies and binary opposites - old/new, elite/popular, Christian/pagan, Orthodox/heretical, male/female and image/text - that have traditionally characterized studies of Russian history. Second, they reattach and reintegrate the study of Russian religion and culture to the important dimension of everyday life. This enables historians of Russian culture to recover the “lived experience,” or, in the words of Baron and Kohlman, to discover “how people thought, lived and interacted” by stressing “human agency in the context of

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Theoretical and Methodological Paradigms: Tracking Images of Russian Historical Figures

On a more concrete level, I situate my work in the developing body of literature dedicated to the investigation of images of important figures in Russian history and culture. In this regard Richard Wortman's magisterial work elucidates the formulation and presentation of artifactual imagery and literary discourse produced by Russian rulers in their discrete historical contexts by employing a long-term chronological approach that traces patronage, symbolic depictions and ritual reenactments. A second seminal work is Isolde Thyret's innovative cultural history employing archival, narrative, and literary sources as well as art and artifacts and tracing the image of medieval Russian royal women and its political, social, and cultural basis from the mid-sixteenth to the late-seventeenth century. Also of great value and utility are Nicholas Riasanovsky, Xenia Gasiorowska, and Maureen Perrie's examinations of individual Romanov rulers' images in Russian written and oral culture. Riasanovsky analyzes Peter I's image in intellectual

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24 N. V. Riasanovsky, The Image of Peter the Great in Russian History and Thought (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); X. Gasiorowska, The Image of Peter the Great in Russian Fiction.
eminent Russian scholar I. V. Pozdeeva’s insistence on studying the Old Belief as a “living culture.” A series under her editorship, The World of Old Belief: Sources and Contemporary Issues, is the flagship publication that exemplifies this new scholarly approach.\(^{27}\)

Of no less import is Georg Michels’ influential study of seventeenth-century Russian religious dissent in which he rejects the traditional practice of relying on Old Believer written texts and concludes that the thoughts expressed in works by the so-called “Old Believer fathers” do not represent the ideas or experiences of most early nonconformists. By introducing a new body of material, including legal proceedings against religious dissenters, Michels has proven able to “resurrect the voices of the vast majority of Russian dissenters.”\(^{28}\)

Taking a cultural anthropological approach to the study of Russian Old Believers in post-1905 Imperial Russia, Roy Robson stresses the central place of religious symbolism and ritual in the world of Old Belief. He perceptively observes that “we can understand the Old Belief as an ongoing relationship between the symbols of pre-Nikonian Orthodoxy and the lives of the old ritualist faithful…. Understanding the interplay between Old Believers and their symbols can yield a better analysis of how the forces of tradition interacted with the power of change.” This mode of investigation shows that the Old Belief was shaped by an on going struggle with the church, state and secular society.\(^{29}\)

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\(^{26}\) Riasanovsky, vii-viii.


\(^{28}\) G. Michels, At War with the Church (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 32, 4.

history; Gasiorowska’s interest is Peter’s representation in fiction, while Perrie’s work considers Ivan IV’s depiction in folklore.

A brilliant study of an important non-royal figure is Margaret Ziolkowski’s recent book, which traces representations of the Old Believer Boiarynia Morozova in literary and artistic culture since the seventeenth century. Explaining that “as a cultural personality, Morozova had profound resonance,” the author points to the “symbolic value” acquired by the Boiarynia’s image in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Importantly, Ziolkowski shows that, although Morozova is the most famous female Old Believer in history, she is best known by an artistic image—Vasilii Surikov’s monumental historical Realist painting “Boiarynia Morozova” (1887), not written texts. Thus, the author highlights the significance and impact that nineteenth-century artistic representations of a seventeenth-century figure had in modern Russian society.25

In sum, this literature confirms Riasanovsky’s observation that “images [of historical figures] have lives of their own” and possess “their own historical value.”26 Moreover, it attests to the wide variety of written artistic and artifactual sources available to those researching representations of famous persons. Finally, these examples illustrate the necessity of tracing the evolution of images over time.

Theoretical and Methodological Paradigms: New Studies of Old Belief

Recent scholarship which stresses the complexities of Old Belief by investigating the actions, ideas and experiences of religious dissenters on all levels of society well into the modern period also provide direction for my study. A key recent development is the

(Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979); M. Perrie, Ivan the Terrible in Russian Folklore (New York, 1987).

Robert Crummey applies methods employed by scholars investigating popular religion in Europe to the study of the Old Belief and thereby demonstrates that Old Believer elite and popular religious cultures “spontaneously influence each other.” Moreover, Crummey, like Robson, concludes that “the complexity and variety of Old Believer cultures are the result of their ongoing interaction with intellectual and cultural currents in society as a whole.”30

Finally, particularly welcome is Laura Engelstein’s advocacy for a comparative approach, which considers both dissenting and non-dissenting positions and cultures and highlights points of overlap and convergence between them. She astutely points out that it is “by studying believers who thought of themselves as loyal members of the church, as well as those who deliberately set themselves outside it, that we can test the relevance of some of the distinctions imbedded in the historical record: between doctrinal and enacted piety (precept and practice), high and low (elite and folk) and new and old (tradition and innovation).”31

Research Methodology

This study employs an interdisciplinary, cultural-historical approach and adopts the perspective of “total history” by examining the creation and reception of Patriarch Nikon’s image in art, material culture and literature from “above” and “below,” as well as across the confessional divide and over a long period. I consider representations of Nikon at the point of production and reception while paying close attention to their content and form. I use both interpretive methodologies intended to explicate the meanings of images

30 R. O. Crummey, “Old Belief as Popular Religion,” Slavic Review 52 no. 4 (Winter 1993), 700-712. The quotations are from 703 and 709 respectively.
in specific contexts and deconstructive strategies designed to comprehend “how they worked” on their audiences. This method combines traditional art historical investigations with iconographical, semiological and documentary textual analyses. Traditional art histories highlight the form, aesthetics and media of artistic images. Iconographical analysis involves the identification of an image’s formal proprieties (conventions), the influence of theological, philosophical, and political ideas and/or popular belief in their creation and development as well as the allegories, tales or legends that give an image meaning in a specific cultural context. Semiology, the systematic study of signs, complements iconographical analysis by uncovering the code system, or program of action, embodied in art, material culture and literature. Documentary textual analysis of sources concerning an image’s creation, use and reception and will contextualize artistic representations historically. It is my hope that such an inclusive, comparative approach can provide a complex and nuanced readings of the Nikonian heritage and will result in a synthesis not possible in works based entirely on written sources and limited to the period of the Patriarch’s lifetime.

Primary Sources

My theoretical and methodological frameworks require several layers of artistic, material cultural, literary and archival sources. Specific artistic genre include icons, parsunae [early portraiture], portraits, history paintings, engravings, lithographs, photographs and risovalnye lubki [hand-painted folk prints]. Architectural structures created by Nikon, especially the New Jerusalem Monastery and its Resurrection Cathedral, and original artifacts used by and/or belonging to Nikon, including clerical

31 L. Engelstein, “Old and New, High and Low. Straw Horsemen of Russian Orthodoxy,” in V.
vestments and symbols of authority and more mundane wear, serve as my primary material cultural sources. The analysis of art and artifacts involves a diverse variety of archival and rare print sources. The writings of artists and patrons, including Patriarch Nikon, provide information concerning the creation of images. Archival and rare print descriptions [opisi] of and guides [putevoditeli] to monasteries, cathedrals, churches, and palaces, as well as catalogues of museums, artistic and commemorative exhibits furnish valuable insights on the promotion and display of art and material culture. Contemporary commentaries on and critical reviews of individual works and exhibitions offer insight into their reception. Scholarly histories, historical fiction, popular biographies, journal articles and Old Believer tales about Nikon are treated here as primary sources because they offer original representations of the Patriarch.

The diverse body of primary sources employed in the dissertation was made possible by research in a number of Russian institutions including the Historical, Architectural and Art Museum “New Jerusalem” (IAKhMNI), Istra; Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (RGADA), Moscow; Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI), Moscow; State Tret’iakov Gallery (GTG), Moscow; State Historical Museum (GIM), Moscow; State Public Historical Library (GPIB), Moscow; Russian State Library (RGB), Moscow; and Moscow State University Library (MGU), Moscow; the State Museum of the History of Religion (GMIR), St. Petersburg; State Russian Museum (GRM), St. Petersburg; Institute of Russian Literature (IRLI), St. Petersburg; Library of Russian Academy of Sciences (BAN), St. Petersburg; Russian National

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Library (RNB), St. Petersburg; and the Moscow Spiritual Academy’s Repository of Art and Artifacts [Kabinet] (MDA), Holy Sergeiev Trinity Lavra, Sergi Posad.

I conducted much of my research at the Historical, Architectural and Art Museum “New Jerusalem.” Housed in the New Jerusalem Monastery, it is the premier collection of original seventeenth-century Nikon-related art and artifacts. It also holds a number of important nineteenth-century historical Realist paintings depicting the Patriarch. The photo archive at New Jerusalem contains extremely rare photographs of the monastery, its sanctuaries, artistic holdings, museum displays and visual memorabilia, such as postcards. Unpublished historical opisi [inventories] of Nikon’s New Jerusalem and Kii Monasteries and their holdings of art and material culture and architecture were researched at the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts. Further investigations of original art and material culture associated with the Patriarch were conducted in museums housed in former monasteries, including Iverskii Monastery, Ferapontov Monastery, Kirilo-Belozerskii Monastery, and Novodevichii Monastery, as well as regional museums in Rostov, Novogorod and Yaroslavl’.

Investigations of original nineteenth-century historical Russian Realist paintings took place at IAKhMNI, GTG, MDA, and GMIR. The writings of nineteenth-century artists, their patrons and critics were located in the Manuscript Department of GTG and RGALI. Research of photograph copies of no longer extant seventeenth- and nineteenth-century works of art was done in the GTG Photo Archive. Many of the mass-produced images of the Patriarch analyzed in the dissertation were found in their original contexts, namely, bound in the publications in which they first appeared. I located others in the Russian Museum, the Russian National Library, the State Historical Museum, and RGALI. I studied unpublished Old Believer handwritten books and artistic images at the
Manuscript Departments of BAN, RNB, RGB, MGU and in the antiquities department of IRLI.

Structure

The dissertation offers five separate, but interconnected, case studies that exemplify the creation, reception and transformation of Nikon's image over time and across societal and artistic boundaries. The first two chapters consider Nikon's self-representation. The following three analyze images of the Patriarch produced since his death.

The first chapter, "Nikon's "Kii Cross System of Imagery," analyzes the original prototypes of the imagery Nikon designed for the Kii and New Jerusalem Monasteries as well as later copies produced in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth century by locating them in the historical and ideological contexts of their creation and display. I explain the meaning and purpose of the original imagery by combining iconographical and semiological analyses of the art with investigations of Nikon's own, previously neglected, writings about the original Kii Monastery prototype and his reform of specific Church texts and rituals. I show that the imagery became and remained significant because, in addition to serving religious functions, it was promoted as a sign of the Romanov Dynasty's legitimacy.

The second chapter, "The Parsuna 'Patriarch Nikon with Clergy'" provides a complete analysis of the original seventeenth-century parsuna [early portrait] of Patriarch Nikon by tracking its significance in Russian history and culture from the mid-seventeenth through the early twentieth centuries. Following the same approach taken in the previous chapter, I analyze "Patriarch Nikon with Clergy" as well as the later versions
of the imagery by locating them in the historical, ideological and cultural contexts of their creation, display and reception. I explore the original imagery by combining iconographical and semiological analyses of the art with the writings of Nikon himself. My goals are twofold. First, I interpret the parsuna’s style and content, uncovering possible meaning and deconstructing the image in order to show “how it works.” Second, I illuminate the continuing, variegated, and expanding significance of Nikon’s image in Russian culture by drawing attention to the relationship between the parsuna and its viewers.

The third chapter, “Patriarch Nikon’s Image in Nineteenth-Century Historical Realist Painting,” investigates the creation, display and reception of seven nineteenth-century genre paintings depicting Nikon by three artists, N. I. Nevrev, A. D. Litovchenko, and S. D. Miloradovich. My analysis of the artists’ representations of Nikon is multi-layered. The chapter begins by establishing the larger historical contexts and conditions that spawned the new realist genres of painting in Russia in general and fostered the formulation of new images of the Patriarch in Russian historiography, popular literature and historical realist painting in specific. Then, I examine written sources of the historical events depicted that were available to the artists and their contemporary audiences. Next, I discuss the artists’ construction of new images of Nikon, employing the writings artists, as well as other involved parties, concerning Nikon. Providing my own iconographical analysis of each of the paintings, I offer original interpretations of their meaning and deconstruct them in efforts to establish their workings. Finally, I explore the paintings’ reception in late nineteenth-century Russian society analyzing both private correspondences between artists and art collectors and published reviews by professional art critics. I aim to show that far from being mere illustrations of written histories, the
historical Realist images of Nikon are complex, inclusive and original compositions based on the wealth of historical, artistic and material cultural sources available in nineteenth century Russia.

The fourth chapter, "Old Believer Images of Nikon in the Late-Seventeenth and Early-Eighteenth Centuries," analyzes Old Believer representations of Nikon from the late seventeenth to the early twentieth century by investigating a series of "tales" about him. My investigations consider "O volke i khishchnike i bogootmetnike Nikone...." ["Authentic Testimony About the Marked by God Wolf and Predator Who Is Pastor in Sheep’s Skin and Forerunner of the Antichrist"], the tales included in "Zhitie Korniliia Vygovskogo" [The Life of Kornilii of Vyg], and "Povest’ o zhitii, i rozhdenii i vospitanii i o konchine Nikona, byvshego patriarkha..." ["Story About the Birth, Education, Life Story and Death of Nikon Who Was Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Collected from Many True Persons Who Lived During the Days of Our Fathers"]. I interpret the content and meaning of the tales by placing them in the context of official discourse and popular belief; comparing the tales against themselves and non-Old Believer sources; the outlining strategies employed; and providing semiological readings of signs and symbols woven into the texts. This study shows that Old Believers employed a variety of "elite" and "popular" sources (terms defined in the chapter) and conceptions and created multifaceted images of Nikon, the significance of which extends beyond the world of Old Belief.

The fifth chapter, "Old Believer Images of Nikon in the Modern Era," analyzes the verbal and artistic images of the Patriarch presented in several never before studied late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century illustrated handwritten books known as the "History About Patriarch Nikon, Eliminator of the Ancient Orthodox Faith" ["Istorii o
Patriarkhe Nikone istrebitele drevnepravoslavnogo blagochestia" [hereafter “History”). My efforts to comprehend the representations of Nikon contained in the “History” follow the procedures already outlined in the previous chapter. In other words, I attempt to interpret the content of the tales in order to recover their meaning(s) and deconstruct the texts in order to show effects on audiences. To achieve these goals the chapter places the “History” in the context of elite and popular culture and belief and compares it against the earlier Old Believer tales, including the “Testimony,” “Life of Korniliu,” and “Story About Nikon” as well as non-Old Believer sources, both verbal and artistic. Like the previous chapter, this one seeks to uncover the textual strategies employed in the formulation of the “History” and offers readings of signs and symbols woven into the texts. I also add new layers of investigation by performing iconographical, semiological and comparative analyses of the artistic images.

The Dissertation’s Objectives

“Patriarch Nikon’s Image in Russian History and Culture” will, I hope, add to the growing body of literature that treats art and material culture as valuable and highly relevant historical sources, not mere adjuncts to the written word. Its findings demonstrate that images of Nikon are important not only aesthetically or artistically, but that they shape and embody historical discourse over long periods. An additional goal of my work is to show that the study of Nikon’s image suggests and illuminates similarities between Russia and the rest of Europe. Placing Russian religious, artistic and political culture within a broader European context brings new understanding of East-West relationships and challenges scholars to expand existing paradigms which, until recently has presented those relationships as antithetical and mutually exclusive where as I prefer
to see them as instructive and negotiable. In conclusion, the study of Nikon's image will substantively contribute to our understanding of major themes of cultural, political and religious interchange.
CHAPTER II

NIKON’S “KII CROSS SYSTEM OF IMAGERY”

In the early summer of 1656 Patriarch Nikon revealed his intention to construct a replication of the Stavros [Cross] Monastery that the Byzantine Emperor Constantine (supposedly) founded in Greece. Nikon explicated the motivation behind the foundation of the new monastery in a request for the Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich’s support. The Patriarch explained that he nearly drowned in a storm while sailing from the Anzerskii skit [hermitage] to the Solovetskii Monastery in 1639. However, after placing his faith in the “life-giving holy Cross,” he was saved and landed on Kii Island in mouth of the Onega Bay. He erected a “holy cross” on the island to commemorate his rescue. Thirteen years later, while en route to collect St. Philip’s remains from the Solovetskii Monastery, he was again shipwrecked. This time he was saved by “the power of the cross.” Nikon also learned the sight of the same cross he constructed in 1639 rescued many travelers caught in storms at sea. At that moment, he took an oath to build the Stavros or Krestny Monastery in the name of the holy life-giving Cross and Moscow Apostle Philip.¹

On June 13, 1656, Tsar Aleksei granted the Patriarch’s request and allowed him “to erect a church and an enclosed monastery on the island where Nikon erected the

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¹ This story was recounted in its entirety in a decree pronounced by Aleksei Mikhailovich on June 13, 1656 and Patriarch Nikon’s Gramota o Krestnom monastyre (Moscow, 1656). The texts of both documents are published in Kratkoe izvestie o Krestnom onezhskom arkhangel'skoi eparkhii monastyre (Moscow: Synodal’naia Tipografiia, 1805), 1-22, 23-6. Ivan Shusherin, Nikon’s seventeenth-century biographer, also related the slightly different tales. See I. Shusherin, Povest’ o rozhdenii, vospitanii i zhizni sviateishego Nikona, patriarkha moskovskogo i vseia Rossii, napisannai ego klirikom Ioannom Shusherinym (1680s). Reprint of second ed. Moscow, 1908. (Moscow: Pravoslavnaia Entsiklopediia, 1997), 27, 62. Shusherin explained that Nikon pledged to construct the monastery in commemoration of his survival of the shipwreck in 1639.
Nikon acted immediately. In less than ten days, he announced that he had already dispatched the new monastery’s principal shrine. It consisted of life sized replica of the True Cross made of cypress and embedded with more than three hundred relics, including pieces of the True Cross, stones sites in the Holy Land connected with Christ and relics of Biblical and Russian saints [Appendix C, Figure 1], and accompanying two accompanying icons. The first depicted Byzantine Emperor Constantine, Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, and Nikon himself. The second featured St. Helen, Constantine’s mother, and Tsaritsa Maria Il’inichna, Aleksei Mikhailovich’s wife. I call this iconographic complex the Kii Cross system of imagery.

Two years later, the Patriarch Nikon commissioned a new version for the Krestny Monastery shrine as a centerpiece for his most important foundation, the New Jerusalem Monastery. In the decades and centuries that followed, Russian rulers and churchmen commissioned numerous new copies of the original [Appendix C, Figure 2]. The representation of the Nikonian imagery, both originals and copies, became significant aspects of Russian religious and political culture which endured into the twentieth century. However, despite being the earliest, most widely copied and promoted seventeenth-century images of Patriarch Nikon and the early Romanovs, the broader import of this iconography remains largely unexplained.

The Nikonian imagery has recently attracted attention of scholars. K. A. Shchedrina comments on the Kii Cross’s significance as a reliquary symbol of state power. G. A. Zelenskaia provides essential material for the study of the imagery’s place

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3 Ibid, 3 and Shusherin, 62.
4 K. A. Shchedrina, Tsarei derzhava (Moscow, 2000), 10-21.
within the larger iconography of the New Jerusalem Monastery.\footnote{G. M. Zelenskaia, “Prizhiznennye izobrazheniiia sviateishego patriarkha Nikona,” in Nikonovskie chteniia v muzee ‘Novyi Ierusalim.’ Sbornik statei (Moscow: Severnyi palomnik, 2002), 9.} O. Pasternak’s and T. M. Kol’tsova’s investigations offer insights on the creation of eighteenth-century copies of the Kii imagery.\footnote{O. P. Pasternak, “Ikonografiia ‘Kiiskogo kresta’ i ego povtoreniia,” in Original i povtorenie v zhivopisi (Moscow, 1988): 47-60; T. M. Kol’tsova, “‘Krestovyi obraz’ Kiiskogo Krestnogo monastyria,” in Nauchno-issledovatelskaia rabota v khudozhhestvennom muzee (Arhangelsk, 1998), 14-30.} I. Thyret, the lone western author to recognize Nikon’s Kii system, employs I. Saltanov’s famous copy of the imagery (1678) to support her thesis that Russian “royal women were considered to be spiritual intercessors for their husbands and subjects and helpmates to the tsars in spiritual affairs.” Thyret’s reading of the image draws attention to some aspects of the gender specific roles presented in the imagery. However, she seriously overstates Mariia Il’inichna’s “liturgical role” in the imagery, while largely ignoring the icon’s broader religious functions and political significance.\footnote{I. Thyret, Between God and Tsar. Religious Symbolism and the Royal Women of Muscovite Russia (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001), 64-70. Thyret’s comments on Saltanov’s icon are interesting, but display unresolved tensions. For example, the author presents the icon as a unique expression of Aleksei Mikhailovich’s and Mariia Il’inichna’s ideas and actions, although it, as Thyret herself acknowledges, was painted after their deaths.} Moreover, by pointing to what she perceives as the unique aspects of the Saltonov icon, namely, the exclusion of select written texts found on earlier versions, she misses the larger significance of the imagery.

While these scholars address important aspects of Nikon’s system of imagery, they do not attempt to discern its original purpose and meaning, or its ongoing resonance in Russian political and religious culture. This chapter attempts to fill these voids. I analyze the original prototypes of the imagery Nikon designed for the Krestny and New Jerusalem Monasteries as well as later copies produced in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries by locating them in the historical and ideological contexts of their creation and display. I explain the meanings and purposes of the original imagery.
by combining iconographical and semiological analysis of the art with investigations of
Nikon’s own, previously neglected, writings about the original Krestny Monastery
prototype, namely, the Patriarch’s Decree Regarding the Krestny Monastery (Moscow,
1665), and his reform of specific Church texts and rituals.

The brilliantly conceived, concisely articulated and carefully presented discourse
Nikon embedded in the Kii Cross System of imagery offers important perspectives on the
Patriarch’s own conception of the church-state relationship and his association with the
Romanov dynasty. The royal family’s and their ideologues’ acceptance, use and
promotion of the Nikonian iconography provides insight into the Romanov position in
regards to the Patriarch as well as the imagery’s central place in the concept of Russia as
the New Jerusalem. In short, the Patriarch’s creation of the Kii cross system and its
subsequent employment stand in direct contradistinction to the widely accepted notion,
established by S. M. Solov’ev and reconfirmed by N. F. Kapterev, which purports that
Nikon aimed to subjugate the secular power to ecclesiastical authority and, thus,
represented major threat to the Russian autocracy. My study demonstrates that the
imagery became and remained significant because, in addition to serving religious
functions, it was promoted as a sign of the Romanov legitimacy and was readily
incorporated into the construction of dynastic myth.

The chapter has several sub-sections. It begins by outlining key ideological
concepts, including the notions of Moscow as the “Third Rome” and “New Jerusalem,”
as well as related ideas concerning Nikon’s self-defined place in the Constantinian legacy.

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8 S. M. Solov’ev, Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen 29 vols. (Moscow, 1866-1879); N. F.
Kapterev, Patriarkh Nikon i tsar’ Aleksei Mikhailovich 2 vols. (Sergiev Posad, Tipografiia Sv. Tr.
Sergievoi Lavry, 1909, 1912). See especially Kapterev’s fifth chapter titled “Ecclesiastical Power Is Higher
Than the Tsar’s,” 178-208.
and Aleksei Mikhailovich’s role as a “New Constantine.” It proceeds to discuss Nikon’s creation and presentation of the original Kii Cross system and his modifications of the second, Golgotha, prototype. Next, I analyze the imagery’s significance in terms of dynastic politics, the depiction of women in the iconography and associated ramifications. The following section examines the creation of new copies of the imagery in the eighteenth century. The display of the original prototypes and copies in the changing contexts of the long nineteenth century are the subject of the subsequent section. Finally, I address the imagery’s place in the celebration of the Romanov dynasty’s tercentenary in 1913.

Moscow as the “Third Rome” and “New Jerusalem”

In the late fifteenth century, Archbishop Gennadi of Novgorod and Dmitrii Gerasimov created the “Tale of the White Cowl.” This tale traces the transfer of spiritual power, symbolized by the white cowl. According to this legend, Constantine gave Pope Sylvester a white cowl, which was later transferred to the Patriarch of Constantinople, the Metropolitan of Novgorod and, eventually, to Moscow. First employed to defend the prerogatives of the Novogrodian Church against encroachment by the Muscovite Grand Princes, this narrative provided a local precedent for defense of the

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church against the state. The iconography connected with the “Tale” furnished a local paradigm for the Nikon’s Kii Cross system of imagery.

The ideas of Moscow as the “Third Rome” and “New Jerusalem” grew from the Old Testament concepts of a “final kingdom” and a “chosen people.” The idea of a “final kingdom” emerged from the Book of Daniel (7:27). There, the Prophet announced that a final kingdom of the true faith would appear on earth and that it would never be destroyed. Western medieval thinkers John Scotus Eriigena and Joachim de Fiore modified Daniel’s basic concept into the theory of “three Kingdoms” - the Kingdom of the Father who gave man Law, the Kingdom of the Son who granted man Grace and the final Kingdom of the Holy Spirit who granted man “freedom.” Russian thinkers seized upon this concept and further refined it to suit Russian self-identity after the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

In the early 1500s, Filofei of Pskov concisely articulated this ideology in the Third Rome Doctrine. “Both Romes fell, the third [Moscow] endures and the fourth will never be.” This doctrine represents a theoretical transfer of political/state legitimacy and power from Constantinople to Moscow. However, the actual physical transfer of regalia from Constantinople to Russia was also essential. The most significant being the Russian inheritance of one of three “life-giving” crosses supposedly created by Constantine from

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11 Ibid, 323.
13 Ibid.
wood of the True Cross. As heir to Byzantine throne and ruler of the final kingdom, the Muscovite sovereign became the universal protector of the true faith.

The notion of Moscow as New Israel/New Jerusalem was not defined in a single doctrine. Rather, it was "more diffuse and more difficult to define, sending few unambiguous political messages and operating at the level of assumption rather than as an explicit 'theory'." The physical transfer of relics from the Holy Land the "symbolic replication" of holy sites, such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, were crucial to this concept.

The belief in Moscow as the Third Rome and Moscow as the New Israel/Jerusalem reached its apogee in the mid-seventeenth century during the reign of Tsar Aleksei and the patriarchate of Nikon. At that time Russia was the strongest and wealthiest Orthodox State. With most of the rest of the Orthodox world under Turkish control, the hierarchy of the Eastern Church recognized Russia as the bastion of the Orthodox world and her tsar, as their protector. They increasingly transferred holy relics from the Holy Land to this "Noah's ark" of Orthodoxy for safekeeping. The same process was repeated within Russia, where the relics of Russian "saints," the former Metropolitan Philip's being the most noteworthy, were transported to Moscow and preformed a number of widely reported miracles. Thus, the early 1650s witnessed a dual transfer of relics -

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14 This transfer was explicated in Ivan IV's coronation ceremony. PSRL v. I pt. III (St. Petersburg: I. N. Skornov 1904), 150-1. See D. B. Miller, "The Coronation of Ivan IV of Moscow," Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas 15 (1967): 561, 566-7. The "Tale of the Grand Princes of Vladimir" also highlights the importance of the transfer of the Constantine's cross.

15 Rowland, 596.


17 Philip was Metropolitan of Moscow during the second half of Ivan IV's reign. He denounced Ivan IV's policies and was put to death by the Tsar's order. His remains were interned at the Solovetskii Monastery (where Nikon was a hieromonk). Philip's fate paralleled that of St. John Chrysostom. Nikon
the first from the Holy Land to Russia and the second the collection and transfer of relics to Moscow from elsewhere in Russia.\(^{18}\) This collection of relics was essential to the Kii Cross system of imagery and the New Jerusalem monastery.

The combination of international and national events appeared to confirm that Russia was the final kingdom and that her people were the chosen ones. Nikon did more than anyone to promote this ideology. From the inception of his patriarchate in 1652, he proceeded to make his vision of Russia's destiny a reality.

**Patriarch Nikon and the Constantinian Inheritance**

As Patriarch, Nikon sought to heighten Russian piety and preserve ecclesiastical prerogatives against the encroachment of a new centralizing and expanding autocratic state. Viewing Russian monasticism as the key to the renewal of Russian piety, Nikon set out to free the institution from secular control. He believed that he could safeguard the church's independence by reasserting her traditional prerogatives.\(^{19}\)

Nikon found legal, religious, and iconographic support for his intentions to make Moscow heir to the Constantinian legacy. The adoption of the so-called "Donation of..."
Constantine\textsuperscript{20} as well as the aforementioned “Third Rome Doctrine” and the “Tale of the White Cowl.”\textsuperscript{21} provided well-established precedents for his plan. According to the “Donation”, a document actually composed in the eighth century, Emperor Constantine granted Pope Sylvester the legal authority to rule Rome and the West when the sovereign departed Rome for the East. It also outlined the symbols and rituals associated with this transfer of power.

Nikon wove the “Donation” into the reform of Church texts and rituals. In 1653, he included a newly formulated Slavonic translation of the “Donation” [“\textit{Ustav Tsaria Konstantina}”] in the \textit{Kormchaia Kniga}, the official collection of “canon law” for the Russian Church.\textsuperscript{22} Eastern patriarchs employed the “Donation” to support their claims of ecclesiastical sovereignty as early as the eleventh century. However, Nikon supplemented his publication of “Donation” with an essay titled “The Schism of the Roman Church”.\textsuperscript{23} This text closely replicated Filofei of Pskov ’s “Third Rome Doctrine.”\textsuperscript{24} Thus, Nikon again combined “universal” and “local” heritages by concatenating the “Donation of Constantine” with the Third Rome Doctrine and encoded them as canon law. He

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} Lorenzo Valla exposed “The Donation of Constantine” as a forgery in his \textit{On the Donation of Constantine} (1439).
\item \textsuperscript{21} Both “The Tale of the White Cowl” and “The Donation of Constantine” depended on the transfer of authority granted by Constantine. It is interesting to note that while “The Tale of the White Cowl” rested on a grant from Constantine, its transfer from Constantinople to Russia supposedly pre-dated the fall of Constantinople. This was also the case for the transfer of Constantine's Cross to Russia. See \textit{PSRL v. I pt. III}, 150-1.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Paul Meyendorff, \textit{Russia, Ritual & Reform} (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1991), 72 n 3. The term “canon law” is employed by Meyendorff, 72 and Medlin, 184. The text of this translation is in Zyzykin, vol. II, 87-8. Nikon used imagery based on the “Donation” as early as 1650. In March of that year, as Metropolitan of Novgorod, Nikon wrote a letter to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich in which he described a vision of a golden crown. According to Medlin, “Nikon's extraordinary vision suggests that the patriarchal dignity, in the form of a 'gold imperial crown,' is destined for him, and that this dignity will have an imperial (Tsarist) significance.” Medlin, 166. This again suggests that Nikon's actions were well planned.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Meyendorff, 89. An English translation of Nikon’s “The Schism of the Roman Church” is found in W. Palmer, \textit{The Patriarch and the Tsar} vol. I (London: Trubner, 1887), 662-5.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Zyzykin, vol. II, 162-66. Medlin suggests the correlation with Filofei of Pskov, 172.
\end{itemize}
repeatedly employed the “Donation” when defending his ecclesiastical prerogatives and properties against secular incursions.25

The “Donation” also provided Nikon with one of the most important iconographic symbols of his image – a gold “crown.” A key phrase in his “Ustav Tsaria Konstantina” reads: “and above all he [Constantine] ordered the successor of the papacy - the most worthy pastor and his heirs would be coronated with the very crown of pure gold that he gave Sylvester from his [Constantine's] own head.” 26

Nikon introduced the image of a “gold crown” to Aleksei Mikhailovich in 1650. In March of that year, then Metropolitan of Novgorod Nikon wrote a letter to the Tsar in which he described a vision he had while praying before an icon of the Savior. “Suddenly a gold crown appeared in the air above the Savior’s head. Slowly the crown began to move towards me. …this crown hovered over my sinful head. With both hands, I reached out to touch it, and it suddenly vanished.”27

While the tsar never actually gave Nikon the crown off his own head, he did give the Patriarch symbolic equivalents. Members of the Romanov family gave Nikon several richly adorned, gold mitras in the early 1650s. Of these, the so-called “crown” (1655) was most significant. These mitras, which were unlike the headwear worn by previous Russian hierarchs, look more like the crown of Russian secular rulers than traditional mitras.28

26 Quoted in Zyzykin, vol. II, 87. It is ironic that L. Valla’s dismissal of “The Donation of Constantine” was largely based on philological inconsistencies concerning Constantine’s supposed granting of a gold crown to the pope.
27 S. M. Solov’ev, History of Russia From Earliest Times vol. 18 M. J. Rubchak ed. and trans. (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 2002), 151. Solov’ev explained that this vision occurred on March 18 after a midnight service while Nikon “whispered to myself the canon to sweet Jesus in the first kathisma.”
Nikon’s reform of the Palm Sunday ritual is also connected with the “Donation of Constantine.” The “Donation” explains that, in the course of Sylvester’s coronation ceremony, Constantine, on foot, led a donkey carrying the Pope. Nikon’s changes to the Palm Sunday ritual, which also included the tsar leading an “ass” [horse] carrying the Patriarch, highlighted further the dual, reinforcing nature of the ceremony in terms of his own and the tsar’s inheritance of the Constantinian legacy.

Nikon’s contemporary critics clearly recognized his assumption of the ecclesiastical portion of the Constantinian legacy. S. L. Streshnev’s and Paisius Ligarides’s accusations against the Patriarch (1658) addressed the matter most directly. Their verbal exchanges read as follows. Streeshnev: “Our most prosperous tsar... granted him all the privileges granted by Constantine the Great to Pope Sylvester. What is to be said of this?” Ligarides: “Hamon thought to be paraded on the king’s horse, wearing the royal robes. So in fact did Constantine the Great to Sylvester, and so did Justinian .... For Justinian also led the horse on which Agapetus sat by bridle, just as thou, O most pious Tsar, doest on Palm Sunday.... It would have been better for Nikon to have fewer privileges, because they have puffed him up, and brought him into trouble.”

Ligarides expounded on this notion further in his History of the Condemnation of the Patriarch Nikon (1667). There, he explained that Nikon “wished to be beyond the rest ... and enjoying a prosperous establishment, and thinking to be styled and celebrated pope... and determined to honor himself with this swelling title, retaining no reverence for the true

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29 M. S. Flier considers the reform in “Court Ceremony in an Age of Reform. Patriarch Nikon and the Palm Sunday Ritual,” in Religion and Culture in Early Modern Russia and Ukraine (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997), 73-95. However, he does not connect it with Nikon’s employment of the Donation of Constantine.

These latter sentiments are evident in early Old Believer claims that Nikon fashioned himself to be a "new pope."

Thus, Nikon clearly established legal, symbolic, ritualistic, and iconographic support for his claims by assuming the prerogatives Constantine granted Pope Sylvester. This, however, was not enough to secure Nikon's position. The Patriarch's portion of the Constantinian inheritance depended ultimately upon Tsar Aleksei and the direct identification of the Muscovite autocracy with the Constantinian legacy and obligations.

Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich as the New Constantine

Although recognition of the Muscovite tsar as heir to the Byzantine imperial throne and the protector of the Orthodox faith were not unique to Aleksei's reign, it did reach unprecedented levels of acceptance at that time. This resulted largely from the presence of Eastern hierarchs, such as Patriarch Paisius of Jerusalem and Patriarch Macarius of Antioch, in Moscow during the early 1650s. They sought alms and military support against the Turks who controlled their and other eastern dioceses. For this reason, they celebrated the young Tsar as the "new Constantine." Patriarch Paisius clearly espoused these flatteries in a speech to the tsar on February 4, 1649: "May it [the most-

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31 Palmer, vol. III, 158. The same ecumenical council that condemned and defrocked Nikon in 1666-7 denounced the "Tale of the White Cowl" and thus, revoked the notion that the Russian hierarch had inherited a supreme position among the universal patriarchs via the Constantinian legacy. See D. Pospelovsky, The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 76.


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holy Trinity] grant you successfully to assume the most high throne of the great Emperor Constantine, your forefather, so that you will deliver the multitude of pious and Orthodox Christians from the impious hands, from the wild beasts who devour them mercilessly.... May you free us [with] the symbol of righteousness, the life-giving Cross....”

Western rulers echoed the same sentiments. Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand and the pope likewise hailed Aleksei as the heir to the Byzantine throne in December of 1655. They, like the eastern clerics, promoted his image as defender of the faith. Their purpose was to recognize the Tsar's recent victories in Poland and to encourage further actions against the Poles.

The physical transfer of two pieces of the True Cross to Moscow compounded the verbal/theoretical connections between Aleksei and Constantine. On December 2, 1655, Patriarch Macarius “presented to the Emperor a large piece of the venerable Cross.” On February 4, 1656, “a great festival was held in honor of the arrival of a piece of the True Cross” surrendered by the Poles at the siege of Lublin. “All the bells of Moscow rang till the very earth trembled, while the Emperor [Aleksei], wearing his crown and imperial robes, with all the population of the city, received the precious relic in the Cathedral and placed it beside the most venerated icon and the Cross of Constantine.” Thus, confirmation of Aleksei’s inheritance of the Constantinian legacy, both theoretical and concrete, emanated from East and West in 1656. Its effect was manifest in Aleksei’s plan

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33 Meyendorff, 96. Rowland explains the history of this practice, 600-2.
34 Quoted in Kapterev vol. 1, 43-44. Also quoted in Meyendorff, 96.
35 Aleppo, 66.
36 Ibid. Aleksei Mikhailovich needed to make a cease-fire with Poland in order to fight the Swedes. The cease-fire was signed on April 1656. Fuhrman, 73.
37 Aleppo, 70.
38 Ibid, 76.
to liberate the Holy Land, append it to his domains, and thus become Tsar of the entire East (including Poland and the Ukraine). 39

Aleksei Mikhailovich's believed that Orthodox texts and rituals needed to be standardized if his plan to create an Orthodox empire was to become a reality. 40 Nikon, who was brought to the patriarchal throne to carry out these revisions, used the most visual and controversial reform to further associate Aleksei Mikhailovich with Constantine. More specifically, Nikon's adoption of the practice of making the sign of the cross with three, as opposed to two fingers, played an essential role in his monastery building program/association of Aleksei Mikhailovich with Constantine. 41

The making of the sign of the Cross with three, as opposed to two, fingers was the most visible reform undertaken by the Patriarch. It became the "symbolic issue which stood for all of Nikon's reforms." 42 Nikon first raised this issue in February 1653. When it met with staunch opposition among other clerics in Moscow, he awaited more favorable circumstances. The opportunity came in 1656. In February, the visiting Patriarch Macarius of Antioch condemned the traditional two-finger custom as heresy and publicly displayed the three-finger style. 43 On April 23, Nikon held a council of Russian and foreign hierarchs, which affirmed the three-fingered sign of the cross. He published

39 Meyendorff, 97; Lebedev, "New Jerusalem," 69; Medlin, 158. Medlin argues that Aleksei Mikhailovich's vision was well beyond his resources. The concept of universal rule has contemporary parallels in the West, see Asch, 36-7. For Aleksei Mikhailovich's campaigns against the Poles and Swedes and their religious ramifications, see Fuhrman, 57-74.

40 Meyendorff, 98. Constantine also attempted to create and enforce standardized rites. For this reason he called the Council of Nicea. See Drijvers, 56.

41 This argument contests Meyendorff's assertion that "for Nikon the liturgical reforms were, in fact, only a peripheral item in his program of aggrandizing the Russian Church." Meyendorff, 91. However, it complements Flier's arguments concerning Nikon's reform of the Palm Sunday ritual. See Flier's "Court Ceremony in an Age of Reform: Patriarch Nikon and the Palm Sunday Ritual," in Samuel H. Baron and Nancy Shields Kollman, eds., Religion and Culture in Early Modern Russia and Ukraine (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997), 73-95. My claim is supported by Nikon's decree of June 24, 1656.

42 Meyendorff, 59.

43 Ibid, 51, 61.
the particulars of this reform, its sanction by the council, and his own comments on the sign of the cross immediately thereafter.\textsuperscript{44}

Three weeks later, Nikon performed another ritual that directly associated Aleksei Mikhailovich with Constantine. On May 6\textsuperscript{th}, in preparation for the Tsar's campaign against the Swedes, Nikon and the visiting Patriarch Macarius performed a \textit{paraclesis} or intercession on Aleksei Mikhailovich's behalf. In the Uspenskii Cathedral, Nikon declared that just as the mighty God gave the Great Constantine victory over his enemies, He will likewise bless the armies of the Orthodox Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich. Then, “they took a farewell of the icon of our Lady of Blackernae and the Cross of Constantine, which the Metropolitan of Kroutitz had had [sic] committed to his charge to bear before the Emperor.”\textsuperscript{45} The campaign was a success.

\textbf{The Kii System Prototype}

In the late spring and early summer of 1656 all the elements of Nikons the Kii Cross system were extremely visible. Moscow received holy relics, including fragments of the True Cross. Aleksei Mikhailovich was widely revered as the “new Constantine.” Nikon established himself as heir to the “Donation of Constantine.” The Patriarch sanctioned the new three-fingered sign of the cross. The Tsar scored military success. In this most favorable atmosphere, Nikon revealed his intention to construct a replication of the \textit{Stavros [Cross]} Monastery that Constantine (supposedly) founded in Greece.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid, 61-2. These were published in the \textit{Skrizhal} in the Spring of 1656. This work was, with exception of introduction, ready for publication in 1653. However, Nikon awaited eastern hierarchs’ sanction before releasing it. This is another example of how Nikon coordinated the presentation of his actions and imagery.

\textsuperscript{45} Aleppo, 86. Palmer, vol. II, 157; Medlin 181.

\textsuperscript{46} According to Drijvers, Constantine did not found any monasteries.
On June 13 Aleksei Mikhailovich granted Nikon permission to found the Krestny Monastery. Less than two weeks later, the Patriarch introduced the original Kii System of imagery. Nikon drew attention to the Kii Cross in both public ritual and a written address.

On June 24, 1656, he conducted “an elaborate parting ceremony” in which he “celebrated the sending of the Cross together with a council of clerics from the cathedral church.” Nikon, together with the entire Orthodox hierarchy, formed a procession which accompanied the Cross beyond the gates of Moscow and fifteen versts [nearly fifteen miles] into the countryside. On the same day, the Patriarch addressed his Decree Regarding the Krestny Monastery, which outlined the purpose and justification of his activities, to “Orthodox Christians of all ages and all walks of life.” In it, he not only announced the founding of the Krestny Monastery and the dispatch of the Kii Cross and its accompanying icons, but also solicited funds for the monastery’s construction and decoration.

Nikon’s Decree Regarding the Krestny Monastery is the verbal counterpart of the Kii System of imagery. It is essential to any attempt to read and comprehend the Nikonian iconography and the Patriarch’s Monastery building program. This rich document presents Nikon’s own ideas on the Kii Cross system’s form, content and meanings. It provides the original description of the Kii Cross, and commentary on its construction and decoration. This document also furnishes precise clarifications of the written texts found on the icons. Moreover, the decree explains and justifies the newly sanctioned three-finger sign of the cross by placing it in historical context. Nikon’s comments on the

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48 Shusherin, 63.
power of the life-giving Cross add a vital new feature to Aleksei Mikhailovich’s inheritance of the Constantinian legacy, i.e., the Tsar’s function as patron.

After recounting the story of how he erected a cross on Kii Island in 1639, Nikon presented the Kii Cross itself.

This is the honorable life-giving Cross which we sent to Kii Island today. It was brought from Palestine and created from the noble wood of the cypress tree. Its width and height are identical to the life-giving Cross on which Christ our Lord allowed Himself to be crucified for our salvation. It contains parts of the very life-giving Cross, as well as the remains of numerous apostles, martyrs and others. Let this honorable life-giving Cross protect and save anyone who appeals to it, having a certain need or by wise intent. He who will come to this life-giving Cross with faith and will adore it, will not be denied the grace given by the power of the holy honorable and life-giving Cross, the grace equal to that given to the travelers to Holy Palestine

While the Patriarch was careful to copy the exact form of the True Cross, he added both universal and distinctly Russian facets to its content. Nikon chose more than 300 elements, including pieces of the True Cross, stones from the most revered sites in the Holy Land and relics of more than one hundred saints, to be included within the body of the Cross. His purposeful selection of these inclusions promoted the concepts of Russia as New Jerusalem and Russians as a “chosen people,” and supported the legitimacy of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Romanov dynasty.

Nikon’s introductory description of the Kii Cross helps explain the significance of the stones from sites in the Holy Land, such as Christ’s Grave, included in the Cross. The statement “He who will come to this life-giving Cross with faith and will adore it, will not be denied the grace given by the power of the holy honorable and life-giving Cross,

49 Ibid, 63.
50 Kratkoe izvestie o Krestnom onezhskom arkhangel’skoi eparkhii monastyrе, 1.
51 Ibid, 3-4.
the grace equal to that given to the travelers to Holy Palestine” suggests that the inclusion of stones transferred the sanctity of their places of origin to the Cross.\textsuperscript{52} Thus, Nikon established the location of the Cross, the Krestny Monastery, as a pilgrimage site equal to the Holy Land itself.

The Patriarch’s selection of relics included in the Cross complimented the equation of Russia with the Holy Land. The relics contained in the Kii Cross, including the remains of Universal and Orthodox saints and their Russian counterparts, represent a “spiritual genealogy” which traces the apostolic tradition to Russia.\textsuperscript{53} However, there is no hierarchical order or division between the universal, Orthodox and Russian saints within the bounds of the Kii Cross. All of the remains commingle in equality. Moreover, parallels between the Russian saints and their predecessors indicate that Russia was not only the heir to apostolic tradition, but a/the holy land with its own canon of “apostles,” martyrs, miracle workers, monastery founders, and “ruler saints”.

The Patriarch’s glorification of particular local Russian saints over others, and their inclusion in the Kii Cross, reflected his policy of refocusing and controlling popular belief. Nikon attempted to restrain local, popular saint cults by restricting the number of saints’ days and festivals. Concurrently, he promoted two new cults, St. Philip’s and St. Iakov Borvichskii’s, and fostered others, such as those of saint metropolitans Peter, Aleksei and Jonah, which underscored his religious and political attitudes. This process

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, 3.

\textsuperscript{53} Universal Apostles (Paul, Jacob, Timothy, and Thomas), Apostolic tsar Constantine (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), Martyrs (Christopher, Stephen, and George), the Prophet Daniel, Saints (John the Baptist, St. George the Theologian and St John Chrysostom) and monastery founders (Antony the Great, Euthimii the Great and John bishop of Damascus). The relics of Russian saints include the Russian “apostle” Andrew “the first called,” Great Martyrs (Prokopii, Pantelleimon, Feodor Stratilat) and Martyrs (Dmitrii, Nikita, and Afanasii), founders of monasteries (Sergii Radonezhskii, Savva Storozhevskii, and Iakov Borvichskii), Metropolitans of Moscow (Peter, Aleksei, Iona, and Philip) and “ruler saints” (Grand Prince Vladimir of Novgorod, Prince Alexander Nevsky, and Prince Roman of Uglich). The Cross did not contain relics of “holy fools.”
was also evident in the reform of the *Sluzhebnik* [Book of Church services] of 1655. The new edition of Russian missal, added St. Philip to the list of commemorations recited during the Eucharist, while eliminating more than a dozen formerly mentioned Russian local saints. All but two of the Russian saints commemorated in the new *Sluzhebnik* were included in the Kii Cross. None of those deleted from the service are found in its composition. Thus, the inclusion of Russian saints in the body of the Kii Cross, like the depiction of the three-fingered sign of the cross on its right side icon, was an iconographic statement of confessionalism.\(^{54}\)

Following the introduction of the Kii Cross, Nikon made an initial plea for support of the new monastery that extolled the virtues and explained benefits of giving to the physical beautification of the Church.

Follow the kind and honorable Patrikii who had such strong faith in the life-giving Cross that he ordered a certain youth to forge a gold Cross decorated with precious stones, that good youth, seeing such a pious effort, added to that Cross his own ten units of gold. You, Orthodox of all ages and statuses, should do the same and contribute to the *Stavros* Monastery. Because it is a known fact that monks and hierarchs of the monasteries carrying their own crosses and adoring Cross of Jesus Christ will be praying for your health and salvation day and night.... You know my beloved flock that they who give to the construction and decoration of the holy churches were given the highest grace as was noted by St. John Chrystsom.\(^{55}\)

Nikon’s request for funds provides valuable insights on his opinions concerning the patronage of the church and its artistic adornment. According to the Patriarch, patronage leading to the decoration of the church was a strong expression of faith worthy of the “highest praise.” His reference to Patrikii illustrated that selfless donations of material wealth to the ornamentation of the Church and its primary symbols provided


\(^{55}\) *Kratkoe izvestie o Krestnom onezhskom arkhangel’skoj eparkhii monastyre*, 6.
spiritual benefits to the donor and inspired the faith of others. Patriarch reiterated the significance of the Cross’s decoration on a plaque which he later affixed to it. There, he stated that the Cross was “decorated with silver and gold in order to be praised and adored by the Christians.” Thus, Nikon explained his rich embellishment of the Kii Cross and established himself, as a paragon of patronage. 56

Nikon used the decree as another opportunity to outline the significance of the recently confirmed three-fingered method of making the sign of the Cross and its illustration on the Kii Cross’s right side icon. “If we are to respect the holy Cross, we should depict it on our faces with the first three fingers of the right hand uniting them together as an image of the Holy Trinity because such ancient custom is based on tradition and befits all Orthodox children of the Eastern Church.... By combining three fingers we keep in mind the mystery of the Holy Trinity and by depicting them through God’s Cross we remember his passions and resurrection and for this we ask your assistance.” 57

The Patriarch concluded his address by tracing the power of the life-giving Cross, first recognized by Constantine, to Aleksei Mikhailovich.

God showed the first Christian Tsar Constantine the image of the life-giving Cross in heaven and commanded him to make an image of the Cross and display it in front of his troops and Constantine, with the power of Crucified Christ our Lord, won three victories. To commemorate these victories he made three crosses of pure copper and erected the Stavros Monastery to celebrate God’s Cross at Holy Mt. Athos, which stands until this day. One of the three crosses was transferred to

56 Other contemporary descriptions of the image recognized the significance that Nikon attached to his decoration of the Cross. According to one Old Believer account, “Nikon ordered to make a cross of cypress wood with height and width like the Cross of Christ, on which Christ was crucified for saving the world. This cross was decorated with silver, gold, precious stones and pearls. Many relics of Greek and Russian saints were collected.” See “Povest’ o zhitii i rozhdenii i vospitanii i o konchine Nikona, byvshego patriarkha.” This text was published by A. K. Borozdin, Protopop Avvakum: ocherk iz istorii umstvennoi zhizni russkogo obshestva v XVII veke (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1900), 145-167. The quote is found on 151. This tale is analyzed in detail in the fourth chapter of the dissertation.

57 Kratkoe izvestie o Krestnom onezhskom arkhangelskom eparkhii monastyre, 19.
Moscow under Great Prince Vladimir and is still in Moscow; it is with its omnipotent effect that Orthodox Grand Princes and Tsars destroyed enemies and conquered neighboring countries. In the same fashion, the pious Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, imitating the first Christian Tsar Constantine, ordered one of the three crosses to be carried in front of his troops, and with the power of Jesus Christ crucified on the Cross, our true God, he defeats the enemies as we can all see.58

This key statement illustrated crucial new associations between Aleksei and Constantine in terms of the power of the life-giving Cross by connecting Russian legends with current events. Drawing on “Tale of the Grand Princes of Vladimir,” the Patriarch reiterated Constantine’s exemplary, God-inspired actions, (creating an image of the Cross and leading troops with it), the result (military victory), and the commemoration the victory (creating three crosses and the Stavoros Monastery). Employing the same source, he also explained the Russian inheritance of one of the commemorative Crosses. That Cross symbolized not only the transfer of power and legitimacy, but also the possibility to further emulate the Byzantine tsar’s actions. Finally, Nikon drew contemporary parallels to the legendary event by showing how Aleksei Mikhailovich’s imitation of Constantine’s example of carrying the Cross in front of his forces (an event publicly staged by Nikon during the paraclesis of May 6th), likewise empowered the Russian ruler and resulted in his recent victory over the Swedes. It is noteworthy that Nikon made the same type references to Constantine and Aleksei Mikhailovich in his Rai Myslennyi. [Spiritual Paradise](Iversky Monastery, 1659).59

The implication of Nikon’s comparison of Aleksei Mikhailovich and Constantine is clear. Since Aleksei, “imitating the first Christian Tsar Constantine,” benefited

58 Ibid, 19. This is a direct reference to the victory over the Swedes which followed the paraclesis Nikon preformed for Aleksei Mikhailovich on May 6, 1665.
59 Nikon wrote Rai Myslennyi to explicate his foundation of the Iverskii Monastery and its significance. This entire work was recently translated into modern Russian as Rai Myslennyi, V. S.
militarily from the power of the life-giving Cross, he should also follow his predecessor’s example and commemorate the victory by supporting the “New” Stavros Monastery. By obligating the tsar to emulate Constantine’s role of patron, Nikon added a distinct new aspect to the traditional interpretation of the Russian inheritance of the Constantinian legacy. This additional responsibility had the dual effect. It simultaneously promoted the national myth and hence the religious and temporal legitimacy of the Romanov dynasty and strengthened the Patriarch’s ecclesiastical prerogatives against the burgeoning encroachments of the state. Aleksei Mikhailovich’s subsequent benefactions suggest that he recognized and accepted the implications of Nikon’s iconography. In 1657 alone, Aleksei Mikhailovich donated 6,000 roubles to the building of the Krestny Monastery. He also endowed it with villages containing 4,537 Christian souls, and fishing rights on the shores of seas and rivers, both “near and far.”

The Kii Cross system was a significant step toward the achievement of Nikon’s goals of recognizing Russia as a new holy land, and himself and the Romanovs as the legitimate heirs to the Constantinian legacy. The Kii Cross’s form, content, and meaning(s) may be understood as a preview of Nikon’s ultimate iconographic composition, the New Jerusalem Monastery and its Resurrection Cathedral. The Kii Cross’s adherence to the exact specifications of Christ’s Cross were the precedent for Nikon’s construction of the Resurrection Cathedral, which followed the outline, or as D. Rowland put it “footprint,” of the original Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The Kii Cross also provided the model for the Resurrection Cathedral’s content. Nearly all of the relics contained in the Kii Cross were also included in the Resurrection

Cathedral. Not content to transfer small pieces of the Holy Land, Nikon created life-sized replications of the most holy sites associated with Christ inside the cathedral. Moreover, he created entire churches dedicated to New Testament, universal and Russian saints within the confines of the larger interior. In both cases, Nikon carefully replicated the form of the original prototypes, but transformed them by adding uniquely Russian features to their content. The content and meaning of the Kii images, which stressed the connection between Aleksei Mikhailovich and Constantine, and thereby obligated the Russian Tsar to support the Krestnyi Monastery, was the first step in a two stage plan intended to make both male and female Romanovs patrons of Nikon's foundations. In time, both aspects of this strategy proved extremely successful.

Patriarch Nikon's "Golgotha" Iconography: A Modification of the Imagery

Nikon conceived the Golgotha system for his final and greatest monastic foundation and iconographic composition, the New Jerusalem Monastery. It served as the central image in Patriarch's symbolic replication of Golgotha in the Resurrection Cathedral. Like the Kii Cross System, it represents the Patriarch's attempts to preserve ecclesiastical prerogatives against the encroachment of the state, while simultaneously promoting the concept of Russia as a New Israel/Jerusalem and hence the religious and temporal legitimacy of the Romanov dynasty.

Compared with the miraculous circumstances surrounding the creation of the Krestny Monastery, the prehistory of the New Jerusalem Monastery appears mundane. On June 3, 1656, Nikon purchased a parcel of land, including the village known as

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60 Krestnyi monastyr' osnovannyi patriarkhom Nikonom, 14.
61 Rowland, 160.
Voskresenskii [Resurrection], located approximately 56 miles north-east of Moscow to supplement the holding of the Iverskii Monastery. Shortly thereafter, he, with the tsar’s blessing, began to build a monastery on the site so that he would not have to stay in the nearby village when he went to visit his new property. By the spring of 1657, construction was well underway on the monastery’s walls, towers and primary sanctuary - the “Church of the Resurrection”. On October 18, 1657, Aleksei Mikhailovich surveyed the construction. After viewing the site and fledgling monastery, he referred to it as “New Jerusalem.” With this inspiration, or perhaps confirmation of preconceived but not yet announced plans, the Patriarch set out to model the Church of the Resurrection after the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem (also known as “New Jerusalem”). In the process, Nikon commissioned the Golgotha system of imagery. 63

While bound together iconographically, a rift, instigated by the boyars, emerged between the patriarch and the tsar. Nikon left Moscow for New Jerusalem at the height of the tensions on July 10, 1658. Later the same month, Nikon’s enemies among the boyars began to condemn the New Jerusalem Monastery as heretical.

Under the less than ceremonious circumstances surrounding the Golgotha imagery’s transfer from Moscow to New Jerusalem, Nikon was in no position to issue another decree like the one of June 24, 1656. A list of icons and other things set to New Jerusalem after Nikon’s departure from Moscow in 1658 provides the earliest mention and description of the Golgotha imagery. According to this document, the tsar sent “two crosses, the largest one made of cypress, not painted, and two large icons to supplement

62 See Arkhimandrit Leonid Kavelin, Kratkoe istoricheskeoe skazanie o nachale i ustrejenii Voskresenskogo, Novyi Ierusalim imenuemogo, monastyria (Moscow, 1872), 3-7 for the details concerning the founding of the New Jerusalem Monastery. See also Lebedev, 72-3 and Rowland, 609-11.
the large cypress cross; on one are Tsar Constantine, great Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and
great lord holy Patriarch Nikon, on the second piece of wood are Tsarisia Helen, Tsarisia
Mariia Il’linichna and the pious Prince Aleksei Alekseivich.  64

The depiction of Aleksei Alekseivich is the most visible modification of the
Nikon’s system of imagery. It served two mutually reinforcing purposes. The first, which
is discussed in detail in the following pages, was to confirm Mariia Il’linichna’s
inheritance of portion of the Constantinian/Helenian legacy. The second was to confirm
her son’s legitimacy. The young Tsarevich’s depiction together with his parents, and their
predecessors, obviously denotes him as heir to the prerogatives and obligations of the
Romanov Dynasty and the Constantinian heritage. By including Aleksei Alekseivich,
Nikon transformed the imagery into a statement about the future. Aleksei Alekseivich
was portrayed differently from all the other figures on the icons. He is not worshiping or
petitioning the Cross. Rather, he stands erect, with his right hand raised as if extending a
greeting.

Supplementary texts on the icons help explain the dissonance of young Aleksei’s
posture and shed new light on the composition’s creation. In addition to simply denoting
who was depicted, written captions next to the images of royal family and the Patriarch
Nikon also indicate their ages. For example, Nikon was depicted in his “50th summer”
(1655), while the tsarevich was presented in the “the 5th summer of his age” (1658).

63 See Kavelin, 6-7; Zelenskaia, 15. See Nikon’s Replies for his account of the Tsar’s naming of
the monastery. The event was also recorded in an inscription on a cross that stood near the place where the
Tsar first observed the monastery.
64 “Perepisannaia kniia domovoi kazny Patriarkha Nikona” in VOIDR (Moscow, 1852), 133. See
also G. M. Zelenskaia “Prizhizennye izobrazhennia sviateishego patriarkha Nikona”, Nikonovskie
chtienia v muzee ‘Novyi Ierusalim,’ Shornik statei (Moscow: Severnyi palomnik, 2002), 9.

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These notations show that icon painter(s) combined *prorisi* [exemplars-sketches] of the Patriarch and the royal family created at different times into iconographic whole.\textsuperscript{65}

The subsequent use of the same *proris* of Aleksei Alkeseivich confirms his role in the Nikonian iconography. The renowned icon painter Simeon Ushakov also used the *proris* in the composition of another icon depicting the spiritual genealogy of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich’s immediate family, “The Tree of the Russian Realm” (1668).\textsuperscript{66}

The repeated use of the identical image (*proris*) of the young Aleksei in icons illustrating the Romanovs’ pedigree makes it the primary iconographic representation of the tsarevich as heir religious and temporal authority of the Muscovite throne.

The Golgotha system’s purpose as the centerpiece of Nikon’s replication of the site and scene of Christ’s Crucifixion resulted in significant transformation of the imagery. According to the monastery inventory of 1679, the original composition included “a large cypress Cross on which the Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ is carved. On the sides there are images of Mary Mother of God, the women who washed Christ’s feet, John the Theologian, and Longrin Sotnik. [It has] a gilded frame with carved decoration. On the right side of the frame there is the image of Tsar Constantine. The same image includes Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich autocrat of all Russia, in prayer, and former Patriarch Nikon. To the left of the frame, there is image of Tsaritsa Helen, Tsaritsa Mariia Il’inich, in prayer, and the Tsarevich Aleksei Alekseivich of the Great, Little, and White Russia.”\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{66} GTG no. 28598. Reproduced in Thyret, *Between God and Tsar*, 71.

\textsuperscript{67} “Opis’ tserkovnovo i monastyrskogo imushchestva i knizhnomu knigr.-khron. Voskresenskogo, Novyi Jerusalim’ imenemago, monastyr, 1679 goda” in Arhimandrit Leonid Kavelin, *Istoricheskoe opisanie stavropigal’nogo Voskresenskogo, Novyi Jerusalim imenemogo, monastyr* (Moscow, 1876), 190-19. See also G. M. Zelenskaia, *Sviatyni Novogo Ierusalima* (Moscow: Severnyi palomnik, 2002), 296, 298. In the second half of the eighteenth century the location of the images changed. They were removed from the side
The Patriarch’s incorporation of the icons featuring the Byzantine rulers, the Romanovs and Nikon into the scene at Golgotha provided them with significant, new meaning(s). This display connected all of the figures directly with Christ, and thus closer to God. Presented together with Mary, John and the other Biblical personages, they are witnesses to the Crucifixion. Thus, they were placed among the original believers and chosen people.

Nikon’s modification of the imagery proves that the system was not static. Rather, it shows that the Patriarch continued to transform the system’s form and content to suit specific new physical contexts and ideological purposes. Moreover, it highlights Nikon’s attempts to replicate the Holy Land in Russia and associate the Russian people with Biblical and Universal saints. Finally, it reveals his continued advance toward the complimentary dual goals of reinforcing the Constantinian inheritance and the imperial patronage of the monasteries under his control.

Patriarch Nikon's System of Imagery and the Romanov Legacy

Patriarch Nikon continued the construction and decoration of the New Jerusalem Monastery until the ecumenical council of 1666-7 dismissed him from the patriarchal throne. During those proceedings, the same universal patriarchs, who earlier recognized Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich as the heir to the Byzantine inheritance, and hailed him as the
"new Constantine" and his wife as the "New Helen," condemned the notion that the head of the Russian Church was also heir to the Constantinian legacy. Moreover, the universal patriarchs condemned the complimentary concept of a Russian "New Jerusalem" on the basis that it defamed the originals and infringed upon their traditional prerogatives. Finally, the council stripped Nikon of the patriarchal title, reduced him to the rank of simple monk and exiled him. As a result, the New Jerusalem Monastery fell into stagnation. However, despite the condemnation, subsequent Russian rulers did not abandon the messages inherent in the Nikonian iconography.

The Kii and Golgotha systems' iconographic support of the Romanov dynasty's political and religious legitimacy and Nikon's symbolic replication of the Holy Land at New Jerusalem, especially the Golgotha Church, took on renewed significance and relevance during the early reign of Tsar Fedor Alekseevich (1676-1682). Fedor, Aleksei Mikhailiovich's third son and successor, turned to the Nikonian iconography during his struggle to solidify his inheritance of the Muscovite throne and the Constantinian legacy in the late 1670s. Fedor's close attachment with and employment of the powerful associations presented in the Nikonian iconography, not only supported his position, but resulted ultimately in the success of the New Jerusalem Monastery and the rehabilitation of Patriarch Nikon and his image in art.

68 The argument that the figures depicted on the icons were considered part of the scene is confirmed by the fact that they were removed from this position during attempts to make the scene more historically accurate in the second half of the eighteenth century. See Zelenskaia, 301, 304.
69 Palmer, vol. III, 158, 164-5. These connections, as noted earlier, were inherently linked long before Nikon appeared on the scene. The universal patriarchs also condemned the "Tale of the White Cowl." Nikon's assumption of the Constantinian inheritance theoretically made him first among the universal patriarchs.
70 Fedor, Aleksei's second son, became tsar when his father died in January 1676. By this time, both his brother, Aleksei Alekseevich, and mother, Mariia, died. Aleksei Alekseevich died on January 17, 1670. Mariia died on March 4, 1669. Aleksei Mikhailiovich married Nataliia Naryshkina on January 22, 1671. Nataliia, Peter I's mother, and her family tried to gain influence and legitimacy to throne after Aleksei
Fedor's increasingly close connection with the New Jerusalem Monastery in general, and the Golgotha Church in particular, began in the summer of 1678. In July and August, he issued decrees demanding the resumption of prayers, the ringing of all the bells and the performance of the holy liturgy in the Golgotha Church. Between the fifth and seventh of September, Fedor took the entire royal household, including his sisters, stepmother, stepbrothers and sisters and aunts, to New Jerusalem. During the first evening of the visit, "the great sovereign was kind enough to listen the service at the life-giving Cross which stands on Holy Golgotha."71

After attending the liturgy in the Golgotha Church on December 5, 1678 Fedor issued a decree calling for the completion of the Resurrection Cathedral.72 According to Ivan Shusherin, "the pious Tsar was very surprised to see such a great beautiful building in such disrepair. He sighed with his whole heart and got inspired by the example of the ancient pious Greek Tsars Constantine, the great Justinian and Theodosius and made a promise in his mind and heart to complete this great stone church which did happen eventually."73

The ideas expressed in the Nikonian iconography played a crucial role in the development of Fedor's religious and political thought. The Resurrection Cathedral, especially its Golgotha Church, impressed upon him the concept of replicating the Holy Land in Russia. The Golgotha images, combined with reinforcing messages from the

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71 Kavelin, 8-9. Tsar Fedor established a pattern of donating to the monastery. He gave monastery fifty roubles for each of the services he decreed. After his first visit, he donated numerous church service utensils and a variety of silver and gold decorative materials as well as 150 roubles. On December 5, 1687 he granted the monastery salt extraction rights.

72 Ibid, 10.

73 Shusherin, 172.
monastery's monks and hierarchy, affirmed his inheritance of the Byzantine legacy and its obligations.74

The impact of the Nikonian iconography is manifest in Fedor's efforts to copy it. In 1678-9, Fedor not only resumed construction of the New Jerusalem Monastery, but created his own symbolic replication of the Golgotha in the Kremlin's Terem Palace. During the same period, the Tsar commissioned Ivan Saltanov to paint a reproduction of the Nikon's System of imagery.75

Fedor's commission of the Saltanov icon, the most well known copy of the Nikonian system of imagery, shows that the Tsar understood and sought to employ the Nikon's iconographic messages of spiritual and temporal legitimacy. Although the tsar clearly revered and memorialized Christ's sufferings at Golgotha, and was familiar with Nikon's Golgotha imagery, he did not order a copy of that system.76 He ordered a copy of the Kii prototype instead, because it did not include his deceased older brother's (Aleksei Alekseevich) image. The omission of Aleksei Alekseevich proves that the image was not intended as a commemorative statement about the past, but rather a commentary on the present and the future. It was not a simple family portrait, but an integrating symbol of the transfer of legitimacy.77

74 I. Brilliantov notes the influence of New Jerusalem's clergy on Fedor in Ferapontov Belozerskii ... monastyr', mesto zatocheniia Patriarkha Nikona (St. Petersburg, Tipografiia A. P. Lopukhina, 1899), 230.


76 See Shchedrina about the role of Christ's Passions in imperial ideology, 9-10.

77 For classic discussions of parsunae and portraits of the royal household in 1670s, see Novitskii's work and Zabelin, 196-99. Cracraft's second and third chapters are essential reading. See also O. S. Evangelova, Izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo v Rossi i pervoi chertverti XVIII veka (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo moskovskogo universiteta, 1987. For an English discussion of "idealized portraits" of the royal household,
By commissioning an icon depicting his mother and father as the legitimate heirs to the Constantinian legacy Fedor supported his own position iconographically against inroads made by his stepmother and her family.\textsuperscript{78} Displayed in the Terem Palace Church, it served as a constant reminder to the rest of the family that the offspring of Fedor's parents, not the children of his stepmother Natalia Naryskina, were the legitimate Romanov heirs. Thus the Tsar used icon to shape opinions about himself, his parents, and Patriarch Nikon.

The reproduction of the Kii Cross system is a significant statement of Fedor's image of Patriarch Nikon. The icon is a clear rejection of the universal council's of 1666-7's denunciation of the Patriarch. It countered the universal patriarchs' decision to defrock and reduce Nikon to the rank of monk, by depicting him in full patriarchal regalia, including mitra, sakkos, paltsy, and by referring to him as patriarch.\textsuperscript{79} The icon also dismissed the council's refutation of the Moscow hierarch's position as heir to the Constantinian legacy, manifest in the “Donation of Constantine” and the “Tale of the White Cowl,” by acknowledging iconographically Nikon's position in relation to the Byzantine Tsar. Contrary to one Soviet art historian's claim that Nikon is depicted on the icon praying for forgiveness of his “mistakes,” the Saltanov icon illustrates the Patriarch's full rehabilitation in the eyes of the tsar.\textsuperscript{80} Moreover, it foreshadowed Fedor

\textsuperscript{78} Fedor could not substitute an image of himself for that of his dead brother because it was the place of a child under the guidance of his mother. Nor could he replace his image with that of his father, because his father gave him legitimacy.

\textsuperscript{79} After the trial of 1666-7 Nikon was referred to as “monk Nikon” in official documents. However, Fedor addressed Nikon as “patriarch” in his correspondence. See Brilliantov, 232. Nikon was depicted as “Former Patriarch” in the Titularnik (1672).

\textsuperscript{80} E. S. Ovchinnikova claims that Nikon is depicted on this image praying for forgiveness of his “mistakes” in Portret v russkom iskusstve XVII veka (Moscow: “Iskusstvo,” 1955), 94.
Alekseevich's successful attempt to have Nikon rehabilitated by universal Patriarchs, returned from exile and commemorated as "patriarch."

Women in Patriarch Nikon's System of Imagery

Nikon's depiction of Helen and Mariia Il'inichna on the Kii and Golgotha icons makes clear their essential roles in the Romanov inheritance of the Constantinian legacy and his vision of New Jerusalem. The female images mirror those of Constantine and Aleksei. Women appear as separate, but equal to their male counterparts. Their significance in the iconography lies in their dual roles of mothers and patrons.

Nikon paralleled Helen and Constantine's respective roles as mother and military victor in terms of their first encounter with the Cross. God revealed the Cross to Helen while she gave birth to Constantine. Constantine witnessed the Cross while preparing for battle, carried the symbol before his troops and won the battle. According to Nikon, both Constantine and his mother erected churches in honor of the Cross. Then, the Patriarch likened Aleksei and Mariia to Constantine and Helen by showing how the current rulers, aided by the power of the life-giving Cross, followed their Byzantine predecessors. Aleksei Mikhailovich scored military over victory the Swedes. Mariia gave birth to a male heir (Aleksei Alekseevich).

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81 Other evidence suggests that Nikon granted women separate, but equal status in the eyes of the Church. According to Paul of Aleppo, 66, Nikon encouraged Mariia Il'inichna to break tradition and participate in daytime services at the Dormition Cathedral together with her husband. "On December 16 [1655], our master, with the Patriarch of Moscow celebrated in the Cathedral in the presence of the Emperor and Empress. Hitherto, according to Russian custom, the Empress had never worshipped in the cathedral but at night; now Kyr Nikon persuaded her to attend the service during the day.... all the wives of the grandees, veiled, wearing violet velvet robes and mantled in sables walked before her, as their husbands did before the Emperor...."

82 See Isolde Thyret, "'Blessed Is the Tsaritsa's Womb': The Myth of Miraculous Birth and Royal Motherhood in Muscovite Russia" The Russian Review 54 (Oct. 1994): 479-96. Thyret rejects "the popular image of Russian royal women as meek and enduring figure," 479. Rather, she stresses the importance of royal motherhood as an empowering role. These ideas are clearly manifested in Nikon's actions and imagery.
Nikon's depiction of Mariia as a mother touched a matter of great contemporary significance. While Aleksei Mikhailovich's lineage was well established, Mariia's capacity to fulfill her role as a royal mother by producing a male heir was in serious doubt much of her married life. The Patriarch of Jerusalem who likened Mariia to Helen and hoped that she, like her predecessor, would produce a male heir recognized this problem.

Their first son, Dmitrii (Oct. 22, 1648-Oct 6, 1649), lived less than a year. Five years passed before Mariia gave birth to Aleksei Alekseevich (February 5, 1654). However, the young Aleksei's birth did not secure the dynasty. He might follow his brother to an early grave. Therefore, the prince's survival through two outbreaks of the plague, which was probably perceived as a miracle, was cause for gratitude and commemoration.

The image of Mariia Il'inichna as mother created in the Nikonian iconography, remained relevant for the subsequent Russian rulers. It was most obvious in the Golgotha icons. There, Aleksei Alekseevich, the recognized heir to the Romanov throne was depicted together with Mariia on the female icon. The Tsaritsa's significance was also evident in Fedor Alekseevich's decision to commission and display the Saltanov icon in the course of his struggle against Natalia Kirillovna, his stepmother. The Nikonian depiction of the mother's role in the transfer of dynastic legitimacy was reaffirmed in the twentieth century.

The female role of patron in the actual replication of the Holy Land in Russia is also key to Nikon's vision of New Jerusalem. The legend that Helen not only discovered the True Cross, but built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and named it "New

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83 Aleksei Mikhailovich begged Nikon to help with this problem in 1652. See Soloviev, Vol 18, 176.
Jerusalem” became accepted as historical fact by the end of the fourth century. Nikon’s reinforcement of this idea is manifest in the text of the prayer held by Helen on the Golgotha icon. “Oh honorable Cross of Christ, I recognized the heavenly light during the conception of my son Constantine, and I raised you with my own hands from the womb of the earth at the advice of my son Constantine, and I erected in your honor a holy church.”

While the combination of Nikon’s decree of June 13, 1652 and the text of the prayer held by Constantine on the Kii Cross icon presented the Byzantine tsar as the founder of the original *Stavros* Monastery, the text of Helen’s prayer in the Golgotha icon denotes her as the founder of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It follows that Mariia, as Aleksei’s counterpart, was also a recipient of the Constantinian inheritance and its imperatives. While Nikon assigned gender specific roles to males (military) and females (motherhood) depicted in the iconography he also gave them a common obligation to patronize churches/monasteries. This reading of the iconography shows that Nikon intended to make female Romanovs major benefactors of the New Jerusalem Monastery by associating them with the Constantinian, or more exactly, the Helenian legacy.

Both earlier precedents and subsequent events confirm this interpretation. The patronage of later female Romanov rulers was largely responsible for the completion,

84 Thyret, 66.
85 Fuhrman, 188. Feodor, Aleksei's third son and eventual heir, was not born until May 30, 1661.
86 Drijvers, 142.
87 Thyret, 209-10, n. 74. On the image, Nikon beseeched Christ to “to send the grace and protection of the Holy Spirit on to the new settlement constructed to His glory.”
88 Thyret, 66. Patriarch Paisius of Jerusalem connected Mariia’s inheritance of the Helenian legacy with the patronage of the Church in December 1652. At that time the Patriarch proclaimed Mariia “a second holy new Helen, who beautifies the most holy altar of the mother churches” Compare this quote with Paisius’s earlier praise of Constantine on February 4, 1649. “May it [“the most-holy Trinity] grant you successfully to assume the most high throne of the great Emperor Constantine, your forefather, so that you will deliver the multitude of pious and Orthodox Christians from the impious hands, from the wild beasts who devour them.”
expansion, renovation, and perpetuation of the New Jerusalem Monastery and Nikon's replica of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Resurrection Cathedral. Elizabeth I (1741-1761) led all subsequent Romanovs in supporting New Jerusalem Monastery. During her reign New Jerusalem regained its status as one of the premier monasteries in Russia in terms of land holdings. Under her patronage, building reached scales unparalleled since the seventeenth century. She donated 30,000 rubles between 1756 and 1759 to adorn the Resurrection Cathedral. During this period the renowned Italian architect B. Rastrelli designed and constructed a grand new rotunda for the Cathedral’s primary sanctuary. The Cathedral’s entire interior was renovated in the baroque style. Catherine II, “the Great” (1762-1796), was second only to her predecessor Elizabeth in patronage of the monastery. Catherine gave three thousand rubles to build a “holy manger” and “Bethlehem” Church in 1769. In 1775, she donated a valuable and ornate new iconostasis for the Cathedral’s Golgotha Church, site of the Nikon’s Golgotha system of imagery. 89

Closer analysis of Elizabeth and Catherine’s patronage reveals their attempts to imitate Helen’s example as expressed in the Kii System imagery. Both empresses funded construction and adornment of churches within the Resurrection Cathedral which replicated Helen’s original foundations in the Holy Land. Elizabeth’s construction of a new rotunda over the place symbolically replicating Christ’s grave was a reenactment of Helen’s creation of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Following Helen’s example completely, Elizabeth officially named the monastery, which until then was referred to as the “Resurrection Monastery,” “New Jerusalem.” Catherine continued the process of

89 Zelenskaia, Sviatyni Novogo Jersalima, 47-50, 235-6, 356, 379; Kratkoe istoricheskoe opisanie Stavropigial’nago Voskresenskago, Novii Jerusalem’ imenuemago, monastyria, 26; Moskovskii
imitating Helen begun by Elizabeth. Her erection of a “holy manger” and “Bethlehem” Church are clearly patterned after what were described as the Byzantine Empress’s subsequent actions. “When the emperor's mother had completed New Jerusalem, she reared another church not at all inferior over the cave at Bethlehem.”

The Nikonian iconography provided female Russian rulers, and their offspring, with a unique sense of legitimacy by associating them with the Helenian legacy. Patronage of the New Jerusalem Monastery provided the opportunity to directly imitate the Byzantine Empress’s most holy deeds. This proved especially valuable for female rulers of the eighteenth century and beyond. Nineteenth and early twentieth century displays of the Nikonian imagery continued to reinforce the Mariia Il’inichna’s place in inheritance of the Helenian legacy by stressing her dual significance as mother and patron.

The Eighteenth Century

The history of the Nikonian iconography took on new significance in the changing contexts of the eighteenth century. The eighteenth century was critical period for the Krestny and New Jerusalem Monasteries. While New Jerusalem flourished under Elizabeth and Catherine’s patronage, the Krestny Monastery suffered gravely. In 1762, its land holdings were secularized and it was demoted to “second class” status. Both the Golgotha and Kii systems, however, fared well. The Golgotha images continued to receive royal attention, the Kii system, gained wider exposure via the creation and dissemination of at least fifteen new copies of Nikon’s original version of the imagery.

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91 See Pasternak, 49; Kol’tsova, 24-26.
These works testify to the continued transformation of the Kii System of imagery and its relevance.

Like Saltanov's icon, these copies of the imagery combined the three parts of the Kii System prototype, the Kii Cross and its two icons, into a single image. However, their duplication of the original is more precise. Most noteworthy are the later images' depictions of Constantine and Helen holding scepters. This important symbol of imperial power was absent in Saltanov's work.

Comparative analysis of the later copies shows that they differ from each other in the form and artistic detail. The works vary in size from 125.5 x 83.5 cm to 41.1 x 32.2 cm. The artists who created them employed a variety of materials and techniques, including tempera on wood, tempera and oil on canvas and oil on canvas. Thus, most are best described as pictures, not icons. These images were executed in the same style, but differ greatly in detail, most notably in the decorative designs and colors of garments. 92

Iconographical analysis reveals three variations in content. In the first, the artist framed the original prototype at the Krestny Monastery with the marble kiot. The second included an additional text at the bottom of the image. The third type included neither kiot nor the additional text at the bottom of the image. All of the later images include additional texts (poetic verse to the Cross) above the main body of the Cross.

While it is possible to reconstruct the motivation of Nikon's creation of the Kii and Golgotha systems and Fedor Alekseevich's commission of the Saltanov icon and their display with some certainty, it is more difficult to determine intended purpose(s) and

92 I investigated eleven copies of the Kii Cross system. They include those held at the Historical, Architectural and Art Museum "New Jerusalem" (A 4208-IV); State Museum of the Moscow Kremlin (Inv. 1714); State Tretiakov Gallery (KP23119 and Inv. DR 102-A); State Russian Museum (ZhB 1953 and ZhB-821); State Historical Museum (17505 IV VIII 5300); Novgorod State Museum Preserve (KP 3769), Novodevichi Monastery (Inv. 1941).
presentation of the subsequent copies. Research of museum records proves that most of
the images were displayed/held at monasteries and provincial Churches. Exhibit
catalogues and other publications explain how a number of the copies were presented and
interpreted in the late nineteenth and twentieth century. However, no extant scholarship
discusses the images’ creation or display in the eighteenth century.

Two Russian scholars, O. Pasternak and T. M. Kol’tsova, offer possible
explanations regarding the creation of the eighteenth century copies of the Kii imagery.
Pasternak, who reads the imagery in the context of the Russo-Turkish War, argues that its
popularity was related to the idea of liberating Southern Slavs from the Turks. She
supports her claim by explaining that in this context, the texts referencing Constantine’s
victory “assumed new meaning.” Kol’tsova locates the images in the history of northern
Russian monasteries in general and the Krestny Monastery in specific. She argues that
Northern monasteries created repositories of “exchangeable images,” depicting the
monastery’s namesake. Monks used these to facilitate a foundation’s popularity and
increase its income. The images, either created my monks or ordered by the monastery,
were sold as gifts to guests and pilgrims. According to Kol’tsova, copies of the Cross
System were created for this purpose. More specifically, their production became
increasingly active in the second half of the eighteenth century “when the monastery lost
all its continental lands and thus the means of existence and desperately needed the flow

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93 See, for example, A. Bakhpomeev, Putevoditel' po Rostovskomu Muzeiu tserkovnykh’
drevnosti (Iaroslavl': Tipografiia gubernskago Pravlenia, 1886), 15; Novgorodskii muzei drevnostei,
Tserkveni otdel, Kratkii Katalog (Novgorod: Gubernskai Tipo., 1911), 6; and K. Zhiznevskii, Opisaniye
Tverskogo Muzeia (Tver, 1914), 57-60.
94 Pasternak, 57.
of pilgrims.” Thus, Kol’tsova concludes that the images served as an advertisement or “business card of sorts” for the Krestny Monastery.95

Kol’tsova’s explication of the circumstances surrounding the creation of new copies of the Kii Cross system points to the original imagery’s significance in wider popular culture. Patriarch Nikon established the Kii Cross as a site of pilgrimage in the decree of June 1656. “He who will come to this life-giving Cross with faith and will adore it, will not be denied the grace given by the power of the holy honorable and life-giving Cross, the grace equal to that given to the travelers to Holy Palestine....”96 Since that time the Patriarch’s statement concerning the Kii Cross’s power was confirmed. The Kii Cross performed miracles for many of those who adored it.97 Therefore, despite being deprived of its material well being as an economic center, the Monastery remained an important spiritual center thanks to the presence of the Kii Cross.98 In 1795, the monastery constructed a two story wooden hotel to house pilgrims.99

While I accept both Pasternak’s and Kol’tsova’s arguments concerning the significance of the Kii Cross system in the larger imperial and more specific local contexts of the eighteenth century, I believe that the imagery may have served an additional purpose. It is highly likely that the replication of the Kii system was used to combat the spread of Old Belief and/or counter Old Believer criticisms of Nikon. Nikon’s association of three-fingered sign of the cross with the seven-ended cross, which Old

95 Kol’tsova, 18-2. This may be compared to the literature and promotional materials used to advertise the New Jerusalem Monastery in the nineteenth century. Kol’tsova’s comparative analysis of the images’ artistic style traces existing copies of the imagery to specific “peasant masters” who lived on lands owned by the Kii Monastery.
96 Kratkoe izvestie o Krestnom onezhskom arkhangel’skoj eparkhii monastyrije, 3-4.
97 RGADA F. 1195 op.6 ed. khr. n. 58 “Istoricheskoe opisanie Onezhskogo Krestnogo vtoroklassnogo monastyr’ (1879). I. 5 (p.7), and Krestnyi Monasryr’ osnovannyi patriarkhom Nikonom’ (St. Petersburg: Tip. E. Evdokimova, 1894), 23. Both works reference work titled “Tale About the Miracles Performed by the True and Life Giving Cross of Christ in Krestnyi Monastery.” (no date)
98 Krestnyi Monasryr’ osnovannyi patriarkhom’ Nikonom’ , 20.
Believers recognized as canonical, provides strong iconographic material to counter Old Believer claims that the three-fingered sign of the Cross was heretical and that the Patriarch was an “enemy of Christ’s Cross.” This point is discussed in detail in the fourth chapter of the dissertation.

The Long Nineteenth Century

The history of the original Kii and Golgotha images varied dramatically in the nineteenth century. Remaining in their original contexts, their fate paralleled that of their respective Monasteries. While the Krestny Monastery remained physically isolated, a new railroad line linked New Jerusalem to Moscow and elsewhere by 1852. As the Krestny Monastery continued to decline, the New Jerusalem Monastery became an increasingly significant and visible center of Russian religion, history, and art as well as a magnet for pilgrimage and tourism. Compared to the large body of literature devoted to New Jerusalem, the Krestny Monastery received very little attention in print. The same is true in terms of imperial visits and patronage.¹⁰⁰

Documents from the Krestny Monastery’s archive describe two back-to-back calamities, which befell the monastery and the Kii Cross in the mid 1850s. In 1854, a British naval force entered the White Sea and attacked the monastery. The following year, a fire ravaged all of the monastery’s wooden structures, including the hotel for pilgrims, and the wooden components of its stone buildings. The Kii Cross was damaged on both occasions. It lost holy relics during evacuation prior to the English attack. It was partially

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⁹⁹ Ibid, 19.
burnt during the fire. Although the Kii Cross was repaired, the monastery was not. It lay in ruin nearly fifteen years due to lack of funding. These disasters and ensuing stagnation explain why the Krestny Monastery and the original Kii Cross System prototype fell nearly into oblivion, while attention to its sisters, the New Jerusalem and the Golgotha images achieved new heights of popularity.

The significance and visibility of the Golgotha images increased together with the renewed interest in the New Jerusalem Monastery. New Jerusalem attracted pilgrims and visitors since its inception. However, in the nineteenth century it was actively promoted in published “Descriptions” and “Guides” as a primary site of Russian religious and cultural heritage. This phenomenon was inherently connected to contemporary Russian fascination with, and pilgrimages to, the “Holy Places” of Holy Land, especially the sites of Christ’s Passions and His grave.

A. N. Murav’ev and Archimandrite Leonid Kavelin, New Jerusalem’s most important non-royal proponents, gained new appreciation for Nikon’s creation during trips to Palestine. Their experiences ultimately resulted in publications which forged and popularized connections between the “Old” and “New” Jerusalems. Murav’ev, author of the immensely popular and influential Puteshestvie po sv. mestam’ russkim (1836), expressed his sentiments in this way. “New Jerusalem, which I have seen before I was in the East, took on new meaning for me. In the middle of the Resurrection Church, I was glad to tell the Palestinian brothers that we in Russia have a replica of their great

101 RGADA F. 1195 op.6 ed. khr. n. 58 “Istoricheskoe opisanie Onezhskogo Krestnogo vtoroklassnogo Monastyria” (1879), I. 9-90b, I. 11 ob. See also Krestnyi Monasryr’ osnovannyi patriarkhom Nikonom’, (St. Petersburg: Tip. E. Evdokimova, 1894), 16, 20.

102 Krestnyi Monasryr’ osnovannyi patriarkhom’ Nikonom’, 20.

103 For the history of Russians in Palestine in the nineteenth century, see N. N. Lisovoi “Istoriia i sovremennoe sostojanie Russkoi Dukhovnoi Missii v Ierusalime” in Al’manakh K Svetu, vypusk 19.
sanctuary. And as I was comparing in my thoughts the building of New Jerusalem to the Old, I desired to look at the New Jerusalem again upon my return and, while the memories and impression of the Old were still fresh, I wanted to soothe my heart with the sacred similarity between the two.”  

Kavelin, the most important and prolific historian of New Jerusalem, was likewise inspired by his time the East (1867-8). He recorded his impressions in a detailed manuscript description of the Holy Land and Russians, including members of the imperial family Constantine and Nikolai, in Palestine. This manuscript clearly served as the paradigm for his later historical descriptions of the monastery and the basis of his likening of the “Old” and “New” Jerusalems. By comparing New Jerusalem to the Old, Murav’ev, Kavelin and the numerous authors who followed their example, supplied the Golgotha images’ with added significance and meaning, a message which reached all levels of Russian society.

The Golgotha images are mentioned in more than forty descriptions of and guides to the New Jerusalem Monastery published in the nineteenth century. These publications are essential to understanding the larger political, social, and religious contexts in which the images were presented and received. They may be divided into several rubrics. The literature includes “historical” descriptions, descriptions of “Holy Places” for religious stranniki [wanderers] and bogomol’tsy [pilgrims], guides for more cosmopolitan

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Rossiia na sviatoi zemle (Moscow: 2002), 118-137. The Holy Land was also an important subject of Russian art. See Sviataia zemlia v russkom iskusstve, Katalog L. I. Iovleva ed. (Moscow: GTG, 2001).


105 RGB OR f. 148 kart. 10ed. khr. 56. See l. 102 ff. for Russians in Palestine. See 107-148, for descriptions of Holy sites and churches. The latter clearly reinforces the Romanovs’ connection with the Holy places. Kavalen’s works on New Jerusalem include Kratkoe istoricheskoe skazanie o nachale i ustoenii voskresenskogo Novi Jerusalem imen. Monastyria. (Moscow: Tipogr. “Sovrem. Izv.”, 1872) and Mesiatseslov Voskresenskogo, Novyi Jerusalem Imenuemago, Monastyria dla prosetitelei i bogomol’tsey sei obiteli. (Moscow: Tipografiia V. Got’e, 1870). Both these works were published in multiple editions. For more about Kavelin, see G. M Zelenskaia “Arkhimandrit Leonid (Kavelin)” Nikonovskie cheteniia v

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puteshestvenniki [travelers] and educational literature for the narod [folk/popular masses]. Examples representative of the literature show that while it was aimed at different audiences, the message concerning the Golgotha images was largely the same.

*Krakwesie istoricheske  stzavropigal'noy voskenskoj Novyi Jerussalimi Imen. Monastyria* (1852) is a prime example of the “historical” descriptions written in the mid-nineteenth century. In the course of describing Golgotha Church and comparing it with the “true” Golgotha, the author commented on the Golgotha images. After detailing the icons and naming the figures portrayed, he explained: “These two images of royal creators of Ancient and New Jerusalems are presented in a very decent shape; Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, with spouse and son and Patriarch Nikon kneel before the crucified Savior and pray for Him to send the blessing and protection of the Holy Spirit for his new residence [New Jerusalem].”

The *Putevoditel’* (Guide du Voyageur) po zheleznoi doroze ot Moskvy do st. Krukovskoi ... i po Novomu Jerusalimu (1853), which promoted the New Jerusalem Monastery together with the possibilities afforded by the recently constructed railroad line linking Voskresenskii with Moscow, is a example of a tourist guide. Keeping in line with the attitude that “getting there is half the fun,” its treatment of the images is noticeably casual. Its rather brief description of the Golgotha Church concludes with the following statement. “One cannot pass two paintings located on two pillars across from the life-

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giving Cross ... they are obviously based on the idea of connecting the creators of the ancient and New Jerusalem in one image.”

A later publication issued by the Ministry of Folk Enlightenment, Novyi Ierusalim. (Voskresenskii monastyr’) (1887), illustrates the message preached to “common people.” It extols the virtues, and even necessity, of pilgrimages to the New Jerusalem by noting that while Holy Land is inaccessible for the folk, the monastery was a viable alternative. “Its glory is wide spread in Russia and everyone who undertakes a pilgrimage to the holy places of Moscow will not pass up New Jerusalem Monastery.”

The author takes the reader “together with pilgrims” through the holy places of the monastery while “describing its attractions by noting similarities and dissimilarities between the Old and New Jerusalems.” The Golgotha images are discussed in the course of this comparison. “In the Golgotha Church we must note another rarity which is not left unnoticed by the pilgrims; in the middle pillar which supports the church roof there is a very ancient image dull from time ... Tsar Constantine and his mother, holy Helen, founders of the Jerusalem Church and also images of the builders of New Jerusalem -Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and his wife Mariia Il’inichna in royal dress.”

All of these examples focus on the same aspects of the Golgotha system’s meanings. Framed by comparisons of the New and Old Jerusalems, they connect Aleksei Mikhailovich and his family, as founders of the New Jerusalem, with Constantine and Helen, the founders of the ancient Jerusalem. These presentations reaffirm the Nikonian

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107 Putevoditel' (Guide du Voyageur) po zheleznoi doroge ot Moskvy do st. Krukovskoi ... i po Novomu Ierusalimu. (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1853), 116-117. The author of the guide was apparently aware that readers might not be “unsatisfied” with such descriptions. He repeatedly suggested that those who want a more in depth treatment buy the afore noted Kratkoe istoricheskoe opisanie, but warned that “it may be too detailed for puteschestvikii.” 46-47, 132.
imagery’s power of visual association and its central place in the concept of Russia as the New Jerusalem.

The visibility and significance of late seventeenth and eighteenth century copies of the Kii Cross system increased with their public display in local/regional museums. Such exhibits were dedicated to opening otherwise hidden examples of church art and promoting their aesthetics and historical import. The recognition of the Kii System of imagery’s art historical value highlights further its resonance in Russian history and culture, beyond the confines of the church.

The exhibition of “The Adoration of the Cross” at the Rostov Museum of Ancient Church Objects is the prime example of the Kii Cross system’s display in a Russian local museum. Established in 1883, the museum’s goals included the preservation and study of ancient church objects possessing historical and scientific value. These objects, according to the museum founders, would be better preserved than if left in private hands. Their exhibit would “educate and familiarize” the public in art and history. The museum drew special attention to artifacts, such as the “The Adoration of the Cross,” which possessed regional historical as well as religious significance. The image’s display in the “Gallery of Portraits of the Most Magnificent Church Figures,” emphasized Nikon’s creation of the original Kii Cross and the Krestny Monastery. “There

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110 The museum also featured a “Portrait of Patriarch Nikon” (No. 624). The printed guide’s explanation of this image included a short biography of the Patriarch and commented on his connections with Rostov region. Bychkov, 19-20
111 Bakhpomeev, 3-4.
hangs an image, paint on canvas, of the Cross constructed in 1656 by Patriarch Nikon for
the founding of Krestnyi Monastery during the reign of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich.....
and Tsaritsa Mariia Il’inichna (born Miloslavskaja).”112 The Nikonian imagery’s lasting
relevance is confirmed by the fact that it became a staple of the museum and continued to
be displayed into the early twentieth century.113

The Romanov Tercentenary

Art and material culture played an extremely important role in the celebration of
the Romanov dynasty’s tercentenary in 1913. Commemorative publications and exhibits
devoted to the observance featured at least three late seventeenth and eighteenth century
copies of the Nikonian imagery. The recurrent inclusion of these images, and their
repeated misrepresentation, is a strong testament to continued significance of the Kii
Cross system’s invaluable iconographic support of the imperial family.

The Nikonian imagery first appeared in Tri Veka, Rossiia ot smuty do nashego
vremen (1912). This nine-volume work, which featured articles by leading historians and
lavish lithographic and photographic reproductions of noteworthy examples of art and
material culture intended to glorify the imperial family, was the most important of the
commemorative publications. Given the prestigious nature of this publication, its
treatment of the Kii system image is peculiar. The photograph of the image, included as
illustration no. 56 of the second volume, is completely out of sync with the text. More
importantly, the caption to the illustration explains that the figures featured include “Tsar

112 Ibid, 15.
113 I. N. Bogoslovskii, Kratkii putevoditel po rostovskomu muzeu tserkovnykh drevnostei.
(Rostov: Rostovskii Muzei tserkovnykh drevnostei, 1911). This image is not mentioned by any of the recent
scholarship. It is displayed in the museum today. See T. V. Kolbasova, Russian Painting: 18th-Early 20th
Century from the Collection of the Rostov Museum-Reserve. Catalogue (Moscow: Souzreklamkultura,
1991), 12.
The idea that “Nataliia Kirillovna,” Aleksei Mikhailovich’s second wife and the mother of Peter I, not Mariia Il’inichna, is depicted in the image is incorrect. The texts on the reproduced image clearly state, albeit in Slavonic, that the female image in question is “Mariia Il’inichna.” Subsequent references to Kii System images displayed in the course of the tercentenary celebration show that this was not an isolated incident. 114

The “Church-Archeological Exhibit in Commemoration of the 300 Year Anniversary of the Romanov House” featured two additional copies of Nikon’s Kii Cross System. This exposition employed artistic and material cultural objects in a concerted effort to highlight the dynasty’s rich heritage in terms of material wealth and spiritual and temporal legitimacy in the past, present and future. Most of these were opened to the public for the first time. This exhibition, more than any other, stressed the significance of the Kii Cross System as iconographical support of the Romanov Dynasty.

Members of the “Moscow Church Jubilee Commission” outlined the exhibit’s purpose and the criteria for inclusion in its display. Opening on March 14, 1913 in the Chudov Monastery (Moscow Kremlin), the exhibit focused on art and material culture which attested to the Romanov Dynasty’s support of the church and her hierarchy—especially Patriarch Nikon. According to the official catalogues of the exhibition, “These monuments are first and foremost a testament of the deep of piety our tsars and their great care of our mother church. They are representations of the living union of the church and the state or, in other words, of the throne and the altar. Finally, they represent the rich material of the historical and archeological characteristics of the first century of the

114 Tri Veka: Rossia ot smuty do nashego vremeni Vol. II (Moscow: Tip. I. D. Sytina, 1912). The image is located on page 203 (No. 56). A brief description is found on page 271.
Romanov period of History.” Nikon’s Kii Cross System, more than any other single artifact, fit these parameters in terms of form and content.115

The images were placed strategically in the “Chamber Dedicated to Different Rulers.” This section of the exhibit displayed a series of paintings portraying three Russian Patriarchs, Germogen, Filaret and Nikon and Romanovs rulers including Aleksei Mikhailovich, Fedor Alekseevich, Sofiia Alekseevna, Peter Alekseevich, and Tsaritsa Evdokiia Lopukhina (Peter I’s wife). Located last in the series (No. 16 and 17), the Nikonian images provided a fitting conclusion to the display by uniting the otherwise separate depictions of temporal and ecclesiastical leaders into single iconographic whole together with Constantine and Helen. This skillful exhibition highlights yet again the Kii system’s power of associating the Romanov rulers, both male and female, as patrons of the church.116

The descriptions of the two images presented in the basic and more lavish illustrated catalogues devoted to the exhibition are brief, but accurate. They correctly note the figures depicted and explain where the images were previously displayed. The first was from Moscow’s Novodevichii Monastery. The second was loaned by the

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115 Ukazatel’ tserkovno-istoricheskoi vystavki v oznamenovanie 300 letia tsarstvovaniia doma Romanovykh (Moscow: T-vo Skoropechatni A. A. Levinson, 1913), 5-6. These include V. Sokolov, Vystavka tserkovno-istoricheskikh pamiatnikov v oznamenovanie 300-letiia tsarstvovaniia doma Romanovykh, Otchet; (Sergiev Posad: Tipografiia Sv.-Tr. Sergeievoi Lavry, 1913), and V. K. Trutovskii, “Romanovskaia tserkovno-arkheologicheskaia vystavka.” Starye gody (June 1913): 36-43. This article was later published as V. K. Trutovskii, Romanovskaia tserkovno-arkheologicheskaia vystavka v Moskove (St. Petersburg, 1913). Trutovskii’s concluding statements highlight the importance of the public display of art held by the church. “I would have been very sad if this accidental collection of the most valuable monuments of culture would become separated and hidden in the inaccessible holdings of the cathedrals, monasteries, churches and so on and would have escaped the inquisitive and awe-inspired glances of the lovers and experts of our native art for another three hundred years.” Trutovskii, 37.

116 Ukazatel’ tserkovno-istoricheskoi vystavki v oznamenovanie 300 letia tsarstvovaniia doma Romanovykh, 35-7. A. Rechmenskii, Sobranie pamiatnikov tserkovnoi stariny v oznamenovanie trekhsetletia tsarstvovaniia doma Romanovykh. (Moscow: Tserkovnaia iubileinaia komissiia, 1913), 66-67. Patriarch Germogen was included because the Tercentenary coincided with the 400th anniversary of his birth. Patriarch Filaret was Aleksei Mikhailovich’s grandfather (father of Mikhail Feodorivich, the first Romanov ruler).
Zachat’evskii Monastery. More attention was given to the second image. Its description included a transcription of the text included at the bottom of the image. The illustrated catalogue included a photograph of the same image. These presentations compliment the images’ physical placement in relation to the other images at the exhibit by clarifying the connections between the Romanov rulers and the church. Nikon serves as the master link in both examples.\(^{117}\)

Publications by V. K. Trutovskii, member of the Jubilee Commission, provided further discussion of the exhibit and the Kii System images. His largely descriptive work commented on, and included photographic reproductions of select examples of the art and artifacts exhibited. However, this author’s efforts are most noteworthy not for their inclusion, but rather for their misrepresentation of the Nikonian imagery. Trutovskii’s descriptions, like the earlier caption published in Tri Veka, explain that both the Kii system images displayed at the “Romanov Church-Archeological Exhibit” feature depictions of “Nataliia Kirillovna” (not Mariia Il’inichna). It is strange that Trutovskii, a member of the Jubilee Commission, committed the same obvious mistake as the editor of Tri Veka when both the exhibit catalogues and the Russian and French captions for the illustration published in his own work denote the female figure in question as “Mariia Il’inichna.”

There are two plausible explanations for the repeated cases of mistaken identity. Both attest to the continued relevance of the Nikonian iconography. The first is that two authors describing three different images (the texts of each of clearly citing the image depicted as “Mariia Il’inichna”), all presented in the course of Romanov Tercentenary

\(^{117}\) Ukazatel’ tserkovno-istoricheskoi vystavki v oznamenovanie 300 letiia tsarstvovaniia doma Romanovykh, 36-7; Rechmenskii, 67.
celebration, made simple mistakes. They assumed that since Nataliia’s offspring inherited
the imperial title, she was depicted. Given the circumstances, the second is explanation is
more plausible and convincing. It suggests that early twentieth-century scholars used the
Nikonian imagery to visually legitimize the Petrine line by replacing Mariia Il'inichna,
whose line ended with Fedor Alekseevich, with Peter’s mother Nataliia Kirillovna.
Regardless of whether they were simple mistakes, or intentional manipulations, these
instances show that early twentieth-century scholars, as well as their unsuspecting
readers, recognized the tsaritsa’s place in the Nikonian imagery in terms of dynastic
legitimacy.

The multiple displays of the Kii System during the Tercentenary celebration
revealed the full significance of its form and content. The images were recognized as
unique and valuable forms of Russian art/aesthetics. They were presented as historical
documents which attested to the Dynasty’s heritage, including the female Romanovs’
place in its transfer. The imagery was presented as the primary illustration of the union of
“throne and altar” and Romanovs’ role as church patron. Thus, Nikonian imagery,
more than any other single work of art, supported the temporal and religious legitimacy of
the Dynasty. This was of course Nikon’s original intention when he first conceived the
imagery.

The inclusion of Kii System in the Tercentenary commemoration was important to
the formulation of Nikon’s larger image in Russian society. This context stressed other,

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118 Trutovskii highlighted the artistic merits of religious art and importance of its public display.
According to him, it was “immensely significant that all those objects with few exceptions ...belong to the
religious area of the arts which like no other preserved purely Russian art, taste, inspiration, and thought....
It would have been very sad if this accidental collection of the most valuable monuments of culture would
become separated and hidden in the inaccessible holdings of the cathedrals, monasteries, churches and so on
and would have escaped the inquisitive and awe-inspired glances of the lovers and experts of our native art
for another three hundred years.”

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more controversial, aspects of the imagery’s content not readily evident in its presentation
in the Krestny and New Jerusalem Monasteries or regional Museums. While Nikon’s
status as the monastery founder was universally recognized, his relationship with the
dynasty continued to be a hotly debated topic in Russian historiography. By employing
the Kii Cross System to portray the “union of the church and state” the organizers
emphasized the Patriarch’s image as the Dynasty’s promoter and ally, not its competitor.

These findings highlight the significant differences between the Patriarch’s
representation in the dominant historiography and the purposeful display and promotion
of Nikon’s Kii system of imagery during a crucial point in the history of the Russian
autocracy. Remarkably, less than a year N. F. Kapterev after published his largely critical
capstone work on the Patriarch, which pronounced the Nikon a major opponent of and
threat to the autocracy, Kii system images and other Nikon-related and artifacts served as
focal points at “Church-Archeological Exhibit in Commemoration of the 300 Year
Anniversary of the Romanov House.”¹¹⁹ Even more telling is that fact that while 45,720
people from levels of Russian society, including Tsar Nicholas II and his family, “the
educated public,” ordinary people, and religious pilgrims, saw the highly positive images
of Nikon presented at the exhibit, only selected few would have read Kapterev’s
scholarship.¹²⁰

The Soviet Period

The significance and power of the Kii Cross System’s unique religious and
political meanings were not lost during the Soviet period. Several images were readily

¹¹⁹ V. Sokolov ed., Vystavka tserkovno-istoricheskikh pamiatnikov v oznomenovanie 300-letiia
incorporated into reorganized Soviet museums. There, curators and propagandists repeatedly attempted to redirect the imagery’s purpose and meanings by changing its historical and/or physical contexts.

The presentation of the Nikonian iconography assumed its most radical proportions as early Marxist-Leninist ideological contexts took on virulently atheistic character during and after the “Cultural Revolution” of the 1930s. The original Kii and Golgotha prototypes and several later copies of the Kii System were employed as “anti-religious propaganda.” This involved yet another change in imageries’ physical contexts and further reinterpretation of their content. Ideologues attempted to strip aura of holiness from religious art and artifacts by displaying them in purposely de-sanctified religious spaces. The most dramatic examples of their efforts include the transformation of leading Russian spiritual centers, including the former Resurrection Cathedral (New Jerusalem), St. Isaac’s Cathedral (St. Petersburg), and Solovetskii Monastery into centers of atheism and anti-religious propaganda. There, the Kii System images continued to be regarded as artistic documents of history. However, the new presentation of this history was diametrically opposed to the old one. The imagery’s depiction of the “union of the throne and altar” served as confirmation that reactionary forces of the Church and State acted together to repress the people. Its depiction of the richly ornamented Kii Cross and Patriarch’s and the Romanovs’ lavish dress affirmed the combined church-state exploitation of the masses. In short, the Nikonian imagery proved just as useful a means to condemn the Orthodox Church and the Romanov dynasty, as to uphold them.\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid, 20. See the detailed account of Nicholas I’s visit to the exhibit in see, 13-18. On the others who attended see 18-20.
Conclusions

The iconography of the Kii Cross system joins what otherwise appear as unrelated, even conflicting set of ideas, into a complex discourse of power and legitimacy. The ideas expressed in the Kii system shed new insights on Nikon’s concept of the Church-State relationship. Contrary to the widely accepted notion that the Patriarch attempted to usurp power at the Tsar’s expense, the Nikonian iconography demonstrates that the Patriarch’s attempt to secure ecclesiastical prerogatives depended largely on his and the secular rulers’ joint inheritance of the Constantinian legacy. Nikon’s self-depiction in the imagery makes it clear that he did not perceive or present himself as superior to the Tsar.

Nikon reinforced the significance of universal Christian and Russian national myths popular in the seventeenth century by presenting their immediate relevance. Nikon drew precise parallels between the legendary deeds attributed to Constantine and his mother Helen and the actions of the contemporary Romanovs. In doing so, Nikon expanded the traditional interpretations of the Russian inheritance of the Constantinian legacy by adding new aspects regarding the secular rulers’ obligations to the Church. While Nikon assigned gender specific roles to males (military) and females (motherhood) depicted in the iconography, he also gave them a common obligation to patronize the monasteries under his control. Although the basis of church independence evaporated with the abolition of the Moscow Patriarchate and the subjection of the church to the state under Peter I, Nikon’s iconographic association of Aleksei Mikhailovich, Mariia

Il’inichna, and their heirs with Constantinian legacy and the concept of New Jerusalem continued to be useful for the Romanov dynasty until its fall.

The Kii Cross System is a unique iconographical statement of *Konsfessionsbildung* [confessionalism]. The only image of its kind, it illustrated, propagandized, and supported the most controversial reforms of Church rituals and commemorations by connecting them with the authority of the True Cross. While Nikon stood against the secularization of church lands, he actively promoted confessional practices, namely, the imposition of the new three-finger sign of the cross and attempts to limit the popular celebration of specific Russian saints, which strengthened both his and the Tsar’s positions of power.

Reading Nikon’s reform activities in the context of the Kii Cross system shows that the Patriarch’s revision of church texts included the adoption and codification of political and religious doctrines essential to his and the Tsar’s inheritance of the Constantinian legacy. The Patriarch’s reform of specific church rituals prescribed commemorations that reinforced the Muscovite Tsar’s and the Patriarch’s association with the Constantinian heritage and presented Russia as a “holy land.”

These findings suggest three conclusions. First, Nikon conceived complex religious and political doctrines that included the reform of the Russian Church and the preservation of ecclesiastical prerogatives against the burgeoning encroachments of the state, while simultaneously promoting the dynastic myth and hence the religious and temporal legitimacy of the Romanov dynasty. In particular, Nikon aimed to free the church from secular control while staunchly supporting the Romanov dynasty and enlisting its male and female members as the primary patrons of his monastic foundations. Second, Nikon was a significant and influential patron of the arts, who...
created comprehensive and lasting iconographic expressions of his principal beliefs and initiatives. Third, Nikon’s iconographic system outlived him, providing the basis for both Romanov legitimacy and, during the Soviet period, opposition to the autocracy.
CHAPTER III

THE PARSUNA “PATRIARCH NIKON WITH CLERGY”

History is mute painting and painting is history speaking, we will sketch and prefix here a portrait of the ex-patriarch Nikon, and exhibit the man himself, so far as a portrait can represent him, to posterity

Paisius Ligarides, History of the Condemnation of the Patriarch Nikon (1668)

Following a service in the Dormition Cathedral on July 10, 1658, Patriarch Nikon left Moscow in protest of what he presented as mistreatment by Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich. Recounting the event, the Patriarch explained:

seeing the Tsar’s wrath, that same day after the celebration... we declared the Tsar’s wrath and that the Tsar’s wrath against me without just cause and on account that he abstains from coming to the service. [After] letting him know that on account of his anger I was going out of the city, according to that which is written, ‘give place to wrath;’ and again, ‘When they drive you out from this city, flee into another;’ and, ‘Wheresoever they will not receive you, nor obey your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.... I put on the humblest and worst episcopal dress [that I could find] and went out from the cathedral.

Later the same day Nikon departed the capital city for the New Jerusalem Monastery.

These actions spawned the oft-repeated charge that Nikon abandoned the patriarchal throne and led to his trial, official removal from patriarchal throne and exile in 1666.1

Nikon actively defended his behavior and status as Patriarch, and combated host of related charges in the nearly eight years he lived at New Jerusalem (1658-1666).

During that time, Nikon engaged in an evolving discourse in regards to power and

1 Nikon’s letter to Patriarch Dionysius of Constantinople in January of 1665 in V. I. Lamanskii in Sobranie gosudarstvennykh gramot i dogorov vol. III (St. Petersburg, 1861), no. 147, 471-2. W. Palmer translated the letter in The Patriarch and the Tsar vol. III (London: Trubner and Co., 1875), 381-400. For commentary on the larger significance of this missive see E. Matthes-Hohlfeld, Der Brief Des Moskauer Patriarchen Nikon an Dionysios Patriarch Konstantinopel (1665) (Amsterdam: Verlag Aldolf M. Hakkert,
legitimacy, by which he defined his prerogatives as Patriarch and spelled out the limits of Tsar’s actions in the ecclesiastical realm. Nikon supported his position by promoting a complex and highly symbolic image of himself which stressed signifiers of his spiritual authority, both tangible -- material cultural symbols and physical places -- and intangible, namely visions.

Continuing the practice first exhibited in the creation of the Kii Cross system of imagery, Nikon supported his program of action iconographically by commissioning the parsuna or portrait “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” [Appendix C, Figure 3]. This large, realistic portrait depicts Nikon and eight clergymen during a liturgical service in the Resurrection Cathedral at the New Jerusalem Monastery. It is the only artistic image contemporary to Nikon that depicts him in “full dignity,” i.e. in full patriarchal regalia and associated symbols. Acknowledged as an important expression of patriarchal power by Nikon’s opponents in the seventeenth century, the painting gained recognition as the canonical image of the Patriarch in ensuing centuries. It became largely synonymous with his entire patriarchate. Acclaimed for its artistic, historical and spiritual value, the parsuna emerged as the most widely copied artistic image of Patriarch Nikon serving as the basis for original new portraits and historical Realist paintings, not to mention the plethora of mass-produced images published during the nineteenth century.

Despite its continued resonance in Russian culture in the three and a half centuries of its existence, the literature on the parsuna “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” is limited in scope. Since the late nineteenth century, scholars investigating the image have viewed it

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2 The image is currently held at Voskresenskii Novoierusalimskii Monastyr’ i Muzei “Novy Jerusalem” as MOKM KP 9805 Zh-98 “Patriarkh Nikon s klirom” (Oil on canvas, 234x180 cm). This
exclusively in context of the seventeenth century. Both art historians and cultural historians have traditionally attempted to determine the work’s date and author and/or to describe its aesthetics and content. While providing a wealth of important information, especially data on painters working in Moscow during the mid- to late-seventeenth century, scholars have failed, with the exception of Galina Zelenskaia, to give serious consideration to the parsuna’s intended purpose(s) or meaning(s).3 Moreover, emphasis on the original image’s status as a rare example of fine art and/or as a source of seventeenth-century history has led to scholarly neglect of mass-produced copies - including engravings, lithographs and photographs - and to a general disregard of the parsuna’s function over time in Russian culture.

This chapter provides a more complete analysis of the parsuna by tracking its significance in Russian history and culture from the mid-seventeenth through the early twentieth centuries. Following the same approach taken in the previous chapter, I analyze “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” as well as the later versions of the imagery by locating them in the historical, ideological and cultural contexts of their creation, display and reception. I explore the original imagery by combining iconographical and semiological analysis of the art with the writings of Nikon himself. My goals are twofold. First, I interpret the parsuna’s style and content, uncovering possible meaning and deconstructing the image in order to show “how it works.”4 Second, I illuminate the continuing, variegated, and expanding significance of Nikon’s image in Russian culture by drawing attention to the relationship between the parsuna and its viewers.

3 G. Zelenskaia, Sviatyni Novogo Ierusalima (Moscow: Severnyi palomnik, 2003), 370-376.
Attention to the large number and variety of mass-produced images based on “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” highlights a crucial but completely neglected aspect of the relationship(s) between Nikon’s image and the individual. R. W. Scribner’s seminal comments on the relationship between the viewer and copies of religious imagery produced in Reformation Germany provide a useful guide for the recovery of this nexus. Countering the idea that religious images reproduced on paper were less effective than original images, social historian of the Reformation Germany Scribner explained that small inexpensive reproductions actually increased the intimacy between viewer and image in two ways. First, the possibility of holding a small paper image in one’s hands greatly reduced the physical distance between viewer and image. Moreover, this more intimate relationship affected how the viewers saw an image. Second, the association of a verbal text with a printed image “changed the two-dimensional relationship image-viewer into a three dimensional relationship: image-viewer-text.” The juxtaposition of artistic image and printed text enabled the viewer to move back and forth between the two. In these instances, written texts could explain the image, provide additional information not included in it, or clarify the significance of the image on different levels.⁵

Advancing this concept further, I will show that the transformation of the parsuna “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” did not end with professional engravers, lithographers or photographers and that the evolving nature of the image-viewer relationship did not halt with an image’s publication. Drawing on original research conducted in Russian archives and the graphic art departments of national museums and libraries, I provide evidence of

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how and for what purposes individuals continued to respond on their own term to printed images of the Patriarch.

This investigation of the parsuna has several sub-sections. Following a comprehensive review of the historical and art historical literature, documentary evidence from the seventeenth century is introduced, which confirming the image’s origins in the early 1660s. Next, I contextualize the Patriarch’s self-prescribed depiction in art analyzing his written statements from the same period. Then, I describe, interpret and deconstruct the original image. The display and reception of the original parsuna and of the many copies in the changing contexts of the long nineteenth century are the subject of chapter’s second half. Key factors here are Russian society’s evolving fascination with antiquities [drevnosti], the concomitant rise of realist historical art and the Nikonian literature, both scholarly and popular. The parsuna’s continued exhibition, preservation, replication and distribution brought its messages to audiences far beyond the walls of the New Jerusalem Monastery and disseminating it to an ever-expanding portion of Russian society. Finally, I discuss the function and impact of mass-produced copies on the individual level. As a whole, the chapter reveals the significance of “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” by stressing the active role it played in Russian culture. The parsuna both reflects the conditions of its creation and engenders ongoing political, social, religious and cultural meaning. While the image was originally intended to serve Nikon’s discrete purposes, it continued to evoke a diversity of responses, at both elite and popular levels as contexts shifted over time.
The Parsuna’s Place in the Seventeenth-Century Russian Artistic Culture

Nikon’s rise to and fall from the heights of clerical power coincided with what is widely accepted as a major transitional or even revolutionary phase in Russian painting and in the overall conception of art. The second half of the seventeenth century was marked by increasing “Western” influence in traditional icon painting and the spread of new artistic styles and forms, especially portraiture. Nikon vigorously supported what Russian cultural historian James Cracraft characterized as “an unprecedented effort... to raise artistic standards.” While staunchly opposed to the Western impact on icon painting, publicly condemning and destroying what he deemed “frankish” icons, the Patriarch simultaneously embraced and promoted the Western-style portraits known in Russian as “parsuny” (“parsuna” in the singular). According to Paisius Ligarides, the Patriarch’s most vocal opponent, “Nikon delighted to be painted and decked out.” Thus, Nikon’s practice exemplifies the “discrete distinction ... being drawn at the pinnacle of the Muscovite establishment between permissible standards of representation in holy pictures and the standards of what we would call secular art.”

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10 Ibid, 21.

11 Cracraft, 76.
Known and practiced in Russia since the fifteenth century, portrait painting exploded in popularity in the mid-seventeenth century as the Muscovite elite’s demand for *parsuny* approached “the dimensions of a mania.” This “dramatic” move towards a new style, tastes, and demands is widely attributed to increased cultural contact with Poland, the Ukraine and Western Europe in general, and the importation of art from Poland, Italy, England, Denmark and Germany and increased presence and activity of foreign artists in Moscow in specific. Foreign artists’ involvement with the Armory Chamber, “the first Russian academy of fine art and combination of ministry of fine arts,” was decisive in this process.

Three European “masters of life painting” who worked at the Armory Chamber were connected to Patriarch Nikon. The German Hans Dieterson, “first official professor of painting in Moscow,” entered the Tsar’s service at the Armory in 1643. His duties included painting according to the Tsar’s orders and teaching Russians the art of painting. By 1650, he had taught two of his Russian students, Isaak Abramov and Flor Stepanov, to do “every painterly thing”. Nineteenth century scholars attributed one *parsuna* of Patriarch Nikon, dated to the 1650s to the artist. Dieterson died in 1655.

Stanislav Loputskii, a Polish noble born in Smolensk, replaced Dieterson as court painter on March 1, 1656. Loputskii painted at least two *parsuny* of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, the first in 1657, and the second from nature in 1661. Though skilled as a mapmaker and decorative artist, Loputskii was not a real master of painting. His students,

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12 Ibid, 115.
14 Grabar, 412-422; Romanov, 204-205; Cracraft, 115-116; Leonid (Kavelin), *Kratkoe istoricheskoe skazanie o nachale i ustroenii Voskresenskogo, Novyi Jerusalim imenuemogo, monastyria*
Ivan Bezmin and Dorofei Ermolan, complained that while he instructed them in the decorative arts, he did not teach them how to paint.\textsuperscript{15}

In early 1667, Daniel Wuchters, a Dutchman, replaced Loputskii and took on his students. He came to Russia via Denmark where he had served the royal Danish court for ten years. Arriving in Moscow in the 1640s in the service of the royal Danish ambassador, Wuchters lived with relatives and worked privately as a painter. The claim that he could paint “life-sized parsunya and biblical histories” better than either Dieterson or Loputskii won him the position of court painter in 1667. However, Wuchters served in that capacity only one year (1667). Little is known about Wuchters after his departure from the Armory Chamber.\textsuperscript{16}

Nikon established a reputation for commissioning portraits of himself during his tenure in Moscow. Paul of Aleppo explained that during the refurbishment of the patriarchal place, “he painted portraits of the six patriarchs who have been from the time of the patriarchate was erected... and his own portrait after them.”\textsuperscript{17} Commenting further on the import of Nikon’s commissions Ligarides explained:

Before I had ever seen the famous Nikon, I was extremely curious to set my own eyes upon his form, and so sought anxiously for an opportunity to get a sight of him, even if it were in an imperfect and misleading portrait. And after a long time I gained my wish: for a certain excellent painter, a German, named John, with whom I was familiar, knowing the greatness of my curiosity, came one day, and brought me a large portrait of Nikon which when I beheld, and looked steadily at it, I was dumbstruck.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid; Romanov, 205-206; Cracraft, 116-117.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid; Romanov, 205-206; Cracraft, 117; See also A. Miller, “Daniel Wuchters,” Oud Holland 57 (1940), 40-48.
\textsuperscript{17} Quoted and translated in Palmer, vol. II, 268.
\textsuperscript{18} Quoted and translated in Palmer, vol. III, 22.
Debates About the Parsuna’s Provenance

Since the nineteenth century, art historians and others have attempted to determine the parsuna’s painter and its date. The commentaries in the highly influential Antiquities of the Russian State contended that a contemporary European artist painted it “from life.” 19 The nineteenth-century historian L. Kavelin believed Stanislav Loputskii or an unknown monastery artist working at the New Jerusalem Monastery painted it between 1657 and 1666. 20 I. E. Grabar’s more recent and detailed investigation addressed the painting’s content, style and political implications. Grabar argued that the painting’s depiction of Gerasim, archimandrite at New Jerusalem from 1659-1666, dated the work. Although Grabar knew these dates corresponded to Loputskii’s tenure at the Kremlin Armory, he surmised that Nikon would not have commissioned Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich’s chief court painter due to the friction that existed between them during this period. Finally, citing painter’s “high decree of skill,” use of painterly devices such as perspective, and overall adherence to the Dutch school, Grabar concluded that Daniel Wuchters, executed it. 21 Other art historians, such as A. Novitskii and N. Romanov, concurred that Wuchters must have done the painting. 22 These scholars generally agreed that the painting’s purpose was to record Nikon’s and the other clergy’s likenesses for future generations.

Soviet era art historians, led by E. S. Ovchinnikova, contended that the painting was not contemporary to Nikon. Ovchinnikova based her claim on a supposed lack of

19 Drevnosti Rossiiskogo gosudarstva. Otd. I Sv. Ikony, kresty, utvar’ khroanovai a i oblachenije sana dukhovnogo (Moscow: Tipografiia Aleksandra Semenova, 1849), 141-2. Here after DRG I.
20 Leonid (Kavelin), Kratkoe istoricheske skazaniie o nachale i ustroenii Voskresenskago, Novyi Jerusalem imenuemogo, monastyria (Moscow: Tipografiia “Sovrem. Izv.”, 1872), 33.
21 I. E. Grabar, Istoriia russkago iskusstva. Istoriia zhivopisi vol. VI (Moscow, 1910), 414.
written evidence, noting that it was not included in the New Jerusalem Monastery's inventory [\textit{opisi}] of 1679 or 1680. Furthermore, the work was not mentioned in the polemics written by Nikon's most vocal contemporary critics, such as Paisius Ligarides. Ovchinnikova believed that the painting dated from 1685-6 in connection with the completion and dedication of the stone Church of the Resurrection at New Jerusalem. Ovchinnikova attributed the work to Hans Dieterson and a team of Russian artists under the direction of I. A. Bezimin.\footnote{E. S. Ovchinnikova, \textit{Portret v russkom iskusstve XVII veka: materialy i issledovaniia} (Moscow: "Iskusstvo", 1955), 90-99. I challenge these claims below. For insightful commentary on Soviet art historians' treatment of seventeenth-century painting see J. Cracraft, \textit{The Petrine Revolution in Russian Imagery} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 92-106.} V. G. Briusova and the British cultural historian Lindsey Hughes also accepted this line of thought.\footnote{V. G. Briusova, \textit{Russkaia zhivopis' 17ogo veka} (Moscow: "Iskusstvo,"1984), 54; L. Hughes, \textit{Sophia Regent of Russia 1657-1704} (New Haven CN: Yale University Press, 1990), 139.} Fitting the painting into her broader discussion of seventeenth century painting in Russia, Hughes explains that the its purpose was "to 'revive' the dead."

Two Russian scholars, N. M. Mikhailova and G. M. Zelenskaia, have recently refuted these claims by providing new proof that the painting was contemporary to Nikon. Mikhailova introduces new documentary evidence concerning Archdeacon Evfunii, a member of the clergy depicted in the painting, prompting her to date the painting to the fall of 1662.\footnote{A. Novitskii, "Parsunnoe pis'mo v Moskovskoi Rusi," \textit{Starve Gody} (July-September, 1909): 384-403; N. Romanov, "Parsuna, izobrazhaiushchaia patriarkha Nikona," in I. E. Grabar, ed. \textit{Pamiatniki iskusstva, razrushennye nemetskimi zakhvatchikami v SSSR} (Moscow-Leningrad, 1943), 206.} Zelenskaia takes an even more inclusive approach, addressing the details of the painting's content. Analyzing the depiction of the material cultural objects featured in the painting, Zelenskaia concludes that specific items, including Nikon's staff, prayer beads [\textit{chotki}] and pectoral [\textit{panagia}], could only have been painted from life. This was the case because the \textit{panagia} detailed in the painting was entombed with Nikon at New Jerusalem Monastery.
Jerusalem in 1681 and not seen again until his crypt was opened in the mid-1930s.

Furthermore, Zelenskaia further counters Ovchinnikova’s dating of the *parsuna* by explaining why it was absent from the monastery’s inventories of 1679 and 1685. According to Zelenskaia, there was no written record of the painting because Archimandrite Gerasim, not Nikon commissioned it. Therefore, it was considered the Archimandrite’s property, was kept in his cell and was not counted among the monastery’s holdings. Thus, recent scholarship confirms the *parsuna* is contemporary to Nikon, but has reached no consensus as to who commissioned it.

Close reexamination of the sources penned in the mid-seventeenth century by Nikon’s friends and foes alike has permitted me to conclude that the parsuna was indeed commissioned by Patriarch Nikon. In point of fact, Paisius Ligarides did directly mention the *parsuna*. In the opening sentences of the “Frontispiece” to his History of the Condemnation of Patriarch Nikon (1667), Ligarides asserted that “even after his patriarchate was over, he [Nikon] still had himself painted at full height, wearing rich mitra, and attended by a group of deacons and clerks.” This previously neglected passage confirms that the Patriarch commissioned the work and proves that the painting was executed in the period after Nikon’s departure from Moscow in 1658, but prior to his exile in 1666.

Additional evidence provided by foreign guests to New Jerusalem

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26 G. Zelenskaia, *Sviatvni Novogo Ierusalima*, 370-376. The same argument is found in Zelenskaia’s “Patriarch Nikon s bratiei Voskresenskogo Monastyria,” in Patriarch Nikon. Oblacheniia, lichnye veshchi, avtografy, vklady, portrety (Moscow: GIM, 2002), 96-98. Mikhailova and Zelenskaia concur that a lack of documentary sources makes it impossible to determine the painting’s creator(s).
27 Ligarides in Palmer, vol. III, 22. It is possible that Ligarides saw the painting when he went to New Jerusalem in July, 1663. See Soloviev vol 21, 50-56. Ovchinnikova probably based her claim on an incomplete version of the Ligarides’ History of the Condemnation of Patriarch Nikon quoted by N. I. Subbotin.
28 This proof supercedes Zelenskaia’s conjecture that Archimandrite Gerasim commissioned the *parsuna*. It is unlikely that Gerasim had the funds or clout required to hire a leading European artist.
explains why the painting did not appear in the monastery inventories. According to both
Nicholas Witsen, who visited the Patriarch at the New Jerusalem Monastery in 1665, and
Bathasar Coyet, who went there ten years later, portraits of the Patriarch were purposely
concealed to avert accusations that Nikon desired to be considered a saint while still
alive.29

These findings strongly support Grabar's claim that Nikon hired Daniel Wuchters
to paint the *parsuna* in the early 1660s. Wuchters was the only known painter present in
Russia capable of producing such a work. Given the tensions between Aleksei
Mikhailovich and Nikon, no artist in the Tsar's service, e.g., Loputskii, would have been
allowed to paint the Patriarch. Wuchters, on the other hand, had a private business and
operated outside the direct official regulations of the Armory. Moreover, he was
recognized as the most highly skilled *parsuna* painter in Russia at that time.30

Nikon had a record of commissioning the leading artists and craftsmen both
Russians, foreigners and Russians trained by foreigners. According to Ivan Shusherin,
Nikon's contemporary biographer, the Patriarch hired Greeks, Ukrainians, Belorussians
and "newly baptized" Nemtsy [Germans or Europeans] to work at New Jerusalem.31
These included leading painters associated with Armory Chamber. Nikon commissioned

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Locher and P. de Buck. (Amsterdam: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966); *Historisch Verhandel, of Besegryving van
de Voyagie ...Koenraad van Klenk...aan Zijne Zaarsche Majesteyt van Moscovien* (Amsterdam: Jan
Claesz., 1677), 165. The same account was is translated into Russian as Bathasar Coyet, *Posol'stvo
Kunraada fan-Klenka k tsariam Alekseiui Mikhailovitchu i Fedoru Alekseevichu* (St. Petersburg, 1900), 465.
Cracraft explains that Witsen was "a draftsman and engraver of some distinction as well as a scholar and
collector of art," 194.
30 Grabar, 414. Wuchters got the job as chief Armory painter in 1667 based on the claim that he
could paint "life-sized parsuny and biblical histories" better than either Loputskii or Dieterson. Cracraft,
31 Shusherin, 84.
Dieterson’s students to decorate the monastery.32 Karp Zolotarev worked there until summoned to the Armory and the Tsar’s service in 1667.33

It is consistent with Nikon’s patronage that he commissioned the premiere painter in Russia to execute a large portrait of himself in full patriarchal regalia. In addition to showing that Nikon was in the avant-garde of the new artistic style, the parsuna demonstrates that the patriarch had a sophisticated understanding of the role of art and architecture played in the creation of his scenario as leader of the Orthodox Church.34 As his very status as Patriarch was contested, he boldly continued his comprehensive system of self-representation as well as his promotion the New Jerusalem Monastery as center of artistic as well as religious culture.

The Patriarch’s patronage of Wuchters is in line with his continued relations with European dignitaries in Russia. While largely cut off from the Tsar’s court after his departure from Moscow in July 1658, Nikon continued to receive European embassies including the already mentioned Witsen (1665) and Augustus von Meierberg, ambassador of the Holy Roman Empire (1661-2). This important, but largely neglected aspect of Nikon’s strategy was calculated to impress upon both the Tsar and the religious hierarchs that he was still recognized the Patriarch by important and powerful European figures.

Meierberg’s published account of his visit to New Jerusalem is especially noteworthy in this regard because it features an illustration of Nikon quite similar to his depiction in “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy.” This drawing presents Nikon in full patriarchal regalia attended by a monk. Here, Nikon wears the same clerical vestments

33 Cracraft, 122,125.
portrayed in the *parsuna*. These details and Nikon’s posture suggest that the Patriarch may have even posed for the image.  

The determination that Nikon himself commissioned Daniel Wuchters to paint the *parsuna* in the early 1660s makes it possible to advance beyond the debate over the image’s origins toward an understanding of its purpose(s), contents and meaning(s).

These findings permit us to examine the *parsuna* as a source of Nikon’s self-representation during a specific period and context. More specifically, they provide the opportunity to view “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” as an iconographical manifestation of the Patriarch’s efforts to preserve his ecclesiastical authority and prestige after his departure from Moscow in 1658.

Galina Zelenskaia is the only scholar to move toward an interpretation of the image based upon specific events connected to the Patriarch. She offers useful insights concerning the painting’s original purpose by connecting it with one of several seventeenth-century records of a vision that Nikon had during an all-night service at New Jerusalem on January 12, 1661. The account reads:

The most holy Nikon by God’s grace Patriarch was in the holy church at the Monastery of Christ Arisen, in New Jerusalem which he erected together with Archimadrite Gerasim and other brothers of every rank and age and ... Archimandrite Gerasim ... read the first Kathisma from the Holy Bible with commentaries. Holy Patriarch Nikon sat down because he was very tired and fell asleep and saw himself in the great Moscow church... and he saw in this great church an indescribable light and became very afraid .... Being in fear, Nikon ... confessed the strange vision to everyone who was at the service.  

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35 August von Meierberg, *Alborn Meirberga* (Leiden, 1667). The also appeared in the Russian translation *Risunki k puteshestviu po Rossii rimsko-imperatorskago poslannika Barona Meierberga v 1661 i 1662 godakh, peredstavliaiushchie vidy, narodnye obychai, odeiania, portretyi* (St. Petersburg: Fedor Adalung, 1827), LIX. In this image, like the in the *parsuna*, the image of the monk, not only makes Nikon’s depiction active, but reinforces the Patriarch’s importance via differentiation in physical size. Meirberg’s work also featured an image of Nikon in monks attire. It appears in the reprinted edition as “Patriarkh Nikon v obyknovenном domashnem odeianii,” LX.

36 Zelenskaia, *Sviatyni Novogo Ierusalima*, 373-376
Finding parallels between this statement, especially the references to the church at New Jerusalem, Archimandrite Gerasim and “brothers of every rank and age,” and the content of the image, Zelenskaia argues that the painting’s purpose was to commemorate this “spiritually significant event” and those who witnessed it. “When you read the details of this …account,” she concludes, “you are involuntarily forced to recall the parsuna.”

In my judgement however, it is unlikely that Nikon commissioned the painting to record the events of January 12, 1661. Although the account describes Patriarch together with the clergy, it does not correspond to the parsuna’s depiction of Nikon. In the painting, Nikon is presented leading the service. He, not Gerasim, is directly connected with an open Bible. Nor is the Patriarch turned to the clergy as if explaining something to them. Conversely, some of the clergy are not looking at him. These and other details suggest that the painting does not commemorate the vision as event. However, this does not mean that the parsuna and the vision alluded to by Zelenskaia are completely unrelated. Rather we must turn to Nikon’s own explanation of the vision in order to understand the discrete context of his discourse espoused in support of his position as Patriarch during in the 1660s and his self-representation in the parsuna in particular. Finally, the depiction of clerics offering Nikon spectacles and beads and holding the gospel book open for him indicate a quite different scenario.

The Parsuna and Nikon on His Status as Patriarch After His Departure from Moscow in July 1658

Patriarch Nikon produced a body of written statements designed to support his position as Patriarch following his departure from Moscow in 1658. This discourse evolved and provides insights into both his self-defense and his self-representation. In

37 Ibid, 376.

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particular, these writings reveal an increasingly pronounced reiteration of Nikon’s self-representation as Patriarch, and as a divinely inspired defender of the faith and of ecclesiastical prerogatives. This largely neglected body of ideas is the key to understanding the content and purpose of the *parsuna* “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy.”

Analysis of Nikon’s primary written statements, including his letters to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and to the Patriarch of Constantinople, the Patriarch’s “Replies Against the Questions of the Boyar Simeon Streshnev and Paisius Ligarides,” and other contemporary documents composed in the early 1660s, highlight major parallels between the ideas the Patriarch expressed verbally and the content of the *parsuna*. The Patriarch offered a highly symbolic visual justification for his departure from and return to Moscow as well as his defense of traditional ecclesiastical rights. Arguing that he never abandoned or renounced the patriarchal throne, Nikon repeatedly stressed his retention of the patriarchal title, the patriarchal place/throne and patriarchal regalia. Visions and dreams held a central place in the Patriarch’s discourse.

Following an initial period of self-deprecation, in which he allegedly referred to himself as the “former Patriarch,” Nikon repeatedly asserted that, although he left Moscow, he did not renounce the patriarchal rank. After meeting with Nikon in March of 1659, tsarist officials Prokofii Elizarov and Almaz Ivanov reported to Aleksei Mikhailovich that Nikon “has no thoughts about returning to the patriarch’s throne, he simply does not deny the title of patriarch and will not deny it. He does not call himself Patriarch of Moscow however, and... gives his blessing for election of a new patriarch.”

In the summer of 1659, Nikon supposedly told Dementy Bashmakov “I do not call myself
Patriarch of Moscow, nor shall I ever do so again. The office of Patriarch, however, I have not abandoned, and the grace of the Holy Spirit has not been taken from me.” As proof of the latter assertion, Nikon cited his continued ability to cure the sick through prayer.\footnote{"Skazka diaka Dementiia Bashmakova o posylke ego k Nikonu v Voskresenskii Monastyr 17 maia 1659" in Gibbenet, pt.1, 168-172. See also Gibbenet, pt.1, 39-40 and S. M. Soloviev, History of Russia from Earliest Times vol. 21 T. A. Smith ed. and trans. (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 2000) 33.}

Nikon also began to reassert his spiritual authority when it was questioned. In 1659, When Pitrim, Metropolitan of Krutitsa, assumed the patriarch’s role in the highly symbolic Palm Sunday ritual, Nikon wrote to Aleksei Mikhailovich expressing his indignation: “someone has dared covet the seat of the great high priest of all Rus and performs the rites on Palm Sunday. I am not writing this for my own sake, nor do I desire to be leader again and to return to authority like a dog to his own vomit.” Rather, Nikon’s primary concern was that he be present to “transfer divine grace [to the next Patriarch], as we ourselves received it. [For] just as light shines forth from light, so too does divine grace pass from its holder to the newly elected by the imposition of hands, nor is it diminished in the first, just as a candle which lights many other candles shows no decrease in light.” Thus, although Nikon made no claim to the chair of Moscow, he counted himself in apostolic succession and asserted that he was and would continue to be graced.\footnote{"Court Ceremony in an Age of Reform. Patriarch Nikon and the Palm Sunday Ritual" in S. H. Baron and N. S. Kollman eds. Religion and Culture in Early Modern Russia (Madison, WI: Wisconsin University Press, 1987) 321-341.}

In February 1660, a synod of Russian bishops convened to resolve the issue of whether or not Nikon could retain the patriarchal title and authority although he had
departed from Moscow. First, the synod attempted to ascertain the specifics of Nikon’s
departure on July 8, 1658, by investigating numerous eyewitness accounts of the event.
Pitrim, Metropolitan of Krutitsa, and Prince Trubetskoy testified that Nikon renounced
his office with an oath. While no other witnesses claimed that Nikon took an oath to
vacate the patriarchal throne, they agreed that Nikon rejected his position and said he
would no longer act as patriarch. 41

Based on these testimonies, the synod ruled that Nikon had left the patriarchate
voluntarily. Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich therefore ordered the bishops to resolve the matter
according to the relevant canons. In response, the synod decreed that Nikon repeatedly
failed to explain his reasons for vacating the throne, and that, according to the canons,
when a bishop renounces his episcopate without just cause, he should be replaced after
six months. Moreover, it declared that Nikon should be stripped of the patriarchal office,
including “both of the dignity and the priesthood.” 42

The bishops never imposed this sentence. The synod’s decision came under fire
when Epifany Slavinetskii, Russia’s leading canonical scholar, explained that he could
find no justification in the canons for deposing a bishop who left his throne, but did not
renounce his episcopal rank. As a result, Slavinetskii retracted his support effectively
annulling the synodial decree. 43

Aleksei Mikhailovich’s attempts to deal with Nikon also proved problematic.

While the synod deliberated in Moscow, the Tsar sent a mission, headed by Matvei

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42 “Postanovlenie Moskovskogo sobora o nizlozhenii patriarkha Nikona s patriarshago prestola
1660” published in Gibbenet, pt. 1, 214-221.
43 Gibbenet, pt. 1, 87-90; Solov’ev, vol. 21, 37. On Slavanetsky see P. Meyendorff, Russia, Ritual
Pushkin, to Nikon at the Kii Monastery where he resided temporarily. The Tsar’s hope was to gain Nikon’s written consent to elect a new patriarch. This attempt failed to sway Nikon. Asserting that he alone had the authority to invest a new patriarch, Nikon explained “I stepped down from the throne, but I did not relinquish the episcopal rank. The Great Sovereign knows well that I took both the patriarchal dignity and the omoforion with me, although I long ago set aside the desire to be Patriarch in Moscow.” He added, however, that after a legitimate consecration took place, he would retire to a monastery, so long as “the Great Sovereign orders that none of the monasteries I built be taken from me. Let him decree that a portion from the cathedral church be given to me so that I may live without want.”

The Tsar not only rejected Nikon’s propositions, but also sided against him in a key legal battle concerning property belonging to the New Jerusalem Monastery. When Nikon returned to New Jerusalem from the Kii Monastery in late 1660, he became involved in a controversy over property rights with the neighboring boyar Roman Boborykin. Nikon claimed that Boborykin had taken control of land belonging to the monastery and asked the Tsar to investigate the matter based on the original deeds. When Aleksei Mikhailovich ignored two petitions from the Patriarch, Nikon acted on his own ordering peasants from New Jerusalem to harvest the grain growing on the disputed land and to bring it to the monastery. Following suit, Boborykin petitioned the Tsar.

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44 “Skazka sto’l’nika Matveia Pushkina s obiasneniiem, chto patriarkh Nikon na postavleniie bez sebia novogo patriarkha blagosloveniia ne daet, no chto on gotov, po tsarskomu ukazu, prIBUT’ v Moskvu dlia etogo dela” published in Gibbenet, pt. 1, 177-178; Soloviev 38. The second condition is another important recognition of Nikon’s status. In the first case, he confirmed that, after investing a new patriarch, he would continue to be blessed by the Holy Spirit. In this case he would retain huge property holdings etc. I agree with Soloviev’s claim that Nikon’s demand to consecrate the new patriarch guaranteed his authority and material wellbeing.
Responding to the boyar’s request, Aleksei Mikhailovich ordered an inquiry into the peasants’ actions.\textsuperscript{45}

Aleksei Mikhailovich’s failure to recognize the Patriarch’s requests and his investigation of peasants under patriarchal legal jurisdiction contributed to the evolution of Nikon’s self-image and its manifestation as a divinely inspired holy man and defender of Church prerogatives. In his letter to Aleksei Mikhailovich in the spring of 1660, Nikon recounted the aforementioned vision of January 12, 1661 placing it in the context of the Tsar’s alleged abuse of the Patriarch and the church. The epistle, according to Nikon’s own account, was the result of inspiration gained on the night of January 12. Nikon’s account and interpretation of the vision are crucial for an understanding of the larger iconographic discourse presented in the \textit{parsuna} “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy.”\textsuperscript{46}

Nikon related his vision to the Tsar as follows:

On January 12, 1661 we were in the \textit{orthos} in the Church of the Resurrection. After reading the first \textit{kathisma} I sat in my place and fell asleep. Suddenly, I saw myself in the Cathedral Church of the Dormition [in Moscow]. The church was ablaze and standing there were some already deceased bishops. Metropolitan Peter arose from his grave and approached the throne and placed his hand on the Gospel. All the other bishops and I did the same. Peter began to speak, ‘Brother Nikon!’ he said. ‘Ask the Tsar why he has offended the holy church and fearlessly desired to control the immovable property which we gathered, for this will be of no use to him. Tell him he must return what he took, for Almighty God has fallen on him because of this.…’ He does not listen to me, I answered. ‘Divine Providence,’ Peter continued, ‘does not permit this to happen. You must speak. If he does not listen to you, he will not listen even if one of us appeared to him. Look, here is a sign for him.’ Following his gesture, I turned to the west of the Tsar’s palace and what did I see? … fire in the church converged and raced

\textsuperscript{45}Gibbenet, pt. 1, 99-101; Soloviev, vol. 21, 40.

\textsuperscript{46}There are several slightly different versions of the vision. The first is Nikon’s own account of the event as recorded in his letter to the Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich in January 1661. This document was published in \textit{Zapiski Russkogo Arkheologicheskogo Obshchestva} T. II (St. Petersburg, 1861), 541-553; Gibbenet, pt.2 514-516; and Soloviev vol. 21, 40-42. Other accounts written by someone other than Nikon are published in S. A. Belokurov, “Dela sviat. Nikona patriarkha, pachezhe reshchi chudesa vrachebnaia” \textit{Material dla russkoi istorii} (Moscow: Universitetskiaa tipografiia, 1888), 101-102 and P.F. Nikolaevskii, \textit{Puteshestviie Novgorodskogo metropolitja Nikona v Solovetskii monastyr’ za moschami svyatiitelia Filipa} (St. Petersburg, 1885), 52. Zelenskaia, \textit{Sviatyni Novogo Ierusalima}, 373-376 follows the redaction published by Belokurov.
toward the Tsar’s place, which then caught fire. ‘If he does not return to his senses, divine punishments shall be added greater than the first’ said Peter…. It was just like that, whether from God or my own imagination I do not know. I only know that is how it was.47

Nikon then moved beyond the issue of property rights to explicate his departure from the capital city and to condemn Tsar’s abuse of traditional ecclesiastical prerogatives: “Seeing the Holy Church persecuted I listened to the word of God, ‘If they persecute you flee to another town.’ I withdrew to and settled in a deserted place [the New Jerusalem Monastery], but even here I found no peace…. The maleficent dragon … stirred up against us his chosen vessel Roman Boborykin who unjustly took control of church land.”48 The Tsar, claimed Nikon, acted in the same way, “you take by force and without pity moveable and immovable property from everywhere, from the holy metropolitans’ territories, from eparchies and monasteries, without consultation or blessing. You entirely disregard all the laws of the holy fathers, pious emperors and Greek and Russian Princes … as well as your own charters and codes.”49

Nikon also reproached Aleksei Mikhailovich for secularizing ecclesiastical courts. “Where,” he asked, “did you receive the audacity to investigate us and judge us…. Are you not satisfied with judging justly the men of the kingdom of this world? In your orders a new command to seize the peasants of the Resurrection Monastery is written.” After pointing out that the Tsar’s own Law Code of 1649 stated that “every rank, including archimandrites, abbots, archpriests, priests, and worthy monks, shall sit in judgement in

47 Zapiski Russkogo Arkheologicheskogo Obshchestva t. II 541-553; N. Gibbenet, pt. 2, 514-516.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
the Monasterial Chancellery,” Nikon observed; “You have abolished all this. Secular judges pass judgements and coerce [churchman].”

The Patriarch further criticized the Tsar for confirming new ecclesiastical hierarchs on his own authority. “Your hand,” asserted Nikon, “rules over the entire episcopate … by your decree bishops are consecrated and archimandrites … are installed; … [the phrase] ‘by grace of the Holy Spirit and the decree of the great sovereign’ appears in ordination letters as though you were equal to the Holy Spirit.”

Finally, Nikon buttressed his position by comparing himself to a host of biblical and Russian martyrs who had defended the church against the secular powers in the face of persecution and exile. He stressed the extremely familiar examples of Metropolitan Philip and of St. John Chrysostom. Philip, he explained, continued to stand up against those offending him despite being expelled. The example of John Chrysostom was even more important, because he “was expelled and returned to his throne again [my emphasis].”

Nikon’s vision signified shifts in the Patriarch’s self-representation and his attitude toward the Tsar. These changes are crucial to understanding Nikon’s depiction in the parsuna. To grasp fully the dynamic relationship between the vision and the parsuna, one needs to look beyond the Patriarch’s interpretation of the dream as a signal to reproach the Tsar and defend ecclesiastical prerogatives. More specifically, in the

50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid. The example of John Chrysostom was often cited during the successful efforts to have Nikon recognized as “Patriarch” and return from exile at the Ferapontov Monastery in the early 1680s.
53 P.F. Nikolaevskii first raised the notion that the vision was connected with Nikon’s protection of church prerogatives in Puteshestviie Novgorodskogo metropolita Nikona v Solovetskii monastyr’ za moshchami svятителя Filipa. (St. Petersburg, 1885), 50-52. The author explained that the situation changed when boyar intrigues broke the friendship between Aleksei Mikhailovich and Nikon. After his retreat to the New Jerusalem Monastery Nikon “received a new revelation and decree for his future activities.”

102
vision Nikon saw himself in the company of former Russian hierarchs, standing before the patriarchal throne in the Kremlin’s Dormition Cathedral. The vision also stressed that Nikon’s episcopal authority was rooted in the immutable truths of the Gospels. The same elements are central to message of the *parsuna*. In “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy,” Nikon places his hand on the Gospel while standing on the patriarchal throne attended by his supporters. In short, the *parsuna* is the artistic expression of the Patriarch’s a larger discourse of power and legitimacy ripe with symbolic and political meaning, not simply a biographical or commemorative work.

Nikon’s most detailed defense of his status as Patriarch is found in his “Replies of the Humble Nikon, by the Mercy of God Patriarch, Against the Questions of the Boyar Simeon Streshnev, Which He Wrote to the Metropolitan of Gaza, Paisius Ligarides, and Against the Answers of Paisius” (1662).\textsuperscript{54} Nikon’s responses to all five thirty of the charges leveled against him, provide essential insights into the Patriarch’s continued justification of his actions since his departure from Moscow and his discourse of self-defense. However, his answers to the fourth, fifth, sixteenth, eighteenth and nineteenth questions are directly related to his self-representation in “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy”.

Nikon countered the charges that he abdicated the patriarchal throne (Question V: “Is a verbal abdication enough?” Answer: “An abdication made publicly in church has the most force of all”) and that he continued to ordain (Question IV: “Nikon, after abdication still ordains, what of this? Answer: “He is to be degraded by the canons”) by reiterating and expanding upon the contentions introduced in his letter to Aleksei Mikhailovich of January 1661. He began by outlining the reason for his departure from Moscow, arguing

\footnotesize{Thereafter, claimed the author, Nikon embarked on a new crusade to defend the church’s rights and power against the state.}
that while the Tsar followed the kept made in 1652 to “obey the Holy Church,” there were no problems. However, “when he ... became false to his promise, and conceived wrath against us unjustly ... we then,... [and so] recalled the divine commandment which says ‘When they persecute you in this city, flee ye to another;’ ... we went away.”

Next, Nikon presented a new account of his actions on July 8, 1652. He refuted Ligarides’ charge that he “did what no one else had ever done” when, after the completion of the holy liturgy, he took off “the sacred vestments of the patriarchal rank.” While, interjected Nikon sarcastically, Ligarides may continue to wear clerical vestments after the liturgy, “with us such is the custom, and such has been the custom of our predecessors, that after finishing the liturgy, we divest ourselves of the sacral vestments.” Nikon also attacked Ligarides’ claim that, when the Patriarch departed Moscow, he said “I am not worthy to be patriarch.” Rather, explained Nikon, “knowing that the Tsar’s wrath was against me without just cause; and on this account, giving place to wrath, I testified; but I swore no oath.” Thereafter, he listed examples, drawn from Scripture, of those forced to flee from persecution. It is noteworthy that several of the Old Testament passages cited by Nikon refer to holy men who chastised secular rulers. Among others, he alluded to Moses, explaining that “the Lord said to Moses, take all the secular princes of the people and reprove them before the Lord against the sun” (Numbers xxv 3, 4), Nikon reinforced his image as a divinely inspired holy man, as well as a leader and defender of the church.

Finally, Nikon countered the charge that his departure from Moscow rendered him “unfit to ordain” invoking Christ as an exemplar. “Where is he,” asked Nikon, “who says

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that I, in consequence of having gone away have no right to ordain? Hear ... how Jesus when he had withdrawn from malice to a deserted place, taught men of the Kingdom of God, and healed them in need of healing.”

Nikon’s retort to the sixteenth and eighteenth points of Streshnev’s and Ligarides’ polemic is crucial to his claim to the Moscow Patriarchate. In this exchange, Streshnev asserted, “Nikon says that he is not out of his diocese, but has withdrawn from Moscow for temporary reasons.” In response, Ligarides purported, “The chair of Constantinople exists only at Constantinople and the chair of Jerusalem exists only at Jerusalem. He has no right to call himself Patriarch of Moscow who has gone away from Moscow ... had there been any destruction through war, or other like cause, it would be allowable.... But Moscow lives and reigns. Wherefore, then, dost thou take from here the chair, and carry it away to a monastery?” In response, Nikon retorted that the ecumenical patriarchs often traveled outside the geographic boundaries of their respective patriarchates. Citing contemporary examples, he explained that the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, and Jerusalem as well as metropolitans, archbishops and bishops came to Moscow and that “each of these, though living at the time far away from his own diocese styled himself by the title of his chair.... And yet, thou sayest that we have no right to take our own title within our own diocese, because on account of the badness of times, we have gone away from Moscow.... Seest thou now that a bishop has not offended who is abiding within his own bounds? Nor is there any one place prescribed within his diocese where he must

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55 In 1652, Aleksei Mikhailovich promised to obey Nikon in all church matters as a condition for the acceptance of the patriarchal chair.
58 Ibid, xxix.
exclusively abide.” Responding to Streshnev’s claim that he “loves to dwell in waste and in unpopulated places,” Nikon insisted that the New Jerusalem Monastery “is not uninhabited...it has more than Moscow: it has the patriarchate.”

Nikon further claimed the Tsar never stopped regarding him as Patriarch of Moscow: after living at New Jerusalem for more than a year, “the tsar had made no question whatever about the patriarchate being vacant, as knowing very well the cause of our withdrawal.” Moreover, Nikon observed that when he returned to Moscow to meet with Aleksei Mikhailovich in 1659, the Tsar had sought to protect him from the threat posed by the Crimean Tatars suggesting he take refuge in a Moscow monastery. Again Aleksei “made no allusion whatever to our previous departure; but he did all just as if we were still living in Moscow, in such manner as was customary at the reception of the patriarch, and bade us to sit on that seat [which reserved for the patriarch].”

Turning personal attacks leveled against him by Streshnev and Ligarides into a larger discourse on the Tsar’s encroachment upon traditional rights of the Church, Nikon represented himself as head of the Russian church and protector of its rights and privileges. He had fled the capital only because the Tsar was unjustly persecuting him. Moreover, Aleksei Mikhailovich had broken his promise to obey the Church, and to respect its canons and customs and even his own laws when he seized monastic property, sat in judgement upon clerics and extended secular jurisdiction to those living on church lands.

This new line of representation is reflected in parsuna’s content. First, a written text on the image denotes Nikon as “Holy Nikon Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia”.

59 Ibid, 97-98. Nikon later accused the universal patriarchs who presided over his trial in 1666 of the same charge.
Second, the purposeful inclusion of the clergy in the artwork shows that the monastery was “inhabited” and that Nikon was not “alone”. Third, the depiction of the patriarchal place/throne in the image illustrates Nikon’s claim that New Jerusalem was the seat of the Moscow Patriarchate as long as he resided there. These iconographic manifestations of Nikon’s “Replies” further attests to parsuna’s place in the Patriarch’s larger efforts to defend his position against the accusations mounting against him in the 1660s.

Despite renewed charges that he renounced the patriarchal throne, in the fall of 1664 Nikon seemed poised to return to Moscow.\textsuperscript{62} Two visions Nikon inspired the prelates resolve. The first was Nikon’s dream of January 12, 1661 previously discussed. Several months later, Nikon wrote to the boyar Nikita Ziuzin, the only noble remaining in close contact with him after his departure from Moscow, telling him about the vision and complaining that he had written to the Tsar about it, only to be accused of prophesizing.\textsuperscript{63} Upset by the breach between the Patriarch and the Tsar, Ziuzin attempted to reconcile the former friends. In a very daring move, he forged a letter in the Tsar’s name requesting Nikon to appear at the Dormition Cathedral and sent it to the Patriarch on December 18th. In this missive, Ziuzin writing as the Tsar promised that “if the Patriarch would only show favor and deign to come on December 19 on the orthos in the cathedral, before the memorial of Peter the Miracle Maker [December 20], he [Peter] would be a wonderworker of our love, and he would drive out all our enemies.”\textsuperscript{64}

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, 94.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{62} The charge reappeared during a series of investigations concerning “Sytin Affair” (1663) and Nikon’s ongoing problems with Boborykin (1664). See Gibbenet and Soloviev vol. 21, 52-53.
\textsuperscript{63} “Sobstvennoruchnoe pismo patriarkha Nikona k Nikite Alekseievichu Ziuzinu ot 3 sentiabria” (no year) in Gibbenet pt. 2, 599. See also Gibbenet pt. 1, 101 and Soloviev, vol. 21, 73-74.
\textsuperscript{64} The full text of this letter is provided in Soloviev, vol. 21, 72-73. When Zuizin’s forgery was discovered he was held accountable. A boyar court sentenced Ziuzin to death. However, his sons petitioned the Tsar for leniency. Commuting the original sentence, Aleksei Mikhailovich exiled Ziuzin to Kazan. See Soloviev, 75.
In the meanwhile, Nikon had another vision that hastened his return to Moscow. He wrote to Aleksei Mikhailovich that, in mid-November 1664, he became disturbed by rumors about the patriarchate and retired to his skit [hermitage] at New Jerusalem. There, he fasted and prayed that "the Lord God might make known what ought to happen." Although Nikon kept strict vigil for more than six weeks, not eating, drinking or sleeping for seventeen days at a time, no revelation came. He became so exhausted that he could only sit up for an hour a day. Then, on December 13, he had a dream in which he saw himself in the Dormition Cathedral in the Moscow Kremlin:

A great was light shining, but there was not a living soul there, only departed bishops and priests standing along the sides where the graves of metropolitans and patriarchs lie. One of the saintly men made the rounds among all the others with a parchment and a jar of cinnabar in his hands, and all signed their names. I asked them what they were signing. 'A letter,' he answered, 'concerning your return to the holy throne' .... I went to my stall and saw that the patriarchs were standing in it! I grew frightened, but Jonas told me, 'Do not be horrified, brother, for such is the will of God. Ascend your throne.'

Nikon interpreted this vision as divine confirmation that he should return to the patriarchal throne in Moscow. His purposeful program of fasting and ascetic reflection, had yielded yet another sign confirming that Nikon continued to possess the Holy Spirit's grace. As in the previous vision of January 1661, Nikon's virtual return to the Kremlin's Dormition Cathedral places him in saintly company. Again he saw himself standing in his stall together with former patriarchs who not only petition in writing Nikon's reinstatement to the patriarchal throne, but also insist that his Moscow is the "will of God." Like the earlier dream, Nikon's visualizes himself as Moscow Patriarch, an image made concrete in the parsuna "Patriarch Nikon with Clergy."

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65 "Nikon's Arrival in the Cathedral Church in Moscow from the Resurrection Monastery and the Trial of Ziuzin, Who Wrote to Nikon in the Tsar's Name on December 18, 1664" in Gibbenet pt. 2, 738-740. See also Gibbenet, pt. 2, 112-113 and Soloviev, vol. 21, 68.
Inspired by his vision and the Tsar’s/Ziuzin’s letter, Nikon returned to the Dormition Cathedral during the orthos on the night of December 17-18, 1664. He resumed his place in the patriarch’s stall taking part in the service. He did not however, receive the same welcome he expected.66 Instead Nikon was met by a group of boyars, including, Streshnev, who once again charged him with renouncing the patriarchate. Despite Nikon’s rebuttal to the charges and numerous pleas to Aleksei Mikhailovich, including an account of his most recent vision, the Tsar ordered him to leave the cathedral and return to New Jerusalem. Upon his departure, Nikon took with him Metropolitan Peter’s zhezl, a key symbol of patriarchal power and authority. Hearing of this, the Tsar sent envoys to secure the staff from the Patriarch. After much negotiation, Nikon relinquished the zhezl in the hope of returning to Moscow to pray and meet with the Tsar. This notion was dashed when Nikon’s request was refused and he was informed about the preparations for a new synod convened at the behest of Aleksei Mikhailovich aimed at resolving the status of the patriarchate.67

Rebuffed by the Tsar, Nikon, in January 1665 decided to take his case to an even higher court by directly appealing to Patriarch Dionysius of Constantinople from home he sought support visa-vis the impending synod. The purpose of this missal was, according to Nikon, to explain “how at first I came to be made patriarch, and how afterwards I came to withdraw from the capital city.”68 Nikon explained that he had only agreed to become Patriarch because the Tsar, the boyars, and the synod promised to “keep the commandments of Christ’s holy Gospel, and the canons of the holy apostles and the holy

66 Ibid.
68 Nikon’s letter to Patriarch Dionysius of Constantinople in January 1665 in Palmer vol. III, 381-400. Patriarch Dionysius never received the letter. It was intercepted by tsarist officials and used against Nikon during his trial in 1666.
fathers, and the laws of the religious Greek emperors, unchangeably, and to obey us [Nikon] as chief pastor and supreme father in all things which I shall announce to out of the divine commandments and laws.” However, he continued, Aleksei Mikhailovich “began to despise what we said out of the commandments of God, and to invade into matters belonging to the bishops, both by orders and by jurisdiction touching on matters of divine grace.” Therefore, when the Tsar, “with out just cause,” revealed his “wrath” to the Patriarch, Nikon kept his promise to adhere to Scripture and decided to leave Moscow.69

Echoing his earlier written accounts and his self-representation in “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy,” Nikon cited his retention of liturgical vestments as proof that he never abdicated the patriarchate: “When I left Moscow, I took with me the episcopal vestments, one piece of each for the pontifical liturgy. I went away, but I did not relinquish the episcopate as they now slander me, saying that I left of my own will.”70

Nikon’s self-justification, especially in regard to his anathematization of Pitirim, the Metropolitan of Krutitsa, is a telling example of his efforts to retain his status as Patriarch: “we anathematized Pitirim, the Metropolitan of Krutitsa, because he stopped commemorating our name in the liturgy and punished those priests who continued to commemorate it.” Commemoration of Nikon in the liturgy in every church in Russia kept the Patriarch before the faithful and guaranteed his place in a central church ritual.71

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69 Ibid, 383-386.
70 Ibid, 387; Soloviev, vol. 21, 76. During his trial Nikon repeatedly claimed that the act of taking his vestments with him when he departed Moscow was proof that he never abdicated the patriarchate: “If I had renounced the office of patriarch with an oath, I would not have taken bishop’s robes with me”. In another instance he claimed that “had I really abdicated, I would not have taken episcopal robes with me.” Soloviev, vol. 21, 83 and 86 respectively.
71 Ibid, 398; Soloviev, vol. 21, 78.
The *parsuna* “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” depicts Nikon and eight clerics in the interior of the Resurrection Cathedral at the New Jerusalem Monastery. The painting is highly realistic. It presents in painstaking detail the likeness of the Patriarch and attendant clergy and accurately documents key material cultural objects associated with Nikon and the Moscow Patriarchate.

The painting reinforces Nikon’s image as patriarch in three ways, first by a written text, second by material cultural symbols, and third, by physical location. The Slavonic text rendered in gold lettering at the top of the canvas above Nikon reads “Holy Nikon Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia.” Nikon is wearing vestments and other symbols, including *sakkos*, *omofor*, *epidril*, *prochie*, *mitra*, *zhezl*, gold *panagia* and gold cross, which denote the full dignity of the Russian Patriarch. The “patriarch’s place” [mesta], a throne or stall located near the front of the cathedral against the pillar supporting the main cupola and facing the iconostasis, provides the context for Nikon’s depiction.

The patriarch’s place envelopes Nikon, while its elevated position several steps above floor level, denoted by the black and white tiles, raises him well above the other clerics. Its black wooden construction and carved white columns with gilt capitals frame Nikon from the waist down. The upper part of the structure, including its ornately carved wooden columns and canopy of rich fabric rises behind Nikon and drapes across the top left of the canvas. An icon of the “Iverskaia Mother of God” hangs prominently over Nikon’s left shoulder. An Oriental rug covers the steps of the throne beneath Nikon’s feet and the floor directly in front of him.

Nikon is depicted standing in full height in the center of the canvas. His figure clearly dominates the canvas. He appears young for a man in his late sixties. His wide-
open eyes look toward the viewer. His vigorous, but austere face is dramatically framed by a luxuriant brown beard and by long plaited hair that streams from under his mitra.  

The Patriarch’s pearl white sakkos is embroidered with golden flowers. The large omofor around his shoulders is also pearl white and bears three red, four-ended crosses. At the center of each cross is an oval with an embroidered image. The red prochie [cuffs], partially visible on Nikon’s wrists, feature images of angels embroidered in pearls. The tassels of his epidril are visible from under his sakkos, near his right foot.

A panagiia and a cross, hanging from gold chains around Nikon’s neck, rest on his chest. The round panagiia bears a central image of the “Mother of God” carved in white stone surrounded by green and red gems in a gold setting. The seven-ended gold cross features an engraving of the Crucifixion.

Nikon’s mitra is large, tall and extremely ornate. Its rich red fabric is covered in gold work, encrusted with precious stones, pearls, and round enamel panels. A cross in gold, jewels and pearls surmounts it. The wide band of gold at the mitra’s base, which features a large circle and cross in rubies, is especially noteworthy because it resembles a secular crown.

The Patriarch’s hands connect him with other important symbols. His left hand holds a wooden staff with three bronze apples. His right hand rests on an open book signifying Holy Scripture connecting him intimately with the authority of the text.

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72 Nikon’s long hair was removed during the painting’s restoration after the Second World War. However, it is clearly visible in the photograph from the State Tretiakov Gallery (GTG) Fototeka and nineteenth century engravings.

Nikon's vestments symbolize the power and authority of his position as Patriarch. The *panagia* and cross signify the highest church authority, the staff and the *omofor* -- the highest pastoral authority. The *mitra*, a symbol of Christ's crown of thorns, is a sign of exemplary service. In addition to their spiritual significance, these richly decorated and embellished symbols display great wealth. Moreover, Nikon's self-depiction in these specific vestments provides visual proof of his persistent verbal claims that he never abandoned the patriarchy. 74

The icon positioned over Nikon's shoulder adds an important sense of confirmation to his representation. It illustrates Nikon acting before the Holy Virgin and Christ, a point routinely mentioned in written justification of his actions. 75 The Christ Child's right hand is raised in the new, three-finger style of blessing introduced by Nikon in 1652. Positioned directly behind the Patriarch, the image of Christ appears to be blessing him. 76

Slavonic texts above the heads of the eight clergymen attending Nikon define them as “archimandrite Gerasim,” “lower deacon Serafim,” “lower deacon German,” “deacon Iosif,” “lower deacon monk Iliodor,” “ieromonk Iov,” “archdeacon Evfimii,” “S. P. [spiritual father] ieromonk Leonid”. The clergy range greatly in age from the extremely youthful, rosy cheeked German to the white bearded Leonid and in rank from lower deacon Seraphim to the archimandrite Gerasim. Like Nikon, they are dressed in

75 See, for example, Nikon's letter to the Patriarch Dionysius of Constantinople of January 1665, in Palmer vol. III, 383-384.
76 Nikon had an intense reverence for the icon of the Iverskaia Mother of God. He dedicated his first Monastery to it. Nikon discussed the “Iverskaia Mother of God” at length in his *Rai Myslennyi* (1659). The full text of this work is published in V. S. Belenko ed., *Rai Myslennyi* (St. Petersburg: Zhurnal "Neva," 1999). See especially 51-62. Given Nikon's concern with icon painting, the depiction of this image is extremely curious. The life-like features included on the image, especially Christ's face and hair, are not in
vestments reserved for conducting a religious service. Two of the clerics, German and Seraphim, actively assist Nikon. The first supports the large book of Scripture and holds it open. The second offers the Patriarch a string of white and red *chotki* and a pair of reading glasses. All of the remaining figures except, Leonid and Iliodor, who gaze toward the viewer, look at the Patriarch.\(^77\)

Serafim’s presentation of the coral prayer beads and spectacles connect Nikon with another extremely important set of symbols. The readily available beads signify Nikon’s readiness for prayer. The spectacles testify to his preparedness for and love of reading. Combined with the open book, the glasses suggest a thorough study and knowledge of Holy Scripture, a connection heightened by the position of Nikon’s right hand on the opened text.

Nikon’s association with the clerics serving him reinforces his stature as high priest and Patriarch. His relationship to the monks magnifies his physically and spiritually elevated status. His position on the patriarchal place lifts him above the other figures. Although apparent in the juxtaposition between Nikon and the monks, the effect is most striking in the depiction of the youths. Both Serafim and German raise their heads and eyes to look up adoringly at the Patriarch. While also dressed in their finest attire, the monks’ appearance pales in comparison to Nikon’s rich vestments. This contrast further heightens Nikon’s distinction and dignity.

The clergy, all of whom served at New Jerusalem in 1658-1665, also connect Nikon with that Monastery. They represent the rich diversity of the monastery population.

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77 For information about the individual clerics see Mikhailova, 148-15; DRG I, 141-142; 141-2; Arkhimandrit Leonid (Kavelin), *Istoricheskoe opisaniei stavropigialnago Voskresenskago Novyi Jerusalem imenuemago monastyrja* (Moscow, 1876), 22-23.
at the time. Even more importantly, they illustrate that Nikon was not alone or isolated after his departure from Moscow, and that he continued to be recognized as a spiritual leader. Therefore, the image conjoins Nikon with a larger brotherhood of monks, whose service and admiration in turn reinforce his stature as supreme cleric, pastor and holy man.

Nikon’s decision to have himself depicted together with his clergy during a church service is crucial to his self-depiction. This context located him within the realm of his spiritual authority, afforded the opportunity to present himself in full regalia and connected him with other key symbols, such as the open book of Scripture and physical place, namely the patriarch’s place. All of these points parallel the idea expressed in Nikon’s “Replies” and other written statements and thus reinforce iconographically Nikon’s representation of himself as pastor, spiritual leader, and defender of the church.

The combination of the parsuna’s size, style, and content ensures that Nikon both looks and acts like the Patriarch. Its large size made it possible to present the nearly seven-foot-tall Nikon and his clergy in real-life proportions. This life-sized representation of physical qualities, combined with the artist’s treatment of details, especially facial features and material cultural objects, including his mitra, staff, glasses and chotki, is extremely effective. The inclusion of the brothers makes Nikon’s representation more realistic by placing him in an active, real-life context. Their attention to and assistance of the Patriarch animate the scene. Here, the symbolic, yet simple, acts of holding the book open and preparing prayer beads and glasses for immediate use help the painting come to life. Nikon appears “alive” largely because of this context.

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78 Shusherin, 70, 84.
The Parsuna's Early Display and Interpretation

The original intended and actual locations of the parsuna's display are unknown. However, its extremely large size, not to mention cost, show that it was intended to inspire awe and to be exhibited prominent place. Paisius Ligarides' charge that Nikon "had his own portrait put in the church while still living ... making himself even before his death nearly equal with the saints," suggests that it may have been commissioned for one of the churches, or even the Resurrection Cathedral, at New Jerusalem.79

Ligarides, who may have seen the painting in its original location when he visited New Jerusalem as part of an official investigation in mid-July 1663 (or someone else saw it, or noted in inquiry of Nikon's possessions), also used commentary on the painting to malign the Patriarch further.

History is mute painting and painting is history speaking, we will sketch and prefix here a portrait of the ex-patriarch Nikon, and exhibit the man himself, so far as a portrait can represent him, to posterity ... even after his patriarchate was over, he still had himself painted at full height, wearing rich mitra, and attended by a group of deacons and clerks; not remembering — he that had no form nor comeliness.... Nikon, was rather like aboriginal matter (which the philosophers tell us is without qualities, without form, without figure) ... [his] bare look and expression was altogether more unpleasing and shapeless than that of any hobgoblins.80

According to European visitors to New Jerusalem in the latter 1660s and 1670s, the portrait was not openly displayed in the monastery at that time, due to Ligarides' charge. Nicholas Witsen explained that when he visited Nikon in 1665, the Patriarch "was afraid to hang his portrait at his monastery because... he would be accused of

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80 Ibid. It is noteworthy that Ligarides focused this attack as well as others on Nikon's physical appearance rather than the symbols of his position. See H. T. Hiondes, Paisius Ligarides (New York: Twain Publishers, Inc. 1972), 68-70 on Ligarides' affinity for physiognomy and other "occult sciences".
desiring to be a saint while still alive." Nonetheless, Nikon’s portrait was proudly shown to Witsen and other foreign visitors. A contemporary description of Konrad van Klenk’s visit to New Jerusalem in 1675-6 provides information concerning the painting’s status during the period of Nikon’s exile (1666-1681). It notes that, after a guided tour of all the churches and sanctuaries at the monastery, the foreigners “were led to a different place where [they] saw a painting of the patriarch, or forefather, Nikon in full height.”

Both these accounts prove that although Nikon’s portrait was not openly exhibited, it was displayed to prestigious visitors even after the Patriarch’s official condemnation in 1666.

This situation most likely changed in the period following Nikon’s death, “rehabilitation,” and internment in the chapel of John the Baptist in the Resurrection Cathedral in 1682. Several documentary sources explain that “portraits” of Nikon hung in the Cathedral in the later seventeenth century. While not specifically mentioned, the parsuna depicting Nikon with his clergy was most likely among them. This is where the earliest direct references to the painting place it.

In the later eighteenth century, the parsuna was displayed prominently in the patriarch’s place in the main rotunda of the Resurrection Cathedral. The significance of strategically placing the image in the location it depicted cannot be overstated.

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81 Nicholaas Witsen, Moscovische Reysen 1664-1665 Journal En Aentekeningen Th. J. G Locher and P. de Buck, eds. (Amsterdam, 1966), 271-289. See also A. M. Loviagin “Nikolai Vitsen iz Amsterdam u patriarkha Nikona,” Istoriicheskii vestnik (1899 no. 9), 879. Cracraft explains that Witsen was “a draftsman and engraver of some distinction as well as a scholar and collector of art,” 194.

82 Historisch Verhandel, of Besgrywing van de Voyagie .... Koenraad van Klenk...aan Zijne Zaarsche Majesteyt van Moscovien (Amsterdam: Jan Claesz., 1677), 165. For the same account was is translated into Russian see Bathasar Coyet, Posol'stvo Kunraada fan-Kienka k tsariam Alekseeu i Fedoru Alekseeu (St. Petersburg, 1900), 465.

83 V. Kolosov, “Popytki kanonizatsii patriarkha Nikona,” in Istoriicheskii vestnik istoriko-literurnogo zhurnala vol. 1 (August 1880) 793-796; Ieronomakh Arsenii, “Pis’mo k novoobrativshimia iz raznykh sekt russkogo raskola k pravoslavnoi iserki iz Novogo Ierusalima (Rossiisko gogo),” in Dushepoleznol ohtenie 25 (September 1884), 53-7.

image’s exhibition in the patriarchal place supplied it with both symbolic and physical contexts. It conceivably heightened the effect of the realistic, life-sized representation of Nikon and quite possibly provided viewers with the sense that Nikon was among them. Filling the space left vacant by his forced exile, the image of Nikon in full patriarchal regalia was a constant presence symbolically officiating services, inspiring monks and visitors and serving as a reminder that he founded the monastery. With this display the painting came the closest to achieving its original purpose. Recognized as Patriarch, Nikon regained his throne both actually and symbolically.

An imperial visit to New Jerusalem in the late eighteenth century generated new interest in the painting and resulted in the first attempt to preserve it. While at the monastery in 1797, Tsar Paul I, an admirer of Nikon and major patron of New Jerusalem Monastery, recognized the parsuna as a rare example of seventeenth-century painting and noted that it was being damaged by dampness. Therefore, it was moved to the choir near the chapel of St. Paul the Confessor. It remained there for more than half a century. 85

While preserving the painting from unfavorable physical conditions, its transfer to a side chapel located in the Resurrection Cathedral’s second tier drastically changed its context. Removed from the patriarchal place and the heart of the sanctuary, the image lost at least some sense of its previous purpose, meaning and significance within the cathedral. However, despite the less prestigious physical location of its display, the painting continued to make strong impressions on its viewers well into the nineteenth century.

85 Ibid. For Paul I’s visit to and patronage of New Jerusalem, see Istoricheskoe opisanie stavropigial’nogo Voskresenskogo, Novyi Jerusalem imenuemogo, monastyr’ia (Moscow: Tipография I. Efimova, 1886), 21-22 and 65.
"Patriarch Nikon with Clergy" in the Late Imperial Period

"Patriarch Nikon with Clergy" received increasing attention in the nineteenth century with the widespread acknowledgment of its spiritual, historical and artistic value. It was discussed, analyzed and interpreted in print, including not only descriptions of the New Jerusalem Monastery, but lavish art books, and the scholarly and popular press. The *parsuna* was restored and copied. It also served as a paradigm for artists creating original new images and as a standard against which all other images of Nikon were compared and judged. Therefore, it became a major factor in the formulation and dissemination of Nikon's image, shaping conceptions of and attitudes toward the Patriarch well into the modern period.

Several interconnected factors regarding the *parsuna*'s style and content explain its increasing significance and relevance in Russian culture in the long nineteenth century. The image was believed to be painted from life, and thus to represent an accurate likeness of Nikon. Although not the only contemporary depiction of the Patriarch extant in the nineteenth century, the painting was widely accepted as the best record of Nikon's true appearance. The depiction of his personality [*lichnost*], via highly realistic painting of his face, was the key factor. The claim that Nikon appeared to be alive, an idea usually associated with devotional images and depictions of saints (in icons), is a recurrent theme in commentaries on the portrait.

The image caused people to think about Nikon. Serving as a catalyst, it jogged the viewer's memories, often evoking strong emotions. Reflection on the life-like features presented in the *parsuna* served as a point of departure for commentaries on Nikon's

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character and behavior. In this way, the image became conjoined with written accounts of the Patriarch’s life, especially Shusherin’s Life of Nikon. The combination of the mutually reinforcing artistic representation and favorable written accounts resulted in the painting’s association with the Patriarch’s entire life, not just the period in the early 1660s when it was created. 88

This process is exemplified in A. N. Murav’iev’s early nineteenth century reading of the parsuna:

The magnificent figure of Nikon is still quite impressive…. His unusual height is increased further by his noble posture….His big and proportional features have a solemn expression and are full of masculine beauty…. his strong soul is revealed in the flaming black eyes….these eyes are still talking and penetrate the soul. Outwardly, Nikon fully reflected his inner self. I looked at the painting for a long time. It appeared a live patriarch stood in front of me authoritatively and I remembered many aspects of his unbridled character, discussed in the eloquent zhitiye [vita] by Shusherin. I remembered his life as a hermit in the wild Solovetskii Monastery, how as a metropolitan he quieted strel’tsy by risking his own life, and how while already patriarch he became Tsar Aleksei’s friend. Next, I recalled his trial and bitter dethronement and even more bitter exile on the White Sea, which did not break his iron will. 89

For Murav’iev, and others, Nikon’s depiction in the parsuna stood for everything positive that Nikon represented. This impassioned commentary became engrained as a classic interpretation of the painting. It was included in all five editions of Murav’iev’s Travels to Holy Places in Russia and quoted and paraphrased by subsequent authors through the end of the nineteenth century. 90

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87 See, for example, Murav’ev, 109 and Prince N. S. Golitsyn, Novyi Ierusalim (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia F. G. Eleonskogo i Ko., 1879), 20.
88 This is especially evident in the repeated positive associations of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich with Nikon. The connection between this image and Nikon’s (entire) life was also paralleled in the practice of including engravings based on the image in written biographies about him.
89 Murav’ev, 109.
90 Murav’ev’s Puteshestviie po svyatym mestam russkim went through at least five editions. His interpretation of the painting is followed in DRG I, 140-143; Putevoditel’ (Guide du voyageur) po zheleznoi doroge ot Moskvy do st. Krukovskoi ... i po Novomu Ierusalimu (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1853), 83-84; Prince N. S. Golitsyn, Novyi Ierusalim. (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia F. G. Eleonskogo i Ko.,
“Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” held broad currency in nineteenth century Russian culture because its style was familiar and even *en vogue*. The *parsuna* became increasingly important in terms of the Russian fascination with *drevnosti* [antiquities] for two reasons. The first pertained to the painting’s realistic style. It was considered a masterpiece of ancient art in Russia in its own right. The second concerned the painting’s content. In this case, it was recognized as rare documentary evidence of the original material cultural objects, such as Nikon’s *mitra*.

The painting took on additional artistic significance in the mid-nineteenth century in connection with the new genre of historical Realist painting. Some even deemed it a “historical painting,” an attribution clearly reflecting the work’s congruence with prevailing artistic taste. Artists seeking to create their own realistic and historically accurate depictions of Nikon turned to the image for inspiration. Painters and art critics assessed nineteenth-century depictions of the Patriarch in terms of the original portrait. Included in both the creation and analysis of historical Realist paintings, “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” gained further recognition as arguably the most important and well-known visual image of Nikon. 91

The replication, preservation, publication and continued exhibition of “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” stimulated renewed attention to the image and opened it to audiences far beyond the walls of the New Jerusalem Monastery. In 1854, a new documentary copy of the original was created and published in the first volume of the highly influential

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91 Some of the earliest Russian historical Realist paintings (e.g., the work of V. G. Schwartz) were “documentary,” in that they featured accurate, realistic depictions of existing “ancient” material cultural objects. The *parsuna*’s impact on the creation and reception of historical Realist paintings is discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of the dissertation.
Antiquities of the Russian State. The parsuna was professionally restored in 1854. Twenty years later it was removed from its location in the Resurrection Cathedral’s choir and included in the newly established Museum at New Jerusalem. Each of these events spawned fresh opportunities to interpret the image and reiterate its and, more importantly, Nikon’s significance.

The inclusion of Academician Fedor G. Solntsev’s watercolor copy of “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” in Antiquities of the Russian State (1849) played a key role in the image’s history. It marked not only the first accurate reproduction of the original and its publication, but the first display of the image together with a written text devoted to it. The printed commentary on the image is noteworthy because it connects the depiction of Nikon’s physical qualities with his actions:

In Nikon’s proportionate, but abrupt features we see the self-realization of the intellect, passion, and stoicism of his character and strong will. Despite the fact that he was more than half a century old, he preserved a freshness of bodily powers. His intelligent and spiritual face contrasts greatly with the faces of his companions. It is definitely worthy to be depicted in the forefront of the painting. It shows readiness for prayer and heroic deeds.... Using the achievements of science and fine art for his purposes, wise Nikon also used portrait painting to preserve his own image, the images of those he liked and those who worked in cooperation with him at New Jerusalem.

The publication also highlighted a new aspect of the painting’s significance. In addition to simply recognizing it as rare example of seventeenth-century painting in Russia and commenting on its style, the text accompanying the image stressed its value as an important historical source: “Taking into account the date of its creation and the content of the image, it should be considered important not only for its artistic aspects,

92 DRG I, 140-144.
93 Ibid, 140-144.
94 Ibid, 141.
but also for its historical significance because it gives us clues about the face and dress of this great leader of our native Church."\(^95\)

Along with Murav’ieiv’s classic comments on the parsuna, the artistic and written representations of “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” featured in Antiquities of the Russian State have had broad and lasting resonance in Russian history and culture. Presented in a collection intended to glorify the Russian state, the image functioned as a sign of the close church-state relationship promoted by Tsar Nicholas I, who employed his patronage to advance the triune values of “Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationalism.”

Counted among the most precious “relics” of the Russian past, the parsuna gained recognition far beyond the discrete context of New Jerusalem. Its effect on later Russian artists is especially noteworthy. The influence that Solntsev’s copy had on subsequent engravers and painters, both discussed below, testify to the impact of his work on nineteenth century artists.

In the fall of 1854, Murav’ieiv commissioned Moscow artist N. I. Podkluchnikov to restore the original painting. Podkluchnikov cleaned the image removing layers of olifa, oil and soils resulting from exposure to dampness and smoke. He then applied a lacquer intended to help protect the original paint from humidity and smoke. Finally, the artist commemorated his own work in a text painted in gold Slavonic letters across the bottom right hand side of the painting.\(^96\)

The parsuna’s restoration became a newsworthy event eliciting a spate of articles in the Russian press. In addition to providing information about the painting’s current

\(^{95}\) Ibid, 142-3.

\(^{96}\) “P. P.”, "Masterskaia N. I. Podkluchikova,” Moskovskie vedomosti, No. 118 (2 Oct. 1854), 476. The text Podkluchnikov added is visible on the photograph of the painting made during its exhibition in the Tauride Palace Exhibition of 1905. I acquired a photographic print of the original negative held at the GTG Photo Archive. The text was removed when the painting was restored after the Second World War.
status to those already familiar with it, these articles exposed a wider reading public to the image’s larger significance. Commentaries on and interpretations of the image were also accompanied by positive discussions of Nikon’s prominent place in Russian history and religious culture. Finally, reports of the parsuna’s preservation served as a catalyst, stimulating news about and interpretations of other artistic images of the Patriarch.97

“P. P.,” author of the first article, “N. I. Podkluchnikov’s Studio,” reported that when he visited the artist at work he “saw the ‘renowned picture’ depicting Patriarch Nikon and his clergy at the Resurrection Monastery. Visitors to New Jerusalem no doubt stopped in front of this single picture... and they, of course, expressed pity that it was getting dark and destroyed because of age and humidity.” Now, however, “the face of great Nikon was taken out of the darkness by the skill of the painter and prepared for new life. Nikon appears in remarkable greatness ... with a very serious pose and expression.”98

This initial report was followed by a more in-depth piece two weeks later. According to the second article, “Portrait of Patriarch Nikon from His Own Time,” “the news about the restoration of the portrait of Patriarch Nikon ... compelled us to report the contents, style, and date of this portrait, or, more correctly, historical painting [my emphasis].” Here, as in earlier interpretations, the artistic representation the Patriarch offered the possibility to outline Nikon’s character and actions.

Nikon’s pose corresponds to his dignity and it expresses his readiness to pray, to give a sermon, and perform heroic deeds.... His oval face is steadfast, his nose is straight, wide, and proportional to the shape his face. His penetrating eyes are dark brown.... The correct, large, and sharp features of his face demonstrate his unusually powerful spirit. This spirit had an irresistible influence on everyone

98 “P. P.,” 476.
around him. It also proved his own recognition of his superior ardor and firmness. In this way, the life of the great prelate, who attracted people of all views throughout Russia and the entire Orthodox world, was represented to us in this portrait. 99

After recounting Nikon’s life story, including an explanation of how he saved the Tsar’s family from the plague, the author concluded that, “during the six years he participated in ruling the state, he struggled against superstition, illiteracy, lawlessness. He struggled without caution and deviation, and his mighty and enterprising character faced the ambitions of nobles.” Although referring to the period prior to the parsuna’s creation, this reading of the image reflects accurately the painting’s original message by linking Nikon’s self-representation and his struggle with the secular forces that strove to defeat him. 100

While written interpretations of the Patriarch’s depiction in the parsuna continued to present the work as symbolic of Nikon’s whole life, the intent behind the image’s actual display became more focused. The painting’s display at New Jerusalem became increasingly associated with Nikon’s role as founder of the monastery. This process testifies to the evolution of the parsuna’s import. The removal of “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” from its previous location in the choir of Resurrection Cathedral during the late 1860s and its inclusion in a series of art-historical exhibits held at New Jerusalem Monastery both changed the image’s context and stimulated renewed attention to its significance.

In 1870 Leonid Kavelin, Archimandrite of New Jerusalem (1869-1877), noted the parsuna’s place in the “gallery of paintings with holy contents” held the monastery’s so-called “Elizabethan Hall” (named for Empress Elizabeth I). Drawing particular attention

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99 “I. S.,” 523-4. This author also commented on Sol’ntsev’s copy of the original parsuna, 523.
to “portraits of Patriarch Nikon as founder of the monastery 1657-1666, ... contemporary portraits of Tsars Aleksei Mikhailovich and Fedor Alekseevich and portraits of Empress Elizabeth Petrovna and Catherine II Alekseevna,” Kavelin explained that the display’s purpose was to commemorate the New Jerusalem Monastery’s most important patrons. Hung along side pictures of secular rulers and presenting the Patriarch as “as founder of the monastery,” the parsuna’s meaning(s) shifted further, affirming its potential to shape Nikon’s larger image.  

Kavelin provided a more detailed interpretation of the parsuna’s import in his short history of the New Jerusalem Monastery two years later. According to this reading, Nikon’s face is serious with sign of deep thought. If you look more carefully at the historical and well-known features of his face you will be persuaded more and more that the artist ... was contemporary to him. The painter accomplished his task very well, and his task was to depict the face of the great prelate for future generations. In this image, we recognize him [Nikon] based on the true proofs about his life, church and state activities and descriptions of his character, which was strong, tempered by overcoming seduction; his mind was bright and penetrating, his heart noble and his tongue without cunning. All these features are very clearly expressed in this ‘truly unshakable pillar of Orthodoxy.’ This description is the best proof of the similarity between this portrait and the real person.

While discussing the parsuna largely in terms of Nikon’s broader sphere of action, Kavelin’s comments reveal two important departures from earlier assessments of the painting. The first concerns the conditions of the parsuna’s display. Given the fact that the image was exhibited with portraits of the monastery’s imperial patrons, the

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100 Ibid, 523-4.
101 Leonid (Kavelin), Mesiatseslov Voskresenskogo, Novyi Jerusalim imenuemogo, Monastyria dla posetitelei i bogomol'tsev sei obiteli (Moscow: Tipografiia V. Got’e, 1870), 34-35. The exact dates of the parsuna’s transfer and the creation of the “gallery” are unknown. The gallery also included “portraits of the Holy Patriarchs of Moscow and All Russia and several metropolitans.”
102 Leonid (Kavelin), Kratkoe istoricheskoe skazanie, 33.

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Archimandrite’s assertion that painting’s purpose was simply to “depict the face of the great prelate for future generations” may be read as an attempt to deflect attention away from the actual conditions surrounding its creation, i.e., Nikon’s conflict with Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich. The second point regards the related issue of the Patriarch’s infallibility. Kavelin’s claim that the image served as “proof” of Nikon’s “overcoming seduction” and of his “tongue without cunning” are refutations of persistent Old Believer accusations against the Patriarch. These, however, were not the Archimandrite’s final words on the image or Nikon.

Dissatisfied with the image of Nikon projected by the New Jerusalem Monastery and the portrait gallery, Kavelin decided to create a much-expanded new exhibit dedicated primarily to the Patriarch. In the course of his research, the Archimandrite became aware of the rich, but dispersed collection of Nikon’s personal possessions preserved at New Jerusalem and decided to assemble and display all of these materials in a single location. The result of this project, which paralleled the restoration of the Resurrection Cathedral in 1873-1874, was the Museum Dedicated to the Memory of Holy Patriarch Nikon. Inaugurated on September 15, 1874 as part of a larger event celebrating the completion of the cathedral’s refurbishment, the museum drew immediate attention.

The following year Kavelin composed a detailed survey and description of the museum’s contents. This extremely rich manuscript, “Description of the Museum

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Dedicated to the Memory of Holy Patriarch Nikon. A Brief Chronicle of the Museum and Its Buildings/Halls,” makes it possible to reconstruct completely the museum’s eight distinct sections. According to this document, the museum “consists of Holy Patriarch Nikon’s personal effects which remain in Resurrection or New Jerusalem Monastery.” Its stated purpose was to “commemorate New Jerusalem’s founder.”104

Kavelin’s placement of the parsuna in the museum’s Central or Elizabethan hall created yet another new set of contexts and potential meanings for the image. In this case, the image was exhibited together with two other contemporary parsuny of Nikon, portraits of nine church hierarchs, primarily those associated with New Jerusalem, and more than sixty of the Patriarch’s possessions. The material cultural objects included items of everyday use, such as tableware, and, more importantly, symbols of Nikon’s status as a holy man, including his vestments epidril, sakkos, omofori and, such as his chetki and staff.105

The complex display of actual objects, some of which were depicted in the art, together with “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” and the other parsuny, had the potential to affect viewers’ relationship to and perception of Nikon’s image on two levels. First, it made the already realistic depiction of Nikon even more tangible, increasing the personal relationship between the image and its viewers. This point is supported by Prince N. S. Golitsyn’s encounter with the image in 1876. Referring to the parsuna, he exclaimed that “all this together creates an unusual effect as if the live Nikon stands in front of the

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104 RGADA f. 1625 op. 1 ed. Khr. 34. The first chapter of Leonid’s description was recently published as Leonid (Kavelin), “Opis’ muzeia, posviashchennogo imeni Sviateishego Patriarkha Nikona,” in Nikonovskie cheteniia v muzee “Novyi Ierusalim. Shbornik Statei G. M. Zelemskaia ed. (Moscow: Severnyi palomnik, 2003), 275-283.

105 Ibid, l. 1-170b.

128
viewer almost ready to talk!106 Second, in addition to commemorating Nikon as founder of the monastery the exhibit’s focus on existing examples of seventeenth century art and artifacts, directly connected the celebration of Nikon’s image with the burgeoning societal interest in Russian drevnosti.

In 1876, Kavelin published yet another new interpretation of the image. In this case he used it as a historical document. “In the Resurrection Monastery there is preserved a large painting depicting the most Holy Patriarch in all the greatness of his prelates’ dignity with staff in one hand and the other hand lying on an open book. He is speaking with the brethren about the Holy Bible.” Therefore, concluded Kavelin, “this painting serves as a remarkable addition to the life story of the Most Holy Patriarch.”107

With the exception of the celebrated 1905 Tauride Palace exhibition of portraiture in St. Petersburg, the parsuna remained part of the museum.108 There it served the same purpose described by Kavelin through the early 1920s. Incorporated in the reorganized Soviet “State Art-Historical Regional Museum in the City of Voskresenske,” in the mid-1920s the parsuna continued to be exhibited together with Nikon’s vestments and other belongings. This situation changed after the Second World War.109

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107 Arkhimandrit Leonid (Kavelin) Istoricheskoe opisanie stavropigal’nogo Voskresenskogo Novyi Ierusalim imenuemogo Monastyria (Moscow: Tipografiia I. Efimova, 1876), 22.
Damage to the *parsuna* incurred during the Nazi occupation and intentional destruction of the (former) New Jerusalem Monastery and its subsequent restoration simulated renewed interest in the image.\(^{110}\) The painting was acclaimed for its artistic and historical value until the collapse of the Soviet regime. It is currently on display at the New Jerusalem Monastery.

Original Paintings Based on "Patriarch Nikon with Clergy"

"Patriarch Nikon with Clergy" served as inspiration and source material for new artistic images of Nikon throughout the long nineteenth century. These consist of painted images, including portraits, historical Realist paintings, and mass-produced works, primarily engravings and lithographs. While striving to replicate accurately the Patriarch's physical and/or symbolic likeness as recorded in the *parsuna*, these works transformed the original image by adding to and/or subtracting from its content. In turn, they produced new interpretations. The plethora of images attests to the *parsuna*’s ongoing role in Russian artistic culture.

In 1858 either Ivan Ivanovich Stroev, or his son Stepan Ivanovich, both local painters working at the New Jerusalem Monastery in the mid-nineteenth century, made another small copy of the original. This image does not display the comparatively refined style, technique or realism of the seventeenth-century work. Yet its content is true to the original with two exceptions. The artist omitted the icon of the Holy Virgin. However, he included an additional symbol material cultural symbol of the Patriarch’s authority. In this

\(^{110}\) Romanov, 201-215. Romanov’s work includes four photographs of the damage to the *parsuna*. 

130
version, Archimandrite Gerasim holds a large tray bearing an ornate white patriarchal klobuk. 111

While failing to replicate exactly the impact created by Solntsev’s copy, this work nevertheless affected conceptions of Nikon. It has been repeatedly misrepresented as the original in important classic publications, including the second volume of William Palmer’s The Patriarch and the Tsar (1871) and Tri Veka (1912), the most substantial and lavish publication issued to commemorate the Romanov Dynasty’s tercentenary. Inclusion in Palmer’s work made it the only version of the original parsuna ever published outside Russia. 112

A nineteenth-century portrait from the Kirillo-Belozerskii Museum-Monastery by an unknown artist titled “Patriarch Nikon” is a prime example of an original nineteenth-century portrait based on “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy.” This work depicts Nikon from the waist up. Like the parsuna, it features Slavonic text, painted in gold letters and located directly above Nikon’s head, which reads “Holy Nikon Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.” The features of Patriarch’s face, beard and long hair, as well as details of his mitra, especially its distinctive lower band, and vestments, including white sakkos with designs in gold and large omofor with large, red four-ended crosses, are all clearly inspired by “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy.” In this image, Nikon is also depicted wearing

111 Records at the Department of Iconography at the State Historical Museum (GIM), Moscow, support the claim that the image published by Palmer was the work of one of the Stroevs. The description of the portrait listed in “Inventarnaiia kniga otdeia ikonografii kartin/maslo; nachata 15 Okt. 1928” (unpublished manuscript catalogue), as “‘Nikon’ (oil on canvas 42x33) 1858, by Stroev” matches this image. See M. A. Kruchkova, “Slovar’ masterov Voskresenskogo Novo-Ierusalimskogo monastyr’ia XVIII-nachala XX vekov,” in Nikonovskie cheteniia v muzee “Novyi Ierusamim. Sbornik Statej (Moscow: Severnyi palomnik, 2003), 293-296, for both Ivan Ivanovich Stroev’s and Stepan Ivanovich Stroev’s activities at New Jerusalem.

112 Palmer, vol. II, flyleaf; “Patriarkh Nikon s klirom. Iz alboma Sol’ntseva,” in Tri Veka. Rossiiia ot smuty do nashogo vremeni. Istoricheskii sbornik pod redaksiei V. V. Kallasha (Moscow: Tipografiia Tva I. D. Sytina, 1912), 8. The same incorrect attribution is found in Patriarkh Nikon i protopop Avvakum (Moscow: Novator, 1997), (no page number).
a single panagia and gold Crucifix. He likewise holds a wooden staff with bronze “apples” in his left hand. Nikon’s right hand is raised to chest level in the act of offering his blessing. An image of New Jerusalem Monastery is located over his right shoulder.113

It is clear these and the many other painted portraits inspired by the parsuna played a key role in disseminating and shaping the Patriarch’s image in Russian culture. However, a lack of contextual evidence concerning their display and reception precludes serious analysis at this time. Fortunately, there is no dearth of material pertaining to a more numerous, and perhaps more important, class of mass-produced images based on the seventeenth century original.114

Mass-Produced Artistic Images: Engravings, Lithographs and Photographs

Engravings and lithographs played a crucial role in extending and altering the life of “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy”, promoting its continued interpretation, transformation, distribution and use. The depiction of Nikon’s physical and symbolic likeness presented in that original were the paradigm for the vast majority of the engraved portraits of him created in the long nineteenth century. Like portrait painters, engravers and lithographers often transformed the content of seventeenth century parsuna by adding, subtracting or changing details while adhering to the core representation of Nikon. Engravings and lithographs based either directly or indirectly on the parsuna account for more than fifty

113 “Patriarkh Nikon” Oil on canvas (79x62 cm) KBIAKhmZ MZh-11 KP-985. I studied and photographed this image on display at the Kirillo-Belozerskii Museum-Monastery and at its display in GIM at the exhibit “Patriarkh Nikon,” Moscow, June 2002. It is published as “Portrait of Patriarch Nikon (1650s)” in Ferapontov monastyr’ v likakh i litsakh (Moscow: Rodnik, 1998), 57, and as “65 Patriarch Nikon” in Patriarkh Nikon. Oblachenia, lichnye veshchi, avtografy, vklady, portrety (Moscow: GIM, 2002), 146. For this painting’s display in the mid-nineteenth century see Varlaam (Arkhimandrit), Istoriko-arkheologicheskoe drevnostei i redkikh veshchei, nakhodshchikhsia v Kirillo-Belozerskom monastyre (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1859), 78.

114 I found records of what appears to be five separate portraits in just three volumes of GIM’s “Inventarnaia kniga otdela ikonografii kartin/maslo, nachata 15 Okt. 1928” (unpublished manuscript catalogue).
of seventy-five known mass produced images of Nikon making it clearly the most frequently reproduced and accessible representation of the Patriarch. These relatively inexpensive, mass-produced versions of the image were featured in the increasing number of books, pamphlets and other print media concerning Nikon and the New Jerusalem Monastery which appeared in the long nineteenth century. Most of these publications, including even the least expensive, featured portraits of Nikon.

The publication of mass-produced works based on the parsuna created new contexts and relationships between the image, written text and their viewer/reader. The process broke physical barriers between the viewer and the image. On the most basic level, mass-produced images provided access to Nikon’s image to those who did not/could not view the original. More specifically, they made it possible for individuals to hold artwork in their own hands. The portability of paper images bearing Nikon’s physical and symbolic likeness made it possible for people to experience his image in new locations, far removed from New Jerusalem, including the comfort of their own home. The intimacy of this contact enhanced the personal and even the spiritual, connection between the Patriarch’s image and its possessor.

The construction of a hybrid media connecting an artistic image with written texts created a “three dimensional relationship” between the image, viewer/reader and text. Presented on the cover, flyleaf, title page or first page of a book, pamphlet or article about Nikon, engravings provided the first source of information about the Patriarch. Because they preceded the written word, these images began to shape viewers’/readers’

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116 It is noteworthy that the texts accompanying the images rarely included accounts of Nikon’s endeavors between 1652 and 1666 other than monastery building.
117 This ideas are shaped by my reading of Scribner, xxvii-xxviii.
impressions of Nikon even before they read about him. Viewers/readers could move freely back and forth between the image and the text finding both clarifications for the artwork and a visual conception of an idea expressed in type. In this process, the association of the image with favorable verbal accounts of Nikon’s life, or vice versa, reinforced each other. Moreover, the single visual image became associated with a diverse body of information about the Patriarch.

Published engravings and lithographs had the potential to shape viewers’ actual encounters with the original parsuna displayed at New Jerusalem. If considered prior to a visit or pilgrimage to the monastery, the matrix of visual-verbal associations supplied by a hybrid media featuring an image based on the parsuna could provide an preexisting set of ideas easily transferable to the original. On the other hand, a person equipped with prior knowledge could also find new, previously unnoticed material in the original and have greater appreciation of its quality, realism, and grandeur than someone completely alien to it. When obtained after viewing the parsuna, perhaps while even still at New Jerusalem, engravings, lithographs, and later photographs allowed those exposed to the image for the first time at the monastery to obtain a copy for personal use. Regardless of whether they were beheld before or after viewing the original, engravings heightened the intimate connection between Nikon’s image, as represented in “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy,” and the individual.

Archimandrite Apollos II Alekseevskii, Archimandrite of the New Jerusalem Monastery (March 7, 1821-February 19, 1837) and author of multi-edition Nachertanie zhitiia i deianii Nikona, patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseia Rossii, played a key role in the creation and transmission of engravings and lithographs based on “Patriarch Nikon with

\[118\] Ibid, xxviii.
clergy.”\textsuperscript{119} Apollos promoted a broad, inclusive approach to understanding Nikon. Emphasizing the significance of \textit{drevnosti}, the Archimandrite recognized the value of artistic imagery as a primary source on par with written documents.\textsuperscript{120}

Archimandrite Apollos’ concept of connecting existing artistic and material cultural sources with Nikon’s life story began during his service at New Jerusalem. He later explained that “in the sixteen years of my tenure there [at the New Jerusalem Monastery], always having before my eyes his [Nikon’s] tomb, the signs of his high position, and evidence of his humility, I found pleasure in recalling events from his life, and unwittingly became deeply engaged in the fate of Nikon the hermit, the Patriarch, the Tsar’s friend and the prisoner.”\textsuperscript{121} Apollos employed the same strategy in his written histories about Nikon: “In addition to the biography I also included [images of] Nikon’s facial features, hands [held to perform a blessing] and his seal and emblem as well as some charters and letters which reflect Nikon’s spirit and the spirit of his time.”\textsuperscript{122} In this way, Apollos set the pace for subsequent biographical works on Nikon, many of which, regardless of their length or price, included an image of Nikon based on the original 

\textit{parsuna} “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy.”

Archimandrite Apollos commissioned the earliest known engraving based on the \textit{parsuna}, N. Afanasiev’s “Nikon” (1825).\textsuperscript{123} This relatively large work presents Nikon in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{119} I know of eight editions of Apollos’s work. They include those published in 1826, 1836, 1839, 1842, 1845, 1845/46, 1852, 1859. For more on Apollos, see Istoricheskoie opisanie stavropigial’nogo Voskresenskogo Novyi Ierusalim imenumogo monastyria, 80.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Arkhimandrit Apollos, Kratkoe Nachertanie zhizni i deianii Nikona, patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseia Rusi, s portretom’ ego 2nd ed. (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1836), II; Arkhimandrit Apollos, Nachertanie zhitiia i deianii Nikona, patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseia Rusi, Sochinenie Novospasskogo pervoklassnogo stavropigial’nogo monastyria (Moscow, 1845/6), IV-VI.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Apollos, Nachertanie zhitiia i deianii Nikona..., IV-V.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Ibid, V-VI.
\item \textsuperscript{123} I investigated and/or photographed several originals of this work including GIM 51680/894 I III 20001; RNB IZO INV 47633; and RM GR 24581. It was recently republished as “64 Patriarch Nikon” in Patriarkh Nikon. Oblacheniiia, lichnye veschi, avtografy, vklady, portrety (Moscow: GIM, 2002), 146.
\end{itemize}
three-quarter height, dressed in full patriarchal vestments. His right hand rests on the pages of an open book of Scripture. His right hand holds a wooden staff.¹²⁴ This image closely follows the likeness, posture and dress of the Patriarch found in the original. Afanasiev’s meticulous attention to the details of the Patriarch’s face, hair and mitra clearly show that his work was based on a close study of the parsuna.

Afanasiev’s work marks an important transformation of “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy”. While closely replicating Nikon’s physical and symbolic lichnost’, the artist deleted some aspects found in the original parsuna and added others. The most significant omissions included the clergy, his location in the patriarchal place, and the icon depicting the Holy Virgin with the Christ Child. New features include a second panagia resting upon Nikon’s chest and three additional books. A text located under the image reads “Nikon Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia born on May 24, 1605, died on August 17, 1681 in Yaroslavl’, buried on the 26th of the same month in the Church of the Resurrection, New Jerusalem Monastery. By the diligence of Archimandrite Apollos.”

Although preserving accurately Nikon’s physical and symbolic likeness, Afanasiev’s engraving changed the potential meaning and purpose of the original painting by eliminating key contextual features. The omission of the clergy is most significant in this regard. By excluding them, the artist removed the direct reference to Nikon’s life in New Jerusalem after his departure from Moscow in 1658. As a result, the image could easily be perceived as depicting the Patriarch at the apex, as opposed to the nadir, of his career. The image’s verbal text is also noteworthy in this context. It associates the image

See D. A. Rovinskii, Podrobnii slovar’ gravirovannykh portretoy vol. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1887), Col. 1382, No.2. Rovinskii explained that the engraving was an “imitation of the contemporary portrait located in the choir at New Jerusalem Resurrection Monastery.” It is likely that Apollos also commissioned Afanasiev to execute an engraving based on Dieterson’s parsuna. The original of this image is preserved at New Jerusalem. It was attached inside either the front or back cover in Kavelin’s Istoricheskoe opisanie.
with Nikon’s entire life, not just his tenure as Patriarch. Here the written caption is the sole link between Nikon and New Jerusalem Monastery (a function performed by the representations of the clergy in the original image). Thus, the image stands as a single representation of Nikon’s complete biography, making it the perfect accompaniment for published accounts of his life. Perhaps not surprisingly, Afanasiev’s work became the paradigm for a series of new images in a host of other books and articles about Nikon. 125

F. Milovidov’s “Nikon. Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia,” first published by Archimandrite Apollos in 1859, is a prime example of an engraved portrait of Nikon based on the original parsuna as interpreted by Afanasiev. 126 This image depicts Nikon, as described above from the waist up. The Patriarch’s left hand, raised above his chest, holds a staff. However, his left hand is cropped out of view. The text located directly below the image reads: “Nikon. Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia.” Nikon’s image and the text are enclosed within an artistic rendering of an embellished frame, topped by

124 The staff is slightly different. It is taller, the top, being at the same level as Nikon’s face.
125 These include three slightly different versions created by F. Milovidov. These are “Patriarkh Moskovskii i vseia Rossi” in Apollos, Nachertanie zhitii i deianii Nikona, patriarcha Moskovskogo i vseia Rossi. Sochinenie Arkhimandrita Apollosa 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1859), flyleaf. An original, uncut and unbound copy of this work is preserved as GIM 46637; “Patriarkh Moskovskii i vseia Rossi,” in G. Georgievskii, Nikon Sviateishii Patriarkh Vserossiiski i osnovannyi im Novii Jerusalim 3rd ed. (St. Petersburg, 1902), flyleaf; and “Nikon. Patriarkh Moskovskii i vseia Rossi,” in V. F. Botsianovskii, Patriarkh Nikon: tragediia v 5 d. i 6 kartinkh (Petrograd, 1923), cover. Rozhinskii, col. 1382, believed that Milovidov’s “Nikon. Patriarkh Moskovskii i vseia Rossi,” in Nachertanie zhitii i deianii Nikona, patriarcha Moskovogo i vseia Rossi. Sochinenie Arkhimandrita Apollosa 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1859), was based on “the same original,” in other words on the parsuna.

N. Rozanov also created at least three images apparently based on the parsuna. These include “Nikon: Patriarkh Moskovskii i vseia Rossia,” in Platon Bektov, Panteon rossiiskikh avtorov’ pt. 1 (Moscow, 1801); “Nikon: Patriarkh Moskovskii i vseia Rossia. Iz Sobranii portretov izdavaemykh Platonom Bektovym,” in Sobranie portretov rossiian znamenitkh (Moscow, 1821); and “Nikon: Patriarkh Moskovskii i vseia Rossia,” in Portreti imenitykh muzei Rossiskoi tserkvi (Moscow, 1843).

Others images include “V. Sch.,” “Patriarkh Nikon,” in Patriarkh Nikon s portreton pervosviatitelia (St. Petersburg, 1869), flyleaf; Glushkov, “Patriarch Nikon,” in V. A. Altaev, V debrialkh Mory. Destvo patriarkha Nikon (Moscow, 1912), flyleaf; and A. Belyi, “Patriarch Nikon,” in A. S. Suvorin, Patriarkh Nikon. Raskaz 4th ed. (St. Petersburg, 1893), flyleaf. See also the image “Russki patriarkh” held at the Russian National Library, St. Petersburg as RNB E. TUM/4-N644 and at the State Historical Museum, Moscow as GIM 70156;
images of a patriarchal mitra and zhezl. A reproduction of the Patriarch’s signature, reading “Nikon, by Grace of God” is included directly under the image, but outside the frame.

While clearly based on the contemporary likeness of Nikon, this image lacks the realistic detail of the parsuna and Afanasiev’s copy. The incorporation of the Patriarch’s autograph, which adds a strong sense of authenticity to the visual image, is an obvious manifestation of Archimandrite Apollos’s efforts to combine artistic and written drevnosti. However, the signature is not contemporary to the original image, as Nikon penned it prior to 1658. Thus, this text, like the one included in Afanasiev’s works fixes Nikon’s image with the peak of his power, not in the actual context of the parsuna’s creation.

Milovidov’s work became a standard representation of Nikon and continued to be published, with slight changes, into the early Soviet period. New variations on Milovidov’s version, in which Nikon’s right hand is raised in a “Nikonian style” blessing, continued to appear through the end of the long nineteenth century. These include “V. Shch.’s” “Patriarkh Nikon” (1869), Glushkov’s, “Patriarkh Nikon” (1912) and an image of unknown origin held at the State Historical Museum, Moscow.

Other artists took more inclusive approaches when creating new images based on the original parsuna. The earliest attempt to present a more complete copy, “Nikon Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia,” appeared in the fourth edition of Archimandrite

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126 Nachertanie zhitiia i deianii Nikona, patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseia Russi. Vnovo ispravlennoe i dopolnennoe s priloženiemi perepisk Nikon s tsarem Alekseem Mikhailovichem i vazhneishih gramot (Moscow, 1859), flyleaf.
127 The plate used to print Nikon’s signature is currently displayed at New Jerusalem.
128 “V. Sch.”, “Patriarkh Nikon,” in Patriarkh Nikon s portretom pervosviatitelia (St. Petersburg, 1869), Flyleaf; Glushkov, “Patriarkh Nikon,” in V. A. Altaev, V debriakh Mordy. Detstvo patriarkha Nikona (Moscow, 1912), flyleaf; GIM 80519122.
Apollos’s work in 1846. Described by Apollos as a “portrait of Nikon, from a contemporary [painting] of him in the New Resurrection Monastery,” this image stresses the physical context depicted in the *parsuna*, but falls short of the original’s realistic treatment of the Patriarch’s physical and symbolic likeness. The features of the patriarchal place, both the lower, wooden section with columns, and the upper section denoted by fringed fabric draped across the top and left of the image are faithfully reproduced. Other details, such as the Oriental rug lying at the Patriarch’s feet, are also included. Here, the open book of Scripture even has lines denoting a written “text.” Only the icon of the Holy Virgin is absent. The depiction of Nikon, on the other hand, is less accurate. The Patriarch’s face bears no resemblance to the one presented in the original image. The details of his vestments and other symbols of authority are incomplete.  

The engraver “Pannemaker” made what at first appears to be the most complete and accurate engraving of the seventeenth-century *parsuna*. This image, “Patriarch Nikon with His Clergy,” appeared in the popular illustrated journal *Niva* in early 1881 and another article of unknown origins. However, contrary to written texts connected with the engraving, comparative iconographic analysis reveals it to be an exact copy of Solntsev’s reproduction, not the *parsuna*.  

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129 Unknown artist, “Nikon Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia,” in Apollos, *Nachertanie zhitiia i deianii Nikona, patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseia Rusi....* (Moscow, 1845/6), reverse flyleaf. The quoted description can be found on page 190.  
130 N. Boev, “Patriarch Nikon,” *Niva* (no. 8 February 21, 1881), 183-187. The image appeared on 184 in Niva. I found two other copies of the image, in Russian archival collections. These are RGALI F. 191 Effremov op 1 ed khr 3480 l. 62 and GIM 80519/68 I III32054. These images originally accompanied an article of currently unknown origins titled “Patriarchs and Metropolitans” in February 1883. Comparative analysis of the features of Nikon’s face and *mitra*, as well as the faces of the clergy, prove that Pannemaker copied Solntsev, not the original. The text included on the RGALI and GIM images proclaim it is “from a painting contemporary to Nikon located at the Resurrection Monastery close to Moscow.” Pannemaker also made engravings of the Dieterson *parsuna* and other material cultural objects/symbols associated with Nikon including a *mitra*. Leonid Kavelin included the engraving of the same *parsuna* on the flyleaf of his *Istoricheskoe opisanie*. For the engraving of the *mitra* see RNB IZO Inv. 116647/l.
N. Boev’s discussion of the engraving published in Niva emphasized the image’s significance in terms of its depiction of drevnosti associated with Nikon’s position.

According to him,

this is a remarkable and important image of the famous Patriarch ... Nikon is presented here in the full greatness of his dignity, ... Patriarch Nikon wears the same dress which is preserved to this day in the Patriarchal Treasury in Moscow. These are his omophor, mitra, panagia, cross, and the horned zhelz in his left hand. All these details of dress, particularly the mitra, are the subject of special attention by our lovers of antiquities. The mitra was smithed from thick golden sheets, decorated with large and excellently finished enamels with pearls and large precious stones. The mitra is so heavy that only a person with great physical stamina like Patriarch Nikon could wear it. 131

The article in Niva also connected the image with circumstances surrounding the creation of the original. Paraphrasing the Patriarch’s own explanation for leaving Moscow, Boev explained, “Nikon departed for his new cloister just to shake the dust from his feet in the gates of the Kremlin. There [New Jerusalem], Nikon felt that he would experience grave misfortunes and he decided to fix his image for future generations in all the greatness of his high dignity just to make evil for his enemies. This plan, concluded Boev, was a success. “It is interesting that his [Nikon’s] enemies, who carefully tried to erase memory of him, did not have the courage to touch this remarkable monument.” 132

The publication of and commentary on Pannemaker’s “Patriarch Nikon with His Clergy” provides an important counterpart to the increasingly transmuted mass-produced images inspired by the parsuna appearing in the second half of the long nineteenth century. By following closely the presentation of the image found in Antiquities of the Russian State, both visually and verbally, Niva presented an accurate reproduction of the

131 Ibid.
132 Ibid.
painting to a wider public outside the reading rooms of major libraries and the homes of the well-to-do. In doing so, this publication further testifies to the original *parsuna*’s place in the expanding societal fascination with *drevnosti*. Finally, this example illustrates how even a copy of a copy of “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” stimulated new commentary on and assessments of the original work and thus the Patriarch’s image in Russian culture.

L. Gedan’s “Patriarkh Nikon” (1891) is to Pannemaker’s engraving what Milovidov’s work is to Afanasiev’s. It provides a relatively detailed close-up of Nikon, depicted from the waist up. It also features accurate reproductions of the Patriarch’s facial features, posture/pose (his left hand holds the staff, the right rests on a wooden structure) and the vestments, *sakkos*, large *omofor*, *prochie* and others symbols, *mitra*, *zhezl*, gold *panagiia* and gold cross, as presented in Solntsev’s and Pannemaker’s copies. This engraving is noteworthy because it exemplifies continued attempts to preserve and disseminate the physical likeness of Nikon captured in the original *parsuna* at the advent of the twentieth century.133

The end of the long nineteenth century witnessed the appearance of mass-produced photographic reproductions of “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy.” The image “Founder of the Monastery Holy Patriarch Nikon 1656” published in *A Souvenir From New Jerusalem* (no date) is a prime example. It is an exact, though edited, photographic copy of the *parsuna* featuring Nikon, from the knee up, as well as the middle (wooden) section of the patriarchal place. However, all of the other contexts provided in the original

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141
work, including the clergy, book, upper part of the patriarchal place and icon, were deleted.¹³⁴

This image provides an interesting contrast to the engravings and lithographs discussed above. Unlike the earlier reproductions, it was not connected with a written text other than its caption/title. Rather, it was part of a visual text featuring twenty-four photographic images of the interiors and exteriors of New Jerusalem. As the first in a series of photographs, its stated purpose was to present Nikon as the monastery’s founder. The album’s title, A Souvenir from New Jerusalem, clarifies that it was sold at the monastery and was intended to commemorate a visit there. More specifically, the attribution “souvenir,” as well as the content of other photographs, suggest that the memento targeted primarily tourists rather than religious pilgrims. All of these factors make it an excellent source of Nikon’s and the parsuna’s place in modern Russian popular culture.¹³⁵

The transformation of “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” did not end with engravers, lithographers and photographers. Nor did the evolving relationship between the mass-produced art work, viewer, and text halt with an image’s publication. Research in Russian archives and the graphic art departments of national museums and libraries provides specific examples of how individuals continued to alter mass-produced copies of the parsuna for a variety of historical, artistic and religious endeavors. Negotiating the images on their own terms, people gave them new contexts, purpose(s) and meaning(s).

Removing the artwork from the books and journals, they separated the visual images

¹³⁴ Na pamiat' iz Novogo Ierusalima (no place or date), “1. Osnovatel’ monastyria Patriarkh Nikon 1656 g.”
¹³⁵ Ibid. Many of the images included in this album are the same as the ones found in early twentieth century collections of postcards. See, for example, “Novyi Ierusalim” (Moscow: Izd. M. Kampel,
from published texts. Concatenating the engravings with additional new visual and written materials, they gave the images new life. In short, people personalized Nikon’s image.

Former private collections now housed in the Russian State Historical Museum and Russian State Archive of Literature and Art offer examples of how some people extracted pages bearing engravings based on the parsuna and kept them as part of their own private portrait galleries of famous historical and cultural figures. A. P. Lavrov’s collection of engravings, which included two images considered here, exemplifies this. Other people appended their own original texts to images clipped from publications. A. E. Zarin, for example, personalized the engraving by Gedan extracted from A. A. Bykov’s Patriarkh Nikon. Bibliograficheskii ocherk by attaching it to his own notes about the Patriarch.

Some people employed the images as part of more complex collections devoted to Nikon. P. A. Efremov, biographer, historian of Russian literature, and collector of books and engravings, assembled an interesting collection of sources about the Patriarch. It comprised several engravings based on the parsuna, including Pannemaker’s “Nikon with Clergy,” as well as associated written materials such as the articles related to the prototype’s restoration printed in Moskovskii Vedomosti. This collection is especially noteworthy because it supplies evidence of personal interest in the original seventeenth century image of the Patriarch as well as mass-produced copies of it.

136 GIM 80519/68 I III 32054 and GIM 80519/22 I III 32047.
137 RGALI f. 208 Zarin op. 1 ed. khr. 42, 156-157.
138 RGALI f. 191 Efremov op. 1 ed. khr. 3119, 61-62.
One private collection preserved in the Russian National Library shows how people used images based on the *parsuna* to create their own “exhibits” devoted to Nikon. This display consists of four engravings and a written text, clipped from different publications and mounted on a large sheet of heavy paper. The artistic images include two reproductions of the *parsuna*, one of Dieterson’s work and another depicting Nikon’s *mitra*. The written text concerns the *mitra*.\(^{139}\) This presentation clearly highlights the concept of *drevnosti* by connecting reproductions of the painting together with a graphic representation of and texts about existing material cultural objects belonging to Nikon. As such, it demonstrates how the image’s appeal as antiquities went beyond purely professional and academic interest and entered into the popular domain.

A series of late-nineteenth-century posters advertising the New Jerusalem Monastery currently held at the Russian Museum and the Russian National Library suggest that the private collections and displays of images featuring Nikon are representative of a much more wide-spread practice. These placards clearly illustrated and promoted the practice of creating such informal displays. Each pictures a different “homemade” collage consisting of a mass-produced image of Nikon and various antiquities at the New Jerusalem Monastery, many of the latter reminiscent of the photographs in *A Souvenir From New Jerusalem*. Here the attempt to portray informal, individualized displays, most obvious in one of the poster’s inclusion of an image with curled edges held in place by a “thumbtack”, reflects accurately the personal touch manifest in the actual archival sources.\(^ {140}\)

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\(^{139}\) RNB IZO E. TUM/4-N644 Inv. 116647/1.

\(^{140}\) RM Gr Lub 681, “Vidy Voskresenskogo monastyria, imenuemago ‘Novyi Ierusalim’” chromolithograph on paper 41.7x 65 cm (Moscow: Izd. Morozovych, 1893); RNB IZO E 134457, “Vidy Voskresenskogo monastyria, imenuemago ‘Novyi Ierusalim’” chromolithograph on paper (Moscow: Tipografia I. D. Sytina, 1898); RM Gr Lub 680, “Vidy Voskresenskogo monastyria, imenuemago ‘Novyi Ierusalim’” chromolithograph on paper (Moscow: Tipografia I. D. Sytina, 1898).
Another example preserved at the State Historical Museum in Moscow provides evidence of how individuals transformed mass-produced images into a home-made devotional shrines or objects of inspiration. In this case, someone removed the lithograph “Nikon Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia” from Archimandrite Apollos’s Nachertanie zhitia i deianii Nikona (1845/6) and trimmed it, removing the written text. Next, the owner backed the reduced image by gluing it to stiffer paper and attaching a loop of natural fiber cord so that it could be hung. Thus modified, the image provided a permanent presence in a private space. Its small size (approximately 17x11cm) meant that it could only be viewed in very close proximity and suggests that it was intended for intimate contact such as personal devotion. Its worn, tattered edges testify to its long use. Much more than an artistic copy published in a book, this personalized image proves the significance that even a comparatively poor reproduction of “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” had in peoples’ everyday lives. 141

Not everyone who removed the engravings from the favorable context in which they first appeared did so out of admiration for the Patriarch. An example from the Manuscript Department of the Library of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg shows how mass-produced images could be employed toward a completely different goal. In this case, the compiler of a handwritten Old Believer book pasted an engraving, cut from an unknown publication, onto the page facing the introduction of anti-Nikon tale. By including the engraving, the compiler of the manuscript created a new hybrid media, which not only combined visual and verbal imagery, but also employed the “modern” means of reproducing artistic visual imagery with a “traditional” hand written text. Placed

Jerusalim” chromolithograph on paper 67.5x50.2 cm (Moscow: lzd. Morozovykh, 1899). The first of these sources includes the depiction of the curled edge image and thumbtack.

145
in the context of the negative verbal treatment of the Patriarch, the visual image took on new meaning(s). Here, the power of the image/viewer/text relationship discussed above worked in reverse, associating Nikon's physical and symbolic likeness with unfavorable connotations. This ironic twist serves as an important reminder that while, on one hand, mass produced images inspired by the parsuna could shape favorable opinions of the Patriarch, on the other, they provided new avenues to denigrate his image. This use of the imagery illustrates yet another aspect of the diverse and seeming endless range of possibilities to negotiate “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” and underscores its continuing resonance on all levels of Russian society.  

Conclusions

The findings presented in this chapter reveal the active role the parsuna “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” played in Russian history and culture. My research shows that the parsuna both reflected the conditions of its creation and shaped subsequent perceptions about Nikon by engendering new political, social, religious, and cultural meaning. While the image originally served as a declaration of Nikon's position under a specific set of circumstances, it continued to mold ideas about the Patriarch on both elite and popular levels, as the physical contexts of its display and larger social, political, religious, artistic and cultural norms shifted over time.

The parsuna, like the Kii Cross system of imagery, discussed earlier represents a complex iconographic expression of the Patriarch's agenda at a specific time. Considered as part of a larger discourse espoused by Nikon in the mid-1660s, “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” sheds new light on one of the most crucial aspects of his patriarchate, namely his

141 GIM 45858 I III 14967.

146
efforts to retain the patriarchal dignity after his departure from Moscow in 1658. Comparative and iconographical analyses of the art and Nikon’s own written statements prove the painting to be a visual and symbolic refutation of the accusations mounting against him in the mid-1660s, especially the primary charge that he renounced the patriarchate. Nikon’s self-representation in the parsuna and his writings, especially those relating visions, reinforce his image as “Patriarch” and counter the claims that he abandoned his throne in three ways. Both the artistic and the verbal texts denote him as “Patriarch,” associate him with/present him in material cultural symbols, including omophor, epidril, mitra, zhezl, panagiia and gold cross, which signify the full dignity of the Russian Patriarch, and locate him physically in the “patriarch’s place.” Moreover, the combination of the parsuna’s size, style and content insure that Nikon both looks and acts like the Patriarch. Nikon’s decision to have himself depicted together with his clergy during a liturgical service, not only places him within the realm of his spiritual authority and associates him with other important symbols, but shows him fulfilling his duties as holy man, pastor and spiritual leader. However, these sources also show that, during this crucial juncture, Nikon presented himself as not only as Patriarch, but as a divinely graced defender of the Russian Orthodox faith and its ecclesiastical prerogatives.

Although conceived and created under extremely unfavorable circumstances, “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” became the most widely renowned and most frequently employed artistic representation of Nikon. Several interconnected factors regarding style and content explain the parsuna’s increasing resonance in Russian history and culture. Thought to be painted “from life,” the image was believed to present an accurate likeness of the Patriarch’s unique physical characteristics, especially his facial features. This belief

142 BAN 25.7.7, l. 42 ob.
was important for several reasons. First, the life-like depiction of Nikon's visage conveyed his forceful character caused people to ponder his character traits and served as a point of departure for commentaries on his life and reign. In this way, the *parsuna* eventually became symbolic of Nikon's entire patriarchate, and, in some cases, his entire life, rather than the discrete circumstances it depicted. Second, the *parsuna*'s style and its antique nature, both in terms of form and content, became increasingly relevant, familiar and pertinent, as art became recognized as a source of history, historical Realist painting gained prominence, and society's fascination with Russian *drevnosti* grew apace. Written commentaries on the artwork and its actual display/exhibition make this point. Third, the realistic presentation of Nikon's physical and symbolic characteristics served as prototypes for later artists' efforts to create new works depicting the Patriarch and attests to the *parsuna*'s bellwether function in Russian artistic culture. While aiming to replicate Nikon's physical and/or symbolic likeness found in the *parsuna*, these works contributed to the original image's transformation by adding to and/or subtracting from its content and by opening it to ever-larger audiences.

My investigations of the imagery inspired by "Patriarch Nikon with Clergy" supply insights into the Patriarch's place in the "lived experience" by examining the largely neglected and forgotten significance of mass-produced images of Nikon. The appearance of engravings, lithographs and photographs based on the *parsuna* exposed an increasingly large public to this extraordinary portrait while simultaneously creating a complex new set of relationships between image, viewer and verbal text. Finally, archival evidence substantiates of the many ways people negotiated mass-produced images on their own terms and for their personal purposes and illustrates how the personalized images became a part individuals' daily lives.
The conclusions reached in this chapter complement those drawn from my investigation of Nikon's Kii Cross system of imagery and thus support the dissertation's primary contentions. First, analysis of the original parsuna “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” provides further confirmation that Nikon conceived complex religious and political doctrines, including the preservation of ecclesiastical prerogatives against the burgeoning encroachments of the state. It also confirms that the Patriarch was a significant and influential patron of the arts who created comprehensive and lasting iconographic expressions of his principal beliefs and initiatives. Second, this analysis confirms that Nikon’s artistic commissions outlived him continuing to shape artistic depictions of the Patriarch and inform the discourse about him and his historically significant activities, most notably the relationship between the church and state, into the twentieth century.
CHAPTER IV

NIKON’S IMAGE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY HISTORICAL REALIST PAINTING

"History painting is necessary ... and must occupy the present day artist to the degree that it parallels the present and gives the viewer food for thought."  
-Nikolai Kramskoi

Patriarch Nikon became an important topic in Russian historical realist painting from the genre’s emergence in the 1860s to its nadir in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century. What, if Kramskoi’s comments noted above are accepted as an artistic program of action, can the proliferation of history paintings depicting Nikon reveal about the Patriarch’s resonance in late nineteenth-century Russian cultural life? The present chapter addresses this question by investigating the creation and reception of seven paintings by three artists, N. I. Nevrev, A. D. Litovchenko, and S. D. Miloradovich, all of who selected Nikon as the subject of important, if not career defining, works.

My analysis of the artists’ representations of Nikon is multi-layered. The chapter begins by establishing the larger historical contexts and conditions that spawned the new realist genres of painting in Russia in general and fostered the formulation of new images of the Patriarch in Russian historiography, popular literature and historical realist painting in specific. Then, I examine written sources of the historical events depicted that were available to the artists and their contemporary audiences. Next, I discuss the artists’ construction of new images of Nikon, employing the writings artists, as well as other involved parties, concerning the subject of Nikon. Providing my own iconographical analysis of each of the paintings, I offer original interpretations of their meaning(s) and deconstruct them in efforts to establish “how they work.” Finally, I explore the paintings’
reception in late nineteenth-century Russian society analyzing both private correspondences between artists and art collectors and published reviews by professional art critics.

My primary concerns are the paintings' content and perceived meaning(s), not their artistic merit. Therefore, my research attempts to determine the sources which shaped the artists' conception of Nikon and focuses on ways in which the they formulated Nikon's image, especially the symbols of his power and authority, and contexts within the paintings, including the depiction of other historical figures and physical settings. I aim to show that far from being mere illustrations of written histories, the historical realist images of Nikon are complex, inclusive and original compositions based on the wealth of historical, artistic and material cultural sources available in nineteenth-century Russia.

Analysis of the critical reviews of the paintings published in the contemporary periodical press offer additional insight into the ideas about Nikon circulating in Russian society during the period of reform and reaction. These sources highlight not only the critics' impressions of the Patriarch's representation in the historical realist paintings, but the preconceived notions about Nikon that the reviewers brought to the new works. Perhaps more importantly, critical reviews add new dimensions to Nikon's resonance in Russian culture by providing the views of individuals other than historians and those directly involved in promoting the Patriarch's image. Thus, the reviews tell as much, or even more about Nikon's resonance as a cultural icon as they are about the paintings they discuss. Moreover, the reviews offer the researcher a prime opportunity to gauge the impact of historical scholarship and other literature devoted to the Patriarch on educated society. These rich materials, not the scant and largely ideologically motivated readings of the paintings offered by later Soviet scholars, serve as the primary sources for my
investigation of the paintings’ and Nikon’s larger significance in Russian culture in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The investigation of Patriarch Nikon’s image in Russian historical realist paintings is not an end in itself. On the contrary, my efforts to determine the forces that shaped the creation and reception of new artistic images of the Patriarch highlight the complex diversity of the perspectives on and ideas about Nikon prevalent in the nineteenth century. Thus, I continue to show that the investigation of nineteenth-century historical scholarship on Nikon is only one of several ways to assess the significance of Patriarch’s image in late imperial Russian society. More specifically, the analysis of the creation and reception of historical realist paintings provides a prime opportunity to judge the impact that the display and promotion of seventeenth-century artwork and material culture related to Nikon had upon nineteenth-century Russian culture.

Society and Realist Art in Nineteenth-Century Russia During the Period of Reform and Reaction

In the nineteenth century Russia lagged behind other major European powers. In a concerted effort to catch up, the Russian State embarked on a series of ambitious legal, social, and economic reforms. The first sweeping measure was the emancipation of serfs (1861), followed by judicial and educational reforms of 1864. The judicial reforms, which introduced a jury system, opened proceedings to the public, separated judicial structures from administrative control, and recognized the principle of equality before the law.\textsuperscript{1} The Public School reform (1864), supervised by the Ministry of National Enlightenment, opened public elementary schools for the peasants with the goal of basic literacy.

\textsuperscript{1} R. C. Wortman \textit{The Development of A Russian Legal Consciousness} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976). After 1872, trials for crimes against the state were held secretly, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior.
By the 1860s, Russia was also rapidly industrializing. At that time, two socio-economic processes with far-reaching consequences emerged. First, the diversification of Russian society opened up new avenues of social mobility which propelled the descendants of former serfs, peasants, lower clergy, and urban lower classes into the ranks of a new raznochintsy.² All of the painters discussed in this chapter exemplify these trends. The rapid state-led industrialization created significant fortunes. These fortunes were not only used for private consumption, but were also donated for social causes. Former merchants were rapidly transformed into industrialists and philanthropists. The Tret’iakovs, Morozovs, and Mamontovs provided material support for, and partly determined the content of, new artistic creations.

The radical reforms and direction in which Russia was moving (Western- versus inward-looking) and desired political changes polarized Russian society. In the second half of the nineteenth century Russian society was divided among several ideological lines. On the left side of the continuum were “Enlighteners,” whose main ideologue was Nikolai Chernyshevskii (1829-1889). Chernyshevskii was close to classic western social democrats. He believed not only in political (parliamentary) democracy, but also in improving social conditions through economic redistribution. Chernyshevskii and his followers also rejected Russian national uniqueness and believed Russia to be part of the West, albeit in need of modernizing. The Enlighteners of the 1860s were the precursors of the Populist ideologues of the 1870 and Social Revolutionaries of the 1880s. Continuing with the leftist agenda, Populists and Social Revolutionaries believed in more radical measures, but viewed Russia as unique. Unlike Enlighteners, these were radical

movements advocating hegemony of the masses over the educated elite. The most known
group among the Populists was the “People’s Will.” In some ways, Populism was a
rejection of rapid capitalist development in the 1860s. Populists tried, but were
unsuccessful, in creating a synthesis between anti-capitalist ideas of Russian peasants and
bourgeois-democratic Western ideas of the Russian intelligentsia. 3

In the middle of the ideological spectrum were Liberals, who like the
Enlighteners, promoted Western values of progress, individual dignity, and capitalist
development. Unlike Enlighteners, liberals did not go in the direction of social
democracy. Instead, they believed in parliamentary democracy, democratic constitution
and the rule of law.

On the right side of the ideological continuum were the reactionaries or
conservatives. This group, led by the Pan-Slavist Nikolai Danilevskii (1822-1885),
actively opposed not only revolution and social radicalism, but even the state-led reforms
of Alexander II. Reactionaries and conservatives tried to create a protective fence around
Russia, which they saw as a leader of a new cultural civilization, against the West. 4 In
short, the Russian political and social debates of the late-nineteenth century focused on
the ideal political system, the future of economic development, radicalism of reforms and
geopolitical position.

These political and social debates serve as an important context in which to
understand Nikon’s significance in Russian society in the second half of the nineteenth
century. The Patriarch’s association with reforms and enlightenment, his emphasis on

3 A. Walicki, A History of Russian Thought From the Enlightenment to Marxism, H. Andrews-
Rusiecka trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), 183-202, 225-235. See also F. Venturi, Roots
of Revolution, A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth-Century Russia F. Haskell
legality, and his perceived roles as an opponent of unlimited autocratic power and
defender of the Russian people, finally, attributes conveniently presented by
contemporary historians, resonated in nineteenth-century Russian society.

The social and economic conditions of the second half of the nineteenth century
left an indelible imprint on Russian art and culture. The appearance of new groups of
people, the introduction of new genres, and the reconceptualization of art’s function
transformed the Russian artistic world. Art was now deemed a great tool of education and
enlightenment. Chernyshevskii’s seminal assertion that “the goal of art is to show society
what aspects of reality are good and beneficial for it [society], why should these aspects
be encouraged by society, and what aspects of reality are harmful and adverse for it
[society], and should therefore be eliminated or, at the very least, weakened in order to
achieve human happiness” became an ideology and program of action. The realist art
depicting daily life [byt] emerged in opposition to the conservative Academy, which
promoted idealist art divorced from social problems. In contrast, the realist art took its
themes from the pressing problems of its day. In the 1860s, it became the dominant
artistic genre in Russia.5

The changing purpose(s) and meaning of art required corresponding changes in its
display, promotion, and evaluation. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the
emergence of national and local museums and galleries, alternative venues for display
(traveling exhibitions), professional critics, and new and more intimate relationships
between patron and artist. The foundation of the Tovarishchestvo peredvizhnych

4 A. Walicki, 291-297; E. C. Thaden, Conservative Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Russia
5 Russian realism was part of a larger European trend that began after the Revolutions of 1848. The
aims and style of Russian realists, were not unlike those of Millet and Corot.

155
khudozhestvennykh vystavok [Society for Traveling Art Exhibitions] (hereafter Tovarishchestvo) was among the most revolutionary innovation.

The Tovarishchestvo began as a group of young professional artists, disenchanted with the official Academy. In 1863, the graduating class of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts broke with tradition and refused to paint a compulsory subject “The Festival of the Gods in Vaihalla” as part of the competition for the Large Gold Medal. Instead, fourteen participating painters demanded the right to choose their own subjects. After their demands were rejected, the students resigned and founded their own artel’ [cooperative] in which each of the members contributed a portion of his profits to support less fortunate colleagues. In 1870, the cooperative became known as Tovarishchestvo peredvizhnych khudozhestvennykh vystavok, its members as were called peredvizhniki [Wanderers]. The following year it held its first exhibit. The peredvizhniki’s primary goals included exposing a broader segment of the society to Russian realist art, gaining professional status and earning a living free of the academic bureaucracy. They produced realist genre paintings, historical realist paintings, portraits and landscapes. From the start, the group was supported financially by Pavel Tret’iakov, a leading merchant-patron, who spent nearly a million roubles on the peredvizhniki’s paintings. The group’s members could also count on the favorable opinion of V. V. Stasov, Russia’s most outspoken art critic, sympathetic to realism. The Realism championed by the peredvizhniki dominated Russian artistic world until when it was replaced by the aesthetic and ideals of the Russian Silver Age.6

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The historical realist painting that emerged in the 1860s combined the
Romanticism of the previous epoch with a realist interpretation of conflict. Romantics
were fascinated with extraordinary personalities or superheroes whose noble virtues were
incompatible and in perpetual conflict with mundane, if not outright hostile, environment.
They saw the conflict between the individual and the environment as something
unavoidable and predetermined by forces beyond one’s control. The realists in general
and the historical realists in particular reinterpreted conflict as the outcome of a conscious
and deliberate actions and decisions taken by the hero. Importantly, both romantics and
realists looked to the past as a source of compelling stories and strong individuals.7

The type of conflicts chosen by romantics and realists were different, however.
For romantics, Biblical and ancient events controlled by Fatum or Divine Providence
placed individuals in a whirlwind of uncontrollable circumstances. Protagonists, although
strong and morally resolute, were in essence helpless. The realists, on the other hand,
looked to the more recent, often national past for examples of people who took control
and made fateful decisions. Aleksander Hertzen, the “father of Russian Populism,”
clarified these sentiments when he proclaimed: “we need to seek new ideals in the
humanity’s struggle for the ideas of freedom, human dignity, and eternal progress; this
should be the leading idea of the arts. The struggle is evident in history, which has
victims and martyrs. So [artists should] go and reproduce the extraordinary events of
humanity’s bleak history.”8

and “Pavel Tret’iakov (1830-1898), Merchant-Patron of the Russian Realists” Ph. D. diss., Indiana
University, 1989).
7 A. G. Vereshchagina, Istoriicheskaia kartina v russkom iskusstve. Shestedesiatyje gody XIX veka
Interest in the Russian past could be found in the characteristics of the second half of the nineteenth century. Shaken by the political, social and economic turmoil created in the period of reform and reaction, society looked to the past to find parallels with and explanations for the present. In the words of N. Kramskoi, one of Russia’s most celebrated realists painters, “history painting is necessary ... and must occupy the present day artist to the degree that it parallels the present and gives the viewer food for thought.”9 Following this line of thought, historical realist painters sought to comprehend the larger social import of history and to depict Russian history in authentic, convincing and recognizable images. Recent advances in historical scholarship made this possible.

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed significant developments in historical scholarship and the popularization of history. The new direction in history was led largely by Sergei Mikhailovich Solov’ev (1820-1879), whose twenty-nine volume History of Russia From the Earliest Times (1851-1879) “mark[s] the transition from romanticism to realism and the firm establishment of ‘scientific’ historiography in Russia.”10 Beginning with Solov’ev, historical studies in Russia entered a new era characterized by the scientific and critical investigation of primary sources. However, interest in Russian history extended beyond the academe and became a societal past time. Numerous historical and thick literary journals regularly published historical studies and reviews of recent historical scholarship, keeping readers well informed about the latest historiographical debates. Societies and professional organizations devoted to history appeared in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and provincial capitals. Historical periods characterized by reform or which exemplified historical discontinuity, including the

9 Quoted in Valkinier, Russian Realist Art, 83.
reigns of Ivan IV, Aleksei Mikhailovich and Peter, and the Time of Troubles, became and remained especially relevant and popular holding a central place in Russian cultural life through the turn of the century.

Fascination with the past was reflected in the prominence of historical themes in Russian literary and artistic culture. The 1870s and 80s witnessed the revival of the historical novel in Russia and a virtual flood of fictional literature devoted the Russian past and figures including Peter I. A. K. Tolstoi’s trilogy of historical plays, including “Death of Ivan the Grozny” (1866), “Tsar Fedor Ivanovich” (1868) and “Tsar Boris” (1870) and M. Musorgskii’s opera “Boris Godunov” (1869) exemplify this trend in the theater. I. E. Repin’s “Ivan Grozny with the Body of his Dead Son” (1885), N. Ge’s “Peter and Aleksei, (1886)” V. Surikov’s “Execution of the Strel’tsy” (1886) epitomize the treatments of historical themes among Russian painters. Yet, interest in the national past was not limited to the history of the Russian state or its rulers.

The Schism of the Russian Church, clearly one of the most traumatic and enduring societal issues in Russian history, also received wide attention in nineteenth century. Efforts to eradicate the Old Belief with the assistance of scholars during the reign of Nicholas I (1825-1855) drew renewed attention to historical and contemporary significance of the Schism in the 1860s, 70s, 80s and beyond. New seminal, sometimes praiseworthy, studies of Old Believers, especially those by A. P. Shchapov and P. Melnikov, and the publication of historical sources and literature on Old Believers by N. I. Subbotin and others generated not only interest, but, in some cases, sympathy and even

10 N. V. Riasanovsky, The Image of Peter the Great in Russian History and Thought (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 158.
action among segments of educated society. Some found parallels between the state’s treatment of the Old Believers and the struggle waged in contemporary society between the government and radical groups, most notably the “People’s Will,” in the aftermath of Alexander II’s assassination in 1881. The new scholarship and the attention it garnered also led state and church to renew its efforts to stifle the Old Belief. Broader societal interest in the origins and persistence of the Schism is manifest in novels including, N. Leskov’s Cathedral Folk (1872) and Melnikov’s In the Forrest (1871-1874) and In the Hills (1875-1881) and the historical fiction of D. Mordovtsev, especially his The Great Schism (1881). Musorgskii’s historical opera “Khovanshchina” (1886) was also composed during this period. Scenes from the Schism, most notably Vasilii Surikov’s “Boiarynia Morozova” (1887), were among the most popular subjects in Russian historical realist painting, rivaling only the depiction of the tsars.

Developments in historical scholarship were paralleled by the emergence and increasing popularity of the new fields of archeology and ethnography. Complimenting more traditional studies of the written word, these disciplines further advanced the causes of realism, shedding new light on daily life [byt] in previous centuries. Interest in material

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12 It is noteworthy that while both Tolstoi’s and Musorgskii’s work were written in the 1860s they were not preformed until the 1880s.
13 A. P. Shchapov, Russkii raskol staroobriadiestva, rassmatryvamymy v sviazi s vnutrennim sostoianiem russkoi tserkvi i grazhdanstvennosti v XVII veke i v pervoi polovine XVIII v (Kazan: Synodalnaia Typographia, 1859); P. I.Melon’nikov, Istoricheskie Ocherki Popyshchiny (Moscow: Typographia Styina, 1864).

The most extreme case of action being efforts led by Alexander Hertzen and Vasily Kelssiev to promote Old Belief as potential revolutionaries and to directly agitate Old Believers toward revolutionary activity in the early 1860s. See P. Call, Vasily L. Kelssiev: An Encounter Between the Russian Revolutionaries and the Old Believers (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Company, 1979) and Venturi, 196-202.
15 Ziolkwski, 32-37.
cultural remains of the past, stimulated in large part by the state and church, became a
noteworthy aspect of Russian cultural life.

*Drevnosti* [antiquities], art, architecture and artifacts from the pre-Petrine era are
especially noteworthy. Initially promoted by the state in order to legitimize the Russian
autocracy, antiquities became wildly popular in Russia during the second half of the
nineteenth century.\(^\text{16}\) Following the highly influential *Antiquities of the Russian State*,
commissioned by Tsar Nicholas I, publications and displays at newly founded state and
local museums continued to expose the public to antiquities associated with the lives of
tsars and tsarinas as well as the Russian people.

Interest in ancient Russian Church architecture, art and material culture was
especially strong. It included the appreciation of ancient religious objects and structures
for their artistic and historical value as well as their religious significance. This
fascination was manifest in written historical descriptions of pre-Petrine churches and
monasteries, and their holdings of art and artifacts and the establishment of entire
museums dedicated to ancient Russian religious art and artifacts.\(^\text{17}\)

The significance of *drevnosti* in nineteenth-century Russia cannot be overstated.
Much more than relics from the past, they were important sources of national cultural
heritage employed to glorify the Russian state church and people. Antiquities attested to
wealth, power and legitimacy of the Russian State and Church in the past and present.
Extremely useful in efforts to connect the autocracy with the Russian Church, they
became especially important tenets of the official policy of “Autocracy, Orthodoxy and
Nationalism” from 1881 forward. Antiquities had the potential to educate the public in

\(^{16}\) Alexander I created the Armory Chamber in the Moscow Kremlin to display imperial regalia.
both art and history, while, at the same time, instilling national, religious, and local reverence and pride. Finally, antiquities provided material and inspiration for new creative endeavors, affecting all levels of Russian culture.

While these larger contexts help explain why realist art in general and historical realist painting in specific emerged in the nineteenth century, they alone do not answer the question why Patriarch Nikon became staple among historical realist painters. Before attempting to comprehend the creation and reception of Nikon’s image in historical realist art, it is necessary to be familiar with ideas about and images of Nikon circulating in nineteenth-century Russian society.

Patriarch Nikon’s Place in Nineteenth-Century History, Society and Culture

The appearance and persistence of two important factors made Nikon an attractive subject of historical realist art. First, serious scholarly historiographical debates regarding Patriarch Nikon produced new ideas about the Patriarch, making him a classic realist hero. Second, the availability of original artistic images of and artifacts belonging to Nikon supplied a wealth of materials to create historically accurate depictions of the Patriarch.

S. M. Solov’ev’s highly influential *History of the Russian State* was central to Nikon’s representation in Russian historiography in the second half of the nineteenth century and beyond. His assessment of Nikon is part of larger “statist” concept of history that presents the state as driving force in the Russian past. Solov’ev’s highly critical treatment emphasized Nikon’s rise to and fall from the patriarchal throne. Solov’ev depicts Nikon as a selfish and ignorant yet conniving power monger intent on usurping

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17 The museum dedicated to Patriarch Nikon at the New Jerusalem Monastery founded by Kavelin
secular power of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and subjecting the Russian state to
ecclesiastical rule. More specific he argued that Nikon aimed to make secular power his
own by “taking advantage of the piety and gentleness of the young Tsar.” Solov’ev’s
strongest statement to this effect is found in his characterization of Nikon’s concept of the
church-state relationship. According to the historian,

the second half of the seventeenth century witnessed a development that was
completely the opposite of the one which occurred in the second half of the
preceding century. At that time, there was also a struggle between secular and
spiritual authority; it seemed that victory had been gained by the former.
However, this was only an illusion. The actions of St. Philip leading to his
martyrdom for upholding the most sacred right within the purview of a church
pastor, the right of restraining political power and not allowing it to degenerate
into pure violence, constituted a great victory for the Russian Church and its
supreme pastor. For the greatest dignity to which the spiritual authority by its very
nature can attain is its holiness and martyrdom by way of sacrificing its life for the
flock; the lowest degree to which a representative of the secular authority can
stoop is to cause the martyrdom of a righteous man. Nikon's character was not of
the type that could take into proper account this inspiring example, for he did not
look upon it with the eyes of a spiritual man. Instead, he was struck and upset by
its surface appearance, which revealed to him nothing more than the deposition of
an ecclesiastical hierarch by a representative of the secular authority. He failed to
comprehend that, in this instance, the one who had conquered was the one who
saved his soul by sacrificing his life. It was this lack of understanding about the
matter that induced Nikon to try to make amends, as he saw it, by compelling tsar
Alexis to send a propitiatory charter to the coffin of St. Philip, seeking forgiveness
on behalf of the person responsible for his assassination, Ivan the Terrible. In
transferring the relics of St. Philip from Solovetskii Monastery, Nikon intended to
make use of them as a measure for insuring his own protection. But in what
struggle, and with whom? He did not see that his personality caused him to
resemble Ivan the Terrible instead of Philip, the persecutor rather than the martyr,
and that the most serene Tsar Alexis [sic] bore not the slightest similarity to Ivan
the Terrible.  


in 1874 and the Rostov Museum of Ancient Church Objects established in 1883 are prime examples of the
later.
In short, Solov’ev characterized Nikon as a serious threat to the autocracy and state. Therefore, the historian highlighted the legal proceedings against Nikon and accepted entirely the case made against the Patriarch.  

While clearly the most well known and widely accepted conception of Nikon among scholars today, especially those working in the West, Solov’ev’s faced serious rebuttals in the nineteenth century Russia. Although other leading Russian historians, most notably Metropolitan Makarii [Bulgakov] (1816-1882) and Nikolai Kostomarov (1817-1885), also presented critical evaluations of Nikon focused on the Patriarch’s alleged power lust, they were vastly outnumbered by more favorable ideas about Nikon disseminated across Russian society in a diverse variety of publications. This rapidly expanding body of literature included scholarly histories and biographies, popular historical and educational literature, and fiction, as well as a whole body of literature devoted to the New Jerusalem Monastery and other monasteries founded by or associated with Nikon.

Alternative views on Nikon’s actions, place in Russian history, and contemporary significance fostered a substantial historiographical debate among scholars in the second half of the nineteenth century. In general, the disputes, which largely mirrored seventeenth-century polemics by Nikon’s contemporary biographer Ivan Shusherin and his detractors, e.g. Paisius Ligardides and the so-called Old Believer Fathers, reflected nineteenth century historians’ sympathies and antipathies toward the principles that

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20 This idea was expressed earlier by V. N. Berkh, Tsarst. Tsar Alekseia Mikhailovicha (St. Petersburg, 1831), especially 76, 199, 207-305. Verkh’s claims were based largely on accounts penned by foreign visitors in Russia, not archival documents.

Nikon championed and the methods he used to achieve his goals. The Patriarch’s detractors, led by Solov’ev, cast Nikon as bent on achieving supreme power in both secular and ecclesiastical realms. Those more sympathetic to Nikon associated his character and actions with contemporary ideals. By the end of the 1880s, the proliferation of scholarship on Nikon filled an entire historiographical monograph, V. S. Ikonnikov’s New Materials and Works About Patriarch Nikon (1888).23

The largest and most heated debates concerned Nikon’s trial. Solov’ev’s account of the proceedings against Nikon evoked numerous responses, including N. I. Subbotin’s Patriarch Nikon’s Trial (1861), N. Gibbenet’s two volume Historical Study of Patriarch Nikon’s Trial (1882-1884), Pavel Nikolaevskii’s Life of Patriarch Nikon in Exile and Imprisonment after his the Verdict of the Moscow Council of 1666. A Historical Study of Unpublished Documents from Original Court Proceedings of Patriarch Nikon’s Trial (1886) and others.24 While generally recognizing the import of Solov’ev’s scholarship, these historians attacked his portrayal of Nikon as extremely biased. Some even likened Solov’ev’s work to Old Believer polemics against Nikon. According to Subbotin, even Nikon’s opponents must admit that the author [Solov’ev] did not spare dark colors to depict the Patriarch’s character and that after reading his account Nikon’s image appears extremely unattractive in the eyes of the reader. Instead of an energetic person devoted to matters of church and state, a person with clear and

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22 N. I. Kostomarov, Russkaia istoriia v zhizneopisaniiakh ee glavneishikh deiatelei T. II (1878) reprint Moscow: Ripol klassik, 1998), 442-443; Metropolitan Makarii (Bulgakov), Istoriiia russkoj tserkvi vol XII (Moscow, 1883) reprint (Moscow: Izd. Spaso-Preobrazhenskogo Valaamskogo monastyr, 1996).
24 N. Subbotin, Delo Patriarkha Nikona (Moscow: Tipografiia V. Grachev i komp., 1862); N. Gibbenet, Istoricheskoe issledovanie dela Patriarkha Nikona 2 pt. (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia ministerstva vnutrennikh del, 1882-1884); P. F. Nikolaevskii, Zhizn’ patriarkha Nikon v sylke i zakluchenii posle osuzhdeniia ego na moskovskom sobor 1666 goda. Istoricheskoe issledovanie po neizdannym dokumentam podlinnogo sledstvennogo dela patriarkha Nikona (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia F. Eleonsgo i ko., 1886). See also P. F. Nikolaevskii, Obstoiatelstva i prichiny udaleniia patriarkha Nikon s prestola (St. Petersburg, 1883). William Palmer’s six volume The Patriarch and the Tsar (London, Trubner and Co., 1871-1876) also had a significant impact on the debates over Nikon’s trial. Palmer’s work was cited by Russian historians, and discussed in the periodical literature. It also was also discussed in detail in Ikonnikov’s Novye materialy i trudy o patriarkhi Nikon (Kiev: Tipografii Imperatorskogo universiteta sv. Vladimira, 1888).
straightforward vision who was above the superstitions and prejudice of his time … we see a stubborn power-lusting, petulant and, most unexpectedly, petty and superstitious man, not at all unlike his main opponent Protopop Avvakum.25

Those revising the history of Nikon’s trial believed that scientific history provided the means to present a more accurate historical account which refuted not only Solov’ev’s contentions, but the “lies” perpetuated by “schismatics” with historical facts derived from the objective study of previously ignored archival documents.26 This line of investigation, proclaimed Gibbenet, would not only “enrich science with new sources,” but “rehabilitate the memory of the famous hierarch.”27 Rejecting completely the notion that the Patriarch’s fall resulted from his own power lust and vaulting ambition, these historians asserted that Nikon’s break with Aleksei Mikhailovich and subsequent troubles were all instigated by the Patriarch’s sworn enemies among the boyars and “schismatics” and, above all, the intrigues perpetrated by Paisius Ligarides.

The most critical reevaluations of Nikon’s trial not only called the course of the proceedings into question, but proclaimed it illegitimate. According to Subbotin, “Nikon was not standing before judges, i.e., people assembled to discuss his accusations impartially, but before prosecutors whose sole purpose was to enumerate transgressions about which they were already convinced. One could not expect anything less from the majority of the boyars, but one must note that this was the attitude of the Greek Patriarchs [who sat in judgement over Nikon]. This proves that they were under the influence of their fellow Greek [Paisius Ligarides].”28 In other words, Nikon’s trial represented a classic miscarriage of justice and official persecution.

25 Subbotin, 2-4.
26 For example Subbotin, 2-7; Gibbenet, pt. 1, ii- iv; and Nikolaevskii, Zhizn’ patriarkha Nikona, 141.
27 Gibbenet, pt. 1, iv.
The preeminence of Nikon’s trial in Russian historiography is not surprising, given the socio-political context in nineteenth-century Russia. The initial reform of the Russian judicial system in the 1860s, its ultimate failure, evident by the 1870s and high profile cases of political radicals in the late 1870s and early 1880s, stimulated a heightened awareness of and interest in the legal process and its shortcomings. Under these conditions, the historiographical debates over Nikon’s trial could be viewed as paralleling the most pressing contemporary debates in Russian society. The repeated choice of Patriarch’s trial as the subject of historical realist paintings attests to the idea that the proceedings against Nikon were perceived as relevant not only among historians, but society in general. 29

A variety of authors addressing a wide cross-section of Russian society associated Nikon with liberal/progressive ideals. Scholars sympathetic to Nikon repeatedly characterized him as a well-educated and intelligent “enlightener” who was ahead of his time. 30 According to this line of thought, the Patriarch was pitted in constant struggle against the spirit of his age, rife with superstition, and injustice. That conflict ultimately

28 Subbotin, 169-170.
29 The abundance of primary sources pertaining to the proceedings against Nikon trial also played a role making the Patriarch’s trial the primary issue of historiographical debate.
resulted in Nikon’s persecution and martyrdom. P. Lashkarev concisely articulated this idea, when he explained that:

Nikon prepared for the great struggle that he undertook in his capacity as Patriarch during his whole life. It was the struggle for the purification of the faith, ... the struggle for Russia’s spiritual enlightenment against ignorance and stagnation of pseudo-antiquity, the struggle for piety and restoration of Church against lawlessness and the arbitrary interference of persons not qualified to manage Church affairs. In order to prevail in the struggle, he had to conceive [himself] in the image of the martyr who suffered for the truth.

Samuil Mikhailovskii echoed the same sentiments:

Patriarch Nikon was one of those men who the Lord raises up from time to time for the special needs of their ecclesiastical and civil society.... Gifted above all their contemporaries with a clear and comprehensive intellect, ... with firm and powerful will, they see the defects of their own age, rise up fearlessly against them by word and deed, clear away prejudices, overthrow superstitions, extirpate vices, defeat injustice, dispel darkness and ignorance, throw down the antiquated foundations of popular or social life and give it new direction, with better and more perfect order, based upon good and true principles: and for this their contemporaries denounce them ... they persecute them ... frequently condemning them as enemies of the Church and State.

According to this line of contention, the Patriarch’s efforts were carried out for the benefit of the Russian narod [folk]. The pro-Nikon literature stressed the Patriarch’s close connections with and importance for the Russian people in the past and present. Born a peasant, Nikon never forgot his humble roots. On the contrary, he became a defender and champion of the common people and in some cases an emancipator or liberator.

Naturally, the folk always, “loved Nikon,” and considered him a hero and/or a saint.

The Patriarch was also used to highlight the benefits of peasant education. The literacy Nikon gained as a peasant child fostered a love of learning resulting in his “enlightenment” and social mobility, i.e. advance through the clerical ranks. Pedagogical

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31 These ideas must also be considered in the context of anti-Old Believer discourse.
32 Lashkarev, 167-168.
33 Mikhailovskii, 5-6.
34 Nikolaevskii, especially 1 and 141.
literature intended for teachers and books distributed to folk schools upheld Nikon as the epitome of peasant literacy. Thus, the Patriarch also became relevant in terms of the education reforms and folk schooling in the second half of the nineteenth century, his image promoted even among the peasant youth. 

Authors of scholarly works and popular literature also stressed Nikon’s significance in the mid-nineteenth century by presenting him in terms of the initial hopes and subsequent despair that characterized the processes of reform and reaction. Historians likened Nikon to both Peter I and nineteenth-century reformers, including Speranski. Several of the leading pro-Nikon historians writing in 1860s and 1870s conceived the initial period of liberal reform as the perfect context to reevaluate Nikon’s significance. According to one historian, “only when liberalism shall have thrown down existing barriers … may she [the Church] discover that her real champion and representative was Nikon… (perhaps, also recognizing him as a saint).”

M. A. Filippov drew perhaps the most striking parallels between the past and present in his historical novel, Patriarch Nikon (1885), when he compared Tsar Alexander II’s actions and fate with Nikon’s. Pondering what the “now deceased Tsar liberator” thought when he signed his name on the wall near a portrait of Nikon during a visit to the New Jerusalem Monastery in May of 1837, Filippov reflected:

What did the heir to the throne who hardly reached the age of 20 think at this holy place? Did he think about the sad fate of the great man or did he already conceive the idea to follow Nikon and liberate the peasants? Or, perhaps, he commiserated with Nikon’s life filled with sorrow? Or did he foresee that he too would become

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35 V. Vodovozov, “Chetenie dlia naroda: Patriarkh Nikon i Krizhanich,” Narodnaia Shkola (December 1, 1878 no. 12), 1-12. See especially 1 and 9. N. Sergeev, Kratkoe zhizneopisanie sviateischago Patriarkha Nikona (Viatka: Tipografiia Kuklina, 1888), 1-2, 9. According to the text on the cover of Sergeev book it was “distributed to all folk schools in the Viatska eparkii.”
36 GRB OR f. 557 (Leonid [Kavelin]) No. 60 “Statia neustanovlennogo avtora o Nikone, patriarkhe Moskovskom” (XIX vek).”
a great martyr tortured by human cruelty and ingratitude? His inscription over the portrait shows his sympathy towards Nikon.... [Alexander] was very familiar with the Patriarch's life and activities.38

With these words Filippov attributed a new level of significance to the Patriarch. By suggesting that Alexander II took Nikon as his paragon of reform, the author infers that the example of Patriarch's life and image in history and art had the potential to effect state policy at the highest echelon.

Images of the Patriarch forwarded in the pro-Nikon literature, both scholarly and popular, reflect his resonance in the contemporary milieu by associating him with liberal, and even populist ideals. The works discussed here emphasize Nikon's relevance on all levels of Russian society from the peasant youth struggling to read to the autocrat. More specifically, the presentation of Nikon as a figure from the national past who consciously struggled to promote progressive concepts, but who ended up a martyr, characterized him as the particular type of positive hero sought by historical realist painters. These, however, were not the only sources of ideas about the Patriarch circulating in the nineteenth-century.

Unlike the sharp divides and heated debates which characterized historical literature about Nikon, nineteenth-century interpretations of original art and artifacts offered more consistent and favorable assessments of the Patriarch and his significance in Russian history and culture. Commentaries on and displays of antiquities depicting and/or associated with Nikon appearing from the 1830s forward provide crucial insights into the Patriarch's image in Russian culture. They are especially crucial given the larger societal

38 Filippov. For Alexander II's visit to New Jerusalem see for example Istoricheskoe opisanie stavropigal'nogo Voskresenskogo, Novyi Jerusalem imenuemogo monastyria (Moscow: Tipografiia I. Efimova, 1886), 66.
fascination with drevnosti in general and the ideas expressed by artists and art critics in specific.

The previous two chapters of showed that nineteenth-century discussions of seventeenth-century artistic images of Nikon, namely the Kii Cross System and the parsuna “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy,” and subsequent copies, characterized the Patriarch positively by highlighting his accomplishments and/or his close relationship with the Romanov Dynasty. Commentaries on the parsuna are particularly important to this chapter of the dissertation. Like the pro-Nikon historiography, they not only shed favorable light on Nikon, but cast him as the epitome of a realist hero.39 Much the same notions were also attached to artifacts related to Nikon.

Numerous antiquities associated with Nikon, including nearly every feature of the Patriarch’s dress depicted in historical realist paintings, were either featured in publications and/or publicly displayed by the mid-1870s. These objects were not only available, but, like the seventeenth-century artistic images of the Patriarch, were often given positive connotations beyond their religious significance via context(s) of their display and/or written commentaries.

The classic Antiquities of the Russian State played a vital role in the promotion of drevnosti connected to Nikon and, ultimately, the creation and reception of new historical realist images of the Patriarch. It provided relatively easy access to a diverse variety of Nikon-related artifacts while infusing them with strong monarchist connotations. In addition to a reproduction of the parsuna “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy,” the first volume

39 A. N. Murav’ev, Puteshestviye po sv. mestam russkim 1st ed. (St. Petersburg, 1936), 109; “I. S.” “Portret Nikona patriarkha, emu sovremennyi,” Moskovske vedomosti no. 125 (October 19, 1854), 523-4; N. Boev, “Patriarch Nikon,” Niva no. 8 (February 21, 1881), 183-187. The notion of Nikon as a positive realist hero was most clearly expressed in Moskovske vedomosti article which claimed that Nikon
of Antiquities presented ten entries dedicated to nearly twenty objects formerly belonging to Nikon. These included items symbolizing the Patriarch’s ecclesiastical authority, especially his mitras and white klobuk, as well as his everyday dress. Each example consisted of accurate artistic studies, featuring views from different perspectives and close-ups of details, and was accompanied by descriptive and interpretive accounts. These texts located the individual antiquities within the larger discourse of harmonious Church-State relations. They depicted Nikon in highly positive terms by connecting him intimately with Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich. These presentations of Nikon strongly resonated in the post-1881 era, not only because of the societal interest in drevnosti, but also in terms of official doctrine of Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality. The assemblage and actual display of many of the same objects in much the same context during the celebration of the Romanovs’ Tercentenary (1913) show that the officially sanctioned positive interpretation of Nikon was promoted until the end of autocracy.

Nikon’s white klobuk received special attention on the pages of Antiquities. In addition to being depicted artistically in two separate entries, it was prominently featured in a lengthy essay discussing the history and significance of the patriarchal klobuks. Both the captions to the illustrations and more substantial written texts repeatedly referenced the seventeenth-century parsuna (displayed at the New Jerusalem Monastery), in which

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40 These include four mitras (no. 87, no. 88, no. 90, no. 91), “klobuk patriarkha Nikona” (no. 92), the parsuna “Patriarkh Nikon s klirom” (no. 94), “domashnee plat’ie patriarkha Nikona” (no. 95), “klobuk, trost’, chetki, brusok, shliapa, sapog i tufly patriarkha Nikona” (no. 103), and “chetki, kreslo i stol patriarkha Nikona” (no. 112).

41 Suffice to mention excerpts from DRG1, including: “This precious mitra symbolizes Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich’s special goodwill towards Patriarch whom he called his friend” (DRG 1, 129) and “the image of Saint Aleksei, Man of God, [on Nikon’s white klobuk] reveals the Tsar’s friendly attitude towards the Patriarch whom he called ‘special and resolute shepherd and beloved favorite and friend’ in his charters,” 139.

42 Ibid, 133-139.
Nikon is depicted in the white klobuk, a symbol of patriarchal authority and legitimacy. Thus, Antiquities upheld this image, like the parsuna “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy,” as an accurate, contemporary and even canonical depiction of the Patriarch. The promotion of Nikon’s depiction in the white klobuk was furthered by the publication of reproduction in books devoted to the New Jerusalem Monastery.

The actual display of ancient art and artifacts at the Museum Dedicated to the Memory of Holy Patriarch Nikon founded at the New Jerusalem Monastery by Archimandrite Leonid Kavelin in 1874 was crucial to the formulation of Nikon’s image for two reasons. First, it was designed to commemorate Nikon’s life and tenure as Patriarch. The New Jerusalem Monastery became a virtual shrine to Nikon. All artifacts preserved at the monastery were systematically arranged and permanently displayed with the goal of commemorating his life and promoting his image. No other hierarch in the history of the Russian Church ever had such a memorial. Second, it was an important archive and educational facility. Where Antiquities and other publications discussed a significant, but small, fraction of Nikon related artifacts, the New Jerusalem Museum served as a complete repository of the original artistic and material cultural sources.

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44 See for example, Nikolaevskii, Zhizn’ patriarkha Nikona, flyleaf; Leonid (Kavelin), Istoricheskoe opisaniei stavropigialnago Voskresenskago Novyi Ierusalim imenemagogo monastyria (Moscow, 1876), flyleaf; and Istoricheskoe opisaniei stavropigal’nogo Voskresenskogo, Novyi Ierusalim Imen. Monastyria, 3.

45 RGADA f. 1625 Op. 1 ed. Khr. 34. l. 11ob no. 44 “Klobuk” no. 28 “Chetki belye korol’kovye ego zhe…” no. 42,43 “Sapogi i kladigi sviateishega patriarkha Nikona”, l. 11ob, no. 44 Klobuk balberkovyi, na perednej chast vyshit zhemchugom Kherubim, v new Sviateishii Patriarkha Nikon izobrazhen na portret no 6’. Kavelin also discussed Nikon’s black klobuk in Istoricheskoe opisaniei stavropigalnago Voskresenskago Novyi Ierusalim imenemagogo monastyria, 274, 293, 325.
Those interested in his life could extend their knowledge beyond the pages of books by visiting the monastery and its museum. 46

Kavelin’s original description of the museum’s main hall consisted of more than sixty separate entries accounting for hundreds of objects formerly belonging to the Patriarch. These included a wide array of church utensils and service vestments as well as Nikon’s personal belongings used or worn in daily life. Kavelin’s catalogue stressed the museum’s key holdings including the black klobuk, which Nikon wore during the course of his trial, his staff and prayer beads, all items later featured in the historical realist depictions of the Patriarch. 47

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Nikolai Vasil’evich Nevrev

Nikolai Vasil’evich Nevrev (1830-1904), a member of an impoverished Moscow merchant family, was a self-made man. After graduation from vocational school, he was about to start a career as a clerk or a shop assistant. These circumstance were not what Nevrev desired for himself. At the age of 21 he finally succeeded in entering the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture. This school was less established than the Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg but was considered a “hot bed” for new artistic

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46 Savva (Tikhomirov), Archbishop of Tver’, Ukazatel’ dlja obozreniia Moskovskoi Patriarshei (nyne Sinodalnoi) riznitsy 5th ed. (Moscow, 1883), described and illustrated objects formerly used by Nikon that were preserved Patriarchal Treasury. These include the processional cross carried before Nikon during his trial, 30 and Table X, no. 4, a zhezl belonging to him, 30-31 Table X no. 50, and examples of the Patriarch’s daily home dress, 46 Table XV, nos. 88-89. The latter objects are the same as those featured as no. 95 in DRG I. I examined All of these items during their display at the exhibit “Patriarch Nikon. Oblachenija, lichnyie veshchi, avtografy, vklady, portrety,” held at the State Historical Museum, Moscow, summer, 2002. See E. A. Morschakova, “Krest prednosnyi (pokhodnyi)” Patriarch Nikon. Oblachenija, lichnyie veshchi, avtografy, vklady, portrety (Moscow: GIM, 2002), 42. Photograph on 43;
directions. Upon graduation, Nevrev found commissions painting portraits of non-aristocratic clients, petite bourgeois and merchants.

While his popularity as portraitist grew, Nevrev began to turn his efforts to critical realist painting. Throughout the 1860s, he became one of the leaders of the emerging new genre. As a realist painter, who knew economic hardship first hand, Nevrev concerned himself with the criticism of contemporary social inequality and injustice especially the “woman question.” Noteworthy works from this period include genre canvases, such as “Funeral Mass at Rural Cemetery” (1865), “Sale of Serfs” (1866), and “The Charge” (1867). In the mid-1870s, following the critical acclaim of his “Roman of Galich Expels Papal Emissaries” (1876), Nevrev became increasingly interested in historical painting. In 1881, he joined became a member of the peredvizhnik. Many of his historical paintings were displayed at peredvizhnik exhibits.48

On several occasions Nevrev looked at the Russian past to find examples of injustice veiled as officially sanctioned and seemingly fair trials. For example, in “Patriarch Nikon Before the Court” (1885) and “Princess Iusupova Being Forced into the Nunnery,” (1886) the artist hinted at the institutional violence of a judicial system in which the state has unbridled license to persecute the dissidents. In the latter, Iusupova is depicted as listening to the sentence which condemns her to internal exile in Siberia for her disrespectful words about the autocracy. Her courage is set against the violence of the autocratic power epitomized in the images of Ushakov, the passionless and cold chief of

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the secret police, the sentries guarding the young woman and executioner peaking through a half-open door. In Nevrev’s paintings, both Iusupova and Nikon, although victimized by unfair legal proceedings, appear to hold higher moral ground against the autocratic power persecuting them.

Historical Sources of Nikon’s First Appearance Before the Church Council, December 1, 1666

Two seventeenth-century accounts, Ivan Shusherin’s biography of Nikon and an archival document known as “Notes with Select Details of the Councilor Meeting on December 1, 1666,” and their interpretation by Russian historians provided the basis for Nevrev’s depiction of Nikon’s trial and its reception in Russian society. These primary sources largely concurred in terms of the physical descriptions and course of events that transpired during the opening of the trial. Both clarified the setting, explaining that the event took place in the Tsar’s banquet hall and more specifically details of the trial’s physical contexts. As far as the course of events was concerned, the sources agreed that Nikon arrived before the council with the cross carried before him, and that when the Tsar directed Nikon to sit, the Patriarch refused noting that the spot offered was not his usual place. Hearing Nikon’s words, the Tsar stepped down from his throne and stood at the table in front of the patriarchs. Then, Aleksei Mikhailovich made his opening remarks to the foreign patriarchs. 49

49 Shusherin, 111-116; “Zapiska s nekotorymi podrobnostiami o sobornom zasedanii 1-go dekabria 1666 g.” Gibbenet, pt. 2, 1042-1061. The account presented in Paisius Ligarides, History of the Condemnation of Patriarch Nikon (1668), published and translated in William Palmer, The Patriarch and the Tsar vol. III (London: Trubner and Co., 1873), 169-70 also provided an rather detailed and quite different account. However, his version of the events of December 1, 1666 was largely ignore by the nineteenth-century historiography.
The primary difference between these sources lies in their presentation of Nikon’s initial appearance before the Council. Shusherin suggested that Nikon appeared and acted in accordance with Aleksei Mikhailovich’s will; the “Notes” provide information to the contrary by showing that Nikon failed to follow the Tsar’s directives. These divergences are at the heart of subsequent presentations of the event. Nineteenth-century historians based their interpretations on three factors: Nikon’s decision to have a cross carried before him, his decision to stand during the proceedings, and Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich’s reaction to Nikon’s actions. Pro-Nikon historians, such as Gibbenet and, in this case, Kostomarov, followed Shusherin’s account in efforts to stress Nikon’s piety and humility and to associate him with the positive symbolism of the cross. Nikon’s critics, including S. M. Solov’ev and Metropolitan Makarii, employed the “Notes,” to show that Nikon appeared and acted arrogantly as well as to cast the Patriarch as a upstart who continued to be insubordinate and haughty.

Neither the primary sources, nor the secondary historical accounts of December 1, 1666, commented on the specifics of Nikon’s appearance crucial to Nevrev’s artistic depiction of the trial. However, accounts of the proceedings that transpired on a different day, December 3, 1666 published by Solov’ev, Makarii and Gibbenet do. There, Nikon’s responses to his judges’ inquiries explain not only what Nikon wore, but the significance of two symbols central to the interpretation of the Patriarch’s appearance at the trial. When the universal patriarchs asked Nikon why he wore “a monk’s headdress with cherub and two panagia,” Nikon responded, “I wear the black headdress following the example of the Greek patriarchs. I wear the cherubs following the example of the

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51 Solov’ev, vol. 21, 81-82; Makarii, 345-347;
Moscow patriarchs, which I wear to help me.” Thereafter, a Russian bishop clarified that, “When you resigned from the patriarchate, you did not take the white headdress with you, you took a simple monastic one, yet now you are wearing the one with cherub.” 52

Daniil Lukich Mordovtsev’s and Mikhail Avraamovich Filippov’s historical novels provided yet another important dimension to Nikon’s trial visible in both the creation and reception of Nevrev’s canvas. Their accounts of the trial diverged significantly from the secondary historical literature and introduced dramatic new versions of the event that redefined the relationship between Nikon and Aleksei Mikhailovich. Both result in highly sympathetic representations of the Patriarch and stress the Tsar’s alleged misgivings regarding Nikon’s fate. 53

In Great Schism, Mordovtsev set an ominous tone declaring that “everything looked dark and awe-inspiring, like a painting of the ‘Final Judgment’.” Then he described Nikon’s entrance at the Council,

the doors swung wide open in order to allow something big through, it was a crucifix carried before the Patriarch. Behind the crucifix, walked the accused. This was the same upright, rough looking, massive man [Nikon] who Moscow saw so frequently about ten years ago at festive services, church processions, and the Tsar’s council…. Looking at the Tsar’s face, he bowed to the ground. When the Patriarch bowed, the Tsar clinched his jaws in order not to cry…. When Nikon finally got up from the floor and arranged his hair, his face was as pale and colorless as prisoner’s face. 54

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52 Solov’ev, 93; Makarii, 361, Gibbenet, pt. 2, 356-357. Paisius Ligaride presented much the same account. “The patriarchs asked Nikon why he wore on his breast two pectorals, and on his head a cap with seraphim worked in pearls, which was not customary? He replied ‘I have hung on my breast two pectorals because when I left Moscow I retained one as a tutelary and the other I have now added as a defense weapon, fortifying myself with the cross, and perhaps also anticipating that the cross might be taken away from me, as it has been, by you, contrary to all reasonable expectation.’” See Palmer, vol. III, 186. Shusherin only described Nikon’s dress during his final condemnation on December 12. See Shusherin, 134-135.


54 Mordovtsev, 87, 89-90.
The version of the event forwarded in Filippov's *Patriarch Nikon, A Historical Novel* stressed psychological portraits and physical descriptions of Nikon and Aleksei Mikhailovich. Most noteworthy is the author’s expose on Aleksei Mikhailovich’s thoughts.

When the decisive moment to try and dethrone Nikon came, he started to be conscientious and he pitied the Patriarch. Who elevated him, who gave him the will if not I myself, he thought - and now at the council I am his major judge. No, I should not be a judge, but an accused, standing together with him. It is I who should explain before the council accusing Nikon. That would make a difference; he would not be standing before the judges alone, but we would be together and let the court decide. Nikon would not be able to say that it was I who condemned him. What if the council condemns him, and boyars demand his head? I would rather give them mine than give him up.55

Filippov continued that, when Nikon refused to sit in his assigned place,

Aleksei Mikhailovich realized that he was the subject of disgrace, and in order to rectify the first unpleasant impression, or perhaps to make the first step towards reconciliation, to the surprise of all he rose from his place, circled the table and stood together with Nikon. At this moment, both [the Patriarch and the Tsar] stood side by side and had the following thoughts and feelings. ‘Look at him,’ thought Nikon, ‘in order to dispose of me he broke both custom and Tsar’s dignity. According to custom, I should be accused by a diakon [member of the lower clergy], but here the Tsar does that. Is it the Tsar’s place to stand in front of the court?’ Nikon’s face became haughty and enraged. ‘I wish he would at least cast one glance [upon me] with love as he did before,’ thought Aleksei Mikhailovich, ‘however, he looks at me as if I were a snake.’ The Tsar was pale and blushed, his lips trembled, he had sweat on his forehead. With great effort, not so much embarrassed but defeated at heart he started to speak while tears welled up in his eyes.56

These features of Mordovtsev’s and Filippov’s fictions are clearly reflected in Nevrev’s depiction of both the Patriarch and the Tsar. The novels, like the historical data presented in the scholarly histories, are an important part of understanding both the creation and reception of the artist’s work. While not possible to confirm how and under what circumstances Nevrev became acquainted with particulars of the opening day of

55 Filippov, 476-477.
Nikon’s trial, his careful replication of the details strongly suggest an intimate knowledge of primary and secondary historical accounts as well as familiarity with Mordovtsev’s and Filippov’s prose.

Description and Analysis of Nevrev’s “Patriarch Nikon Before the Court, December 1, 1666”

Nevrev’s painting “Patriarch Nikon Before the Court, December 1, 1666” (1885) is set in the secular, rather austere, interior of the Tsar’s dining hall. Nikon stands in the center of the image. He wears a mantiia (the top right panel has a seven-ended cross), black klobuk with cherub, and panagiia. In his left hand, the Patriarch holds a staff with a seven-ended cross and corpus of Christ. In front of Nikon, stands a monk holding a four-ended processional cross.

The rest of the primary figures are presented in front of Nikon, closer to the viewer. The two universal patriarchs sit behind a table to the left of Nikon. They are dressed in mantitas and black klobuks. Several books and silver boxes lay on the table. A cleric (translator) stands at the far end of the table, bending forward, towards the patriarchs. Two secular authorities stand, arms crossed, behind the seated patriarchs. A third stands toward the back of the room. The Tsar stands in front of Nikon and the universal patriarchs. His arms are outstretched at his sides with the palms of his hands facing up, gesturing as he speaks. He is dressed in a satin kaftan and tsar’s shapka. Behind the Tsar, to the right of the image, a hierarch dressed in mantita stands leaning slightly forward. He is translating the Tsar’s speech into Greek for the universal

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57 “Patriarch Nikon Before the Court, December 1, 1666” (1885) Oil on canvas. Measurements unknown. The whereabouts of this work are unknown. This work was reproduced in Danovskii’s V. N. Nevrev, (no plate number) and in Russkoe Iskusstvo. Ocherki o zhizni i tvorchestve khudozhnikov vol. I, 218.
patriarchs. Ecclesiastical and secular authorities sit in rows across the back wall of the room behind Nikon. The clerics are on the right; the secular officials on the left.

Nevrev’s depiction of Nikon draws heavily on classic artistic images of the Patriarch and existing artifacts promoted by the Russian Church. Of the historical realist canvases portraying the Patriarch, Nevrev’s is the closest to the ancient ones. It follows closely original artistic images Nikon painted in the seventeenth century, especially the parsuna formerly attributed to Ivan Dieterson. In effect, the events of the trial frame a classic, full-length parsuna of Nikon wearing klobuk, mantiia and panagia and holding a staff. Thus, Nikon appears basically the same as he did in traditional works depicting him at the height of power and glory. This conventional depiction combined with the cross borne before him, adds up to a positive portrayal of Nikon.

Juxtaposition of Nevrev’s work against written sources available in the 1880s confirms that the painting includes all the details provided in the primary and secondary historical accounts and more. Nevrev painstakingly replicated the verbal descriptions of the trials’ protagonists including Nikon, Aleksei Mikhailovich and the universal patriarchs. The painter also paid close attention to the historical accounts’ descriptions of the signs denoting the key players’ positions of authority, i.e., Nikon’s Cross, the Tsar’s throne and the patriarchs’ seated position behind a table covered with documents. Most importantly, however, the artist went beyond the written accounts introducing original new details.

58 RGADA f. 1625 Op. 1 ed. Khr. 34. l. 11ob. See also Leonid (Kavelin), Istoricheskoe opisaniei stavropigialnago Voskresenskago Novyi Ierusalim imenuemago monastvria, 274, 293, 325 and Savva, (Tikhomirov), 30-31.
59 Ibid, l. 2-3.
60 The only exception being that, in the earlier parsuna, Nikon is presented either holding a scroll, or making the sign of a blessing with his right hand. Both options would be completely out of place in the context of the trial.
Nevrev’s decision to depict the universal patriarchs in black *klobuks* and *mantıias* affects both their and Nikon’s representation. It creates a contrast which highlights the disparity of symbols tipped in Nikon’s favor. In addition to wearing the same vestments, as the other patriarchs, Nikon’s staff and cross suggest authority not visually ascribed to the other patriarchs. Therefore, Nikon appears equal, if not superior, to his judges.

Nevrev also used artistic effects to cast Nikon in a more favorable light. Sunshine from the left side of the room illuminates the figures of Nikon, his servant, the Tsar and clerics directly behind the Russian Patriarch. The foreign patriarchs are in the shadows, their backs to the source of light which brightens the rest of the scene. This effect provides an interesting contrast in which light shines on Nikon and the Tsar, while the seated patriarchs are in the shadows.

Nevrev’s presentation of two secular figures standing behind the universal patriarchs is not recorded in any of the historical sources. Their position behind the judges suggests influence on the court, perhaps even a *boyar* plot. This detail insinuates that the proceedings against Nikon were biased or even unjust. Therefore, the painting reflects both the larger societal concerns with general judicial practices in the era of reform and reaction contemporary to Nevrev and the more specific critique of the Patriarch’s trial forwarded by scholars led by N. I. Subbotin in mid-nineteenth century.

Display and Reception of Nevrev’s “Patriarch Nikon Before the Court December 1, 1666”

The painting was displayed at the 13th *Peredvizhnaia* Exhibition in St. Petersburg at “Dom Iusupova” (February 10-March 17, 1885) and later in Moscow at the Moscow
School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture (March 28-April 21, 1885). At least twenty-six of nearly sixty published reviews of the exhibition mentioned Nevrev’s work. Analysis of these commentaries reveals important insights about Nikon’s image in nineteenth-century Russian culture. In addition to assessing Nevrev’s painting as art, the reviews provide original and telling interpretations of Nikon’s behavior, his relationship with Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, and his trial. Moreover, the reviews demonstrate their authors’ familiarity with the earliest artistic and material cultural sources relating to Nikon. In a number of instances, reviewers’ previous exposure to extant artifacts, especially those on deposit in New Jerusalem and the Patriarchal Treasury, as well as their knowledge of archival illustrations and literary descriptions, shaped their interpretations of Nevrev’s representation of the Patriarch.

Close investigation of the published reviews shows that art critics often based their analysis of Nevrev’s canvas on classic seventeenth-century paintings of Nikon, existing material cultural objects belonging to him, and/or secondary historical sources. On balance, reviewers who commented on the material cultural objects (symbols of the Patriarch’s position) depicted in the painting and/or those who referenced earlier artistic images of the Patriarch, forwarded positive interpretations of Nikon. The same reviews often criticized the painting precisely because it did not mirror dominant, canonical images of Nikon promoted by the official church and state. However, those who depended primarily upon the written sources characterized Nikon negatively.

Many critics based their assessments of Nikon and the trial on what they perceived to be the nature of the relationship between Patriarch and Tsar. This method provided the foundation for both positive and negative evaluations of Nikon as a historical figure and the trial as a historical event. Surprisingly, only one of the reviewers commented on the relationship between Nikon and the universal patriarchs judging him.

M. N. Remezov and A. G-sskii are the prime examples of reviewers that criticized Nevrev for failing to represent Nikon according to the most well known existing artistic and material cultural sources. Both reviewers critiqued the depiction of the Patriarch in a black, as opposed to a white, klobuk. They based their contentions on three factors. First, they cited the seventeenth-century portrait of Nikon wearing a white klobuk displayed at the New Jerusalem Monastery. Second, they noted the existence of the white klobuk held in the Patriarchal Treasury. Finally, the critics attempted to buttress their claims by incomplete and misleading references to secondary historical accounts.

According to Remezov’s commentary in Russkaia Mysl’,

the major reproach one can cast at the painter is that he did not use surviving portraits of the figures of the Tsar and Nikon.... Portraits of the latter are located in New Jerusalem and the chambers of the Patriarchal Treasury in Moscow. Nikon is depicted in black klobuk with pearl-encrusted cherubs, while he was more likely to wear a white klobuk with cherubs on the sides which is kept in the same storage facility. When the Tsar sent for Nikon on December 1, he ordered Nikon ‘to come to the council in humility. However, he came as usual; preceded by the cross. He entered the dining chamber in the patriarchal manner’ (Solov’ev). We can conclude from that quote that Nikon appeared in all the brilliance of his position and undoubtedly in a white klobuk. In addition to conveying more historical accuracy, ... the public would not have been at a loss looking at the picture and trying to determine which one is Nikon.

The reviewer for Istoricheskii vestnik asserted that,

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63 Ibid, 112. I can not confirm the reference to “Ancient and New Russia, 1875.” The parenthetical reference to Makarii’s work is Remezov’s.
Patriarch Nikon is portrayed somewhat unsuccessfully...[he] looks common and does not resemble the numerous life portraits, e.g., the one at New Jerusalem or the one published in the journal [Ancient and New Russia, 1875]. For some unknown reason, Patriarch Nikon is depicted in a black klobuk, although the painter could have easily seen the white one in the Patriarchal Treasury. The black klobuk with angel was only taken from Nikon on December 12, after the verdict was delivered (see Makarii T. 12, 744).  

These commentaries place greater emphasis on artistic depictions of Nikon than the written historical texts. Remezov’s association of “all the brilliance of his position” with the white klobuk reveals the dominant mental image of the Patriarch wearing that symbol, as symbol that had already become canonical in the popular sense. G-sskii’s claimed that depicting Nikon in a known, recognizable artifact would make the painting more historically accurate. More importantly, his assertion that “the public would not have been at a loss looking at the picture” suggests that the painting’s audience was familiar with the classic artistic images of Nikon dressed in a white klobuk. Both reviewers indicate that popular images of Nikon were shaped more by pictorial art than written historical or fictional sources.

Other reviewers’ direct references to the material cultural symbols of Nikon’s position also resulted in positive assessments of the Patriarch. M. Solov’ev (not to be confused with S. M. Solov’ev the historian) presented Nevrev’s painting as a scene of betrayal. According to Solov’ev’s piece in Moskovskie vedomosti, “the meek Tsar Aleksei was in an awkward position as Nikon’s prosecutor. Nikon was doubly dear to him as an old friend and high ranking official. In the center [of the painting], there is the powerful peasant figure of the accused patriarch in mantiia and black klobuk with

64 G-sskii, 497.
65 See my discussion of the significance of Nikon’s white klobuk in the sub-section “Patriarch Nikon’s Place in Nineteenth Century History, Society and Culture” above.
cherubs. Persecuted, the Patriarch bravely looks at the ashamed tsar.... Next to Nikon, stands his servant with the cross, a beautiful specimen of carving now kept at the Patriarchal Treasury.”\(^66\) The critic known as “Rectus,” P. P. Gnedich, explained that Nikon “is noble and authoritative. He leans on his staff not without dignity and stands proudly beneath the shadow of patriarchal cross.... The figure of the ‘meek’ Tsar Aleksei is completely unsatisfactory. The painter perhaps intended to conceal his good spiritedness and tearful plea to the stubborn patriarchs.... Only the painter knows why he is so helplessly spreading out his arms.”\(^67\)

Solov’ev and Gnedich associated symbols connected to Nikon, including his patriarchal mantia, black klobuk with cherub, staff, and patriarchal cross, with a set of favorable qualities including nobility, authority, dignity, pride, power, and bravery. These positive symbols are further enhanced by the negative assessment of the Tsar’s appearance and body language. Both Solov’ev and Gnedich suggest that Nikon was unjustly accused and tried, even “persecuted.” Solov’ev argued that Aleksei “looks ashamed,” while Gnedich notes that the Tsar attempted to defend Nikon against the “tribunal.” These notions clearly connect the depiction of Nikon’s trial with contemporary concerns regarding the Russian judiciary, namely the reintroduction of secret tribunals under the Ministry of the Interior for crimes against the state in 1872. They also display the reviewers’ intimate knowledge of the pro-Nikon historiography in general and fluency in the historical fictional accounts penned by Mordovtsev and Filippov.

\(^{66}\) M. Solov’ev, “Peterburgskie khudozhestvennye novosti,” Moskovskie vedomosti no. 47 17 February 1885, 4-5. The claim that Nikon looked “common” is noteworthy in the context of literature addressed to folk audiences.

I. F. Vasilevskii’s review of Nevrev’s painting provides an interesting contrast to the positive, art- and material culture-driven commentaries discussed above. According to his column in *Russkie vedomosti*,

The painter knew that during the trial the Patriarch behaved with pride and arrogance and the Tsar was lost when he encountered his power lusting and unwavering hierarch. The painter articulated this contrast. The painting’s inner logic lies predominately in this conflict. At the same time, Nevrev exaggerated it and found himself on the border between the historical genre and the humor of caricature. To depict great arrogance, he raised Nikon’s head, but did it in a very natural manner so that the Patriarch has the pose of a man who is about to start boxing. Any minute he will charge forward and knock everybody down. Tsar Aleksei is even more theatrical and ridiculous. He ran from the throne to the middle of the hall, protruded his round belly, spread his arms, and half opened his mouth. Should the action of the painting have taken place in a garden, the crows would have been scared to death and the crops would have been safe. 68

Vasilevskii reading of the painting, especially his reference to Nikon as “power-lusting,” suggests that the critic’s interpretation was shaped largely by negative preconceptions based, most likely, on S. M. Solov’ev’s *History*. Vasilevski omitted reference to the signs of patriarchal authority associated with Nikon, focusing instead on the established stereotypes found in the literature (“the painter knew that during the trial the Patriarch acted with pride and arrogance”) and physical posture. In sum, Nikon is presented as full of hubris, even physically threatening, while the Tsar is reduced to a buffonish “scarecrow.”

Vasilevskii’s interpretation of Nikon is the complete opposite of the previous reviewers. Comparison of his comments with Gnedich’s assessment highlights the differences in approaches to the painting and conclusions about Nikon. Gnedich’s association of Nikon with patriarchal staff and cross caused the critic to link the Patriarch’s “pride” with “dignity.” Vasilevskii, who not only omitted mentions of the
material cultural objects in the painting, but also drew his conception of Nikon from a well-known written source, equated “pride” with “arrogance.”

Regardless of their opinion of Nikon and Nevrev’s artistic ability, the majority of critics agreed that the painting’s subject was significant. G-sskii asserted that “Patriarch Nikon’s trial is undoubtedly one of the most characteristic and pronounced episodes of our ancient history.”69 M. Solov’ev’s praises included the claim that “one cannot but give credit to the Moscow painter in whose work dynamic and dramatic page of history and time, the great healer, are wed in artistic harmony.”70 Vasilevskii concluded, “The Trial of Patriarch Nikon’ is a study both extremely important in historical meaning, and highly agreeable in its picturesque nature.”71 V. Sizov, critic for Russkie Vedomosti, and Gnedich questioned the painting’s artistic merit, but recognized the import of its subject. For Sizov, the painting’s “execution does not match the idea.... The viewer is correct in expecting greater attention from the painter to the fundamental requirements of such a serious subject.”72 For Gnedich, “the goal was worthy, but its treatment very mediocre.” 73 Remezov’s comments highlighted the broader significance of the canvas. “Our public adores history subjects in historical paintings and novels as if it intuitively understands their pedagogical significance.”74 Thus, all these critics recognized the relevance of Nikon’s trial for contemporary audiences.

69 G-sskii, 49.
70 M. Solov’ev, 5.
71 Vasilevskii, 2.
72 Si-v V[V. Sizov], “XIII Peredvizhnaia vystavka v Moskve,” Russkie Vedomosti no. 83 28 March 1885, 1.
73 Gnedich, 2.
74 Remezov, 112.
Essays published in two leading artistic journals derided Russian history painting in general, and Nevrev’s depiction of Nikon’s trial in specific. V. Voskresenskii’s review in Khudozhestvennye Novosti and N. Aleksandrov’s, penname “Storonnii zritel’,” piece in Khudozhestvenny Zhurnal found Nevrev’s canvas ahistorical and insignificant. However, deeper analysis reveals that these authors’ efforts to dismiss the painting raised other issues that highlighted Nikon’s broader significance in Russian history and his trial’s relevance in the contemporary milieu.

V. Voskresenskii’s comments on Nevrev’s painting in Khudozhestvennye Novosti are congruent with his larger observation that “one can see the childish and weak understanding of our past in the historical paintings at the exhibition.” According to him, Nikon,

is a contemptuous old man whose petty personal accounts with the stubborn Tsar are of absolutely no interest to us.... For all, Nikon is forever associated with the idea whose straightforward realization led to raskol in the Russian Church. However, it is not this idea which is being judged in front of the eastern patriarchs.... Instead, the petty gossips, which were the reasons for the official dethronement of the ‘former Patriarch,’ as the trial referred to him, are being judged. Nikon, as the carrier of the idea, met the most severe opposition not at the court, and not in Moscow, but in the far north among the clergy of Solovetskii Monastery.

Voskresenskii’s assessment contains strong opinions on Nikon’s trial and reforms based on Populist, pro-Old Believer sentiments. For him, the painting misrepresented Nikon’s import in Russian history because it did not ultimately represent the Patriarch’s significance for “the people.” Dismissing the trial as insignificant, the critic moved

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beyond the content of the painting to promote what he claimed to be a universally accepted and relevant conception of the Patriarch, i.e., his implementation of the religious reforms and his responsibility for the *raskol*. Voskresenskii’s efforts to reduce the historical import of Nikon’s trial is noteworthy. The author’s repeated claim that the official charges against Nikon were based on “petty gossips,” not substantial evidence or actual wrongdoing, suggests that Nikon’s trial was a meaningless sham. Voskresenskii’s comments are significant in the broader sense. They illustrate how Nikon became the object of ideological confrontation after 1861.

N. Aleksandrov wove his critique of Nevrev’s painting into a broader attack on Russian history painting in *Khudozhestvenny zhurnal*.

It is easier for the painter to create a historical painting than a genre painting. In genre painting one needs to find a subject and use imagination, but here read one, two pages in history and you have your subject. Nothing to think about. Based on the description, the painter imagines a famous scene, dresses the models in costumes borrowed from the theater, gives them appropriate poses, perhaps even creates lighting effects.... One can always imagine a scene based on contemporary realities. Take, for example, some historical trial. We know how trials proceed in court today. The judge or judges sit at the table, behind them stand the clerks. In front of the judges stand the litigating parties and behind the litigating parties sit the public. The judge supports his head with his hands, listens importantly, and thinks, also with a sense of importance, ‘well we will see whether you are aggrieved or not’. Nikon has the same arrogant pose as if he does not want to know anything, as if he is not on trial and no one is complaining.77

Aleksandrov’s review is noteworthy because it likens Nevrev’s depiction of Nikon’s historical trial to contemporary reality. His basic claim is that the artist’s depiction of the past is shaped by current circumstances, namely, the reform of the

77 Storonnii zritel’ [N. Aleksandrov], 259. The reviewer continued, “In my opinion, history painters appeared here because they were tempted by the picturesque historical costumes.... If it was not for the multicolored velvet clothes embroidered with gold, fur, and precious stones, the artists would not have worked on paintings. They are not attracted to the historical subject of the life of the people. One may even say they do not paint it at all.”
Russian judiciary. This was true, but not in the one-dimensional sense that the critic suggested. Nevrev did not attempt to pass off the present as the past. Nor is his painting a simple illustration of a single historical text. Rather, the importance of Nevrev’s work lies in his efforts to highlight the relevance of Nikon’s trial for Russians living in the mid-nineteenth century. Aleksandrov’s own interpretation of the painting confirms this point. His comments are a prime example of how “contemporary realities,” in this case a favorable impression of the reformed judicial system, shaped the painting’s creation, display, reception, and interpretation.

The analysis of published reviews shows that critics’ assessments of Nevrev’s painting were usually colored by preconceived images of Nikon. Thus, the commentaries are as much, or even more, about Nikon’s resonance as a cultural icon as they are about Nevrev’s painting.

Aleksandr Dmitriievich Litovchenko

Aleksandr Dmitriievich Litovchenko was born in 1835 in Kremenchug (contemporary Ukraine), the son of the provincial art teacher. In 1855 he was listed as a student at the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts. As a student, he was awarded numerous merit medals for his sketches. Litovchenko’s career at the Academy was interrupted on November 9, 1863, when he and thirteen others students resigned in protest over the inability to choose their own subjects in the Big Gold Medal competition. This act cost Litovchenko not only foreign travel, but a studio in the Academy. He joined the artel’ of painters, but did not stay there for long. Litovchenko was forced to paint icons for the church in Chernigov to earn a living (1866-67). At that time, he became especially
interested in historical paintings. This interest was especially fruitful given the proliferation of historical novels, dramas, and operas. Litovchenko’s friendship with V. G. Schwartz, a founder of Russian realist historical painting, with whom Litovchenko shared lodgings, was another influence on the young painter. In the mid-1860s, Litovchenko painted a series of canvases depicting ancient Rus including, “Heavy Thought” (1866) (Kiev Museum of Russian Art) and “Falconer During the Reign of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich” (1866)). The latter was well received and even sent to the World’s Fair in Paris (1867). In the late 1860s and early 1870s, Litovchenko, encouraged by favorable reception of his historical works, created a series of sketches “Winter Trip of the Patriarch” (Tret’iakov Gallery). The artist continued to paint historical subjects, such as “Ivan the Terrible Shows His Treasure to the English Ambassador Gorsey” in 1875. Artistic and personal sympathies forced Litovchenko to join the Peredvizhniki. He became a member on March 3, 1878. The ensuing period was his most prolific. Litovchenko painted portraits, icons and genre canvases not only for clientele in the capitals, but for provincial patrons. In 1886, four years before his death, Litovchenko completed a monumental canvas “Aleksei Mikhailovich at the Tomb of Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow,” (Tret’iakov Gallery).78

Sources of Nikon’s Acceptance of the Patriarchal Chair on July 22, 1652

The subject of Litovchenko’s painting was a construct of mid-nineteenth century Russian historiography and more precisely of S. M. Solov’ev. Solov’ev connected two events previously linked only by chronology - Nikon’s translation of Metropolitan Philip’s relics from the Solovetskii Monastery to Moscow (March - July, 1652) and

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78 “Aleksandr Dmitriievich Litovchenko,” in Russkoe Iskusstvo. Ocherki o zhiznii i tvorchestve

192
Nikon’s acceptance of the patriarchal throne (July 22, 1652) - by attributing political, rather than religious, significance to both. His purpose was to support his larger contention that Nikon was a power lusting upstart who overstepped the traditional boundaries of the Church-State relationship by showing that hierarch intentionally plotted to usurp secular power and to subject it to his will even before he became Patriarch.

Solov’ev argued that Nikon, who “exerted powerful influence over the young Tsar,” not only convinced Aleksei to bring Philip’s remains to Moscow, but forced him to write a penitential plea addressed to Philip, begging forgiveness for “the sin which our great-grandfather, Tsar Ivan, senselessly committed against you.” The historian supported his claim that the future Patriarch aimed to extend his power into the worldly sphere by abusing his secular escort. “Bearing the repentance of one tsar over another’s refusal long ago to obey a prelate’s admonitions, Nikon felt fully justified in demanding that his noble escorts enforce without demur his own instructions on ecclesiastical discipline.” Solov’ev concluded by directly linking the translation of Philip’s relics to Nikon’s acceptance of the patriarchal throne.

Nikon arrived in Moscow in July 1652 and was elected patriarch. He declined the honor in order to force an election on his own terms, to assure himself that Khovansky’s friends would not obstruct them. Shedding copious tears, the tsar and those around him lay on the ground in the Dormition Cathedral, near the remains of St. Philip, begging Nikon not to reject the office. Addressing the boyars and the people, Nikon asked if they would respect him as their archpastor and father, and allow him to set the church in order. After everybody swore to respect his wishes, Nikon agreed.

79 Solov’ev, vol. 18, 175.
80 Ibid, 176, 182.
81 Ibid, 176, 182.

193
Solov’ev’s politicization of Nikon’s rise to the patriarchal throne marked a drastic and controversial departure from existing primary and secondary accounts regarding the relocation of Metropolitan Philip’s relics and Nikon’s agreement to become Patriarch and fostered rebuttals by subsequent historians. Authors writing both before and after Solov’ev stressed the religious significance of the first event and the notion that it fostered a strong friendly relationship between the future Patriarch and the Tsar.

Several historians directly refuted Solov’ev’s claims. S. V. Mikhailovskii countered that Nikon’s intent was to defend the Church against growing incursions of the secular powers, especially the boyars. According to P. F. Nikolaevskii’s Metropolitain of Novgorod Nikon’s Journey to the Solovetskii Monastery for the Remains of Prelate Philip (1885), the purpose of transporting Philip’s remains was “to create good relations between church and secular power and to achieve a state based on Christian faith and the Church principles which Philip advocated.” While Solov’ev’s treatment of Nikon’s transfer of Philip’s relics stimulated some response, the same cannot be said about his account of Nikon’s acceptance of the patriarchal throne.

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82 Kostomarov, 400-3 largely followed Solov’ev’s argument that the future patriarch schemed to subvert and then usurp secular power by concatenating Nikon’s transfer of Philip’s remains and his agreement to become Patriarch.

83 Ivan Shusherin explained that the Tsar based his decision to relocate the remains on the advice of Patriarch Iosif and the entire Church council. Shusherin’s account highlights the religious aspects of the event by attesting to miracles preformed by the relics during the course of the journey and upon their arrival in Moscow. It furnishes extremely favorable images of Nikon by demonstrating his labors and the hardships he endured. Nikon’s miraculous rescue at sea is most noteworthy in this respect. Finally, Shusherin explained that Nikon’s efforts resulted in increased amicability and friendship with the Tsar, the latter lavishing Nikon with expensive gifts. See Shusherin, 49-51. Metropolitan Platon, Kratkiaia tserkovnaiia rossiiskaia istoria T. II (Moscow, 1805), 69 followed Shusherin’s account. See also Archimandrite Apollos, Kratkoe nachertanie zhizni i deianii Nikona, patriarkh Moskovskogo i vseia Rossi, s portretom ego (Moscow: Universitetskoi tipografii, 1836), 20-21. Gibbenett, 8; Vodovzov, 2; and Sergiev, 5-6 are examples of those wrote after Solov’ev.

Solov’ev’s presentation of the details surrounding Nikon’s decision to become Patriarch was unprecedented and widely rejected. Comparison of Solov’ev’s account with the sole primary account of event - Nikon’s letter to Patriarch Dionysius of Constantinople in 1665 – reveals that that the historian introduced several key ideas not found in the original source while omitting others that actually did appear. More specifically, Solov’ev interjected the notion that the Tsar “lay on the ground … near the remains of St. Philip,” while taking his oath, that ran contrary to the content of Nikon’s letter. On the other hand, the historian purposely excluded positive references Nikon made to his relationship with Aleksei Mikhailovich, such as “I was not able to disregard the tsar’s entreats…. I wept myself not a little; and caused the Tsar to rise up [off the floor]” and the significance the Patriarch attributed to interior of the Dormition Cathedral.

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85 Nikolaevskii, 50-51. This author concluded that “Nikon’s six-year tenure presiding over the Russian Church was proof in the eyes of all of the continuation of the friendly union concluded historically between the Tsar and Patriarch.”


In regards Nikon’s agreement Shusherin simply explained that “the pious Tsar understood that at that time none of the arch-hierarchs could rival Nikon in neither intellect or piety. Therefore, after consulting with the council, he urged Nikon to take the patriarch’s throne even though Nikon, not desiring this, refused by citing many reasons; Nikon assumed Patriarch’s throne on July 25, 1652.” Shusherin, 52

Paul of Aleppo also provided a contemporary account of Nikon’s acceptance of the patriarchal throne in his Travels of Macarius (late-seventeenth century). However, he did not describe the events of July 22, 1652. Rather, Aleppo explained that just before the arrival of Philip’s relics, Patriarch Josif died and there “was the unanimous vote of the assembly of the clergy to make Nikon patriarch. But he strongly refused to accept the dignity, until an order should be established that the emperor should confer no ecclesiastical sacral offices whatsoever, as the previous sovereigns had conferred them. Having obtained his will in this respect, he further procured an imperial decree, that his sentence should be absolute, without opposition or appeal. This prelate, immediately on his elevation, entered upon the exercise of uncontrolled authority.” Palmer, vol. II, 110. This work was first published in Russia as Puteshestviia antiokhiiskogo patriarkha Makariia, opisannyia arkhierdiakonom Pavliom Alepkskim D. Blagov trans. (Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografía, 1878).

Given these rather obvious deviations from the primary source, it is not surprising that many authors refused to accept or even acknowledge Solov’ev’s ideas. It is noteworthy that none of the sources described Nikon’s physical appearance.

Thus, by the time Litovchenko embarked on his project in the early 1880s, several divergent accounts were circulating among Russia’s educated classes. Some historians aligned with Solov’ev and portrayed Nikon as cunning and power hungry. Other praised his translation of Philip’s remains as a religious achievement. Still others recognized Nikon as a defender of Church rights. Historical accounts *en vogue* in the mid-19th century not only shaped Litovchenko’s take on patriarch Nikon, but created larger societal conceptions of the patriarch. When Litovchenko painted Nikon, neither he, nor his audience, relied exclusively on Solov’ev’s account; rather, they saw the Patriarch through the lens of Solov’ev’s critics and/or earlier writers with their traditional interpretations.

Litovchenko’s Depiction of Nikon and Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich Before Metropolitan Philip’s Shrine: The Genesis of the Idea

The idea to paint a scene featuring Nikon and Aleksei Mikhailovich before Metropolitan Philip’s shrine in the Dormition Cathedral did not originate with Litovchenko. The renowned artist N. N. Ge first conceived a plan to paint the same topic in the winter of 1872. Documents penned by eminent figures in the Russian art world, including the critic V. V. Stasov and artists I. E. Repin and I. N. Kramskoi, make it possible to trace and analyze the genesis of opinions surrounding the subject in general, and Nikon in particular, from Ge’s introduction of the idea to Litovchenko’s final realization of the project.

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88 See, for example Makarii, 19-20; Gibbenet, Pt. 1, 8-9 and Nikolaevskii, 48, 51. Solov’ev’s ideas did not appear in literature intended for teachers of folk schools or students. See Vodovozov, 3; Sergiev, 5.
According to Stasov, Ge shared his seminal idea with a small group, including Stasov himself, M. Musorgskii, N. I. Kostomarov, and D. L. Mordovtsev, gathered to preview Mussorgsky’s historical opera “Boris Godunov” in the spring of 1872. The critic explained that,

During one of the intermissions perhaps under special influence of Mussorgsky’s historical talent, Ge started to tell us the subject of his new painting which he had just started. It was a scene in Dormition Cathedral in Moscow where the young Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich puts his hand on the tomb of Metropolitan St. Philip in order to keep Nikon Patriarch and swears to him never to interfere in church affairs. I thought the subject, especially as described by the agitated Ge, was very interesting in its external appearance and picturesque nature, but I became opposed to it and, with great passion, started to prove to Ge that, in my opinion, he should not have embarked on such a subject. What is good and important in it? The victory of despotic and arrogant clericalism over the extremely weak tsar who was himself but a scared youth! Obviously, Ge heatedly defended his idea and his subject, but Kostomarov and Mussorgsky were on my side. In the end, Ge surrendered and never mentioned this painting. He never started it. No one could even find any pencil sketches in his folders. 

In addition to providing a record of Ge’s unrealized work, this passage reveals Stasov’s conception of Nikon in the early 1870s. At that time, his attitude towards Nikon was clearly shaped by S. M. Solov’ev’s arguments. His claims that Nikon was “despotic and arrogant” and that the hierarch intentionally took advantage of extremely “weak” and “scared” young Aleksei Mikhailovich came straight out of Solov’ev’s History.

Ge, under the influence of Stasov, reintroduced the topic at a soiree he hosted shortly thereafter. I. E. Repin, who was present at the event, recalled that Ge “was interested then in Russian history and for a time was inspired by the subject, realized later

89 V.V. Stasov, N. N. Ge, ego zhizn', proizvedenija i perepiska (Moscow: I. N. Kushnerev, 1904), 243-4. Another version of Stasov’s account is published in R. Taruskin, A Life of Modeste Mussorgsky in Letters and Documents (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1947), 183. Stasov’s description of the proposed painting is the most significant difference. “It was a scene in the Uspensky Cathedral - the youthful Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, placing his hand on the tomb of the sainted Metropolitan Philip, in order to retain Nikon as Patriarch, swears never to interfere in the clerical affairs of Russia.” Taruskin also
by Litovchenko, namely Patriarch Nikon at the tomb of Metropolitan Philip forces the young monarch Aleksei Mikhailovich to swear the inviolability of the Patriarch’s prerogatives. ‘Yes, this wonderful subject and gorgeous surroundings are very much up my alley,’ said Ge, ‘but I cannot, cannot glorify the harmful domination of the clergy.’” Thus, it appears that Ge accepted the argument that Nikon intended to subject Aleksei Mikhailovich to patriarchal authority by forcing him to take an oath of obedience before Metropolitan Philip’s tomb. 90

The circumstances surrounding Litovchenko’s decision to take up the subject previously abandoned by Ge are not clear. The artist first mentioned his intention to create a painting featuring Nikon in a letter written in 1880. On Christmas Eve, Litovchenko wrote to E. G. Schwartz that he painted a sketch [iskiz] ‘Nikon at the Tomb of Philip,’ but that he was not ready to complete the painting at the moment. 91 Several years passed before the artist finished the “Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich Gives His Promise to Nikon Over Metropolitan Philip’s Remains” in (1884?) Historical-Architectural and Art Museum “New Jerusalem.” 92

Litovchenko’s painting depicts Nikon, Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, and several clerics and boyars positioned in front of Philip’s shrine. The scene is set in the front right

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90 I. E. Repin, “Nikolai Nikolaevich Ge i nashi pretenzii k iskusstvu,” in Nikolai Nikolaevich Ge. Pis’ma, stati, kritika, Vospominania sovremennikov (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1978) 271-272. These comments were also published in Repin’s Dalekoe i blizkoe and the journal Neva (1894).


92 “Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich Gives His Promise to Nikon Over Metropolitan Philip’s Remains” 1884 oil on canvas (41.5x28.5 cm) The sketch is catalogued as MOKM Inv no. Zh-72 at the Historical-Architectural and Art Museum “New Jerusalem.” The painting is listed as a “sketch” [iskiz] and dated 1884 in two early twentieth-century catalogues of the Tsvetkov Gallery, Moscow, Perechen’ kartin i risunkov iz sobrania I. E. Tsvetkova (Moscow, 1904), (unpaginated); Tsvetkovskiaia Gallereria, Moskva. Perechen’ khudozhestvennykh prozvednii Tsvetkovskoi Galleriei (Moscow, 1915), (unpaginated). Both catalogues note that the work “dated based on other sources.”
corner of the Moscow Kremlin’s Dormition Cathedral. Philip’s shrine is located on the amvon in the sanctuary’s right corner. The ornate fabric used to cover the casket is pulled back from the head area. Several indistinguishable icons are visible behind and to the left of the shrine. An open door is located to the right.

Nikon stands in full height, to the left of Philip’s shrine, facing the viewer. He is dressed in mantitia, sakkos, and white klobuk with three cherubim and panagiia. His right hand holds a zhezl. His outstretched left hand motions toward the shrine. Aleksei Mikhailovich, dressed in fine attire, kneels in front of Nikon and before the shrine on his left knee. His crowned head is bent towards the shrine. The staff held in his right hand is likewise lowered.

Five boyars are depicted near the head of the shrine to the right of Nikon and tsar. They, unlike the other figures, are not on the amvon. All are dressed in ornate fur-lined robes. Holding their hats in their hands, they wear skullcaps on their heads. The three boyars to the left bend at the waist towards Nikon and the Tsar. The remaining two appear to observe the action. Three clerics are positioned on the amvon to the tsar’s left. Two wear mantitia and white klobuks. The hierarch directly next to the Tsar bends solemnly. Only the head of the third is visible.

This painting does not exhibit Litovchenko’s hallmark treatment of detail. The artist clearly focused his efforts on the depiction of Nikon, Aleksei Mikhailovich and the others nearest them. The physical context surrounding the figures received minimal attention.

93 The sakkos is the same design as the one depicted in the image “Christ Enthroned with images of Metropolitan Philip and Patriarch Nikon” (1652).
Litovchenko’s artistic portrayal of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich giving his promise to Nikon before Metropolitan Philip’s shrine is not a simple illustration of any single historical source. Rather, it presents a distinct, new interpretation shaped by a variety of written and material cultural sources. The visual representation of key signs and symbols invest the event and Nikon’s image with meanings, absent from the written accounts.

Litovchenko’s painting sends mixed messages. On one hand, the painting’s curious, vague title does not define Nikon’s place in the church hierarchy, but clarifies that it transpired before Nikon became Patriarch. On the other hand, Nikon’s vestments, especially the cherubs on his white klobuk, equate him with the patriarchal honor.

Comparative analysis of the painting with the primary and secondary written sources shows that although Litovchenko depicts Aleksei Mikhailovich making an oath to Nikon before Philip’s remains, his portrayal of the event is unique. His version, like Solov’ev’s, transpires before Metropolitan Philip’s shrine. However, the artist changed the physical positioning of those present. The painting followed the idea, expressed in Nikon’s letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople, that the future patriarch “raised the Tsar up” from his supine position before the sovereign made his promise, rather than Solov’ev’s claim that Aleksei Mikhailovich performed his oath laying flat on the floor. Finally, the artist diverged completely from the notion, common to the written sources, that all other parties lay prostrate on the floor while they begged Nikon to accept the patriarchate.

Litovchenko added a significant new dimension to the central theme by introducing material cultural signs of Nikon’s and Aleksei Mikhailovich’s power and authority not mentioned in the written accounts. The depictions of staffs and headwear are most significant. The Tsar’s staff is lowered not only before the saint’s remains, but
also directly before Nikon’s staff. The Tsar’s crown is also bent, while Nikon’s white klobuk is erect. Read iconographically and semiologically, the contrasts between the Nikon’s and Aleksei Mikhailovich’s symbols of power demonstrate Nikon’s dominance. While Nikon’s power and authority are artificially increased via his depiction in patriarchal vestments, the inclusion of the Tsar’s symbols of power only reinforces Nikon’s position of superiority.

In the final analysis, the painting represents a strong political statement. All aspects signify Aleksei Mikhailovich’s capitulation to Nikon. There are no positive points of reference for the Tsar. The artist increased the sense of the Tsar’s humility by contrasting Nikon’s and Aleksei Mikhailovich’s headwear and staffs, as much by physical posturing. Although Aleksei Mikhailovich is not completely prostrate before Nikon, the juxtaposition of his and Nikon’s symbols of power clearly signify his submission. Thus, Litovchenko presented a more complete account than the written sources which relied entirely on Aleksei Mikhailovich’s supposed physical posturing and verbal utterance. His next creation proved to be even more iconographically inclusive.

Litovchenko’s efforts to create a refined, final version of his subject met with acceptance and support. I. N. Kramskoi, Litovchenko’s “close friend” and neighbor at the studio, championed Litovchenko’s cause among other artists including Repin. On February 20, 1885 in a letter to A. S. Suvorin, Kramskoi wrote,

If you make Repin’s acquaintance try to tighten some screws with him in favor of Nikon, Philip, Ivan Grozny. As far as I know, he does not have any definite opinions. However, who can know the future? Ge wanted to paint ‘Aleksei Mikhailovich Begs for Forgiveness for His Predecessor Ivan Terrible in Front of Philip’s Shrine and Swears that He Himself Will Obey’ and when he was in Moscow’s Dormition Cathedral and talked to the monks about his subjects they
kissed him!! For myself, I can say that I was not at all engaged in those subjects but I could understand and appreciate their significance.94

This statement in support of Litovchenko’s work is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it reveals a key detail concerning Ge’s intentions not mentioned in Stasov’s or Repin’s accounts. According to Kramskoi, Ge planned to combine two separate events, the Tsar’s plea for forgiveness and his later promise to obey Nikon, into a single scene. Second, it presents Kramskoi’s own thoughts on the subject. The artist connected the topic with Ivan IV’s persecution of Philip. His willingness to promote Litovchenko’s theme validates its significance and utility.

Litovchenko turned to Kramskoi when he had difficulty finding a model for Nikon. Kramskoi told Litovchenko that he saw a similarity between Stasov and Nikon in the seventeenth-century portrait “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” reproduced in Antiquities of the Russian State. Litovchenko examined the portrait, agreed with Kramskoi, and approached the critic. Stasov explained what transpired next,

Once, in the Spring of 1886, the painter Litovchenko came to me in the public library. I hardly knew him personally. He asked me to pose for a painting he was working on. I replied ‘perhaps’ and was of course curious, as to what type of painting and what type of personality. He responded that the painting was called ‘Young Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich at the Tomb of Miracle-Maker Philip in Uspenskii Cathedral,’ and he asked me to pose as Patriarch Nikon. I immediately told him of the conversation with Ge fifteen years ago, and how I dissuaded him from painting such an image for such and such reasons. However, Litovchenko refused to accept these reasons. He was determined to paint this image and he told me that he would not give up because the subject and the detail are very picturesque and he liked them. Beside, a large portion of the painting was already done. He went to Moscow and studied the lighting effect in Uspenskii Cathedral on a sunny day and he succeed in painting it. How could he now give up the semi-finished painting? … His pleas were so insistent, and I did not want to hurt a person and his work, so I reluctantly agreed. Litovchenko’s Nikon is painted from me with one exception, he painted me twenty years younger than I was in reality. Litovchenko procured the patriarchal mantiia from the treasury of Nevsky


202
Monastery. He sewed the white klobuk himself according to the surviving original, but gave me freedom in finding a pose and position of hands.  

Stasov later told the artist P. Polevoi that Litovchenko dressed him “in patriarchal vestments” at least six times during the course of the modeling.

Stasov’s recollection confirms the central role that existing antiquities such as the Parsuna “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy,” and the “surviving original” white klobuk, promoted by the Church and State, and reproduced in Antiquities of the Russian State, played in the creation of a new image of Nikon. Moreover, Stasov’s willingness to reconsider his earlier position on the topic suggests a major change in his opinion of Nikon. Finally, Stasov’s repeated mentions that he posed as “Patriarch Nikon” suggest that he conceived Nikon as “patriarch” although the painting depicts an event which transpired prior to Nikon’s accepting of the patriarchal throne.

“Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and Nikon, Archbishop of Novgorod, at the Grave of Miracle-Maker Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow”: Description and Analysis

Litovchenko’s final product, “Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and Nikon, Archbishop of Novgorod, at the Grave of Miracle-Maker Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow,” depicts the right front quadrant of the Dormition Cathedral as seen from the left rear portion of the sanctuary. Metropolitan Philip’s ornate silver casket stands elevated on a platform in the middle of the cathedral. The cloth covering the open casket is pulled back from the head. What appears to be the deceased metropolitan’s mitra is visible. The iconographic

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95 V.V. Stasov, N. N. Ge, ego zhizn', proizvedeniia i perеписка, 244-5. Perhaps Kramskoi’s suggestion to ask Stasov to pose as Nikon was a ploy to get the critic’s approval of a subject he may have otherwise rejected and criticized. Some of Nikon’s belongings originally kept at the Iverskii and Kii monasteries were later transferred to Alexander Nevsky Lavra, St. Petersburg.

96 P. Polevoi, “Vospominanie o khudozhnikhe A. D. Litovchenko” Istoricheskii vestnik no. 12 (December, 1890), 757.

97 “Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and Nikon, Archbishop of Novgorod at the Grave of Miracle-Maker Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow” 1886 oil on canvas (255x838) GTG No. 1755.
details of the cathedral, including the iconostasis (to the left of the casket) and the frescoes on the large pillar and right-side wall (behind the casket), are clearly discernible. Sunlight streaming through the widows above and behind the casket illuminates sections of the iconostasis.

The scene includes a large number of clerical and secular figures. Nikon stands in full height to the left of the casket. His arms are held close to his waist. His fingers are intertwined. He is dressed in mantīia, white klobuk with cherubs, and wears a panagiia. Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich kneels on his right knee before the casket and directly in front of Nikon. The Tsar’s right hand is outstretched touching the casket (signifying the taking of an oath). He is dressed in fine kaftan and wears an ornate Tsar’s cap. Two clerics stand opposite the Tsar, on the far side of the casket. Both wear mantīia and klobuks. Behind Nikon, to the left of the other hierarchs, stands a large group of clerics and monks. A crowd of people of different social status, including women and children, stands behind the hierarchs witnessing the event. A single young acolyte also stands to the left behind Nikon. Behind the Tsar, to Nikon’s right, (extreme left of the painting) stand several boyars/princes dressed in their finery. The bare-headed nobles hold their hats in their hands. A vacant avenue of space leading from the casket directly to the “holy doors” in the middle of the icon screen separates the boyars and the clerics.

The painting’s central subject, Aleksei Mikhailovich kneeling before Nikon at Philip’s shrine, is largely the same as the one in Litovchenko’s earlier canvas. However, the artist placed the core event in much more detailed context, framing it a realistic depiction of the architectural, artistic, and material cultural drevnosti preserved within Dormition Cathedral. Litovchenko’s precise replication of the cathedral’s interior provides the scene with a strong sense of authenticity. In this painting, the physical
setting defines the event by supplying symbolic associations which shape Nikon’s image and his relationship with the Tsar. In short, the artist created an idealized event, based on primary and secondary written sources, provided it with a strong sense of authenticity, including material cultural signs, and placed it within a highly realistic replication of the cathedral’s interior.

Litovchenko’s representation of Nikon is again ahistorical and contradictory. In addition to depicting Nikon in patriarchal vestments, including the white klobuk with cherubs, the title denoted Nikon as archbishop, instead of the historically correct metropolitan. While Litovchenko’s verbal misnomer was probably unintended, his decision to paint Nikon in the symbolic dress of the Moscow Patriarch was intentional. According to Stasov, Litovchenko went to great lengths to obtain specific objects included in the painting, “he procured the patriarchal mantal [mantiiia] from the treasury of the Nevsky Monastery. He sewed the white klobuk himself according to the surviving original.” Thus, the desire to achieve historical accuracy by employing the existing examples of material cultural objects belonging to Nikon resulted in a noteworthy case(s) of symbolic misrepresentation.

Litovchenko’s repeated, intentional portrayal of Nikon in patriarchal vestments points to the existence of a dominant, widely accepted, preconceived image of Nikon as patriarch wearing a white klobuk. The artist presented Nikon as “patriarch” even as he painted a scene that transpired before the hierarch accepted the patriarchal throne. Stasov, who was fully aware of the type of garb he donned as a model, apparently had the same image of Nikon. The wider prevalence of this notion is confirmed by the fact that none of the published reviews of the painting, including those that note the mistake in its title, mentioned that Nikon was dressed inappropriately.
Although Litovchenko symbolically elevated Nikon’s power by representing him in white klobuk, the artist ultimately downplayed the notion of a power struggle between the future Patriarch and the Tsar by eliminating other potential signs of conflict. The absence of staffs is the most obvious and noteworthy. Nikon does not hold a staff. Instead, his hands are held before him with fingers intertwined. Aleksei Mikhailovich’s staff, is all but completely obscured behind his body. Only a very short portion of its lower section is visible behind the Tsar’s left leg. Aleksei Mikhailovich wears a crown, but his head is upright, not bent over. Even though the Tsar kneels in front of Nikon, the symbols of his power, especially when compared with Litovchenko’s earlier work, are not compromised. As a result, Aleksei Mikhailovich’s relationship with Nikon is not symbolically confrontational. The combination of symbols, or lack thereof, and physical postures attributed to Nikon and Aleksei Mikhailovich suggest amicable circumstances.

Litovchenko’s decision to set the scene in the middle of Uspenskii Cathedral allowed him to present a large section of the sanctuary’s interior space and decoration. The artist’s attention to the frescoes and icons are most significant. The inclusion of these images provides more than a realistic, historically accurate impression of the cathedral’s interior.\textsuperscript{98} The decorative details supply the subject with several layers of visual context and symbolic association, which ultimately effect the painting’s content(s) and meaning(s).

The frescoes depicting “ruler saints” on the pillar rising behind the casket provide an important set of associations for the Tsar. Located directly above the kneeling Tsar, these images link Aleksei’s actions with those of his canonized predecessors and confirm his piety. In effect, the Tsar’s, physical position in relation to the other images, places him
in the direct line of pious succession. The same iconography was essential to seventeenth-century images intended to express the Tsar’s temporal and spiritual heritage and legitimacy. Nikon’s own “Kii Cross System of Imagery,” which presented Aleksei Mikhailovich as heir to the Constantinian legacy by positioning him directly beneath Constantine, his Byzantine predecessor, is a prime example. Thus Litovchenko’s Aleksei Mikhailovich represents a strong, traditional, and pious Tsar, not a scared youth trampled by a power-lusting Nikon.

Litovchenko’s attention to the icons in the first three tiers of the cathedral’s iconostasis and his creation of lighting effects combine to provide the scene with even broader meanings crucial to Nikon’s image. The icons in the first tier include an image of “Christ Enthroned” and two images of the Mother of God. Another image of Christ Enthroned and icons of John the Baptist, and Archangel Michael are visible in the second tier. Icons depicting the Crucifixion are discernable in the third row. Litovchenko highlighted several of these images. The streams of sunlight shining through the cathedral windows illuminate the icons of Christ Enthroned and the Mother of God. Moreover, the two beams of light terminate on and thus emphasize even further the two images of Christ. In addition to being highlighted, the image in the first tier is further accentuated by the avenue of open space which links the casket and the iconostasis and separates the boyars from the church hierarchs. More precisely, the line of open space and the angled ray of sunlight converge on that icon.

Litovchenko’s stress on the images of Christ Enthroned supply the scene with a sense of divine judgement. The image of Christ Enthroned is a direct reference to the

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98 The iconostasis dates to 1653.
ultimate judge, while the ray of light shining down from above not only physically illuminates the icon, but signifies God’s presence. Combined, these references impart the events taking place before the images with a strong sense of divine affirmation.

The artist’s treatment of the icons reveals an important detail mentioned in Nikon’s account of his acceptance of the patriarch’s throne, but absent from the later histories. For Nikon, the icons played an essential part. According to his explanation, “the most religious Tsar, with all the honorable boyars and with all the sacred synod earnestly and affectionately catching up our answer, did ... before the holy gospel and before the holy venerated icons of Christ and of the Mother of God, and of the other saints promise to keep unchangeably all that we had mentioned.”

"Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and Nikon, Archbishop of Novgorod, at the Grave of Miracle-Maker Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow": Display and Reception

"Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and Nikon, Archbishop of Novgorod at the Grave of Miracle-Maker Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow," was displayed at the XIVth Peredvizhniki Exhibition in St. Petersburg at the Academy of Sciences (March 2-April 6, 1886) and in Moscow at the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture (April 14-May 4, 1886). Exhibit catalogues noted that Solov’ev’s History of the Russian State provided inspiration and/or historical context for the painting. The reference to Solov’ev is central to the painting’s presentation. While work’s title does not define the event depicted, and raises speculation about its content, the explicit reference

99 Other images such as Simeon Ushakov’s “Tree of the Russian Realm” (1668) depicted Aleksei Mikhailovich at the foot of a genealogical tree the branches of which include images of ruler saints.
100 Nikon’s letter to Dionysius of Constantinople of 1665 in Palmer, vol III, 383.
101 G. Burova et al., Tovarishchestvo peredvizhnykh khudozhnikh vystavok vol. 2 (Moscow: Iskustvo, 1959), 100.
to Solov’ev’s History demonstrates that it, like the artist’s earlier work, was intended to portray Aleksei Mikhailovich’s oath to Nikon.

P. M. Tret’iakov bought the painting from the artist for 8,000 roubles while it was on display in St. Petersburg. However, the patron was dismayed by others’ reception of the work. In response to I. E. Repin’s inquiry about his opinion of the Peredvizhniki exhibit, Tret’iakov responded, “I don’t even have to write anything. Litovchenko’s picture did not meet with success either among the artists or, among the public.”

Litovchenko’s canvas was mentioned in at least eighteen reviews of the fourteenth Peredvizhniki Exhibition. Twelve critics went beyond passing references to discuss the content of the work. Analysis of these commentaries provides important insights about the work’s reception. First, it shows that none of the reviewers discussed the painting in terms of, Solov’ev’s History. Second, it demonstrates that the painting’s vague title opened it to both harsh criticism and creative interpretations. None of the critics negatively characterized Nikon or his participation in the event portrayed. Rather, they filled the voids created by their apparent ignorance of Solov’ev’s work and the painting’s ambiguous title with their own preconceptions of Nikon. These findings suggest that although Solov’ev influenced a certain portion of Russian society, the vast majority of Russians’ conception of Nikon was shaped by more accessible popular written accounts and artistic and material cultural sources promoted by the Church and State.

The exhibit catalogue’s explicit reference to Solov’ev’s History of the Russian State had little impact on the reviewers’ impression of the painting or their attitudes toward Nikon. None of the reviews mention that the painting depicted Aleksei

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Mikhailovich swearing an oath of obedience to Nikon. Only one suggested that the scene depicted a “power conflict.” On the contrary, the critics that attempted to explicate the painting represented Nikon in highly positive terms. Several claimed the scene illustrated a harmonious relationship between Nikon and Aleksei Mikhailovich. Others used it as a forum to discuss Ivan IV’s persecution of Philip and/or to compare Nikon with Metropolitan Philip.

The reviews of Litovchenko’s canvas, like the critiques of Nevrev’s work, reveal a correlation between critics’ references to drevnosti and their interpretations of Nikon. Those who compared Nikon’s representation in Litovchenko’s work with canonical artistic images of the Patriarch and/or drew attention to the material cultural objects depicted in the painting, presented Nikon sympathetically. Furthermore, the critics who claimed the painting was historically accurate based their assessments on the artist’s accurate depiction of costume and setting, rather than on written accounts. More importantly, the critics’ unquestioning acceptance of Litovchenko’s incorrect portrayal of Nikon wearing a white klobuk with cherub points to the existence of a generally recognized stereotypical image of the hierarch based on original seventeenth-century art and surviving artifacts.

Several of the reviews questioned the painting’s significance because they believed it depicted an event of comparatively little historical importance unknown to the majority of the public. The critic for Moskauer Deutscher Zeitung observed that viewers at the exhibition were not familiar with and did not understand Litovchenko’s subject.104 I. F. Vasilevskii, “Bukva,” a columnist for Russkie vedomosti, simply pondered, “what

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and to whom does it speak? Why should one dedicate this huge painting to an episode peripheral to the biographies of both main protagonists?" 105 V. Chuiko, critic for Khudozhestvennye Novosti, used his comments on Litovchenko’s work as a platform for a broader attack on historical painting in Russia:

I would criticize one thing common to all our historical painters. They have a certain stubborn propensity for depicting obscure historical episodes which are, in the final analysis, insignificant from the historical point of view. Conversely, they are notorious for avoiding historical events with important consequences that are therefore more or less popular. What can Litovchenko’s painting tell the educated public conceivably familiar with Russian history but certainly not to the extent of remembering the episode he created? One cannot forget that not all viewers studied the History of the Russian State by Karamzin or works by Solov’ev, and that such study is totally optional for the masses. However, the painting was [surely] not done for two or three dozen people adept at Russian history.... 106

Chuiko’s extreme position and harsh words overlook two factors essential to understanding painting in general and images of Nikon in particular. First, a viewer’s ability to “understand” the artistic depiction of a given subject depends on the knowledge the viewer brings to the work. Second and more to the point here, public knowledge of Nikon was derived from a variety of widely known and material cultural and written sources. Both conditions are manifest in reviews by other critics, including Vasilevskii.

This fund of prior knowledge led even the leading critics to view the painting as depicting Aleksei Mikhailovich paying homage to Metropolitan Philip. I. F. Vasilevskii and F. I. Bulgakov, reviewer for Nov’, surmised that it portrayed Nikon leading the Tsar to venerate Metropolitan Philip’s remains and interpreted it as a statement of amicable relations between Nikon and Aleksei Mikhailovich. According to Vasilevskii, Nikon

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104 “Moskauer Lokalnachrichten” Moskauer Deutscher Zeitung no. 87 April 17, 1886, 388.
106 V. Chuiko, “XIV peredvizhnaia vystavka” Khudozhestvennye novosti T. IV, no. 7, April 1, 1886, col. 203-205.
"looks at the young monarch with hope and endearment. Next to them is a group of higher clergy whose faces fully reflect the solemnity of the moment." Bulgakov echoed Vasilevskii’s sentiments. He explained, “in his capacity as Archbishop of Novgorod, Nikon brought Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich to pay respects to the tomb of Metropolitan Philip…. [It is a] scene of reverence for a person who was imprisoned and murdered for his disapproval of Ivan Grozny’s devilish deeds. The event was very grand and educational for the young Tsar.” M. Solov’ev, art critic with Moskovskie vedomosti, noted: “the episode is borrowed from Solov’ev’s History of the Russian State,” but concluded, “it seems that the painter depicted the placement of the remains in the cathedral. It is unclear why the painter chose this subject over the more effective scene of the Tsar praying before the obstinate Nikon.” The “more effective scene” noted here refers to Solov’ev’s discussion of Nikon’s acceptance of the patriarchal throne discussed above.

Other reviewers declined to define the event depicted and instead chose to reference more familiar aspects of Nikon’s life, especially his fall from power and exile. The anonymous reviewer for Pravitel’stvennyi vestnik asserted that Litovchenko’s work was “a very valuable and important contribution to our historical painting. The painting transports the viewer to the epoch of religious trouble and discord that appeared in the second half of the seventeenth century and culminated in Patriarch Nikon’s exile to the Kirillo-Belozerskii Monastery…. I. B. Bozherianov’s comments in Novosti i birzhevaia gazeta directly countered V. Solov’ev’s argument that Nikon used Philip’s

109 M. Solov’ev, “Peterburgskie khudozhestvennye novosti” Moskovskie vedomosti no 76 March 18, 1886, 4.
memory to gain secular power. To prove his point, Bozherianov focused on the shared fate of the two hierarchs:

it was in this very Dormition Cathedral ... that A. Basmanov came with the Oprichniki to read the decision of the Religious Council to deprive Philip of his shepherd’s position. The Oprichniki stormed the altar, tore off Philip’s garments, put him in humble cassock pushed him out of the church with brooms .... In the painting by Litovchenko, Nikon, standing next to the casket, looks at the young Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich kneeling in awe in front of the open shrine of Philip. Could Nikon, the Tsar’s favorite and friend, soon to be elevated to the patriarchate and proclaimed to be ‘Great Lord’ by Aleksei Mikhailovich during the Polish expedition, ...could he, we ask, have conceived that, like Philip, he too would be dethroned and exiled to the Ferapontov Monastery at the Belozersk!\footnote{M. Solov’ev, “Peterburgskie khudozhestvenye novosti,” 4.}

M. Solov’ev and the anonymous reviewer for Pravitel’stvennyi vestnik assessed Litovchenko’s portrayal of Nikon by comparing it with existing works of art. Solov’ev argued that, the “large red faced and rather vulgar Nikon ... does not resemble his image in surviving portraits. It does not remind one of a man who lived a holy life, ‘a martyr for tsar of heaven’ as Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich called him in his letters.”\footnote{“XIV peredvizknaia vystavka,” Pravitel’stvennyi vestnik no. 87 April 22, 1886, 2.} The anonymous author claimed that “the main personality is the figure of Nikon who is depicted by the painter in his solemn greatness, which is the hierarch’s usual attribute.”\footnote{I. B.” [I. B. Bozherianov] “Istoricheskie kartiny peredvizhnoi vystavki” Nevosti i birzhevaia gazeta no. 63 March 5, 1886, 2.} Although columnists differed in their opinion of Litovchenko’s representation of Nikon, they concurred in investing the hierarch with positive traits.

Critics devoted much shrift, both positive and negative, to Litovchenko’s treatment of architectural and material cultural details. The anonymous reviewer for Pravitel’stvennyi vestnik contended that, “the whole scene is depicted extremely ascetically and historically correct. Even the most minute details reveal the artist’s serious

\footnote{“XIV peredvizknaia vystavka,” Pravitel’stvennyi vestnik no. 87 April 22, 1886, 2.}
attitude to his task...."\textsuperscript{114} I. G. Rashevskii, the critic at Severnyi vestnik, concurred. "The interiors of the church, figures, clothes fabrics, everything is so harmonious, so realistic as not to desire anything more.... Despite the fact that Nikon stands in the background, one can feel that he is the main character in the painting and that the whole purpose of the painting is to depict him." \textsuperscript{115} Bulgakov agreed that "The interiors catch the eye as brilliantly painted with truly Chinese diligence. The technique is exemplary, every detail of decoration of the rich cathedral is multi-dimensional. The silk rugs, icons are ready to be carried to the museum.... The final result is an excellent architectural depiction of the cathedral."\textsuperscript{116} Russkie vedomosti’s critic, V. Sizov, echoed the later claim. "Litovchenko undoubtedly labored over depicting satin and metals.... The canopy over the tomb, the satin, the candle sticks, and iconstasis are all painted by the artist with remarkable detail."\textsuperscript{117}

Given the attention devoted to Litovchenko’s realistic replication of various minutiae, it is noteworthy that none of the reviewers commented on the material cultural objects associated with Nikon. Although critics cited what they presented as the incorrect depiction of details concerning the Tsar and the boyars, the anachronistic crowd, and specific features of the cathedral interior, the fact that Nikon was incorrectly represented in white klobuk with cherubs escaped detection.\textsuperscript{118} This case, like the previous examples of Nevrev’s work, points to the existence of a strong preconceived image of Nikon which

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid
\textsuperscript{116} Bulgakov, “O XIV peredizhnoi vystavke” 53
\textsuperscript{117} Si-v V. [V. Sizov], “XIV Predvzizkania vystavka v Moskve” Russkie Vedomosti no 107 April 21, 1886, 1-2.
\textsuperscript{118} It is ironic that Sizov, unwittingly criticized Aleksei Mikhailovich’s dress as inaccurate, when published primary sources prove Litovchenko’s depiction truthful to the originals.
associated him the white *klobuk*. This concept was so deeply ingrained and accepted that it was perceived as normal even when completely out of place.

Sergei Dmitrievich Miloradovich

Sergei Dmitrievich Miloradovich (1851-1943) was born to the family of a rural *diakon* [lower clergy]. He graduated from a religious instruction school where he began painting. During 1866-1867, he attended the Stroganov School of Art in Moscow. In 1867, he transferred to the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture where he spent three years and received two merit medals for a sketch and a drawing. After the closure of the school where he taught from 1879 to 1889, Miloradovich became an instructor at the Moscow Spiritual Seminary. In 1909, Miloradovich became an academician of fine arts. He was discouraged from painting after the October Revolution due to his failing eyesight and, more importantly, because of artistic differences with the new Soviet regime.¹¹⁹

Miloradovich became enthralled with historical subjects during the late 1860s and early 1870s. He eventually painted numerous historical paintings dealing with the history of the Russian Church and the *Raskol*. In particular, the artist focused on the persecution of religious leaders in particular. His paintings on these themes include “Black Council” (1885), “Patriarch Germogen Imprisoned in Chudov Monastery” (1896), and at least three depictions of the Old Believer Avvakum: “Protopop Avvakum’s Journey to Dauria” (1896), “Protopop Avvakum’s Journey to Siberia” (1899) and “Protopop Avvakum in

However, Miloradovich's depiction of the final day of Patriarch Nikon's trial is arguably his most interesting and challenging historical work.

The Final Day of Nikon's Trial, December 12, 1666

The final day of Nikon's trial, December 12, 1666, was the most symbolic and dramatic aspect of the proceedings against him. The primary sources agree that two significant series of actions transpired during the closing stage of the trial. First, a list of charges against Nikon was pronounced and he was officially condemned and sentenced to exile. Second, the universal Patriarchs judging Nikon demoted to him simple "monk" and physically stripped of two key symbols of his position as Patriarch. The primary sources also agree that Nikon responded verbally to the foreign patriarchs throughout the course of these proceedings.

Ivan Shusherin's detailed version of the events provided the basis for the vast majority of historical scholarship and popular literature concerning the final phase of the Patriarch's trial. Shusherin explained that, unlike the earlier stages of the trial which transpired in the Tsar's dinning room, the final day of the trial took place in the Chudov Monastery (Moscow Kremlin). After stressing the idea that Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich did not participate in the sentencing phase of the trial, Shusherin identified and described those who did attend. "The universal patriarchs, hierarchs, archimandrites, hegumen, and simple clergy were dressed in service vestments.... Prince Odoevskii, Prince Grigorii

120 See V. I. Malyshev, "Istoriia 'ikonnogo' izobrazheniia protopopa Avvakuma," in TODL XXII (Moscow-Leningrad: Nauka, 1966), 39; Chenskaia, 149-54. All of these works were displayed at peredvizhniki exhibits.

121 The primary sources of the final phase of Nikon's trial include Shusherin, 129-135; Ligardes History in Palmer, vol. III, 191, 195-199; and "Ob'iaavlenie patriarkhu Nikonu patriarshego postanovleniia o nizlozhenii ego c patriarshego prestola," in Gibbenet, pt. 2, 1098-1099.
Cherkaskii, Prince Iurii Dolgorukii and many other officials” were also present.122 When all parties assembled, the charges against Nikon were read, first in Greek, and then in Slavonic by Illarion, Archbishop of Riazan.123 Following the pronouncement of the charges against Nikon, the foreign patriarchs, dressed in omoforia, “left their places and stood in front of the holy doors.” They told Nikon to remove his klobuk. “On the holy Patriarch’s head was a black klobuk on which the true and life-giving cross was depicted in precious pearls.” Nikon refused and explained that

even if the council unjustly accused our deeds ... I will still not take the klobuk off myself because, according to the oath I took at my consecration, I am to keep it until my soul leaves my body. You are free to do as you please. I know you. You are travelers from distant countries at the land’s end. You came not to do something good, or teach peace, but being enslaved by the Turks, you wander the earth as beggars not only to obtain the necessary, but to pay the yoke.124

Nikon continued,

‘I asked you where did you get these laws and canons according to which you so brazenly act? If I am guilty and worthy of punishment, why do you do it secretly like thieves? You brought me to the small monastery church. Neither his royal majesty, nor his officials, nor the people of the Russian lands are here. Was it here, in this small church, that I received the blessing of Holy Spirit, my flock, or the shepherd’s staff? Believe me, this church was built later, by the labors of our humbleness.’ The patriarchs responded ‘here or there, its all the same.’125

When he concluded, the universal patriarchs “took Nikon’s klobuk with pearls and his panagia, the latter embellished with silver, gold, and precious stones.” When reproached by Nikon to “take it all and divide it amongst yourselves,” a clear reference to the Biblical account of the division of Christ’s garments among His persecutors during the Crucifixion (Mark 15, 24), the patriarchs gave the klobuk and panagia to the monk named Mark. Then, they put a different, simple klobuk taken from a Greek monk on

122 Shusherin, 129-132.
123 Shusherin, 132 did not enumerate the charges, but referred to them as “libelous and false accusations.”
124 Ibid, 132-133.
Nikon, but allowed the "former Patriarch" to keep temporally his *mantiia* and *posokh* due to "fear of the people."\(^{126}\)

Shusherin's presentation of Nikon's retort to the foreign patriarchs raises serious issues concerning the nature of his trial. More specifically, Nikon questioned the legal basis of his condemnation ("where do you get these laws from?")\(^{126}\), charged that it was carried out in "secret," and asserted that foreign patriarchs judging him were compromised ("you wander the earth as beggars not only to obtain the necessary, but to pay the [Turkish] yoke"). In sum, these accusations raise the notion that Nikon was unjustly persecuted, not fairly tried.

Shusherin's presentation of Nikon's responses to the universal patriarchs would have wider relevance to Russians living in the mid-nineteenth century. They concerned the same basic issues only partially resolved by the legal reforms of 1863 and the challenges to them raised by the political activism and increasing violence of Narodnichestvo in the late 1870s and 1880s. Not surprisingly, historians and others sympathetic to Nikon emphasized his own words in their efforts to defend the Patriarch and to rehabilitate his memory.\(^{127}\)

Nikon's much quoted responses to the actions taken against him on December 12, 1666 are crucial to the nineteenth-century interpretations of his trial and the larger formulation of his image. N. Subbotin's especially harsh critique of the trial in general and sentencing phase of the proceeding in particular, stressed Nikon's response to the universal patriachs. Following the Patriarch's own words and supplementing them with

\(^{126}\) Ibid, 133-134.
\(^{127}\) Ibid, 134-135. According to Ligarides, Aleksei Mikhailovich requested that Nikon temporarily retain his cope.

See, for example, Apollosa, 58-60.
other primary sources, Subbotin argued that the trial was biased, clandestine and thus, unjust.\textsuperscript{128}

The historian concluded,

In deed, one must agree that their [the universal patriarchs'] behavior regarding Nikon's trial reveals not so much a desire to understand all of its details as a desire to get in the good graces of the Tsar and thus to protect their personal interests. There is no doubt (if not outright more plausible) that they would gladly acquit Nikon if that coincided with the wishes of the Russian tsar and therefore would be to their personal advantage. One need only remember that after Nikon's death, the four patriarchs reversed the very verdict against Nikon delivered by his “brothers,” restored his patriarchal title and sent final farewell charters as Tsar Fedor Alekseevich asked them to do.\textsuperscript{129}

The other experts on Nikon’s trial, including Gibbenet and Nikolaevskii, presented much the same line of argumentation by stressing Nikon’s own words.\textsuperscript{130} It is significant that even Nikon’s harshest critics, most notably S. M. Solov’ev, closely followed the details of Shusherin’s works and presents the Russian Patriarch’s responses to the foreign patriarchs in their entirety.\textsuperscript{131} The same is true of popular and historical fictional accounts.

Mordovtsev’s and Filippov’s novels expanded the notions presented in the primary sources stressing Nikon’s charge that the proceedings were clandestine.\textsuperscript{132} Mordovtsev explained that when Nikon entered the church “he searched for the eyes of the Tsar, but the latter was not in the church, only one parchment paper-like face, the face of Almaz Ivanov was not in a sakkos.”\textsuperscript{133} Filippov noted that, while “all the highest Moscow clergy” were in attendance, “the Tsar sent only Prince Nikita Ivanovich Odoevskii (boyar of the office of secret affairs), Boyar Peter Mikhailovich Saltykov

\textsuperscript{128} Subbotin, 169-175.
\textsuperscript{129} Subbotin, 171.
\textsuperscript{130} Gibbenet, pt. 2, 366-372; Nikolaevskii, Zhizn’ patriarkha Nikona v ssylke, 3-5.
\textsuperscript{131} Solov’ev, vol. 21, 95-96. Kostomarov, 448-449, closely followed Solov’ev.
\textsuperscript{132} Mordovtsev, 137-140; Filippov, 496-498.
Moreover, according to Filippov, Almaz Ivanov, not Archbishop Illarion of Riazan', read the judgment against Nikon in Russian. These details not only support, but enhance the notion that Nikon’s condemnation was both secret and biased. Like Subbotin and the pro-Nikon historians, Filippov carried this idea to the extreme claiming that Nikon was unjustly persecuted. Both Mordovtsev’s and Filippov’s presentation of Nikon’s trial were clearly affected by a concern for justice, i.e., an open, unbiased trial, inspired by contemporary Russian legal reforms and/or practices.

Metropolitan Makarii appears to be the sole historian to reject Shusherin’s account and to contest the charges leveled by Nikon. Makarii countered the Russian Patriarch’s accusations by attempting to uphold the legality of the trial in four ways. First, he undercut the claim that the proceedings were carried out in secret by explaining that a veritable host of secular officials witnessed the event. Second, he added references to material cultural symbols, namely epitrakhil’, omoforiia and mitras, associated with the universal patriarchs’ and other Russian hierarchs’ authority not found in the primary sources. Third, he edited Nikon’s speech, reducing it to a single phrase - “take all this you poor travelers and use it for your needs.” Finally, he responded to the implication that the universal patriarchs were motivated by material gain, by clarifying that rather than keeping Nikon’s valuables for themselves, they “gave both the klobuk and the panagiia to Nikon’s monk Mark, who was standing nearby.”

\[133\] Ibid, 137.
\[134\] Ibid.
\[135\] Fillipov, 497. Fillipov’s and Mordovtsev’s emphasis on Almaz Ivanov was later incorporated into Miloradovich’s depiction of the event.
\[136\] Makarii, 364-369. Metropolitan Makarii’s treatment of the event is unique among the secondary sources. His effort is a response to Old Believer polemics and Subbotin’s claim that Nikon’s trial was secretive, prejudiced, and unjust. Makarii countered the Old Believers’ use of the trial to
Material cultural objects symbolizing Nikon's status as Russian Patriarch played a central role in his own and subsequent representations of his final deposition. Here, specifics of Nikon's patriarchal vestments take on new meaning(s) and serve new functions. Two of the objects taken from Nikon, the black klobuk with pearl cherub/cross and panagia, are recognized for their material value as well as their symbolic significance. The decision to allow Nikon to retain temporally his mantitia appears vital to the universal patriarchs' efforts to conceal their "secret" degradation of the Russian Patriarch.

Miloradovich's Depictions of Nikon's Trial: Inspirations

Miloradovich's fascination with Nikon's trial lasted his entire career. Over the course of thirty years (1886-1917), he painted at least five paintings and numerous studies of the events of December 12, 1666. Miloradovich's canvases depict various instances from the concluding stage of Nikon's trial. He dedicated two paintings to the announcement of the final charges against Nikon. Two others portray Nikon being stripped of patriarchal symbols. Each of the paintings represents original interpretations of Nikon's trial based on a variety of written and material cultural sources. All present different perspectives and include distinct background images that supply the event with
different contexts and symbolic associations. Especially noteworthy is the artist’s repeated association of Nikon with images of Christ crucified.

Miloradovich’s unpublished autobiography and other writings provide important insights on the types of materials that inspired his depiction of Nikon. The artist recalled that Mordovtsev’s historical novel Great Schism furnished the original inspiration for his first historical painting “Black Council.” However, after reading N. I. Subbotin’s rather harsh review of Mordovtsev’s book in journal Russkii Vestnik, the artist decided to take a more serious investigation of his historical subjects. Miloradovich met with Subbotin for consultation and received books from him. Thereafter, he decided to become more familiar with the primary sources and historical scholarship. Turning to Subbotin’s publications, Miloradovich “found valuable material for the artist.”

It appears that Subbotin stimulated Miloradovich’s interest in Nikon’s trial. According to the artist’s autobiography, his efforts to paint Nikon’s trial followed not long after his contact with the historian and the study of his work. Other notes penned by Miloradovich indicate relatively intense study of Nikon’s life and primary sources pertaining to the Patriarch’s trial. For example, the artist’s writings about the trial include outlines enumerating more than seventy five clerics that participated in the Church Council of 1666-7, specifics about the universal patriarchs, Paisius Ligarides, Illarion, the Archbishop of Riazan’, and other details used in his paintings. In other words, Miloradovich followed closely the lines of investigation advocated by Subbotin. Finally, and most importantly, the artist’s depictions of Nikon testify to the lasting impact of

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138 RGALI f. 2056 op. 1 n 4, l. 2. I have not yet located the review cited by Miloradovich. It is noteworthy that Subbotin also harshly criticized what were considered highly favorable depictions of Old Believers in the historical novels of Nicholas Leskov. See R. F. Byrnes, Pobedonstev. His Life and Thought (bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), 181.

139 RGALI f. 2056 op. 1 no. 6. See 33-34.
Subbotin’s scholarship had on Miloradovich. Accepting his and later pro-Nikon historians’ and novelists’ presentations of the Patriarch, the artist created pictorial images which showed Nikon as a martyr by likening him to Christ. Although not completed and exhibited until the early twentieth century, Miloradovich’s representations of Nikon were clearly shaped by the ideas about the Patriarch that emerged in the literature of the mid-nineteenth century.

Miloradovich’s own writings also reveal in-depth study of a diverse selection of artistic, and material cultural sources pertinent to his depiction of Nikon.140 The artist consulted published guides to monasteries, cathedrals and museums holding art and artifacts related to the Patriarch. He was also intimately familiar with the details of the Patriarch’s dress, including even Nikon’s preferred color of riasa [clerical undergarment]. There can be little doubt that Miloradovich visited the New Jerusalem Monastery to study original seventeenth-century artistic images of and artifacts belonging to the Patriarch displayed at the museum dedicated to Nikon.141 The painter’s precise artistic treatment of specific aspects of Nikon’s belongings available only at New Jerusalem, including the Patriarch’s black klobuk, testify to this.

Miloradovich’s Depictions of Nikon’s Trial: Early Efforts

Miloradovich discussed the results of his early efforts to depict Nikon’s trial in his unpublished autobiography. The artist first mentioned the painting and its reception while recalling a visit by P. M. Tret’iakov in 1886. Tret’iakov, one of nineteenth-century Russia’s premier patrons and collectors, visited Miloradovich’s studio shortly after he had bought the artist’s “Black Council.” According to Miloradovich, “my wife opened the

140 RGALI f. 2056 op. 1 n. 6 “Zametki ob ikonopisi” (no date), l. 29 ob-32 ob.
door and said that some kind of kupets [merchant] in felt boots arrived and was asking for me. He entered my studio where I was hurriedly working on a new historical painting ‘Patriarch Nikon’s Trial’ for the upcoming Peredvizhniki Exhibition. He looked at it attentively and noted among other things that the faces of boyars in the painting hardly reflected any nobility. He was correct, it was easier for me to paint the monks in the painting purchased by him than to suffer with the boyars who I did not completely understand.” Miloradovich submitted the painting to Peredvizhniki jury, but it was rejected.  

The preeminent Russian artist I. E. Repin outlined the reasons for the painting’s exclusion from the Peredvizhniki Exhibition and offered advice for Miloradovich in a letter to M. P. Fedorov on March 9, 1886. After noting that he was the only member of the selection committee to vote in favor of the work, Repin explained that,

when I saw his current painting ‘Nikon’ I did not believe my eyes. Four people could hardly move this massive ... frame! .... No lighting could help - the painting is bad. A mediocre composition, the painting manner is not based on models, not to mention the style itself. All the mountains of paint with no avail and most importantly, the false self-interpretation. Everything is done in a sloppy manner. In his current painting, there is not a shadow of that modest, truthful painter aspiring to realize his ideals. Here, everything is self-calculated and the image is executed haphazardly.... Enough about that, it is boring and pitiful. Please advise him to paint sketches using models. He should not chase after quantity, but quality. Paint modestly, but truthfully. Stop piling up paints. However, the talent will shine through and this failure is perhaps for the better.

Fedorov, contrary to Repin’s intentions, showed the letter to Miloradovich in order to avail him of the senior artist’s assessment of his work.

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141 RGALI f. 2056 op. 1 n. 4, l. 29. Miloradovich’s old personal friend N. Rozhdestvenskii was a monk at New Jerusalemen during Archimandrite Leonid Kavelin’s tenure (1869-1877).
142 RGALI f. 2056 op. 1 n 4, l. 2ob. See Norman, “Pavel Tret’iakov and Merchant Art Patronage.”
143 GTG OR f. 31 op. 1 n. 1343, I. E. Repin to M. P. Fedorov March 9, 1886, 11-2ob.
144 GTG OR f. 31 op. 1 n. 1344, I. E. Repin to M. P. Fedorov May 4, 1886, l. 2ob.
Miloradovich explained that Tret’iakov returned shortly after the painting’s rejection to console his “failure.” The patron advised him to submit the painting to the competition of the Moscow Society of Art Lovers because, “it would have a good chance to get an award.” The artist rejected the suggestion. “I could not in all consciousness send my rejected work to the competition of the society with which, by the way, I was not acquainted very well. Besides, the subject of the painting was so attractive to me that I was ready to continue improving it.” 145

Tret’iakov’s and Repin’s honest criticisms and advice clearly affected Miloradovich’s subsequent efforts to depict Nikon’s trial. While both pointed to the painting’s alleged shortcomings, neither dismissed its subject. Rather, they encouraged revisions. Tret’iakov’s efforts to promote the work and his proposition that it was likely to win an award, suggest that he perceived it to be a noteworthy representation of history. As Repin predicted in a second letter to Fedorov, Miloradovich’s work would ultimately benefit from this early “failure.” 146 However, nearly two decades passed before the artist’s endeavors reached fruition.

Miloradovich turned his creative attention to more contemporary subjects, including social critiques of both high and low ranking provincial clergy. His works from this period include “Hierarch Visits Female Landowner” (1887), “Counting the Easter Cakes” (1887), “Dividing Easter Offerings” (1887) and “Attending to the Parish” (1891). 147 None-the-less, Patriarch Nikon continued to serve as point of reference for him and his fellow artists. Miloradovich described one such instance that occurred during a

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145 RGALI f. 2056 op. 1 n. 4, l. 2ob.
146 GTG OR f. 31 op. 1 n. 1344, l. E. Repin to M. P. Fedorov May 4, 1886, l. 2ob. It is noteworthy that neither Tret’iakov nor Repin thought the painting’s subject repetitive, even though Nevrev’s painting of Nikon’s trial had appeared at the Peredvizhniki Exhibit less than a year earlier.
147 Grigor’eva, 255; Chenskaia, 152-153.
visit from his friend V. I. Surikov, “He would say I came to you from a cross procession in during which I enjoyed observing the crowd. What personalities the clergy have, and to think that they have not changed a bit since the seventeenth century, and remained the same as they were in life of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and Patriarch Nikon.” 148

Miloradovich returned to historical genre with “Troitse-Sergieva Lavra Under Seige” (1894). Like his earlier historical canvases, it treated the clergy in much more favorable light. The artist continued in this vein creating new, positive images of historical clerical figures struggling under repression. These include “Patriarch Germogen Imprisoned in Chudov Monastery” (1896), and several painting of the Old Believer Avvakum such as “Protopop Avvakum’s Journey to Siberia” (1899) and “Protopop Avvakum in Bratskii Prison” (1899). 149 Miloradovich’s renewed efforts to immortalize Nikon’s trial fit squarely within this mode of depicting the ancient Muscovite clergy.

“Patriarch Nikon”: Announcement of the Charges

By late 1906, Miloradovich completed a new version of his previously rejected work. According to the artist, he “labored over the painting for quite some time.” 150 He submitted the canvas to the 35th Peredvizhniki Exhibition, where it was accepted. The painting appeared at the Society’s shows at the Historical Museum in Moscow (December 30- February 4, 1906-7) and at the Society for the Encouragement of Art in St. Petersburg (March 1907). 151 Exhibit catalogues listed the painting as “Patriarch

148 RGALI f. 2056 op. 1 n 4, l. 29ob.
149 See Grigor’eva, 256-257; Malysh, 39.
150 RGALI f. 2056 op. 1 no 4, l. 29.
151 G. Burova et al., Tovarishchestvo peredvizhnykh khudozhhestvennykh vystavok vol. 2 (Moscow: Isskustvo, 1959), 284. More than ten thousand spectators visited the exhibit in Moscow alone. See “Moskauer Lokalnachrichten” Moskauer Deutscher Zeitung no. 26 2 February 1907, 110.
Nikon.”  
Illustrated versions of the catalogue featured a reproduction of the work. Both versions noted that “on December 12, the second and last meeting of the council members prosecuting Nikon took place in the Blagoveschenskii Church beneath the rear gates of the Chudov Monastery. The Tsar himself was not present.... Archbishop Illarion of Riazan’ read the verdict in Russian (from the amvon). While, listening to the verdict, Nikon was mumbling (see Makarii’s History T. XII).”

The painting included at the 35th Peredvizhniki Exhibit depicted the pronouncement of charges against Nikon. The Patriarch stands in the middle of the sanctuary. The front of the church is to his left. The wall to the right (right side of the sanctuary) is decorated with a variety of frescoes, icons, and banners. The wall to Nikon’s left (rear of the sanctuary) is unadorned.

Nikon is depicted in full height, from the left side. His head is turned to the left to hear the charges against him being read. He is dressed in mantìia and black klobuk with pearl cherub. His left hand rests on a zhezl in front of him. His right hand, holding chotki [prayer beads], rests on his left wrist.

Behind Nikon, raised on the amvon, stands Illarion, Archbishop of Riazan’. His back is to the viewer. Dressed in mantìia and bishop’s hat, Illarion reads the charges against Nikon from a long list held in both hands. An acolyte stands slightly behind him holding Illarion’s staff in his right hand and round cloth insignia emblazoned with an

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152 Illiustrirovanny Katalog XXXV Vystavki, TPKhV 1907 g. (Moscow: Tipo-Litogr. N. I. Grosman i G. A. Vedel’shtein, 1907), x; XXXV peredvizhnaja vystavka kartin Moscov (Istoricheskii Muzei) (Moscow, 1907), 4; Katalog XXXV-ai Peredvizhnoi vystavki Kartin St. Peterburg (Morskaia 38) (St. Petersburg, 1907), 6.
153 Ibid, Ill. “4. Patriarkh Nikon.” The title page of the illustrated catalog advertised the sale of a set of sixty-four photographs of paintings exhibited, including Miloradovich’s, at a price one rube and five kopeks.
154 Ibid, x; XXXV peredvizhnaja vystavka kartin Moscov (Istoricheskii Muzei) (Moscow, 1907), 4; Katalog XXXV-ai Peredvizhnoi vystavki Kartin St. Peterburg (Morskaia 38) (St. Petersburg, 1907), 6.
eagle in the left. To the left of Nikon and Illarion, sit the foreign patriarchs. Both wear *epitrakhil*, *omoforiia* and *mitras*. Another barely visible young acolyte stands to the left of the patriarchs holding a *zhezl*. Across the back of the church stand six *boyars* and a large crowd of clerics (on the right). An elderly, bare-headed clerk with a long white beard sits at a table, in the midst of the clerics, taking notes. Numerous other clerics and monks stand behind Patriarch Nikon.

Comparative analysis reveals that while Miloradovich followed several key details of the event introduced in Makarii’s *History*, especially information concerning the universal patriarchs’ and other clerics’ dress and the number of secular figures present, he created an original interpretation of the event based on a variety of artistic, material cultural, and other written sources. Here, and in the other depictions of the final day of Nikon’s trial, Miloradovich followed Makarii’s claim that the universal patriarchs wore *epitrakhil*, *omoforiia* and *mitras*. This differentiates the universal patriarchs from Nikon (a distinction which Nevrev’s depiction did not make) and ultimately enhances their symbolic sense of authority. The artist’s inclusion of the *zhezls* and cloth insignia held by the two youths, a well as his depiction of the pronouncements of the sentence from the *amvon*, supplies the patriarchs with signs of authority (not mentioned in Makarii’s work). Miloradovich depicted six secular figures among the crowd witnessing Nikon’s condemnation. The inclusion of other bare-headed figures in the same vicinity suggests an even larger secular presence. In short, Miloradovich not only followed Makarii’s account, but further legitimized the event by loading the universal patriarchs with symbols of authority and packing the sanctuary with ecclesiastical and lay witnesses.

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The citation of Makarii’s work is obviously an attempt to clarify the painting rather vague title “Patriarch Nikon”. The reference is unique. None of the other works listed in the catalogs included such as citation.
While Miloradovich’s depiction of the participants in, and witnesses of, Nikon’s trial followed and expanded upon Metropolitan Makarii’s descriptions, he created an original and powerful image of Nikon by combining specific material culture objects/symbols featured in “canonical” images of the Patriarch. The artist presented Nikon in black klobuk with cherub, a feature common in the written sources. However, he took the liberty of defining other symbols alluded to but not described in the written accounts, i.e. Nikon’s mantia and zhezl, according to seventeenth-century artistic images depicting the Patriarch in his fullest authority. The mantia is the same as the one depicted in “Parsuna of Holy Nikon Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia” (late 1650s). The zhezl was the same as the one displayed at New Jerusalem and featured in the parsuna “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” (early 1660s). The chotki, which are not mentioned in any of the written sources, were depicted in the latter painting and displayed at the Museum dedicated to Nikon.156

Miloradovich’s use of specific and rather well-known material cultural symbols invests his work with additional historical authority. The artist was obviously familiar with existing art and artifacts, including the finest details of original seventeenth-century images of Nikon and his personal effects, namely the Patriarch’s black klobuk with peal cherub, chotki and staff displayed at New Jerusalem. In short, Miloradovich’s representation of Nikon is a composite of artifacts and original works of art preserved and promoted by the Church and state. Thus the artist made his depiction of Nikon historically accurate and easily recognizable.

155 This proposition cannot be confirmed because Miloradovich depicted several figures in clerical dress without headwear. 
156 See RGADA f. 1625 op. 1 ed. khr. 34, l. 11ob.
Miloradovich’s detailing of the church’s interior introduced iconographic contexts crucial to his representation of Nikon. The crucifixion scene depicted on the wall directly behind and above Nikon is most noteworthy in this respect. Nikon’s relationship to the image of Christ crucified signifies that he, like Christ, was unjustly persecuted. This association, articulated more concisely in the artist’s portrayals of Nikon’s deposition, calls the nature of the proceedings into question.

This was not the first time Miloradovich used frescoes depicted in church interiors to reinforce the symbolic meanings of his depiction of historical actors. In the painting “Black Council,” he highlighted the central figure of a monk making three-fingered sign of the cross, by depicting two frescoes showing a “saint” making the same sign behind it. This device reinforces the significance of the “sign” by creating associations between historical actors and the canonized images.

Neither the 35th Peredivzhniki Exhibit, nor Miloradovich’s “Patriarch Nikon,” received much attention in the press. Critics tended to agree that the painting was not compelling and originality. For N. Kochetov, reviewer for Moskovskii listok, Miloradovich’s work displayed “a certain academism which is dry, weak and uninteresting.” 157 Other commentators claimed that the artistic flaws of the work detracted from the significance of the subject. According to O. Grosberg’s review in St. Petersburger Zeitung, “‘Nikon’ is quite boring, it does not display the spark of one of Russia’s greatest historical moments.” 158 The distinguished critic P. D. Ettinger, writing under the penname “Lubitel,” observed that “the tragedy of historical moment depicted in

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157 N. Kochetov, “XXXV peredvizhnaia vystavka” Moskovskii listok no. 6 8 January 1907, 2-3. Academic painting is usually well executed, but not compelling or original.
‘Patriarch Nikon’ is weakly painted by Miloradovich. How little greatness we see in the highly ordinary type of the Patriarch himself!”

Though few in number and brief, these critiques attest Nikon’s significance as an important historical personality and his trial as a crucial historical event. While Grosberg’s opinion of Nikon is unclear, he recognized the significance of Nikon’s trial by counting it as “one of the greatest historical moments.” Ettinger’s comments provide a more precise evaluation of the Patriarch. His claims that Nikon was “great” and “extraordinary” and that his trial was a tragic moment reveal that the reviewer had a strong positive preconceived image of the Patriarch. These notions reflect clearly the continued impact of pro-Nikon literature in general and the specialized works on the Patriarch’s trial in specific upon broader societal conceptions of Nikon.

Although not widely discussed in the press at the time of its exhibition, both important collectors and Miloradovich’s fellow artists appreciated the painting. Miloradovich explained that he received news of the painting’s reception during a visit from his friend Arkhilov. “He had just visited the opening of the Perdvizhniki Exhibition in the Historical Museum and, among other things, he told me that the selection commission, including Serov, the preeminent portrait painter of the Silver Age, Ostroukhov, leading expert on icons and religious art, and Korzinkin, discussed the purchase of my painting for the Tret’iakov Gallery. Serov was especially fond of it.... It turned out, however, that Ostroukhov wanted to buy the painting for the Alexander III

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Although the painting was not sold, it continued to attract the attention in the art world. Two years later, I. Tsvetkov, V. S. Surikov, and V. Makovskii included "Patriarch Nikon’s Trial (1906)" in a list of works submitted to the council of the Imperial Academy of Arts in a successful bid to have Miloradovich recognized as an academician.  

This recognition confirms the significance of the Patriarch’s trial as historical event and subject of historical painting well into the Silver Age of Russian culture. The notion that the work was under consideration for purchase by and public display at the Empire’s leading collections of Russian art, and its citation in support for Miloradovich’s elevation to the status of academician, attest to official approval of the artist’s representation of Nikon and the trial. This validation was reconfirmed in the national press when, in 1911, the illustrated journal Niva featured a full-page reproduction of the painting. 

Miloradovich’s second painting, “Patriarch Nikon’s Trial - Sketch for the Painting” (1908), reveals the artist’s continued attempts to redefine the Church Council of 1666-7’s final condemnation of Nikon on December 12, 1666. The sketch and six studies for the painting “Patriarch Nikon’s Trial” appeared at the 37th Perdvizhniki Exhibit in Moscow at the Historical Museum (December 14, 1908- January 25, 1909), at the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts in St. Petersburg (February 6 - April 5, 1909), and in

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160 RGALI f. 2056 op. 1 no. 4, l. 29. Miloradovich went on to explain that he did not regret that the painting was not sold and that “later on during the Revolution, I corrected many imperfections that I found in it.”

161 GTG OR f. 14 op.1 no. 86, l. 10-10ob “Draft of the proposal to the Council of the Imperial Academy to promote S. D. Miloradovich to title of academician” (January, 1909). Miloradovich received the title “academic painter” on October 26, 1909. See Grigor’eva, 258.

162 Neva 12 19 March 1911, 224. The same issue also included a brief text pertaining to the image. See the brief, unsigned article “K risunkam” in the same issue of Neva, 239-240.
Khar’kov (1909). One of the studies, a close-up of the old man reading behind the desk, was included in the illustrated catalogue.

Comparative analysis of “Patriarch Nikon’s Trial - Sketch for the Painting” with “Patriarch Nikon” highlights several significant differences. Although the artist’s depiction of Nikon is consistent, he revised the rest of the image. Miloradovich completely transformed the context of the event and its potential meaning(s), by reversing the perspective (the front of the church is in the background), and by omitting several figures and symbols. These changes affected Miloradovich’s presentation of the trial.

The artist diminished the authority attributed to the universal patriarchs and Illarion, the Archbishop of Riazan’, in the earlier work by removing symbols of their power (zhezl and emblem with eagle) and by relocating their position within the church. Although the patriarchs and archbishop all appear in the foreground of the painting, near the viewer, they are actually located in the very back of the sanctuary, rather than the front. This is especially noticeable in Illation’s case. Here, the verdicts against Nikon are announced from the floor, not from the authoritative position of the raised amvon. By reversing the perspective and presenting key clerical figures in the back of the sanctuary, the artist further departed from the written accounts of the event.

Miloradovich radically altered the depiction of secular figures. Reduced in number and pushed to the fringes, they are all but nonexistent. The presentation of the old man reading behind the table is the most obvious change. Situated in the middle

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163 Iliustrirovanny Katalog XXXVII Vystavki. TPKhV 1909 g. (Moscow: Tipo-Litogr. I. F. Schetinkin i I. A. Martynova, 1909), xi; XXXVII peredvizhnaia vystavka kartin, Moscow. (Istoresheskii Muzei), 1908 Katalog (Moscow, 1909) 8; XXXVII peredizhnaia vystavka kartin, St. Petersburg (Morskaia, 38) 1909, Katalog. 7; XXVII peredvizhnaia vystavka kartin, Khar’kov (Khar’kov, 1909), 6. More than ten thousand spectators viewed the exhibit in Moscow alone. See “W.” “Na vystavkakh” Rul’ no. 154 26 January 1909, 8.
164 Ibid, Ill. 48 “Etiud k kart. “Sud nad patriarkh Nikonom (56x71).”
foreground of the painting, his figure replaces the youth holding Archbishop Illarion’s staff and insignia. The elderly man’s central position and curious actions (reading while the charges against Nikon are announced), raises questions about his identity and role in the trial. None of the scholarly histories provide answers to these questions; however, the fictional accounts presented in D. Mordovtsev’s *Great Schism* and M. A. Filippov’s *Patriarch Nikon. A Historical Novel* does.

Miloradovich’s depiction of the old man fits the historical novels’ description of Almaz Ivanov. Mordovtsev’s account matches his physical description, while Filippov’s novel describes his actions. Mordovtsev explained that when Nikon entered the church “he glanced at the patriarchs and hierarchs standing in sakkos, only one parchment paper like face, the face of Almaz Ivanov was not in a sakkos.” 165 According to Filippov, “Almaz Ivanov and one of the Greeks read from the council’s decisions in Greek and in Russian respectively.” 166 The notion that Ivanov, recognized as Nikon’s enemy in the fictional account, participated in Nikon’s final sentencing suggests unfair and unjust verdict against the Russian hierarch.

In sum, these modifications signal a critical presentation of Nikon’s trial reminiscent of Subbotin, Gibbenet, and Nikolaevskii’s arguments and fit the artist’s practice of depicting persecuted clergymen from the past. Miloradovich repeated his strong, favorable depiction of Nikon by creating a composite based on seventeenth-century images of the Patriarch. However, the artist’s reverse perspective, omission of secular witnesses and key symbols associated with the universal patriarchs, and his portrayal of Almaz Ivanov combine to create a compromised image of the proceedings.

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165 Mordovtsev, 137.
166 Fillipov, 497.
against Nikon. This version of the trial has more in common with pro-Nikonian accounts than Makarii's History. Moreover, this case attests to the lasting impact historical fiction had on the formulation of Nikon's image.

Despite being viewed by "the most intelligent public," the 37th Peredvizhniki Exhibition received even less attention in the press than the 35th. While reviewers mentioned Miloradovich's participation in the exhibit, his work elicited little attention from the critics. However, A. P. Lanov, Miloradovich's friend, expressed a favorable opinion of the artist's paintings. He recollected that his collection included "the oil sketch to the painting 'Trial of Patriarch Nikon' depicting an old male model from fine art school. The sketch is very interesting and picturesque because, as D. [S. D. Miloradovich] himself told me, the sketch was done from a model, who at the time, was more than 115 years old." 

Still not satisfied with his depiction of Nikon's trial, Miloradovich continued to labor over the subject. In 1913, he exhibited two "studies of the Patriarch" at the Peredvizhniki Exhibition of Studies, Drawings, and Sketches. Miloradovich's obsession with Nikon even persisted in the midst of the Revolution. He explained in his autobiography that, "when the October Revolution came, I continued to use my studio and worked, among other things, on my big painting 'Patriarch Nikon on Trial'."

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169 GTG OR f. 3 op. 1 n. 319. The Tret'iakov Gallery bought this work from Lanov in 1936. See GTG Katalog Zhivopisi XIII-nach. XX veka (do 1917) (Moscow: Izobrazitel'noe Iskusstvo, 1984), 298. It is listed as no. 22590, "Old Man" study for the painting "Patriarch Nikon", XXXV TPKhV Exhibit 1907 (55x73).
170 Burova, vol. I, 258. S. D. Teleshev bought one of the works for 100 roubles. GTG OR f. 69 op. 1 no. 625. The only review of this exhibit I found, I. Iasiniskii, "Peredvizhnaia vystavka eskizov i etiudov" Birzhevve vedomosti no. 14553 13 December 1914, 4, did not comment on Miloradovich's studies.
171 RGALI f. 2056 op. 1 n 4, l. 39 ob. Comparison of the reproductions of the painting featured in the illustrated catalogue of the 35th Peredvizhniki Exhibit and Neva with the painting as it exists today,
“Patriarch Nikon on Trial”: Nikon’s Response

Miloradovich produced at least two paintings portraying the final moments of Nikon’s trial. Both depict the highly symbolic act of Nikon being defrocked. Thus, they also show the precise moment Nikon pronounced his harsh denunciation of the proceedings against him. These works are strikingly different from the paintings analyzed above. In addition to featuring a different aspect of the event, they introduce new physical perspectives and symbolic contexts, which reshape Nikon’s image. Like the Patriarch’s retort recorded in the primary sources, and stressed by Subbotin and other historians sympathetic to Nikon, these paintings question the motivations behind, and legality of, the trial’s final phase.

The first work is more of a sketch than a finished painting. The left front quadrant of the church serves as the physical and symbolic context. The iconostasis and tsar’s doors are to the right rear of the image. A wall covered with frescoes lines the back left portion of the painting. Several of the many icons and other images included are recognizable. A large, free-standing crucifix completes the image’s background. Nikon stands in the middle of the scene with his back to the iconostasis. He is dressed in mantia, but is bare-headed. His arms are raised and outstretched to his sides. His left hand elevates his zhezl. Nikon’s outstretched arms cause his mantia to lift to his thigh and to spread open.

reveals the results of Miloradovich’s modifications. The artist made minor changes to the secondary figures, i.e. developing faces of figures standing at the back of the church and the youth holding the zhezl and emblem with an eagle. He also continued to experiment with the background. The most obvious change being inclusion of a fresco depicting the Final Judgement on wall to the left behind Nikon. The inclusion of the image of the ultimate judgment on a previously blank space adds weight to the significance of Nikon’s condemnation.

236

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The two universal patriarchs are directly in front of Nikon, facing him and the front of the sanctuary. Both are dressed in *epitrakhil, omoforiiia* and *mitra*. The Patriarch of Antioch is seated facing Nikon, with his back to the viewer. The Patriarch of Alexandria stands directly in front of Nikon. His left arm is extended toward Nikon as if trying to restrain the condemned Russian Patriarch. He places the *panagiia*, stripped from Nikon only seconds earlier, on a large silver tray held by a monk wearing a simple black *klobuk*. Nikon’s black *klobuk* with pearl cherub is already resting on the same tray.

Archbishop Illarion and several other clerics stand behind Nikon at the front of the church. They are raised on the *amvon* directly before the tsar’s doors. Illarion holds a long scroll containing the charges against Nikon. An old man to his left appears to take notes. Numerous hierarchs and other clerics line the wall to the left of the action. Two *boyars*, in fur coats, stand behind the seated Patriarch. Three men dressed as secular officials stand to the right at the front of the church.

This depiction of the event closely parallels the accusations Nikon raised against his judges. In this canvas, the inclusion of secular figures does not attest to the notion that the proceedings were inclusive and open. On the contrary, by placing two of the *boyars* physically and figuratively “behind” the universal patriarchs, the artist stressed the *boyars’* enmity towards Nikon and suggested that they conspired against the Russian Patriarch.

The material cultural signs of Nikon’s position are central to the painting and give it new meaning. Here, Nikon’s *klobuk* and *panagiia* appear as not only symbols of power, but objects of material value. While the painting clearly illustrates the Patriarch of Alexandria stripping the pearl and gem encrusted symbols of Nikon’s position, it does not suggest that they will be returned. The monk holding the silver tray on which the *klobuk*
and panagiia are placed does not, based on both Nikon’s and the Alexandrine Patriarch’s reactions, appear to be the “Mark” mentioned in Shusherin’s accounts and Makarii’s History. Rather, this monk’s headwear and physical location and the absence of other monks in the painting, clearly denote him as the monk, referred to in all the sources, as the one standing nearby, whose “simple” klobuk was removed and placed on Nikon’s head. Therefore, the painting appears to confirm Nikon’s assertion that the universal patriarchs’ actions were motivated at least in part by material gain, an idea widely accepted and stressed in both the scholarly and popular literature.

Finally, Miloradovich reconfirmed and added new depth to the notion that Nikon was unjustly persecuted by associating him symbolically and iconographically with the image of the Christ crucified. Nikon’s out-stretched arms clearly liken him to the figure of Christ hanging on the cross that the artist positioned directly behind him. This association is especially striking given Nikon’s statement that his prosecutors to were free to partition his belongings, a clear reference to the division of Christ’s garments during His Crucifixion. The same power and defining set of associations is also found in Miloradovich’s other painting depiction of the same event.

Miloradovich’s second, more realistic, painting of Nikon’s divestment introduces yet another set of physical and iconographic contexts and human actions. This painting shows the right, back corner of the church. A series of rounded arches dominate the sanctuary’s interior. Frescoes of large cherubim fill each of three overhead arches, as well as the arched passage and the wall to the right of the main action. A large crucifix is present at the back center of the image.

Nikon stands in the center of the space, denouncing the actions taken against him. He is dressed in a mantitia, but is bareheaded. His arms are outstretched to his sides. His
left hand holds his zhezl. Nikon’s outstretched arms cause his mantiia to spread open and rise above his knees.

The Patriarch of Alexandria is in front of Nikon. He steps away from Nikon (and the viewer) toward the back of the sanctuary. His head is turned to the “former Patriarch.” Dressed in epitrakhil, omoforiia and mitra, he holds Nikon’s black klobuk with pearl cherub in his left hand.

A single, young assistant is also located in the middle of the sanctuary. He holds the Alexandrine Patriarch’s zhezl with his left hand. The youth bends over to pick up an insignia, bearing an eagle, which has fallen to the floor with his right hand.172

The remaining figures are grouped in small clusters. To the right, stand eight boyars conversing with each other. A scribe behind a podium is among them. Two additional boyars stand to the extreme left. Four figures at the back left center of the scene are raised several steps above the rest of the actors. These include the Patriarch of Antioch, dressed in epitrakhil’, omoforiia and mitra and holding his zhezl, Archbishop Illarion, holding the long scroll with the list of charges against Nikon, and three other clerics. One of the hierarchs reaches somewhat undignified toward the approaching Patriarch of Alexandria as if grabbing for Nikon’s klobuk. There are no other clerical figures featured in this image.

This is Miloradovich’s most striking and favorable depiction of Nikon and his most original and critical commentary on trial. Here, Miloradovich altered the composition of the participants in the final day of Nikon’s trial. The boyars are in the majority. There are eight of them and only six clergymen, including the two universal
patriarchs. The artist highlighted this disparity by locating the boyars in the foreground of the painting and relegating the clergy, with the exception of the Alexandrine Patriarch, to the background. Although raised several steps above the rest of the scene, the Patriarch of Antioch and Archbishop Illarion are not situated in the authoritative position of the amvon.

The idea that there were more boyars/secular officials than clerics at the proceedings is a major departure from all written accounts of the event. This purposeful exaggeration is a negative commentary on the nature of the trial. The overwhelming presence and position of the noblemen suggests that they, not the Church council or the Tsar, dominated the proceedings and determined the actions taken against Nikon. The obvious lack of clerical participants, not to mention the Tsar, stresses the clandestine nature of the event. All of these factors point to a boyar plot against Nikon, a concept common to much of the historical and popular literature sympathetic to the Patriarch.

While the painting emphasizes the boyar’s role and power, it, like the previously discussed work, seriously questions the universal patriarhs’ motives and authority. Following closely Nikon’s biting critique of the actions against him, it stresses the foreign patriarhs’ fallibility. The action surrounding Nikon’s klobuk with pearl cherub is most significant in this respect. By showing the Alexandrine Patriarch carry it away from Nikon and toward the impatient grasp of another hierarch, the artist echoed and supported the “former Patriarch’s” charge that the foreign patriarhs were motivated by material need. This point also parallels the thrust of the pro-Nikon authors line of contention.

172 This is the same youth depicted in the first painting. While in the earlier painting the youth held the staff and insignia for Illarion, here he bears the symbols of the Alexandrine Patriarch - there are no other clerics close by. Illarion is at the opposite end of the sanctuary.
Finally, Miloradovich compromised the Alexandrine Patriarch’s position by presenting a symbol of his authority, e. g., the emblem with an eagle, lying on the floor.

The painting contains multiple symbolic references that reinforce Nikon’s positive representation. As in the previously discussed painting, Nikon’s outstretched arms clearly associate him with the figure of the crucified Christ located behind him, and suggest that the Patriarch, like Christ, was unjustly persecuted. Here, Miloradovich’s depiction of cherubs on the ceiling and walls of the sanctuary and the symbols of authority retained by the “former Patriarch,” i.e., his mantia, creates another strong and meaningful set of associations. According to Orthodox tradition, “the broad, loose, unbelted mantia is sign of angelic wings and is called ‘the image of the angel’.” Therefore, despite being stripped of the klobuk with cherub, Nikon’s open mantia equates him symbolically with the angels. In effect, Nikon is not only surrounded by, but in the company of cherubs. His association with the cherubs is especially poignant when compared to the symbols associated with Patriarch of Alexandria. While the foreign patriarch’s emblem of authority, ironically depicting an eagle, is fallen to the ground, the “wings” of Nikon’s mantia elevate the Russian Patriarch into company of angels and signify extreme piety.

Taken together, Miloradovich’s canvases provide an iconographic record of the painter’s ongoing struggle to express artistically his conception of Nikon and the sentencing phase of his trial. They show that his presentation of Nikon remained largely consistent. Although Miloradovich continued to work on depicting the Patriarch’s trial into the early twentieth century, his ideas about Nikon are clearly shaped by the discourse on the Patriarch that emerged and gathered force in the mid-nineteenth century. The content of Miloradovich’s paintings exhibits the impact of the negative treatments of
Nikon’s trial advanced in specialized historical studies by Subbotin, Gibbenet and Nikolaevskii, as well as novels by Mordovtsev and Filippov. More specifically, the artist reinforced the notion of Nikon as an unjustly persecuted martyr by associating him repeatedly with images of Christ crucified. Like Nevrev and Litovchenko, Miloradovich produced original positive images of Nikon by associating the Patriarch with specific material cultural objects, featured in original seventeenth-century images and/or promoted by the church and state.

In the final analysis, it appears that Miloradovich never abandoned neither his ideas about the persecution of the clergy in Russian history. In the period between his original decision to paint Nikon’s trial in 1885 and its realization in the early twentieth century, Miloradovich perfected his craft by continuing to paint scenes involving oppositional clergy at crucial historical junctures. In doing so, he followed the advice of his critics, most notably I. E. Repin, who impressed upon Miloradovich the need to improve his technique and artistic integrity in order to be “a truthful painter aspiring to realize his ideals.” After achieving a certain level of mastery, validated by critics and patrons, the painter returned to finish the original canvass. Thus, the explanation behind Miloradovich’s persistence appears to be professional rather than ideological. Miloradovich’s ideas about Nikon’s significance in Russian history as they were formulated in the mid-nineteenth century were finally realized in the early twentieth century.

172 Kak razlichat’ duxhovenstvo po chinam i zvanijam (Moscow: Tsentr Blago, 1999), 10.
174 GTG OR f. 31 op. 1 n. 1343, I. E. Repin to M. P. Fedorov March 9, 1886, l. 2 ob.
175 Grigor’eva, 256.
Conclusions

Far from mere illustrations of written historical texts, historical realist depiction of Patriarch Nikon represent complex, inclusive and original compositions based on a variety of source materials. The investigation of Nikon’s image in Russian historical realist art offers perhaps the best opportunity to gain a comprehensive grasp on Nikon’s image in arguably one of the most active periods of its development and proliferation - the second half of the nineteenth century. My analysis of paintings by Nevrev, Litovchenko, and Miloradovich shows that the artists created unique, inclusive iconographic representations of historical events and images of Nikon based on a variety of primary and secondary sources available in nineteenth-century Russia. Because the artists employed a variety of source materials and focused on controversial topics with contemporary relevance, their works evoked distinct responses. The analysis of these complex compositions and the reactions to them manifest in private correspondences and published reviews offer new insights on Nikon’s image not evident from readings based on historical texts alone.

The formulation of Nikon’s image in both historical literature and historical painting depended largely on symbols of power and authority, both secular and religious, especially material cultural objects associated with the patriarchal office. Attention to historical accuracy resulted in the production of favorable new images of Nikon. This was the case because, unlike written documents that were often critical of the Patriarch, the original iconographic sources were consistently presented and interpreted in positive terms especially, the notions of piety, religious authority, and legitimacy.

Evidence of the paintings’ reception provides unique insights on Nikon’s image in Russian culture. My investigation of the reactions to the canvases emphasizes critics’
conceptions of Nikon and the historical events depicted, rather than their opinions of the paintings as art. This distinction in assessing Nikon's image is crucial, because my research suggests that there is no relationship between the perception of the paintings' artistic merits and the critics' judgments concerning the Patriarch. Frequently, reviewers had high opinions of a painting's aesthetics, but criticized its representation of Nikon and vice-versa. In short, the critics' commentaries were as much or more about Nikon's resonance as a cultural figure, as they were about the perceived artistic values of the historical paintings themselves.

This study shows that opinions of viewers/reviewers of Nevrev's, Litovchenko's, and Miloradovich's depictions of Nikon were largely shaped by preconceived knowledge. The audiences' preconceptions, like the painters' inspirations, were based on religious, historical, and fictional literature. However, they were not determined by written sources alone. Original works of art portraying Nikon and artifacts associated with him played a major role in the formulation of ideas about the Patriarch. More specifically, my investigation shows that those familiar with seventeenth-century parsuny of Nikon and material cultural objects/symbols belonging to the Patriarch presented him positively regardless of the contexts of the historical event pictured. I contend that this was the case because those familiar with artistic and material cultural drevnosti associated with Nikon were likely to be exposed to and influenced by sympathetic accounts of Patriarch's life and deeds, especially the foundation of the New Jerusalem Monastery.

In sum, this chapter suggests that both artists and critics often accepted images of Nikon as projected in "ancient" works of art over historical "facts" recorded in written histories. Thus, the promotion of art and artifact via actual displays and published
illustrations and descriptions greatly influenced the creation and reception of new images and artistic representations of Nikon.
CHAPTER V

OLD BELIEVER IMAGES OF NIKON IN THE LATE-SEVENTEENTH AND EARLY-EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Few figures in the history of Russian Old Belief received more attention or have stronger resonance than Patriarch Nikon. Responding to Nikon’s actions, both actual and alleged, early Old Believers cast as him as the embodiment of heresy and evil. Discussed in all types of Old Believer narrative texts, polemics, letters and zhitiia [vita], the Patriarch was purported to be forerunner of the Antichrist and even the Antichrist himself. As Georg Michels astutely notes in his influential work on the schism of the Russian Church, early Old Believer authors “wrote almost exclusively about Nikon’s liturgical revisions and their religious implications” and that “the ideas they developed to reject Nikon’s reforms were almost all based on written culture.”

Therefore, contends Michels, most Old Believer texts fail to offer insight into popular responses to the Patriarch’s actions, especially those not dealing with liturgical reforms. In short, early Old Believer polemics directed against the “Nikonian” reforms, were written by a clerical elite, disseminated “from the top down” and largely inaccessible to and irrelevant for most Russians.

Michels’ observations do indeed apply to the vast majority of Old

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1 G. Michels, At War with the Church (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 4, 32.
2 Ibid, 4, 13. Michels questions the practice of relying on Old Believer texts in the study of seventeenth-century Russian religious dissent. Instead, he introduces a new body of material, including recordings concerning the legal proceedings against religious nonconformists, to “resurrect the voices of the vast majority of Russian dissenters.” Michels argues that the thoughts expressed in writings of the Old Believer “fathers” do not represent the vast majority of early dissenters for three reasons. First, the authors were members of the clerical elite whose thought was shaped by written culture (including foreign sources). Second, the vast majority of the early dissenters were illiterate. Third, there was little or no interaction or common ground between the two groups.
Believer writings discussing Nikon’s “innovations.” However, they are less relevant to
the sources I analyze in the dissertation.

The research presented in this chapter marks a new direction in the study of early
Old Belief. Unlike the traditional line of investigation that employs Old Believer texts
about the “Nikonian” reforms in efforts to uncover the roots or “character” of the schism
in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, my goal is much more specific.3 I am
interested in what a specific type of Old Believer literature concerning Nikon tells us
about his image in Russian history and culture.

This study focuses on the comparatively little known, but wide-spread and
extremely significant body of Old Believer texts known as “tales” about Nikon.4 The
tales, which first appeared during Nikon’s lifetime, became an increasingly important
aspect of Old Believer written culture during its formative stage in the late seventeenth
and early eighteenth century. During this time, they were included into Old Believer
polemics, vitae, and histories as well as narratives dealing primarily with Nikon. These
tales are important precisely because they, as one early Old Believer author put it, address
the Patriarch’s activities “besides corrupting church dogmas.”5

3 See, for example, P. S. Smirnov, Vnutrennie voprosy v raskole v XVII veka (St. Petersburg:
Tovarishchestvo “Pechatnia S. P. Iakovleva,” 1898) and V. N. Pertz, Sukhi i tolki o patriarkhe Nikon v
literaturnoi obrabotke pisatelei XVII-XVIII vv (St. Petersburg, 1900).
4 N. Iu. Bubnov, “Skazaniia i povesti o patriarkhe Nikone,” in TODL vol. XLI (Leningrad:
knizhnost': Voprosy istochnikovedeniia i paleografii 3 (XVII v.) pt. 3 (P-S) (St. Petersburg: RAN, 1998),
459-462 and N. Iu. Bubnov, Staroobriadcheskaia kniga v Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XVII v (St. Petersburg:
5 L. V. Titova, “Skazaniie o patriarkhe Nikone -- publitsisticheskii traktat pustozerskikh
uznikov,” Istoriia russkoi dukhovoi kultury v rukopisnom nasledii XVI-XX vv ed. E. K. Romodanovskala
My investigation considers the tales presented in three separate texts. They include “O volke i khiuchnike i bogootmietnike Nikone…” [“Authentic Testimony About the Marked by God Wolf and Predator Who Is Pastor in Sheep's Skin and Forerunner of the Antichrist”] (hereafter “Testimony”),7 the “Zhitie Korniliia Vygovskogo” [The Life of Kornillii of Vyg] (hereafter “Life of Kornillii”),8 and “Povest' o zhitii i rozhdenii i vospitanii i o konchine Nikona, byvshogo patriarkha…” [“Story About the Birth, Education, Life and of the Death of Nikon, Former Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Collected from Many True Persons Who Lived During the Days of Our Fathers”] (hereafter “Story About Nikon”).9 Unlike the vast majority of Old Believer writings on the Patriarch which focused the so-called “Nikonian” reforms, the tales discussed here present multifaceted images of Nikon, the significance of which extend beyond the world of Old Belief. Arguably these rich materials contain the most comprehensive insights into societal conceptions of Patriarch Nikon in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries.

Despite their central place in Russian history and culture, Old Believer images of Nikon in general and the tales about him in specific have largely escaped detailed

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6 I selected these texts for several reasons. First, they represent compilations of individual tales which were recorded at different times and at different locations. Second, they include the earliest and the latest known tales about the Patriarch and thus make it possible to track the changes and continuities in Nikon’s representation over time. Most importantly, however, they contain a common set of core tales based, allegedly, on eyewitness accounts of Nikon’s actions and descriptions of his character provided by ordinary people.

7 Analysis of this text is based on the BAN manuscript Sobraniie Druzhinina 746 (790), l. 85ob-94, published in Titova, 232-237. Cited hereafter as “Titova.” A different manuscript copy of the tale was published earlier by N. I. Subbotin, Materiialy dlia istorii raskola vol. 6 pt. 3 (Moscow, 1881), 299-302.


9 Analysis of the “Story About Nikon” is based the text published by A. K. Borozdin, Protopop Avvakum: ocherk iz istorii umstvennoi zhizni russkogo obschestva v XVII veke (St. Petersburg: A. S.
The only attempt to use these sources to assess societal conceptions of the Patriarch was conducted more than a century ago by V. G. Peretz. While other scholars, including N. I. Subbotin, A. K. Borozdin, and V. G. Druzhnin, published and/or catalogued various Old Believer tales about Nikon, Peretz was the first to suggest that the study of the early tales contained noteworthy ideas about him. His classic study investigates the most renowned Old Believer image of Nikon -- Nikon as Antichrist -- by locating several of the stories in the context of seventeenth-century Russian eschatology. Peretz intended his survey to provide “material for characterization of the mood of the eschatological masses led by so-called teachers of the Raskol [schism]” and to catalog opinions of Nikon held by the seventeenth-century supporters of “ancient piety.” He argued that universally accepted and omnipresent belief in the eminent end of the world, the final judgment and the Antichrist provided prime conditions under which to associate Nikon with the Antichrist. Peretz supported this contention with concrete examples proving that Old Believer leaders employed eschatological literature. He also showed how biblical predictions about the Antichrist were applied to Nikon as well as how Nikon’s actions appeared to confirm the association. According to this historian, no new tales appeared after the late eighteenth century, “because later writers lost interest in the

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Suvorin, 1900), no. 33, 145-167. Cited hereafter as “Borozdin.” A shorter, incomplete version of the “History About Nikon” was published in Peretz, 177-190.
10 See Bubnov, “Skazania i povesti o patriarkhe Nikone,” 144 and Staroobriadcheskaja Kniga v Rossii, 244.
11 N. I. Subbotin, Materialy dla istorii raskola, 269-274, published the “Testimony.” Borozdin, 145-167, published the “Story About Nikon.” V.G. Druzhinin, Pisaniia russkich staroobriadiatsev, Perechen' spisov, sostavlennyi po pechatnym opisaniiam pukopisnykh sobranii (St. Petersburg, 1912), 215-220 advanced the study by defining twenty-five individual tales and their locations in both unpublished and published manuscripts.
12 Peretz, 126. Peretz countered P. S. Smirnov’s contention that Old Believer texts “show that the raskol was motivated exclusively by religious aspirations” and that there was a total lack of protest against secular conditions of any kind. Peretz also rejected the notion that there was “not a hint at social conditions not a sigh about the economic order.” According to Peretz, the schism grew out of unsolved religious contradictions, but it was, to a large degree, inspired by both economic and historic factors as well as (or even to a larger degree) by literary factor, 123-124. See Smirnov, I-V and CXXVII-CXXVIII.
person of Nikon. Without the inspiration of the events contemporary to Nikon, they only rhetorically retold already known tales."\(^{13}\)

Peretz’s conclusion draws attention to limitations of his investigation. Although he revealed Nikon’s significance in the context of seventeenth-century Russian eschatology, he neglected other socio-political contexts crucial to the formulation of the Patriarch’s multifaceted image. He did not analyze the specifics of individual tales or trace their transformations over time because he read all the tales as documents of a single eschatological “mood.” With the waning of the apocalyptic atmosphere, the Patriarch’s association with the Antichrist became irrelevant. Nikon’s image remained static thereafter. This programmatic approach, which presents the tales and Nikon’s image as monolithic, is symptomatic of the discourse of modernity shared by other nineteenth and early twentieth-century Russian researchers investigating Old Belief. \(^{14}\)

Several scholars, namely, L. V. Titova, D. N. Breshchinskii, and, most notably, N. Iu. Bubnov, have recently established specific details about the tales’ origins and commented on their significance in Old Believer written culture. Titova’s work represents the first attempt to discuss and date deacon Fedor’s “Testimony.” Based on a textological comparison between the “Testimony” and the tales found in the “Life of Komilii,” the Russian scholar proves that the “Testimony” appeared earlier.\(^{15}\) However, the brevity of her analysis does not allow for an appreciation of the complexities and nuances of this work. Laudable as her work might be, much more detailed analysis is required.

\(^{13}\) Ibid, 160.

\(^{14}\) See, for example, Smirnov, i-v. It is noteworthy that even scholars that presented the Old Believers in a positive light stressed the idea that the Old Belief was static and monolithic. For example A. P. Shchapov characterized Old Belief as “a splinter of ancient and obsolete Russia … [which] fell away from the new Russia organized by Peter the Great.” See A. P. Shchapov, Russkii raskol staroobriadchestva, rasmmatryvaemyi v sviazi s vnutrennim sostojaniem russkoj tserkvi i grazhdanstvennosti v XVII i pervoi polovine XVIII v (Kazan’: Synodal’naia Tipografiia, 1858), 55.
Breshchinskii’s study highlighted the importance of the tales about Nikon originating in “Life of Kornilii” by showing that they were incorporated into the subsequent “Story About Nikon.” Bubnov updated and expanded Druzhinin’s work by establishing a chronology of and categorizing more than twenty tales about Nikon. His framework, which includes crucial information concerning the tales’ authorship, dates and sources, outlines the continued creation of new tales. Bubnov’s efforts in general and his recent references to the late nineteenth-century illustrated versions of the “History About Nikon” in specific underscore the need for studies which explain the tales’ meanings and track their significance in broader Russian society and culture.

Following Bubnov’s recommendations, I aim to provide a comparative investigation of the early Old Believer tales about Nikon. This investigation draws attention to the importance of analyzing Nikon’s image both longitudinally and across confessional and cultural divides. My efforts to comprehend the representations of Nikon contained in the tales involve two complementary levels of analysis employed earlier in the dissertation. I interpret the content of the tales in order to recover their meaning(s) and

15 Titova, 223-232.
19 See R. O. Crumme, “Old Belief as Popular Religion,” Slavic Review 52 no. 4 (Winter 1993), 700-712. Crumme, 709, explains that “in contrast with the traditional view of the Old Believers’ cultural isolationism, derived in part from their own self-perception, recent studies have shown that the movement’s intellectuals knew the main developments in “secular” scholarship.” He concludes “the image that Old Believer high culture was hermetically sealed from the outside world ... can no longer be maintained.”
deconstruct the texts in order to show "how they worked" on their audience(s). The first level of investigation involves placing the tales in the context of elite and popular culture and belief and comparing them against each other and non-Old Believer sources. The second tier of analysis uncovers the textual strategies employed in the tales and offers readings of "signs" and "symbols" woven into the texts.

My examination of the tales about Nikon looks beyond the "eschatological mood" to see the larger social and political contexts, that shaped his image in the late-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. I show that the Old Believer depictions of Nikon reveal societal discontent with other, non-dogmatic, aspects of broader church reform (e.g., redistribution of land and disciplining clerics) and expose popular responses to the forces of centralization and confessionalization, especially concerns over legality, justice, and discipline. Although I investigate the particularities of the Russian case, my research should be viewed within the broader European processes of political and religious consolidation, a concept largely ignored because of the parochialization of Russian studies in general and Russian Church history in particular.

By elite, I mean individuals who are literate, occupy recognized positions of power in secular, religious or cultural domains (i.e., boyars, higher level clerics or figures recognized for moral leadership) derived either from social position or moral authority. Their status provided them with means to convey their messages, including discourse on Nikon, regardless of its effect on intended or unintended audiences. I use the terms ordinary people and common people/folk interchangeably. Using these terms, I rely on the definition provided by Georg Michels. Michels describes the common people as

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20 Thus, I again follow the recommendations expressed by L. Hunt in "Introduction: History, Culture and Text," in L. Hunt, ed. The New Cultural History (Los Angeles: University of California Press,
“anyone who was excluded from the Muscovite social and political system: peasants, artisans, women, simple monks and priests...”\textsuperscript{21} Michels goes on to say it is important to "learn about the intentions and aspirations of the ‘common man’ without distorting viewpoints and intermediaries."\textsuperscript{22} It follows that the voices of these people require a deeper level of analysis, a point discussed below.

Both the elite and the common men produced their own cultures, which although possessing distinct features, often overlapped affecting each other in complex ways. By elite culture, I mean a set of attitudes, discourses, and ideas created by the members of the elite, as I define it. By popular culture, I understand a constellation of beliefs, narratives and practices shared by the lower members of a society. Popular belief can be defined loosely as “the belief held by the mass of the people, by contrast to that held by the religious elite who make up the clerical hierarchy of the Church, the ‘professional men of religion.’”\textsuperscript{23}

I compare the “Testimony,” “Life of Kornilii,” and the “Story About Nikon” against three seventeenth-century treatises concerning the Patriarch produced by non-Old Believers. The first two are boyar Semeon Luk’ianovich Streshnev and Paisius Ligarides’ thirty question and answer polemic directed against the Patriarch (1662) and Ligarides’ History of the Condemnation of the Patriarch Nikon (1667). These sources epitomize the anti-Nikon sentiments (discourse) espoused by Nikon’s opponents in the Muscovite nobility and clerical elite and used against the Patriarch at his state-sanctioned trial in 1989), 12-17.

\textsuperscript{21} Michels, 1
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
December 1666. They are highly critical of Nikon. The third source, Ivan Shusherin’s *Povest’ o rozhdenii, vospitanii i zhizni sviateishego Nikona, Patriarkha* [Story About the Birth, Education and Life of Holy Patriarch Nikon] (1680s) is the primary pro-Nikon account of the Patriarch’s life and deeds. Written largely in response to Ligarides’ polemics and other popular rumors, this highly sympathetic and nearly hagiographic account chronicles the details of Nikon’s life stressing his most pious deeds, justifying his actions and refuting or glossing over existing charges, both official and popular, raised against the Patriarch.

This mode of investigation reveals the interaction of ideas about Nikon across the confessional divide. It makes it possible to determine whether specific tales were based on popular or elite sources, as well as where and how Old Believer and mainstream conceptions intersect. Moreover, this line of research highlights the existence of positive popular images of Nikon omitted from even the most praiseworthy contemporary accounts of Nikon’s life. These comparisons prove that Nikon’s image was a significant

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24 I considered two sources created by Ligarides. The first regards the actual process of charging Nikon. In early July 1662, Aleksei Mikhailovich’s maternal uncle boyar Semeon Luk’ianovich Streshnev (died 1665), whom Nikon anathematized, sent a document to Paisius Ligarides containing thirty questions about Nikon’s actions. On August 15 Ligarides answered. Slavonic translations of Ligarides’ responses circulated widely among the Moscow elite. The Tsar sent also sent the polemics to the Orthodox Patriarchs of Constantinople, Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria together with an invitation to sit in judgement against Nikon. Nikon acquired a copy of the document and wrote his own set of responses, known as his “Replies” or “Refutation,” defending his position against both Streshnev and Ligarides. This polemic was published and translated in its entirety by W. Palmer *The Patriarch and the Tsar* vol. I *The Replies of Humble Nikon* (London: Trubner and Co. 1871). It was not published in Russian until the late twentieth century. See *Patriarch Nikon on Church and State, Nikon’s Refutation* G. Vernadsky and A. A. Tumins eds. (The Hague: Mouton, 1982). The second source is Ligarides’ *History of the Condemnation of the Patriarch Nikon* (1668). Ligarides wrote this self-glorifying work in defense of his role in Nikon’s trial and dedicated it to his patron, Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich. The Tsar refused the dedication. See H. T. Hionides, *Paisius Ligarides* (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1972), especially 99. W. Palmer published and translated Ligarides’ *History in The Patriarch and the Tsar* vol. III *History of the Condemnation of the Patriarch Nikon* (London: Trubner and Co. 1873). While extracted, this work was never published in its entirety in Russian. See also A. A. Romanova, “Paisius Ligarides” in *Slovar Knizhnikov i knizhnosti drevnei Rusi* 3 (XVII v.) pt. 2 (P-S) (St. Petersburg: Rossiiskaia Akademiia Nauk, 1998), 8-12.

feature of Russian culture by showing that the contest to control it was intense and ongoing.

The ordinary people discussed in the tales did not leave written documents, so we may never know whether or not the actions and thoughts attributed to the common folk in the Old Believer narratives were accurate or if they even transpired at all. Thus, historians of Russian Old Belief are largely dependent on the sources created by the learned authors, however problematic that might be.

Why did learned Old Believer writers include elements of popular discourse about Nikon into their narratives? I suggest two plausible explanations. First, the events involving ordinary people described in the tales actually happened and eyewitnesses could corroborate them, thus making the elite’s accounts the real testimonies they were purported to be. Even Nikon’s biographer, Ivan Shusherin, gives some credence to this explanation. Indeed, in some cases, Shusherin mentions the very same accusations raised against Nikon in the tales, but quickly dismisses them as lies.27 Second, in pursuing its own agenda, the Old Believer elite attempted to broaden its audiences beyond educated circles by making the tales accessible to ordinary people. Even if we accept that the events presented in the tales never happened, and that the elite concocted stories including ordinary people, the very fact that the elite was compelled to do so is significant. Therefore, in both cases ordinary people are important in shaping, or at very

27 See, for example, Shusherin’s explanations of the libels perpetrated Nikon by monks Feodosii and Iona on 75-80 and 160-166

255
least conditioning, the formulation the Patriarch’s representation. This point testifies to popular influences on the creation and perpetuation of Nikon’s image.\textsuperscript{28}

Semiological analysis of the tales shows that Nikon’s image was established by reference to a variety of “signs” and “symbols.” Verbal references to “symbols” of the faith (pre- and post-reform) include material cultural objects (e.g., crosses) and ritualistic gestures (e.g., making the sign of the cross) as well as material cultural “symbols” of the Patriarch’s status (e.g., \textit{zhezl} [staff]). Most important are the complex metaphors of the “wolf” and “wolf in sheep’s skin” and the more obvious “snake.”\textsuperscript{29} The “wolf” signifies “thief” and “predator.” It is also the antithesis of the shepherd (priest). While the shepherd leads and defends the flock, the wolf leads it astray and attacks it. The “wolf in sheep’s skin” represents the false prophet/priest and forerunner of the Antichrist. The “snake” is the sign of Satan/Antichrist and “conqueror” of mankind. Both the “wolf” and “snake” are deceivers and/or tormentors. Verbal references to material cultural “symbols” were sometimes combined with the other signifiers (e.g., “wolf” steals “\textit{zhezl}” and “snaked-headed \textit{zhezl}”). Reading these signs and symbols provides another way to trace continuity and change in the tales. More importantly, this mode of investigation reveals that many ideas about Nikon expressed in the tales were familiar and accessible to ordinary, uneducated people, including children.

Each of the tales under investigation has a different chronological structure. The “Testimony” focuses on Nikon’s deeds as Patriarch (post-exile, but pre-trial). The tales in

\textsuperscript{28} These finding clearly correspond with Crummey’s assertions that many features of Old Belief combined elite and popular culture and that Old Believer literature often blended “ideas, images and rhetorical strategies from both.” See Crummey, “Old Belief as Popular Religion,” especially 711.

\textsuperscript{29} It is noteworthy that Nikon also used the same metaphors, especially references to the wolf, in his own writings, namely, \textit{Rai Myslyennyi} (Iversky Monastery, 1659). See \textit{Rai Myslyennyi} V. S. Belenko, ed. (St. Petersburg: Zhurnal “Neva,” 1999), 45. There were, of course a mainstay of Reformation propaganda produced a more than century earlier in Germany. See Scribner, 51-58 and 27-28.
"Zhitie Korniliia" consider Nikon’s tenure as Metropolitan of Novgorod as well as his actions as Patriarch (post-exile, but pre-trial). The "Story About Nikon" treats Nikon’s entire life including his burial. The point in life at which Nikon became "bad"/"evil" corresponds directly to the period of his life considered in the texts. The later the text appeared, the earlier it begins to "reveal" Nikon’s "true" nature and the longer it belittles him. The later the tale, the more critical and fantastic it is.

The authors/compilers of the tales drew on biblical strategies including "testament," revelation, and eschatology, which operated on both elite and popular levels to achieve their purpose. The earliest tales present evidence of Nikon’s deeds after they occurred, while the later ones employ the opposite approach. The "Testimony" present "eyewitness" accounts of Nikon’s actions. The tales found in the "Life of Korniliii" introduce visions that reveal Nikon’s alleged evil, but are not based on any specific deed(s). The "Story About Nikon" introduces prophecies and visions that presage Nikon’s future actions and their consequences. In these cases, subsequent testimonials, including those discussing Nikon’s deeds after his trial, serve to fulfill providence. While eyewitness accounts often highlight revelations made by common people, visions and prophecies are attributed to those having special powers – either "holy" or "magical"/"evil" men.

These strategies produce different images of Nikon. Testaments present Nikon as a breaker of customs, laws, traditions, both God’s and man’s, and depict him as

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30 As discussed earlier, Nikon himself often made references to visions and attributed great significance to them. See for example his discussions of his vision of January 12, 1661 presented in the second chapter of this dissertation and Nikon’s own account of the event as recorded in his letter to the Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich in January 1661. This document is published in Zapiski Russkogo Arkheologicheskogo Obschestva vol. II (St. Petersburg, 1861), 541-553; N. Gibbenet, Istoricheskoe issledovanie dela Patriarkha Nikona pt. 2 (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Ministerstva Vnutrennikh Del, 1884), 514-516.
“heretic” (false priest/prophet or forerunner of the Antichrist) and “thief.” Visions and predictions made by “holy” men and foreign practitioners of magic, with few exceptions, present the Patriarch’s supposed vaulting ambition and cast him as either a threat the state, or a conqueror, or the Antichrist. All present Nikon as a deceiver and tormentor.

Finally, the structure and strategy of the tales have direct bearing on their consistency. The “Testimony” focuses on what happened in the past. They are limited to Nikon’s tenure as Patriarch and are based on testimony, or other records, presented after the fact. Later efforts, presented in to further denigrate Nikon by considering increasingly longer, more detailed accounts of his life/actions appearing in the “Life of Korniliii” and the “Story About Nikon” often raised as many questions as they answered. Despite the inclusion of visions and prophecies, later authors were at a loss to explain key questions about Nikon’s activities. Attempts to answer these questions in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century tales about Nikon relied increasingly on xenophobic and misogynic fantasies, a point discussed in detail in the next chapter of the dissertation.

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What circumstances caused a body of apocalyptic literature, in existence for centuries, achieve new levels of significance and to become associated with Patriarch Nikon in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries? The answer to this question provides a more specific historical basis for the formulation of Nikon’s image in Russian culture as depicted by the early “Old Believers.”

31 W. Palmer raised this issue earlier in The Patriarch and the Tsar vol. IV (London : Trubner and Co. 1876). “While the clamor made by the raskolniki against Nicon, as if he were personally Antichrist, has drawn off attention from what was really antichristian tyranny against which the raskolniki, no less than Nikon ... contended: for they contended against it in the name of narrow-minded private judgement; whereas Nicon [sic] contended it in defense of the oecumenical [sic] canons, and in the name of not a national church, but oecumenical [sic] Church of Christ,” Palmer, vol IV, 378.
Apocalypticism usually appeared in Russia in periods when society was "undergoing an internal crisis of basic transformation." The late seventeenth century was such a period. The reform of both civil and ecclesiastical law contained in the Ulozhenie [Legal Code] of 1649 tore the fabric of traditional Russian society. The Ulozhenie was an attempt to codify all the laws and administrative rules of the Muscovy in order to unify and standardize legal and administrative procedures. The new legal code instituted sweeping changes in Russian society ranging from the institutionalization of serfdom to the reform of the church. The latter affected administrative structures, not dogma.

The reform or rather secularization of the Church's judicial and economic practices was one of the major consequences of the Ulozhenie. It was necessitated by a perceived crisis of the Church, a perception most apparent in the "Zealots of Piety's" call for a moral reform of Russian society and ecclesiastical discipline. Prior to the Code's promulgation, the Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich issued a series of decrees expanding his jurisdiction over questions of moral and social discipline of his lay and clerical subjects. For the first time, all clergy and people living on church properties, with the exception of those living on the Patriarch's own land holdings, were subjected to the jurisdiction of the newly formed Monanstyrskii Prikaz [Monastery Court] headed by secular judges. Moreover, the Code prohibited clerics, with the exception of the Patriarch, from acquiring

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34 Medlin, 144
new properties. 35 "The State Code of 1649 ... gave definitive legal formulation to religious and institutional forms which had long been the essence of the Russian State. .... Religion [was] as much a law of the realm as [were] the decrees of the Tsar." 36 The reform of church dogma, rites and rituals carried out during Nikon’s patriarchate was another step in this process of social transformation and disciplining. In other words, it was part of the process of confessionalization.

Thus, two discrete, but inherently related, goals of social transformation emerged in the mid seventeenth century - the secularization of Church judicial and economic interests via a new law code and the standardization of the Church dogmas, rites, and rituals imposed by the so-called “Nikonian” reforms. Both sought to increase control over society by undermining (legisлатing) traditional, local prerogatives and beliefs. 37 The advent of this process in the mid seventeenth century during the reign of Aleksei Mikhailovich provides the larger the context for the creation and reception of the “Testimony.” Efforts to expand and intensify political, social and religious transformation and consolidation in the first quarter of the eighteenth century under Peter I, frame the production and readings of the “Life of Komiliii” and the “Story About Nikon.” By looking behind the “eschatological mood” it see the actual historical factors, which shaped Old Believer images of Patriarch Nikon.

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35 Medlin, 163, 183. Nikon attempted to preserve ecclesiastical prerogatives by expanding the territorial base under his control, by acquiring the territories of other clerics -- which according to the Code would become subjected to secular courts. However, it may have actually arisen from the official charge that Nikon expanded his territory at the Bishop Pavel of Kolomenskoe. This is one of the Old Believers' major complaints.

36 Medlin, 150.

37 Cherniavsky, 11 explained, “for Nikonians, the issue was one of authority, discipline, of the right to legislate,” while for their opponents “the issue seems to have been authority, the right of legislation.”
Analysis of the “Testimonies”

This section investigates images of Patriarch Nikon presented in “Authentic Testimony About the Marked by God Wolf and Predator Who is Pastor in Sheep’s Skin and Forerunner of the Antichrist.” The “Testimony” is the earliest known Old Believer compilation of tales about Nikon. This seminal work, which dates to the late 1660s, is attributed to deacon Fedor Ivanov.38

Fedor Ivanov was born into a family of priests. In 1658, the same year Nikon left Moscow, Fedor arrived in the capital and became acquainted with important Old Believers, including Grigorii Neronov and arch-priest Avvakum. These associations led to become Fedor an Old Believer by 1665. He refused to use new service books and was arrested in 1665. If before his arrest Fedor was cautious in his public statements, he became more emblazoned when faced with inevitable punishment.39

In early 1666, he appealed to the Tsar to consider “the blasphemous statements of priest Sysoi.” The “Sysoi Affair” galvanized Old Believers who hoped to bring it to the attention of the judges at Nikon’s trial. However, these efforts backfired and after several interrogations, Fedor was imprisoned. On May 15, he was anathematized, stripped of his deacon’s rank and exiled to a remote monastery. There, Fedor wrote two letters of repentance. These efforts had the desired effect and in August Fedor was retried. At this trial he again repented and was sent to another monastery to “reform.” However, when faced with an order to publicly renounce his Old Believer convictions, Fedor refused. He

was soon recaptured (according to his own version, he gave himself up). Fedor again recanted and was sent to Troitse-Sergievskii Monastery where he lived in relatively favorable conditions. There, he reestablished contact with other Old Believer leaders. This behavior led to a new trial where he retracted his earlier recantations and asserted his firm adherence to the Old Belief. On February 24, 1668, he was convicted and sentenced to having his tongue cut out. Next, he was exiled to Pustozerskii prison where on April 20 he joined other imprisoned Old Believers including Avvakum. Fedor was executed there on April 14, 1682. 40

Fedor produced his most important writings, including his contributions to the Old Believer anthology Shchit Very [Shield of the Faith] and Otvet Pravoslavnykh [Response of the Orthodox] during his “rehabilitation” at Troitse-Sergievskii Monastery. The former compilation included at least ten chapters attributed to Fedor, including one devoted specifically to Patriarch Nikon’s trial (Chapter 17). The second compilation is significant because it is inherently connected to the “Testimony.” In numerous versions of the Response of the Orthodox, including the earliest ones that appeared in the 1670s, the “Testimony” was often appended to the main body. 41

The “Testimony” introduces the set of core tales and ideas about Nikon common to all of the tales under examination. However, Fedor’s unique strategy of exposing

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39 Bubnov, Staroobriadcheskaia kniga v Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XVII v., 60-61.
40 Ibid., 60-68, 231. Priest Sysoi was supporter of Patriarch Nikon who was tried in connection with Nikon’s return to Moscow in 1661. In 1665 Sysoi, while intoxicated, “was engaged in blasphemy alleging that the Jews were right to crucify Christ who was a common thief.” Neronov learned about Sysoi’s utterance and decided to use it to vilify Nikon’s reforms. Sysoi was subsequently exiled to Vologda. See Bubnov, Staroobriadcheskaia kniga v Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XVII v., 61-62.
41 Ibid, 64-68, and Bubnov “Skazaniia i povesti o patriarkhe Nikone,” 142-143; According to Bubnov, the Response of the Orthodox was written sometime between 1667 and 1669, i.e., either during Fedor’s time at Troitse-Sergievskii Monastery or during his imprisonment at Pustozerskii jail. Fedor compiled the “Testimony” in the early 1670s. See also Titova, 223-224.
Nikon and his emphasis on the effects of the Patriarch’s actions on the “common man” differentiate it from the later texts.

In addition to reflecting a strong sense of seventeenth-century Russian eschatology, the “Testimony” display an intense concern about justice and legality. Although framed by introductory and concluding references to the end of the world and the coming of the Antichrist, the final judgement is not the only trial which provided context for the tales about Nikon. Fedor’s text reveals his familiarity and intense dissatisfaction with Russian judicial practice in general and Nikon’s state-sanctioned trial in particular. Although the latter stripped Nikon of the patriarchal title, it failed to condemn him as a heretic. Therefore, argued Fedor, “let the Lord judge the Tsar because the Tsar did not give justice for the deeds of Nikon the heretic.”

Thus Fedor, himself convicted of heresy, turned the tables by accusing Nikon of the same charge.

Fedor created an alternative trial including additional charges and witnesses excluded from the official proceedings against Nikon. Its ultimate purpose was to present evidence that “besides corrupting Church dogmas Nikon was marked by God for his deeds [dividing the Church of Christ].” Fedor’s strategy of exposing Nikon by presenting evidence of his supposed misdeeds differs greatly from the later tales that Nikon deemed guilty without proof of his alleged transgressions. His depiction of the Tsar as Nikon’s enabler is also drastically different from the subsequent tales.

Comparison of the “Testimony” with official documents pertaining to accounts of Nikon’s trial penned by Paisius Ligarides suggests that the latter provided the precedent, model and, in some cases, material for charging Nikon with transgressions other than the

42 Titova, 234.
43 Ibid., 232.
reforms. Fedor manipulated Ligarides’ condemnations by localizing and reinforcing them with biblical references. By redirecting the official charges, which emphasized transgressions against the Tsar, he drew attention to the effect of Nikon’s actions on the common man. However, rather than omitting reference to the Tsar completely, Fedor castigated him as a knowing, if duped, participant in Nikon’s deceptions.

Analysis of Fedor’s and Ligarides’ texts enable us to determine whether specific accusations were based on popular rumors or official sources as well as to see where and how popular and official charges intersected. The author’s case against Nikon consists of eyewitness testimonies presented “from below” by ordinary people/lower clergy; charges of theft of land voiced from both “above” and “below” and accusations culled from the pages of official charges against the Patriarch and accounts of his trial. All concern infractions against established traditional customs, not condemnations of Nikon for introducing of new ones. The first group of transgressions included desecration of key signs and symbols of the faith, failure to perform prescribed ritual and disrespect and abuse of the memory of Russian “holy fathers.” The second set of accusations condemned Nikon for abandoning the patriarchal throne and “stealing” patriarchal symbols and prerogatives after his departure from Moscow in 1658. In both Fedor’s and Ligarides’ writings Nikon is denounced for harsh disciplinary measures, especially “torments” and theft.

Fedor’s presentation of the testimonials by ordinary men who complain about and thefts and torments perpetrated against by Nikon do more than merely introduce charges absent from the official case against Nikon. They make his alleged transgressions relevant

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44 These claims clearly fit Michels’ argument that, during Nikon’s patriarchate, ordinary people were disaffected with the Russian church for reasons other than liturgical reforms.
and accessible to disaffected common people, especially lower ranking clergy. Fedor’s narrative makes sure that these people are not only included, but entrusted with making among the most serious allegations against the Patriarch.  

The text commences with a warning from the New Testament; “Christ … foretold about godless heretics in such a way: ‘listen to the false prophets who come to you in sheep skin, but whose essence is of the wolf and predator and tell them do not tempt me. Know these false prophets by their fruits.’”

Thereafter, the author draws immediate attention to the significance of the current situation in Russia, including a perceived lack of justice, by differentiating between the treatment of past heretics and the case of Nikon. While “heretics in Greek lands” were condemned by “seven universal councils,” the more recent, “local” heretic - “a vessel of spite named Nikon … was condemned by many of the lower clergy, the common people and the clergy of high ranks.” Thus, according to Fedor, protection of the true faith in Russia relied on native Russians led by the lower clergy and the “common people,” not on a foreign hierarchy.

Fedor’s initial denunciation concerns Nikon’s ability to heal the sick. “Those ill people formerly treated by Nikon were not healed; instead they were often affected with ulcers caused by him. Now these people reject him, because those who try to compare their minds to the Lord’s are the enemy of the Lord, to the law of the Lord and … it is impossible for those who do not submit to the laws of the Lord to clean themselves from

45 It is possible that Fedor used Nikon as a personification of all Russian Orthodox hierarchs imposing strict disciplinary measures. If this were the case, it would clearly heighten the tales’ relevance among low ranking clergy and monks living in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

46 Titova, 232. The charge that Nikon was “pastor in sheep’s clothing” was made earlier in Ligarides’ History: “Nikon dissembled his true character prior to becoming Patriarch.” Palmer, vol. III, 38-9.

47 Titova, 232.
The primacy granted to this charge suggests that Nikon’s image as a true healer, or at least rumors to that effect, was popular in the late seventeenth-century Russian society.

The first real proof of Nikon’s transgressions is presented in a series of three eyewitness testimonials from common men and monks formerly in Nikon’s service. These accounts relay two related types of information - Nikon’s transgressions against God and crimes against man. The primary charges include abuse of the most sacred signs and symbols of the faith and failure to perform prescribed rituals. The secondary accusations, which result from the primary ones, localize official charges associated with Nikon’s abuse of power and “torments” by giving specific cases of actual ordinary people who supposedly suffered at Nikon’s hands. Thus, in addition to being an “enemy of Christ,” Nikon is presented as a tormentor of men.

All three tales provide prime examples of how Fedor negotiated the official charges against Nikon to serve his purpose. He magnified and clarified the official charges in two ways. First, he connected them with more serious accusations of heresy. Second, he localized the circumstances, namely, ordinary peoples’ exposure of and confrontation with Nikon, which led to the Patriarch’s cruel punishments of those in his service.

The first testimonial is attributed to Kirik, Nikon’s former assistant. “Kirik was a man of holy life, who was taken against his will from the staff of the Solovetskii Monastery hospital,” because Nikon “knew Kirik as a person of obedience and kept him at his disposal using force.” During this forced service, Kirik once examined a pair of the Patriarch’s expensive velvet shoes and “saw that the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ was

\[48\] Ibid.
sewn on the insole of one shoe and the Holy Virgin with Christ -- on the other.” After warning Nikon that this was “bad,” Kirik refused to eat and feigned illness until Nikon allowed him to return to Solovetskii Monastery. There, “he told his spiritual father, priest Vitaly, about this terrible matter and his spiritual father told the brethren how Nikon, the enemy of the Lord, wore the Icon of the Holy Virgin and the Cross of the crucified Lord beneath his feet.”

Andreian, Nikon’s long-time pupil, likewise, “saw [that] when Nikon was Patriarch, the cross of Jesus Christ under the insole of one of his shoes and an icon of the Holy Virgin on a copper leaf under the second.” Thereafter, Andreian “began to argue with Nikon ... and his tormentor beat him many times for this arguing. Once Nikon was very vicious and himself locked [Andreian] in irons ... and ordered him imprisoned in Paleostrovskii Monastery.” Andreian later related his experience to his spiritual father, priest and monk Feodosii. “He also told all about Nikon, this precursor of the Antichrist, to me [Fedor]. As Lord is my witness, I am not lying. This information came from true and holy men.”

Naftan, a monk at the New Jerusalem Monastery, and “many other people” witnessed how Nikon censured the traditional ritual of renouncing the devil during the baptismal ceremony. During this incident, “Nikon assisted his father Satan and said to Naftan: ‘it is not good to spit on Satan, only people without sufficient knowledge do this!’” Naftan responded: “It is necessary to spit on Satan and reject him as it is written in all holy books.” Nikon exclaimed: “not necessary!” Finally, after Naftan said: “I spit on the person who supports Satan,” Nikon ordered him to be “whipped and sent to Kii

50 Ibid, 233.

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Island. Naftan was released in two years.” Naftan told many monks and priests about his ordeal. 51

Read semiologically, the first two allegations reveal complex symbolic meanings. They establish Nikon as a heretic and deceiver by portraying him as abuser of the most sacred symbols/images of the faith. The idea that Nikon had holy symbols/images in his footwear suggests that he desecrated them, not once, but repeatedly by stepping on them. In effect, every step he took he committed acts of sacrilege. The idea that the symbols lay in “very expensive shoes” is a clear stab at the Patriarch’s extravagance and wealth. More specifically, however, it suggests that Nikon used extravagant displays to conceal his evil deeds. The idea that religious symbols lay hidden in an unlikely place, discovered only by people very close to Nikon, further reinforces the argument that the Patriarch sought to conceal his true intentions thus heightening the conception of Nikon as a wolf in sheep’s skin.

The third tale emphasizes Nikon’s image as an “enemy of God” in terms of symbolic ritual. In this case, the pattern of abuse is reversed. Here, the Patriarch’s refusal to reject the devil symbolically (by spitting on him) confirms Nikon’s relationship with Satan. Moreover, it suggests that anyone receiving a “Nikonian” baptism is also a child of Satan.

A comparison between these three tales and accusations against Nikon recorded in the works by Paisius Ligarides highlights the intersection of popular and official condemnations of Nikon. Fedor’s explanation that Nikon took Kirik “against his will from the staff of the Solovetskii Monastery … [and] … kept him at his disposal using force” is a localized version of charges in Ligarides’ History -- “he kept monastic clerks

51 Ibid, 233-234.
in fetters, casting them in chains on the spot, so that they could not escape." The abuses suffered by Andreian ("his tormentor beat him many times ... and once he was very vicious and himself locked him in irons and...ordered him imprisoned in Paleostrovskii monastery") and Naftan (Nikon ordered him to be "whipped and sent him to Kii Island and gave him freedom in two years") are localized examples of Streshnev and Ligarides' polemics against the Patriarch. According to the twenty-second point of this discourse Strehnev asked: "is it proper for a bishop to scourge, and to strike, and to exile, all which things Nikon did, and was never satisfied with doing both lay people and those of the clergy?" Ligarides responded, "I see no better virtue than a man with justice and patience, nor any worse evil than anger ... it is not proper for a bishop to inflict such cruel punishments."

The correlation between Fedor's and the official charges is significant on several levels. First, Fedor personalized the effects of Nikon's torments by showing their impact on specific individuals. Second, and more importantly, he showed that ordinary men were subjected to the Patriarch's punishments. Thus, the author complimented and extended the official accusations against Nikon, which focused on his mistreatment of church hierarchs, by making them familiar and relevant to a much larger segment of the population.

Fedor went one step beyond the official charges by explaining the alleged motives behind Nikon's actions. Kirik, Andreian, and Naftan endured captivity and physical torture as a result of adhering to the tenants of the "true faith" in the face of Nikon's deeds. While Kirik acted passively, Andreian and Naftan responded actively. Kirik,

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53 Titova, 233-234.
whose obedience was taken advantage of, suffered self-imposed starvation after the
trauma he endured. Andreian’s torments occurred after he “began to argue with Nikon,”
while Naftan’s public defiance and derision of the Patriarch led directly to the priest’s
punishment. By explaining that all three survived their torments and “spread the word”
about their experiences, Fedor suggested that those who resist Nikon, including lowly
servants, will be judged favorably —“blessed are the perishing on earth.”

The second set of testimonials presents Nikon as an enemy of the native Russian
Church and ancient piety. Voiced “from below,” these tales continue to emphasize the
local concerns by providing evidence that the Patriarch repeatedly disrespected the
memory of “our holy [Russian] fathers” by slandering them and omitting them from
traditional commemorations. The same Naftan gave evidence that “Nikon called the ‘holy
fools’ ‘mad saints’ and did not give permission to depict their faces on icons.” The priest
Neronov told both Fedor and the Tsar that Nikon “scolded our Holy fathers,” including
the miracle-maker Efrosin Pskovskii for the triple hallelujah —“Efrosin was a fool and son
of a whore!” Another of Nikon’s pupils gave evidence that the Patriarch slandered Iosif of
Volokolamsk. “They [also] said that all the names of Russian miracle-makers were
deleted from the lists of the recollections during services.” Moreover, Nikon “scolded not
only all the saints, but their pupils because all their miracles, according to Nikon, were

54 Palmer vol. I, xxxii.
55 These tales thus present an interesting contrast with several of the ones appearing in the “Life of
Korniliii” (discussed below) who chose to avoid confrontations with Nikon are cast in a favorable light.
These differences are clearly attributed to a change in the mode of opposition practiced against the state and
official church by the first generation of Old Believers including Fedor, and second generation who that
produced the later tales. While the first generation chose direct confrontation with “Nikonians,” the second
opted to avoid them through flight.
made not according to the glory of Christ's Church, but for lands, woods, waters and real estate."

None of these charges were part of the official proceedings against Nikon. Only the claim that Nikon deleted the names from the service can be confirmed as true. It refers to changes in the commemorations of saints introduced in new Sluzhebnik [Euchology or book of services] of 1655. This accusation was not part of official proceedings against Nikon because the revision of the Sluzhebnik was a cornerstone of the reform of church texts confirmed in 1667 by the same universal patriarchs who condemned Nikon in 1666 -- Makarii of Antioch and Paisius Ligardes, Metropolitan of Gaza. On the contrary, Fedor's set of charges suggests that the universal Patriarchs were not fit to judge transgressions against Russian holy fathers. More importantly, the charges stress the perceived state of injustice in Russia by asserting that "the Tsar was also informed about it, but the Tsar concealed all of Nikon's wrong doings and let the Lord judge the Tsar, because the Tsar did not give justice for the deeds of Nikon, the heretic."

The third set of accusations presented by Fedor is significantly different from the previous ones. They center on more worldly matters and introduce the image of Nikon as "thief" by explaining that he "stole" property to construct the New Jerusalem Monastery.

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56 Titova, 233.
57 See the changes made in the commemoration of saints during the performance of the prothesis rite imposed in 1655 outlined by P. Meyendorff, Russia Ritual and Reform (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991), 138-150. Charts on 142-3 compare the "reformed" (Moscow, 1655) and earlier (Moscow, 1646) versions of the Sluzhebnik and clearly outline the exclusions. It is noteworthy that some of those excluded were miracle-makers associated with the Solovkii Monastery. In the first chapter of this dissertation I argued that changes in the commemoration of Russian saints were reflected in Nikon's choice of relics inserted in the Kii Cross. 58 See Meyendorff, 66-7, on the church councils of 1666-7 headed by Patriarchs of Antioch and Paisius of Alexandria.
Although he cited no eyewitness testimonies in these cases, the author attempted to give the charges added authority by comparing Nikon's deeds with examples from the Old Testament and including an admonition allegedly made by the "Patriarch of Jerusalem." Unlike the official and later Old Believer tales, it includes the effects of Nikon's actions on the common man.

Stealing like a wolf, he grabbed villages and real estate from monasteries and from princes taking all properties and adding all of them, as if a prince of the world.... He destroyed small and large estates which were created by many people over many years.... He insulted and destroyed many monasteries and offended many local princes and poor people and tormented many common Christian landholders when he created his New Jerusalem. He acted like the pharaoh who tormented the Israelites in Egypt. And the Holy Patriarch of Jerusalem spoke correctly about Nikon when he said that, when the Russian Patriarch began to erect New Jerusalem, it was necessary to wait for a new god on earth and the name of that god will be Antichrist.... And the Tsar was also informed about this. 60

This account is noteworthy for its multi-layered attack against Nikon's most significant creation - the New Jerusalem Monastery. It combines the immediate, local consequences of Nikon's actions with their ultimate ramifications. Nikon's image as "thief" and association with secular rulers is an indirect reference to the perceived injustice of the 1649 legal reforms. The Patriarch appeared as a "prince of the world" because he, according to the Ulozhenie, was the only clergyman allowed to increase his property holdings. While in other cases the Patriarch stole indiscriminately, his theft of land to create New Jerusalem not only affected monasteries, local princes and poor people, but most importantly, "tormented common Christian landholders." These "torments" connect the theft of land, needed to create the monastery, with the theological

59 Titova, 234. This point reinforces Fedor's earlier proclamation that "many of the lower clergy, the common people an the clergy of high ranks" took the leading in condemning the Patriarch and defending of the true faith. See Titova, 232.
concepts concerning the establishment of a “New Church” on earth which signifies the reign of the Antichrist. 61

Comparison of this episode with the official condemnations of Nikon reveals that Paisius Ligarides, not Paisius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, conceived the association of the New Jerusalem Monastery with the coming of the Antichrist. However, Ligarides’ original association of Nikon’s New Jerusalem Monastery with the Antichrist had nothing to do with stealing land or tormenting people. Rather, it referred to Nikon’s supposed transgressions against the status of the “old” Jerusalem, a charge clarified in the fourteenth point of Streshnev’s and Ligarides’ polemic. There, in response to Streshnev’s query “Nikon is now building a monastery, and he has named it ‘the New Jerusalem.’ Is it well to transfer, and to dishonor the name of the Holy City?” Ligarides replied, “O indignity! O extraordinary novelty! Not a new house, foresooth, but the New Jerusalem! I hear too, O Nikon … that there should be with thee in thy New Jerusalem some mother of Antichrist.” 62

This case suggests that Nikon’s association with the Antichrist did not originate among the Old Believers fathers. Ligarides wrote his response in January 1662, whereas the early Old Believers began to associate Nikon with the Antichrist only later after the confirmation of the “Nikonian” reforms by the council of 1666-7. 63 Thus, it appears Fedor adopted Ligarides’ association of New Jerusalem with the coming of the Antichrist

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60 Ibid, 234-235. Inclusion of this last phrase again suggests that Tsar wittingly tried to conceal Nikon’s actions.
62 Palmer, vol I, xxviv.
63 Cherniavsky, 14-15 argues that the connections of Nikon with the Antichrist were widespread among the narod [people] before 1667. However, he only provides evidence that the practice began in the mid-1660s. It is noteworthy in this context that the tales about Nikon, unlike other polemics, never refer to the Tsar as “Antichrist.” See also Smirnov, 22; Peretz, 126-127.
and Nikon, but changed its emphasis to reflect the impact this relationship had on the Russian people.

Fedor's reference to the "Patriarch of Jerusalem's" connection of New Jerusalem with the Antichrist represents a major problem in terms of Russian national myths. The concept of Russia as "New Jerusalem and Israel," like "Moscow the Third Rome," was accepted in Russia long before Nikon began to construct the New Jerusalem Monastery. The notion that the Russians were the "chosen people," or "New Israelites" is manifest in Fedor's own comparison between his Russian contemporaries and the biblical Israelites. The contradictions that resulted from combining "local" and "foreign" accusations against the Patriarch reinforce the notion that it did not originate with Old Believers, but rather had a "foreign" provenance.

Fedor summarized the charges brought against the Patriarch and interjected a rare reference to the "Nikonian" reforms to heighten the perceived state of injustice and danger of Nikon's actions. "When such evil is rejected it does not corrupt the soul, but when evil is in the dogmas, the number of sinners increases and all are corrupted and in peril and this is what Nikon legalized and confirmed ... this matter was approved by the wrong judges." After reasserting Nikon's delineation as "enemy of the Lord and the Holy Virgin and all the saints," an obvious reference to Nikon's abuse of holy symbols, he addressed the reader.

Why do you keep his legislation and limp on both legs. If our Lord is on the right path with all his saints and with all our former priests, let us follow behind him and his saints and the people who baptized you and your fathers in former times.

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64 See D. B. Rowland, "Moscow - The Third Rome or the New Israel?," The Russian Review 55 (October 1996), 591-614, on the concepts of Russia as "New Israel" and "New Jerusalem." Fedor's references to "Russian miracle-makers" clearly support the notion of Russians as a "chosen people." See Titova, 234.
65 Titova, 235.
66 Ibid.
If Vaal, Nikon by name, the person marked by God, is right with his new books, new dogmas and old heresies, let us follow him and kneel to his icon which he, himself commissioned and do not chastise him for exile.\footnote{Ibid.}

Fedor’s conclusion, “let Christ, the Son of God, be a good judge of them,” reconfirms the lack of justice in his world.\footnote{Titova, 236.}

Fedor’s narration of the Patriarch’s withdrawal from Moscow largely follows the official sources with one exception – he changed the motivation for Nikon’s actions: “Nikon left his throne as if for humbleness and he, without reason, failed to participate in the service and took off all his prelate dress because at this moment he was out of his mind and he was dressed in plain monk clothes and left the church and that is proof that he is no longer worthy to be a priest.” However, despite proclaiming; “I am no longer the Patriarch,” Nikon continued “to act as a prelate and promote his protégés to high positions and he really wanted to be back on the Patriarchal throne.”\footnote{Titova, 235. Palmer, vol. I, xxix. The answer to Ligarides’ response to Streshnev’s eighteenth question, “Nikon says he is not out of the diocese, but has withdrawn from Moscow only for temporary reasons,” reads “He has no longer any right to call himself Patriarch of Moscow who has gone away from Moscow.... Why did thou [Nikon] not make known the secret reasons of thy departure, but without any consultation ... go away? .... Why did he [Nikon] not explain himself by writing, ... so that the affair might cause no noise”. Streshnev’s fourth question charges that “Nikon, after abdicating the patriarchy, still ordains”, xxvii. According to Ligarides’ History, Nikon “put off all his Episcopal robes, deposing himself....” Palmer, vol. III, 166.}

Fedor commented on Nikon’s absence from the patriarchal throne by forwarding the notion that the Patriarch willingly abandoned his position and the capital city. His explanation that Nikon left “as if for humbleness” and “without reason” contradicts the official inquiry that questioned that the Patriarch was forced to flee out of fear.\footnote{Palmer, vol I, xxix. Streshnev’s nineteenth question asked “Was it right for Nikon to fly through fear?”}

\footnote{275}
prelate dress" and "he was out of his mind," Fedor reemphasized Nikon's most dangerous traits - slyness and deception.

It is probable that Fedor took the idea to manipulate the incident from the official condemnations of the Patriarch. Both questions eighteen and nineteenth questions concerning Nikon's departure found in the exchange between Streshnev and Ligarides offered prime examples of how to exploit the situation. In response to Streshnev's statement that "Nikon says he is not out of the diocese, but has withdrawn from Moscow only for temporary reasons," Ligarides wrote: "He has no longer any right to call himself Patriarch of Moscow who has gone away from Moscow.... Why did thou [Nikon] not make known the secret reasons of thy departure, but without any consultation ... go away? .... Why did he [Nikon] not explain himself by writing ... so that the affair might cause no noise." While answering the nineteenth question posed by Streshnev, Ligarides continued: "even if it had been needful to fly, yet, as soon as the danger was over, he ought to have returned, on account of the scandal caused by his absence; because now so many souls [i.e., of the raskolniki] are going astray." By perpetuating these concerns, the author achieved, perhaps, his most brilliant negotiation of the "official" charges against Nikon.

Fedor further elaborated the notion that Nikon's departure was an act of slyness and deception by connecting it with a highly symbolic account of Nikon's unexpected return to Moscow. According to the author, "he arrived there during the night, like a rascal. Everyone was afraid of him." When the Tsar learned of Nikon's uninvited presence, he sent his boyar to tell "the wolf" to leave. "At this time he [Nikon] stole the

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71 Palmer, vol I, xxix.

276
Patriarchal staff from the place of St. Metropolitan Peter" and Tsar "sent after him as if for a wolf" in order to regain the staff. In the course of his escape the "blasphemer inflicted torture on many of his servants...." Moreover, Nikon later "wrote about this to Metropolitan Paisius of Gaza and lied about the Tsar."73

While the basic outline of Fedor's account follows closely the twenty-second and thirty-first chapters of Ligarides' History, it contains specific details which complement the earlier accusations of theft and accentuate Nikon's image as a "wolf"/"wolf in sheep's skin."74 Here, as in the earlier allegation of robbery, Fedor cast Nikon as a "wolf." He also stressed the resulting "torture" of ordinary people. In addition to stressing Nikon's "illegal" attempts to regain the staff as a symbol of patriarchal power, Fedor also employed the staff's other meaning. He suggested that, instead of using the staff to "shepherd" his people along the "right path," "the blasphemer" led them to "torment."75 This use of the staff's symbolism reinforces the idea that Nikon was a "wolf in sheep's clothing" and an unworthy priest. The concluding insinuation that Nikon attempted to hide his actions by "lying" completes his image as a "deceiver."

Fedor presented the ultimate consequences caused by the "wolf in sheep's clothing": "Until the Tsar knew about the slyness of his enemy, he lived according to the enemy's guidelines and hated the ancient customs and repressed all those who embraced the old customs and tortured all with various evilness." This "happened because the Tsar

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73 This is a reference to Nikon's letter of September 1665 to the Patriarch Dionysius of Constantinople captured by tsarist officials (January 1666). It accused the Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich of trampling traditional church prerogatives and what Nikon presented as Paisius Ligarides' detestable activities in Moscow. See Palmer vol. III, 397-400 for a translation of the entire letter.

was accursed by Nikon and his disciples.” The latter “are ashamed to return to the old customs because they are unaware of what they are up to…. Let Christ judge them.”

The author concluded his indictment of Nikon by reemphasizing strong sense of injustice which, according to him, entered Russia from the West.

There is no good judge on earth among the people now when we have the last days before the end of the age…. They rule not by the light of the east, but darkness of the West and flee from the truth toward demise and try to find wisdom in the West because their earthly wisdom is contained in sly philosophy and is hidden from the light. They are afraid to show their nakedness, for every truth is the true light which lives in humbleness and does not cover itself with vanities of slyness because it shines brightly to all.

Thus, concluded Fedor, Nikon, the “wolf in sheep’s skin,” is the embodiment of western earthly wisdom. His “slyness” is like the “sly philosophy” of the west. Both are “hidden from the light being afraid to show their nakedness.” Nikon attempted to “hide” this abuse of holy symbols in his shoes, he “lied” repeatedly, and stole the patriarchal staff “during the night.” Unlike the “true light which lives in humbleness and does not cover itself with vanities,” he collected his “stolen” properties “as if a prince of the world,” “commissioned an icon of himself” and cunningly “left his throne as if for humbleness.”

The Vyg Community of Old Believers

Discussion of the Vyg community, formally established in October of 1694 (62), is intended to briefly sketch the context in which the “Life of Korniliii” and the “Story About Nikon” first appeared. This community is especially significant in understanding the formative stages of Old Believer written culture in general and its representation of

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75 In the thirty-first chapter of his History, Ligariades explained that “those who through surprise had acknowledged him [Nikon] as Patriarch on the 18th of December 1664 are now pardoned.” Palmer, vol. III, 102-106.

76 Titova, 236.
Nikon in specific. Importantly, unlike the first generation of the Old Believer dissenters, who were persecuted and encountered the whole wrath of state-sanctioned violence, individuals who formed the Vyg community and associated settlements functioned under much more favorable conditions during the reign of Aleksei Mikhailovich’s son, Peter. While Peter I did not tolerate political dissention, he was more permissive in the religious sphere.  

Unlike deacon Fedor and the other members of the first generation of Old Believer fathers who confronted the authority of the state and church directly, the leadership and members of the Vyg community took a different approach. On the one hand, they sought to escape the influence of the Russian society, by preserving traditions and creating a counter culture. On the other, they attempted to avoid persecution, by making concessions to the state. The moderate leadership of Vyg, although persistent in rejecting Nikon’s reforms, prayed for the Russian ruler, an action designed to preserve the community, and thus the Old Belief.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the Vyg community became the “cultural capital” and “intellectual and literary center of Old Belief.” The Vyg fathers, including Simeon and Andrei Denisov, continued the process of confessionalism launched by the first generation of Old Believers. Both copying and expanding the corpus of text produced by their predecessors, the Vyg educated elite created a “canon of sacred texts which formed the backbone” of the Old Belief. They left numerous works now

77 Titova, 236-237.
79 Ibid, 172-3. The Vyg fathers instructed the ordinary members of the community, to “pray for a Russian victory over the Turks in the campaign of 1711,” Crumney, 172.
considered masterpieces of the Old Believer literature, including polemics, such as
Pomorskie otvety [Responses from the Coast of the White Sea], martyrologies, Vinograd
rossiiskii [Russian Grapes], and histories Istoriia ob ottsakh i stradal’tsakh solovetskikh
[History of fathers and Martyrs of Solovki]. In the words of Robert Crummey, the Vyg
leaders “attempted to give the faithful all the benefits of high culture in a form that would
fit their needs as members of a disadvantaged religious minority.”

The “Life of Kornilii” and the “Story About Nikon” represent an important part
of the Vyg literary legacy. Like the majority of Vyg’s sources, Nikon-related works were
intended not only as chronicles of the past, but more importantly, as educational tools for
the ordinary dissenters, who increasingly filled the ranks of Old Belief. Analysis of these
sources demonstrates further the evolution of the Old Believers’ representations of Nikon.

Analysis of the Vyg Redaction of “Life of Kornilii”

The first redaction of the “Life of Kornilii” was compiled between 1723 and 1727
at the Vyg community. It consists of two parts. An Old Believer author known only as
Pakhomii, wrote the first section. Pakhomii’s account treats Nikon’s deeds, from his
tenure as Metropolitan of Novgorod to his early patriarchate, in the context of Kornilii’s
life story. It includes several passages which explain the formative stages of the
“Nikonian” reforms and their implementation. The author of the concluding section, or
“Notes,” is unknown. The “Notes” represent a new redaction of the “Testimony” written
by Deacon Fedor at the Pustozerskii Prison in the 1670s. This more recent version
modified the earlier narrative by prefacing it with two new tales. The “Notes,” with one

exception, concern Nikon’s actions as Patriarch. Like Fedor’s work, they catalogue Nikon’s transgressions against established traditions, symbols and customs.  

Pakhomii (late seventeenth century-1776) was a pupil of Korniliu. After Korniliu’s death in 1695, Pakhomii stayed in Vyg. Pakhomii was not always attracted to the hermit’s lifestyle. He made several attempts to “go into the world,” however he invariably returned to Vyg. Pakhomii based his “Life of Korniliu” largely on the tales related by his subject, a fact reflected in a number of direct quotes attributed to Korniliu and the substitution of the persona of the narrator by Korniliu himself. Pakhomii’s work is a typical example of an early Old Believer Zhitie. Historicism and polemical thrust characterize it. Its language combines literary and vernacular elements. It is also characterized by vivid depictions of rather colorful episodes from Korniliu life, including an account of Korniliu’s confrontation with “Nikonian” clergy in Nilov hermitage during which the Old Believer defending pre-reform rituals hit a priest on the head with a lit censer. Although Trifon Petrov later embellished Pakhomii’s redaction, the latter remained the most popular version of Korniliu’s life.

The tales introduced in the “Life of Korniliu” are unique in their originality. Comparisons with the official sources show that they have no parallels in elite literature. These seminal tales provide rare insights into popular conceptions about Nikon created outside the influence of mainstream Russian society.

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Pakhomii's stories and the "Notes" present Nikon from completely new perspectives. In addition to supplying condemnations voiced by those with grudges against Nikon, they include the experiences and opinions of his friends. The breaking of old, and making of new friendships mark significant shifts in Nikon's representation. In Pakhomii's tales, friends provide the only concrete proof of Nikon's alleged heresy. In the "Notes," Nikon's former friend reveals the motivation behind the Patriarch's abuse of the symbols of the faith. However, despite ultimately denouncing Nikon's reform/abuse of the "Cross," these tales, unlike the earlier and later versions, suggest that Nikon was not entirely bad.

Pakhomii's work treats Nikon's life and deeds, as seen through the prism of Kornili's career, from Nikon's tenure as Metropolitan of Novgorod through the implementation of the reforms. The "Notes," with the exception of an account about Nikon's life as a monk at the Solovetskii Monastery, concern his actions as Patriarch. While dealing with two different chronological periods, these sections are largely parallel. Both introduce new, mutually reinforcing perspectives from Nikon's non-servile acquaintances. They are also alike in that they incorporate new strategies, namely, the explanation of visions regarding Nikon. Both narratives emphasize negative symbols, especially snakes. Most importantly, these tales forward a new dominant image of the Patriarch - Nikon as the Antichrist. The combination of these elements marks a significant departure from the earlier formulation of Nikon's image found in deacon Fedor's "Testimony" and prepares the way for the later "Story About Nikon."

Pakhomii's tales and the "Notes" commence with strong language and signs concerning Russian holy men's dislike of Nikon. These are followed in both accounts by the introduction of Nikon's old and new friends. The old friends, Kornili and the peasant
Dmitrii, at first oblivious to Nikon’s connection to evil, eventually recognize the real Nikon as an enemy of Christ’s Cross. Both these men attempt to disassociate themselves from Nikon after witnessing his sacrilegious actions. Nikon’s new friends, including Arsenii Sukhanov, the corrector of books, and devils, are aware of his supposed evil and yet, seek closer ties.\(^{83}\) Whereas Kornilii, an old friend, rejects Nikon’s offer of a new position, and thus participation in the heretical reforms, Nikon’s new friend, Arsenii, gladly accepts a promotion and willingly advances heresy. This is a prime example of how Nikon supposedly used flattery and promotions to achieve his position.

The breaking of old and making of new friendships mark significant shifts in Nikon’s representation. Kornilii and Dmitrii, who had no apparent reason to suspect Nikon and who actively sought his company, distance themselves from their old friend when he reveals himself as an enemy via his introduction of the new, three-fingered, sign of the cross and his mistreatment of symbols of the faith. According to Pakhomii, Nikon “lived a righteous life” until he released Arsenii from imprisonment at Solovetskii Monastery “to be his friend.” These cases suggest that Nikon was not bad early in life or during the early stage of his patriarchate.

Both sections of the “Life of Kornilii” introduce new visual elements crucial to the formulation of Nikon’s image. These include not only verbal references to signs and symbols of the faith, but visions of signs signifying Nikon as evil (snakes and devils). Here, the metaphorical snake, all but absent from the earlier tales, takes on increasing significance and replaces the wolf as Nikon’s primary signifier. The inclusion of visions and the shift in emphasis from the wolf to snake parallel the notion that Nikon is not the forerunner of the Antichrist, but the Antichrist himself.

Pakhomii’s Text

Pakhomii’s tales about Nikon are comparatively short and often vague. They, unlike earlier and later narratives, do not attack Nikon with great vigor. On the contrary, they send mixed messages about him by suggesting that he acted admirably both before and after he began to introduce innovations into Church practices.

Pakhomii first mentioned Nikon in connection with Afonii, the deceased former Metropolitan of Novgorod. The author noted that Afonii, signified as a holy man by the emanation of incense from his body after death, asked, prior to his demise, that Nikon not bury him “because Nikon hated him, which is a known fact.” While this inimical relationship remained unexplained, Nikon’s hatred of a proven holy man and the latter’s final request suggest the evil potential of the future Patriarch.84

The reasons behind Afonii’s request become clear with Kornilii’s arrival on the scene. According to Pakhomii, Kornilii “visited Nikon many times when he was Metropolitan of Novgorod because he knew Nikon as a simple monk.” Thus, when Pimen, a member of the black clergy of the Solovetskii Monastery, told Kornilii “Nikon, the Metropolitan, is the Antichrist,” Kornilii responded in disbelief; “you are possessed.” However, his opinion changed when Pimen showed him that “Nikon was blessing people using the new sign of the cross and not the old symbol of blessing.” Thereafter, Kornilii did not seek Nikon’s blessings and tried to avoid him. Despite this effort, “Nikon continued to regard Kornilii warmly. ‘Kornilushka, why don’t you come to get my blessing? I am considering making you the bishop in a rural monastery.’” Kornilii responded that he was not worthy and fled.85

84 MGU OR Verkh. no. 803, l. 368 ob-369.
85 Ibid, 369-369ob.
Taken together, these tales suggest two basic conclusions. First, Afonii was aware of Nikon’s heretical blessing and came in conflict with him over it. Second, Kornilii failed to recognize Nikon’s unorthodox method of blessing and thus continued to have a positive relationship with Nikon. Kornilii even defended his friend against the charge of “Antichrist” until he saw Nikon “using the new sign of the cross.” Although Kornilii eventually rejected his old friend, the text implies that Nikon presented a positive image of himself during his life as a “simple monk” and his tenure as Metropolitan of Novgorod.

Kornilii’s presence at the Chudov Monastery provided context for Pakhomii’s most symbolic tale about Nikon. “At that time in Chudov Monastery there was a certain Simeon who had a vision of a very frightening, black, mottled snake. The snake encircled the Tsar’s chambers but his head and his tongue were inside the chamber whispering to the Tsar.” Simeon confessed his vision to all the clergy, but they did not believe him. “However, it was this very night that Nikon had a conversation with the Tsar, yet no one knew what it was about and they did not pay attention to Simeon.” Although the story continued to be retold, no one could interpret it until, “someone remembered that the Holy Patriarch of Jerusalem … said ‘when you in Russia have a tsar whose name begins with the first letter, all the church hierarchy and the laws will be changed or cancelled, a different order of service [will be introduced] and a new god will persecute the church of God.’”

The combination of the vision, Nikon’s conversation with the Tsar, and the “Patriarch of Jerusalem’s” alleged statement suggests three significant conclusions. First,

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the snake is Nikon. Second, the Tsar and Nikon discussed reforms. Third, no one could understand the vision until it was placed in the context of the Nikonian reforms.

Pakhomii’s final tale about Nikon concerned the reform of church texts. After a short period of time in which Nikon “lived a righteous life,” he released Arsenii, a “known heretic,” from imprisonment at Solovetskii Monastery “to be his friend” and promoted him to the position of book corrector at the printing house. Together, they “eradicated all original Orthodox piety and replaced it with the new unknown heretical innovations.” Following this account, Pakhomii delineated the differences between Nikon’s heresies and the ancient faith.87

This account, like Pakhomii’s earlier explanation of Kornillii’s relationship with Nikon, presents Nikon favorably. The notion that Nikon “lived a righteous life” before he released Arsenii and began to introduce innovations reinforces the idea that, with the exception of reforms, Nikon was not a bad person. This idea did not contradict deacon Fedor’s representation of Nikon. Pakhomii, like Fedor before him, only revealed Nikon as a potentially evil force in connection with the latter’s rise though the hierarchy. However, Pakhomii’s work is significantly different from Fedor’s in that it in no way suggests that Nikon’s actions had a negative impact on the Russian people.

Later Old Believer authors confirm the claim that Pakhomii presented Nikon in a potentially positive, or at least not a totally negative, way. While Pakhomii’s redaction continued to be copied into the early twentieth century, subsequent writers who employed his work in the construction of new narratives apparently recognized the less than harsh treatments of Nikon and rejected them. The analysis of the “Story About Nikon,” presented later in this chapter and the discussion “History About Nikon,” discussed in the

286
next chapter, show that later Old Believer authors purposefully modified the tales originating in Pakhomii’s work by removing all hints of a positive portrayal of Nikon’s early life. Not content to simply erase the favorable connotations, they transformed the same tales into highly critical representations of the Patriarch. These actions reveal not only certain dissatisfaction of Pakhomii’s work, but suggest tensions at the Vyg Community over the issue of Nikon’s image. This same process is true in the case of section of the “Life of Korniliu” known as the “Notes.”

The “Notes”

Analysis of the “Notes” provides a prime opportunity to chart the continuing transformation of the core Old Believer tales about Nikon. Comparison with deacon Fedor’s “Testimony” show that the author of the “Notes” inserted two new introductory stories into the earlier narrative. Both involve visions.

The first story presents a scene from Nikon’s life as a monk at Solovetskii Monastery. In this case, Eleazar, the monastery’s abbot, “told Korniliu that he saw Nikon standing in the church while a mottled snake was encircling his [Nikon’s] shoulders. The monks started to cry and reflected ‘who could this accursed person be?’ Then Eleazar addressed the brethren aloud ‘o brothers should someone happen to kill Nikon I, though sinful, would pray for him forever.’”

88 Ibid, 400. Versions of this tale are also included in Semen Denisov’s Istoriia o ottsakh i stradal’tsakh solovetskikh [History of the Fathers and Martyrs of Solovki] (1720’s-30s). This work was recently published as in Semen Denisov, Istoriia o ottsakh i stradal’tsakh solovetskikh N. V. Ponyrko and E. M. Iukhimenko eds. (Moscow: Iazyki Slavianskoi Kultury, 2002). The edition features an extremely useful introduction, “Istoriia o ottsakh i stradal’tsakh solovetskikh Semena Denisova v dukhovnoe zhizni russkogo staroobriadchestva XVIII-XX vv.,” by Iukhimenko and Ponyrko. See also E. M. Iukhimenko, “Staraoobriadcheskie izdaniia ‘Istoriia o ottsakh i stradal’tsakh solovetskikh’ Semena Denisova,” in Russkaia Knizhnost. Voprosy Istochnikovedenia i paleographii T. V. Dianova ed., (Moscow: GIM, 1998), 59-77. For a useful discussion on Nikon’s relationship with Eleazar see G. P. Gunn, “Patriarkha Nikon i
Like Pakhomii’s introductory mention of Afonii, this story provides strong, but unfounded denunciations of Nikon. However, despite its vague basis, the symbolic imagery of this tale is obvious. The snake around Nikon’s neck clearly denotes him as the person “marked by God”. While not directly related to the earlier “Testimony,” this story provided a significant precedent for depicting Nikon’s connection with the Solovetskii Monastery negatively and would play an increasingly significant function in later redactions of the tales.

The second new tale is an elaborate account based “not on rumors, but the truth itself. In this story, the peasant Dmitrii, the Patriarch’s former neighbor and “old friend,” was rudely awakened to the real Nikon. Dmitrii caught a sturgeon and wanted to bring it to the Patriarch. According to his logic, “since Nikon was his friend before, he would be friendly now.” Nikon received Dmitrii, got him drunk and put him to sleep in the adjacent chamber. However, when the peasant awoke and peeked through keyhole, he “saw Nikon surrounded by many devils that were kissing him and sitting him on the throne. They were worshipping him and saying ‘you will truly be our good friend and big brother if you help us get rid of the cross of the Son of Mary.’” The devils, upset that Dmitrii may have witnessed their plot, asked Nikon why he sheltered the peasant. Nikon replied; “I did this because he is a friend and neighbor, besides he is drunk and soundly asleep.” Not satisfied, the devils ordered the Patriarch to strangle the potential witness. When Nikon entered Dmitrii’s chamber, the peasant pretended to be deep asleep. Nikon then began to test him by scratching his feet with a needle. Satisfied that Dmitrii was sound asleep, Nikon left. At this point, Dmitrii got up, “became sober,” and noticed that his feet hurt so

Eleazar Anzerski, in Drevnerusskaia knizhnost po materialam pushinskogo doma A. M. Panchenko ed. (Leningrad: Nauka, 1985), 230-242,
much that he could barely walk. Scared and unable to sleep, Dmitrii went to the
Patriarch’s bedroom. There, he looked at a pair of Nikon’s shoes and discovered “insoles
made of black velvet.” In one he found “the image of the Mother of God made from
silver and in the second he saw a three-part silver cross. He became afraid and began to
think how to get rid of his so-called friend.” When Nikon returned, he asked Dmitrii what
he remembered about the last evening. Dmitrii replied “Nothing. I do not remember
anything, holy father, I only know that my heels hurt and I have a hangover.” Nikon
“started to laugh, gave him more wine, blessed him, and bid him to go in peace.”

Dmitrii’s story provides an interesting comparison with original “eyewitness”
accounts by Kirik and Andreian concerning the discoveries of holy symbols in Nikon’s
shoes presented in deacon Fedor’s “Testimonies.” Although Dmitrii is obviously a
“common man,” he is neither in Nikon’s service, nor is he described as a monk or man of
holy living. Yet, his status as Nikon’s friend gave him intimate contact with the Patriarch
and therefore credibility. Dmitrii, like deacon Fedor’s Kirik, did not confront or
reprimand the Patriarch. On the contrary, he attempted to conceal his knowledge of the
Patriarch’s communion with the devils.

This tale confirms that Old Believer authors continued to expand upon deacon
Fedor’s “Testimonies.” The addition of Dmitrii’s account provided perfect context for the
earlier proofs of Nikon’s abuse of the cross and the “image of the Mother of God” as well
as his refusal to perform proscribed ritual. In addition to simply discovering symbols of

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89 Ibid, 401-402ob.
90 While the author suggests that Nikon “tormented” Dmitrii, the reader may construe Nikon’s
actions as simply hospitable.
91 Deacon Fedor provided three such examples in the “Testimony.” In the first, Kirik “saw that the
Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ was sewn on the insole of one shoe and the Holy Virgin with Christ on the
other,” while examining a pair of the Patriarch’s expensive velvet boots.” In the second, Andreian, Nikon’s
long-time pupil, likewise “saw, when Nikon was Patriarch, the Cross of Jesus Christ under the insole of one
the faith in Nikon’s shoes, Dmitrii saw and heard the motivations behind their desecration — Nikon was in direct contact with devils who wanted him to “help us get rid of the Cross of the Son of Mary.”

The “Life of Komilii” is essential to the evolution of the tales about Nikon. While Pakhomii’s colorful and highly visual, but unclear, stories called for further elucidation, the author of the “Notes” provided clarifications for the tales presented in the “Testimonies.” Visions introduced in both sections played pivotal roles in later transformations of the written texts and served as the basis of the among most significant Old Believer artistic depictions of Nikon in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The new material presented in the “Life of Komilii” adds new tensions to Nikon’s image. On the one hand, testimonies attributed to his friends, suggest that Nikon was predisposed neither to evil nor torments. There are no additional mentions of Nikon’s supposed transgressions. On the other hand, unqualified visions reveal Nikon’s intimate connection with the devil(s). Thus, despite more humane treatment of his fellow man, Nikon’s image became increasingly negative.

Analysis of “Story About Nikon”

“The Story About the Birth, Education, Life, and of the Death of Nikon Former Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Collected from Many True Persons Who Lived During the Days of Our Fathers” was compiled at Vyg community of Old Believers in the of his shoes and an icon of the Holy Virgin on a copper leaf under the second.” The third concerned a conflict between Nikon and Naftan during a baptismal ceremony. During this incident, “Nikon assisted his father Satan and said to Naftan: ‘it is not good to spit on Satan, only people without sufficient knowledge do this!’” Naftan responded: “It is necessary to spit on Satan and reject him as it is written in all holy books”. Nikon exclaimed “not necessary!” Finally, Naftan said “I spit on the person who supports Satan.” Titova, 232-4.
1830s. Its author/compiler is unknown. This collection of tales is a complex weave of Old Believer sources, including the “Testimony” and the “life of Kornilli,” additional popular tales, insights attributed directly to Kornilli and Deacon Fedor, works by Paisius Ligarides and Ivan Shusherin’s late-seventeenth biography of Nikon – Story About the Birth, Education and Life of Holy Patriarch Nikon] (1680s). The author expanded upon and, in some cases, altered the meaning of the earlier tales by incorporating sensationalized excerpts from Shusherin’s text and the new accusations voiced “from below.”

The “Story About Nikon” provides an Old Believer version of Nikon’s entire life. It is structured as a zhitiie [vita]. Two subdivisions corresponding thematically to the information presented in Pakhomii’s tales and the “Testimony”/“Notes” form its chronological framework. The first part concerns Nikon’s early life, his rise to power, subsequent implementation of reforms and the resulting calamities. It is based on Shusherin, the “Life of Kornilli” and additional new tales “from below.” Like Pakhomii’s work, it emphasizes Nikon’s introduction of “innovations” into the Russian Church, not his desecration of old symbols and traditions. The second part, like deacon Fedor’s “Testimony,” presents evidence of Nikon’s transgressions in addition to his Church reforms. It paints increasingly critical images of Nikon in which works by Fedor, Shusherin, and Ligarides are supplemented by new tales. However, in a significant departure from the earlier narratives, Nikon’s image shifts from “thief” to “conqueror.”

92 Peretz suggested only that it appeared after 1716. Breshchinshkii, noting the inclusion of material from “the Life of Kornilli” dates it to the 1730s (after 1731), 137-8, n 47.
93 The extremely close similarity between the titles of the Old Believer tale and Shusherin’s work clearly show that the former was intended to counter the positive representation of Nikon offered in the latter. It is likely that the anonymous Old Believer author/compiler purposely sought to mislead audiences into thinking that the negative portrayals presented the “Story About Nikon” were what Shusherin originally wrote about the Patriarch.
This change clearly parallels a shift in the use of signs associated with the Patriarch. Here, the snake, symbolizing the Antichrist and conqueror of mankind, replaces the wolf, signifying false prophet and thief, in key passages. The purpose the “Story About Nikon,” like the earlier tales, is to expose Nikon’s alleged misdeeds and commemorate the early Old Believer fathers. This notion is epitomized in the “Story About Nikon’s” introductory assertion that “all Nikon's matters were covered with silence and we would like to tell the story which was given to us from our fathers just to praise victims tormented for true piety.”

The author of the “Story About Nikon” transformed the tales originating in the “Life of Komilii” by combining them with information and devices gleaned from Shusherin’s work. The introduction of “predictions” is the most noteworthy. Here, Eleazar, Afonii, and Simeon, introduced earlier in “Life of Komilii” as able to recognize Nikon’s supposed character and intentions, utter a series of prophecies about him. Each instance expands the earlier vague and incomplete references by beginning to clarify the causes behind and/or results of the original explanations. Thus transformed, the tales received increased significance and meaning. In addition to depicting Nikon as a heretic, these new stories present him as a major threat to the Russian state.

The Old Believer response to the saintly images of Nikon introduced in Shusherin’s biography of Nikon results in several significant departures from the earlier tales in terms of content and strategy. While earlier authors canonized popular rumors and localized already existing negative images found in official sources by weaving them together with popular tales, the author of “Story About Nikon” responded by negotiating positive images on his own terms. The resulting transformations from “good” into “evil”

94 Borozdin, 145.
are not always simple binary opposites. Rather, they often represent manipulations of several levels of different texts (sources). For instance, the author creates completely new images by combining negative reinterpretations of Shusherin’s work with popular belief and references to medieval Russian history. The decision to counter the extremely positive images of Nikon presented in Shusherin’s work and the potentially favorable depictions found in Pakhomii’s text is significant. It not only highlights the struggle to control the Patriarch’s image, but reconfirms the interaction between elite/popular and official/dissenting segments of society and attests to the evolving nature of the Old Believer representations of the Patriarch. 95

The “Story About Nikon” features several new types of material not found in deacon Fedor’s “Testimony” or the “Life of Kornilii.” These include the introduction of “other” characters, especially women, and new types of charges against Nikon, such as sexual misconduct. Most important, however, are the repeated references to magic and predictions.

The concept of magic is among the most important aspects of popular belief presented in “Story About Nikon.” References to magic, in combination with predictions, provide catchalls for those aspects of Nikon’s deeds that defy simple explanation. Moreover, magic serves as a point of contrast between the “evil” of foreign practitioners and the “holiness” of their Russian counterparts against which Nikon’s image is formulated. Finally, magic is employed to counter Nikon’s popular image as a healer and

95 Paisius Lifarides’ History provides the first example of attacking Nikon in the framework of a vitae. See Palmer, vol. III, 154-166.
miracle-maker.\textsuperscript{96} Thus, the “Story About Nikon” sheds new light on the most positive aspect of Nikon’s popular depiction omitted from Shusherin’s biography.

Predictions fall into two categories – those made by foreigners with magic powers and those made by Russian holy men. The first type of prediction is based on manipulations of Shusherin’s text. They prophesize Nikon’s rise to the top of the Russian power structure. The second kind clarifies and reinforces the inclusion of visions gleaned from the “Life of Korniliii.” They complement the first type by foreshadowing the negative consequences of Nikon’s actions as a hierarch (i.e., threat to Russia). Moreover, they highlight the holiness of the clerics who make them.

Two dominant new images of the Patriarch emerge from the “Story About Nikon” - Nikon as “conqueror” and Nikon as a threat to the Tsar. He is depicted as undermining the stability of Russian Tsardom, including the Third Rome concept, in both sections of the tale. In the first case, his actions and “innovations,” which are repeatedly likened to historical threats to Russia, such as the Tatar Mongols, result in war and plague. In the second, the charges presented against Nikon accentuate his alleged transgressions against the Tsar, but not the Russian people.

\textsuperscript{96} Some rare manuscript versions of Shuherin’s biography of Nikon contained appendices listing healings performed by Patriarch while he was in exile at the Ferapontov and Kirillov Monasteries. See S. A. Belokurov, Materialy dla russkoj istorii. Dela sviat. Nikona patriarkha, pache zhe reshchi chudesa vrachebnaja (Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1888), 11-100. Other archival sources, formerly held at the New Jerusalem Monastery, recorded “miracles” attributed to Nikon after his death. These began shortly after his demise in 1882 and continued unto the nineteenth century. See V. Kolosov, “Popyтки канонизации патриарха Никона,” in Istoričeskij vestnik istoriko-literaturnogo zhurnala vol. I (August 1880) 793-796; and Ieromonakh Arsenii, “Pismo k novoobrativshimsia iz raznykh sekt russkago raskola k pravoslavnoi tserkvi iz Novago Ierusalima (Rossiiskago),” in Dushepoleznoe chteniie 25 (September 1884), 53-7. I contend that although Nikon’s image as a healer and miracle-maker was promoted by some pro-Nikon factions in the mid nineteenth century, it may have been an extremely important element of Nikon popular appeal among the common folk since the late seventeenth century. The article by Ieromonakh Arsenii is extremely telling because it was addressed to Old Believers and directly countered Old Believer “lies” about Nikon. Perhaps most telling is Arsenii’s report that “several raskolniki converted to Orthodoxy because on Nikon’s miracles,” 56.
These changes in Nikon's representation reflect a turn in attitudes toward the Tsar among Old Believers living at Vyg in the early 1830s.\textsuperscript{97} While deacon Fedor, who suffered from official persecution, forwarded strong anti-tsarist sentiments in the “Testimonies,” the author of “Story About Nikon,” whose community was largely free from oppression, hailed the Tsar repeatedly and admonished those who did not.\textsuperscript{98} With the exoneration of the Tsars Nikon became the sole focus of attack. Therefore, despite employing popular concepts (i.e., magic) later tale tends to reflect more closely the official condemnations of Nikon.

Nikon’s Early Life, Rise to Power, and Implementation of Church Reforms in the “Story About Nikon”

The brief mention of Nikon’s birth and education recorded in the “Story About Nikon” suggests there was nothing inherently bad about him. On the contrary, Nikon is depicted amicably, even admirably. The account of Nikon’s youth establishes that “Nikita” [Nikon’s given name] was born in the Nizhni Novgorod region to “wretched parents” and that, after the death of his mother, a woman named Kseniia raised the boy and taught him to read. When Nikita was old enough, he went to a monastery where he lived “in friendship” with the clergy.\textsuperscript{99}

The first indication of Nikon’s negative potential appears with the most significant prediction about his impending conquest. Here the author gives information, presented in Shusherin’s account, a negative spin.\textsuperscript{100} Made symbolically by a Tatar – the

\textsuperscript{97} For the change in opinion about the Tsar and the debates over whether or not to pray for him at Vyg in the early 1830s see Crummey, The Old Believers and the World of the Antichrist, 170-174 and Cherniavsky, 159.

\textsuperscript{98} The anti-tsar diatribe present in Fedor’s work is replaced by admonitions such as “when you speak with the prince do not speak evil.”

\textsuperscript{99} Borozdin, 145. Literacy is a positive trait, especially considering Nikon’s circumstances. It signifies power.

\textsuperscript{100} This is the least sophisticated manipulation of Shusherin’s work.
age-old foreign enemy of the Russians - the prophecy promised that Nikita will be a future contestant for state power. In the course of a journey to another monastery, Nikon and his "friends" spent the night in the home of a "Tatar magician." "This magician, using his magic skill ... his devil book and cudgel said to Nikita: 'You will be a great lord.'" Nikita did not forget this prediction. 101

Although Nikon remains innocent in the eyes of the reader, this prophecy provides the framework for his future actions (reforms) in terms of conquest and punishment of the Russian people and their faith. Moreover, the prophecy establishes the dichotomy between the magic practiced by foreign protagonists and "true piety" of Russian holy men essential to the formulation of Nikita's image.

In the meantime the young Nikita did not exhibit any evil tendencies or evoke contempt. On the contrary, a wife described as "a great lover of drinking and crying" tormented him. The couple lived in a village where Nikita was ordained as priest. However, "due to the bad character of his wife," he left for Moscow where he lived in a monastery, got tonsured and took the name "Nikon." He wandered to the Anzerskii skit [hermitage] of Solovetskii Monastery. There, he became the pupil of Eleazar, the monastery's abbot, and "made friends around the skit and lived there." 102

Nikon's image in the text changes when three holy men (Eleazar, Afonii and Simeon), introduced earlier in Pakhomii's work as able to recognize the future Patriarch's supposed character and intentions, utter a series of predictions about him. Each instance expands the earlier vague and incomplete references introduced in the "Life of Komilii" by clarifying both causes behind and results of the original explanations.

101 Borozdin, 145.
102 Ibid, 146.
The modification of the tales originating in the "Life of Kornilii" began with Eleazar's encounter with Nikon. After noting that Nikon became Eleazar's pupil, the author added that Eleazar, who "had the ability to predict the future and this gift was given to him for true living," foretold that "Nikon will be the man who causes confusion and rebellion in Russia ... he will confuse the whole country and fill it with misfortunes." Thereafter, Eleazar saw "a very huge snake with a very awful appearance wrapped around his [Nikon's] neck during a service." This occurrence "was truly witnessed by the people at the Anzerskii skit." 103

The combination of the Eleazar's prediction and vision is mutually reinforcing. The vision confirms the prophecy by providing an obvious sign denoting Nikon's evilness - the snake. Moreover, the inclusion of Eleazar's revelation that "Nikon will be the man who causes confusion and rebellion in Russia..." answered the question "who could this accursed person be?" first posited in "Life of Kornilii." 104 Nonetheless, the reasons why Eleazar saw the apparition as well as why he was compelled to utter the prophecy remain unexplained until later in the narrative.

The author of the "Story About Nikon" revealed manifestations of the first two prophecies about Nikon by explaining how, using magic, the future Patriarch started to achieve the power which eventually allowed him to eradicate the true faith. These instances accentuate Nikon's image as a "conqueror" by repeatedly likening him to historical threats to the Russian faith and state - Roman popes and Tatars. The story tells that while it is "impossible to explain the way in which he got acquainted with great lord Aleksei Mikhailovich and the most Holy Patriarch [Iosif]," they made him Archimandrite

103 Borozdin, 146.
104 Ibid; MGU OR Verkh. no. 803, I. 372-372ob.
of Novo-Spasskii Monastery [in Moscow].” There, “using his hypocritical perfidy, he conquered the thought of his majesty the Tsar. The Tsar came to believe that Nikon was worthy to be not only archimandrite, but Patriarch. He entrusted Nikon to take petitions from wronged people and to present them for judgment.” Thus, “Nikon was glorified among the people as a true priest and a father of offended people.” He ascended to his position through the “maddening support of the magical Tatar’s devilish spirit.” Rather than displaying “great virtues proper to the respected Patriarchal position,” Nikon rejected the Lord by stepping on holy images of the Savior and true Holy Virgin and committed “awful Sodom sin.” In this, “he looked like an enemy of God, a magic wolf, not a priest.” He achieved his high position not by matter of virtue, but “through magic art and flattery and cunning like the Roman Pope Kelseiv [sic] who rejected Christ.”

Next, the narrator manipulated information found in Shusherin’s work to expand Pakhomii’s brief mention of the former Metropolitan Afonii’s supposed request that Nikon not bury him into a meaningful warning. In addition to explaining the tension between Nikon and his predecessor, this commentary likens Nikon’s ascension to the Novgorodian Metropolitanate with the most tragic event in the history of Novgorod – the Tatar conquest. According to the tale, Patriarch Iosif made Nikon the Metropolitan of Novgorod “because of the many sins of the people. And he, false monk, led to the death of Christian people because before his elevation he was anointed with Tatar vomit.” After becoming Metropolitan, “this sly fox” visited Afonii, “the very epitome of virtuosity and humbleness,” and asked to be blessed. Afonii, who was partially blind, asked “who are you and where are you from?” Nikon responded: “I am Metropolitan

105 This is another example of the change in opinion about the Tsar at Vyg. See Crumney, Old Believers and the World of the Antichrist, 170-174, and Cherniavsky, 159. Compare with this line of
Nikon.” Afonii, who also “had the gift of prediction,” perceived that Nikon would “cause very great damage to the Orthodox people” and said “it is so strange that the time has come when Nikon is becoming Metropolitan. This is because the Lord’s will has left us.”

Nikon’s image as a threat to the “Orthodox people” is especially noteworthy in the context of Novgorodian History. His anointment in “Tatar vomit,” a reference to a Tatar magician’s early prophecy that Nikon would become a “great lord,” signifies him as the successor to the Tatars of old. Like the earlier conquerors, Nikon would cause “very great damage to the Orthodox people.” The reference to “the many sins of the people” used to explain Nikon’s appointment as well as the lament “the Lord’s will has left us” are nearly the same as the ones used in the Novgorodian Chronicle to explain the Tatar invasions of 1238.

The attempt to certify Afonii’s prediction by attributing it to Kornili’s authority found in the “Story About Nikon” results in major tensions within the text. After noting that the information concerning Afonii’s prophecy and burial request “was told by the monk Kornili who lived in Metropolitan Afonii’s cabin,” the author explained that Kornili was oblivious to Afonii’s warnings. Kornili “did not know that in Nikon had spite for the old fathers’ piety…. [He] came to this wolf covered with sheepskin because he knew him before he became a Metropolitan and saw him many times while he lived near Patriarch Iosif. Kornili was openhearted and forgot about Afonii’s prediction

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106 Borozdin, 147.
107 Ibid, 147-8; MGU OR Verkh. No.803, 1. 368ob-369. According to Shusherin, when Nikon asked for Afonii’s blessing, he (Afonii) predicted that Nikon would be Patriarch and asked for his (Nikon’s) blessing instead, 32-33.
concerning Nikon and accepted a blessing from Nikon as a blessing from a worthy priest.”

In this case, the attempt to deprecate Nikon backfired. In addition to explaining that the former Metropolitan’s word had no effect on Kornilii, it suggests that the monk did not recognize Nikon’s untraditional blessing. Therefore, Kornilii’s image of Nikon remained positive until he met Pimen.

The account of Kornilii’s revelation about Nikon presented in the “Story About Nikon” follows Pakhomii’s story with one noteworthy exception. According to the later version, Pimen, who was “very skilled and knew about Eleazar Anzerskii’s prediction about Nikon,” warned Kornilii “Nikon is the Antichrist because he used five fingers, not two fingers, for blessing people.” Kornilii heeded Pimen’s admonition, witnessed Nikon blessing with five fingers and went to Moscow to inform Patriarch Iosif. By referencing Eleazar’s premonition, this tale connects the sign of the snake with Nikon’s style of blessing and the idea that the future Patriarch was the Antichrist.

The “Story About Nikon” featured a second prediction of Nikon’s future greatness made by a foreigner with magical powers meant to explain how Nikon (supposedly) first encountered Arsenii Sukhanov, the future corrector of books. This tale represents an elaborate attempt to meld several unrelated positive aspects of Shusherin’s text into a single extremely negative commentary on Nikon. Moreover, it reduces the significance of one of Nikon’s most important acclaimed actions, the transfer of St. Philip’s remains.

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109 Borozdin, 148.
110 Ibid, 148. In Pakhomii’s account, Kornilii was not privy to Afonii’s supposed warnings, nor did he live with him. See MGU OR Verkh. no.803, l. 368ob-369.
111 Ibid, 148.
112 See Meyendorff, 101-108 and Nazarov, 24 on Arsenii Sukhanov.

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from the Solovetskii Monastery to Moscow in 1652, by making it a mere pretext for the future Patriarch to meet Arsenii.113

According to the “Story About Nikon,” Nikon visited the prisoners held at Solovetskii Monastery during his trip to collect Metropolitan Philip’s remains. At this time, he encountered Arsenii who was imprisoned for “guilt against the Lord.” The prisoner addressed Nikon, “Holy Patriarch Nikon, please bless me!” Nikon, considering these words and prediction made earlier by the Tatar magician, replied to Arsenii: “There are many opinions about me, but I am not Patriarch. I am Metropolitan of Novgorod.” Nonetheless, Arsenii begged Nikon to promise that, when the latter was on patriarchal throne, he would remember the imprisoned monk and free him. Nikon agreed that, if he became Patriarch, he would release the captive.114

The author transformed Pakhomii’s tale about Simeon of Chudov’s vision of the snake wrapped around the Tsar’s palace by replacing the subsequent statement attributed to the Patriarch of Jerusalem (“When you in Russia have a tsar whose name begins with the first letter, all the church hierarchy and the laws will be changed or cancelled and different order of service and a new god will persecute the church of God”),115 with a more relevant warning from the past.116 In this rendition, the vision of the snake “reminded the monks of Chudov Monastery of the story about the ancient snake that fought with the eagle in Byzantium… The battle between the snake and eagle was a sign of the coming Turkish reign that changed Christianity in Byzantium. There was a snake in

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113 On Nikon’s transfer of Metropolitan of Philip’s remains see Shusherin, 49-51 and P. F. Nikoliaevskii Puteshestvie Novgorodskogo metropolita Nikona v Solovetskii monastyr’ za moshchami sviatitelia Filipa (St. Petersburg, 1885).
114 Ibid. 148-9.
116 Borozdin, 150.
the air and it was a sign of the Antichrist and the apostasy of Rome ... and the monks who remembered this were afraid that it would be repeated in Russia."\textsuperscript{117}

The connection of the vision of the snake with the Turkish overthrow of Constantinople, like the previous example, which associated Nikon with the Tatar invasion of Novgorod, clearly places Nikon in the historical context of a conqueror and threat to the Russian state. According to tradition, both the Tatar and Turkish conquests were punishment for sins and apostasy.\textsuperscript{118} However, unlike the example of the Tatar conquest, which was historically significant but had no special relevance for the future, Nikon’s conquest held major consequences according to the concept of Moscow as “the Third Rome.” While the defeat of Byzantium, the Second Rome, resulted in Moscow becoming the Third Rome, the fall of Moscow signaled the end of the world and thus, the coming of the Antichrist.\textsuperscript{119} The snake - the signifier of both conquest and the Antichrist - is revealed later in the text to be Nikon. In the meanwhile, this sign was not completely understood and soon thereafter a council of Russian bishops elected Nikon to be Patriarch.\textsuperscript{120}

The author countered Pakhomii’s notion that, during his early Patriarchate, Nikon “lived a righteous life,” by explaining that it was actually a time for Nikon to disguise himself and his deeds. As Patriarch, “he covered his beastly claws with the gentleness/meekness of sheep’s skin and entered the Russian Christian flock and crept through it using flattery towards other countries” in order to change church service books.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{118} For the case of the Tartar’s see The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016-1471, 84. For the case of the Turks see S. A. Zenkovsky, ed., Medieval Russia’s Epics, Chronicles and Tales. Revised and enlarged ed. (New York : Meridian, 1974), 323-4.
\textsuperscript{119} See the concise explanation of the concept of Moscow as the Third Rome in Zenkovskii, 23-24.
\textsuperscript{120} MGU OR Verkh. No 803, l. 372; Borozdin, 150.
These newly printed books were spread all over Russia “because the people who knew Nikon thought he was a good bishop, not a wolf.” After describing Nikon’s founding of the Iverskii, Kii, and New Jerusalem Monasteries, the author concluded that the Patriarch “offered these [new monasteries] to common Orthodox Christian people like sweet meal, like a lure.” However, “it was impossible for such an awful snake to hide his ferocious lupine poison for long.”

Nikon revealed his true colors when he released the “false monk Arsenii” from Solovetskii prison. This “damned false prophet and minion of God-killing Jewish people, who was filled with the poison of Latin schism, followed the apostate beast Nikon, agreed with him in every new activity and became the Patriarch’s beloved spiritual son.” Together with his ally, Nikon used flattery to convince the Tsar to approve the “correction” of church books based on a comparison with “ancient” texts. “His slynness was to collect all ancient books and to erase all the sources of accusation against him.”

Nikon’s efforts to eradicate the “ancient faith,” like the medieval Novgorodians’ sin and the apostasy of Byzantium, resulted in God’s wrath. “At this time there was a war between the great Tsar and the Polish and Lithuanian King, and at the same time - due to the Lord’s will - there was death and plague and almost all people died.” Despite these signs, “Nikon did not take into account the Lord’s anger.” Rather, he appealed for foreign support of his conquest by asking “Paisius [Patriarch] of Alexandria” to approve his “Latin innovations.” The Patriarch of Alexandria “swallowed Nikon’s message like a very sweet meal” because he “wanted to divert Russia off the path of true piety for a long

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121 Borozdin, 150-151.
122 Ibid, 151.
123 The tragedies presented here were actually coincided with a high point in Nikon’s tenure as patriarch. The combination of Aleksei Mikhailovich’s victories, and Nikon’s rescue of the Tsar’s family
time.” In his letter of support, which was sent to Nikon in 1655, Patriarch Paisius “tried to cover the knife of his betrayal with the honey of antiquity, not the real truth.”

In the story, Patriarch Paisius’ confirmation of the Russian Patriarch’s “innovations” resulted in the verification of Simeon’s and Eleazar’s visions regarding Nikon’s association with snakes. When the Russian Patriarch presented the Patriarch of Jerusalem’s letter in support of the reforms to a Russian church council, “many monks and others were terrified by Nikon’s words and discussed Simeon’s story about the awful, mottled snake, and this snake was considered to be Nikon.... Eleazar Anzerskii’s vision and prediction about the fierce beast Nikon and his innovations were also recalled.”

The affirmation of the visions and the fulfillment of related prophecies represent a significant step in the transformation of the tales originating in the “Life of Komilii” and the formulation of Nikon’s image. By connecting the tales concerning Eleazar and Simeon with the implementation of the reforms, the “Story About Nikon” established Nikon’s image symbolically as a snake. While in the earlier tales the sign of the snake was seen by a select few, here it is eventually recognized and understood by all.

Evidence of Nikon’s Transgressions in Addition to His Innovations

The second part of the “Story About Nikon” considers Patriarch Nikon’s actions from the imposition of “corrected” books forward. Based largely on deacon Fedor’s “Testimony” and Ligarides’ History, it contains new tales “from below” as well as manipulations of Shusherin’s biography of Nikon. The “Story About Nikon” also continues to establish the Patriarch’s image as an “enemy of God” by presenting proof of

from the plague resulted in the apogee of Nikon’s power and the Tsar’s support for his monastery building program. See Shusherin, 55-56.

124 Borozdin, 152.
125 Ibid, 153.
his transgressions in addition to the “innovations.” However, several significant
departures from the earlier texts add new facets to Nikon’s image.

The goal of the tales presented in the “Story About Nikon,” remained largely the
same as the objective of the earlier Old Believer stories. However, the more recent tales
were different in that the Tsar replaced the Russian people as the primary victim of
Nikon’s transgressions. Whereas deacon Fedor’s “Testimony” display an intense
dissatisfaction with the Russian legal system in general and the Tsar’s failure to provide
justice in the case of Nikon’s trial in specific, the “Story About Nikon” presents the legal
process as just and legitimate. Moreover, the new tales reflect a growing acceptance of
the official condemnation of Nikon’s deeds in its entirety.\(^{126}\) This shift, which may be
attributed to larger debates over the autocrat’s status taking place at Vyg in the 1730s,
resulted in Nikon being cast as a direct threat to the Tsar.

While emphasis on Nikon’s abuse of the signs and symbols of the true faith
persisted, and even broadened via the introduction of new charge “from below,” the
“Story About Nikon” focused increased attention on the material cultural symbols of
Nikon’s authority as Patriarch. This emphasis, attributable to the inclusion of broader
sections of Ligarides’ History, reflects the official accusations that Nikon attempted to
usurp power from the Tsar and the Eastern patriarchs. However, these new accounts gave
the material cultural symbols new meaning, not found in the official charges, by
associating the objects with popular signs, namely, the snake and wolf.

\(^{126}\) Compare, for example Fedor’s statement “Let the Lord judge the Tsar because the Tsar did not
give justice for the deeds of Nikon the heretic,” Titova, 234, with the explanation found in the “Story
About Nikon” that the Tsar and the foreign Patriarchs “made careful investigation and found Nikon,
guilty....This decision was made without any partiality taking only into account the last judgment,”
Borozdin, 164.
The transition between the first and second parts of the “Story About Nikon” is clearly denoted by in a vivid interjection by the unknown author/compiler of the tale:

So let me begin my story about this awful beast that came from the abyss of betrayal.... He [Nikon] is like a red snake filled with the blood of the saintly confessors.... Every day he tried to get fatter eating peoples’ souls like a bull who will be slaughtered.... These peoples’ souls were eaten instead of bread. He is not a priest, but a wolf and mercenary.127

In addition relaying core tales about Kirik’s and Andreian’s discoveries of Nikon’s secret abuse of the cross and men’s resulting confrontations with the Patriarch, introduced in the “Testimony” and perpetuated in the “Life of Kornilii,” the “Story About Nikon” introduced yet another new eyewitness testimony.128 It develops further Nikon’s image as an enemy of Christ’s cross and raised another highly negative charge. The new tale explained that:

similar blasphemous episodes were relayed by the Patriarch’s scribe Fedor who described Nikon as a heretic and sodomite. Fedor at some point of time saw that Nikon kept an image of Christ crucified under his bed. Upon seeing this Fedor was stupefied. God seeing Fedor’s love and diligence revealed to him Nikon’s other shameful sodomite affairs. Once he [Nikon] got his scribe Ivan, alias Ladoshka, drunk and committed sodomite sin with him. Ladoshka got really upset about this and told Fedor. Nikon then disposed of the sad Ivan and tried to discover Fedor’s whereabouts in order to dispose of him as well. However, Fedor escaped.... He also became a true witness of the suffering of our holy fathers, arch-priest Avvakum Lazier, deacon Fedor and Epifanii who were burned on April 14, 7910.129

The tale appears to be loosely based on the rumors perpetuated by Nikon’s former companion, deacon Feodosii. According to Shusherin, at first, Feodosii was very fond of Nikon, asking the Patriarch to take him [Feodosii] on all official travels. Nikon, not suspecting Feodosii’s treachery, obliged. Soon Fedosii began to slander other people close to the Patriarch. For a long time Nikon ignored Feodosii’s insinuations. Soon,

127 Borozdin, 154.
128 Borozdin, 158-159.
however, the deacon’s duplicity was discovered. According to his accomplice, Feodosii was preparing a poison at Kii Monastery’s bathhouse. When captured, Feodosii confessed that he acted on the orders of Pitirim, Metropolitan of Krutitsa, and Pavel, archimandrite of Chudov Monastery, who promised Feodosii a position as Novgorodian metropolitan in return for his services. The poison was distilled from the Patriarch’s hair found in his bed, soil from the soles of his shoes, and soap which he used to bathe. When Nikon learned about this betrayal, he recalled having been offered questionable drink. The Patriarch ordered that the deacon and his accomplice be sent to Moscow (shackled and manacled) to stand before the Tsar. After denying the allegations, Feodosii was “interrogated with extreme prejudice” like a common criminal. The interrogation had the intended effect and Feodosii signed his previous confession. The Tsar placed Feodosii’s fate in Nikon, but the Patriarch deferred the final judgement to the Tsar. 130 Especially noteworthy is the mention of both Fedor and Feodosii’s investigations of Nikon’s bed. The fate of both men also appears to be parallel.

The “Story About Nikon” clarified Nikon’s departure from the Patriarchal throne in 1685 by connecting it with the chaos supposedly caused by his innovations. While, according to deacon Fedor, Nikon left out of humility, this story explains that the Patriarch admitted that he acted against the sovereign’s will and fled because he “saw the lord Tsar’s anger and feared the Tsar.” 131 He took off his patriarchal vestments, stood his staff [zhezI] near the patriarch’s place and, “barking like a raging dog, crying and swearing,” proclaimed: “from this time I will not be the Patriarch. I know my numerous sins before the Lord and the many wars and epidemics that came to Russia. The many bad

129 Ibid, 159.
130 Shusherin, 75-80.
things that occurred because of my sins are forcing me to leave the patriarchal throne.”\footnote{132} Despite this confession of guilt, Nikon did not repent.

In the “Story About Nikon,” the Patriarch’s clandestine return to the capital city in December 1664 takes on a new meaning evident in the change of signifiers associated with the patriarchal staff. When told to leave Moscow, Nikon, like an “enraged snake,” took Metropolitan Peter’s staff. The Tsar ordered his men to take the staff from Nikon “because it was the most valuable holy symbol.” Once the staff was recovered, Aleksei Mikhailovich directed that it be placed near the patriarch’s place. This action affirmed the victory of the true symbol of authority, Metropolitan Peter’s staff, over “the snake-headed staff which would like to stand in its place.”\footnote{133}

This treatment of Nikon’s attempt to leave Moscow with the patriarchal staff is a major departure from the one forwarded in deacon Fedor’s account. Fedor presented Nikon as a thief, and showed that the Patriarch’s actions resulted in the “torment” of common men. The “Story About Nikon,” on the other hand, forwarded the idea that Nikon’s actions were symbolic of a power struggle between true piety, signified by Metropolitan Peter’s ancient Russian style bishop’s staff, and foreign heresy, denoted by the “snake-headed zhezl,” which involved the Tsar, rather than ordinary people.

The difference between Nikon’s representation in the “Testimony” and the “Story About Nikon” is most clear in the use of animal metaphors. While the “Testimony” reinforced Nikon’s image as a thief by repeatedly referring to him a wolf, the “Story About Nikon” intensified his representation as a conqueror by likening him to a snake.

\footnotetext{131}{Borozdin, 160.}
\footnotetext{132}{Ibid, 160. According to the tale Nikon “used puss rather than for oil for his heretic magic body” during his self-imposed exile, Borozdin, 160.}
\footnotetext{133}{Ibid, 161.}
This shift is indicative of a broader acceptance of the official charges against the Patriarch.

The "Story About Nikon" introduced an entirely new set of accusations against Nikon that broadened the scope of the Patriarch's transgressions and further stressed his potential as a threat to the Tsar's power. According to the narrative, Nikon had two Jewish converts in his service. One of them often visited Moscow and informed a certain Daniel, one of the Tsar's physicians, "about all Nikon's lawless imprudence." Daniel passed this information to the Tsar. When Nikon learned of the servant's betrayal, he "beat him very severely" and imprisoned him. The Tsar's doctor witnessed this, escaped to Moscow, and exclaimed "I have a matter of state importance." When questioned by the Tsar about "Nikon's lawless activity and imprudence," the doctor revealed "Nikon's sin with the Jewish converts' wives" and that "the wives were beaten nearly to death." The Tsar imprisoned all involved in the Chudov Monastery in order to "use them as eyewitnesses of Nikon's awful lawlessness and torments." However, the story concludes, "all these Jewish people ... were killed and some people thought Nikon's accomplices killed them."134

This bizarre set of accusations is noteworthy not only because it forwards charges of Nikon's supposed sexual misconduct and the brutality associated with it, but because it raises them to the level of "state importance." The urgency attributed to these charges is manifest in three ways. The first concerns Tsar's interest in the matter. The second deals

134 Borozdin, 162. Shusherin also explained that the Jewish coverts raised serious charges against Nikon but that the Tsar realized they were untrue and threatened to cut the slanderers' tongues out, 98-101. Nikon himself mentioned a somewhat different account of his treatment of the "two baptized Jews who lived with me in the Resurrection Monastery [that] abandoned the Orthodox faith" in a letter to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich on December 25, 1671. See Solov'ev, vol. 21, 105-106.
with the Tsar’s attempt to protect the victims and use their testimonies in Nikon’s official trial. The third suggests that Nikon would do anything to keep his actions hidden.

The notion that Nikon’s deeds presented a threat to the Tsar’s power was continued in the next episode presented in the narrative. The text explained that, shortly after the murder of the Jewish witnesses, Ivan Shusherin, Nikon’s personal servant and biographer, was delivered to the Tsar for questioning. However, when the Tsar asked him, under the threat of torture, about “Nikon’s secret activities,” Shusherin, “like a friend of the fierce beast,” said nothing. The Tsar imprisoned him in the chamber of secret affairs for three years and then exiled him to Novgorod. This tale, like the preceding one, highlights the Tsar’s perception of Nikon as a threat, as well as Nikon’s friends’ attempts to obstruct the Tsar’s justice. Moreover, it serves do discredit Shusherin’s account of Nikon's life. \(^{135}\)

The account of the Patriarch’s trial presented in the “Story About Nikon,” largely mirrors Ligarides’ History and clearly emphasizes Nikon’s supposed transgressions against the authority of the Tsar and the Universal Patriarchs. Paraphrasing and embellishing Ligarides’ summary of charges against Nikon, the Old Believer narrative began by explaining that when Nikon was Patriarch “he confused great Lord and Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and all his kingdom and took charge of affairs which were not in the realm of the Patriarch, but proper to the Tsar.” Although he renounced the patriarchal throne, he continued to act as archbishop, ordained new priests, and even consecrated bishops. Nikon “created monasteries with indecent and vain names like New Jerusalem, Golgotha, Bethlehem, and Jordan.” Moreover, he mocked the divine and abused holy titles when he named himself “Patriarch of New Jerusalem.” He stole “one-third of the
Tsar's kingdom.” “Acting like a Latin,” Nikon wrote a letter to the Eastern patriarchs in which he disrespected the Tsar by calling him a “tormentor.” When, according to the story, Metropolitan Illarion of Riazan’, announced these allegations before the tribunal, Nikon “like a deaf snake, did not want to hear these awful words about his bad deeds and tried cover truth with lies.” However, Ilarion “was not able to suffer Nikon’s eruptions of vomit and began to call Nikon a killer, lascivious beast of prey and many other offensive words, which covered Nikon's head like excrement.” All of these impressions were “added to the image of beast-like tormentor dressed in patriarch’s vestments [sakkos].”

The “Story About Nikon” continued to deride the Russian Patriarch by including a detailed, original and somewhat contradictory account of the final stages of his deposition based on official sources and rumors. The story opens with an accurate description of the official condemnation of the Patriarch: “According to the divine apostolic rules and seven universal councils as well as local tradition, he should be rejected from holiness, prohibited to act as bishop, stripped of omofors and epitrakhil and hence forth called ‘simple monk Nikon.’” Perhaps even more striking, it concluded with the claim that “this decision was made without any partiality taking into account only the Final Judgment.” While this suggest a complete acceptance of the official version of the proceedings against the Patriarch, the description of his being stripped of the symbols of the Russian patriarchal honor do not.

Some people are saying that ... when the universal patriarchs ordered him to take the black klobuk from his head and the panagia from his neck, he [Nikon] cried very loudly like a wild boar ‘you are beggars and thieves, not shepherds. You came here not to do good, but to steal peoples’ hearts by flattery.... In doing so, you fill your hungry, silver lusting and hellish mouths. You are no better than

135 Borozdin, 162.
136 Borozdin, 163-4. This entire section of the Old Believer texts is an almost verbatim copy of Ligarides’ History. See Palmer, vol. III, 163-6 and 191-3.
Roman heretics whose customs led to the destruction of the Church of Jerusalem by non-Orthodox Turks.' Patriarch Paisius [sic] could stand the abuse no longer and using his staff knocked Nikon’s klobuk off his head and ordered that his panagia be stripped off without any honor…. And in this way each of them abusing and reproaching the other, they as representatives of ancient Oriental and Russian Churches, demonstrated that they were tormentors of both traditions and customs, but not teachers. 137

The author attempted to prove that Nikon continued to “breath cunning and hypocrisy” and to pose a threat even after his imprisonment at Ferapontov Monastery by claiming that although “this spiteful false prophet acted like a diligent worshiper of the Lord's cross and images of the Holy Virgin, in reality, he was the wicked destroyer of these.” Nikon found it hard “to communicate with evil spirits” under close guard. Therefore, he “collected stones and created an island in the lake ... and erected there a cross with the inscription ‘this cross is the Cross of Patriarch Nikon who is now imprisoned’” so that he could, under the pretext of adoring the cross, go to the island freely. “He very often visited this island after sunset with a monk named Iona from the Voskresenskii [New Jerusalem Monastery], who was very cunning and practiced magic, and together they appealed for the devil’s appearance. When the devil appeared in the form of an awful and great snake, Nikon hugged and kissed him on his awful death- and poison-bearing lips ... and talked with the snake like it was his best friend.” However, the “malicious monk” Iona reported this “magic and the meeting with snake about three hundred times” to Nikon’s chief captor, colonel V. V. Shepelev. The latter forwarded this information to Tsar Fedor Alekseevich and Patriarch Ioakim. They sent investigators who confirmed the reports were true. “That is why, according to decree of Tsar and Patriarch, ... Nikon was transferred to Kirillov Monastery.” 138

137 Borozdin, 165-6.  
138 Borozdin, 166-7. Nikon was transferred to the Kirillov Monastery in 1676.
This story condensed three points recorded by Shusherin, namely, Nikon’s creation of an island and erection of a cross, the vague, yet repeated mention of “lies” perpetrated upon Nikon by Iona and the official inquiry resulting in Nikon’s relocation, into a single case. 139 Although the story supports the notion that Nikon continued to abuse symbols of the faith, not to mention his communication with the devil (snake), the conclusion that this line of events resulted in Nikon’s transfer is unfounded.

While the “Story About Nikon” clearly distorts several aspects of Shusherin’s account, it may clarify others, namely, the content of the “lies” spread by Iona. Shusherin made repeated references to Iona’s duplicity in his discussion of Patriarch’s life in exile at the Ferapontov Monastery, yet the biographer rarely clarified the content of the monk’s “lies.” Therefore, it is possible that the tale about Nikon’s meeting with the snake was among the falsehoods circulated by Iona. In this case, the Old Believer account provides a significant instance in which rumors “emerging from below” were acknowledged, but swiftly discounted in Shusherin’s pro-Nikon biography. Moreover, it serves as another example of the multidirectional movement of ideas that shaped the competition for control over Nikon’s image.

According to the Old Believer story, relocation to the Kirillov Monastery did not thwart Nikon’s evil practices. There, “the beast” promised a noblewoman with cataracts that he could cure her if she visited him for treatment. However, when she arrived, “he tightly tied the noblewoman to a bench and tied her arms and legs because the medicine

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139 For discussions about the cross, Iona, and investigation of the Patriarch and Nikon’s relocation, see Shusherin, 159-60, 160-62, 165-66 and 165-67, respectively.
the noblewoman some wine and instead of treating her, he made love to her.”

This character assassination is significant for several reasons. It both counters the popular conception of Nikon as healer and adds new weight to the charge of misogyny raised earlier in the story in connection with the Patriarch’s alleged mistreatment of the wives of the Jewish converts. Unlike deacon Fedor’s account of Nikon’s “false treatments” in which the Patriarch’s patients simply remain unhealed, it presents Nikon as ruthlessly taking advantage of the afflicted that sought his help. The accusation of rape takes this line of argumentation to the extreme. It suggests that Nikon deceitfully used the pretext of healing as a means to gain his own illicit pleasure. The clarification that Nikon abused a noblewoman is significant for two reasons. It implies that if Nikon had the audacity to assault a noblewoman, he would not hesitate to take advantage of females with more humble origins, such as the Jewish converts’ wives. Second, it skirts the idea that Nikon cured sick common folk.

Though presenting disturbing images of Nikon, this extremely critical account provides unique insight into the Patriarch’s image as a healer, a conception important in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. References to Nikon’s healing the sick were noted in monastery records and, in some instances, appended to manuscript copies of Shusherin’s biography. They are not, however, found in Shusherin’s original text. It appears that this aspect of Nikon’s deeds was not recognized, or at least not actively promoted, by the official church or even Nikon’s most ardent supporters, including

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140 Borozdin, 167.
141 It should be remembered that, by the time Nikon was transferred to the Kirillov Monastery, he was seventy-five years old.
Shusherin. Thus, the Old Believer representation of Nikon as false healer addresses issue overlooked in the official accounts of the Patriarch’s life in exile.\textsuperscript{142}

The complex effort to discount Nikon’s image as a healer presented in the “Story About Nikon” testifies to the apparent significance of that reputation among the ordinary people. Examining the Old Believer narrative, regardless of how negative it may be, makes it possible to determine what other aspects of Nikon’s images were specifically relevant on the popular, as opposed to the official, level. In this instance, the Old Believers unwittingly pointed out Nikon’s accessibility to the people and his ability to treat the sick, features that became widely accepted and discussed by those seeking to promote the Patriarch’s more populist image in the nineteenth century. In other words, by purposefully countering Nikon’s image as a healer, the “Story About Nikon” highlights its relevance and importance in popular culture, well beyond its original purpose and formulation.

The “Story About Nikon” concludes by seizing the occasion of Nikon’s death to stress the Patriarch’s guilt and ultimate punishment in hell. “This enemy of true piety, wishing to clear his way to the gates of hell, fell ill and took the tonsure…. His body was delivered to Voskresenskii [New Jerusalem] Monastery and where it was kept overnight in the church called ‘the prison.’ There he, like hell’s prisoner, spent the night before entering hell. For burial, his body was carried to the place called Golgotha where the earth’s crust split while Christ was crucified, and the body was laid there just to be closer to hell.”\textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{142} Accounts of Nikon’s “treatments” and “miracles” were not included in Shusherin’s original text or in later published versions of it.  
\textsuperscript{143} Borozdin, 167.
This final assault on the Patriarch is noteworthy not only because it distorts Shusherin’s account, but because it represents a significant manipulation of the Patriarch’s most complete system of iconography - the Resurrection Cathedral at the New Jerusalem Monastery. While loosely following the course of events described by Shusherin, the Old Believer account gives Nikon’s burial a negative spin by reinterpreting the significance of the physical locations at which specific stages of his burial took place. The interior of the Resurrection Cathedral contained “churches” symbolically replicating sites in the Holy Land associated with Christ’s Passion, including the prison cell where He spent the night before the Crucifixion, and Golgotha, the site of the Crucifixion. Nikon’s own self-designated burial place, “Adam’s Place” was located directly under Golgotha. Shusherin’s account of the transfer of Nikon’s body through the “churches” symbolizing the various stages of the Passion clearly associated Nikon with Christ. What, therefore the “Story About Nikon,”

Conclusions

The research presented in this chapter departs from the traditional examination of early Old Believer literature. Unlike previous investigations that employed Old Believer texts to gain insight into the causes of the schism of the Russian Church, my goal was different. I investigated a body of largely unstudied records in an effort to provide a more complete picture of Patriarch Nikon’s image in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Russian society. Old Believer culture(s) were traditionally viewed as artificially

144 The major difference in the description of the events being the Old Believer clarification that although Tsar Fedor Alekseivich ordered that Nikon be interned at the New Jerusalem Monastery he directed those involved “to make a very simple service as if for a monk not a patriarch.” See Borozdin, 167. Shusherin explained that Nikon was laid to rest with full patriarchal honors. See Shusherin 188-195.
confined and isolated. However, my analysis suggests a significant cross-pollination between mainstream and dissenting cultures.

This chapter offers a detailed comparative analysis of the tales about Nikon which traces their development over time and stresses their relevance for all segments of Russian society. My analysis of the images of Patriarch Nikon presented in the “Testimony,” the “Life of Kornilii” and the “Story About Nikon” shows that the tales offer more than the perspectives of an isolated Old Believer elite. On the contrary, they represent complex products that shaped, and were shaped by, a multidirectional movement of ideas that flowed from “above” and “below” as well as across confessional lines. The tales reflected and shaped the attitudes about Nikon held by the Old Believer elite and ordinary dissenters, as well as their non-dissenting counterparts. Far from being static, the tales were alive with change. Although the core elements common to all the tales persisted from the late seventeenth- to the early eighteenth century, other facets of Nikon’s image were continuously expanded to include ever greater cross sections of popular and elite culture. In addition to presenting the negative attributes of Nikon’s deeds and character, they shed new light on positive conceptions of the Patriarch.

Comparison of the tales’ content with non-Old Believer polemics highlights the movement of ideas about Nikon, both positive and negative, across the confessional divide. On the one hand, the chapter clarified that Old Believer authors were familiar with readily employed anti-Nikon discourse espoused by the Muscovite secular and clerical elite and their representative, Paisuis Ligarides. It follows that much of the tales’ content concerns the charges leveled against the Patriarch at his trial. Moreover, my research suggests that perhaps even the most well known Old Believer image of Nikon - Nikon as the Antichrist - was gleaned the non-Old Believer repertoire. On the other hand, it
elucidated how the tales sought to neutralize and/or reverse the positive representations of Nikon forwarded by his biographer Shusherin. Especially noteworthy are the conflicting representations of accusations raised against the Patriarch by ordinary monks in his service. While the first case provided a unifying platform for Nikon's opponents, both among Muscovite and Old Believers elites, who were themselves bitter enemies, the second instances proved that the struggle waged to control Nikon's image was intense and ongoing. However, the tales display more than a circulation of ideas about Nikon between Old Believer and non-Old Believer ideologues.

My analyses the tales’ content, structure, and modes of narrative reveals that they present complex images of Patriarch Nikon and operate on different levels. Some of the tales clearly represent important aspects of learned culture, both Russian and non-Russian, which required certain level of education on the part of the audience. On this level, the formulation of Nikon's image involved abstract ideas, such as heresy, church-state relations, and legal processes. It also included biblical allusions and references to historical texts. Other tales, which either emerged from, or at the very least were tailored for, ordinary people, contained elements of popular culture and required minimal or no knowledge of learned culture. On this level, the construction of Nikon's representation involved more tangible ideas, such as theft, physical punishment and abuse of symbols of the faith, and references to popular belief, most notably magic and shamanism, metaphors concerning animals, namely, the "wolf" and the "snake," and the experiences of ordinary people.

The latter type of tales is especially significant because they grant ordinary people a central role in the fashioning of ideas about Nikon. Eyewitness accounts voiced from below by the common folk are the core of all three texts. Each new compilation
introduced at least one new eyewitness account attributed to a commoner. Thus, the common folk’s place in the tales expanded continuously mirroring the increasing numbers of ordinary people who began to fill the Old Believer ranks in the early eighteenth century. Not only are these people included in the narratives, but they furnish the most concrete proofs of the Nikon’s alleged transgressions against God and man.

Representations of Nikon found in the tales are highly symbolic and visual. The Patriarch’s images are established via verbal references to signs and symbols of the faith, including material cultural objects (e.g., crosses and the patriarchal staff) and ritualistic gestures (e.g., making the sign of the cross) as well as metaphors concerning the “wolf” and the “snake.” The characterization of the Patriarch’s actions are manifest in the eyewitness accounts attributed to ordinary people and the visions experienced by Russian holy men.

The significance attributed to the symbolic and visual elements employed in the construction of Nikon’s image is most evident in the two types of composite characteristics of the Patriarch. The first type combined verbal references to material cultural symbols with metaphors to create hybrid associations, such as “wolf” [Nikon] steals “patriarchal staff” [symbol of religious authority]. The second kind connected Nikon’s behavior which could be observed directly by ordinary people with either material cultural symbols or animal metaphors. Eyewitness accounts attributed to Nikon’s servants allowed the audience to “see” how Nikon supposedly abused the most important symbol of the faith - the cross, while visions experienced by Russian holy men revealed the Patriarch’s associations with evil in terms of the metaphorical snake. The translation of the tales’ symbols and visual features into Old Believer artistic imagery, a point
examined in the following chapter, further underscores their importance in the production and reception of Nikon’s image.

Not all the early tales about Nikon are completely adversarial and negative. Accounts of Nikon’s early life, in other words, his existence as a common peasant youth/priest, present him with some degree of sympathy. While on all accounts he is shown as being in conflict with other clerics, in some instances, Nikon is described as having amicable relationships with ordinary people. Pakhomii’s tale about the peasant Dmitrii is especially noteworthy in this context. While clearly providing serious charges against Nikon, such as his conspiring with a host of devils, it contradicts other equally important accusations typically presented against the Patriarch, namely, that he was a tool of the devil and that his associations with evil had an adverse effect on the Russian people. According to Pakhomii, Nikon defended the peasant against evil by refusing devils’ demands to murder him. These findings raise new questions about inner divisions concerning ideas about Nikon and the “Nikonian” reforms within the learned circles and leadership of the Vyg and other Old Believer communities in the early eighteenth century.

Finally, the tales offer important insights into positive ideas about Nikon circulating in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Russian society, but not recorded in Shusherin’s work. Most noteworthy is the information pertaining to the Patriarch’s reputation as a healer. The repeated efforts to counter that image point to what must have been among the most widespread and important popular conceptions of the Patriarch.

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The chapter demonstrated that the Old Believer tales about Nikon became increasingly elaborate, inclusive and nuanced. The diverse and complex ideas that they
contained could be appropriated for different contexts. The next chapter discusses the continued transformation of the early tales during the long nineteenth century. It shows that the ideas conceived by the original authors proved to be relevant long beyond the period of apocalyptic fears which characterized the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Importantly, the vivid verbal images presented in the early tales could be easily translated into an effective artistic imagery.
CHAPTER VI

OLD BELIEVER IMAGES OF NIKON IN THE MODERN ERA

This chapter investigates Old Believer images of Patriarch Nikon in the modern era by analyzing the written and artistic images of him presented in never before studied late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century illustrated manuscripts of the “History About Patriarch Nikon, Eliminator of the Ancient Orthodox Faith” [“Istoriia o Patriarkhe Nikone istrebitele drevnepravoslavnogo blagochestiia”] (hereafter “History”). The “History” represents the apogee of the Old Believer tales about Nikon. The combination of written and artistic images makes it the most elaborate and comprehensive Old Believer attempt to depict the Patriarch. Taken together, the written and pictorial texts epitomize the continued evolution of the tales about Nikon and underscore the dynamic nature and ongoing relevance of narratives about the patriarch among Old Believers living in the Late Imperial period.

The “History,” like the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century tales discussed in the previous chapter, sheds new light upon both Old Believer and broader public opinions about the Patriarch because incorporated and/or countered images of Nikon circulating in mainstream Russian society. It attest to the movement of ideas about the Patriarch across the confessional divide into the late nineteenth century and proves that Nikon’s image was a significant feature of Russian culture by showing that the contest to control it was intense and ongoing. Moreover, the “History” provides another chance to assess the effect of mainstream Russian culture, such as the popular press,
historical fiction and historical scholarship, on popular audiences in general and Old Believers in particular.

There is no comprehensive study to date of the Old Believer tales regarding Nikon produced after the early eighteenth century. The failure to recognize the existence, not to mention the significance, of these sources may be attributed to the widely accepted notion that no new tales about Nikon appeared after the early eighteenth century (see chapter 4). In fact, only one researcher, N. Iu. Bubnov, has pointed out that Old Believer tales about Nikon continued to flourish well into the nineteenth century.¹

Systematic investigation of the Patriarch’s image in Old Believer art and in the illustrated versions of the “History” has simply not occurred.² In the mid-1960s, the late Michael Cherniavsky published two Old Believer artistic depictions of Nikon and provided a pioneering discussion placing them in the context of Russian eschatology.³ More recently, V. Budaragin, briefly discussed perhaps the earliest Old Believer artistic image of Nikon, protopop Avvakum’s original illustration in the “Pustozerskii sbornik” in connection with his assessment of Avvakum’s drawings.⁴ A. A. Amosov and N. Iu. Bubnov commented briefly on several versions of the “History” in their larger discussions of illustrated books attributed to the Old Believer peasant artist A. S. Kalikin and his

² The entire genre of hand-painted folk prints [risovannei lubki], of which the images contained in the “History” are a part, has until very recently been ignored. However, they represent an important and underresearched aspect of Russian folk art and popular culture. See E. I. Itkina, Russkii risovanii lubok kontsa XVII-nachala XX veka (Moscow: Russkaia Kniga), 1992, 5.
⁴ V. Budaragin “Risunki protopopa Avvakuma i inoka Epifaniia,” in Risunki pisatelei. Sbornik nauchnykh statei (St. Petersburg: Gumanitarnoe agentstvo Akademicheskii proekt, 2000), 126-136. Budaragin discusses the image featuring Nikon on 128-132. The artwork is reproduced on 129. N. S. Demkova et al., published and described the same image but did not attempt to analyze it. See N. S. Demkova et al., Pustozerskii sbornik: avtografy sochinenii Avvakuma i Epifaniia (Leningrad: “Nauka,” 1975), 150-153. The original image is published as l. 2. The description is found on 151.
family which are now held at the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St.
Petersburg. While Amosov mentioned the books in passing, Bubnov, analyzed their
paleography, diplomatics and artistic style and explained that the written and pictorial
texts found in the “History” have different provenances. He dates the written texts, the
author(s) of which are unknown, to the late eighteenth or the first half of the nineteenth
century. Bubnov clarified that there are two different versions of the “History” held by
Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which he denotes as “abbreviated” and
“complete.” He attributed the artistic images to the workshop of the Old Believer peasant
artist A. S. Kalikin of the Volodga region and dated them to the late nineteenth or early
twentieth century. Bubnov concluded that the time has come to recognize the historical
and artistic significance of these and other illustrated Old Believer manuscripts created in
the late imperial period.

Heeding Bubnov’s recommendations, I have assessed the import of these
overlooked sources by incorporating them into the larger comparative study of images of
Patriarch Nikon created by Old Believers. My investigation focuses upon four illustrated
versions of the “History.” These include the three held at Library of the Russian Academy
of Sciences and a fourth housed in the manuscript department of the Russian State
Library, Moscow (GRB OR) which has never been commented upon. Comparative
analysis of the written texts in these sources shows that the latter version offers the most

5 N. Iu. Bubnov, “Litsevye rukopisi staroobriadcheskoi knigopisnoi masterskoj vologodskikh
krest’ian Kalikinykh,” 314-320.
6 A. A. Amosov, “Knigopisnaia masterskaia tarnoogskikh krest’ian Kalikinykh,” in Traditsionnaia
dukhovnaia i material’naia kultura russkich staroobriadcheskich poselenii v stranakh Evropy, Azii i
staroobriadcheskoi knigopisnoi masterskoj vologodskikh krest’ian Kalikinykh,” 314-320.
7 These sources include BAN 45.4.9; BAN 45.5.9; BAN Sobranie Kalikina 49; and GRB OR f. 17
Sobranie E. V. Barsova no. 140.
complete and inclusive narrative. In addition to incorporating nearly every aspect of the texts contained in the books at BAN, it includes a variety of additional writings about the Patriarch. Therefore, I chose the written images presented in the GRB OR version of the “History” as the primary source of textual analysis. The study of artistic images required a more encyclopedic approach. The Kalikin family workshop produced all four of the books. They are alike in that they feature original art depicting the written texts they accompany. However, I discovered that each of the books is unique because of variant details and, in some cases, completely different artistic depictions. Thus, in order to provide a complete analysis, my investigations include images presented in all four versions of the “History.”

In order to discover the multifarious representations of Nikon contained in the “History” I employ the same methodology outlined in the previous chapter. In other words, I attempt to interpret the content of the tales in order to recover their meaning(s) and deconstruct the texts in order to show “how they worked” on their audience(s). To achieve these goals the chapter places the “History” in the context of elite and popular culture and belief and compares it against the earlier Old Believer tales, including the “Testimony,” “Life of Kornilli,” and the “Story About Nikon” as well as non-Old Believer sources, both written and artistic. As in the previous chapter, I seek to uncover the textual strategies employed in the formulation of the “History” and offer readings of signs and symbols woven into the texts. Moreover, I subject these images iconographical, semiological and comparative analysis.

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The goal of this chapter is to show that Old Believer images of Nikon continued to morph. Whereas the “History” both reflected the circumstances of its creation and engendered a host of new conceptualizations of the Patriarch. The chapter demonstrates that although the core elements of the early Old Believer tales “became fact” and persisted from the late seventeenth to the early twentieth century, other facets of Nikon’s image were continuously recast and expanded to include ever-broader cross sections of Russian political, religious, artistic and popular culture(s). This was the case because the “History” was designed to present an updated version of the traditional Old Believer tales about Nikon in order to counter the proliferation of positive interpretations of the Patriarch, appearing in late imperial Russian society.

Long Nineteenth Century Contexts and Sources of the “History”

A variety of interconnected political, social, religious and cultural factors provide deep context for the creation and reception of the “History” in the long nineteenth century. The first concerns the growth and diversification of the Old Belief and the continued Old Believer efforts to preserve the traditional faith while struggling to survive and prosper in the face of official persecution. In this regard, the formulation of the “History” has much in common with creation of the earlier Old Believer tales, namely, the “Testimony,” “Life of Korniliy,” and “Story About Nikon.” The second regards broader political actions and policies, including warfare, ideological concepts - such as nationalism and Panslavism and cultural factors, especially the development of historical and popular literature and the widespread societal fascination with Russian antiquities. Thus, the circumstances surrounding the creation of the images presented in the
“History,” both written and artistic, largely paralleled those framing the Patriarch’s depiction in nineteenth-century historical Realist painting.

Official policies towards the Old Believers fluctuated greatly between the mid-eighteenth and late nineteenth century. During the second half of the eighteenth century the lot of Old Believers improved. The reign of Peter II (1727-1730), witnessed official toleration of Old Believers. Catherine II’s rule (1762-1796) marked the foundation of what would later become the hubs of Old Believer merchant and industrial capitalism, the Preobrazhenskoe and Rogozhskoe centers in Moscow. In the early nineteenth century, both the church and the state made efforts to reconcile with Old Believers in hopes of drawing them into mainstream society. The institutional church sought rapprochement through the edinoverie (1800), a branch of the official church which recognized the pre-Nikonian rituals and rites in return for Old Believers’ recognition of the official hierarchy. Alexander I’s decree of 26 March 1822 acknowledged the Old Believers’ right to practice their faith and to assemble. Moreover, this policy created the favorable legal, economic and social conditions under which the Old Belief grew and prospered. However, the end of Alexander I’s reign and advent of Nicholas I’s rule (1825-1855) witnessed a dramatic reversal of official policy towards Old Believers and nearly all the concessions they had received from previous rulers were countermanded. The governmental position flipped again during the reigns of Alexander II (1855-1881) and Alexander III (1881-1894). Alexander III’s Old Believer Law of May 1883, was the most important manifestation of the change in policy. This law was a double-edged sword - while it granted Old Believers a number of basic religious and civil liberties, it also imposed new restrictions upon them.
This legislation guided the government’s relation with Old Believers until 1905 when they, together with other religious minorities, received full freedom.9

On a more specific level, the rise and expansion of modern historical scholarship in Russia during the nineteenth century provided the first crucial precondition for creation of the “History.” Historical research opened up the study of Nikon, providing access to primary sources as well as new, often negative, interpretations of the Patriarch’s life and work. Accompanying Alexander II’s Great reforms in the 1860s was a rise in scholarly and public interest in Nikon’s trial and its significance in Russian history. The major historiographical debates that ensued provided abundant materials were incorporated into the Old Believers’ negative assessment of the Patriarch. The very decision to title the latest redaction of Old Believer tales about Nikon a “history” reflects a conscious effort to lend a higher degree of credibility in to the tales in a period of characterized by the professionalization of historical scholarship and the emergence of enlightened public opinion [obshchestvennost’].

The resultant proliferation of scholarly and popular biographies dealing with Nikon introduced new source materials and interpretations of the Nikonian legacy. The new biographies often strove to the highlight the Patriarch’s significance in the modern era by connecting him with contemporary processes, including the Great Reforms, and concepts, such as populism, Slavophilism and Panslavism. Often included in these biographies were mass-produced artistic images of the Patriarch and the inevitable association of visual representations of the Patriarch with written texts.10

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10 See for example Archimandrit Apollos, Nachertanie zhitiia i deianii Nikona, patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseia Rusi.Vnov’ ispravlennoe i dopolnennoe s prilozheniem perepisok Nikona s tsarem Alekseem Mikhailovichem i vazheishikh gramot (Moscow, 1859); Patriarkh Nikon. C’ portretom’ pervosviatitelia (St. Petersburg: Izdaniie Redaktsii zhurnala “Mirskoi Vestnik,” 1869); S. V. Mikhailovskii,
Yet another factor in the broadening discourse about Nikon was the emergence of historical fiction. The appearance of D. Mordovtsev’s *The Great Schism* (1881) and M. A. Filippov’s *Patriarch Nikon. A Historical Novel* (1885), works unfettered by the constraints of the scientific method or religious dogma, opened up new perspectives on Nikon. The novel’s intimate psychological portraits of Nikon and fictitious dialogues between him and other characters promoted fresh nontraditional representations of the Patriarch. For example, the development of the Nikon’s personal relationships, especially with women, namely, Nikon’s wife, nun Natalia, and Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich’s sister, Grand Duchess Tatiana Mikhailovna, introduced highly personal, unorthodox and potentially damaging perspectives on the Patriarch. In short, a dimension comparable to the rumors and original tales that circulated in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. 11

Accompanying the aforementioned developments in the nineteenth century was the active promotion and display of Russian antiquities which included art and artifacts related to Nikon discussed in chapters two and three of the dissertation. These materials cultural objects were incorporated into the Old Believer formulation of the Patriarch’s image. 12 Not surprisingly, the promotion and exhibition of original artifacts associated with Nikon resulted in additional meanings and served new purposes. Recognized for their historical, artistic and, in some cases, material value, objects belonging to Nikon

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11 D. Mordovtsev, *Velikii raskol* (St. Petersburg, 1881); M. A. Filippov *Patriarkh Nikon* (St. Petersburg, 1885).

12 The analysis of the “Testimony,” “Life of Kornili,” and “Story About Nikon” presented in the previous chapter showed that material cultural objects symbolizing religious authority, e.g., the patriarchal
were employed to commemorate the Patriarch and to link him and the Russian Orthodox Church together with the Romanov Dynasty. The display of art and artifacts at the “Museum Dedicated to the Memory of Holy Patriarch Nikon,” founded at the New Jerusalem Monastery in 1874, is most noteworthy in this context. By the mid-nineteenth century, the promotion of material cultural objects and symbols belonging to Nikon held at the New Jerusalem Monastery played a part in anti-Old Believer propaganda. Several Russian Orthodox polemics held that contemporary Old Believers who saw the Patriarch’s personal belongings were so moved that they converted from the Old Belief to the official church. Finally, the display and/or publication of artifacts belonging to the Patriarch also provided inspiration and/or concrete materials for nineteenth-century artists creating new images of Nikon.

The emergence of historical Realist painting in the mid-nineteenth century had a significant impact on nineteenth-century Russians’ visualization of Nikon. These images, like the engravings featured in the biographies of Nikon (discussed in chapter two), are significant because by this time they could be mass-produced at relatively low cost prices and were thus accessible to all but the very poorest. In his study of literacy and popular literature in nineteenth-century Russia, Jeffery Brooks notes that

the appearance of the newspaper and magazine illustrations ... was an important step in the formation of a new popular visual language, just as popular prose constituted a new language in print. Drawings and photographs of people and places in the news were a lesson in how the world could be presented on a flat staff.  

13 A prime example of using the New Jerusalem Monastery and the artifacts displayed at the Museum Dedicated to the Memory of Holy Patriarch Nikon is Ieromonakh Arsenii, “Pismo k novooobrativshimsia iz raznykh sekt russkogo raskola k pravoslavnoi tserkvi iz Novogo Ierusalima (Rossiiskogo),” Dushepoleznoe chtenie 25 (September 1884), 53-57. Arsenii’s account of the Old Believer conversion appears on 56. S. A. Belokurov, Dela Sviat. Nikona Patriarkha, pache zhe reshchi chudesa vrachebnaia (Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1888), 112-113.
surface for people whose only previous exposure to pictorial representation may have been icons, lubok prints and an occasional shop sign.

Illustrated periodicals, especially Niva played a major role in this process. Pictures featured in Niva, which included reproductions of historical Realist paintings of Nikon, “the first serious rivals to the traditional lubok prints among the peasants.” As such, they provided new sources relevant to the reconstructions of the Patriarch’s image. 14

The Written Texts

Comparison of the “History” with the earlier Old Believer tales highlights the dynamic nature of Nikon’s image. Nearly all of the core classic tales discussing Nikon’s “innovations” and abuse of the “ancient faith” were included and clarified in this version. The traditional tales became more complex, yet increasingly precise. The “History” also omitted several elements from the earlier tales, including Nikon’s supposed theft of property, references to his “false healings” and condemnation of his use of art, elements no longer deemed important or relevant in the nineteenth century. 15 Other topics, such as Nikon’s New Jerusalem Monastery and his relationships with women, endured and had new resonance. Finally, the “History” introduced new themes and original new stories.

Further comparative study of the “History” shows that non-Old Believer discourse continued to shape Old Believer images of Nikon. Following the practice begun in the eighteenth-century Old Believer “Story About Nikon,” the “History” countered the claims presented by Nikon’s seventeenth-century biographer Ivan Shusherin. No longer content to fill the blanks in Shusherin’s accounts with fictitious details, the author(s) of the

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15 This is surprising, given the promotion of Nikon’s image as a healer in the mid-nineteenth century and its connection with anti-Old Believer discourse. See Arsenii, 53-57; Belokurov’s entire book;
“History” transformed what Shusherin, and subsequent pro-Nikon historians and biographers, presented as Nikon’s most praiseworthy and pious actions - namely, Nikon’s shipwreck on Kii Island, his transfer of St. Philip’s remains to Moscow, and his founding of New Jerusalem Monastery - into negative factors. Breaking new ground, the “History” also included potentially damaging materials and interpretations forwarded in recent scholarly works, such as Sergei Solov’ev’s History of Russia from Ancient Times (1851-1879) and Metropolitan Makarii’s (Bulgakov’s) History of the Russian Church (1883), as well as historical fictional by Mordovtsev, The Great Schism (1881) and Filippov, Patriarch Nikon (1885).

In the “History,” as in the earlier tales, Nikon’s image is defined in terms of signs and symbols. Signs connected with animal metaphors, namely the “wolf” and the “snake,” continued to play crucial roles in the reformulation and expansion of the tales originally appearing in the “Testimony,” “Life of Kornilii,” and “Story About Nikon,” as well as in newly introduced materials. Here, however, the references found in the earlier tales are clarified in detail. The distinctions drawn between the “holy three-part/seven-ended” Cross as the signifier of the true faith and the “Latin two-part/four ended” Cross associated with Nikon and his supposed heresy are prime examples of this trend. These new specifics are complemented by additional illustrations of Nikon’s abuses such as destroying icons, charges supplied by nineteenth-century scholarship.16

References to material cultural symbols of Nikon’s position take on increased significance in the “History.” In addition to Nikon’s zhezl’ [patriarchal staff], the most...
referred to symbol in the earlier tales, the “History” repeatedly mentions the Patriarch’s vestments and regalia, including his klobuk, mitra, panagia, and sakkos. Instead of simply signifying patriarchal authority and the Nikonian reforms, these objects are recognized for their material value. Highlighting the Patriarch’s supposed extravagance, they serve as a means of illustrating Nikon’s alleged distance from the common people.

The “History” also establishes Nikon’s image by associating him with “others,” specifically, women and national and ethnic minorities. The inclusion of misogynistic and xenophobic fantasies not only affects Nikon’s image, but also provides a telling commentary on perceived threats to established order posed by females and non-Russians. Based on a variety of sources, these accounts reflect both biblical and historical concepts and contemporary political as well as social issues.

Nikon’s associations with women that appear in the “History” were shaped by a number of factors. The first is biblical and concerns the Old Testament’s representation of Eve as the cause behind the “Fall of Man.” In this case, it is important to note that other Old Believer illustrated manuscripts dating to the nineteenth century clearly place the imposition of the “Nikonian reforms” in the context of the biblical account of the “Fall of Man.”\(^\text{17}\) The second female association is historical and concerns with female members of the Romanov Dynasty. The representation of the Patriarch’s association with Tatiana Mikhailovna is gross distortion of Shusherin’s sympathetic account of the Grand Duchesses’ support of Nikon. However, it is also possible that the tales pertaining to women were shaped by critiques of eighteenth-century female rulers, namely, Elizabeth I (1742-1762) and Catherine II (1762-1796). Both figures share several features with the

\(^{17}\) See, for example, RGB OR f. 17 Sobranie E. V. Barsova no. 617; RGB OR f. 98 Sobranie Egorov no. 892; RGB OR f. 98 Sobranie Egorov no. 894; RNB OR Sobranie Tikhomirova 338.
women in the "History," including court intrigues, illicit love affairs, controlling men, conducting foreign policy and successfully plotting to deny male members of the dynasty the throne. Both Elizabeth and Catherine also had major connections with and were leading patrons of Nikon’s New Jerusalem Monastery. The third factor was the glaring examples of female treachery in the nineteenth century, including the highly publicized actions of female radicals, revolutionaries and terrorists, such as Vera Figner and Sophia Perovskaia, involved in secret plots leading to the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881. These contemporary figures thus served to further reinforce the ideas of female fallibility, a trait allegedly traceable from biblical times to the nineteenth century. In other words, the women in the “History” are treated as incorrigible. Regardless of historical conditions and social positions, they retain the same negative features.

Women are essential to the formulation of the “History” and the assault on Nikon’s character. While the earlier tales attempted to denigrate Nikon by advancing charges of misogyny, including his alleged physical abuse and rape, the opposite is true of the “History.”18 In this text, Nikon’s relationships with females are far from abusive. On the contrary, two women, Nikon’s wife Praskoviia, later the “nun Nataliia” and sister of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, Grand Dutchess Tatiana Mikhailovna, are instigators and willing participants in his alleged schemes. These female characters are key explanatory factors in the narrative. They are the enabling forces behind Nikon’s promotion through the ranks of the clergy, his reform of church books and customs, the foundation of the New Jerusalem Monastery, and in the Patriarch’s alleged attempts to escape the Tsar’s punishment and to establish a new patriarchate in Kiev.

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Nikon’s power is both advanced and limited by women. Although Nikon allegedly conceived the Machiavellian plan to use women in his struggle for power, he becomes increasingly dependent on them. In the “History,” he repeatedly seeks out his wife’s and Tatiana Mikhailovna’s council. The Patriarch treats Tatiana’s word as law and refuses to act without her sanction. The women’s exit from the narrative signals the decline of Nikon’s potential. Deprived of female support, he is soon removed from power.

The “History’s” account of Nikon’s relationships with women adds completely new, and often contradictory, facets to the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth tales. The Patriarch’s contacts with women present him as indecisive and dependent, not strong-willed and all-powerful. Without women, he becomes increasingly desperate and even helpless. While Nikon’s female relationships provide opportunities to accuse him of deception, adultery and the desecration of holy spaces, they also minimize larger, more significant, charges against him. The women, not the Patriarch, receive the ultimate blame for what the earlier Old Believer accounts presented as some of Nikon’s worst transgressions, i.e., the implementation of the “Nikonian reforms” and attempts to deceive and wrestle power from the Tsar. By relieving the Patriarch from culpability, the “History” presents him as a somewhat less formidable character than earlier Old Believer tales.

Official policies of Russification imposed in the second half of the nineteenth century are also relevant to the “History’s” discussion of foreigners. Designed largely in response to perceived threats emanating from non-assimilated minorities, policies of

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18 See the relevant passages in “Story About the Birth, Education, Life and Death of Nikon, the Former Patriarch” in A. K. Borozdin, Protopop Avvakum: ocherk iz istorii umstvennoi zhizni russkogo obshchestva v XVII veke (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1900), 161, 167.
Russification sought to forcibly impose Russian identity on “unyielding minorities.”

Russification applied in particular to Poles, Ukrainians and Jews. Similarly, the “History” treats representatives of the same ethnic groups as troublemakers ready to aid and abet an equally troublesome Nikon.

The distinctly negative treatments of non-Russians in the “History” are a function of both traditional historical associations and contemporary circumstances. In the narrative, Nikon is associated with ethnic minorities and foreigners, including Tatars, Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews, ethnic groups traditionally recognized as threats to the stability of the Russian state and church. Of those Tatars in particular are treated as quintessential villains who destroyed the Russian state, subjected its people and corrupted its customs. Even more telling are the immediate circumstances relevant at the time of the tale’s creation. For instance Nikon’s association with Poles can be placed in the context of the Polish Uprising of 1863-1864. Nineteenth-century Russian audiences would immediately discern the negative connotations implicit in Nikon’s consorting with Poles who were also associated with militant Roman Catholicism. The message would be especially strong among Russian peasants who served as conscripts in the tsarist army and who were sent to repress the rebellion. Given the sympathy with the Polish cause among more educated segments of Russian society, this message appears to be intended for the masses.

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19 It is noteworthy that in the “History” Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich is also dependent on women. He repeatedly seeks both Nataliia’s and Tatiana’s advice on key decisions, including who to name Patriarch and whether or not the reform of church texts and rituals is warranted.

20 In 1793 the third and final partition of Poland put the eastern part of the country, including Warsaw under Russian control. After an initial period of adjustment, Polish subjects became increasingly engaged in anti-Russian rebellions. Not a decade passed without significant insurgency. The rebellion of 1863-1864 was among the most well organized. Its suppression was also one of the bloodiest.
While not as developed as Nikon's female relationships, associations with ethnic minorities were brought up to appeal to Russian xenophobia. The Patriarch's contacts with stereotypical Orientals associate him with pagan beliefs, sorcerers and "evil spirits. Connections with Poles and Ukrainians provide the context for one of the most significant new images of Nikon, the Patriarch as an armed and desperate outlaw, abetting Russia's external enemies. Finally, the Patriarch's contacts with Jews in the governmental bureaucracy and charges of Jewish conspiracies appealed to popular anti-Semitism which became particularly virulent after the assassination of Alexander II in 1881 and the specious "Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

The Artistic Images

The artistic images found in the "History" belong to the genre of hand-painted folk images [risovannye lubki]. They are related to other artistic genres, including folk prints [lubki] decorative folk art on utilitarian objects and hand-painted book illuminations. The technique of the hand-painted lubok combined pencil or ink sketch with application of liquid tempera. In contrast to mass produced lubki, the hand-painted ones were executed by folk artists from start to finish, thus giving every exemplar a unique appearance. The creators of hand painted lubki drew inspiration from the ancient Russian traditions of icon painting and book decorating. The practice of hand-painted lubki was not as widespread as the production of printed lubki. Old Believer settlements in the Russian north - Karelia, Vologda region and the valley of the Northern Dvina River - were the major centers of risovannye lubki.

Initially, the risovannye lubki were designed as ideological tools to popularize the Old Belief, a task which could not be fulfilled by the simple reproduction of texts. The
content of original hand-painted lubkii was unambiguously religious and spiritual. In order to visualize religious teachings Old Believers consciously sought appropriate artistic forms. They found them in lubki, an artistic genre which combined both pictorial and written texts and which was highly adept in treating traditional folk themes, for example, virtues, such as piety, and communal living, or punishments for excessive greed, theft, gossip, and adultery. The themes of hand-painted lubki included the Russian past, portraits of Old Believer leaders, depictions of Old Believer monasteries, biblical illustrations and illustrations for tales and fables from Old Believer anthologies.

Like most folk images, hand-painted lubki remain anonymous with certain exceptions. Among the most respected and recognized artists working in this genre was a family of Volodga peasants. The Kalikins were Old Believers belonging to the Filippovsky concord. The family patriarch, Anton Kalikin (b.1854) was a colorful personality. In the 1870s and 1880s, he served as a conscript in the Russian army. Together with his common law wife Afim'ia, he had five children: Fedor (b.1885), Ivan (b.1890), Lidiia (b.1892), Grigorii (b.1893), and Sophia (b.1895). All the children became artists and book copiers at a very early age. Among Kalikin’s most celebrated

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22 Itkina, 5-11.
23 Ibid, 11-12.
24 The Filippovtsy concord of Old Believers “traced their roots to the Pomortsy concord but occupied more radical places on the spectrum of Old Believer ideology.” The primary difference between the two was that the Filippovtsy, continued to associate the state with the Antichrist. This division emerged in the Vyg community in the early nineteenth century. As priestless Old Believers, the Filippovtsy rejected the sacrament of marriage. While the Filippovtsy began to reintegrate with the Pomortsy towards the end of the nineteenth century “they did, however, serve as the guardians of radical priestless views by continuing to reject the influence both the state and the dominant church.” Robson, 36-37. This radicalism explains why A. Kalikin although unmarried fathered five children.
25 Amosov, 132.
26 Fedor Kalikin eventually became an important collector of ancient manuscripts. See Bubnov, 319. Sophia’s earliest works were produced at the age of ten. She often worked with her elder brother Grigorii. Many of their works became part of the collection of lubki held at the State Historical Museum, Moscow. See Itkina, 22.
works are the “History of the Fathers and Martyrs of Solovki” and the “History About Nikon” The workshop founded by A. Kalikin operated until the 1920s.

In 1896, Anton Kalikin was indicted for counterfeiting ancient icons and producing illegal (i.e., Old Believer) images, a charge implying subversion of official religious authority. The case never went to trial because Kalikin signed an affidavit promising to halt his illegal activities. However, after a short hiatus, Kalikin returned to his old ways. In the course of a second investigation, police discovered that it was Kalikin’s sons who were engaged in counterfeiting icons. However, Kalikin was not totally innocent. He admitted to illegally copying Old Believer literature, an activity allegedly sponsored by Moscow Old Believer merchants.

The artistic images presented in the “History” are part of a relatively new type of Old Believer artistic polemic that flourished in the second half of the eighteenth and the long nineteenth centuries. I call this genre the “art of reform.” It consists of illustrated manuscripts and other visual imagery including lubki and paintings. These works defended and promoted the “ancient faith” via visual imagery delineating the differences between the traditional and Nikonian signs and symbols of the faith, rituals, and church

27 Amosov, 136.
28 Ibid, 137.
30 See Itkina, 11-12. Seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century Old Believer manuscripts were rarely illustrated. Consultations with N. Bubnov (BAN) and V. Budaragarin (IRLI) and my own surveys of the primary collections of Old Believer manuscripts, namely held in GRB OR, RGB OR, BAN, MGU OR and IRLI confirm this.

Avvakum’s illustration in the “Pustozerskii sbornik” which features images of Patriarchs Nikon, Josif, Makaril and Paisius is the most noteworthy exception. This original is preserved as IRLI Drevlekhranilishche op. 24 no. 43, 1-2. This image was later copied by nineteenth-century Old Believer artists. See, for example, BAN Sobr. Druzhchina 245 l. 3. See N. S. Demkova et al., Pustozerskii sbornik: avtografy sochinenii Avvakuma i Epifania (Leningrad: “Nauka,” 1975) 150-153. The original image is published as l. 2. V. Budaragarin “Risunki protopopa Avvakuma i inoka Epifania” in Risunki pismatelei. Sbornik nauchnykh statei (St. Petersburg: Gumanitarnoe agentstvo Akademicheskii proekt, 2000), 126-136. Here the image is published on page 129. I thank V. Budaragin for the insightful comments on Avvakum’s and other Old Believer artists’ images of Nikon that he shared with me in the fall of 2001.
architecture. Their purposes were to create solidarity among the Old Believers and to indoctrinate new converts. This genre was based on the notion that words alone could not express many of the most significant elements of the ancient faith. This attitude is expressed in the often-repeated instruction for viewers to “look, because it is impossible to describe in more detail.”

The art of reform took two approaches. The first depicted the various aspects of the traditional (pre-Nikonian) and “new” (post-Nikonian) faiths in basic opposition to each other. In illustrated manuscripts, individual features of the opposing confessions were presented in kind of visual glossary, so that they could be compared, contrasted, and differentiated from their counterparts. In the case of lubki and paintings, various aspects of the post-Nikonian Orthodoxy were combined and placed in the opposition to their Old Believer counterparts. While clearly defining the faiths against each other symbolically, these works did not necessarily attempt to degrade the Nikonian branch of Orthodoxy.

The second approach was part of more complex pictorial histories depicting the imposition of the Nikonian church reforms. It was often included in illustrated Old Believer versions of the “Apocalypse” and the “Tale About the Antichrist.” These works usually placed the reforms in the context of Christian eschatology and compared them with biblical events such as the “Fall of Man.” This type of imagery is much more

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31 RGB OR f. 17 No. 762.2, l. 2-3; RGB OR f. 17 No. 795, l 12ob-3.
32 See, for example, BAN Sobranie Druzhinina 37, l. 9ob and BAN Sobranie Arkheologicheskogo Instituta 75.
33 BAN 21.11.5, especially l. 424-463; BAN Sobranie Druzhinina 37; BAN Sobranie Druzhinina 957; IRLI Drevlekhranitelishche Sobranii Peretza no. 625, l. 20ob-27.
34 RGB OR f. 17 E. V. Barsova no. 617; RGB OR f. 98 Sobranie Egorov no. 892; RGB OR f. 98 Sobranie Egorov no. 894; and RNB OR Sobranie Tikhomirovna. 338 all place the Nikonian reforms in larger eschatological contexts including the “fall of man.” These images may be an attempt to counter the Novaja Skrizhal’ of 1803.
35 RGB OR f. 17 Sobranie E. V. Barsova no. 654.
complex than the first and was usually adversarial in nature. In addition to depicting the traditional and new signs and symbols in opposition, these works included new material (signs and symbols) which confirmed the holiness of the traditional faith and demonized the Nikonian. For example, the inclusion of divine blessing, denoted by “the hand of God” or the sun, confirmed Old Believer righteousness, while association with fire, blood, snakes or beasts served to condemn Nikon and his followers.36

The illustrated versions of the “History” represent a unique aspect of the art of visual catechesis. Rather than locating the signs and symbols of the Old Belief in terms of universal eschatology, they placed them in the discrete context of the Russian experience. Many are personalized by direct association directly with Nikon. Unlike the other Old Believer adversarial artistic polemics based on metaphysical conflict, many of the images included in the “History” depicted human actions. Men, not God, reject the Nikonian reforms. While Nikon vigorously abuses and/or destroys the traditional signs of the faith, pious Russians see through and actively repudiate his heterodoxy.

The artistic images presented in the “History” are more than mere illustrations. They reflect and shape the contents of the written tales about Nikon. The pictorial images, like the narrative text, draw on a variety of sources and strategies both traditional and new, elite and popular. Analysis of Old Believer artistic images demonstrates that they complement and often transform the content of the written texts. The visual materials greatly enhance the accessibility of the earlier written texts by clarifying concepts not readily explainable in words alone. In some cases, the non-verbal data contradict the written word.

36 See, for example, RNB OR Sobranie Tikhmirova no. 338, l. 14.
Artistic images add crucial information to the written texts. These include new symbols of the faith, such as the "open book" and symbols of Nikon’s position as Patriarch. The example of the patriarchal mitra is especially noteworthy. This symbol was completely omitted from earlier Old Believer tales. While mentioned only once in the written text, it appears repeatedly in the pictures depicting Nikon in the acts of desecration, apostasy and persecution of dissenting clerics. On one level, the visual links between the mitra, as a sign of patriarchal authority, and Nikon’s actions clearly suggest abuse of power.

In the “History” art highlights human and physical qualities and expressions not described in the written texts. The images create visual stereotypes of ethnic minorities and foreigners, including Tatars and Ukrainians as well as traditional and nontraditional “Russians,” including ordinary folk. The depiction of specific gestures and postures, such as pointing, kneeling, holding arms folded or open, elucidate human reactions to Nikon’s actions omitted from the text. The artwork also introduces new types of signifiers related to the social positions of those depicted. These include bare feet (signifying peasant/poverty) and long beards (signifying piety and/or wisdom of Old Believers).

The combination of different styles of painting in a single image further heightens these distinctions. While the artist(s) often painted Nikon and his associates as caricatures, they usually employed strategies of icon painting to depict Nikon’s opponents. Detailed treatments of the Old Believers’ faces, especially long beards and folds in clothing, as well as the conventions used to denote multitudes of people make adherents to the Old Belief appear like the saints depicted on traditional icons. 37 This

37 Robson detects the same practice in later depictions of Old Believers both historical and modern, 88-90.
method intensified the meanings of the textual images by connecting them with visual signs relevant to the holy past and the world of the peasants.

Analysis of the “History’s” Written and Artistic Texts

Nikon’s Youth

The “History” establishes Nikon’s character and the motivations behind his future actions in his youth. Unlike the previous Old Believer treatment of Nikon’s early life, which presented him in sympathetic terms, this version begins with a largely negative set of images and stereotypes. The unknown author manipulated Shusherin’s work and introduced fantastic new tales “from below.” The purpose of this new version is to show that, while Nikon had several inherently negative traits, his most serious flaws were shaped by others. Pagans, non-Russian minorities and foreigners instilled Nikon with an unquenchable thirst for wealth and power. A woman fuels his lust, temper, and attempts to deceive.

The illustrations that accompany the “history’s account of Nikon’s youth are key to formulation of stereotypes essential to the rest of the story. They visually separate Russian from pagan/non-Russian. The artwork also designates peasants in terms of dress and dwelling and thus provides points against which Nikon’s later extravagance may be judged. Moreover, these images introduce body language and physical postures that denote peoples’ rejection of Nikon.

The “History” begins by noting that Nikon’s parents, Mina and Mariamia, were poor peasants from the Nizhny Novgorod region and that his mother “suffered during his birth” because of his “unusually large size.” Soon after the birth, a Mordovian shaman came to the house. “He was a pagan and a sorcerer.” The shaman, an old friend of the
boy's parents, wished to see the newborn in order to predict his future. Shown the infant, the shaman started to chant a spell in Mordovian. Then, he "looked at the child and started trembling, kneeled and uttered, 'you are neither tsar nor anti-tsar; you are neither poor nor rich; you are building neither city nor monastery. The tsar, the kings, the princes and the boyars will both pray for him and damn him. He will make the land where he was born and will be buried very famous.'" Then, the shaman took a bead from his golden necklace and put it under the baby's covers and said, "Let the gold pave the road which is intended for you by the great spirit." Hearing this speech the parents became very embarrassed. The child's father said to the shaman, "we are sinners and do not have any grace and we live in poverty. Why do you proclaim such strange fortunes for our child?" The parents did not believe the prediction and called a priest, baptized the child and called him Nikita.\(^{38}\)

The image "Shaman Predicts Nikon's Future" illustrates the highpoint of the shaman's visit. Nikon's mother sits on a bed holding the infant. Kneeling before the baby, the shaman presents him with a gold bead. Nikon's father stands upright behind the shaman. His hands crossed over his chest in disbelief and rejection of the prophecy.\(^{39}\)

This image establishes Nikon's humble origins while simultaneous defining peasant, Russian and pagan/non-Russian. The wooden interior of the home is austere. Nikon's parents, both in traditional dress, are clearly denoted as peasants. His father wears a long shirt tied at the waist and trousers. He wears a full beard. Nikon's mother wears a shawl over her head. The shaman looks different. He is Eastern, not Russian. He is dressed in a skullcap usually associated with the Muslim faith. Instead of a beard, he

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\(^{38}\) GRB OR f. 17 no. 140, 2-3ob.
\(^{39}\) Ibid, 4.

344
has a long mustache symbolizing his “oriental” connections. The shaman’s posture is also noteworthy. Placing himself between the father and the rest of the family, he appears as an outsider intruding into the family space. Moreover, he is the only human figure to prostrate himself before Nikon.

The author continued to twist Shusherin’s account of Nikon’s youth by developing fictitious details which stress the boy’s supposed intransigence and promiscuity. The tale goes on to describe how, after several years, Nikon’s mother died and his father took a new wife. Nikita’s stepmother disliked him “because he was an honery boy.” Zina, a paternal relative, raised Nikita and taught him to read and write. Nikita became “a very powerful young man.” His education allowed him to enter the service of the parish priest. He lived with the priest and his family and began to participate in church services. All went well until “the priest saw Nikita in a very indecent situation with his daughter Praskovia.” The priest forbade Nikita to see the girl. Nikita, who “had a bad temper and did not tolerate anything that contradicted his plans,” left the priest’s home and went to the Makarii Zheltovosskii Monastery. There, the bishop recognized the young man’s literacy and strong voice and allowed him to participate in the services. With time, Nikita joined the clergy. 40

The tale of Nikita’s youth concluded with the retelling a story, first related by Shusherin and subsequently transformed in the “Story About Nikon,” concerning a Tatar sorcerer’s prediction about Nikon’s future. Once Nikita had to go to another monastery with two clergymen and they spent the night with a Tatar sorcerer “similar to the above-mentioned shaman.” He could also predict the future using his “evil and devilish book”

40 Ibid, 5-5ob. According to Shusherin, 18-19, Nikon’s stepmother abused him severely. She beat him until he bled and attempted to burn him to death in the hearth.
and cudgel. The Tatar predicted that Nikita would be a “great lord.” Although Nikita did not believe the Tatar, he thought about the prediction and “it took root in his stubborn character.”

While the text of this tale is basically the same as the earlier Old Believer version, the accompanying image, “The Tatar Predicts Nikon’s Future” contains crucial new elements. The Tatar, wearing garments and a skullcap like the one worn by the Mordovian shaman, sits on a stool. He holds an open book in his left hand and the cudgel in his right hand. Although he wears a beard, his dress and facial features denote his oriental origin. Nikon, hands on his hips, stands in front of two men. All three are dressed as monks and face the Tatar. Among the three Russians only Nikon has a beard. The authority and wisdom of the beardless monks appear to be in question. At the very least, they are tricked into participating in a highly suspect ceremony. At worst, their status as holy men is subverted.

In addition to graphically reinforcing the concept of the stereotypical “other,” the picture establishes another category of opposition essential to Nikon’s image. The depiction of the pagan Tatar holding an open book is significant in this regard. In this context, the book symbolizes a different and competing wisdom, authority, and power. It, like the Tatar who employs it, is foreign and pagan. This use of the book stands in stark contrast with later illustrations which feature the book as the “word of God.” Nikon’s body language suggests that he ponders, rather than rejects, the Tatar’s prediction and the authority of the “evil and devilish book.” Unlike the earlier depiction of his father, who rejected pagan prophecies, Nikon stands as if considering the Tatar’s words.

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41 Ibid, 6.
42 Ibid, 6 ob.
The author constructed another fiction around several elements of Shusherin’s account. It shows that Nikon consciously set out to fulfil the Tatar’s predictions. After the death of his father, Nikita left the monastery, returned home, married Praskovia and found a position as a priest. The marriage produced three children. All died shortly after birth. Nikita secretly entertained the hope sown by the Mordovian shaman’s and Tatar sorcerer’s predictions. “Deep seated self-love, pride, lust for power and desire for any kind of reform reigned in Nikita’s heart. He had deep disdain for everything already existing.” He asked himself how he could achieve the power. Should he quit the church and glorify himself as a soldier? Or, should he join the monastery, take an oath of celibacy, and advance through the church hierarchy? He chose the latter option because it appeared to be the most promising and easily obtainable. 43

Nikita’s choice is significant, but predetermined. Although his physical qualities suited soldiering, his disrespect for authority excluded that career. By providing the military option, the author suggests that Nikon chose to use the Church, to disrupt the established order, rather than defend Russia against foreigners. It follows that all of Nikon’s subsequent actions as a member of the clergy were based not on pious intentions, but upon a selfish desire to fulfill the prophecies made by pagans.

Next, Nikon drew his wife into the deceitful plot to use the church to gain power. Although Praskovia begged him to forfeit this ambitious scheme and pleaded with him not to leave her without any means of existence, Nikita announced his decision as final. He asked his wife to become a nun and promised to give her the bigger part of the gold that he acquired while being a priest and from the sale of their property. With this money, she could appear rich and famous. By concealing her true origins, she could become

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43 Ibid, 7-8. The text notes that Nikon learned about the shaman’s predictions from his father.
acquainted with the boyars’ wives and daughters and advance Nikon’s career. Bidding farewell, Nikita told Praskovia that they separated “in order to acquire glory and honor.” Nikita took the tonsure, changed his name to “Nikon” and “posed as a wandering monk.” Thus, disguised husband and wife set out to bring the predictions about Nikita to fruition.44

Nikon’s Early Career

The account of Nikon’s early career directly contradicted Shusherin’s narrative beginning with his life at the Solovetskii Monastery’s Anzerskii skit [hermitage]. This new rendition of Nikon’s sojourn at the skit clarified Eleazar Anzerskii’s antipathy toward the future Patriarch and provided important new contexts for the traditional tale concerning the vision of a snake around the Nikon’s neck. The narrative also stressed Nikon’s greed and insubordination and provided the first veiled attack on his efforts to create a “New Jerusalem” in Russia. Moreover, the “History” telescoped and completely reinterpreted two subsequent events from Shusherin’s work into a single extremely effective display of Nikon’s treachery.

The “History” explains that soon after Nikon joined the skit, he tried to persuade Eleazar to build a new church and “Calvary Mountain” and asked Eleazar to go with him to Moscow to collect funds for the new church. However, “Nikon’s true desire was to see his former wife and to consult with her about his plan to gain power.” Eleazar, “who did not know about Nikon’s deceitful plan,” agreed to accompany Nikon. In Moscow, “Nikon often parted with Eleazar and met secretly with his wife Praskovia, now known as ‘nun Natalia.’” In any case Nikon and Eleazar collected 500 rubles and returned to the

44 Ibid, 80b-9. According to Shusherin, 23, Nikon’s wife decided to enter the nunnery on her own

348
monastery. Shortly thereafter Nikon began to concern himself with the financial management of the *skit*. The "History's" narrator then observed:

he [Nikon] started to change the church services and began to come into conflict with the older clergy. That made Eleazar very wary. During the liturgy, in which Nikon took part, Eleazar saw a snake around his neck. The snake was very big and wrapped itself around Nikon in many circles. Eleazar was appalled and told the other monks 'what kind of insurgent and troublemaker has Russia produced? This troublemaker will be the source of many trials and tribulations.' He added, 'if somebody would kill this trouble making monk I would pray to God for him.'

Sensing the animosity toward him, Nikon soon left for the Kozheozerskii Monastery.45

By supplying a new, alternative, version of Nikon's relationship with Eleazar the author gave additional power and meaning to the traditional tale about Eleazar's vision. Although Eleazar remains unaware of several facets of Nikon's scheme, including his wife's role and his intention to create a "New Jerusalem" (denoted by his desire to build a "Calvary Mountain"), he eventually "sees through" the most important aspect Nikon's artifice. By stating that Nikon "started to change the church services," the author provided the direct cause of Eleazar's revelation and completes the textual evolution of the tale.

The story is accompanied by a painting entitled "Eleazar Sees a Terrible Snake on Nikon's Neck." This is not an image of what Eleazar saw, but rather a depiction of the event as seen by an outside observer. Nikon with a his neck and shoulders, stands before an open book and an icon of "Christ the Pankrator." He is dressed as a monk. To his right, separated by a column, stands a large group of monks with Eleazar is at the head.

45 Ibid, 106b-110b. According to Shusherin, Eleazar decided to build a new stone church. He and Nikon went to Moscow and collected 500 rubles. However, after two years, the construction had still not begun. Nikon, afraid that brigands may come and steal the money and kill the brothers, suggested the money be taken to the Solovetskii Monastery for safekeeping. Eleazar strongly disagreed with this advice and grew angry. Nikon decided to leave rather than exacerbate the situation further. 26-7
Pointing to Nikon, Eleazar turns to the others and makes his prediction. The monks next to him listen intently.  

The snake, an archetypal symbol of evil and deception signifies that Nikon is the “person marked by God.” The composition of the image adds even deeper meaning as Nikon stands in front of the book, symbolizing the “word of God,” and the icon of “Christ the Pankrator.” Here, the snake takes on additional significance by transforming what would otherwise be considered an act of piety into an act of subversion. It appears as a visible sign of Christ’s judgment against Nikon and the “changes in the church services.” The snake around Nikon’s neck is the antithesis of Christ’s halo. Thus, rather than appearing as a reflection of Christ, Nikon’s position facing the icon presents him as Christ’s mirror opposite, the Antichrist.  

This artwork displays a strong sense of rejection of Nikon not evident in the written text. Placed outside the community of monks, Nikon is completely isolated. He stands as a single figure, while the rest of the monks form a united opposition. The column that divides the scene heightens his physical separation. Long beards on Eleazar and his brethren signify the authority and wisdom of the monks’ rebuff of Nikon.  

Although both the text of the tale and the picture’s caption only mention that Eleazar saw the terrifying snake, the image tells a different story. It suggests that all present observed the vision and heard Eleazar’s declarations. Moreover, the artist, by employing a strategy used by icon painters to denote multitudes of people, implies that there were many more witnesses than actually would have been present at the Anzerskii

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46 Ibid, 12.  
47 The claim that Nikon stands in front of an image of “Christ the Pankrator” is confirmed by comparing this illustration with others appearing later in the manuscript. See l. 28 and l. 52. This iconography is also evident in a later image depicting Nikon’s “iconoclasm.” In this image, Nikon is again
hermitage. This exaggeration reinforces the immediate mass rejection of Nikon’s innovations.

The Old Believer tale of Nikon’s voyage from Solovkii to the Kózheozerskii Monastery contradicts accounts by Shusherin, Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, and Nikon himself. According to the Old Believer text, Nikon asked a fishing party about to sail for the mouth of Onega if he could travel with them. Although, “the fisherman did not want him to because he could not keep quiet and liked to be in charge,” they finally agreed to take him on the conditions that he keep silent and obedient. When they reached the designated place, they boarded a smaller boat and sailed down the river. The company camped, fished, and salted the catch. When it was time to load the fish for the return home, Nikon suggested that they celebrate the good catch by drinking beer. At Nikon’s insistence, all the fisherman got very drunk. At nightfall, when the others were asleep, Nikon “took both boats and left his brothers without any pity on an uninhabited island. They were defenseless and did not suspect Nikon’s ill intentions. Nikon was able to do all this because he was so strong. What ordinarily took three or four men, he could do by himself. He took all the fish and all the boats. The first to eat, and second to deprive his pursuers of any means of catching up with him. So the fishermen were left without food and means of transportation.” Meanwhile, Nikon reached the Monastery. 48

This story is more than a hostile fabrication accusing Nikon of theft, gluttony and malice. It replaced one of the most dramatic and significant events in Nikon’s early life - his shipwreck on Kii Island (1639). By omitting the shipwreck, and thus circumstance

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48 l3-14ob.

presented opposite Christ. He stands upright in full patriarchal regalia while the icon of “Christ the Pankrator” that he has flung to the ground is upside down and about to be destroyed. See I. 52.
behind Nikon’s creation of the Cross Monastery, the “History” effectively negates the primary literary and material cultural evidence for Nikon’s respect for Christ’s Cross.  

Nikon’s Rise Through the Church Hierarchy

The “History” answered the question how Nikon “got acquainted with... Aleksei Mikhailovich” by introducing a fictitious conspiracy hatched by Nikon’s wife, the nun “Natalia and Tatiana Mikhailovna, the Tsar’s sister. Natalia used “her undying craft and treachery” to frequent the Tsar’s court. She befriended the Tsaritsa [empress] and Tsarevna [princess]. She disclosed her secret to Tatiana Mikhailovna, telling her about “Nikon’s courage and his alleged knowledge and the predictions about him.” Natalia became Tatiana’s “secret friend” and she “started to use to the Tsarevna to fulfill her intentions.” After conducting a series of secret rendezvous with Nikon, at which they discussed their “secret evil intentions,” Natalia revealed Nikon’s intentions to the Tsarevna. “Nikon was aware of this and encouraged it. They all plotted to promote Nikon.”

As the tales unfolds, Natalia and Tatiana frequently mentioned Nikon to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and his wife Mariia Il’inichna. The two women describe him as “courageous, charismatic, solemn, wise, stately, organized person with a strong voice and unusually keen knowledge of books and all matters.” Thus, “they planted the seeds of love into the souls of the young Tsar and Tsaritsa.” The royal couple “began to love the

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49 The first story concerned Nikon’s shipwreck on Kii Island. It included Nikon’s erection of a cross, his promise to build the Kii Monastery and his suffering from hunger (he spent ten days without food). The second discussed Nikon’s life at the Kozheozerskii Monastery. It explained that, although Metropolitan Afonii of Novgorod made him hegumen of the monastery, Nikon “often caught fish for the brothers and brought them to the dinning hall himself.” Shusherin, 27-30.

50 GRB OR f. 17 no. 140, I. 16-17. The claim that it is “impossible to explain the way in which he got acquainted with great lord Aleksei Mikhailovich” first appeared in the “Story About Nikon.” See A. K. Borozdin, Protopop Avvakum: ocherk iz istorii umstvennoi zhizni russkogo obshechestva v XVII veke. (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1900), 32.
preying wolf as if he were a meek lamb.” Later, Natalia and Tatiana arranged for Nikon to conduct a service in Uspenskii Cathedral in the presence of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich.

“The young heart of the Tsar, already tricked by Nikon’s wife and his sister, the Tsarevna, was charmed by Nikon’s appearance, his noble stance, his stateliness, and powerful voice. Thus, they made the young Tsar Nikon’s admirer.” Aleksei Mikhailovich asked Patriarch Iosif to make Nikon the archbishop [sic] of the Novy Spasskii Monastery. When Afonii, the Metropolitan of Novgorod, retired, Nikon, who was “rushing to get the position of Novgorod,” replaced him. “As usual,” concluded the author, “the omnipotent evil enemy of humanity [Satan] tempts the hearts of wise, all-powerful and kind people through the evil flattery of the woman.”

The author further refined the tales originating in the “Life of Korniliii” to explain Nikon’s actions as Metropolitan of Novgorod. The new account of Nikon’s encounter with Afonii is less dramatic than the one presented in previous versions. It explained that, “Upon his elevation, Nikon demanded to go to his predecessor Afonii’s cell and asked for his blessing. Afonii, who was blind, asked ‘who are you and where did you come from?’ ‘I am Nikon, Metropolitan of Novgorod,’ said Nikon. Afonii sighed, ‘Oh the time has come that even Nikon’s Metropolitan’ and added ‘God have mercy.’ Afonii was already near death and “asked his friends not to be buried by Nikon, but by a different archbishop because Nikon was the enemy of God.” Thus, “Nikon assumed the position of metropolitan through an oversight of God.”

By omitting earlier references to Afonii’s special status as an exceptionally holy man, the “History” diminishes the former Metropolitan’s significance. Stripped of

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51 GRB OR f. 17 no. 140, 1-20.
52 Ibid, 20ob-21ob.
Afonii’s prediction, that Nikon “would cause great damage to the Orthodox people....
This is because the Lord’s will has left us,” the story looses much of its previous impact.
Rather than reemphasizing the notion that Nikon’s elevation was an act of divine
punishment, it stresses the idea that it was a case of poor judgment.53

The absence of an illustration for this tale is significant. It accentuates the
important role played by visual elements and signs in the transformation of the written
word into artist texts. Unlike the other tales from the “Life of Kornilii” which received
visual treatments, this one lacks vision and reference to signs, such as the snake and
symbols of the faith. Afonii’s blindness precluded both. This case suggests that, as far as
Nikon and the symbols of the “Nikonian” reforms were concerned, “seeing” is believing.

The “History” continued to depart from the earlier Old Believer narratives by
changing Kornilii’s relationship to Nikon. Here, he is Nikon’s servant, not his friend.
Kornilii “described how once, while serving Nikon, they had a visit from Deacon Pimen.
Pimen told Kornilii ‘here is Metropolitan Nikon. He is Antichrist.’ Kornilii responded
‘you are possessed’ and then they went to the church and saw how Nikon blessed the
people with three fingers, not as previous apostles did. The Metropolitan blessed with a
strange sign where his fingers were all spread out. Kornilii was appalled by this unusual
sight and quit Nikon’s service.”54

By making Kornilii Nikon’s servant, the author removed some of the tensions
found in the earlier texts. Rather than freely seeking Nikon’s company, Kornilii is bound
to him in service. More importantly, the author refrained from mentioning that Kornilii
forgot Afonii’s warnings about Nikon and that he willingly accepted Nikon’s blessing.

53 This omission is significant. It shows how the tales continued to change after passing of the
“eschatological mood.”
Although the earlier contradictions in the text(s) suggesting that Nikon was an admirable person were erased, the question of why Kornili did not realize that the Patriarch blessed in an unusual manner remained unanswered. This problem becomes even more pressing when the text of this tale is compared with its accompanying illustration.

The illustration titled “They See Nikon’s Unusual Blessing” depicts the scene viewed by Kornili. Nikon stands elevated on an amvon. He wears his black klobuk with cherub and omofor with a four-ended cross. His fingers are obviously “all spread out” as he makes a three-fingered blessing with his right hand. To his extreme right, separated by a column, stands a multitude of people in peasant dress. 55

This image is at odds with the written text. In the picture, physical separation, again denoted by a column, signifies the common mans’ distance from and rejection of Nikon. Moreover, the folk recognize that Nikon does not bless in the traditional manner. They do not bow or hold out open arms as if receiving a legitimate blessing. Rather, they stand upright with their arms folded, as if in protest. There is also discussion in the ranks. Therefore, although the written text suggests that Nikon’s “unusual blessing” was not apparent to some monks, the artistic image shows that it was both recognized and rejected by the common folk. The illustration thus suggests conflict. Folk wisdom is implied to be superior to clerical judgement.

The artist could not, without including additional signs (e.g., a snake), depict the people receiving Nikon’s “unusual” blessing as if it were normal. If he did, it would appear that the “Nikonian” blessing was sanctioned and accepted. Such an image would also contradict illustrations depicting human hands making traditional and “reformed”

54 Ibid, 22ob.
55 Ibid, 23.
blessings presented at the conclusion of the book. Instead, the artist reinforced the “foreign” nature of the blessing by combining it with the (completely anachronistic) image of a “Latin cross” on Nikon’s vestment. Although inconsistent with details of the text, the image affirms the primacy of the traditional blessing. Thus, consistent artistic depiction of signs of the faith superceded concern for the content of the tale.

Nikon’s depiction wearing a black klobuk with a cherub is significant for several reasons. First, like the association with the Latin cross, the klobuk is completely anachronistic. Only Russian patriarchs wore the klobuk with cherub and at this stage of his career, Nikon was not yet Patriarch.

The account of Nikon’s rise through the hierarchy concludes with two attempts to downplay the most heralded event of Nikon’s tenure as Metropolitan of Novgorod – his retrieval of St. Metropolitan Philip’s relics from the Solovetskii Monastery. The first recapped Nikon’s encounter with Arsenii the Greek from the “Story About Nikon.” The tale describes Arsenii’s imprisonment in the monastery for “heresies” and his prediction that then Metropolitan Nikon will become “Patriarch.” Nikon, in turn, promises to release the captive if his prediction comes true. After noting that Patriarch Iosif had died while Nikon was at Solovkii, the author returns to the subtext of female deceit to explain how Nikon became Patriarch.

Faced with the decision of choosing a new patriarch, Aleksei Mikhailovich allegedly consulted his sister Tatiana Mikhailovna. “He always considered her to be very wise and never commenced any new endeavor without her advice.” The Tsarevna told the Tsar to consult nun Natalia because she had “the gift of prediction.” The Tsar went to the

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56 Ibid, 135 ob-137.
57 Ibid, 24-24ob.
“false servant of God Natalia” and said, “You are a prophetess and a great laborer of God. The Holy Spirit will reveal to you who should be our patriarch.” Natalia responded that she needed to pray to God. “If He graces me, perhaps, I can give the name of the future patriarch of Russia. In this way, he will be chosen by God.” She fell before an icon and started to utter something incoherent. Then, she stood up, “as if aspired for above,” and exclaimed, “a great laborer of God is coming from the northern parts. He walks through woods, swamps, and steppes. He rests neither during the day nor at night. He is surrounded by many guards and is together with a great apostle in a coffin. The great laborer is bringing the apostle to us on his shoulders. The name of the deceased being carried to us is the holy miracle maker Metropolitan Philip. I see how Holy Philip raises from the coffin, surrounded by an aura of light, and blesses the great apostle who carries him.” When the Tsar asked who this “great apostle” was, Natalia responded “Philip calls this laborer Nikon.” The “nun” collapsed on the floor as if exhausted. “So blinded by female slight and treachery the Tsar decided to elevate Nikon to the status of Patriarch.”

Comparative textual analysis reveals that the core of this narrative, e.g., the Tsar’s meeting with Natalia and ensuing dialogue between the two figures, was blatantly lifted from M. A. Filippov’s novel Patriarch Nikon (1885). However, the “History” transformed the original, positive account given by Filippov, by framing it with equally fictitious ideas. As a result, Filippov’s effort to show that the decision to make Nikon Patriarch was based on a truly mystical and divinely inspired experience, was transformed into the first of several highly misogynic fantasies intended to illustrate that Nikon’s wife and Tatiana Mikhailovna, both cast as epitomes of “female treachery,” conspired to dupe an indecisive and vulnerable Tsar. This important finding demonstrates the impact of

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58 Ibid, 28.
popular fiction in the reformulation of the Patriarch’s image among Old Believers and proves that the text was composed after 1885.59

The Reforms and Iconoclasm

The “History” provides the most unique and complete Old Believer account of Nikon’s church reforms and employs a multi-layered strategy to discredit them. The tale starts with a detailed account of how Nikon received the Tsar’s approval to implement the church reforms. It then proceeds to a complex refutation of several key aspects of the reforms. First, it describes imaginary and actual events to present the Patriarch’s imposition of new signs and rituals. Next, the narrative recounts traditional Old Believer stories about Nikon’s desecration of the signs and symbols the faith. Finally, the “History” added two dramatic new accounts, based on popular legend and nineteenth century Russian scholarship, in order to demonstrate Nikon’s continued iconoclasm.

While the text follows established line that reforms are “evil” and ancient piety is “good,” the images move beyond these bipolarities. If previously the pictures served to illustrate metaphysical struggle, the images in the “History” demonstrate reforms as rejected by the people. For the first time in the corpus of Old Believer literature, the masses play an active role in renouncing Nikon’s innovations.

The “History” recontextualizes the classic story of Simeon’s vision of a snake, which occurred during Nikon’s tenure as Metropolitan of Novgorod in the “Life of Korniliii” and the “Story About Nikon,” by associating it with the imposition of the Nikonian reforms. According to the latest explanation, “Nikon went to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich desiring obviously to steal his kind heart.” The Patriarch claimed that many

59 Fillipov, 168-169.
Russian church service books did not correspond to the Greek and ancient Russian religious charters and criticized the ancient Russian books and all church customs. After the Patriarch revealed his “ill intent” to the Tsar, Simeon of Chudov Monastery had a vision in which “a great mottled and frightening snake encircled the Tsar’s chambers and placed his head and tongue inside the chambers and whispered in the Tsar’s ear.” This vision agitated Simeon and he began to ponder its meaning. He secretly revealed the dream to his colleagues. The monk became frightened when he learned that Nikon requested the revision of books and customs that very night.  

Relocating this tale within the sequence of events created grounds crucial to the denunciation of Nikon. Unlike the earlier versions, which noted that when Nikon went to speak with the Tsar “no one knew what it was about,” this version suggests that the purpose of the meeting was understood. Here, as in the case of Eleazar Anzerskii’s vision of the snake around Nikon’s neck, the inclusion of additional information directly connects the vision of the snake with Nikon’s innovations. Moreover, this reworked version of the tale is significant for what it omitted - the rather complex reference to ancient history related in the “Story About Nikon.” This simplification of the tale clearly made it more accessible to ordinary people, a concept reinforced by the artwork accompanying the tale. According to the “Story About Nikon,” Simeon’s vision “reminded the monks of Chudov Monastery of the story of the ancient snake that fought with the eagle in Byzantium…. The battle between the snake and the eagle was a sign of the coming of the Turkish reign that changed Christianity.”

60 Ibid, 31ob-32.
61 See the account in the “Life of Kornili,” MGU OR Verkh. no. 803, l. 370-370 ob.
62 Borozdin, 150.
The accompanying artistic image entitled “Nikon with the Tsar” shows a complete view of Simeon’s revelation by providing exterior and interior details simultaneously. The exterior view shows the body of a multicolored snake wrapped around a building and entering its main entrance. A cut-away wall provides access inside the palace. There, the tsar, dressed in royal attire and tsar’s cap of Monomakh, sits on a throne. Facing him is the head of the two-legged snake.63

While it depicts Simeon’s vision in its entirety, this image does not transmit the written text’s message in regard to the reforms. Rather, as its title makes clear, it emphasizes Nikon’s relationship to the Tsar. Although the text described the snake as “frightening,” the Tsar does not appear afraid. On the contrary, he receives the snake with open arms and listens to it, apparently not realizing that he is surrounded and in danger.64

Nikon’s association with the Tsar stands in sharp contrast with the earlier images depicting his relationships with common men. Unlike the monks and common folk who physically separate themselves from Nikon and reject him, the Tsar is physically close, and appears to accept him. No physical barriers stand between the snake and the Tsar. On the contrary, by crossing the main threshold of the building, Nikon penetrates through the walls which divide the two parts of the image. Thus, while the people recognize and reject the consequences of Nikon’s actions, the Tsar appears oblivious and accepts them.

Despite the focus on the Tsar, and absence of the people, the picture includes significant elements of folk life. The construction and details of the Tsar’s palace clearly reflect traditional aspects of folk art and architecture. Carved wooden detailing around the building’s entrance, eaves and roof denote the dwelling of a wealthy peasant, not the

63 Ibid, 32 ob.
stone palaces of the seventeenth-century Moscow Kremlin. These features increase the image’s accessibility and relevance to the ordinary people, especially peasants, by providing familiar points of reference. Moreover, they associate the Tsar’s living conditions with the folk’s.

The author offered another exposé of the Patriarch’s and his wife’s deceitful conspiracy to explain “how Nikon received power from the Tsar to corrupt the holy religious books and holy ancient customs and habits.” Aleksei Mikhailovich did not know that Nikon was a “vessel of deadly poison who spate out infinite curses on the Holy Church.” Nor did he recognize the “treacherous, sly plan of Nikon’s wife, the false servant of God.” Therefore, when Nikon sought his approval to correct the old books, the Tsar agreed wholeheartedly. However, he told Nikon to consult “the great servant of God Natalia in this most important matter” because “she is a clairvoyant and will render blessed advice inspired by the Holy Spirit.” Nikon concurred, acting as if he had no previous contact with Natalia. The Patriarch arrived at the Alexandrovskii Monastery “dressed in fancy clothes and fancy klobuk adorned with a diamond cross. He had two panagiias sparkling with precious stones on his chest.” When Nikon entered Natalia’s cell with the nunnery’s abbotess, he and his wife pretended they were meeting for the first time. While in the abbotess’s presence, the Patriarch relayed the Tsar’s recommendations and urgency of the reform of church books. Natalia “said to the wolf patriarch, ‘Holy Father Patriarch you speak the truth. We must return to the Evangelical truth that alone can make us the True Orthodox. Do as the Holy Spirit insists, but do not stop half way for you are the Patriarch and no one can defy you. I give you my blessing.’”

64 This could also be read as collaboration of Aleksei Mikhailovich and the Romanov dynasty in enforcing the reforms and oppressing the Old Belief.

361
Then, Nikon told the abbotess to leave so he could talk privately with Natalia. Thus, “the abbotess left the preying wolf with the sly female wolf, husband with wife, as if engaged in religious council.” Nikon later returned to the Tsar and reported Natalia had given her blessing to the project. The Tsar, believing that Natalia “always speaks upon hearing the Holy Spirit,” granted final permission to conduct the reform.65

This sensational tale goes well beyond the previous Old Believer explanation that Nikon “used flattery” to convince the Tsar of the need to reform the Church. It gives Natalia the leading role in the process. Moreover, the author suggests that confirmation of the reforms depended entirely on a deceit female.

Although not illustrated, the scene is loaded with symbolic meaning(s) and innuendo that extends beyond the reform of the Church. The description of the Patriarch’s “fancy clothes” and the material cultural symbols of his position - “fancy klobuk adorned by with diamond cross” and “two panagiias sparkling with precious stones” - repeated allusions to the “wolf” are important factors in the continued formulation of Nikon’s image.

References to symbols of Nikon’s patriarchal vestments, klobuk and panagia contain several layers of meaning. In addition to abusing the Patriarch’s extravagance, the author introduces the notion that Nikon used displays of wealth to conceal his true intentions. Moreover, it highlights a meaningful, but usually overlooked aspect of Nikon’s reforms - his adoption of Greek Patriarchal dress. By presenting Nikon in Greek attire, the author stressed the foreign nature of the other changes.66

65 Ibid, 34-36.
66 This included wearing a black, not white, klobuk and two as opposed to one panagia. For Nikon’s adoption of “Greek” klobuk see Paul of Aleppo and Meyendorf, 49. The author returned to this topic in his account of Nikon’s trial. It complements the focus on Arsenii the Greek’s role in the reforms.
The author’s direct and implied references to the metaphor of the wolf (predator and false prophet) apply to both Nikon and Natalia. The Patriarch and his wife, are predators who prey on the innocence/ignorance of the unsuspecting Tsar and the abbotess. The connection of the wolf with the description of Nikon’s patriarchal and Natalia’s (implied) nun’s attire, presents husband and wife as a pair of “wolves in sheep’s skins.” The statement that “the abbotess left the preying wolf with the sly female wolf, husband with wife, as if engaged in religious council”, not only presents the couple as “false prophets” and “false servants of God,” but suggests intimate contact, sexual impropriety and the desecration of holy space. This instance stands as another prime example of the Old Believers’ ongoing ability to shape Nikon’s image by combining the material cultural symbols of his position with other verbal signifiers.67

As noted previously, the explanation that the decision to reform the Russian Church books, depended largely on the nun Natalia, as had Aleksei Mikhailovich’s decision to make Nikon Patriarch, is based Filippov’s novel. However, according to Filippov’s story, the Tsar sent Nikon to the nun for advice because she was a truly pious ascetic. On his way to the Alekseevskii Convent, which happened according to Filippov happened to be the same convent, Nikon had left his wife many years earlier, the Patriarch began to ponder the fate of his former spouse. During the course of a rather unusual conversation, in which the nun tells the Patriarch he should not only reform the Russian Church book, but, “like [Martin] Luther,” get married, Natalia revealed herself as Nikon’s former wife and professed her undying love for him. Greatly disturbed by the experience, Nikon asked for Natalia’s blessing and departed. As in the previous case, the

67 The “wolf” could also suggest that Nikon first “stole” the heart f the Tsar only to continue to steal the wealth which made his lavish displays possible.
Old Believer version greatly altered Filippov’s account, by stressing that the meeting between the Patriarch and the nun was part of a larger plot to deceive and by interjecting traditional animal metaphors to denigrate both figures.

Having explained how Nikon supposedly received the authority to reform the Russian Church from the Tsar, the “History” related to the Patriarch’s efforts to force changes upon the Russian clergy at the all-Russian Council in Moscow. There, in the presence of the Tsar, the Patriarch pressed the hierarchy and the entire clergy to correct the church books and urged the council to obey him in every matter: “Some people did so because they were ignorant; some because they were tempted by the trappings of this world and not willing to loose their positions and honors and some cooperated because they were afraid to contradict Nikon and be imprisoned because they saw that Nikon had the Tsar’s support.”

According to the “History” Bishop Pavel of Kolomenskoe (really Kolomna) was among “the small select part of the flock who knew about the dangers of violating scripture” and defied the Patriarch. When Nikon ordered the council to approve his resolution, Pavel declared that all who defy the ancient documents and blindly copy the Latin creed would be subject to anathema. Nikon could not tolerate such defiance and, “like a wild beast, started to beat Pavel with his own hands.” After Nikon repeated attempts to persuade the Bishop to accept the new practices, Pavel declared Nikon to be a “betrayer and corrupter of Holy ancient church customs.” Hearing this criticism, Nikon “became berserk and, like a wild boar,” ordered Pavel to be dressed in a bishop’s mantiia [mantle] and, “without any shame, started lawlessly tearing off Pavel’s apostolic riza and mantiia with his own hands. He ordered his servants to beat and imprison Pavel.
Afterwards, he transferred the bishop to the Pustozerskii Monastery. There, “he had Pavel burned in a wooden hut for his adherence to the ancient piety.”

This account of the Patriarch’s abuse of Pavel, usually mentioned in the context of Nikon’s trial, plays a meaningful role in the presentation of the Nikonian reforms. It provides a psychological prelude to Nikon’s forced imposition of the changes, as well as his efforts to desecrate and “eliminate” all vestiges of the “ancient faith.”

Nikon’s treatment of Pavel, the visual embodiment of the Old Belief, parallels the Patriarch’s subsequent attacks on the symbols of the “true faith.” These ideas are reinforced in both written and verbally and graphic forms. References to the material cultural symbols of Pavel’s and Nikon’s clerical positions are key to the “History’s” written and artistic descriptions of the Bishop’s public humiliation.

Having Nikon tear off “Pavel’s apostolic riza and mantia with his own hands” was a highly symbolic act. By specifically referencing Pavel’s mantia, the author suggested that Nikon did more than defrock a bishop who disagreed with him. This would have been a simple administrative action. Desecrating of the mantia, a symbol of angelic otherworldliness and the wisdom of the Old and New Testament, meant that Nikon also intended to expose Pavel’s cause as devoid of wisdom and legitimacy. More importantly, it represented Nikon going against the divine authority of the “word of God.”

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68 GRB OR f.17 no. 140, 35 ob-36ob.
69 Ibid, 37ob-39ob.
70 Ibid, 38.
71 In early Christianity, the mantia was worn by all Christians who converted from paganism and rejected all state positions. It was reserved for the most festive ceremonies. Later, the mantia came to represent the other worldliness of monks/black clergy. The broad, loose, unbelted mantia resembles angelic wings. It is called the image of angel. On each side of the split of the mantia, there are four squares. The two top squares, skrizhali, contain either images of crosses or icons. They represent the Old and New Testament which should guide the hierarch and from which he should draw wisdom in his church teachings. The teaching capacity of the hierarch is also symbolized in “sources” or “waves”- three long, double lines which encircle mantia. The double line represents the wisdom of Old and New Testaments. The number
The charge implicit in the text is therefore, two-fold; first, Nikon abused an innocent and pious clergymen, secondly in doing so the Patriarch had *ipsa facta* placed himself outside the “true faith.” This narrative establishes that Nikon was the is leader of reforms that defied Orthodox cannons, not to mention Christian ethics. In sum it yields the moral high ground to those who opposed the Nikonian reforms. Bishop Pavel’s based not on his opposition not personal wisdom, but on the wisdom of God.

This narrative is accompanied by “Nikon Beats Holy Bishop Pavel for His Criticism,” the first of two images devoted to the Patriarch’s treatment of Pavel. Nikon is dressed in patriarchal vestments and a new style *mitra*. He holds Pavel’s hair with his left hand. His right hand is raised in a fist set to pummel the Bishop. Pavel is dressed in the same clerical vestments as Nikon minus the patriarchal *mitra*. He is bent over in pain with his hands outstretched in a plea for mercy.72

Detailing of Patriarch’s vestments add a significant element absent in the written text. It reinforces the notion of Nikon as wolf in sheep’s clothing. More importantly, it makes a direct negative association with new style *mitra* worn by Nikon. The *mitra*, the primary symbol of the Patriarch’s authority, is inextricably linked to the abuse of that power and to the persecution and eradication of the proponents of the “true faith.” This visual association is reiterated in subsequent images depicting Nikon wearing the *mitra* while in the process of attacking symbolic representations of the wisdom of the “ancient piety.”

This line of representation is highly significant given the widespread promotion of antiquities associated with Nikon, both artistic and material cultural in mainstream. three symbolizes the Trinity, which encircles the bishop. *Kak razlichat’ dukhovenstvo po chinam i zvanijam* (Moscow: Tsentr Blago, 1999), 29-30.
Russian society. The Old Believer depiction of Nikon wearing a *mitra* while abusing Pavel directly contested the Patriarch’s portrayal in the mass-produced images, based on the original seventeenth-century *parsuna* “Patriarch Nikon With Clergy,” included in all types of publications about him that proliferated in the nineteenth century. Moreover, *mitras* were perhaps the most conspicuous items given to the Patriarch by members of the Romanov family, as a sign of love and cooperation between the Patriarch and the ruling dynasty and of a tacit alliance to persecution and crush the Old Belief. In short, this case is one of several important illustrations that demonstrate how, in order to effectively compete for control over Nikon’s image, Old Believers moved beyond the written word to include both art and artifact in their representations of the Patriarch.

The second image on the theme just discussed is “Bishop Pavel Being Burnt for the Old Faith” in which Bishop Pavel being burned at the stake. Pavel looks toward heaven, as he is engulfed in flames. Soldiers armed with guns and pikes restrain a crowd of spectators. All the witnesses are peasants wearing felt boots. Their faces closely resemble Pavel’s. All have long beards. The central place given to the armed troops in this picture is noteworthy. It highlights the state’s active role in enforcing the Nikonian reforms and in persecuting adherents of the Old Belief.73

The “History” then presents a new tale “from below,” attributed to Kornilii’s experience, to introduce Nikon’s imposition of a nontraditional style cross upon the Russian Church. The story explains that, shortly after the all-Russian council met, Kornilii dreamt he was in Uspenskii Cathedral where he saw two people struggling with each other. One was “decent looking,” the other was “dark and very sullen.” The decent

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72 Ibid 38
73 Ibid, 40.

367
looking one held a “three part cross.” The dark looking one held a “two-part cross which was a Latin cross in disguise.” The first person told the dark figure: “this is the True Cross of God.” The adversarial response was: “now the time has come for the two-part cross to be revered.” They continued to fight until the dark one overpowered the decent looking one.74

Komilii’s vision clearly defines the struggle between Nikon and his opponents by reducing it to a straight out conflict between good and evil. The narrator operates with a simple set of oppositions focused on the most basic symbol of the faith, the cross. The three-part cross is “the True Cross of God” upheld by “decent people.” The two-part cross is a sign of darkness, “evil,” and foreign, Latin “heresy.” The confrontation implies that the council’s ratification of the Nikonian reforms, and the Patriarch’s elimination of the opposition (i.e., Bishop Pavel), signaled the victory of evil, foreign forces over the “true faith”. Although rudimentary, the significance of these verbal descriptions cannot be overstated. In addition to providing significant clarifications of the term/sign “cross” absent from the early Old Believer tales about Nikon, these definitions create distinctions essential to the formulation of the Patriarch’s image.

The illustration “The Fight Between Holiness and Unholiness” further defines the set of oppositions introduced in the written text by adding new features to Komilii’s vision. In the image, the “decent looking person” is white. He wears long hair and a long beard. He is dressed in traditional Russian dress (rubokha [long shirt] and fur-collared cape). He holds a four-part cross with both hands. The “dark looking one” has a black complexion. He has a large nose, short dark hair and mustache. He is dressed in a military

74 Ibid, 41-42ob This story was not part of the “Life of Komilii”. Awakened by the dream, Komilii went to the morning service in Church of the Dormition of the Holy Mother of God. There, he overheard an
uniform and three-cornered hat. He holds a two-part cross with his right hand. His left hand is on his hip.75

The artist heightened the conflict between the two figures by painting them in different styles. He employed icon painting techniques, especially noticeable treatments of clothes and face, to depict the “decent looking one.” The “dark one” is painted as a caricature.

The more complex definitions of holiness and “unholiness” displayed in the image are based on several categories of opposition. These include traditional versus new crosses, white versus black, Russian versus foreign, and servant of God versus servant of the state. These combine to create mutually interdependent stereotypes representing Nikon’s opponents and proponents. The “decent looking one” is a stereotypical Russian Old Believer. His dress and physical features resemble those of other traditional Russians depicted earlier and later in the imagery. His nemesis, the “dark one,” is a stereotypical foreigner, or at least Russian imitator of foreign customs. His military dress raises sense of the opposition to a level of a battle. Moreover, it recalls the state’s use of military force to impose the “Nikonian” reforms on early dissenters as well as continued the governmental efforts persecute the Old Believers.

Together with the written text, the image “The Fight Between Holiness and Unholiness” furnishes important points of reference and context for the illustration of tales subsequent. Henceforth, the mention/depiction of the two crosses carry these associations. More specifically, it enriches the “History’s” inclusion of the classic core argument between the proponents of the “new” and “old” ways of singing. They “argued for a long time but the lovers of the new style prevailed.”

75 Ibid, 42.

369
Old Believer tales concerning ordinary peoples’ alleged discovery of the Patriarch’s desecration of the key symbols of the faith, the cross and the image of the Holy Virgin.

The incorporation of the traditional tales into the text and iconography of the “History” is significant for three reasons. First, it establishes that the personal motives behind the reforms were Nikon’s lust for power and wealth. Second it locates Nikon in the metaphysical struggle between good and evil envisioned by Kornilii. Third, it constructs a new set of oppositions used to define Nikon’s distance from the Russian folk and clergy. These modifications further prove that Old Believer authors and artists continued to transform and update the classic tales about Nikon in order to advance new ideas and to insure their relevance in the modern period.

Dmitrii’s experience with Nikon contains two key points which differentiate it from the original one presented in the “Life of Kornilii.” After explaining the circumstances for Dmitrii’s visit to Nikon and his eventual drunkenness, the tale presented the peasant’s extraordinary vision of the Patriarch in the company of devils. In this redaction, the devils not only kissed Nikon and placed him on a throne, but “they proclaimed him tsar by putting a tsar’s crown on his head.” While worshipping him, the devils persuade the Patriarch to help them “get rid of the cross of the Son of Mary.” Following the earlier account’s explanation of how the devils discovered Dmitrii’s spying and Nikon’s refusal to murder the peasant, the tale diverges from the original. This tale concludes when Dmitrii, who could not sleep, went to Patriarch’s bedroom, saw a pair of Nikon’s shoes and looked inside. In one of the boots he found “a three-part Cross.” In the other, he saw an “image of Mother of God.”

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76 RGB OR f. 17 No. 140 43ob-44ob; BAN 45.4.9, 26ob-27, 28ob. The second half of the tale is not included in the first manuscript.
By reintroducing Dmitrii’s tale, the author emphasizes Nikon’s unquenchable quest for power, a theme characteristic of the “History” and the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century tales about the Patriarch. However, the “History” also connects Nikon’s political ambitions with his abuse of the cross. By specifying that the devils recognized Nikon as the tsar and furnished him with symbols of imperial power, this text transformed the earlier versions’ original emphasis on the degradation of the symbols of the faith into a more complex political statement. Here, the implication of Dmitrii’s story is that Nikon was willing to assist the devils trample the true Orthodoxy if he received ultimate (secular) power in return. Thus, Nikon’s betrayal of the symbols of the faith provides the most extreme example of his lust for power. The dual significance of this tale is manifest in two different types of illustrations.

The first image, “Devils Crown Nikon,” presents an outsider’s view of Dmitrii’s visual experience. The scene features the interiors of two rooms divided by a wall. On the left, Nikon, dressed in royal costume, sits on a throne adorned with pillows. His feet rest on a plush stool. Five black, horned, naked devils surround Nikon. Four are positioned in front of him. The fifth is behind him. The devil standing behind Nikon, has his left arm around Patriarch’s shoulder (denoting friendship) and raises his right hand in a gesture as if making a point. He utters advice and instructions. A single devil lays prostrate before the Patriarch. Another embraces and kisses him. The third places a gold crown on his head. The fourth notices Dmitrii and points to him. To the right, in a richly appointed, room, stands Dmitrii. He is in peasant’s attire and barefoot. The peasant peeks through a partly opened door and sees the devils crown Nikon.77

77 BAN 45.4.9 l. 27ob-28.
This image, like the earlier one depicting “Nikon With the Tsar,” accentuates the Patriarch’s alleged thirst for power. Comparative analysis of the two images shows that Nikon adopted all of the signs of the Tsar’s power. Nikon is dressed not as a prelate, but in the exact same costume worn by the Tsar in the earlier, and later picture(s). His crown is that of a secular ruler, not an ecclesiastical mitra. Nikon’s dwelling, in contrast to the Tsar’s peasant palace, is richly decorated and furnished. His throne, unlike the Tsar’s, is lavishly detailed. Moreover, it resembles the one often seen in icons depicting “Christ the Pankrator.” Thus, it appears that Nikon usurped the Tsar’s position.

The illustration also demonstrates Nikon’s detachment from the Russian folk. Dmitrii’s presence in the Patriarch’s home draws attention to type of divisions not evident in the earlier images. Dmitrii’s portrayal as a barefoot peasant highlights the opulence of Nikon’s abode. This disparity stresses Nikon’s greed. The combined spiritual, physical, and material separation presented in this image clearly sets Nikon apart from the rest of his flock. Therefore, while the picture of the Tsar’s “peasant palace” closely associated the secular ruler with the Russian folk, Nikon’s extravagant dwelling distances him even further from the people.

The second image, “Dmitrii sees Christ’s Cross in Nikon’s Insoles” shows the scene in Nikon’s bedroom. Dmitrii is discovering a cross in Nikon’s shoe. In this picture, Dmitrii is again depicted as a barefoot peasant. He holds one of Nikon’s fancy shoes in his left hand. As he removes the insole with his right hand, he exposes a four-part cross. The cross is upside down, its top is under Nikon’s heal.

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78 I have in mind the icon “Christ on the Throne with Metropolitan Philip and Patriarch Nikon” (1652), The Historical-Architectural and Art Museum “New Jerusalem” (MOKM. Inv. no. 7346).
79 RGB OR f. 17 No. 140, 45.
This image compliments and expands the meaning of the written text. The ornate shoes suggest that Nikon used lavish displays wealth to conceal his heresy. As in the previous image, Dmitrii’s depiction as a common man is at odds with the luxury of the Patriarch’s residence. However, here the disparity is even more evident due to the emphasis on footwear. Dmitrii’s bare feet, a sign of poverty, contrast sharply with the Patriarch’s expensive shoes. Therefore, in addition to illustrating Nikon’s abuse of the True Cross, this image reinforces Nikon’s extravagance and his detachment from the Russian folk.  

The “History” also included the core Old Believer tales relating Adreian’s discovery a cross and an image of Mother of God in Nikon’s boots and Fedor’s finding an image of Christ crucified under the sheets of Nikon’s bed. While the written narratives basically repeat the earlier versions, the images they inspired forward additional information not evident in the originals. This new visual data clarifies and intensifies the meanings of the traditional written word as well as the other artistic texts. 

The picture “Adreian Sees Christ’s Cross in Nikon’s Insole” reinforces the image of Dmitrii’s discovery of a cross in Nikon’s shoe. Adreian is in a different, but likewise decorated, bedroom. He is depicted monk in a simple black robe. Holding one of Nikon’s ornate boots in his left hand, he removes the insole with the right one and uncovers the image of a seven-ended cross. By depicting a different physical context and different pair of footwear, this image confirms that Dmitrii’s finding was not accidental. Moreover, it reiterates the contrast between the common monk’s existence and the Patriarch

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80 RGB OR f. 17 No. 140, 45.
81 Ibid, 45ob, 46ob, 47ob.
extravagant lifestyle and heightens further the hierarch’s distance from the rest of the clergy.82

The renewed efforts to denigrate the Patriarch by employing well established tales concerning Nikon’s footwear must be considered in terms of the efforts in mainstream Russian culture to commemorate the hierarch. It is important recognize that the displays of Nikon’s own personal belongings promoted by the official church and state included, not only religious vestments and artistic images, but shoes and boots worn by the Patriarch. The exhibition of these objects at the New Jerusalem Monastery as well as artistic renderings of them in published sources were intended to provide examples of Nikon daily life [byt], an aspect central to the appreciation to Russian antiquities in the nineteenth century. These displays could also make audiences more empathetic with the Patriarch and his life. Literally, the viewer could put him or herself “in Nikon’s shoes.” Viewed in this context, “History” appears as a direct response to practice of creating positive conceptions of the Patriarch though displays of antiquities associated with him.

The image “Fedor Sees Christ’s Cross under Nikon’s Sheets” provides a new perspective on Nikon’s desecration of the cross. Fedor is presented in yet another of Nikon’s bedchambers. He is dressed as a monk. Lifting the sheets from Nikon’s bed, he reveals large, seven-ended Cross. The cross is not only under the sheets, it is upside down. The top of the cross is at the foot of the bed. The image of the inverted cross reinforces the notion that Nikon was the opposite of Christ. The cross’s position also

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82 Ibid, 46.
refers the viewer to the images of Dmitrii’s and Adreian’s discoveries. All locate the cross under Nikon’s feet.83

The “History’s” account of the “Nikonian” reforms culminates with two non-traditional stories describing the Patriarch’s collection and destruction of holy books and icons. These tales compliment the traditional stories concerning Nikon’s secret desecration of the cross by providing examples the Patriarch’s public acts of iconoclasm. The artistic images accompanying these narratives are especially noteworthy because they contrast Nikon’s mitra, the symbol of patriarchal power, authority and wealth, with signs and symbols of ancient piety referred to earlier in the written texts and pictures. Therefore, they associate a distinctly set of negative conations with new signs and symbols that Nikon introduced to the official church. Employing the Patriarch as the embodiment of all that was wrong with the Nikonian church, these critiques provide insightful commentary on conceptions of the official church in general.

According to the “History,” Nikon printed “corrupt new” service books and church books, “filled with perfidy,” and imposed them in all churches. At the same time, he collected all the “holy, God-inspired books” and brought them to Moscow, where the Patriarch ordered all the holy books to be publicly “executed.” The old books were burned on lobnoe mesto.84

This fictional story is a strong commentary on Nikon’s efforts to criminalize and eradicate the “ancient piety.” The type of punishment inflicted by the Patriarch, and the place where it was carried out are both significant. By suggesting that Nikon unjustly condemned the holy books to death by fire, a punishment usually reserved for heretics

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83 Ibid, 47 ob This is a reverse of Nikonian iconography. The icon “Christ Pankrator with Kneeling St. Metropolitan Philip and Patriarch Nikon” and the Kii Cross system of imagery place Nikon’s...
and Old Believers, the author presented the tomes as martyrs. The Patriarch’s execution of the books parallels his earlier abuse and “execution” of Pavel of Kolomenskoe [sic]. In both cases, the Patriarch allegedly eliminated opposition to “his” reforms by burning it. This connection is heightened even further in the iconography. The idea that Nikon acted on lobnoe mesto reinforces the criminalization holy books as well as their martyrdom. The lobnoe mesto in Moscow’s Red Square was a traditional site of public executions. However, lobnoe mesto was also the site of Christ’s Crucifixion on Golgotha.

In the center of the image “Nikon Burns Holy Books,” large books, one of which is open, are engulfed in flames. To the left of the blaze stands Nikon, again dressed in patriarchal vestments and mitra. A four-ended Cross is visible on his omophor. He directs a helper, in military dress, to throw another book onto the conflagration. To the extreme right, stands a common man. His right hand is raised to his forehead in disbelief and despair. 

This image contrasts Nikon’s authority, signified by his mitra, with wisdom and authority of God’s word, denoted by the “holy” books. The books’ large size indicates the significance of their destruction. The presence of an open book is especially noteworthy. The open book is a symbol of authority and wisdom, both holy and evil. In the icon “Christ Pankrator,” it represents the “word of God”/sanctity of scripture. In the picture presenting the Tatar sorcerer, the open book alludes to “evil magic.” In this context, the burning of the holy Testament depicted in “Nikon Burns Holy Books,” signals the victory of its opposite, the Tatar sorcerer’s “evil and devilish book.” The

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84 Ibid, 49ob.
85 Ibid, 50.
image also reiterates Nikon’s distance from his flock. Here, fire separates the Patriarch from those who recognize his actions as wrong and reject them.

This illustration parallels the one depicting “Pavel Being Burnt for Ancient Piety.” Both graphically depict the verbal/vocal opposition to Nikon’s reform of the Church books engulfed in flames. The presentation of military forces as Nikon’s agent of destruction is in common in the iconography. By visually connecting the Patriarch’s persecution of Pavel, a symbolic proponent of the “true” faith, with the actual destruction of the word of God, the artist created a set of associations which firmly establish Nikon’s image as a “destroyer of ancient piety.”

The section of the “History” devoted to illustrating Nikon’s attempts to root out the “ancient piety” concluded by introducing new materials concerning the Patriarch’s destruction of icons. According to the narrative, “some of these icons were ancient images with the two finger blessing and praying. They also depicted the eight-ended Cross of Christ.” When the tsar was absent, “Nikon ordered his people to poke the eyes out of these icons and to carry them through the city as a demonstration.” The Patriarch also announced a decree made by the Tsar which ordered strict punishments for those who painted and/or kept such icons in their home. When such icons were delivered to Nikon and his servants, the patriarch “took one after another and started to break them on the iron floor with such force that the icons broke into many pieces”. In the process, he announced the names of the nobles who owned the icons in order to shame them publicly. This action startled everyone, including the “Patriarch of Antioch”. After smashing the images, Nikon commanded the broken pieces to be burned. At this point, the Tsar begged
the Patriarch, “please Father, do not order to burn them, it’s better to bury them in soil.” Seeing the Patriarch’s “lawlessness,” the people of Moscow began to call Nikon an iconoclast behind his back. When a great plague broke out, the people “all started to say that this was God’s punishment for the unholliness of the Patriarch’s desecration of the holy icons.”

This account relies heavily on manipulations of information presented in two late nineteenth-century scholarly publications. These include Metropolitan Makarii’s (Bulgakov’s) History of the Russian Church (1883) and the translation of Paul of Aleppo’s seventeenth-century Travels of Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch (1898). The Old Believer author closely followed Aleppo’s account of Nikon’s iconoclasm with one very important exception. He replaced the original clarification that the images were destroyed because “they were similar to ‘frankish’ icons,” with claim that “some of these icons were ancient images the two finger blessing and praying. They also depicted the eight-ended Cross of Christ.” The “History” also included details, most notably, the idea that Nikon’s actions resulted in the plague, drawn from Makarii’s History.

This case provides a striking example of the continued exchange of ideas about Nikon across the confessional divide. The adoption of facts presented in Makarii’s and the translation of Aleppo’s works reveals the Old Believer familiarity with and ongoing determination incorporate, albeit in modified from, mainstream historical versions of the

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86 The burning of books connects symbolically the account and image regarding Pavel’s being burnt. This is also interesting in context of other illustrated manuscripts in which fire is sign of God’s rejection.
87 GRB OR f. 17 no. 140, 51ob.
88 Paul of Aleppo Puteshtvie antiokhiiskago patriarkha Makariia v Rossiiu v polovine XVII veka... trans. G. Murkos Chteniia v Imperatorskom Obshchestve Istorii i Drevenotei Rossiskh vol. 3 pt. 3 (St. Petersburg, 1898), 137-138. Makarii (Bulgakov) Istoriia russkoi tserkvi vol. 12 (St. Petersburg, 1883), 207-209.
89 Makarii’s work is directly noted one at least one versions of the “History.” See BAN 45.4.9, l. 36.
Patriarch’s deeds. The references to Alleppo’s *Travels* and Makarii’s *History* confirm that some of the new information presented in the “History” was not added until after 1883, and even as late as 1898. This case once again attests to the Old Believer willingness to employ the work of their opponents in the official church when constructing negative images of Nikon in the modern era.

The image “Nikon Destroys Holy Icons” depicts the Patriarch in the violent act of iconoclasm. He stands raised on an *amvon*. Dressed in patriarchal vestments and *mitra*, he is in the process of hurling a number of icons toward the ground. He uses both hands. An icon of “Christ Pankrator,” with the “two-finger blessing,” is upside down in the air a split second away from destruction. An image of the Holy Virgin is clearly visible among the icons already smashed on the floor. A bare-headed Tsar stands at the head of a multitude of other figures who witness the scene. The ruler clutches his stomach. The man next to him also holds his arms across his midsection. All of the pictured witnesses wear long beards.90

In this picture, the Patriarch is also presented as Christ’s opposite. The Patriarch is elevated and “crowned” by the patriarchal *mitra* while the icon of “Christ the Pankrator,” the same image opposing him in earlier illustration, “Eleazar Sees a Terrible Snake on Nikon’s Neck”, is inverted and about to be destroyed. The Patriarch’s elevated position not only places him above the Tsar and the other figures, but aids his destruction of the icons.

Despite the written text’s explanation that the Tsar outlawed the icons in question, the monarch stands together with his subjects in united opposition to the Patriarch’s actions. The position of the Tsar’s hands grabbing his stomach suggests that the sight
sickens him. The crossed arms of the adjacent person restate the rejection of Nikon’s deed. The long beards worn by the witnesses signify the wisdom of the rebuke.

The imagery presented in this section represents a significant contribution to the art of reform. In addition to presenting straightforward comparisons of the ancient and Nikonian symbols of the faith, the images depict both abuse of the old symbols and the rejection of new ones. On the one hand the abuse of the old is directly associated with the authority of the new, signified by Nikon wearing the new style patriarchal mitra. On the other hand, the new are rebuffed not by God, as is customary in Old Believer art, but by man. These images present not only martyrs, but the Russian secular elite and common folk as united against Nikon’s actions. Taken together, both aspects of the artwork reveal the Patriarch’s persistent significance in defining the Old Believer struggle to persevere the ancient faith.

Nikon’s “New Jerusalem”

The “History” presented a new and updated treatment of Nikon’s New Jerusalem Monastery. It replaced the earlier and no longer relevant charges that Nikon stole land to create the monastery, that he used the foundation as a lure to trick the faithful and that creation of New Jerusalem signaled the coming of the Antichrist, with an imaginative set of new claims reflecting modern realities. This elaborate explanation is based on manipulations of Shusherin’s seventeenth century biography and Filippov’s nineteenth century novel, combined with other fictitious dialogues and previously ignored charges raised at Patriarch’s trial. It outlines Nikon’s conception of “New Jerusalem” in general and the purpose of constructing the New Jerusalem Monastery in specific. It suggest that

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90 GRB OR f. 17 no. 140, 52.
a foreigner, Arsenii the Greek, and a women, Tatiana Mikhailovna, played leading roles in formulation of the idea and the attempt to make it a reality. Moreover, it presents Nikon’s concept of New Jerusalem as the primary factor in his fall from the Tsar’s grace and his removal from the patriarchal throne.

This section of the narrative opens with an expose of Nikon’s alleged affair with Tatiana Mikhailovna. “Now it is necessary to recall the female cunning and intrigues, which Nikon used to get to the patriarchal throne.” When Nikon became Patriarch and learned about Tsarevna’s “sneaky thoughts,” he began to thank and assist her. “Captivated by each other, an obscene love developed.” Nikon frequently entered to the women’s section of the palace. During this period, Tatiana Mikhailovna refused her fiancée. She preferred to reside at the Alekseevskii Nunnery. Nikon, who advised the Tsar to allow his sister to live in the nunnery, constructed house for the Tsarevna with a special entrance that gave direct access to the outside world. When Tatiana Mikhailovna moved there, “Nikon began to visit her both openly in daytime, and secretly at night.”

The notion that Nikon was romantically involved with Tatiana Mikhailovna adds a completely new aspect to Nikon’s image and the theme of “female cunning.” The statement that “obscene love developed” between the patriarch and the Tsarevna is damaging on several levels. It suggests that Nikon was guilty of adultery and breaking his vow of celibacy. Thus, he betrays not only his wife (and co-conspirator), but the Church. The couple’s efforts to conceal their “secret” represent another case of Nikon’s and Tatiana’s deceit. It presents the Patriarch’s repeated transgression into “female” spaces of the “women’s section of the palace” and Alekseevskii Nunnery clearly violating the natural order of things. Moreover, it implies that Nikon again defiled the holy space of

381
a nunnery. Finally, the tale provides a motive for Tatiana’s continued support and promotion of Nikon.

The author constructed another new narrative detailing the circumstances and purposes behind the creation of New Jerusalem Monastery. When the Tsar departed from Moscow for the Polish War, he granted Nikon the title “great lord” and asked him to care for the royal family. During this time, an epidemic occurred in Moscow. The Tsar ordered Nikon to take his family to a safer location. The Patriarch gathered the entire royal court and servants as well as his deacons and print master Arsenii the Greek and left the capital. After five days of traveling, they stopped. Nikon went sightseeing with the Tsar’s sisters and Arsenii. During the excursion, Arsenii exclaimed, “how this place reminds me of Jerusalem. This river [Istra] looks like Jordan. Those hills westward of this place look like the Favor and Ermon. The creek that flows at the bottom of this hill looks like the Cadron. That other place looks like Joseph’s Valley and those trees and place are similar to Gesthemna. With luck, the Resurrection Cathedral will be a second Jerusalem.” Tatiana told Nikon to “think about this special place.” The Patriarch stated that he “thought about the creation of a New Jerusalem for a long time,” but lacked a good location. He added that he would ask Tsar to give him permission and assistance to construct a future New Jerusalem here. Tatiana said to Nikon, “if you have such a wish I will give you a donation for construction of the cathedral, and will ask my brother, the Tsar, and he will listen to me.” Nikon responded, “great Tsarevna, your words for me are always my law and my wish. My intention is to assist in glorifying the entire Russian State because now all the other Eastern patriarchs’ thrones are under the rule of infidel

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91 Ibid, 55-56.
authority. When we will have the New Jerusalem, the Russian Patriarchal throne will be the first among the Universal thrones, the Russian Patriarch will be named Patriarch of Jerusalem and he will be the first judge of the Universe." 93

The account combines several different aspects of Shusherin's story in order to highlight Tatiana Mikhailovna's and Arsenii the Greek's role in shaping Nikon's actions. First, the author transformed Nikon's much praised deliverance of the Tsar's family from the plague, into a mere pretext gather Nikon, Tatiana and Arsenii together outside Moscow. Second, he used the occasion to replace Shusherin's explanation that Nikon and Aleksei Mikhailovich surveyed the early construction of the Monastery. In doing so he reformulated Arsenii's role in Nikon's efforts to construct a replica of the Holy Land in Russia by crediting the Greek, rather than Aleksei Mikhailovich, with naming the site of the future Monastery "New Jerusalem." 94

The fictitious dialogues presented here are important for two reasons. They provide further confirmation of Nikon's slavish reliance on Tatiana Mikhailovna, as well as Tsarevna's willingness to manipulate her brother in order to advance Nikon's cause. More importantly, they allow Nikon to outline his intention of creating a New Jerusalem in Russia in "his own words." While, according to this tale, Nikon was resolved to glorify the Russian State, his ultimate goal was supreme power. The proposition that Nikon

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92 This refers to the earlier mention that Nikon wanted to create "Calvary Mountain" at the Anzerskii Skit.
93 GRB OR f. 17 No. 140, 57-59ob.
94 Shusherin 55-6 explains that that the plague resulted from "our sins" and that Nikon's deliverance of the royal family resulted in the apogee of the "mutual love" between the Tsar and the Patriarch. He does not specifically mention Tatiana's presence. Arseii was not part of Nikon's evacuation. Shusherin followed his account of the plague with Nikon's purchase of land which eventually became the site of the monastery. Shusherin claimed that the Aleksei Mikhailovich first referred to Nikon's new monastic foundation "New Jerusalem", 64-5. According to Shusherin, Arsenii provided the Patriarch with a model of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, 65. Several historians, including Makarii (Bulgakov), later dismissed this idea, Shusherin, n. 55, 223. The model exists. It is currently on display at New Jerusalem.
intentionally planned to usurp the universal patriarchs’ authority is tenuous. Although such charges were leveled at Nikon’s trial the author presented them as an undisputed fact.

The “History” included a completely fabricated account of the founding of the “New Jerusalem Monastery” in order to expound further Nikon’s alleged ambitions. It reflects several obvious attempts to make the story relevant to Russian living in the late nineteenth century. According to the narrative, the Tsar and the elite of Russian society assembled at the location of the future monastery for a dedication ceremony. After a prayer service, Nikon blessed the construction site with holy water. The Tsar and the Patriarch laid cornerstones in the foundation. They praised God, prayed to the Cross and went to a banquet. During the dinner, Aleksei Mikhailovich addressed Nikon, “Great Lord, holy Father and pilgrim, tell us why you call this place New Jerusalem.” Nikon responded with a prepared speech written by Arsenii the Greek.

The real city of Jerusalem is captured by the Turkish Sultan. The Eastern Patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem and Constantinople are all Turkish captives. Therefore, our pilgrims cannot visit the Lord’s tomb. The Holy Spirit inspired me to create the Resurrection Cathedral, a true replica of the Jerusalem Church, on this place so that the pious and faithful will have a safe place to pray and so that the Holy Eastern Church and blessed patriarchs will have asylum should the Turks persecute them. The Latin creed is particularly strong because the Pope in Rome is supreme and independent. Our Eastern Greek Church is weak because it is divided into numerous patriarchates. I pray to God that he will unite the Eastern Church in New Jerusalem in the future. Without this, the unification of all Slavic peoples, proscribed by the Blessed Nestor, cannot be realized. You and I together, Great Tsar, laid the cornerstone of this unification..... Kiev and Galich are now part of your tsardom. However, other Orthodox peoples, Bulgarians, Serbs, Slovenians, Moravians, Herzegovines, Bosnians and Montenegrins, still moan under the yoke of Turks and Germans. All of them will come under your hand, Great Lord Tsar and under my patriarchal rule and blessing. Then this place will become the headquarters of their patriarch and will become a New Jerusalem for them.\footnote{GRB OR f. 17 no. 140, 62-64}
The Patriarch’s speech flattered and pleased the Tsar. Satisfied, Aleksei Mikhailovich immediately contributed numerous villages, formerly belonging to Kolomeskoe [sic] bishopric, to construction of the church and the monastery. The whole royal court followed by merchants and urban patricians also contributed. However, although the princes and boyars gave donations, they did not like Nikon’s plan. Immediately after his speech they began to assault the Patriarch, “see how high our Nikon tries to fly. He aspires to become a new universal pope. The Eastern patriarchates were established by a universal council. Nikon, desiring to become a universal pope, follows Latin heresy.”

This expose is the most obvious anachronism in the “History.” The entire conception and framework of this supposed event would have been alien to the seventeenth century Russia. The etiquette and protocol followed by the Patriarch and the Tsar are distinctly modern. Both the ceremonial laying of stones and keynote speech follow a nineteenth century script. The content of the Patriarch’s speech is also largely ahistorical. The concept of the Turkish captivity of the Holy Land and the universal patriarchs was relevant in Nikon’s day. However, the Panslavist notion of a union between Russian and oppressed Slavic minorities of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires united under the Russian Tsar had nineteenth century origins. While references to specific Slavic nationalities may have held currency with a nineteenth-century audience, they would have been meaningless for Nikon and his contemporaries.

Comparative analysis demonstrates that the “History’s” account of the founding of the New Jerusalem Monastery narrative was taken from Filippov’s novel. All aspects of
the Old Believer narrative, including the alleged founding ceremony, Nikon’s speech and the quote attributed to the boyars were directly plagiarized from that work. However, the their meaning in the “History” take on completely different meanings due to their recontextualization within the Old Believer account.

Filippov’s fiction about founding of New Jerusalem was intended to support his primary claim that Nikon strove to unite Slavic churches and Slavic lands rule of the Russian Tsar. Filippov credited Nikon with the idea that religious unity of all Orthodox Slavic nation was a prerequisite for political unification. Filippov further contend that “Nikon’s correction of books ... represented none other than the unification of all Slavic Churches.... By conceiving the reform of significant for all Slavic peoples and understanding that religious unity would lead to political alliance Nikon built the New Jerusalem Monastery .... The Monastery was intended as a seat for the Patriarch of all Slavs and his title would have been patriarch of New Jerusalem.” In other, words Filippov praised Nikon as early Panslavist visionary.

The “History” not only included, but effectively countered Filippov’s commentary on the significance of the New Jerusalem Monastery. In the Old Believer account, the emphasis in is placed on the boyar’s supposed charge that Nikon wanted to be a “new pope.” While Filippov’s text moved on to hail Nikon as a predecessor of Peter I, the Old Believer account took a opposite turn.

The “History” employed the same line of thought to clarify Nikon’s falling out with Aleksei Mikhailovich and his departure from Moscow.97 The boyars, led by Streshnev, continued to harp on the idea that Nikon intended to make himself a “new

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96 Ibid, 64-66.  
97 In doing so the author filled the vagaries of Shusherin’s “Life of Nikon”. See 66.
pope” and called for his removal. The Tsar, dissatisfied with Nikon’s repeated requests for additional building funds, began to listen to the boyars.

The effect of the boyar’s claim that Nikon strove to become a “new pope” is manifest in the following conversation between Aleksei Mikhailovich and Tatiana Mikhailovna. When Nikon learned that the boyars planned to depose him, he asked Tatiana to approach her brother. The Tsar told his sister “Up to this time, his [Nikon’s] intention was to break all the old traditions. Maybe he will soon damn my house and his damned New Jerusalem will be named new Rome where Nikon be a new Pope. It is necessary, my sister, to demonstrate his evil intentions in order to destroy them”. Otherwise, “he will take both state and clerical power in his iron hands. After that, it will be impossible to save the Romanov Dynasty.” Then, the Tsar advised Tatiana “not to support Nikon.” Aleksei Mikhailovich, who intended to limit the Patriarch’s power, clearly refused to forgive Nikon.98

**Nikon’s Retreat from Moscow**

The “History’s” largely fictitious account, of the Patriarch’s life in the period between his departure from Moscow and trial is replete with illicit love affairs, international intrigues and dramatic chase scenes. It forwards unprecedented new images of the Patriarch, based to large extent, on ideas originating in Filippov’s novel. While Nikon’s relationships with women and foreigners continue to shape his ideas and actions, the Patriarch becomes increasing desperate and insecure. His supposed attempts to retain some semblance of his previous power cause him to flee Russia and take up arms. Here,

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98 GRB OR f. 17 no. 140, 70.

387
Nikon appears much like a popular antihero from a nineteenth-century adventure story than an actual historical figure.  

The first hint of Nikon's change of character appears when the Tsar and boyars asked Nikon if he would either return to patriarchal throne or allow some else be elected as his heir apparent. On this occasion, "Nikon's eyes lit with the former pride and his old dreams revived. He wanted to reconcile with Tsar and become Patriarch of Russia again." When Tsar reluctantly agreed to invite the Patriarch to Moscow, the "formerly proud Nikon was meek and polite and kind." He blessed royal family and said that he prayed relentlessly for the Tsar's household while he was at New Jerusalem. However, when the Tsar did not make Nikon's dreams come true, the Patriarch began receptive to other, paths to power.  

The author goes on to allege that Nikon's bid to gain power by becoming the Patriarch of Kiev, like his previous rise through the Russian hierarchy, was instigated and forwarded by women. The account of Natalia's and Tatiana's efforts to bring Nikon back from political oblivion reads like a nineteenth century adventure story. The following paragraphs summarize the gist of Nikon's failed trips to the Ukraine.  

When Nikon's possessions in the patriarchal palace and the lands given to New Jerusalem were returned to the state, he consulted Tatiana Mikhailovna and "his pushy wife nun Natalia". Together they hatched a new conspiracy. Tatiana gave Natalia large amount of gold and sent her to the Ukraine to bribe the nobles and clergy there to establish new Kievian patriarchate. Natalia, still disguised as a nun, went to the Ukraine. She lived in the camp of hetman and, "using her pushiness and adroitness," convinced the

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100 GRB OR f.17 no. 140, 82-84.
hetman, noblemen and clergy to accept Nikon as the patriarch of a new Kievian Patriarchate. Natalia, together with the hetman, formulated a plot to deliver Nikon to the Ukraine.101

Natalia returned to New Jerusalem with “secret ambassadors” from hetman Iurii Khmel’nitskii. She told Nikon that the entire Ukraine was expecting him. There, he would be accepted with great honor as a Patriarch. Moreover, the Ukrainians would give him all the churches in the country. However, although “Nikon expected the invitation and received it with impatience,” he thought it was necessary to discuss the matter with Tatiana Mikhailovna. Natalia hoped that Tsarevna would agree “so that they could all run away to Ukraine together”.102

Nikon’s “sneaky wife” went directly to Tatiana Mikhailovna. The Tsarevna, anxious about the results of her bribery, was interested in Ukrainian opinion about Nikon. Natalia explained that the Ukrainians “would like to declare him new pope.” Then, she outlined the plot. According to this new conspiracy, Cossacks, posing as potential monks, would soon arrive at New Jerusalem with “special letters” for Nikon. The Patriarch would disguise himself as a Cossack in order to hide from the Tsar and boyars, and run away. The only problem was that Nikon “could not decide without Tatiana’s permission.” The Tsarevna said “I would like to visit him immediately.” Then, the nun asked “how can you leave this palace? You will be discovered and let our Lord save you, because it is known that you are going to New Jerusalem.” Tatiana replied, “a lot of eyes are looking for me and for Nikon, but I can take care of myself. I have a lot of nun’s clothes. My trusted servant and I will put them on and veil our faces. In such manner, we will depart

101 Ibid, 86ob-87.
102 Ibid, 88-88ob.
and no one will pay attention”. Refusing to allow Tatiana to go alone, Natalia explained that Nikon told her secret ways where we will be able to escape detection. At this, “Tsarevna turned her head whispered ‘I also know these secret ways.’” Soon, two unknown nuns emerged from the palace and drove to New Jerusalem.\(^\text{103}\)

It was midnight. Natalia stopped horses, told the Tsarevna about a small, unknown road and directed her to the monastery oak. The Tsarevna went to the oak and saw a large man sitting in the darkness of night. The man, of course was Nikon. The Patriarch saw someone approach as he sat beneath the oak. He “recognized the beautiful Tsarevna Tatiana Mikhailovna despite her black nun dress.” He stood up and hugged her. “I am worried my beautiful Tsarevna that someone will recognize you because there are a lot of spies around me here. Do not worry, my sisters will conceal my departure. I arrived here to ask you to run away from here as soon as possible because a council is planing to condemn you and send you to prison. In Kiev, you will have great honor and full might. All your friends will join you there.” Tatania explained that she already had a plan to meet him. “I will run away and no one will stop me. I will dress in masculine clothes.” Encouraged by these words, Nikon agreed to the women’s plot. Natalia and Tatiana returned to Moscow. They are no longer mentioned in the text.\(^\text{104}\)

This series of events depicts Nikon as completely dependent on women. His wife promotes him among Ukrainians, conducts negotiations with the Cossacks and formulates a plan for his escape. Tatiana funds the plot and provides Nikon with intelligence about the Tsar’s stratagem against him. Despite these well-laid plans, a worried and even

\(^{103}\) Ibid, 89ob-90.

\(^{104}\) Ibid, 91-93ob.
insecure Nikon hesitates to act without the Tsarevna’s approval. Without female assistance and deception Nikon is broken and lost.

The idea of a love triangle between Nikon, his former wife, nun Natalia, and Tatiania Mikhailovna clearly and the women’s plot to make Nikon Patriarch of Kiev comes from Filippov’s work. In the historical novel Tatiana secretly pines for Nikon and is a driving force behind the plan to unite Russia and the Ukraine. However they plan itself is designed and executed by Natalia. To achieve these goals Natalia even visits Kiev and meets with hetman Bogdan Khmel’nitskii under the pretext of reclaiming her inheritance confiscated by Poles. Khmel’nitskii, himself holds Nikon high esteem and conditions his [Khmel’nitskii’s] acceptance of an alliance with Russia on Nikon’s being Patriarch of Russia. Should Nikon be removed from the patriarchal throne, Khmel’nitskii vows to ally himself with Tatars against the Russian Tsar. 105

The “History” introduced a dramatic account of Nikon’s ill-fated attempt to fulfill the plot hatched by his wife. In the middle of the night, “Nikon took of his clothes, tied his hair in a knot, put on big Cossack hat and dress and became unrecognizable. He really looked like leader of the Cossacks.” Thus disguised, Nikon and his accomplices, slipped outside the monastery with great caution. Then, they began to rush through the night. One of the Jews assigned to spy on Nikon later reported that “I woke up at night and saw how the Patriarch escaped dressed as Cossack with sword and revolver in his belt.” The Tsar ordered local boyar Bogdan to lead the chase for Nikon. Bogdan, accompanied with streltzi, soon found the trace of Nikon and besieged the house where he was spending the

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night. Nikon pleaded to be allowed to go to Kiev. The boyar, following the Tsar’s order, returned the Patriarch to New Jerusalem and increased the security.\(^{106}\)

The author twisted what Shusherin presented as a false accusation against the Patriarch. According to Shusherin, Nikon said that he spoke the Psalm not against the Tsar, but against Bogdan because the latter had seized some of the land that the Patriarch had bought from him. Shusherin also explained that the interrogation of monks at the New Jerusalem Monastery was conducted while they were “under the arrest of Moscow strelzii.” The security was so tight that when Nikon, together with other monks intended to make bricks, the strelzi presented an decree from the Tsar forbidding him to leave the monastery which was surrounded. This situation lasted a month. After the end of this conflict “they told Tsar a lot of lies and rumors about Nikon.”

According to the Old Believer tale, Nikon became enraged at both the boyar and Tsar because the later took away his estates. Then, during the religious service in New Jerusalem Nikon, instead of praying for Tsar, was heard reciting from the prophet David, “May his days be short and his sons be orphaned and his wife be a widow.” When this information reached the tsar, he convened a council of clergy and boyars. They decided to send a delegation to investigate and interrogate Nikon. When the committee arrived at the monastery, Nikon called them “Jews besieging Christ.” The delegation retired for the night, but planned to continue the interrogation. Nikon became afraid he would be imprisoned. He told his household not to allow the delegation into his chambers the following day.\(^{107}\)

\(^{106}\) Ibid, 96 ob-97ob.

\(^{107}\) See Shusherin 180-81 and note 75, 226-7. According to Shusherin, Nikon said that he spoke the Psalm not against the Tsar, but against Bogdan because the latter had seized some of the land that the Patriarch had bought from him. Shusherin also explained the interrogation of monks at the New Jerusalem Monastery was conducted while they were “under the arrest of Moscow strelzii”. The security was so tight
The narrator expanded Shusherin’s comment that there were “a lot of lies and rumors about Nikon” into tale of sensational adventure reflecting mid nineteenth century circumstances including the already mentioned Polish rebellion of 1863-1864. That night, Nikon and two servants, “Olshevskii the Pole and Dalmatov the German,” “dressed themselves in peasant clothes and secretly departed from the monastery. Nikon wanted to go Kiev. He hid swords and pistols underneath his dress. Another chase, this one headed by boyar Streshnev, ensued. Streshnev eventually caught up with the Patriarch, “but did not dare apprehend Nikon in broad day light as he had too few streltzi. He was also afraid that Nikon would appeal to villagers who could assist.” Nikon decided to make a break for the woods while his streltzi, armed with swords, attacked the pursuers. The confrontation came to a head when Streshnev explained that he acted on the Tsar’s orders and produced an ukaz from the first pursuit. Nikon looked at the document and screamed “woe to me. There is no peace for me. You are worse than all the Jews. It is worse than King Herod’s persecution. Christ was pushed from city to city but he was not persecuted. I want to leave and you prevent me I want to go to Kiev. I left everything for you. I carry only my sinful body, and even that I cannot have. Let me out of your sinfulness and decay. I will not come back with you.” After Nikon prohibited his aggressive servants to use their arms, Streshnev ordered streltzi to capture him Nikon’s servants were also arrested. All were brought to New Jerusalem. 108

Among the negative foreign protagonists, the character of Nikon’s Polish accomplice is most developed. He is supplied with an authentic Polish name. For nineteenth-century audiences, the Pole Olshevskii definite rang true. Just like the restless
Polish subjects of the Russian Empire Olshevskii is the enemy within. He betrays the Russian Tsar and associates with the most subversive elements within Russia itself, i.e., Nikon. Although divided by faith Olshevskii, nonetheless is ready to abed Russia internal enemies. In other works, Olshevskii is presented as a unscrupulous opportunist, and image not far removed from the from both official and popular treatments of the Polish rebels.

Compared to Olshevskii, “Dalmatov the German,” Nikon’s other outlaw servant is authentic, his last name appears to be of Turkish origin, not German. Perhaps in this case the term nemets is used more generically and refers to all foreigners. Thus Damatov symbolizes any insidious foreigner operating in Russia. Regardless of nationality, what matters is the intent both Dalmatov and Olshevskii, conspiracy to protect Nikon.

Nikon’s Trial

The “History” devotes more space to Nikon’s trial than any other aspect of the Patriarch’s life or deeds. It includes a large body of information not found in the early Old Believer tales and provides a much more complete account of the proceedings against the Patriarch. Unlike the earlier Old Believer description, which focused on the final, sentencing phase of the trial, the “History” provided a detailed account of what transpired on all three days of the proceedings against the Patriarch (December 1, 5, and 12, 1666). The later Old Believer work closely followed, and in most cases directly quoted, the transcripts of the proceedings against the Patriarch published by Russian historians and novelists in the mid nineteenth century. The specificity of various aspects presented in the

lasted a month. After the end of this conflict “they told Tsar a lot of lies and rumors about Nikon”.

108 GRB OR f. 17 no. 140,100ob-104ob.

109 Although in contemporary Russian nemets unambiguously means “German,” in earlier vernacular the term usually referred to foreigners. Nemets is derived from nemoi – mute.
“History,” such as the dialogues between Nikon, the Tsar and the universal patriarchs, and the detailed descriptions of events and the physical settings, all prove that it was based on work of mainstream Russian historical scholarship.\(^{110}\)

The treatment of Nikon’s trial forwarded in the “History” is obviously an effort to emulate and/or to compete with the advances in nineteenth-century scholarship on the Patriarch. By directly quoting the trial transcripts, as presented in both the published primary sources and the narratives of Russian historians without significant interjections, or the usual Old Believer commentary, the “History” lets the sources stand on their own. This method of presenting the primary sources of Nikon’s trial was dominant in nineteenth-century historical scholarship. Both pro- and anti-Nikon historians, including S. M. Solov’ev, Metropolitan Makarii, and Gibbenet as well as the historical novelist Filippov, all favored this practice. In short, the “History” displays the same characteristics as the mainstream historical scholarship on Nikon’s trial, both in terms of content, form and method.\(^{111}\)

Judging from the content of other sections of the “History” discussed above, it appears likely that the Old Believer account was based on Filippov’s, Metropolitan Makarii and/or Gibbenet’s work. Thus, the “History” shows that Old Believer writers continued the practice of employing official sources in the construction of narratives about Nikon trial begun in the early eighteenth century. Not content with traditional explanations, they chose to update their own accounts by including the most recent

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\(^{110}\) GRB OR f. 17 no. 140,117-134.

\(^{111}\) Makarii (Bulgakov) Istoriiia russkoi tserkvi bk 7, 345-370. N. Gibbenet, Istoricheskoe issledovanie dela Patriarkha Nikona pt. 2 (St. Petersburg: Tipografia Ministerstva Vnutreennikh Del, 1882), 319-373; S. M. Soloviev, History of Russia from Earliest Times vol. 21 T. A. Smith ed. and trans. (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 2000) 80-96; Filippov, 475-499. The transcripts of Nikon’s trial were published as appendices Gibbenet’s work. See “Zapiska s nekotorymi podrobnostями o sobornom
research on the Patriarch. However, nineteenth-century historical scholarship concerning
Nikon’s trial was not the only influence detectable in the illustrated versions of the
“History.”

An artistic image titled “Nikon’s Trial” usually accompanied the accounts of the
Patriarch’s trial presented in the “History.” This comparatively large image covers two
entire leaves. It depicts the opening of the official proceedings against the Patriarch. In
the image, Nikon stands in the middle of the space. He is dressed in black klobuk and
patriarchal mantel. He holds a patriarchal staff in his right hand. A figure denoted as
“Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich” is directly in front of Nikon. The Tsar stands raised on a
platform is leaning over a table with an open book. He is dressed in royal attire and tsar’s
crown. His right hand is outstretched as if in the act of presenting charges against Nikon.
On the Tsar’s right sit four church hierarchs wearing black klobuks. To their right sit three
figures, in secular dress denoted as “boyars.” A series of three large arched windows and
an arched ceiling situated behind the seated figures complete the image.112

Comparative analysis of this image with other artistic depictions of Nikon’s trial
circulating in late nineteenth-century Russia proves that it was based on/inspired by non-
Old Believer imagery. More precisely, the Old Believer work may be traced directly to A.
Zemtsov’s original drawing “Patriarch Nikon’s Trial” (1892). This work was published in
the thick, illustrated journal Niva the same year the image was created.113

zasedanii 1-go dekabria 1666 g.,” Gibbenet, pt. 2, 1042-1061, and “Ob’iavlenie patriarkhu Nikonu
patriarshego postanovleniia o nizlozhenii ego c patriarshego prestola,” in Gibbenet, pt. 2, 1098-1099.
112 BAN 45.4.9, l. 19ob-20; BAN 45.5.9, l. 117ob-118; BAN sobranie Kalakina 49, l. 67ob-68.
113 A. Zemtsov, “Sud nad Patriarkhom Nikonom” (engraver Shubler), Niva no. 5 8 May 1892, 109.
These are not the only examples of Old Believers’ copying artwork published in Niva. BAN Sobranie
Kargopol. 68, l. 6ob features a miniature of the painting “Presledovanie russkogo platiia pri Petre
Velikom” published in Niva no. 45 1892. Both images picture Peter I’s soldiers cutting the traditional long
sleeved dress off of men. See the discussion on the impact that artistic images reproduced in Niva had on
Russian society in Brooks 162-163.

396
The general composition and finer details of the Old Believer imagery closely match Zemtsov’s original work. Especially noteworthy are the parallels in the depiction of both the physical setting and human figures. The Old Believer art closely replicates architectural features, including windows and rounded arches, presented in the published image. The representation of people both in images is also strikingly similar. The depiction of Nikon standing before the court, the seated position of the church hierarchs and the boyars as well as the depiction of the Tsar all mirror Zemtsov’s work.

While the Old Believer artwork has much in common with the image published in Niva it is more than a simple copy. Old Believer artists modified Zemtsov’s image in several ways. Most striking difference is the artistic style employed. By using the artistic style characteristic of the hand-painted lubki, the Old Believer artist transformed the mass-produced image into a distinctive piece of folk art and made it more accessible to simple folk. The image in the “History” also introduced new aspects into the content of the original. It featured symbols, i.e., an opened book and the patriarchal zhezl, not found in the published artwork, but employed extensively in both the Old Believer writings and iconography. These inclusions made the image more relevant for Old Believer audiences by connecting it with more traditional representations of the Patriarch. Moreover, the Old Believer images are more historically accurate and attentive to material cultural details than Zemtsov’s work. Unlike the published image which depicts Nikon, wearing a white klobuk, the Old Believer artwork closely follows the written narrative and correctly represents the Patriarch wearing a black klobuk.

The written and artistic representations of Nikon’s trial presented in the “History” correspond with philosophies and practices dominant in nineteenth-century Russia. Both testify to the Old Believers’ increasing willingness to incorporate mainstream societal
representations and conceptions of the Patriarch into their own works both literary and artistic. Clearly, Old Believers were intent on keeping up-to-date with the ideas about the Patriarch proliferating in both Russian educated society and popular culture. In short, the written and artistic representations of Nikon’s trial presented in the “History” provide conclusive proof that Old Believer images of Nikon produced in the late imperial period continued to be shaped by non-Old Believer literature and art. Old Believers readily incorporated and transformed both written and artistic images of Nikon appearing in the second half of the nineteenth-century into their own unique representations of the Patriarch.

Exile and Death

The “History’s” account of Nikon’s exile and death are largely the same as the one presented in the “Story About Nikon.” The new, condensed story concerning Nikon’s captivity at the Ferapontov Monastery emphasized the claim, that Nikon created an island in the adjacent lake and erected a “four-part cross” on it in order to communicate with the devil. In a significant departure from the earlier narrative, this tales asserts that Natalia Krilovna, Aleksei Mikhailovich’s second wife, pushed Tsar Fedor Alekseevich to allow Nikon to return to the New Jerusalem Monastery. The abridged mention of Nikon death focused on the earlier tale’s mention that, before being interred at New Jerusalem, the Patriarch’s body spent time in the “Christ’s prison.” This section is most notable for the artistic images it includes.114

The “History” concludes with three sets of images. Neither corresponds to the written text. All are important manifestations of “art of reform.” The first is an image
titled “The Vine Brought from Egypt.” It depicts a complex scene and highly symbolic scene. A larger than-life sized “Tsar David” stands in the center of the image. He is dressed in royal attire, like that wore in earlier depictions of Aleksei Mikhailovich, cape and crown resembling the one worn by Nikon in the image “Devils Crown Nikon.” He holds a scroll in his right hand. The text on the scroll reads “The vine brought from Egypt.” “David’s” left hand points to the symbolic vine. Its roots visibly spread under his feet and cover the section bottom of the image which illustrated the earth/ground. The vine has bunches of grapes at the tips of its six branches. More importantly, a hand depicting the traditional two-finger blessing and three three-part crosses, some with spear and sponge, are depicted as sprouting from different places on the vine. Two Tsar David’s right, three smaller plants emerge from the ground. They are connected to the larger vine via its root system. The smaller plants have churches topped with three-part crosses emerging from them. A hand making a two-finger blessing is visible in the top left corner of the image.

This image concerns Russia’s inheritance of the “ancient piety” from the ancient past. The, vine, is an important symbol in Orthodoxy. It signifies heavenly paradise. The idea that the signs of the ancient faith, i. e., the “three-part cross, emerged from the vine confirms the source and legitimacy. The fingers in the upper corner of the image signify “God’s” approval of the three-part Cross and its transfer from Egypt. The image of the “The Vine Brought from Egypt,” including the sprouting signs of the Old Belief, played an important role in the “art of reform.”

114 GRB OR f. 17 no. 140, 133ob-134, 137ob-138. Compare this brief account with the “Story About Nikon,” Borozdin, 166-168.

115 See for example “David’s Psalm about Planting Vine” (Mid-nineteenth century. Ink, pencil, tempera 33.4x43.3) in E. I. Itkina, Russkii risovannyi lubok kontsa XVIII-nachala XX veka iz sostavleniia gosudarstvennoi istoricheskogo muzeia Moskva (Moscow: Russkaia Kniga, 1992), plate 116.
The "The Vine Brought from Egypt" is accompanied by another image on the facing page. This illustration depicts the three figures noted to be the "beast," the "serpent" and the "false prophet of the apocalypse." The first figure depicts a (Russian) ruler in military uniform. The figure has long hair, a western mustache, but no beard. A crown with a two-part Latin cross sits on his head. His left hand holds a scepter topped with a double-headed eagle. A frog/toad springs from his mouth. The second figure or "beast" resembles the head of a dragon. It looks like the "snake" depicted earlier in the image "Nikon with the Tsar." A toad also jumps from its open mouth. The third figure depicts Nikon dressed in black klobuk. He crams a branch of the vine shown in the previous image, complete with bunch of grapes and a three-part cross, into his open mouth. A toad leaps from the same orifice.

This image highlights figures associated with the elimination of the ancient faith. The beast, the serpent and the false prophet of the apocalypse closely associated with eschatological predictions about the end of the world and the coming of the Antichrist. The beast closely resembles Tsar Peter I. The two-part cross on his crown clearly associate the Tsar with Nikon, the Latin "heresy" and foreignness. This negative depiction of the Russian ruler, including the scepter with double-headed eagle, stands in stark contrast to the larger narratives favorable assessment of the Romanov Dynasty. The figure denoted as false prophet of the apocalypse is obviously Patriarch Nikon. The depiction of facial features and black klobuk as the same as those presented earlier. Nikon’s act of devouring the fruit of the vine and the three-part cross is significant on several levels. It presents Nikon as destroying he ancient piety. More specifically, it
associates the introduction of the black klobuk with the abuse of the Cross. The act of eating, combined with the title false prophet reinforce Nikon’s image as wolf (predator) as well as wolf in sheep’s skin. The depiction of the “serpent” as its self completes the tripartite construction of the image. The serpent’s position behind and in between the other two figures that it controls them. This iconography plays a significant role in the Old Believer “art of reform.” It has numerous variations, all of which include Nikon. 116

Conclusions

This chapter provided a comparative analysis of the verbal and artistic images of Patriarch Nikon comprised in the late nineteenth-century Old Believer anthology of tales, titled the “History About Patriarch Nikon, Eliminator of the Ancient Orthodox Faith.” It is the second of two chapters which trace Old Believer representations of Nikon from the late seventeenth century to late nineteenth century. The findings presented here confirm further my central argument that the Old Believer tales about Patriarch Nikon were complex constructions that shaped and were shaped by a multidirectional movement of ideas that flowed both from above and below as well as across confessional lines.

Drawing attention to both the continuities and changes in Old Believer depiction of the Patriarch, the chapter demonstrated that although the core elements of the early Old Believer tales continued to be copied and refined into the modern period, other facets of Nikon’s image were continuously recast and expanded to include ever-greater cross sections of Russian political, religious, artistic and popular culture(s). The verbal and artistic texts of the “History” reflect a variety of nineteenth-century contexts. These include social factors such as spread of Old Belief, political concepts and policies,

116 See for example BAN 45.4.9, l. 43; BAN 21.11.5, l. 454; IRLI Drevlekhranilishche sobranie

401
including Panslavism and Russification, as well as broader cultural processes, especially the advance of historical scholarship, and the proliferation of popular illustrated literature, and societal fascination with Russian antiquities. This was the case because the "History" was designed to present an updated version of the traditional Old Believer tales about Nikon that countered the proliferation of new ideas about and images of the Patriarch appearing in late imperial Russian society. Taken together, the written and painted texts that comprised the "History" epitomize the evolution of the Old Believer literature about Nikon.

This study shows that the artistic images presented in the "History" are more than mere illustrations of the written word. On the contrary, they are unique, complex, and valuable sources of historical and cultural information. The pictorial texts both reflect and shape the meaning(s) of verbal narratives. They clarify concepts not explainable in words alone, especially references to signs and symbols of the old and new faiths, and add crucial information not evident in the written texts, such as human action/reaction.

The folk artistic style of the hand-painted lubki and their content were obviously created by and designed to appeal to ordinary people. The images make the often complex ideas and concepts expressed in the "History" accessible to all levels of Russian society, including peasants, the illiterate and children, by presenting information in a familiar visual form and by connecting it with well known folk themes. The pictorial images, much more than the written narrative, give the common folk a central role in the rejection of Patriarch Nikon and his deeds. In sum, the artistic images in the "History" effectively portray Nikon, and, by association, the "Nikonian Church," as detached from the common

Peretza 625, l. 25ob.

402
people. The images also clearly present ordinary people as the primary defenders of the ancient faith.

Research of the written and artistic texts included in the “History” proves the continued interaction of ideas about Patriarch Nikon across the confessional divide. In addition to countering the saintly images presented in Shusherin’s seventeenth-century biography of Nikon, the “History” readily embraced the proliferation of scholarly and popular literature about Nikon that appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century. The inclusions of recently published seventeenth-century accounts of Nikon’s destruction of icons and primary sources of the Patriarch’s trial made available in Gibbenet’s, Metropolitan Makarii’s, and Solov’ev’s histories are highly significant in this regard. Equally important are the wholesale quotation and/or modification of key passages and ideas from Filippov’s historical novel, Patriarch Nikon found throughout the “History.” These borrowings provided the basis for the formulation of the Patriarch’s image in terms of the other, i.e., women, and resulted in Nikon’s connection with modern concepts, such as Panslavism. In short, much of the newly introduced materials and ideas presented in the “History” are based on and/or react against the new scholarship and ideas about Nikon appearing in conventional Russian society, not Old Believer sources.

The construction of the “History” was not shaped by written texts alone. Both written references to and artistic renderings of specific material cultural objects and symbols found in the “History” reflect nineteenth-century scholarship as well as the actual display of and/or commentaries on antiquities associated with Patriarch Nikon. However, unlike the historical realist painters discussed in the third chapter of the
dissertation, namely, Nevrev, Litovchenko, and Miloradovich, who employed original material cultural artifacts in order to make their depictions of the Patriarch realistic and historically accurate, the goal of the Old Believer artists was different. While tapping into the broader societal fascination with antiquities, their intent was to connect material cultural symbols, such as Nikon’s mitra and black klobuk, and objects, especially Nikon’s everyday dress, with negative connotations by incorporating personal belongings into pictures depicting the Patriarch’s alleged crimes against God and man. The anachronistic representation of Nikon dressed in a black klobuk with pearl cherub while introducing the three-finger style of blessing, as well as the Patriarch’s repeated depiction wearing a mitra while abusing people and symbols of the faith, i.e., beating Bishop Pavel, smashing icons and burning “holy books,” all illustrate this important point.

This line of representation is important on yet another level. It offers additional evidence illustrating that the artifacts pertaining to Nikon that were promoted by both the church and state impacted Russian society beyond the walls of museums and the pages of commemorative publications and anti-Old Believer polemics. The efforts to co-opt antiquities belonging to Nikon manifest in the “History” demonstrate that Old Believers perceived the official use of artifacts as a significant, influential practice which needed to be countered, neutralized and reversed. In this sense, the artistic depiction of material cultural objects belonging to Nikon is comparable to the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century tales’ refutations of Nikons’ ability to heal the sick, a point discussed in the previous chapter. Both shed light onto the extremely significant, but completely

117 Nineteenth-century fiction about Nikon appears to play much the same role in the “History” that rumors attributed to ordinary people played in the “Testimony,” “Life of Korniliu“ and “Story About Nikon.”
ignored struggle waged between pro- and anti-Nikon factions to control popular conceptions of the Patriarch.

The research presented in this chapter indicates that artistic images of the Patriarch disseminated in print throughout late nineteenth-century Russian society have a definite effect on Old Believer conceptions of the Patriarch. Comparative analysis of the picture “Nikon on Trial” showed that Old Believer artists were familiar with and eager to employ mass-produced copies of original artwork portraying Nikon published in the popular press. Recognizing the potential of the original work by artist Zemstov, they copied its content and structure, but transformed it by repainting it in a folk style and by recontextualizing it within the larger Old Believer narrative. This practice, like the use of ancient material cultural objects, clearly confirms that the artistic images presented in the “History” reflect and react against, and thus shape broader trends in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century religious and artistic culture.

In conclusion, this comparative investigation of “History” suggests that it is by far the most inclusive and complex effort to depict Patriarch Nikon ever created. The “History” contains an amazingly diverse body of ideas about Nikon and employs an equally elaborate set of narrative and iconographic strategies and styles, drawn from and accessible to all levels of Russian society. The “History’s” inclusive nature combines both classic Old Believer tales with nineteenth-century scientific historical research as well as historical fiction and folk art. It testifies not only to the complexity of Old Believer images of Nikon, but sheds new light onto the mainstream societal conceptions.

118 It is possible that the inclusion of antiquities in the “History” was part of an ongoing polemic between the Old Belivers and the official church and state.
and representations of the Patriarch that circulated across all levels of late imperial Russian society.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

*Images... have their own historical value.*
-Nicholas Riasanovsky, *The Image of Peter the Great in Russian History and Thought*

This dissertation traced and analyzed the pervasive and malleable image of Patriarch Nikon in Russian history and culture from the mid-seventeenth century to the early twentieth century. Its main goal was to broaden the parameters of studying Patriarch Nikon. Throughout this work, I argued that traditional histories fail to recognize Patriarch Nikon’s lasting significance in Russian history and culture for two reasons. First, they are based entirely on written sources and limited to Nikon’s tenure as Patriarch. Second, they omit analysis of art and material culture.

This work investigated the ways in which images of Nikon, both written and artistic, reflected and actively engendered ideas and discourses not only about the Patriarch, but about larger issues in Russian history, especially those issues central to relationships between church, state, and society. By analyzing in depth the Patriarch’s self-presentation, and his depiction by contemporaries, the dissertation provides a solid foundation upon which to assess how and why later artists, historians, churchmen, rulers, intellectuals, and ordinary people appropriated existing images and created new representations of the Patriarch for their own purposes.
I took an interdisciplinary, cultural-historical approach which adopted the perspective of "total history" and analyzed the creation and reception of Patriarch Nikon's image across all levels of Russian society, in various artistic and literary genres over a long period of time. My method draws upon and synthesizes recent theoretical and methodological paradigms in cultural studies. As noted in the introduction, scholars studying the history of artistic images, representations of historical figures, and the cultural history of Russian Orthodoxy inspired the modes of investigation practiced here. By combining traditional art historical investigations with iconographical, semiological, documentary and textual analyses, I considered images of Nikon at the points of production and reception and paid close attention to their content and form. Analysis of Nikon's representation in art and literature employed both interpretive methodologies intended to explicate images' meanings in specific contexts and deconstructive strategies designed to comprehend "how they worked" on their audiences. The study of art and artifacts related to the Patriarch did not result in the neglect of political, intellectual or institutional history. On the contrary, my research into these overlooked sources and their use elucidated previously neglected aspects of Russian political, institutional, and religious history and culture.

Rather than simply accepting and perpetuating strict sets of dichotomies used to define Nikon's image, I aimed to determine whether or not they were in fact as distinct and exclusive as they first appeared and/or were purported to be. By investigating both sides of dichotomies - including old/new, elite/popular,
Orthodox/heresy, and Russian/non-Russian – and by tracking their construction and use over time, I was able to rethink and challenge certain long-held accepted assumptions central to Russian history and culture.

Of equal value to me was the recovery of the “lived experience.” I strove to understand the significance of all types of literary and artistic representations of Patriarch Nikon for the ideas and values they exhibited and the specific roles they played in Russian cultural life at different points in time. For example, Old Believer tales about Nikon formulated in the late-nineteenth century were given equal weight as the ones first recorded by Nikon’s contemporary deacon Fedor; and inexpensive, mass-produced engravings based on the parsuna “Patriarch Nikon With Clergy” were just as useful as the seventeenth-century original representations in terms of the formulation and evolution of Nikon’s image. However, the dissertation did more than simply include the other sources. It highlighted the connections and exchanges of ideas about and depictions of the Patriarch within genres both literary (scholarly history and Old Believer tales) and artistic, (historical realist art and hand painted lubkii), as well as illuminated the interplay between them, (the impact historical fiction had on the creation and reception of historical Realist paintings).

While not a study of aesthetics per se, this work emphasizes that style, form, media and size of artwork depicting Nikon are important aspects of artistic modes of production. These aspects proved crucial to understanding how images worked on their audiences and, conversely, how people responded to them. My analysis of the parsuna “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” is a prime example of this point. Because of
its life-sized proportions, highly realistic style, attention to detail, and remarkable depiction of the Patriarch's face, *parsuna* became accepted as the best and most accurate representation of his physical features. Therefore, it became the canonical source employed by later artists seeking to create new images of the Patriarch.

This study also emphasized the promotion and exhibition of original seventeenth-century artistic images of and artifacts belonging to the Patriarch as factors crucial to the formulation and reception of his image across all levels of Russian society. I found that whether they were displayed, in an actual exhibition or published as artistic reproductions, and whatever the intent or presumptive audience, images of Nikon that appeared in mainstream Russian society were couched almost exclusively in positive terms. In short, artistic images were used to commemorate, not denigrate Nikon. Therefore, people exposed to Nikon-related artistic images and material cultural objects were more likely to have positive conceptions of the Patriarch, a point dealt with in more detail below. This was especially the case in hybrid representations, such as the plethora of biographies about Nikon featuring engravings based on the *parsuna* "Patriarch Nikon with Clergy," in which favorable written texts and artistic images mutually reinforced each other.

Accepting the notion that the knowledge an audience brings to an image is/can be as important as what viewers find in it, I studied commentaries on and reactions to art depicting the Patriarch in an effort to comprehend broader societal conceptions of Nikon.¹ The investigation of published reviews of the historical Realist paintings of

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Nikon by Nevrev, Litovchenko and Miloradovich featured at *Peredvizhniki* exhibits in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was particularly fruitful in this regard. My study of these reviews added new dimensions to Nikon’s image in Russian culture by providing the views of individuals other than historians and of those directly involved in creating and/or promoting the Patriarch’s image. The reviews tell as much, or even more about Nikon’s resonance as a cultural icon as they do about the specific paintings they addressed. These rich sources provided another way to gauge the impact of discourses on Nikon presented in historical scholarship and other literature devoted to the Patriarch. In sum, they testified to the variety of ideas about Nikon circulating in Russian society and showed that, for the most part, opinions about the Patriarch were not shaped by scholarly histories.

My research went even further to document how art and material culture, promoted by the church and state were negotiated, manipulated and reshaped to serve different purposes. Clearly, Nikon-related art and artifacts affected Russian society beyond the walls of churches, museums, exhibition halls, and the pages of commemorative publications and polemics. Both historical Realist painters and Old Believer artists used art and artifacts promoted in actual displays and in print to create new artistic images of the Patriarch, albeit for completely different reasons. Evidence that Old Believer artists replicated mass-produced copies of original historical paintings attests to circuitous route this process could take. Also important was the practice, common to mainstream Orthodox and Old Believers alike, of extracting mass-produced images of the Patriarch from published materials and...
recontextualizing them to serve other diverse purposes. Equally striking in this regard was the act of displaying of small paper images intended for intimate contact, such as inspiration or devotion and the Old Believer practice of removing images featured in published sources and inserting them into traditional anti-Nikon polemics.

These and other examples presented in the dissertation attest not only to the continued evolution of Nikon's image, but also to the active role individuals, both professional artists and ordinary people, played in the negotiation and reconfiguration of the official discourse on and representation of Nikon. In the archives I found materials suggesting that individuals became fascinated with Nikon and that, in some cases, they became intimately connected with artistic representations of the Patriarch, making them part of their daily lives. While, on the one hand, the promotion, display, and dissemination of Nikon's image, both artistic and verbal, shaped ideas about the Patriarch and larger societal issues, on the other hand, individuals and groups in society continuously transformed existing images and created new ones on their own terms and for their own specific purposes. In short, the formulation of Nikon's image was not a unilinear process imposed from above in either mainstream or dissenting culture, but was altered and reconstructed by human agency at various levels of Russian society and in different periods in Russian history.

New Findings on Patriarch Nikon

The study of original seventeenth-century iconography commissioned by and depicting Patriarch Nikon yielded several important insights. In this regard, the Kii Cross system of imagery and the parsuna "Patriarch Nikon with Clergy" provided the
most important and suggestive sources. The ideas embedded in the Kii system offer important new perspectives on Nikon’s concept of the church-state relationship. The Nikonian iconography stands in sharp contradiction to the widely accepted notion that the Patriarch actively attempted to subject the Russian State, and the tsar, to ecclesiastical or theocratic rule. My reading of the Kii Cross system and the Patriarch’s related writings, especially his Decree Regarding the Krestny Monastery (1656), demonstrate that Nikon aimed to work in harmony with Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and that his attempt to secure ecclesiastical prerogatives depended largely on his and the secular rulers’ joint inheritance of the Constantinian legacy. The Patriarch’s self-depiction in the imagery makes it clear that he did not perceive or present himself as superior to the Tsar. On the contrary, of the persons portrayed, Nikon’s figure is the most humbled.

Nikon gave new impetus to universal Christian and Russian national myths, especially the conception of Russia as the New Israel, popular in the seventeenth century by stressing their immediate relevance. He drew persuasive parallels between the legendary deeds attributed to Constantine and his mother Helen and the actions of the contemporary Romanovs. In doing so, Nikon expanded the traditional interpretations of the Russian inheritance of the Constantinian legacy by adding new aspects regarding the secular rulers’ obligations to the Church. While Nikon assigned gender specific roles to males (military) and females (motherhood) depicted in the iconography, he also gave male and female rulers a common obligation to patronize the monasteries under his control.
Reading Nikon’s reform activities in the context of the Kii Cross system demonstrates that the Patriarch’s revision of church texts included the adoption and “codification” of political and religious doctrines essential to his and the Tsar’s inheritance of the Constantinian legacy. The Patriarch’s reform of specific church rituals prescribed commemorations that reinforced the Muscovite Tsar’s and the Patriarch’s association with the Constantinian heritage and presented Russia as a “holy land.”

Finally the Kii Cross system is central to understanding Nikon’s initiatives important because it represents an early articulation of Nikon’s ultimate iconographic expression, the New Jerusalem Monastery. In the creation of the Kii system, as in the construction of the monastery’s Resurrection Cathedral, Nikon carefully replicated the form of the original prototypes (the True Cross and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem), but transformed them by adding uniquely Russian aspects to their content. This conclusion parallels those presented in Michael Flier’s groundbreaking work on the Patriarch’s reform of the Palm Sunday Ritual and Galina Zelenskaia’s research on the New Jerusalem Monastery. Like these scholars, I show that Nikon’s intent was not to aggrandize his own image, but to recreate in Russia central monuments of the faith which enhanced the image of Russians as the chosen people, their ruler as the New Constantine or New Helen and their homeland as the New Israel.

The results of my investigations of the parsuna “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” complemented those drawn from my investigation of Nikon’s Kii Cross system of
imagery. The *parsuna* both reflected the conditions of its creation and shaped subsequent thought about Nikon by engendering new political, social, religious, and cultural meanings. Like the Kii Cross system of imagery, the *parsuna* represents a complex iconographic expression of the Patriarch’s program of action at a specific time. Considered as part of a larger discourse espoused by Nikon in the mid-1660s, “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” sheds new light on one of the most crucial aspects of his patriarchate, namely, his efforts to retain the patriarchal dignity after his departure from Moscow in 1658. Comparative and iconographical analyses of the art and Nikon’s own written statements suggest that the painting was a visual refutation of the accusations mounting against the Patriarch in the mid-1660s, especially the primary charge that he renounced the patriarchate. Nikon’s self-representation in the *parsuna* and his writings, especially those relating to visions, reinforce his image as “Patriarch” and counter the claims that he abandoned his throne.

In sum, my analysis of Nikon’s Kii system of imagery and the *parsuna* “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy” supported the dissertation’s central arguments. First, it demonstrates that Nikon was a significant and influential patron of the arts, who created comprehensive and lasting iconographic expressions of his principal beliefs and initiatives. Second, its shows Nikon’s iconographic systems outlived him, ironically providing the basis for both Romanov legitimacy and opposition to the autocracy. Finally, it highlights Nikon’s image as a bellwether for larger political, religious and cultural issues in Russian history.

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There is a distinct need for scholarly investigations into the Russian Orthodox Church’s patronage of the arts.
While important in its own right, my study of Patriarch Nikon’s iconographic systems and his self-representation is not an end in itself. On the contrary, it is the starting point for investigations of the Patriarch’s ongoing significance in Russian history and culture. This is the case because Nikon’s image outlived him.

The Resonance of Patriarch Nikon’s Image in Russian History and Culture

A combination of factors explains the persistence, continuities and changes in Nikon’s image in the centuries since his death. These include the existence of original iconographic systems created by Nikon and material cultural sources belonging to him, the Patriarch’s association with the Romanov dynasty, the New Jerusalem Monastery he commissioned, and the schism of the Russian Church. While any one of these factors may have allowed Nikon’s image to survive, together, they insured that it became one of the most enduring ones in Russian history and culture.

The discovery of an ongoing discourse based on art and material culture that stressed the positive relationship between Nikon and the Romanov dynasty, is one of the most original results of my research. Established mutually by Patriarch Nikon and Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and perpetuated by later Russian rulers, both male and female, and their ideologues, this association came to symbolize the unity between church and state. It became a noteworthy aspect of the official policy of “Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality” first adopted in the 1830s and reaffirmed during the period of reaction following the assassination of Alexander II in 1881.

I demonstrated that this positive relationship was based largely on the existence of original artistic and material cultural sources. They included Kii Cross
system of imagery, the *parsuna* "Patriarch Nikon with Clergy" and valuable gifts, especially *mitras*, presented to Nikon by the royal family. These tangible, concrete objects of art were repeatedly referred to as proof of what one exhibition promoted as "the deep piety of our Tsars and their care of our mother church. They are representations of the living union of the church and state or, in other words, of the throne and the altar." ³ This line of representation connected the Patriarch intimately with Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich. It was epitomized by statements, such as "this precious *mitra* symbolizes Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich's special goodwill towards Patriarch whom he called his friend." ⁴ The promotion of a positive relationship between Nikon and the state often distorted seventeenth-century historical reality. The repeated presentation of the *parsuna* "Patriarch Nikon with Clergy," an image commissioned by Nikon as visual proof of his authority at the peak of his conflict with the Tsar in the 1660s, as sign of the close church-state relationship attest to this practice.

The assemblage and display of the art and objects promoted during the celebration of the Romanov dynasty's tercentenary (1913) demonstrates the persistence of this discourse until the end of autocracy. ⁵ The presentation of the Kii Cross system of imagery at the "Church - Archeological Exhibit in Commemoration of the 300-Year Anniversary of the Romanov House" is especially noteworthy in this respect. Strategically displayed last in the series of paintings portraying individual

³ Ukazatel' tserkovno-istoricheskoi vystavki v oznamnenovanie 300 letia tsarstvovaniia doma Romanovych (Moscow: T-vo Skoropechatni A. A. Levinson, 1913), 5-6.
⁴ Drevnosti Rossiiskogo Gosudarstva Otd. I. (Moscow: Tipografia Aleksandra Semena, 1849), 129 and 139 respectively.

417
Russian Patriarchs, including Nikon, and six Romanov rulers, both male and female, the Kii system of imagery provided a fitting conclusion to the display by uniting the otherwise separate depictions of temporal and ecclesiastical leaders into a single iconographic whole. This adroit exhibition highlights yet again the Kii system’s power of associating the Romanov rulers with the Russian Church, embodied by Patriarch Nikon. Presented as the primary illustration of the union of “throne and altar,” the Nikonian imagery, more than any other single work of art, heralded the Romanovs as protectors and patrons of the Church and supported the temporal and religious legitimacy of the dynasty. The practice of connecting Patriarch Nikon to the Romanovs did not pass with the fall of the autocracy in 1917.

Later Soviet efforts to counter the discourse associating the Patriarch with the Romanov dynasty attest to the power, significance and pervasiveness of this association in Russian society. Anti-religion propagandists employed the very same art and artifacts the Romanovs promoted to new ends. Continuing to display the Kii Cross system, the parsuna “Patriarch Nikon with Clergy,” and related material cultural objects, Soviet ideologues changed the contexts of the images offering them as material proof that the combined reactionary forces of the church and state acted together to repress and exploit the Russian masses under the guise of religious piety.

In short, Soviet ideologues followed much the same practices employed earlier in the Old Believer tales about Nikon. They attempted to change the meaning of art and material culture, especially those representing Nikon’s authority as Patriarch, by

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5 Ibid, 133-139.
placing it in new contexts which emphasized their material value rather than their religious significance. By doing so, they aimed to show that displays of wealth associated with Nikon proved that he, and the Orthodox Church in general, exploited and was distant from the masses.

The New Jerusalem Monastery

The New Jerusalem Monastery, the Patriarch’s most comprehensive iconographic system, was crucial to Nikon’s image. As the Patriarch’s premier monastic foundation and burial site, it became the center of Nikon’s commemoration. Thanks to imperial favor - every Romanov ruler visited the monastery - and patronage, including lavish restoration projects, New Jerusalem became an increasingly significant and visible center of Russian religion, history, and art while many other ancient monasteries, including Nikon’s own Iverskii and Kii Monasteries, slipped into decline.

For Russian rulers, New Jerusalem provided more than an opportunity to support the church and display their own piety. The messages ingrained in Nikon’s Kii system, connected them not only with Patriarch Nikon, but with Russian and ancient rulers and saints. By patronizing the monastery they followed not only in the footsteps of previous Romanovs, but Saints Constantine and Helen.

New Jerusalem’s significance was not limited to Russian rulers. Ordinary people made their way to the Monastery beginning in the late-seventeenth century. By the nineteenth century, it was actively promoted in published across all levels of
society as a primary site of Russian religious and cultural life. It was even offered as a viable alternative to pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

The Museum Dedicated to the Memory of Holy Patriarch Nikon, founded by Archimandrite Leonid Kavelin in 1874, was unique. It is the only museum complex dedicated to a single hierarch in the history of the Russian Church. Brilliantly conceived by Kavelin, this comprehensive exhibition of art and artifacts directly connected the celebration of the Patriarch with the New Jerusalem Monastery and nineteenth-century societal interests in Russian history and antiquities.

Images of and artifacts belonging to the Patriarch viewed in the unique contexts of the New Jerusalem Monastery, including both the Resurrection Cathedral and the exhibition halls of the museum, reportedly had a special effect on people of all ranks and social positions. In some cases, they inspired people to make momentous decisions. After repeatedly visiting New Jerusalem and its Golgotha Church while Nikon was still in exile during the late 1670s, Tsar Fedor Alekseevich was so moved that he not only copied Nikon's systems of iconography by commissioning his own copy of the Kii Cross imagery and constructing his own symbolic replication of the Golgotha in the Kremlin's Terem Palace, but decided to rehabilitate the Patriarch. Tsar Paul I was struck by the parsuna “Nikon with Clergy” during a visit and initiated the first efforts to preserve it. The novelist Filippov explained that while admiring Nikon's portrait during a trip to the Monastery, Tsar Alexander II not only sympathized with the Patriarch, but may have even decided to “follow Nikon and
liberate the peasants.” On a different, but no less significant level, Old Believer merchants visiting the monastery decided to reject the Old Belief and accept the official Church after seeing Nikon’s personal effects at New Jerusalem. Finally, the art and artifacts displayed at New Jerusalem stimulated creative activities. Archimandrite Apollos, Nikon’s nineteenth-century biographer, testified that being exposed to “the signs of his [Nikon’s] high position and signs of humbleness” during his tenure at the Monastery, he [Apollos] “found pleasure in recalling the events from his life, and unwittingly became deeply engaged in the fate of Nikon.” Iconographic analysis shows that many artists, including S. D. Miloradovich, found the inspiration to create new images of the Patriarch after seeing exhibitions of art and material culture at the monastery. In short, New Jerusalem was the place where people believed that artistic representations of Nikon appeared to come “alive.”

However, encounters with the Patriarch at New Jerusalem did not have to stop with the end of a pilgrimage or visit. In the modern age, mementos and souvenirs, especially mass-produced art, postcards and photographs featuring images of the Patriarch, acquired on trips to the Monastery allowed pilgrims and visitors, as well as others who did not make the journey, to experience the Patriarch’s image when they returned home. This process, which was preceded by the dissemination of copies of original Kii Cross system at the Kii Monastery in the eighteenth century, personalized connections between the Patriarch’s image and ordinary people. Moreover, it promoted the continued celebration of Nikon far from the site of official

421
commemoration, thus spreading and intensifying the Patriarch’s significance in peoples’ daily lives.

Old Believer Images of Nikon

The dissertation offered comparative analysis of the Old Believer tales about Nikon. It traced their development over time and stresses their relevance for all segments of Russian society. My research of the images of Patriarch Nikon presented in the seventeenth-century “Testimony,” the early eighteenth-century “Life of Kornilii” and the “Story About Nikon” and late nineteenth-century “History” demonstrated that the tales offer more than the perspectives of an isolated Old Believer elite. On the contrary, they represent complex products that shaped, and were shaped by, a multidirectional movement of ideas that flowed from “above” and “below” as well as across confessional lines. The tales reflected and engendered the attitudes about Nikon held by the Old Believer elite and ordinary dissenters, as well as their non-dissenting counterparts. Far from being static, the tales were alive with change. Although the core elements common to all the tales persisted from the late seventeenth- to the late nineteenth century, other facets of Nikon’s image were continuously expanded to include ever-greater cross sections of popular and elite culture. In addition to presenting the negative attributes of Nikon’s deeds and character, they shed new light on positive conceptions of the Patriarch.

The conclusion that the Old Believer tales about Nikon were not simply limited to refutations of the Nikonian reforms but, that they were shaped by

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7 Arkhimandrit Apollos, Kratkoe Nachertanie zhizni i deianii Nikona, patriarkha Moskovskogo

422
interaction with non-Old Believer initiatives and that they continued to evolve over
time are crucial to understanding the Patriarch’s lasting resonance in Russian history
and culture. The dissertation demonstrates that there was a continuing struggle for
control over Nikon’s image. Efforts to get the upper hand in this contest resulted in
further actions and reactions. This dialectal process of interaction between the Old
Believers and those in mainstream society who formulated images of and discourse
on Nikon, both favorable and hostile, propelled the evolution of the Patriarch’s image
and insured its significance as long as the schism of the Russian Church persisted.

The Old Believer representations of Nikon reflected the best and the worst
images of the Patriarch appearing in mainstream society. They countered positive
representations of the Patriarch and they incorporated negative ones. However, the
Old Believer tales about Nikon are important not only because they reflect the ideas
of Old Believers, but because they evoked responses from the official church, state
and others among Nikon’s proponents. This process which began in the late
seventeenth century, persisted until the early twentieth century.

My analysis showed that the earliest Old Believer tales about Nikon presented
in the “Testimony” were largely based on representations of the Patriarch, including
Nikon’s association with the Antichrist, forwarded by his primary opponents in the
Muscovite elite and their mouthpiece Paisius Ligarides. I also suggest that the core
Old Believer tales presenting Nikon as the enemy of Christ’s cross were attempts to
counter the Patriarch’s creation and promotion of the Kii Cross system of imagery.

Ivyeia Rusi, s portretom ego 2nd ed. (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1836), IV-V.

423
This was likely because the Patriarch himself connected the Kii Cross, a life-sized replica of the True Cross, with his imposition of the three-fingered sign of the cross. The early attempts to dismiss Nikon’s reputation as a healer were clearly aimed against his image in popular culture.

Ivan Shusherin, Nikon’s seventeenth-century biographer, was the first to enter the fray against the Old Believers on the Patriarch’s behalf. Shusherin, who also defended the Patriarch against Ligarides’ polemics, was also the first to refute what he called “raskolniki [who] libeled the Patriarch calling him Antichrist” and other slander “which is forbidden to write on paper.” The second generation of Old Believer tales appearing in the eighteenth century, namely, the “Story About Nikon,” responded to Shusherin’s work, adopting his biographical format, countering his favorable portrayals and reasserting the earlier Old Believer accusations, the pro-Nikon biographer tried to discount.

Renewed attempts to stifle the Old Belief and to commemorate Nikon in the nineteenth century sparked a new phase in the battle for control of the Patriarch’s image. On the one hand, favorable representations of Nikon forwarded in new scholarly biographies and popular literature about the Patriarch, including historical fiction, as well as anti-Old Believer polemics all countered “raskolniki lies.” These efforts included new strategies, namely, hybrid representations combining verbal and artistic texts, and emphasis on art and artifacts connected with Nikon. Often a part of official educational and/or anti-Old Believer policies and discourse, they were aimed
at ordinary people who the state and church believed to be most likely to be in, or fall into, dissent. On the other hand, the emergence of scientific scholarship on Nikon, especially the historical debates over Nikon’s trial, provided an abundance of historical evidence testifying to the Patriarch’s alleged transgressions.

Not to be outmaneuvered, Old Believers again responded by updating their own representations of the Patriarch to reflect the most recent trends and methodologies in late imperial scholarly and popular culture. Analysis of the “History” demonstrated that Old Believers adopted the most recent findings of scientific history as well as of the new fictions provided by Filippov’s historical novel *Patriarch Nikon* (1885). Investigations of the “History” also confirmed that Old Believers recognized the significance of using art and material culture as a means to promote the Patriarch’s image, as well as to attack the Old Belief, and thus, attempted to counter, neutralize, and reverse the practice by co-opting it.

These finding complement the broader conclusions recently drawn about Russian Old Believers by I. V. Pozdeeva, Roy Robson and Robert Crummey. Tracing the evolution the Old Believer tales about Nikon over 300 years illustrates the dynamism, vitality and complexity Old Believer cultures. Comparative analysis of Old Believer representations of the Patriarch highlighted explicit instances of interactions within the Old Belief as well as across the confessional divide which shaped the lives of Old Believers. More specifically, the discovery that Old Believers formulated Nikon’s image in terms of the signs and symbols of both the pre- and post-

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8 I. Shusherin, *Povest' o rozhdenii, vospitanii i zhizni sviateischego Nikon, patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseia Rossii, napisannaia ego klirikom Ioannom Shusherinym* (1680s) Reprint of 425
Nikonian Church offers insight into the central place of Orthodox symbolism in Old Believer cultures.

The dissertation suggests several avenues of further research. First is the investigation of the hundreds of artistic images of Patriarch Nikon, executed in all genres, that I discovered during the course of my research but could not analyze here. Second is the study of popular images of Patriarch Nikon as a healer and miracle-maker and associated pilgrimages to his tomb and other important sites connected with his life. Third is the analysis of almost completely neglected genre of Old Believer folk art, which I called the "art of reform." This rich body of source materials will offer new insights into Old Believer artistic culture and will provide even deeper understanding of the central place held by symbols of the faith in Old Believers' lives in the future. Fourth is Nikon's image in history and culture during the Soviet period, especially the Patriarch's representation in anti-religious and anti-Romanov propaganda.

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Although this dissertation discussed the important role that Patriarch Nikon played in Russian cultural and artistic life from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth century, one must note the current revival of social interest in Nikon's biography and historical-cultural legacy. During the course of my research in Russia over the past six years, I observed several significant manifestations of this process. There is continuous debate on Nikon's beatification and canonization, a move popular
among Orthodox clergy and laymen alike. The first step towards this goal, the establishment of August 30 as Nikon’s memorial day, has already been made by the Russian Orthodox Church.

The New Jerusalem Monastery which has been returned to the Russian Church has reemerged as an important destination for religious pilgrims and tourists alike. The museum it houses, which continues to be under the auspices of the state, not the church, has expanded tremendously to reclaim its place as the center of research and scholarship on Nikon. “Nikonian Readings,” a seminar led by Galina Zelenskaia, which attracts scholars of Russian religion, history, art and culture from throughout Russia, is particularly significant in this regard.9

Since the fall of the Soviet Union the Kii Cross, so central to the Patriarch’s conception of Russia as New Israel and the Russians as a chosen people, has likewise begun to regain much of its former significance. Returned to the Orthodox Church in 1991, it was symbolically unveiled on August 30, after decades of obscurity. The Kii Cross currently serves as a reliquary at the Church of Sergei Radonezhskii in Krapivniki, Moscow, where it attracts religious pilgrims from throughout Russia and even abroad.

Patriarch Nikon was recently the subject of a major exhibit at the State Historical Museum in Moscow.10 His New Jerusalem Monastery was highlighted in

a significant exhibition at the State Tret’iakov Gallery, Moscow. Moreover I, often unexpectedly, found artistic representations of Patriarch Nikon displayed in monasteries, churches and national and regional museums. Equally noteworthy are the recent efforts to restore existing artistic images of the Patriarch and the creation of new ones, including icons, history paintings, portraits, drawings and hand-painted book illustrations.

On the eve of the tercentenary of Nikon’s birth we are only begining to understand his enduring legacy. Remarkably, Nikon remains relevant for Russians as they struggle to redefine the roles of the church and the state in the post-Soviet context, a process that will entail the ongoing reinvention of his image. The re-appropriation of Nikon and his image will most likely continue to be a salient feature of Russian culture.

APPENDIX A

Glossary of Russian Religious Terms

Chetki – rosary given to a monk upon tonsure to remind him about constant prayer.

Iconostasis – wall separating altar from the main body of a church. An iconostasis consists of several rows of icons, including ones dedicated to local saints, life of Jesus, universal saints, prophets and Old Testament figures.

Klobuk – everyday head-dress of bishops and monks in which they perform select sacraments.

Mantit – the outwear of arch-hierarchs symbolizing their dignity. It is adorned by three double circular lines and two rectangular plates on the top symbolizing the unity of the Old and New Testaments.

Mitra – crown-like head-dress worn by arch-hierarchs during the liturgy. It symbolizes the crown of thorns worn by Christ.

Narod – folk

Omofor – the wide, long piece of fabric bearing crosses worn over the shoulders of arch-hierarchs. The omofor symbolizes a lost sheep which God put on his shoulders, in other words, it means the salvation of humanity.

Palitsa – diamond-shaped plate which is part of the liturgical wear. The palitsa is worn on the side and signifies a spiritual sword or the word of God.

Panagia – an image of the Savior and Virgin Mary worn on the chest of an arch-hierarch. It is a miniature ark containing relics of saints.

Parsuna – early portraiture

Riasa – outer wear of monks and priests.

Riznitsa – room in a church where liturgical wear and utensils are kept.
Sakkos – outer liturgical wear of upper clergy. The two joined parts of the sakkos symbolize the unity of the Old and New Testaments

Skit – a hermitage

Zhezl – an ornate staff symbolizing an arch-hierarch’s power and authority. It is a sign of the shepherd guarding the “lambs of God.”
APPENDIX B

List of Russian Abbreviations

BAN – Biblioteka Rossisskoi Akademii Nauk [Library of Russian Academy of Sciences]

ChiODR – Chteniia pri Imperatorskom obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh
[Proceedings of the Imperial Society for Russian History and Antiquities]

DRG – Drevnosti Rossiiskogo gosudarstva [Antiquities of the Russian State], 6 vols.
Moscow, 1849-1853

GIM – Gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii musei [State Historical Museum]

GMIR – Gosudarstvennyi musei istorii religii [State Museum of the History of Religion]

GPIB – Gosudarstvennaia publichnaia istoricheskaia biblioteka [State Public Historical Library]

GTG – Gosudarstvennaia Tret’iakovskaia galereia [State Tretiakov Gallery]

IAKhMNI/MOKM – Istoriko-arkhitekturnyi i khudozhhestvennyi musei “Novyi Jerusalim”/Moskovskii oblastnoi kraevedcheskii musei [Historical, Architectural and Art Museum “New Jerusalem”/Moscow Region Historical Museum]

IRLI – Institut russkoi literatury i iskusstva (Pushkinskii Dom) Rossisskoi Akademii
Nauk [Institute of Russian Literature and Art (Pushkin’s House), Russian Academy Sciences]

MGU – Moskovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet [Moscow State University]

MDAK – Moskovskaia dukhovnaia akademiia v Troitse-Sergievoi Lavre, Kabinet
[Moscow Spiritual Academy Repository of Art and Artifacts, Holy Sergei Trinity Lavra]

RGADA – Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov [Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts]

431
RGALI – Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva [Russian State Archive of Literature and Art]

RGB – Rossiiskaia gosudarstvennaia biblioteka [Russian State Library]

RM – Gosudarstvennyi Russkii muzei [State Russian Museum]

RNB – Rossiiskaia natsional’naia biblioteka [Russian National Library]

TODRL – Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury Akademii Nauk SSSR [Proceedings of the Ancient Russian Literature Department, USSR Academy of Science]
APPENDIX C

Illustrations

Figure 1

Section of the Kii Cross

Source: Photograph by the author
Figure 2

Adoration of the Cross

Source: Trutovskii, V.K. “Romanovskiaia tserkovno-arkheologicheskaia vystavka.”
Starye gody (June 1913), 42.
Figure 3

Feodor Solntsev’s Reproduction of “Patriach Nikon with Clergy”

Source: Drevnosti Rossiiskogo Gosudarstva. vol. 1 Moscow, 1849, no 94.
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MOKM Inv. No. Zh-72. A. D. Litovchenko “Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich i Nikon, arkhiepiskop Novgorodskii na mogile chudotvortsa Filipa, metropolita Moskovskogo.” 1884. 41.5x28.5, oil on canvas


IAKhMNI Inv. No Zh-94. S. D. Miloradivich. “Sud nad patriarkhom Nikonom/Eskiz k kartine/.” 1908. 48x64, oil on canvas

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436
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Museum-Preserve “Moscow Kremlin”

Inv. No. 1714. Ivan Saltonov. “Poklonenie Krestu.” 1678. 126x90, oil and tempera on canvas

Inv. No. Sk-42 Krest perenosnyi (pokhodnyi). 1650s, wood and silver

Inv. No. TK-103/1. Klobuk

Inv. No. TK-2244. Kaftan domashnii

Inv. No. TK-2241. Kaftan domashnii

Inv. No. MR-464. Posokh (zhezl)

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GIM 46637. F. Milovidov. “Patriarkh Moskovskii i vseia Rossii.” 1902, ink on paper


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State Museum of the History of Religion (GMIR)

GMIR Inv. No. A 5725-IV. “Kiiskii Krest”, late-eighteenth or early-twentieth century. 76.5x54, oil on canvas

GMIR A-1532-IV. S. D. Miloradovich. “Sud nad patriarkhom Nikonom”, late-nineteenth or early- twentieth century. 49x67.5, oil on canvas

State Russian Museum (RM)

RM ZhB-821. “Poklonenie Krestu.” 1750s. 57x55, oil on canvas

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465


467


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468


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