

ABHANDLUNGEN

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We Have Never Been Modern: Approaches to the Study of Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*

In memoriam
Hans-Joachim Torke

Papageno: Länder? Menschen? Prinz? – Sag du mir zuvor: gibt's außer diesen Bergen auch noch Länder und Menschen?

Tamino: Viele Tausende! ... Nun sag du mir, wie nennt man eigentlich diese Gegend? Wer beherrscht sie?

Papageno: Das kann ich dir ebensowenig beantworten, als ich weiß, wie ich auf die Welt gekommen bin. Ich weiß nur so viel, daß nicht weit von hier meine Strohütte steht, die mich vor Regen und Kälte schützt.

Die Zauberflöte (1791), Act 1, Scene 2.

My title embodies two others. One – Russia in the Age of Peter the Great – is both the title of the splendid new book by Lindsey Hughes and generically is the primary focus of this article.¹ My current work on a monograph about Petrine-era culture has forced me to confront larger issues of how we conceptualize our study of Russia in that period. In the process, my own approach to the material has shifted considerably, moving away from the still widely accepted paradigms that stress the ways in which Peter's activity thrust Russia in the direction of "modernity." My thinking on these issues has been stimulated in part by a highly controversial book in the philosophy of the history of science, Bruno Latour's *We Have Never Been Modern*.² I shall begin by reviewing selectively modernization theory and its impact on the historiography of the Petrine era, then turn to issues raised by Latour's book and, lastly, develop a concrete example illustrating how we might enrich our understanding of the Russia of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

Part of the agenda here is to insist that, if they are really to understand Russia, historians should devote greater attention to the provinces rather than continue to focus on the center.

* I am grateful to members of the History Research Workshop at the University of Washington and to Glennys Young, Thomas Hankins, Carol Thomas and Robert Crumney for their comments on an earlier version of this paper. As credited in the notes, several colleagues' suggestions have helped me substantially to broaden my reading. I also thank the commentators on the paper I delivered at the annual meeting of the British Association of Slavonic and East European Studies in April 2000. Some of the material from that presentation, on the problem of regional identity, has been incorporated here. Naturally, responsibility for opinions and errors of commission or omission rests with me alone.

¹ LINDSEY HUGHES *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*. New Haven, London 1998. I should note that even though (perhaps, precisely because) she does not subscribe to an overarching thesis, in countless places Hughes refutes the dichotomies I criticize below in the work of other historians of the Petrine era.

² BRUNO LATOUR *We Have Never Been Modern*. Transl. by Catherine Porter. Cambridge, MA 1993.

My specific example concerns Viatka (Khlynov, Kirov), whose distance from the capitals (to St. Petersburg—1400 *versty*; to Moscow—977 *versty*) in the minds of most Russians even today is much more than a matter of physical space as measured on the replica of an old milepost in the center of Kirov. The case of one very interesting Viatka bookman, a church deacon Semën Popov, reveals that Viatka was both better connected with the center and Petrine reform than one might have assumed and, as one would expect, fully traditional, but in vibrant and creative ways. Straddling as he did both the old and the new, Popov arguably is one of those whom Bruno Latour terms a “non-modern.”

Modernization theory and the historiography of Petrine Russia

With rare exceptions and for perfectly understandable reasons, the periodization of Russian history includes a break with the reign of Tsar Peter I (1682–1725). The story of how such perceptions developed, beginning even in Peter’s reign, is well known from the work of Nicholas Riasanovsky and others.³ The overwhelming tendency, shared by those who admire Peter as well as his strongest detractors, has been to emphasize how much changed specifically thanks to him. There is also a scholarly tradition, identified, for example, with the famous nineteenth-century historian S. M. Solov’ev, to seek the antecedents to Peter’s “reforms” in late Muscovy. In either event, guided by the precepts of the Enlightenment and then Positivism, students of the Petrine era have tended to emphasize that which anticipated or helped to bring about the “modernization” of Russia along the lines of other European countries.⁴ Apart from any guiding philosophical precepts, the fascination of Peter’s oversized person and personality has ineluctably led students of “early modern” Russia to focus on him, and he in turn then comes to represent Russia and the history of the period. While my goal here is to move us away from such an emphasis, I still find myself using “Petrine era,” as a convenient shorthand, in part because I am trying to avoid the even more problematic designation of “early modern” for the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.⁵

Granted, there is also ample scholarship on the given era not devoted to Peter. For better or worse, in at least part of the Soviet period there was a conscious effort to avoid writing

³ NICHOLAS RIASANOVSKY *The Image of Peter the Great in Russian Thought*. New York 1985. Riasanovsky provides an excellent guide to the historiography and uses extended quotations to illustrate a variety of views about Peter.

⁴ In his writing about the “bureaucracy” HANS-JOACHIM TORKE was an exception to this rule. See, for example, his *Gab es im Moskauer Reich des 17. Jahrhunderts eine Bürokratie?*, in: *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte* [=FOG] 38 (1986) pp. 276–298; IDEM *Crime and Punishment in the Pre-Petrine Civil Service: The Problem of Control*, in: *Imperial Russia 1700–1917: State, Society, Opposition. Essays in Honor of Marc Raeff*. Ed. by Ezra Mendelsohn and Marshall S. Schatz Weberian. DeKalb, Ill. 1988, pp. 5–21. I confess to not being entirely comfortable with his holding up of a standard for evaluating administration in that period.

⁵ See the reservations by LORRAINE DASTON *The Nature of Nature in Early Modern Europe*, in: *Configurations* 6 (1998) esp. p. 149, where she declares “‘Early modern’ is as screamingly anachronistic and teleological a label as ‘the Middle Ages’ [...]”. For some thoughtful comments with a significantly different focus regarding the problem of periodization, see JOAN DEJEAN *Did the Seventeenth Century Invent Our Fin de Siècle? Or, the Creation of the Enlightenment That We May at Last Be Leaving Behind*, in: *Critical Inquiry* 22 (1996) pp. 790–816. Significantly, she notes (p. 793 n. 6): “... I do not intend these pages as still another contribution to the quest for the origins of modernity that has become such a widespread obsession on the part of specialists of early modern literatures in recent years. Even if I am obliged to use generally accepted notions of periodization and markers such as modernism, I do so in the hope of complicating rather than reinforcing the new history of the birth of our modernity.” She goes on to question such linear views of literary history and refers with approval to Lucien Febvre’s comments (in his *Combats pour l’histoire*) about history’s having “not originating markers but central points from which a movement can be shown to radiate both forward and backward.”

about Peter as "The Great" – that is, to de-emphasize the impact of his person – and to examine issues in the Marxist framework of socio-economic analysis which did not allow for any historical periodization at ca. 1700. As both Soviet and post-Soviet Russian scholarship illustrate, contemporary political constraints and concerns were never far removed from assessments of Peter.⁶ One reason for this politicization of the subject is the abiding concern about socio-economic change in Russia in the twentieth century. Political concerns over the Soviet model and its apparent threats also were reflected in Western scholarship, especially during the heyday of "modernization theory," as it developed subsequent to World War II. (For more on what this involves, see below.) Yet there is ample evidence in more recent scholarship to suggest that historians are sensitive to the continuities across the Petrine divide and the degree to which many of the Petrine "reforms," however radical in their conception, had at best limited impact.⁷ Although at one time it was thought that modernization theory had seen its day, the relevance of that body of ideas is still very much the subject of active debate. I am struck by how the paradigm of Petrine modernization still informs and in a reductionist form, I would argue, unfortunately diminishes some of the most valuable recent work dealing with the Petrine era.

While the basic concepts of "modernization theory" are well known to most Russian historians, a few summary comments may be in order here. In its crudest form, the theory posits a dichotomy between the "new" and the "old," with the features of the two being expressed as a further set of dichotomies.⁸ Among the most significant are: industrial/agrarian (var.: urban/rural); universal/particular (alternatively, national/local); exclusive politics/inclusive politics; dynamic/static; rational/irrational; religious/secular. The last of these is particularly important in the discussion which follows. Modernization involves "progress" from "traditional" societies to those exemplified by the most "advanced" states of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; in such development, science and technology play a key role. All societies are assumed to go through this process, although at possibly different rates and in different periods on any absolute chronological scale. In the nineteenth century Britain

⁶ For the Soviet scholarship, in addition to Riasanovsky, see C. E. BLACK *The Reforms of Peter the Great*, in: *Rewriting Russian History: Soviet Interpretations of Russia's Past*. 2nd ed. Ed. by Cyril E. Black. New York 1962, pp. 233–259. For post-Soviet Russian scholarship, see LINDSEY HUGHES *Peter the Great and the Fall of Communism*, in: *Irish Slavonic Studies* 17 (1996) pp. 1–18.

⁷ See HUGHES *Russia*, for a broad look. One of the best examples of a more narrowly focussed study is BRENDA MEEHAN-WATERS' examination of the composition of the Petrine elite, which illustrates how little change resulted from the establishment of the Table of Ranks: *Autocracy and Aristocracy. The Russian Service Elite of 1730*. New Brunswick, N. J. 1982. Of particular importance for my concerns in this essay are the recent book by MAX OKENFUSS, cited below, and HANS ROTHE *Religion und Kultur in den Regionen des russischen Reiches im 18. Jahrhundert – Erster Versuch einer Grundlegung*. Opladen 1984 (= *Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften: Geisteswissenschaften, Vorträge*. G 267.) At the outset (p. 7), Rothe questions the "Mythos vom 'neuen' Rußland."

⁸ For a relatively up-to-date survey stating the theory in largely conventional terms, see KRISHAN KUMAR *The Rise of Modern Society: Aspects of the Social and Political Development of the West*. Oxford and New York 1988, Ch. 1 (reprinted from: *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*). One of the best critiques is by HANS-ULRICH WEHLER *Modernisierungstheorie und Geschichte*. Göttingen 1975, where one can find a convenient tabulation of the dichotomies on pp. 14–15. For political aspects of modernization, see SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON *Political Modernization: America vs. Europe*, in: *State and Society: A Reader in Comparative Political Sociology*. Ed. by Reinhard Bendix. Boston 1968, pp. 170–200, originally published in: *World Politics* 18 (1966) pp. 378–414. An authoritative argument for comparative history of modernization by a Russian/East European specialist is CYRIL BLACK *The Dynamics of Modernization: A Study in Comparative History*. New York [etc.] 1966. His ongoing project of modernization studies includes CYRIL BLACK [et al.] *The Modernization of Japan and Russia: A Comparative Study*. New York, London 1975.

and France came to embody what was most modern; by the mid-twentieth century, the United States was the prime example. It was largely in the aftermath of World War II that the "western" model of these countries was held up by modernization theorists (especially in the United States) as the inevitable standard by which progress should be judged for any country. That such ideas are still very much alive can be seen in the assertions about "the end of history" with the apparent triumph of liberal democracy at the end of the Cold War.

Even in its heyday, modernization theory was modified in some very important ways in order to accommodate individual paths of development, the possibility of intermediate or mixed stages of development and non-Western "models."⁹ Among the most important modifications of the theory have been analyses stressing the degree to which "traditional" societies in fact are not static but constantly accommodate change. At the root of most criticisms of modernization theory have been concerns over its a-historical nature and its embodiment of ideological value judgments as to what is inevitable and good with regard to human development. In particular it is reasonable to ask whether the models for modernization are not the exceptions rather than the rule. Ernest Gellner has insisted "on the uniqueness and lack of inevitability of modern western civilization" in a way that might be seen as analogous to Steven Jay Gould's emphasis on the uniqueness but lack of inevitability of evolution along a single path.¹⁰ Yet even the most articulate and persuasive critics are willing to admit that in some modified variant the theory can be a useful analytical tool. As Ian Roxborough suggests, "we all work with some notion of a transition from premodern to modern society,"¹¹ and as Gerald Feldman has put it, "modernization has not been replaced by any more viable or satisfactory conceptual tool for the critical analysis either of the transition to industrialization or of the developmental processes of modern industrial societies."¹²

Although some would argue the two concepts are not coterminous and one may be acceptable whereas the other is not, modernization is often considered to be synonymous with

⁹ Among the more general responses of interest for the current discussion, see REINHARD BENDIX *Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered*, in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* [= CSSH] 9 (1967) No. 3, pp. 293–346; S. N. EISENSTADT *Some Observations on the Dynamics of Traditions*, in: *CSSH* 11 (1969) No. 4, pp. 451–475 (note especially his comments on the role of elites); EDWARD SHILS *Tradition*, in: *CSSH* 13 (1971) No. 2, pp. 122–159; for more recent literature, IAN ROXBOROUGH *Modernization Theory Revisited: A Review Article*, in: *CSSH* 30 (1988) No. 4, pp. 753–761. For the relevance of the theory to specific countries whose experience may be particularly instructive for parallels to the Russian case, see, e.g., GERALD D. FELDMAN *The Weimar Republic: A Problem of Modernization?*, in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 26 (1986) pp. 1–26; TIM MASON *Italy and Modernization: A Montage*, in: *History Workshop: A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Historians* 25 (1988) pp. 127–147. A recent book on migration history in Germany raises serious questions about the validity of one of the generally accepted markers of difference between "traditional" and "modern societies"; see STEVE HOCHSTADT *Mobility and Modernity: Migration in Germany, 1820–1989*. Ann Arbor 1999. I am grateful to Kate Brown for this reference.

¹⁰ ALAN MACFARLANE *Ernest Gellner and the escape to modernity*, in: *Transition to Modernity: Essays on power, wealth and belief*. Ed. by John A. Hall and I. C. Jarvie. Cambridge [etc.] 1992, p. 122, citing E. GELLNER's *Plough, Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History*. Chicago, London 1988; STEVEN JAY GOULD *Wonderful Life: the Burgess Shale and the Nature of History*. New York 1989. One should note that Gould's book provides an instructive example of how entrenched paradigms can obstruct significant advances in knowledge.

¹¹ ROXBOROUGH *Modernization Theory Revisited* p. 755.

¹² FELDMAN *The Weimar Republic* p. 1.

"westernization."¹³ More often than not the two terms are used interchangeably with reference to the Russian experience. In the Russian context then, the era of Peter the Great looms large, since Peter is identified, above all, with "westernization." However, most would probably agree that Russia is a case of "delayed modernization" as is argued in the project coordinated by one of the gurus of comparative modernization studies, Cyril Black. In this scheme, the significant developments date to the post-Emancipation period. In many ways, Black's scheme is very carefully qualified to avoid simplistic dichotomies; in fact he insists that "modernization must be thought of not as a simple transition from tradition to modernity but as part of an infinite continuum from the earliest times to the indefinite future."¹⁴ Nonetheless his model for modernity is ultimately the "advanced" European/American one, and his conclusion seems to be that Russia indeed joined the ranks of modern nations some time in the twentieth century. As the Russian case illustrates though, periodization of the process in fact is one of the most problematic aspects of modernization theory. Most studies of the phenomenon understandably work back from some degree of "modernity" and attempt to seek its roots. In the Russian case, those roots tend to be sought before Peter. In a stimulating new book, Simon Dixon argues persuasively for the value of the "modernisation model" as an analytical tool, but after applying it, he concludes it has "limited applicability" to the Russian case, at least for the period 1676–1825. In fact, he asserts flatly, "Russia in 1825 was by no means a modern state."¹⁵ The late-twentieth-century vicissitudes of post-Soviet Russia raise questions in the minds of some observers whether the country is modern yet.¹⁶

The problem of value judgments looms large in any discussion of Russia's modernization/westernization and certainly goes back to the time of Peter the Great and to even the immediate evaluations of his accomplishments. As is well known, in the nineteenth century Slavophile/Westernizer controversies, the touchstone of where one stood in the great debate was one's evaluation of Peter's reforms. Such debates continue to this day in Russia, but they are not unique to Russia. The national angst about "backwardness" and values can be found, e.g., in assessments of Italy's modern history. In both countries, one of the issues is how to come to grips with the twentieth-century, "modern" phenomenon of totalitarianism.

Of course for a long time students of Russia have had fruitful variants of the "modernization model" for assessing Russia's place in some European continuum. Alexander Gerschenkron's idea of "relative backwardness" (if one can read through the ostensible value judgment suggested by the term) is one constructive approach to trying to understand important changes in Russian institutions, while not holding the country up to the standard of the "most advanced" economies.¹⁷ Marc Raeff has even gone so far as to suggest that if

¹³ Note that Black prefers to avoid using "Westernization" and "Europeanization" (Modernization of Russia and Japan p. 8). I was taught, if anything, the opposite, that the term "modernization" was to be avoided at all costs.

¹⁴ BLACK *The Dynamics of Modernization* p. 54.

¹⁵ SIMON DIXON *The Modernisation of Russia 1676–1825*. Cambridge [etc.] 1999, p. 256.

¹⁶ As an example of the first tendency, see PAUL BUSHKOVITCH *Religion and Society in Russia: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. New York, Oxford 1992, which I shall discuss in more detail below. An editorial marking the death of Raisa Gorbacheva seemed to suggest Russia is not yet there: "Abroad, she is seen as a modern partner who tried to help turn the old Soviet Union into a modern Russian state" (A Soviet First Lady, in: *The New York Times* September 21, 1999, p. A30). For STEPHEN F. COHEN *Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia*. New York 2000, Russia has been there and the process now going on is an unprecedented one of "demodernization."

¹⁷ BENDIX *Tradition and Modernity* p. 316, n. 55, notes his indebtedness to Gerschenkron's well-known *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective: A Book of Essays*. Cambridge, MA 1962. Of particular relevance for discussions of Peter the Great is ALEXANDER GERSCHENKRON *Europe in the*

anything Russian development is the more typical model for Europe in the eighteenth and perhaps early nineteenth centuries.¹⁸ Raeff's emphasis on the efforts by Peter the Great and his successors to follow the models of the Well-Ordered Police State helps us to understand why (in Simon Dixon's words) "the more Russian rulers tried to modernise their state, the more backward their empire became."¹⁹ As Dixon suggests, the more simplistic, linear models of modernization need to be discarded. Perhaps, following the argument which has been advanced for the case of a "non-Western" society, China, some new definitions will still need to be explored if we are to come up with a concept of modernization that is sufficiently flexible to analyze the Russian case. As Mark Elvin has suggested for China, "any attempt to formulate 'modernity' simply in terms of some sort of increased 'rationality', whether in economics or politics or religion, meets what are probably insurmountable difficulties."²⁰ However, his emphasis on the dominance of the "power-complex" in modern states, while it allows for the continuation of "traditional" cultural values, may be too narrow.

As will become clear, my purpose here is not to devise a definition of "modernization" best suited to the Russian case but rather to elaborate specifically with regard to the Petrine period why we should exercise care in using even implicit assumptions about modernization. For the sake of argument, we may even wish, paraphrasing Latour, to adopt the extreme position that Russia has never been modern; hence to emphasize modernization under Peter may be a greater distortion of reality than the reverse. In particular, I am disturbed by three tendencies: the continuing focus on the center (and thus on Petrine pronouncements) as opposed to the provinces (arguably the locus of Russian realities); the concomitant emphasis on the elite as opposed to the mass of the population; and the emphasis on secularization, to the extent that religious belief and practice are ignored. In other words, my argument will support the view (arguably wishful thinking) expressed by Nancy Kollmann and Samuel Baron in their introduction to a stimulating new collection of essays, which they argue "put to rest" "the bipolar way of seeing the early modern period mainly in terms of 'continuity' and 'change' (focussing on Peter I and his reforms)."²¹ To illustrate my points, I shall examine studies by James Cracraft, Richard Wortman, and Paul Bushkovitch. Paradoxically, while recent and important – even innovative – this scholarship is also arguably anachronistic.

Russian Mirror. Four Lectures in Economic History. Cambridge 1970, pp. 69–96.

¹⁸ MARC RAEFF *Russia's Autocracy and Paradoxes of Modernization*, in: *Ost-West-Begegnung in Österreich. Festschrift für Eduard Winter zum 80. Geburtstag*. Ed. by Gerhard Oberkofler, Eleonore Zlabinger. Wien [etc.] 1976, pp. 275–283.

¹⁹ MARC RAEFF *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600–1800*. New Haven, London 1983; DIXON *The Modernisation of Russia* p. 256.

²⁰ MARK ELVIN *A Working Definition of 'Modernity'?*, in: *Past and Present* No. 113 (1986) p. 208.

²¹ *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Russia and Ukraine*. Ed. by Samuel H. Baron, Nancy Shields Kollmann. DeKalb, Ill. 1997, p. 12. Although the mandate of the conference which produced this collection of essays offers an explanation, it is somewhat paradoxical that most contributions stop at the Petrine divide and thus would seem to conform to the older paradigm the editors indicate is being questioned. "Bi-polarities" are, of course, fundamental to the semiotic analysis of Russian culture in the work especially of B. A. USPENSKII, I. M. LOTMAN and V. M. ZHIVOV, but the problems raised by their interpretations are substantially different from those posed by the bi-polarities of modernization theory. Certainly the semioticians cannot be charged with ignoring the religious aspects of Russian culture in the period. Given the complexity of their stimulating arguments, I shall merely acknowledge and not attempt to analyze them here. For a small but representative sampling of this work, see I. M. LOTMAN, B. A. USPENSKII *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*. Ed. by A. Shukman. Ann Arbor 1984.

Cracraft is one of the preeminent Petrine experts today, whose knowledge is wide-ranging, in particular regarding the cultural history of the period, its antecedents, and its consequences. His first book, on the Petrine church reform, stressed the importance of western models.²² His more recent examination of the Petrine cultural "revolution," now two-thirds complete, devotes considerable attention to pre-Petrine antecedents, in the first instance to emphasize how different they were from what Peter created and, in the process, to debunk Soviet efforts to extol the significance and quality of those antecedents.²³ Cracraft is quite explicit in his labeling of pre-Petrine artistic achievements as "crude," in contrast to the artistic achievements of the Renaissance and Baroque.²⁴ Indeed, if one's standard is "realism" or "naturalism" as it develops in the West, there can be no argument. By insisting on that value judgment, however, one can jump to the unsupportable conclusion that traditional Russian painting "came to an end."²⁵ What we have here is analogous to the distortion produced in studies of Chinese art, where T'ang "realism" is the standard by which other styles and periods of Chinese art have been judged (and often condemned as inferior). In Cracraft's view, the arts in Russia therefore had reached a "crisis" by the end of the seventeenth century. While changes in the arts began prior to Peter, those wrought under Peter were profound. Although vigorously stated, this interpretation is forced and often contradicted by evidence that Cracraft himself cites regarding the numbers of those involved in the new directions of art and the quality and influence of what they produced. Too often he defines the Petrine accomplishment not by what was achieved in Peter's lifetime ("the real thing" was yet to come) but by what we can see developed in Russia in subsequent generations. His emphasis is on style, not substance, and style as defined by a small elite in Moscow or St. Petersburg. His argument is framed by and too reliant on contrasting foreign opinions about Muscovite "backwardness" and barbarism in the seventeenth century and then positive assessments from the next century. However, even in the late eighteenth century one of the indeed perspicacious foreign observers of the Russian scene would conclude that the accomplishment (in this case in architecture) "delights us less by what it is than by the idea of what it will be when completed."²⁶ To a considerable degree here, of course, the argument is whether the Petrine glass is half full with "modernity" or half empty. Cracraft argues for its fullness.

Granted, it may seem somewhat unfair to criticize Cracraft for the book he never intended to write – after all, he is explicit about his standard of judgment and the fact that his focus is a relatively narrow segment of elite culture. The real problem is in justifying such sweeping conclusions without looking more carefully at other evidence, in particular that which pertains to the persistence of religious culture and religious art, not just amongst the mass of the population but also among the elite.²⁷ The baroque imagery that Peter promoted in the interest of the state is indeed extremely important – and it is one great service of Cracraft's study to emphasize it – but it is far from being just secular; certainly to dismiss post-Petrine religious images with the comment that they lack "sacral significance" is at very least

²² JAMES CRACRAFT *The Church Reform of Peter the Great*. Stanford 1971.

²³ JAMES CRACRAFT *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Architecture*. Chicago 1988; IDEM *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Imagery*. Chicago 1996.

²⁴ E. g. CRACRAFT *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Imagery* p. 150.

²⁵ Ibidem p. 97.

²⁶ Quoted by CRACRAFT *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Architecture* p. 236.

²⁷ Here one should note, however, his treatment of "popular" prints, in which he correctly emphasizes the way in which they were influenced by elite art: CRACRAFT *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Imagery* pp. 305–311.

perplexing.²⁸ If the "Petrine men" among artists were indeed embodiments of a cultural orientation that represented such a sharp break with Muscovite tradition, then how odd it is that several of them had to fall back on icon painting to support themselves in the post-Petrine period. In short, there are too many contradictions and questions left unanswered by a scheme whose underpinnings are assumptions about Russia's modernization involving the replacement of religious culture with the secular.

Richard Wortman's magisterial examination of imperial ceremony includes significant material on the Petrine era.²⁹ His subject is indeed an important one and in some respects his approach sophisticated, inspired in part by anthropological approaches to the study of ritual and symbol. What is striking, however, is his convoluted insistence on denying any religious substance to those aspects of imperial ideology and ritual which in fact are overtly religious in content. A central theme of his discussion is the way in which ceremony emphasized the position of the ruler as being somehow foreign from and above the rest of society. In support of this interpretation, he cites selectively Marshall Sahlins' study of rulership in Polynesia, omitting however a critical component of Sahlins' analysis, namely the emphasis on the divinity of the ruler.³⁰ In Muscovy, royal ceremony emphasized the "sacred truth" of the "fiction of imperial succession," but the liturgy is reduced in Wortman's description to superficial "gestures."³¹ He discusses one of the major public ceremonies of the Muscovite state, one which continued into and was transformed in the Petrine era, the "Blessing of the Waters," but primarily for its analogies to the "European triumph" and for the degree to which non-clerical participants assumed prominence (the "new mode in the observance of traditional religious holidays").³² Similarly, following Victor Turner, he interprets the Palm Sunday processional as an expression of the unity of the elite, while Michael Flier's "compelling argument" for an "apocalyptic and eschatological reading of the procession" is relegated to a footnote.³³ Wortman discusses the appropriation of St. Aleksandr Nevskii and the various invocations of St. Andrew by Peter, but only in connection with the justification of a secular and secularizing monarchy.³⁴

As in the case of Cracraft's study, the patent unwillingness to take religion seriously in an era that is, by retrospective reading of history, being defined as "secularizing" leads to contradictions. Wortman makes only partial sense of coronation ceremonies that contain significant religious elements – an example being that for Catherine I, for which he indicates the "setting is entirely secular, without the appearance of saints or religious symbols." The official published description of the ceremony "made the religious ritual an event of secular import."³⁵ Even a ruler such as Empress Elizabeth, generally regarded as pious and the

²⁸ *Ibidem* pp. 304–305.

²⁹ RICHARD WORTMAN *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy*. Vol. 1. Princeton 1995.

³⁰ See MARSHALL SAHLINS *Islands of History*. Chicago, London 1987, esp. Chapters 3, 4; IDEM *How "Natives" Think: About Captain Cook, For Example*. Chicago, London 1995 (which Wortman could not have seen). Ironically, Wortman's arguments are analogous to those by GANANATH OBEYESKERE who denies that the Hawaiians could have mistaken Captain Cook for a god. In *How "Natives" Think*, Sahlins effectively demolishes OBEYESKERE's *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific*. Princeton [etc.] 1992.

³¹ WORTMAN *Scenarios* pp. 28–29.

³² *Ibidem* pp. 35–37, 60–61.

³³ *Ibidem* p. 37.

³⁴ *Ibidem* p. 62–63, 70, 76. Cf. DIXON *The Modernisation of Russia* pp. 193–194, who takes the religious content of Petrine justifications and imagery much more seriously.

³⁵ WORTMAN *Scenarios* pp. 68–69.

supporter of harsh policies against non-Orthodox, merely wanted to “appear as a devout believer” (my emphasis).³⁶ Her many pilgrimages to monasteries were “performed more in the spirit of rejoicing than of solemn devotion.” Such examples can be multiplied, telling us, it seems, more about Wortman’s personal views regarding the desirability and impact of “secularization” than they do about the realities of religious belief and practice for the Russian monarchy. His curious selectivity produces the same kind of distortion as J. L. Black’s excision of the biblical quotations from the Felbiger textbook *On the Duties of Man and Citizen* used in Catherine II’s public schools.³⁷

Perhaps it should be no surprise that studies such as Cracraft’s and Wortman’s, devoted as they are to the Petrine period and what follows from it, should adopt what reasonably can be called a limited, modernizing and secularizing view of culture.³⁸ Somewhat more surprising is to find elements of the same kind of approach in Paul Bushkovitch’s book devoted specifically to religion in Muscovy.³⁹ He begins inauspiciously, with the unsupportable assertion that Peter “reduced the church to a handmaiden of the tsar, and fundamentally reoriented Russian culture away from religion.”⁴⁰ Such a statement is strikingly at odds with his laudatory insistence that nineteenth- and twentieth-century paradigms have misleadingly emphasized Russia’s secularization.⁴¹ In fact, the goal of his book, as he explains it, is to dispel ideas that Russian religious culture prior to Peter was unchanging. He argues, “the two centuries before Peter was a period of considerable and rapid change within that religious culture,” involving “a shift in religious experience from one basically public and collective, which stressed liturgy and miracle cults, to a more private and personal faith with a strong stress on morality.”⁴² He explicitly confines his analysis to the elite, insisting that the sources simply do not allow us to say much about popular piety. Therein, however, lies one of the major problems with his account, in part because he is arguing that elite and popular religion increasingly grew apart in the late Muscovite period without seriously analyzing the latter.⁴³

³⁶ *Ibidem* p. 106.

³⁷ See MAX J. OKENFUSS *The Rise and Fall of Latin Humanism in Early-Modern Russia: Pagan Authors, Ukrainians and the Resilience of Muscovy*. Leiden 1995, pp. 206–213, whose discussion obviously influenced DIXON *The Modernisation of Russia* pp. 154–155. For a more extended appreciation of the significance of Okenfuss’s book, see my review in: *The Russian Review* 57 (1998) pp. 283–285.

³⁸ There is ample evidence that scholars of religion cannot begin to reach any agreement on the subject of secularization. See: *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis*. Ed. by Steve Bruce. Oxford 1992, for which reference I am indebted to Glennys Young.

³⁹ BUSHKOVITCH *Religion and Society*.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem* p. 3. Curiously, Bushkovitch chooses to ignore GREGORY L. FREEZE *Handmaiden of the State? The Church in Imperial Russia Reconsidered*, in: *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985) pp. 82–102. The review of Bushkovitch by GEORG MICHELS (in: *Journal of Modern History* [=JMH] 67 [1995] No. 1, pp. 240–241), notes “Bushkovitch’s own data and other available evidence suggest that there was much more continuity in church policy than this book argues.”

⁴¹ See the approving summary of his views in Baron and Kollmann’s introduction to *Religion and Culture* pp. 4–5.

⁴² BUSHKOVITCH *Religion and Society* p. 3

⁴³ That we can get more out of the sources than he attempts or admits can be seen by comparing his treatment of miracle cults with that by ISOLDE THYRËT *Muscovite Miracle Stories as Sources for Gender-Specific Religious Experience*, in: *Religion and Culture* pp. 115–131. EVE LEVIN’s *Supplicatory Prayers as a Source for Popular Religious Culture in Muscovite Russia*, *ibidem* pp. 96–114, is further strong evidence on this point. Although the main focus of the book is the first half of the eighteenth century, a fine example of what can in fact be accomplished in a sophisticated analysis of popular piety is A. S. LAVROV *Koldovstvo i religiiia v Rossii 1700–1740* gg. Moskva 2000. Lavrov’s book, received

What he ends up with is a curiously "modernizing" read on religious developments, in which the way is prepared for the "secularization" of the Petrine era amongst a narrow section of Muscovite society. Just because official church policy seems to have turned against some local and "popular" manifestations of piety and just because some members of the elite turned to a more personal kind of piety, in part under the influence of Ukrainian clerics, says nothing about what the majority of the population believed and practiced. It is certainly not sufficient to reach sweeping conclusions about change on the basis of fragmentary evidence about the appearance in scattered libraries of some of the "new texts."

In short, judging from these examples, alternative approaches or emphases might well help us to understand more fully Russia in the age of Peter the Great, and thus to appreciate better what Peter did and did not accomplish. In fact, what we should be emphasizing here is not Petrine "modernity" and all that is associated with it, but rather the limits of the concept. To do so would invite us to look in different ways at some of the same evidence and also to pay more attention to evidence that tends not to be considered in the conventional treatments of the period.

Latour's "Non-Moderns"

Scholarship reassessing the "Scientific Revolution" can provide some inspiration in this task. "Modern science" as the embodiment of new and "rational" modes of inquiry is assumed to be perhaps the foremost characteristic of the "modern world."⁴⁴ In the "sagas of modernity and Enlightenment, the Scientific Revolution is the unmoved mover that sets the irreversible processes of secularization, industrialization, and rationalization in motion."⁴⁵ With good reason, the most widely accepted histories of science have identified the critical turning point in the seventeenth century, as exemplified in the development of the experimental method by Robert Boyle, and culminating in the mathematical formulations of Isaac Newton.⁴⁶ Yet the historiography of this Scientific Revolution seems to parallel the historiography of "modernization," in that no sooner had the positivist framework been established than it came under attack.⁴⁷ Even those who still argue for the validity of the concept of the Scientific Revolution now agree that the relationship between science and religion or rationality and superstition is demonstrably complex.⁴⁸ Arguably the Scientific Revolution, in which some of the leading

after my article was written, addresses many of the issues which I raise and sets a high standard for what can be accomplished in the study of Russian religious life.

⁴⁴ For example, BLACK [et al.] *Modernization of Japan and Russia* p. 3: "By modernization the authors mean the process by which societies have been and are being transformed under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution."

⁴⁵ DASTON *The Nature of Nature* p. 152.

⁴⁶ It is significant that while Newton's works did become known rather quickly to a few under Peter, for a long time in Russia, the competing Cartesian views were dominant. See the comments by DIXON *The Modernisation of Russia* p. 164; cf. VALENTINE BOSS *Newton and Russia: The Early Influence, 1698-1796*. Cambridge, MA 1972.

⁴⁷ A discursive and very thoughtful examination of this historiography is H. FLORIS COHEN *The Scientific Revolution: A Historiographical Inquiry*. Chicago and London 1994. Cohen stands clearly on the side of the utility of the concept of the Scientific Revolution.

⁴⁸ A valuable corrective to "conventional wisdom" about the relationship between the sacred and profane is ROBIN HORTON Lévy-Bruhl Durkheim and the Scientific Revolution, in: *Modes of Thought: Essays on Thinking in Western and Non-Western Societies*. Ed. by Robin Horton, Ruth Finnegan. London 1973, pp. 249-305. Horton makes the important point that the common citations of Durkheim for what he says about the gulf separating the sacred and the profane in fact distort the more significant point he argued, about the degree of closeness of "primitive religious and modern scientific thought." For a recent contribution exploring the relationship between science and religion, see MARGARET J.

lights “were even more pious than their predecessors” in the seventeenth century, involved in part “an active struggle to reclaim knowledge for the pious.”⁴⁹ In part, the re-examination of the Scientific Revolution has occurred in studies of experimental practice and the social context of science. One of the most influential studies in what is known as the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK), has suggested that the supposedly rational demonstration of the superiority of Boyle’s experimental method was less than objective and “scientific.”⁵⁰ Although at one time he was identified with SSK and he uses this study as an important *point d’appui*, Bruno Latour has now moved radically beyond what defenders of this school can accept.

Latour, who seems to relish controversy, states boldly: “No one has ever been modern. Modernity has never begun. There has never been a modern world.” (p. 47).⁵¹ The modern world as commonly understood is really an “invention” of Boyle and Hobbes, “in which the representation of things through the intermediary of the laboratory is forever dissociated from the representation of citizens through the intermediary of the social contract” (p. 27). “[...] The moderns can mobilize Nature, objectify the social, and feel the spiritual presence of God, even while firmly maintaining that Nature escapes us, that Society is our own work, and that God no longer intervenes.” (p. 34). Moreover, and this is a critical point for historians, “the moderns have a peculiar propensity for understanding time that passes as if it were really abolishing the past behind it. [...] They do not feel that they are removed from the Middle Ages by a certain number of centuries, but that they are separated by Copernican revolutions, epistemological breaks, epistemic ruptures so radical that nothing of that past survives in them. [...] The moderns indeed sense time as an irreversible arrow, as capitalization, as progress.” (pp. 68–69). And nature/scientific truth is not distinctly separated from human society and culture. In between those two poles is an array of “hybrids” or “quasi-objects,” which may be “seen as mixing up different periods, ontologies or genres,” and which, according to Latour, the moderns attempt to deny. “We are not emerging from an obscure past that confused natures and cultures in order to arrive at a future in which the two poles will finally separate cleanly owing to the continual revolution of the present.” (p. 76). He argues then that since the dichotomies asserted by the moderns do not really exist, we can best accept being “non-modern,” retaining at least some of the beliefs of the “premoderns,” importantly among them “their capacity for conceiving of past and future in many ways other than progress and decadence” (p. 132).⁵²

OSLER Mixing Metaphors: Science and Religion or Natural Philosophy and Theology in Early Modern Europe, in: *History of Science* 35 (1997) pp. 91–113. DASTON The Nature of Nature, asserts: “The new natural order of the late seventeenth century was not forged out of the specific achievements of the Scientific Revolution” (p. 169) but rather “the most striking changes must be chalked up to theology and jurisprudence rather than to natural philosophy, natural history, and the mixed mathematical disciplines” (p. 168).

⁴⁹ The quotations are from PAULA FINDLEN *Between Carnival and Lent: The Scientific Revolution at the Margins of Culture*, in: *Configurations* 6 (1998) pp. 255, 254.

⁵⁰ STEVEN SHAPIN, SIMON SCHAFFER *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life*. Princeton 1985.

⁵¹ Unless otherwise indicated, page citations are to LATOUR *We Have Never Been Modern*.

⁵² In this summary, I have deliberately emphasized those aspects of Latour’s argument which would seem to be of relevance for our examination of the Petrine era and in so doing have probably distorted somewhat his intentions. I find his elaborations regarding the nature of “quasi-objects” at times obscure, and, with some of his critics, find it hard to accept his apparent belief that objects can be social. At the same time, though, there seems to be little basis for the neo-conservative diatribes against him on political grounds. For a sympathetic review of his book by T. HUGH CRAWFORD, see: *Configurations* 2 (1994) No. 3, pp. 578–580; for a critical one by H. M. COLLINS, in: *Isis* 85 (1994) No. 4, pp. 672–674.

Now what is important here, whether or not we accept so bold an idea as our never being modern, is the insistence that we should move away from the bipolar models created by the “modernizers” and take seriously that which may be somewhere in a rather messy and ill-defined middle, for any given historical period, in Latour’s words, “a great hotchpotch” (p. 73). To translate this generality into something more concrete regarding the Petrine era, we might seek to emphasize not what was “revolutionary,” especially if to do so involves an oversimplified labeling of that which is traditional as “crude” or simply regarding it to be inconsequential. The reality, I would argue, is much more complex, much more interesting, and, granted, much more difficult to study. “Russia” in the age of Peter does not equate with the tsar’s reforming ideas and the small circle of those who supported them. We need to emphasize the “traditional” and its persistence, and even more importantly, attempt to find the places where the Petrine vision and policies intersect with and combine in perhaps unexpected ways with the “traditional.” What we may discover is not pre-moderns or moderns but what in Latour’s terms is in between, the non-moderns.

Certainly there are ample possibilities for doing so even while continuing to focus on the elite, as most students of Russia’s cultural “transformation” in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have tended to do. Max Okenfuss’s recent provocative book reassessing standard views regarding westernization and secularization suggests many fruitful possibilities for such a study.⁵³ His evidence is in the first instance that of library inventories, where the significance of large numbers of religious books has been downplayed or ignored in the effort of scholars to make of figures such as Lomonosov exemplars of secularizing modernity. Viktor Zhivov’s stimulating study of the development of literary Russian in the early eighteenth century demonstrates clearly its debt to Slavonic, and much of his striking evidence derives from the sermons of that period.⁵⁴ Peter Tolstoi, whose travel diary is often cited as evidence of a “modernizing” view, is clearly a non-modern.⁵⁵ In her recent book on Peter and his era, Lindsey Hughes is careful to point out that members of the Petrine lay elite – for example, Gavriila Golovkin and Boris Sheremetev – were far from comfortable with many aspects of Peter’s policies in part because they remained deeply religious.⁵⁶ It is logical to expect that such cases can be multiplied, especially given what we know about the degree to which there

Collins continues there his defense of SSK and attack on Latour, among others, in: H. M. COLLINS and STEVEN YEARLEY *Epistemological Chicken*, in: *Science as Practice and Culture*. Ed. by Andrew Pickering. Chicago, London 1992, esp. pp. 309–326. A rebuttal by Latour and Michel Callon and then Collins and Yearley’s counter-rebuttal follow in the same volume. One of the targets of Collins in his review is the article by JOSEPH ROUSE *What are Cultural Studies of Scientific Knowledge?*, in: *Configurations 1* (1992) pp. 1–22, which provides a useful contextualization for Latour. Also very helpful for understanding him is ROBERT KOCH *The Case of Latour*, in: *Configurations 3* (1995) pp. 319–347, as is the effort to apply Latour’s scheme to a concrete example, in: T. HUGH CRAWFORD *Networking the (Non) Human: Moby-Dick*, Matthew Fontaine Maury, and Bruno Latour, in: *Configurations 5* (1997) pp. 1–21. For the strident oversimplifications of neo-conservative political correctness, see MARGARET C. JACOB *Reflections on the Ideological Meanings of Western Science from Boyle and Newton to the Postmodernists*, in: *History of Science 33* (1995) pp. 333–357, reprinted in revised form as: *Reflections on Bruno Latour’s Version of the Seventeenth Century*, in: *A House Built on Sand: Exposing Postmodernist Myths about Science*. Ed. by Noretta Koertge. New York, Oxford 1998, pp. 240–254. Jacob’s political stridency undercuts what merit there may be to her substantive argument; it is worth noting that her label notwithstanding, Latour explicitly distances himself from post-modern theorists.

⁵³ OKENFUSS *The Rise and Fall of Latin Humanism*.

⁵⁴ V. M. ZHIVOV *Iazyk i kul’tura v Rossii v XVIII veke*. Moskva 1996.

⁵⁵ It has been ably translated and annotated by MAX OKENFUSS *The Travel Diary of Peter Tolstoi: A Muscovite in Early Modern Europe*. DeKalb, Ill. 1987.

⁵⁶ HUGHES *Russia* pp. 290, 421–422; for Sheremetev, see also ROTHE *Religion* S. 49.

was continuity in the upper echelons of the elite, the Table of Ranks notwithstanding.⁵⁷ Examples can be found as well among less prominent social groups. Ivan Pososhkov, often touted as a mercantilist theorist, in fact was highly suspicious of much that the West had to offer, and in his "instructions" to his son echoed the Muscovite *Domostroi*.⁵⁸ Little of this should be news to us, but the careful study of such examples needs to be greatly expanded, so that we will not fall into the trap of easy assumptions about the abandonment of the old for the new.

Evidence from the Russian provinces: the case of Viatka

A much more difficult task faces us if we move beyond the circles of the capital and the elite. But move we must, for, David Rollison reminds us, "to understand the origins of modern society we need a new kind of history, one that begins in the localities but does not end there."⁵⁹ While there is a growing body of sophisticated analysis of provincial Russia in the Imperial period, much of it focuses on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To a considerable degree, the explanation lies in the accessibility and density of the sources, which may simply not provide evidence allowing answers to many kinds of questions we would ask for the Petrine era or its Muscovite antecedents. We are now only beginning to see whether we can expect for Russian case studies as rich as the provincial studies for England in the same period.⁶⁰ Bushkovitch's objection regarding the possibilities for obtaining evidence about popular religion might be raised with regard to other topics, especially if we would wish to know in any detail how individuals or communities outside of the capitals lived and what they thought. To suggest otherwise, I can offer here one example based on work still in progress, an example which arguably is not exceptional. This example may help to demonstrate how we can move fruitfully from an emphasis on Petrine era modernization to a broader understanding of Russia in the age of Peter the Great and beyond.

My case study might be characterized as a kind of "thick description" (à la Geertz), although I would hope its connections to larger historical questions are sufficiently clear to qualify it as an example of the better kinds of "micro-history" (à la Ginzburg and his

⁵⁷ The evidence adduced by BRENDA MEEHAN-WATERS *Autocracy and Aristocracy* is quite persuasive. As Robert Crummey has reminded me, an excellent example among the clerical elite might be Archbishop Afanasii of Kholmogory. See also, LAVROV *Koldovstvo*, Chapter 3.

⁵⁸ See MARC RAEFF *The Two Facets of the World of Ivan Pososhkov*, in: *FOG* Band 50 (1995) pp. 309–328; OKENFUSS *The Rise and Fall of Latin Humanism* pp. 101–104.

⁵⁹ DAVID ROLLISON *The Local Origins of Modern Society: Gloucestershire 1500–1800*. London, New York 1992, p. 15. I am indebted to Kate Brown for calling this book to my attention. While Rollison's study is set firmly in a framework of seeking the origins of Britain's modernity, he is highly conscious of the importance and nuances of studying "traditional" culture. For a very different approach to using a local "micro-history" to shed light on national trends, see HOCHSTADT *Mobility and Modernity*.

⁶⁰ Among the first of the new studies of Muscovy, note CAROL BELKIN STEVENS *Soldiers on the Steppe: Army Reform and Social Change in Early Modern Russia*. DeKalb, Ill. 1995, in which she emphasizes (p. 10) the importance of studying regional identity and concludes that traditional conceptions of Muscovy that emphasize centralization badly need to be re-considered. It does seem to me that Stevens is not really writing history that "begins in the localities," but her approach may to a considerable degree have been dictated by her Muscovite source base. More significant for our purposes here is VALERIE A. KIVELSON *Autocracy in the Provinces: The Muscovite Gentry and Political Culture in the Seventeenth Century*. Stanford 1996, which will be discussed below. One should note that since the collapse of the Soviet Union, within Russia the study of regional history has blossomed. An example in the case of Viatka is the 10-volume *Entsiklopediia zemli Viatskoi*, whose publication began in 1995.

school).⁶¹ The location is what came in later generations to be regarded as the quintessential provincial backwater of Russia, the Viatka region and its main town, known in the Petrine era as Khlynov (today, Kirov). To accept without question this image of Viatka's backwardness – to a considerable degree the creation of Alexander Herzen and M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin – would be to equate the region with the realm of the Queen of the Night in which Papageno was so blissfully ignorant of the outside world and anything beyond the creature comforts of daily life.⁶² Papageno, emblematic of, shall we say, a different kind of “thickness” although idealized for his living in a state of nature, is a cousin of Saltykov-Shchedrin's crude *glupovtsy*. How Viatka – or for that matter any other Russian provincial “backwater” – acquired its image would be worth further study, to illustrate the ways in which Russian intellectuals erected what turn out to be quite permeable and artificial barriers between elite and popular or metropolitan and provincial.⁶³ Once we have done that though, we need also to learn more about our Papagenos and *glupovtsy*, for in most cases we likely will discover that, like Ginzburg's miller, they were not quite so bizarre, dumb or isolated as superficial acquaintance might suggest.

While there are many interesting aspects of my Viatka example, one which deserves particular emphasis is the light which it sheds on what I would term “regional identity.”⁶⁴ Recent scholarship on the emergence of the “modern” nation state recognizes the complex interplay between the development of a sense of national identity and the tendency of traditional societies to define themselves in regional or local terms. The importance of regional identities for “early modern” Europe is widely assumed; how those identities

⁶¹ For a persuasive review of anthropologists' methods and their strengths and weaknesses from the standpoint of the historian, see ALETTA BIRSACK *Local Knowledge, Local History: Geertz and Beyond*, in: *The New Cultural History*. Ed. and introd. by Lynn Hunt. Berkeley [etc.] 1989, pp. 72–96. On “micro-history,” see, for example, GIOVANNI LEVI *On Microhistory*, in: *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*. Ed. by Peter Burke. Cambridge 1991, pp. 93–113; CARLO GINZBURG *Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm*, in: CARLO GINZBURG *Clues: Myths, and the Historical Method*. Transl. by John and Anne C. Tedeschi. Baltimore, London 1989, pp. 96–125, 200–214; *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe*. Ed. by Edward Muir, Guido Ruggiero. Baltimore 1991. One of the classic examples of “micro-history” is, of course, CARLO GINZBURG *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*. Transl. by John, Anne Tedeschi. Harmondsworth [etc.] 1982.

⁶² A. I. GERTSEN *Byloe i dumy*. Kiev 1976, Chs. 14–17; M. E. SALTYSKOV-SHCHEDRIN *Istoriia odnogo goroda*, in: *IDEM Sobranie sochinenii v Trekh Tomakh*. T. 1, Moskva 1996, where his fictional Viatka is called *Glupov*. Of course in the first instance, both writers were expressing their irritation at the mindless Nicolaevan bureaucrats who supervised their exile, but at the same time, as members of the elite intelligentsia, they felt doubly insulted by having to tolerate living beyond the pale of genuinely polite society.

⁶³ One of the issues worth exploring would be the way that such images created by elite intellectuals in turn influenced even the most devoted enthusiasts for giving regional history and culture its due. In the case of Viatka, this can be seen in some of the writings by A. S. Vereshchagin (see below). For a pioneering study of Russian culture that addresses directly the importance of transcending the supposed elite/popular boundary, see FAITH WIGZELL *Reading Russian Fortunes: Print Culture, Gender and Divination in Russia from 1765*. Cambridge [etc.] 1998. She argues that “the study of fortunetelling adds force to the increasingly accepted view that modern societies differ less from traditional societies than has previously been imagined” (p. 4). Although by no means all of the manifestations of “magic” in Russian culture necessarily cross the assumed elite/popular divide, any study of these issues in the future will start from the splendid new book by W. F. RYAN *The Bathhouse at Midnight: Magic in Russia*. University Park, Pa. 1999. Insofar as a study of “popular” beliefs might involve an examination of attitudes toward “prodigies,” there is a lot to be learned from LORRAINE DASTON, KATHARINE PARK *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150–1750*. New York 1998.

⁶⁴ I disagree with RICHARD HANDLER *Is 'Identity' a Useful Cross-Cultural Concept?*, in: *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*. Ed. by John R. Gillis. Princeton 1994, pp. 27–40. His insistence that identities must be unchanging and are “peculiar to the modern Western world” makes little sense.

persisted and were transformed in subsequent centuries is still a matter of on-going debate.⁶⁵ Nearly a quarter century ago, Carsten Goehrke called for the study of "regionalism" (*Regionalismus*) in Russian history.⁶⁶ His examples focussed on the "medieval" period (illustrated by the case of Novgorod) and on the later imperial periods, and his emphasis in the first instance was on regionalism as defined by political resistance to centralization.⁶⁷ However, his definition clearly understood the phenomenon to have broad implications for "attitudes" or "conduct" (*Handlungsweise*), and he at least admitted that study of the subject for the "early modern" period was desirable and might produce interesting results.⁶⁸ While much has been done on the subject of regionalism since the 1970s, especially by scholars of Russian literature, historians have been slow to answer Goehrke's summons.

One of the few exceptions is the stimulating book by Valerie Kivelson on late Muscovite "regionalism" (or "localism" as she terms it).⁶⁹ Unlike Goehrke, who suggested that the strongest manifestations of this phenomenon might be found in the remote regions of the Russian north, she focusses on the central provinces. She is quite explicit about the fact that the basis for regional identities is in traditional social norms which are indeed very different from the bases for modern individualism; significantly, she concludes that in many respects the regionalism of late Muscovite "political culture" had much in common with that in "advanced" parts of Europe such as England or France. At the same time, she accepts the idea that the Petrine reforms would soon begin to undermine this regionalism. Unlike Kivelson's, my investigation focuses less on secular political culture and more on the ways in which Orthodox belief and practice contributed to regional identity. In such matters, Peter's impact may be much less in evidence.

My curiosity about Viatka developed out of the discovery of a single book (which, it turns out, was compiled there), to which I was led initially because it contains a unique collection of texts that attest in the first instance to Petrine-era "westernization."⁷⁰ In the book are, *inter alia*, an array of late Muscovite translations from western cosmographies (for example, that of Abraham Ortelius) and western propaganda pamphlets, and a unique and remarkably extensive collection of copies of one of Peter's "modernizing innovations," the first pub-

⁶⁵ Cf., for example, HENRY KAMEN *Early Modern European Society*. London, New York 2000, Chapter 1; ALON CONFINO *The Nation as Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871–1918*. Chapel Hill, London 1997.

⁶⁶ CARSTEN GOEHRKE *Zum Problem des Regionalismus in der russischen Geschichte. Vorüberlegungen für ein künftige Untersuchung*, in: FOG Band 25 (1978) pp. 75–107.

⁶⁷ This perhaps overly narrow political emphasis was noted in a very thoughtful review of the regionalism issue in the context of interpreting literary and religious texts. See ULRICH Bamborschke [u. a.] *Die Erzählung über Peter Ordynskij. Ein Beitrag zur soziologischen Erforschung altrussischer Texte*. Berlin 1979 (= Veröffentlichungen der Abteilung für slavische Sprachen und Literaturen des Osteuropa-Instituts [Slavisches Seminar] an der Freien Universität Berlin, Band 48), pp. 110–138. Although his main interest is later, cf. ROTHE *Religion*, esp. pp. 112–117, who may be overstating the degree to which late medieval regions were re-shaped and consolidated by Muscovite centralization.

⁶⁸ Goehrke's definition is: "Regionalismus meint alle historisch relevanten Bewegungen, Handlungsweisen oder Bezugssysteme für die Kontrolle von Handlungsweisen, soweit sie als spezifischen Interessen der Bevölkerung oder einzelner Gruppen und Schichten der Bevölkerung einer Region hervorgehen, die als historisch gewachsener und weitgehend homogener Bestandteil eines politischen Machtbereichs den unmittelbaren Bezugsrahmen bildet" (GOEHRKE *Zum Problem des Regionalismus* p. 80; also, see pp. 92, 104).

⁶⁹ KIVELSON *Autocracy in the Provinces*.

⁷⁰ See my initial report on the discovery, DANIEL CLARKE WAUGH 'Anatolii's Miscellany': Its Origins and Migration, in: *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 19 (1995) pp. 747–755, where there are references to the earlier literature on the manuscript, which is now in the Alisher Navoi State Library of Uzbekistan, in Tashkent, no. P/9250.

lished Russian newspapers or *Vedomosti*. My study of this material was very much in the tradition, exemplified by some of the work I have criticized above, of emphasizing the “modernization” of “traditional” Russia. There was every reason to assume that the book was yet another bit of evidence regarding the changing world view of the late Muscovite elite, a testimony to the fact that Peter had around him individuals who were prepared to look to the West and would at least understand and support his efforts to “modernize” the empire. Not the whole story, as it turns out.

This book leads us into the world of its compiler, one Semën Popov (yes, from a family of churchmen), who was a deacon in the cathedral church of Khlynov and apparently served as one of the first *burmistry*, elected to carry out Peter’s tasks of urban tax collection.⁷¹ The book (and some others that we can confidently associate with Popov) attest to the breadth of his interests. Indeed he dutifully kept copies of some of the most important Petrine decrees (on the new calendar, on the requirement to wear western clothing, on the establishment of the Senate...) as well as an array of news reports beginning with the war against the Turks in the 1690s and going well past the turning point of the Northern War at Poltava. Popov preserved what are now the only known copies (handwritten) of the very first published Petrine *Vedomosti* of late 1702 and in fact he owned a complete set of such copies for the first year and a half of that newspaper’s existence. While his collection then becomes spottier, the evidence suggests that the news of Peter’s war and other events of importance (such as royal marriages) arrived in Viatka at least several times a year.⁷² Apart from the official publications, there was a steady stream of news coming, apparently, from someone connected with the staff of Field Marshal Boris Sheremetev. Popov consciously cultivated those who had access to the news locally (among others, his nephew who lived in his house and worked in the local government chancery), and he seems to have had correspondents who sent him newsletters from the capitals. He sought out those who owned other books published on the Tsar’s orders so as to have copies made for himself.

It may be, somewhat unexpectedly for us, that Viatka was in fact one of the “better connected” of the places within Peter’s realm, for it was on one of the main routes to Siberia.⁷³ We know that a great many Swedish prisoners of war passed through Viatka on the road east; it is tempting to imagine that something of this foreign presence clung to the bushes along the rough road. Certainly later (although how much we can read back from this is questionable), Viatka benefited from the presence not only of Russian *intelligenty* but also

⁷¹ Most of our information on Popov’s biography is to be found in A. [S.] V[ERESHCHAGIN] *Vremennik ezhe naritsaetsia Letopisets Rossiiskikh Kniazei*, in: *Trudy Viatskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi komissii [=TVUAK] 1905*, Vyp. II, Otd. II, pp. 90–96. See also my *K istorii viatskogo letopisaniia*, in: *In Memoriam. Sbornik pamiati Ia. S. Lur’ev. S.-Peterburg 1997*, pp. 303–304 (also published as ‘Anatolievskii sbornik’ i problemy viatskogo letopisaniia, in: *Shvedy i Russkii Sever: Istoriko-kul’turnye svyazi [K 210-letiiu Aleksandra Lavrent’evicha Vitberga]. Materialy Mezhdunarodnogo nauchnogo simpoziuma. Kirov 1997*).

⁷² Details concerning the communications between Viatka and the center as reflected in this acquisition of news will be found in Chapter 3 of my forthcoming monograph.

⁷³ The issue of “networks” and connection between the periphery and center is an important one in Latour’s discussions of the birth of modern science; he draws parallels with imperialism which may be suggestive for analyses where we might try to incorporate more fully the history of the Russian provinces into our narrative. See KOCH *The Case of Latour* p. 325; LATOUR *We Have Never Been Modern* pp. 117 ff.

Swedes and exiled Poles, who brought with them impressive libraries of rare editions in various languages.⁷⁴ We do know that prominent *viatchane* traveled to the capitals.

On at least one occasion, Popov or someone close to him attended Peter's new year celebrations in Moscow (as a member of the delegation headed by Viatka Archbishop Dionisii), and there witnessed some of the new "scenarios of power," with their Classical allegories. While this witness expressed (in very traditional Muscovite language) a vague sense of wonder at what he saw, we cannot know what he really thought about the imagery. Popov's book later would include the actual published descriptions of at least one of the fireworks celebrations and one of the Baroque triumphal gates. Yet we should not conclude from this that Popov necessarily succumbed to the lures of the new Petrine order. What seems to have been most important to him about the new year celebrations in 1705 was Peter's use of the occasion to announce to the celebrants that he was going to press "excess" clerics into state service in support of the war effort. The Viatka churchmen were indignant at this, but, characteristically, rather than blame the Tsar, they blamed the idea on his chief lieutenant Menshikov.⁷⁵ One wonders whether antagonism toward Menshikov might not have been stimulated via the contacts Popov had with Boris Sheremetev's chancery, for Sheremetev and Menshikov were known not to have gotten along very well.

One of the issues which must concern us in order to establish the context for Popov's activity is the history of the Orthodox Church in Viatka. The first major monastery in the region was founded a century earlier and grew rather rapidly under its abbot Trifon, who was venerated locally as a saint by the late seventeenth century but never officially canonized. Viatka's first bishop, Alexander (appointed in 1657), seems not to have gotten along with the locals; apparently he resented what in effect was "provincial exile" after his previous post in Kolomna. He became a critic of Patriarch Nikon's revised church books and thus played an important role in the development of the Old Belief, although he then recanted his position in the Council of 1666.⁷⁶ While we must be very cautious not to assume unorthodox or dissenting tendencies subsequently in Viatka, there is certainly reason to suspect both occasional friction between the local inhabitants and their bishops and, more importantly, tensions between the local church hierarchy and its superiors in Moscow. The last quarter of the seventeenth century was a period of substantial church construction and apparently the development of important public manifestations of officially-supported piety under Archbishop Iona. Popov's superior, Archbishop Dionisii (1700–1718), on the other hand, acquired a reputation of being unenlightened and passive. He was, in any event, not one of the learned Ukrainians who were beginning to dominate the Orthodox Church hierarchy. Perhaps his reputation (like that of Viatka) is undeserved. We do know at least that he attempted to promote the construction of new churches in the face of the Petrine ban on such construction. The last of the new masonry churches in Viatka (before the brief hiatus occasioned by the

⁷⁴ There has been a revival of interest in the Swedes in the region; see several of the essays in the collection *Shvedy i Russkii Sever*. The very rich collection of rare foreign books in the Herzen Regional Library in Kirov owes a lot to the exiled Poles. It is possible, of course, that such a collection was (and still is) a rare tropical plant somehow oddly out of its element. An analogy might be seen in the fact that the former Polish Catholic Church (built around the beginning of the twentieth century) now serves as a concert hall with an expensive new German-built tracker organ – this, in a situation where the local economy and resources to support cultural endeavors are severely strained.

⁷⁵ For the text of Popov's notes on this visit to Moscow, see my 'Anatolii's Miscellany' pp. 752–753, where I attribute their composition to him, a conclusion that probably needs to be qualified.

⁷⁶ Alexander's role in the development of the Old Belief has recently been highlighted by GEORG B. MICHELS *At War with the Church: Religious Dissent in Seventeenth-Century Russia*. Stanford 1999, esp. Chapter 2.

ban) is documented by a drawing of its plan preserved in Popov's manuscript. It is worth noting (*pace* Cracraft) that the architectural style followed that of traditional wooden architecture of the Russian North.⁷⁷ It is possible that even under Dionisii the Church "took the offensive" against non-Orthodox peoples in the Viatka region, a significant portion of the population, in line with the directives coming via the episcopate in Kazan'. Viatka would have to wait until the advent of the learned Ukrainian Lavrentii Gor'ka in the 1730s to see the creation of a seminary modeled on the Jesuit schools, a project for which at least initially the *viatchane* had little enthusiasm. However, Popov's book does attest to the fact that someone in Viatka was beginning to study Latin as early as the first decade of the eighteenth century.

As we look more closely at Popov's "literary" interests and writing, we are led to an appreciation of him not simply as an educated provincial official who was part of the new "modernizing" order but rather as a devout Orthodox believer, church functionary and patron who wished to employ both local church traditions and local history as a counterweight to the centralizing tendencies of both Church and state.⁷⁸ Much of his interest in religious texts is well documented from the excerpts he himself copied.⁷⁹ His readings included the *Pchela* (a collection of religious and moralizing aphorisms), standard commentaries on the Gospels, the writings of SS. Dorotheos of Gaza and Ephrem of Syria, and the late seventeenth-century sermons by the prominent Ukrainian cleric Lazar Baranovych. His was not concerned with complex theological issues; rather, he selected texts that likely were intended for basic religious and moral instruction, connected, as one might suppose, with his functions as a church deacon. He paid at least some attention to the belief in certain circles that Peter was the anti-Christ and the Final Judgment was thus imminent. Popov owned copies both of a published pamphlet denouncing such views and a translated pamphlet containing Western prophecies of the coming Judgment, a work whose possession (in an earlier edition) had helped condemn religious dissidents back in 1666.⁸⁰ Whether Popov believed in such prophecies cannot be determined.

There is persuasive evidence that he had a particular interest in the miraculous and more specifically in miracle-working icons and other relics. Popov owned a copy of the well-known tale about the Murom cross (commonly called the "Tale about Marfa and Mariia") and a quite obscure tale about a miracle-working icon connected with the founding of a small north Russian monastery in the Solikamsk region. He is credited with having composed an account about one of the local churches which had burned and in whose restoration he was involved. One focus of this story was the miraculous survival of an icon of the Sign of the Mother of God. Popov's involvement in the composition of historical works included a deliberate effort to collect information on miracle-working icons.

⁷⁷ The Church of the Presentation of the Lord and St. Paraskeva was completed in 1712, but as with so many of the Viatka churches, has not survived to the present; for a photograph, see: *Entsiklopediia zemli Viatskoi*. T. 5. Arkhitektura. Kirov [etc.] 1996, p. 65. See the comments by A. G. TINSKII *Planirovka i zastroika goroda Viatki v XVII–XIX vekakh*. Kirov 1976, pp. 45–46.

⁷⁸ I have elaborated some of these arguments in my *Novoe o 'Povesti o Viatskoi Zemle'*, in: *Evropeiskii Sever v kul'turno-istoricheskom protsesse (K 625-letiiu goroda Kirova)*. Ed. by V. V. Nizov. Kirov 1999, pp. 350–380.

⁷⁹ Detailed analysis of Popov's collection and use of religious texts will be found in Chapter 2 of my forthcoming monograph.

⁸⁰ On this latter incident, see *MICHELS At War with the Church* pp. 193–194.

For the Viatka region, the most prominent of such icons was one of St. Nicholas "Velikoretskii," which had been discovered miraculously near the River Velikaia.⁸¹ It became so famous that in 1555 when it needed restoration after a fire, Tsar Ivan IV decreed it be brought to Moscow. With the completion of the Cathedral of the Intercession on the Moat (St. Basil's), one of the nine chapels in that church was dedicated to St. Nicholas and a copy of the Velikoretskaia icon placed in it. The original was returned to Viatka.⁸² Soon after the establishment of the Romanov dynasty, the icon was again requisitioned to Moscow and copied. The most extensive accounts of the icon's origins and the miracles associated with it were compiled in Viatka in the second half of the seventeenth century. One such text has been dated between 1696 and 1700, when Iona was archbishop; additional miracles associated with the icon were recorded for 1706, 1709 and 1711. This local emphasis on the icon and the annual procession venerating it came at precisely the time when the Viatka church administration may have felt it necessary to resist efforts by the central Church administration to curb local cults. The account about the icon of St. Nicholas figures prominently in the well-known "Tale about the Viatka Land" (*Povest' o strane Viatskoi*) whose author, I argue, was Semën Popov.⁸³

The core of this Tale is a concise chronicle account about how Viatka was settled by Novgorodians back in the twelfth century. The earliest known copy of this core tale is in Popov's manuscript. Either he (my hypothesis) or someone in his circle then elaborated around the core tale a rather florid and somewhat disjointed account emphasizing Novgorodians' "independence" (the word used is *samovlastie*) and drawing upon late Novgorodian chronicle traditions. Another source was the *Prolog*, one of the popular collections of church readings which in its late seventeenth-century versions had come to include a lot of information about Russian saints and princes. The Tale about Viatka's founding included as well a lengthy version of the account about the icon of St. Nicholas Velikoretskii, and ended with a selection of chronicle entries concerning Viatka's struggle against Moscow (and against Tatar incursions) and its incorporation into the Muscovite state. One of the interesting features of the Tale is the way it stresses the role of prayer to SS. Boris and Gleb in the victory achieved by the Novgorodians over the indigenous "pagans" and its account of a miracle in the founding of the city of Khlynov. In short, the Tale emphasizes the historical basis for Viatka's independence via its inheritance of Novgorodian traditions and its pattern of resistance to incorporation by Moscow and reinforces this message with particular emphasis on divine dispensation. Khlynov was in its own right a "holy city," an outpost of Christian colonization in pagan country and the center of a region enjoying divine protection, as embodied especially in the icon of St. Nicholas. Regional identity is expressed above all in religious terms.

There are a number of features of this Tale which present problems for historians interested in Russia's "modernization." For students of Russian historiography, late chronicle

⁸¹ The texts were published with extended commentary by A. [S.] V[ERESHCHAGI]N *Povesti o velikoretskoi ikone sviatitelia Nikolaia*, in: TVUAK 1905, Vyp. IV, Otd. II, pp. 28–102. Some Viatka sources date the discovery to the fourteenth century, although probably the veneration of the icon in fact began in the sixteenth.

⁸² The collection of such icons in Moscow was part of a process by which the "symbolic space" of the capital was being transformed; see MARIJA MAKHAN'KO *Sobiranie v Moskve drevnikh ikon i relikvii v XVI veke i ego istoriko-kul'turnoe znachenie*, in: *Iskusstvoznanie* 1 (1998) pp. 112–142. I am grateful to E. S. Smirnova for bringing this article to my attention.

⁸³ See my *Novoe o 'Povesti'*, esp. pp. 371–377. The text of the Tale was published with extensive commentary by A. [S.] V[ERESHCHAGI]N "Povest' o strane Viatskoi" in: TVUAK 1905, Vyp. III, Otd. II.

traditions merit much less attention than do works which seem to anticipate a more syncretic and analytical (read “modern”) approach to writing about current events.⁸⁴ This helps to explain why the important seventeenth-century Novgorodian chronicle texts, which so badly need study and publication, are still awaiting attention.⁸⁵ Even the most astute students of eighteenth century Russian historiography see in the continuing popularity of chronicle texts and in the writing and circulation of works such as our Tale evidence of provincial “backwardness” in a situation where at least some authors in the provinces were beginning to emulate more “modern” approaches to history.⁸⁶ Paradoxically, A. S. Vereshchagin, the most enthusiastic advocate of regional history in Viatka in the late nineteenth-century, was positively embarrassed by what he saw to be the lack of sophistication and precision in the Tale and in its related contemporary Viatka chronicles. His interest in the texts was primarily in what they might reveal about Viatka’s early history, not its culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁸⁷

While some scholars take seriously the proliferation in late Muscovy of tales about miraculous icons, Bushkovitch seems concerned about the phenomenon only insofar as it upset the Church and became a target for suppression.⁸⁸ The Viatka evidence alone for the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries raises serious questions about his assertions that local cults were in decline then (and beyond). Such examples of living and developing traditions can be multiplied.⁸⁹ Indeed the local cults came under attack, but they became the focal point of ultimately successful efforts to resist further encroachment from the center. We see in the Popov materials more generally ample testimony to the persistence of the belief in miracles and a view of history in which divine intervention figures prominently.

If we are to understand the culture of “early modern” Russia, we will need to devote much more attention not only to the veneration of local saints but also to the immense popularity of icon cults and the forms in which their veneration was expressed. Such icon tales are numerous in Muscovy, and they arguably form an extremely important body of source material for the study of regional identities. The most extensive survey and analysis of the tales is the impressive recent book by Ebbinghaus, which by no means exhausts the possibilities for such study.⁹⁰ For one, he is interested primarily in the origins of the tales, and partly for practical reasons, he deliberately did not delve deeply into later manuscript traditions. Secondly, even though many of the icons were specifically associated with particular regions, he simply is not very interested in what this may tell us about regional identities. While some

⁸⁴ Notably, A. P. BOGDANOV *Ot letopisaniia k issledovaniiu. Russkie istoriki poslednei chetverti XVII veka*. Moskva 1995.

⁸⁵ One notable exception here is the study by S. N. AZBELEV *Novgorodskie letopisi XVII veka*. Novgorod 1960, which should have been followed by publication of the texts. We are still waiting to see them.

⁸⁶ See A. A. SEVAST’IANOVA *Russkaia provintsial’naia istoriografiia vtoroi poloviny XVIII v. Avtoreferat dissertatsii na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni doktora istoricheskikh nauk*. S.-Peterburg 1993; A. A. SEVAST’IANOVA *Viatskie letopisty i opisaniia XVIII v. – pamiatniki provintsial’noi istoricheskoi mysli*, in: *Viatskaia zemlia v proshlom i nastoiashchem. (K 500-letiiu vkhozhdeniia v sostav Rossiiskogo gosudarstva). Tezisy dokladov i soobshchenii k nauchnoi konferentsii*. Kirov, 23–25 maia 1989 goda. Kirov 1989, pp. 274–275.

⁸⁷ V[ERESHCHAGI]N “Povest”; IDEM *Zaselena li byla Viatka novogorodskimi vykhodtsami v XII veke?*, in: *Kalendar’ Viatskoi gubernii na 1888 god. Viatka 1887*, pp. 155–198.

⁸⁸ BUSHKOVITCH *Religion and Society*, esp. Chapters 4, 5.

⁸⁹ See, for example, LAVROV *Koldovstvo* pp. 203–243.

⁹⁰ ANDREAS EBBINGHAUS *Die altrussischen Marienikonen-Legenden*. Berlin 1990 (= Veröffentlichungen der Abteilung für slavische Sprachen und Literaturen des Osteuropa-Instituts [Slavisches Seminar] an der Freien Universität Berlin Band 70).

of the tales antedate the sixteenth century, a great many of them appear only in the seventeenth, and then more often than not they are connected with a particular provincial church or monastery, especially in what we may loosely term "the Russian North." One cannot but be struck by the fact that in some areas, the majority of literary works with a definable regional focus consists of precisely these icon tales.⁹¹ Another group is found in Siberia, which (not surprisingly) provides a number of interesting parallels with the literature of Viatka.⁹² Ustiug is another case with important parallels to Viatka. As A. N. Vlasov has put it in the very first sentence of his article on the Ustiug tales about wonder-working icons: "The emergence of a cult of holy icons in the Ustiug region was closely connected with the process of the development of a local (regional) self-awareness, with the birth amongst ustiugians of a feeling of a motherland in relationship to the empty lands of the North which they took possession of."⁹³

To analyze the cults on their own terms, we might well learn from the kind of analysis developed by Victor Turner regarding pilgrimage, in which there seem to have been a number of functions that a pilgrimage might fulfill.⁹⁴ In one respect, it represented a means of removing oneself from one's familiar environment and "escaping" from the various cares of day-to-day life. Pilgrimages can then be involved with a re-configuration of traditional centers of power and culture. In that respect they can serve as the means for developing new centers of community and a kind of "mystical regionalism." Turner and others cite examples of how church and political authorities often manipulate pilgrimage cults and relics for purposes of strengthening their authority, an authority that may be focussed both on a national and on a local scale.⁹⁵ One of the striking features of many of the pilgrimage cults

⁹¹ See, for example, A. A. TURLOV *Maloizvestnye pamiatniki iaroslavskoi literatury XIV–nachala XVIII v. (Skazaniia o iaroslavskikh ikonakh)*, in: *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik za 1974 g. Moskva 1975*, p. 169.

⁹² There are many valuable insights relevant to our subject in: E. K. ROMODANOVSKAIA *Russkaia literatura v Sibiri pervoi poloviny XVII v. Novosibirsk 1973*.

⁹³ A. N. VLASOV *Skazaniia o chudotvornykh ikonakh ustiuzhskogo kraia XVI–XVII vv.*, in: *Knizhnye tsentry drevnei Rusi. XVII vek. Raznye aspekty issledovaniia. S.-Peterburg 1994*, p. 215. See also his article, *O pamiatnikakh ustiuzhskoi literaturnoi traditsii XVI–XVII vv. (Sozdateli i sostaviteli nekotorykh literaturnykh proizvedenii Velikogo Ustiuga i Soli Vychevodskoi)*, in: *Knizhnye tsentry drevnei Rusi XI–XVI vv. Raznye aspekty issledovaniia. S.-Peterburg 1991*, pp. 313–343; and monograph, *Ustiuzhskaia literatura XVI–XVII vekov. Istoriko-literaturnyi aspekt. Syktyvkar 1995*.

⁹⁴ See VICTOR TURNER *Pilgrimages as Social Processes*, in his: *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca, London 1974, Chapter 5; VICTOR TURNER, EDITH TURNER *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives*. New York 1978. NANCY S. KOLLMANN has applied Turner's ideas in her study *Pilgrimage, Procession and Symbolic Space in Sixteenth-Century Russian Politics*, in: *Medieval Russian Culture. Vol. 2. Ed. by Michael S. Flier, Daniel Rowland. Berkeley [etc.] 1994 (= California Slavic Studies, 19)*, pp. 163–181.

⁹⁵ For quite different examples from widely-separated places and periods, see PATRICK J. GEARY *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*. Princeton 1978; PHILIP M. SOERGEL *Wondrous in His Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria*. Berkeley [etc.] 1993. I am grateful to Isolde Thyrét for first bringing Geary to my attention and to Mary O'Neil for the reference to Soergel. Various studies by HEINZ SCHILLING provide a valuable framework for understanding the relationship between religion and identity formation in "Early Modern" Europe. See, for example, his *Nationale Identität und Konfession in der europäischen Neuzeit*, in: *Nationale und kulturelle Identität: Studien zur Entwicklung des kollektiven Bewusstseins in der Neuzeit. 3. Aufl. Hrsg. von Bernhard Giesen. Frankfurt a. M. 1996*, pp. 192–252.

is how they have persisted into the twentieth century, in the face of the "secularization" and attacks on "superstition" which we consider to be prominent features of "modernization."⁹⁶

To the best of my knowledge, no one has yet attempted to analyze systematically the "human geography" or the chronology of the Russian icon cults. That is, to what degree, as recorded in the miracle tales associated with them, do the worshippers come from a definable local region? Furthermore, where icon processions are involved, where do they go, and what can we suggest about the significance of the route? While there is a bit of information on the efforts to suppress the cults especially in the Petrine era, can we establish whether those efforts met with any success? Certainly we know that within a generation of Peter, however reluctantly, the Church was again permitting local cults; recent work is demonstrating their vitality in the last century of the imperial regime.⁹⁷

According to one source, the annual procession involving the icon of St. Nicholas Velikoretskii began back in the fourteenth century when it encompassed only the area of Khlynov and a group of villages fairly close to the city.⁹⁸ In 1552, the circuit expanded considerably, and the procession lasted from June to November. In 1745, an icon of the Savior Not Made by Hands came to be included in the procession. Apart from the veneration of these icons of regional importance, there seem to have been a number of locally-venerated icons which also became the objects of such celebration. While the Synod seems to have given up on trying to suppress such veneration, the Soviet regime apparently was more successful. Yet how quickly when that regime began to disintegrate did the Church revive in places such as Viatka. One manifestation of that revival was the resumption of the traditional icon procession venerating St. Nicolas Velikoretskii.⁹⁹

Conclusion

Semen Popov (and a circle of his provincial Viatka associates) arguably is one of Latour's "non-moderns," and as such is typical of those with some education in the Petrine era who perforce were touched by the "reforms." These are individuals whose cultural values are firmly Orthodox, but who also straddle the purported divide between the new and the old. Others include the Petrine artists who, trained in the Western style and thus on the modern side of a supposed revolutionary divide, ended up painting icons when it turned out there was insufficient demand for their newly-shaped talents. Popov is a provincial analogue to Peter Tolstoi and Boris Sheremetev, amongst the Petrine elite, and someone who would recognize as his cultural kin the entrepreneurial Pososhkov, with his convictions reflecting the sixteenth-century world of the *Domostroi*.

In conclusion, we might consider more broadly what topics would be particularly fruitful to explore to understand both Petrine Russia and what followed upon it. While religion, broadly defined, certainly does not of itself encapsulate even the largest part of the topics that

⁹⁶ Russianists who would work on miracle cults can learn much from JEAN-CLAUDE SCHMITT *The Holy Greyhound: Guinefort, healer of children since the thirteenth century*. Transl. by Martin Thom. Cambridge [etc.] 1983. I am grateful to Mary O'Neil for this reference too.

⁹⁷ See LAVROV *Koldovstvo* and for the later Imperial period the recent article by VERA SHEVZOV *Miracle-Working Icons, Laity, and Authority in the Russian Orthodox Church, 1861–1917*, in: *The Russian Review* 58 (1999) pp. 26–48.

⁹⁸ The early date for the icon's discovery is in the late seventeenth-early eighteenth century Viatka chronicles, and other details are in tales about the icon mentioned above. One would like to know more, however, regarding the sources of information for the map entitled "Religioznoe vozrozhdenie" illustrating the evolution of the processions in the Viatka/Kirov *oblast'*, in: *Istoriko-etnograficheskii atlas Kirovskoi oblasti*. Moskva 1998, p. 38.

⁹⁹ This even made the front page of *The New York Times*, June 10 (1997) pp. A1, A3.

legitimately merit our attention, we should heed the comments of scholars such as Gregory Freeze regarding how ill-served we are by the existing literature on this critically important subject.¹⁰⁰ A region such as Viatka, properly studied, could help shed light on a wide range of issues: the relationship between church and state; the official Church and the Old Belief; interactions between the Orthodox and the non-Orthodox; the manifestations of popular belief and their connection with regional identity.¹⁰¹ If we were to extend the study of a place such as Viatka, paying particular attention to religious belief and practice, we very likely would discover interesting analogies to the picture which has in recent years been developed for France, a country most would argue was significantly more “modern” than Russia.¹⁰² These analogies, however, do not point in the direction of a secularizing “modernization,” even as led by a Church ostensibly devoted to stamping out superstition and bringing local cults under control (both presumably features of a “modernizing project”). In fact, the evidence from France is overwhelming regarding the pervasiveness of popular belief, in all of its “superstitious” and “mystical” aspects related to the real concerns of daily life.

A closely related topic of broad consequence which I would emphasize is that we need to study much more the significance and application of literacy in Russian society and the ways in which “texts” other than those in writing operated in Russian culture. Even (especially?) in the matter of interpreting the influence of written texts – a subject for which the literature is substantially larger – we are still surprisingly poorly served. As Edward Keenan keeps reminding us, in fact our source base in many ways still needs to be properly established before we should even begin to venture broader interpretations, not the least reason being that a huge amount which was important continued to circulate in manuscript books whose

¹⁰⁰ FREEZE *Handmaiden of the State?*; IDEM *The Rechristianization of Russia: the Church and Popular Religion, 1750–1850*, in: *Studia slavica finlandensia* 7 (1990) pp. 101–136.

¹⁰¹ Most students of popular belief learn from the advice of NATALIE ZEMON DAVIS, in, e.g., her *Some Tasks and Themes in the Study of Popular Religion*, in: *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*. Ed. by Charles Trinkaus, Heiko A. Oberman. Leiden 1974, pp. 307–336; and *From ‘Popular Religion’ to Religious Cultures*, in: *Reformation Europe: A Guide to Research*. Ed. by Steven Ozment. St. Louis 1982, pp. 321–342. For the Russian case, the starting points are EVE LEVIN *Dvoeverie and Popular Religion*, in: *Seeking God: The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia*. Ed. by Steven K. Batalden. DeKalb 1993, pp. 31–52; ROBERT O. CRUMMEY *Old Belief as Popular Religion: New Approaches*, in: *Slavic Review* 52 (1993) pp. 700–712; MICHELS *At War with the Church*; and now LAVROV *Koldovstvo*. Although it has been all too easy to relegate the Old Believers to the “pre-moderns,” such a position is really untenable. On this issue, see also ROBERT O. CRUMMEY *Interpreting the Fate of Old Believer Communities in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, in: *Seeking God* pp. 144–159. Any future study of the Old Believers and religious change in the second half of the seventeenth century will also have to take into account the revisionist book by GABRIELE SCHEIDEGGER *Endzeit. Russland am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Bern [etc.] 1999 (= *Slavica Helvetica* Band 63).

¹⁰² Of particular interest here is the widely-cited (e.g., by WIGZELL *Reading Russian Fortunes*) study by JUDITH DEVLIN *The Superstitious Mind: French Peasants and the Supernatural in the Nineteenth Century*. New Haven, London 1987, but the subject of “superstition” is much broader than a peasant one. See as well RALPH GIBSON *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789–1914*. London, New York 1989, esp. Chs. 5–6; GÉRARD CHOLVY, YVES-MARIE HILAIRE *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine, 1800–1880*. Toulouse 1985, esp. Chapter 4. As Caroline Ford emphasizes in her useful review of this literature which questions the “tattered image of a secularized and dechristianized France,” one of the important virtues of the study by Cholvy and Hilaire is its attention not only to center (as had been traditional in such studies) but the provinces. See, CAROLINE FORD *Religion and Popular Culture in Modern Europe*, in: *JMH* 65 (1993) esp. pp. 155–156.

lineage is hardly known.¹⁰³ As my Viatka example illustrates, there is much more to be done simply to establish who owned and had access to which books; analysis of this kind of material needs to go beyond simply categorizing what percentages of books owned were in what "subjects" as defined by "modern" categories of knowledge.¹⁰⁴ In all too many cases, we simply know too little about the contents of the books – an example again being the late Novgorod chronicle/chronograph traditions that were drawn upon by Popov and his circle. The biases that have interfered with the study of the historical texts also inform the work that has been done so far on tales about miraculous icons, where the focus is on the origins of the texts and cults and not on how they later developed.

Bushkovitch has argued that we cannot learn anything about "popular religion" except through the distorting filter of the literate elite. Indeed, while Popov may have been a "provincial," he was a member of the elite, precisely because he was literate and arguably remarkably well read compared with the majority of his contemporaries. At the same time, his interests clearly encompassed more than the written text. The "traditional" (read "religious") as well as the new images and symbols were a critically important part of the culture which he shared in the Petrine era with the majority of Russians, the illiterate. Despite my quarrel with how they interpret the material, one of the great virtues of the work by Cracraft and Wortman is to systematize a lot of the non-textual evidence. Yet to stress only its secular aspects is as distorting as what scholars such as Luppov have done, when they conveniently ignore the fact that the greatest demand for published books under Peter was precisely for religious texts. It is likely that iconography in all of its forms is one place where elite and popular culture meet; but to study it requires considering more than the elements of European style and content.

As with so many other issues of relevance here, we can learn a great deal from studies which have been done for cases other than Russia. It would be worthwhile to review what anthropologists have written on the transition from pre-literate to literate societies and the various responses evoked by such studies. The subject has direct relevance to discussions of "modernization," insofar as it connects with issues of rational thought and thereby much that underlies the pronouncements of Max Weber.¹⁰⁵ It turns out that the growth of literacy does not necessarily connect inexorably with what are considered to be salient features of "moder-

¹⁰³ EDWARD L. KEENAN Afterword: Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy, in: *Religion and Culture* pp. 199–206. This is one of the forceful messages of SCHEIDEGGER *Endzeit*, who questions the provenance of important texts traditionally attributed to figures such as Avvakum.

¹⁰⁴ The series of books by the late S. P. LUPPOV on Russian libraries from the Muscovite period down through the eighteenth century illustrates clearly the inadequacy of such an approach; he has been appropriately criticized by GARY MARKER *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700–1800*. Princeton 1985, pp. 18–19, especially for his tendency to exaggerate the "modernizing" impact of Peter's reforms. Marker and Okenfuss (*The Rise and Fall of Latin Humanism*) have provided a clear indication of what can be gained from a more sophisticated approach.

¹⁰⁵ The starting point for most recent discussions of literacy is the stimulating essay by JACK GOODY, IAN WATT *The Consequences of Literacy*, in: *CSSH* 5 (1963) pp. 304–345. Goody has subsequently elaborated and refined his ideas in several books. Although the subject matter is primarily pre-literate cultures, Robin Horton addresses many of the same issues in his important essay *African Traditional Thought and Western Science*, in: *Africa* 37 (1967) No. 1–2, pp. 50–71, 155–187. Such discussions by "western" scholars have been sharply criticized as Eurocentric. For references and Horton's defense of his position in the face of such criticism, see his *Tradition and Modernity Revisited*, in: *Rationality and Relativism*. Ed. by Martin Hollis, Steven Lukes. Oxford 1982, pp. 201–260. For the purposes of my essay, I make no attempt to walk into the quagmire of post-colonial criticism, which is, however, relevant for issues being discussed. An excellent example of what can be accomplished by bringing studies of literacy in the medieval West to bear in analyzing the Russian case can be found in: SIMON FRANKLIN *Literacy and Documentation in Early Medieval Russia*, in: *Speculum* 60 (1985) pp. 1–38.

nity" (for example, secularization and "the growth of knowledge" [!]). The example of Old Believer culture is one eloquent testimony to this fact for Russia.¹⁰⁶ Historians of the book who write about Western Europe have a great deal to say to us too. Roger Chartier's essays, for example, are models as to how to address important questions regarding readership and the understanding of the written word.¹⁰⁷ One of his emphases is that assumptions about boundaries between elite and popular culture are too often unwarranted.

In summary, then, I would advocate that we intensify our study not of Russia's putative modernization but rather that which is non-modern. This perforce requires that we look at the complicated meeting places between what we define as modern and the realities of that which we call pre-modern. We can do this at least in part by focussing on cases of the "exceptional normal," that is on the micro-histories, and the local, while keeping in mind always their relationship to the larger issues. As Jacques Revel has asked, in his advocacy of such a micro-historical focus, "pourquoi faire simple quand on peut faire compliqué?"¹⁰⁸ Indeed, Russia in the age of Peter the Great, as I think we would all admit, is far from simple.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ See CRUMMEY *Interpreting the Fate*. An interesting comparative example, which explicitly questions some of Goody's contentions, is in R. W. NIEZEN *Hot Literacy in Cold Societies: A Comparative Study of the Sacred Value of Writing*, in: *CSSH* 33 (1991) pp. 225–254, where one finds the assertion that "widespread literacy does not in itself promote the growth of knowledge" (p. 253).

¹⁰⁷ For example, ROGER CHARTIER *Texts, Printing, Readings*, in: *The New Cultural History* pp. 154–167; IDEM *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*. Transl. by Lydia G. Cochrane. Princeton 1987. See also NATALIE ZEMON DAVIS *Printing and the People*, in her: *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays*. Stanford 1975, Ch. 7.

¹⁰⁸ JACQUES REVEL *L'histoire au ras du sol*, introductory essay to: GIOVANNI LEVI *Le pouvoir au village: histoire d'un exorciste dans le Piémont du XVIIe siècle*. Transl. by Monique Aymard. Éditions Gallimard 1989, p. xxiv. The phrase "exceptional normal" is Edoardo Grendi's, cited pp. xxx–xxxii.

¹⁰⁹ This article was already in press when I learned from Prof. Cracraft that he is preparing an extensive review of modernization theory for the third volume of his *magnum opus*. I thereupon provided him with a typescript of my article. In a response of 3 February 2001 he takes strong exception to much of what I say. I look forward to the continuation of the discussion.