

# The Petrine Instauration

Religion, Esotericism and Science  
at the Court of Peter the Great,  
1689-1725

**Robert Collis**



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## The Petrine Instauration

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at the Court of Peter the Great, 1689–1725

*By*  
Robert Collis



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To Penelope Eunice Mathias



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NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION,  
TRANSLATIONS, BIBLICAL CITATIONS AND DATES

The Library of Congress system for transliterating Russian has been adopted throughout this work. However, some well-known individuals, such as Peter the Great, are referred to using their English language equivalents. All translations from Russian and Ukrainian, unless stated otherwise, are by myself. All German translations are by Graham Collis and Latin translations are by Veli-Matti Rissanen. I also received help in translating Latin texts by Feofan Prokopovich from John Wade. All Biblical citations are from the King James Version.

Lastly, all dates (days and months) are denoted according to the Old Style system, that is, the Julian Calendar, rather than the New Style Gregorian Calendar, which was only introduced into Russia in 1918 and into Britain in 1752. In the seventeenth century, the Julian Calendar was ten days behind the Gregorian Calendar, whilst in the eighteenth century the time-lag was eleven days.



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PRELUDE

QUIRINUS KUHLMANN'S MILLENARIAN MISSION  
TO MOSCOW IN 1689

At eleven o'clock, on the morning of October 4, 1689, Quirinus Kuhlmann (1651–1689), a Silesian mystic from Breslau (Wrocław) who was greatly influenced by Jakob Böhme (1574–1624), and Konrad Nordermann (d. 1689), a Dutch merchant and resident of the *Nemetskaia Sloboda* (Foreign Quarter), in Moscow, were led out onto Red Square in the Russian capital to be burned at the stake as heretics. The ensuing gruesome spectacle was witnessed by Kuhlmann's mother who subsequently wrote a letter dramatically describing the last moments of her son's life. A copy of this letter was reprinted in the notable work *Kirchen und Ketzer-Historie* (1699–1700) by the Pietist Gottfried Arnold, which discussed a number of heretics in a favourable light. In the letter she describes how they were led out on to Red Square as false prophets where a 'small house' (a stake) had been prepared and furnished with tar barrels and straw. She then adds:

When these innocent people approached death and saw that nobody around them would give consolation and did not want to grant them a reprieve, they both came to a halt and began to pray, turning their eyes to heaven. When they approached the stake and already saw that they had no salvation, my son then raised his hands and exclaimed in a loud voice: "You are just, great Lord! And right is your judgment. You know that we die now without guilt." And both, consoled entered the small house and were immediately consumed by fire; and no longer was there heard any kind of voice.<sup>1</sup>

This unsavoury public event marked the high tide of Patriarch Ioakim's wave of Orthodox reaction against foreign influence. The Patriarch felt emboldened by the downfall of the Regent, Sophia, in September 1689, and utilizing the tacit support of the Naryshkin clan surrounding the young tsar, Peter Alekseevich, he sought to assert his authority. The burning of Kuhlmann and Nordermann at the stake was the clearest example of his determined zeal to eradicate what he perceived to be the contaminating influence of heterodoxy (and confessional competition) emanating from the Foreign Quarter.

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<sup>1</sup> N. S. Tikhonravov, "Kvirin Kul'man," *Russkii Vestnik* 12 (1867): 592–93.

In many ways, however, the unfortunate fate of Kuhlmann and Nordermann had been decided as early as 26 May, 1689 – only a matter of weeks after the arrival of the former in the Russian capital. It was on this date that the first interrogation of Kuhlmann took place, carried out by officials of the *Posol'skii Prikaz* (Foreign Ministry). A leading player in Kuhlmann's arrest, however, was not the Patriarch, but Joachim Meinecke, a Lutheran pastor in the Foreign Quarter. It seems Meinecke felt threatened by the presence of mystical Protestants preaching a brand of radical chiliasm at odds with his orthodox doctrine. Consequently, the Lutheran pastor was skilfully able to manipulate the religious and political environment in Moscow. Indeed, Kuhlmann was soon labelled a heretical 'Quaker' and compared to the Russian *raskol'niki* (schismatics) by two early Russian translators of his texts working in the *Posol'skii Prikaz*.<sup>2</sup>

The knowledge that Kuhlmann was en route to Moscow had induced a tangible air of excitement among a sizeable group in the Foreign Quarter, led by the merchant Nordermann, who were already favourable to the mystical theosophy of Jakob Böhme and interested in the Quaker movement. Kuhlmann himself had been an ardent follower of Böhme since 1673, when he was given a copy of the latter's *Mysterium Magnum*.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, he immersed himself in Böhme's work, which he read with "enthusiasm and astonishment" and came to believe that his Silesian predecessor was divinely inspired.<sup>4</sup> In 1674 Kuhlmann published his principal work, *Neubegeisterter Böhme*, which combined the chiliasm he had inherited from a Dutch prophet, Johannes Rothe, the *Heilsplan* of Valentin Weigel and Böhme's belief in the imminent coming of an 'eternal kingdom.' This Enochian age would be marked by a union of the Protestant sects and the arrival of a new and true knowledge of God.<sup>5</sup>

It is also interesting to note that Kuhlmann had been greatly influenced in the early 1670s by the Jesuit polymath, Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680),

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<sup>2</sup> Tikhonravov, "Kvirin Kul'man," 11, 184.

<sup>3</sup> Robert L. Beare, "Quirinus Kuhlmann: The Religious Apprenticeship," *PMLA* 68: 4 (September 1953): 852.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Beare, "Quirinus Kuhlmann," 852, 861; Nils Thune, *The Behmenists and the Philadelphians: A Contribution to the Study of English Mysticism in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri AB, 1948), 105–6. In the Hebrew Bible, Enoch was a seventh-generation descendant of Adam. Genesis 5:24 describes how Enoch "walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." As a result of this passage, Enoch became central to apocalyptic speculation. For more on Enoch and apocalyptic speculation, see John Joseph Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998).

writing in 1671 that he “is like a miraculous magnet: his almost unprecedented learning fills (me) with amazement and attracts the whole earthly globe.”<sup>6</sup> Kuhlmann engaged in a lengthy correspondence with Kircher in which he expressed his admiration for the latter’s *Ars Magna* based on the divine art of combing numbers in order to unlock the secrets of nature. Kuhlmann also wrote to Kircher regarding his renowned scientific collection, the revelations of Adam and Solomon and he proclaimed to Kircher that he had “read and re-read” the work of Ramon Lull (c. 1232–1316) on divine attributes which was closely linked to Jewish Cabbala. According to Kuhlmann, Lull’s wheel – upon which were placed the nine divine dignities or names – “provides a method for opening the secrets of nature and the truth of wisdom.”<sup>7</sup> Kuhlmann’s admiration for Kircher was most fully expressed in a tome dedicated to the work of the latter, entitled, *Kicheriana de arte magna sciendi sive combinatorial*, which was published in London in 1683. Other important influences on Kuhlmann were the proto-Pietist Johann Arndt and the mystical physician and alchemist, Paracelsus, cited as a reference in the preface to his prose work *Lehrreicher Geschicht-Herold*.<sup>8</sup> Kuhlmann also became acquainted with Jane Lead the founder of the Philadelphian Society and fellow disciple of Böhme, during his stay in England in 1684.<sup>9</sup>

By 1687 Kuhlmann had become firmly convinced in the special role to be played by the Russian monarchs (the Regent Sophia and the two co-tsars Ivan and Peter) in his chiliastic vision and in his own revelatory mission. Indeed, he published a collection of prophecies dedicated to the Russian monarchs in Amsterdam in this year, entitled *Drei und Zwanzigstes Kühl-Jubel Ausz dem ersten Buch des Kühl-Salomons an Ihre Czarische Majestaten*.<sup>10</sup> This edition was drawn directly from Jan Amos Comenius’s *Lux e Tenebris* (1657), in which he published the prophecies of his friends, Miklós Drabik, Christoph Kotter and Christina Poniatowska. This was one of six works sent to Archangel in December 1688 with the aim of promoting Kuhlmann’s ideas in anticipation of his arrival.

One can detect a distinct political dimension to Kuhlmann’s fixation with the special role of Russia. After all, it was in May 1687 that Russia

<sup>6</sup> Tikhonravov, “Kvirin Kul’man,” 11, 192.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>8</sup> Beare, “Quirinus Kuhlmann,” 844, 849.

<sup>9</sup> Tikhonravov, “Kvirin Kul’man,” 12, 565.

<sup>10</sup> See Quirinus Kuhlmann, *Der Köhlsalter*, ed. Robert L. Beare, vol. 2, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1971), 362–3.

embarked on a Crimean campaign against the Ottoman Turks and the Crimean Tartars, in alliance with Austria, Venice and Poland. Kuhlmann was vehemently against this so-called ‘Holy League,’ as he wished to see the destruction of the Hapsburg Empire and the Papal Church. The Silesian also saw Russia’s prophetic role as actually being fulfilled in alliance with the Ottoman Turks and the Crimean Tartars. This stance drew heavily on the prophecies of Drabik, Kotter and Poniatowska, as well as those of Stephen Melish. In 1643, for example, Drabik had a series of visions in which God purportedly “whispered to the East and to the North to come up, and revenge the injuries of my servants.”<sup>11</sup> In these visions, Drabik also envisages the destruction of Babylon (Vienna) by an alliance of Turks, Tartars and Muscovites, in which the ‘infidels’ would then convert to Christianity.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Kuhlmann went to Moscow in order to beseech the Russian monarchy to break with its allies, who in the service of the Papacy, he writes, “seek to shamefully charm you.”<sup>13</sup> Needless to say, this political agitation was not appreciated in all quarters in the Russian capital and greatly contributed to Kuhlmann’s eventual downfall.

Later, whilst under interrogation in Moscow, Kuhlmann explained that he went to the Russian capital according to the visions of an angel. The “many great and secret matters” revealed to him in these visions would be revealed to the “great monarchs” if he was given his freedom and allowed to reside in the city.<sup>14</sup> Immediately prior to his arrival in Moscow, whilst staying in Novgorod, Kuhlmann also wrote a fresh appeal to the Russian monarchs exclaiming their special role in achieving his chiliastic vision of an “eternal kingdom.” This appeal was dated 26 April, 1689 and was entitled *Kühl-Jubel* (Fresh Triumph). In it, Kuhlmann exclaimed that Sophia would become a new Miriam, Ivan would become a new Aaron and Peter would become a new Moses. He also exhorts them to unite and hurry to apostolic power, when the Tabernacle of the last age approaches, and where they will be shown the truth that David and Solomon had revealed to Kuhlmann himself. When approaching their “fresh ark” Kuhlmann would also inform them that they should behave according to the customs of the Samaritans.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Christoph Kotter, *Prophecies of Christopher Kotterus, Christiana Poniatovia, Nicholas Drabicius* (London, 1664), 96.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>13</sup> Tikhonravov, “Kvirin Kul’man,” 12, 570.

<sup>14</sup> Dmitrii Tsvetaev, “Pamiatniki k istorii protestantsva v Rossii,” *Chteniia v imperatorskom obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh*, 3 (1883): 130–1.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 122–23.

These sentiments were enthusiastically shared by Nordermann, who during his second interrogation pronounced a similarly powerful Biblical vision of the imminent foundation of a New Jerusalem and a new Solomon's Temple on Russian soil, which N. S. Tikhonravov directly compares to Masonic ideals:

Like the later Masons, Norderman was waiting for a spiritual Christianity to formally achieve a new church, to create from itself a new Solomon's Temple, the internal beauty of which would eclipse the blessed model of the Temple of the Old Testament Tsars.<sup>16</sup>

This powerful vision, furthermore, is explicitly linked to the East and Russia in particular: "to the East shall Jerusalem return and a single faith . . . it shall be better, as in antiquity and as it was in the time of Solomon."<sup>17</sup> What is more, the Temple of Solomon will be built again, "better and more glorious."<sup>18</sup>

Yet despite the lofty Biblical role envisaged for the Russian monarchy by Kuhlmann and Nordermann, the pair won little favour in Moscow. In reality, they offered little to the Russian monarchy, apart from reverent praise. Whilst chiliasm and esotericism were at the heart of their message, they failed to fully comprehend the religious, cultural and political environment in Moscow. Indeed, Kuhlmann was much more concerned with the fall of the Hapsburg monarchy than the advancement of the Romanovs. Thus, in essence it is easy to see how they created many enemies and few supporters. Ultimately their fervency lacked a progressive and dynamic dimension, in which the foundation of a New Jerusalem and a new Solomon's Temple on Russian soil could be aspired to by advancing knowledge (in both religious and scientific terms). Nevertheless, Kuhlmann's mission to Moscow marks a significant moment in Russian history. After all, one of Europe's most prominent mystical thinkers had assigned a special providential role for Russia and its monarchs. Thus, although expressed with a degree of uncommon fervency, Kuhlmann's sentiments epitomize a phenomenon that gained wider and greater currency during the sole reign of Peter the Great (1672–1725). Namely, that the Russian monarch had been granted a divine role to play in the unfolding Biblical drama at a crucial culminating period in history.

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<sup>16</sup> Tikhonravov, "Kvirin Kul'man," 12, 588.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Tsvetaev, "Pamiatniki," 133–4.



## INTRODUCTION

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old. (Amos: 9:11)

In March 1697 Peter the Great embarked on his famous Grand Embassy to Western Europe. This venture aroused considerable excitement among many of the continent's leading scientific, philosophical and religious figures. Naturally, part of the sense of anticipation stemmed from the unprecedented sight of a Russian tsar exploring the West. However, many figures interpreted the Grand Embassy in a providential light, and envisaged Peter the Great as a Christian monarch capable of defeating the Ottoman threat from the East and spreading the light of Christianity. Thus, Peter the Great's journey to the West was effectively viewed as a symbolic act in a grand, unfolding religious drama.

Most notably, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) followed the tsar's progress across Europe with keen interest. Indeed, he attached a profound providential significance to Peter the Great's reign. In addition to envisaging the monarch as a defender of the Christian faith against the Muslim Turks, Leibniz believed that Peter the Great could cultivate “until completion,” as he wrote, “the plantation entrusted to him by God.”<sup>1</sup> According to Leibniz providential foresight had brought Peter the Great to power in Russia in order to carry out a grand and pivotal mission to facilitate the spread of light and knowledge to the East in the guise of Reformed Protestantism.<sup>2</sup> Crucially, Leibniz shared this vision of the spread of Reformed Protestantism with a number of other eminent correspondents whilst Peter the Great undertook his Grand Embassy – most notably August Hermann Francke (1663–1727), the German Pietist leader based in Halle, and Nicolaes Witsen (1641–1717), the burgomaster of Amsterdam.<sup>3</sup> It is significant that all three of these figures went on to exert a powerful influence on the

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<sup>1</sup> W. Guerrier, *Otnosheniia Leibnitsa k Rossii i Petru Velikomu po neizdannym bumagam Leibnitsa v gannoberskoi biblioteke* (St. Petersburg, 1871), 15.

<sup>2</sup> It should also be borne in mind that Peter the Great's Grand Embassy coincided with the signing of the Treaty of Ryswick in September–October 1697 that brought an end to the Nine Years' War between France and a coalition headed by England, the Hapsburg Empire, Spain and the United Provinces of the Netherlands.

<sup>3</sup> See Guerrier, *Otnosheniia Leibnitsa k Rossii*.



Petrine reforms at the beginning of the eighteenth century through direct contact with the Russian monarch or via his close servitors.

Leibniz felt that the ideal mentor to guide the young Russian tsar in his God-given task, whilst he was residing in Holland in the autumn of 1697, would be Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont (1614–1698). However, Leibniz lamented that van Helmont, who was his friend and collaborator, was too old for the task, although he wrote that “if he was younger he would prove very useful to the tsar” as he “possesses an astonishing knowledge in all subjects.”<sup>4</sup> Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont was the son of Jan Baptista van Helmont (1577–1644), the famed alchemist. The younger van Helmont maintained his father’s alchemical outlook, whilst also embracing a form of Christian Cabbalism. Thus, Leibniz considered the ideal tutor for the young Peter the Great to be a man who displayed a profoundly esoteric outlook.

As mentioned above, Leibniz was far from being alone in foreseeing a lofty destiny for Peter the Great. This becomes apparent if one reads the proposals given to the Russian tsar by Dr. Francis Lee (1660–1719), whilst Peter the Great was resident in London in the early months of 1698. Lee was the editor of Jane Lead’s mystical writings and the driving force behind the Philadelphian Society – a millenarian group based in London that drew heavily on the theosophical thought of Jakob Böhme.<sup>5</sup>

The proposals outline a practical scheme to advance learning and the institutions of government in the Russian realm. More specifically, Lee recommends the establishment of seven colleges for (1) the advancement of learning; (2) the improvement of nature; (3) the encouragement of the Arts; (4) the increase of merchandize; (5) the reformation of manners; (6) the compilation of laws and (7) the propagation of the Christian religion.<sup>6</sup>

Lee’s concern with the practical management of faraway Russia was based on the same hopes as Leibniz. In other words, he envisaged the young Peter the Great as being capable of fulfilling a vital role in the

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on the Philadelphian Society, see Francis Lee, *The State of the Philadelphian Society, or, The Grounds of their Proceedings Consider’d* (London, 1697); Thune, *The Behmenists*.

<sup>6</sup> Francis Lee, *Apoleipomena, or Dissertations Theological, Mathematical and Physical* (London, 1752), 2.

imminent millenarian drama, as the following prologue from the text suggests:

Sir,

An invisible hand has conducted you to what is a Mystery to all *Europe*, and being followed, will conduct you to what may be for the Astonishment and Praise of all the World. There remains somewhat behind the Scene to be unveil'd, which will afford, perhaps, a more agreeable Surprize to your great searching in all your Travels; not beneath the Cognizance of the highest Potentates of this terrestrial Globe, and which may have a particular Regard to the present Motions of your *Caesarean Majesty*.

An extraordinary Genius may effect extraordinary Things; and it is an extraordinary Age in which we live, that calls for a more than common Application and Penetration: The vulgar Methods are all too short to compass any thing considerable: Wherefore others are to be searched out more suitable to the Greatness of your Mind, and more effectual to all the Aims of Government, and fitted to raise you, Sir, above the ordinary Level of your Predecessors.<sup>7</sup>

When reading Lee's extolment of Peter the Great as an "extraordinary genius" able to bring about "extraordinary things" in an "extraordinary Age," it should be borne in mind that many millenarians at the close of the seventeenth-century were expecting the arrival of the prophesied Fifth Monarchy (after the fall of the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian and Roman empires) drawing on Daniel (2:44), which states: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." The Philadelphian Society, with Lee at its head, was one such millenarian group that actively heralded the pending arrival of the Fifth Monarchy, led by a ruler who embodied the virtues of David and Solomon.<sup>8</sup>

Given the decidedly mystical and esoteric nature of Francis Lee's and the Philadelphian Society's form of millenarian thought, it is fascinating to note that Lee's proposals explicitly state that they were formulated at the specific request of the Russian tsar.<sup>9</sup> Thus, less than a decade after the death of Quirinus Kuhlmann on Red Square, Peter the Great himself, it seems, sought out a man in London who espoused a similar chiliastic and esoteric worldview.

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<sup>7</sup> Lee, *Apoleipomena*, 1–2.

<sup>8</sup> See Lee's preface to the first volume of Jane Lead, *A Fountain of Gardens*, (London, 1697), 1:1–34

<sup>9</sup> Lee, *Apoleipomena*, 1.

Yet whilst Kuhlmann offered no concrete and positive vision for the transformation of Russia, both Leibniz and Lee did provide such practical plans. I would argue that these practical plans envisaged the tsar as a divinely sanctioned catalyst, whose providential role was to bring about an instauration, as opposed to mere reform, of Russian society. In this study I will argue that Peter the Great was receptive to the potency of this grand vision of his mission and, moreover, actively promoted his reforms accordingly, with the aid of a number of foreign servitors. By drawing on such strands of thought it was possible to portray Peter the Great as a ruler destined to fulfil divine prophecy by advancing the cause of learning; thereby rekindling the legacy of David and Solomon in constructing the Temple and Jerusalem and ultimately in bringing about a restoration of prelapsarian knowledge. Importantly, this cause of learning did not preclude an acceptance, or at least tolerance, of Western esotericism.

*The Study of Western Esotericism and Petrine Russia*

In the past two decades the study of Western esotericism has gained much from the methodological work of a number of notable scholars, who as Kocku von Stuckrad has noted have sought “to present esotericism as a structural component of European history of religion and culture, while playing a significant part in the evolution of modernity.”<sup>10</sup>

In this regard, the work of Antoine Faivre, in particular, has been pivotal in establishing a sound methodological framework for the academic study of Western esotericism. Thus, his interpretive model incorporates a diverse array of traditions and disciplines, including alchemy, magic, astrology, Platonic and Hermetic thought and Christian Cabbala that date back to Antiquity and which were reinvigorated during the Early Modern period.<sup>11</sup> In the Early Modern period some scholars and thinkers referred to this tradition as a *philosophia perennis* (perennial philosophy), thereby advocating universal truths that could be traced back to Genesis via Antiquity.

According to the model advanced by Faivre, one can discern four intrinsic characteristics related to esotericism: 1) *Correspondences*. The realm of nature, or the various classes of reality (humans, minerals, plants,

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<sup>10</sup> Kocku von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret Knowledge* (London: Equinox, 2005), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 3–18.

planets etc.), whether visible or invisible, are linked via a series of correspondences. 2) *Living Nature*. This posits that the cosmos is a complex, hierarchical and ensouled entity that is empowered by a living energy. 3) *Imagination and mediations*. As von Stuckrad summarizes, this category indicates that esoteric knowledge of correspondences requires substantial power of symbolic imagination, which is, moreover, revealed (or ‘mediated’) by spiritual authorities. 4) *The experience of transmutation*. Akin to alchemical transmutation based on refinement and purification, Faivre postulates that a similar process also relates to the change of being that can result from illuminated knowledge.

Furthermore, Faivre outlined two further minor categories that also correlate with the other four features. Namely, 5) *The practice of concordance*. This describes the ambition to discern common ground between various esoteric traditions over time. Lastly, 6) *Transmission or initiation through masters*. This final category relates to the tendency to restrict the transmission of knowledge to select initiates who are led by a guiding authority.<sup>12</sup>

Hitherto, such a methodological approach has not been systematically applied to the history of Russia in the early eighteenth century. More specifically, I would argue that the adoption of such a method has much in regard to broadening our understanding of Petrine Russia vis-à-vis the complex nature of the religious, cultural and scientific attitudes prevalent at the Court of the so-called ‘Tsar Reformer.’

### *The Idea of Instauration and Petrine Russia*

The notion that a divinely appointed monarch could play a prophetic role resonated strongly in the writings of many prominent seventeenth-century thinkers. In 1600, Tomasso Campanella (1568–1639) wrote *Monarchio di Spagna*, for example, which sought to demonstrate through astrological, astronomical and prophetic evidence that the Spanish monarchy was in fact the long-awaited fifth monarchy.<sup>13</sup> Two decades later, Francis Bacon (1561–1626) published *Instauratio Magna*, in which he outlined his grand plans to reform society through the advancement of learning in the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. For succinct summaries of Faivre’s categories, see Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 4; Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 8–10.

<sup>13</sup> See John M. Headley, *Tomasso Campanella and the Transformation of the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 212.

arts and sciences.<sup>14</sup> By using the Latin word *instauratio* Bacon was explicitly providing his visionary programme with a powerful sense of prophetic symbolism. As Charles Whitney has noted, Bacon drew heavily on the use of the word as denoted in the Vulgate Bible where it combined ritual, architectural, political and prophetic meanings:<sup>15</sup>

The Vulgate in effect creates a typology or symbolism of instauration by lexically connecting the architectural instauration of Solomon's Temple both to a prophetic "rebuilding" of Israel and to a Christian instauration of all things in the apocalypse.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, in the narrow sense of the word, instauration was closely tied to the restoration of Solomon's Temple. In the broader sense, instauration expressed the belief in the return of a prelapsarian state at the end of time, when man would regain the knowledge lost at the Fall. In his *Instauratio Magna*, Bacon quickly makes it apparent that his work should be seen in both senses. In the epistolary dedication to King James I, Bacon champions his monarch as a latter-day Solomon worthy of building a restored Temple of Wisdom. Moreover, the frontispiece to the work depicts in emblematic form the prophetic significance of the increased sense of knowledge being made possible by the voyages of discovery. A ship is depicted sailing into unknown waters through the mythical Pillars of Hercules, which also bring to mind the pillars of Jachin and Boaz at the entrance to Solomon's Temple.

An inscription is also included underneath the ship, which is drawn from the prophetic Book of Daniel (12:4): "Many shall go to and fro and knowledge shall be increased." Hence, Bacon is effectively implying that God has facilitated the increase of knowledge seen during the Renaissance in order to carry out divine prophecy. Bacon articulates such an understanding in the following way:

All knowledge appeareth to be a plant of God's own planting, so it may seem the spreading and flourishing or at least the bearing and fructifying of this plant, by providence of God, nay not only by a general providence but by a special prophecy, was appointed to this autumn of the world: for to my

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<sup>14</sup> For a summary of Bacon's notion of instauration, see Steven Matthews, *Theology and Science in the Thought of Francis Bacon* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 99–116.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Whitney, "Francis Bacon's *Instauratio*: Dominion of and Over Humanity," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50: 3 (July–September 1989): 377–8.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.



Fig. 1. The frontispiece to Francis Bacon's *Instauratio Magna* (London, 1620).

understanding it is not violent to the letter, and safe now after the event, so to interpret that place in the prophecy of Daniel.<sup>17</sup>

As indicated in his epistle to King James I, Bacon bestowed great hope upon a monarch capable of rekindling the wise reign of Solomon. This sentiment is most fully expressed in *New Atlantis* (1626), where he extols the wisdom of a fictional King Solamona, who had founded “the noblest foundation . . . that ever was upon the earth . . . dedicated to the study of the works and creatures of God.”<sup>18</sup>

The manner in which Francis Bacon viewed reform and the advancement of learning within an eschatological framework struck a chord with many eminent thinkers throughout the remainder of the seventeenth century, such as Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1642), Jan Amos Comenius (1592–1670), John Dury (1596–1672), Samuel Hartlib (c. 1600–1662) and Jan Jonston (1603–1675), and was a crucial element in the development of German Pietism under Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705).<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, the belief that society was living through an age of instauration, in which long-lost knowledge was being rediscovered, greatly encouraged many individuals and groups to embrace distinct elements of esotericism that could help in the quest to reveal divine secrets. The publication of the Rosicrucian Manifestos in Germany in 1614 and 1615, for example, bears witness to how a chiliastic call for reform embraced a wide spectrum of the esoteric arts.<sup>20</sup> The opening of the first manifesto

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<sup>17</sup> Francis Bacon, *Valerius Terminus*, “Of the Interpretation of Nature, in *The Works of Francis Bacon: Baron of Verulam, Viscount St. Alban, and Lord High Chancellor of England*, eds. James Spedding, R. L. Ellis, D. D. Heath, vol. 3 (London: Longmans & Co., 1870), 220–1.

<sup>18</sup> Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning and New Atlantis*, ed. Arthur Johnston (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 229.

<sup>19</sup> For an in-depth study on Andreae, see J. V. Andreae, *Christianopolis*, ed. Edward H. Thompson (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1999), 3–142. For more on the eschatological mindset of Comenius, Hartlib, Dury and Jonston, see Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform 1626–1660* (London: Duckworth, 1975). For an English language study of Spener see Ernest F. Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) and Ernest F. Stoeffler, *German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973).

<sup>20</sup> The seminal work on the impact of the Rosicrucian Manifestos is Frances Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972). For more recent studies, see Christopher McIntosh, *The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason: Eighteenth-Century Rosicrucianism in Central Europe and its Relationship to the Enlightenment* (Leiden, Brill, 1992); Christopher McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians: The History, Mythology and Rituals of an Esoteric Order* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser Inc., 1997); Susanna Åkerman, *Rose Cross over the Baltic* (Leiden: Brill, 1998); Donald R. Dickson, *The Tessera of Antilia: Utopian Brotherhoods & Secret Societies in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

announces how God has “in these latter days . . . poured out so richly his mercy and goodness to Mankind, whereby we do attain more and more to the perfect knowledge of his Son Jesus Christ and Nature.”<sup>21</sup> Such perfect knowledge of the wisdom of God had not been obtained, according to the prologue to the *Fama* (the first Rosicrucian Manifesto), since the reign of “wise King Solomon.”<sup>22</sup> However, the Rosicrucian Fraternity purported to have discovered the vault of “our most godly and highly illuminated Father, our brother C.R.,” who had travelled extensively and had acquired a profound knowledge of magical practices and Cabbala.<sup>23</sup> In unearthing the secrets contained therein, the Fraternity took on the responsibility of preserving this knowledge until “the Lion doth come, who will ask them for his use, and employ them for the confirmation and establishment of his kingdom.”<sup>24</sup>

Although the furore unleashed by the Rosicrucian Manifestos was significantly dampened during the course of the Thirty Years’ War, the underlying chiliastic spirit of the movement was far from smothered by the chaos that rent much of Europe asunder. Indeed, it can be argued that the peak of millenarianism in Europe actually only occurred at the close of the seventeenth century. In other words, this period marked an era of great agitation regarding the Christian expectation of a last earthly age, as prophesized in Revelation 20:2 and 20:7, in which Christ will reign again and will bring the true harmony of the Church and the containment of evil.<sup>25</sup>

A number of factors conspired to encourage the spread of millenarian sentiments towards the end of the century, such as the renewed threat from the Ottoman Empire, which as recently as 1683 had besieged Vienna; the Edict of Nantes in France in 1685 that prohibited the French Huguenots and led to their mass exile; and the English Revolution of 1688, which revived eschatological sentiments that had first emerged during the civil war years in the 1640s. Across Europe various radical religious groups began to attract a certain degree of popularity such as the Pietists in Germany,

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<sup>21</sup> *The Rosicrucian Manifestos: Fama Fraternitatis and Confessio Fraternitatis*, ed. Benjamin Rowe (Cincinnati: Emperor Norton Books, 2000), 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>25</sup> For a definition of millenarianism (and the corresponding Greek term of “chiliasm”), as well as a commentary on the many controversies regarding the doctrine, see Kocku von Stuckrad, ed., *The Brill Dictionary of Religion*, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 1225–8.



the Quakers and French Huguenots in England, various Reformed sects in Holland and Quietists in France.

Furthermore, this millenarian spirit was coupled with a continued fascination with the esoteric arts among many learned sections of European upper-class society. This goes against the notion that the Scientific Revolution marked a decisive Kuhnian paradigm shift, whereby religion and esotericism were rejected as progressive forces. In the past forty years it has been powerfully demonstrated by the likes of Allen Debus, Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs and Richard Popkin that many elements of esoteric thought still played a crucial role in the religious and scientific worldviews of the ruling elites across Europe at the close of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century. Hence, even the supposed paragons of the Scientific Revolution, such as Newton, still displayed a profound curiosity in alchemy.<sup>26</sup> Thus, I would argue that it is too simplistic to advance the theory that Peter the Great introduced a paradigm shift in Russia. This historical perspective rests upon a plethora of dichotomies: pre and post, traditional and modern, religious and secular, which only succeed in forging artificially clear-cut boundaries.

In essence I argue that Peter the Great's reforms of Russian society can be viewed against the backdrop of the widespread millenarian expectations that were so prevalent among both leading religious and scientific figures across Europe at the onset of the eighteenth century. An appreciation of this profoundly religious outlook, alongside an understanding of the continued role of the Western esoteric tradition, enables one to view Peter the Great's undertakings and the symbolic landscape of his royal court in a new light. In this regard, it is worth citing Kocku von Stuckrad, who argues in general that an understanding of Western esotericism (and I would add millenarianism) "enables us to demonstrate the complexity of European cultural history, without playing off religion against science, Christianity against paganism, or reason against superstition."<sup>27</sup>

However, by arguing that Peter the Great drew on a Western concept of millenarian thought, I do not mean to suggest that the tsar ignored the deeply messianic role outlined for Russian monarchs and the providential fate destined for Russia as a whole. Rather, Peter the Great was able to utilize the dynamism and progressive potential of Western millenarian

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<sup>26</sup> See Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Janus Face of Genius: The Role of Alchemy in Newton's Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>27</sup> Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 11.

thought – with its embrace of esotericism and scientific experimentation – alongside an embrace of the traditional messianic role of the Russian tsar. This potent combination reflects his Janus-like approach to governing his country.

At this point it is worth briefly outlining the messianic and providential tradition that emerged in Russia, or more specifically Muscovy, in the fifteenth century related to the doctrine of Moscow as the Third Rome.<sup>28</sup> Inherent in this notion, as Boris Uspenskii has demonstrated, was the idea of Moscow as not only the inheritor of the Roman Empire (after the fall of Constantinople – the Second Rome – in 1453), but also the consciousness of the Russian capital as a holy and theocratic city, or, in other words, a New Jerusalem.<sup>29</sup>

One of the earliest recorded Russian documents demonstrating the extensive use of Old Testament parallels and images dates back to the late fifteenth century. At this time, Bishop Vassian Rylo wrote a letter to Grand Prince Ivan III (the Great) of Muscovy, in which he compared God's liberation of Muscovy from the Tartar Yoke, which took place in 1480, to the Israelites liberation from the Egyptians and directly named Moscow as 'the New Israel.'<sup>30</sup>

During the sixteenth century, symbolic references to Old Testament parallels were frequently adopted in Muscovite Russia, as the nation began to flex its muscles and believe in its unique Orthodox mission. Daniel B. Rowland has argued that Russians (and Europeans in general) still experienced time within a Biblical framework that progressed from genesis to the apocalypse.<sup>31</sup> Thus, as Muscovy became more powerful and unified as a national state it became extremely tempting for monarchs and theologians to view their nation's destiny in messianic terms. They were to be the 'New Israelites,' led by the House of David, who were to establish the New Jerusalem in God's chosen land.

At the coronation of Ivan the Terrible, in 1547, for example, Metropolitan Makarii recited a prayer in which he directly stated that the new tsar

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<sup>28</sup> For a thorough contemporary study of this doctrine in Russian history, see N. V. Sinitsyna, *Tretii Rim: istoki i evoliutsiia russkoi srednevekovoi kontseptsii (XV–XVI vv.)* (Moscow: Indrik, 1998).

<sup>29</sup> Boris Uspenskii, *Etüdy o russkoi istorii* (St. Petersburg: Azbuka, 2002), 93–4.

<sup>30</sup> Daniel B. Rowland, "Moscow – The Third Rome or the New Israel?," *Russian Review* 55:4 (October 1996): 602.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 592.

was the blessed heir of King David and that his subjects were to inherit the sacred role of the ancient Israelites.<sup>32</sup>

King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Who by Samuel the Prophet didst choose Thy servant David and anoint him to be king over Thy people Israel . . . look down from Thy sanctuary upon Thy faithful servant the Great Prince Ivan Vasilievich . . . Thou hast redeemed with the precious blood of thine only-begotten Son.<sup>33</sup>

In ideological terms, Markarii's prayer formed part of a much more extensive literary campaign in chronicles and historical accounts, which sought to chart the divinely ordained ascendancy of the Russian nation.<sup>34</sup>

Religious rites were also utilized to maximize the symbolic space of Moscow, which was experienced in sacred terms. Undoubtedly the best example of this was the lavish Palm Sunday ritual, which entailed the tsar and metropolitan symbolically entering Jerusalem, accompanied by an ass – a journey re-enacted from the Kremlin to Red Square. In this way, the city was not only used to commemorate past events, but was actually sensed as the holy city of Jerusalem. From the 1560s, St. Basil's Cathedral came to play a prominent role in this ritual. Indeed, the west (and largest) chapel of the cathedral was dedicated to the Entry into Jerusalem and acted as the focal point of the ceremony.<sup>35</sup>

In fact, the whole of St. Basil's Cathedral was commonly referred to by many in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as 'Jerusalem' and believed that it was based on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Indeed, it has been argued that the raised profile of the cathedral and its surrounding chapels evoked Jerusalem as a whole. Even the square adjacent to St. Basil's was known as *Lobno mesto* (Skull Place) in reference to Golgatha. It has also been suggested that the unusual floral decorations adorning the internal passageways of the cathedral were meant to represent the gardens of paradise.<sup>36</sup>

During the reign of Boris Godunov, between 1595–1605, the notion of Moscow as a New Jerusalem was stressed still further. Godunov planned

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 597.

<sup>33</sup> *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei*, 13, ed. S. F. Platonov (St. Petersburg, 1904), 150.

<sup>34</sup> The principle text in this regard is Makarii's *Velikie chetii minei* [Great Menology]. On this text, see David Miller, "The *Velikie Minei Chetii* and the *Stepennaia Kniga* of Metropolitan Makarii and the origins of Russian National Consciousness," *Forschungen zur Osteuropäische Geschichte* 26 (1979): 263–313.

<sup>35</sup> Rowland, "Moscow – The Third Rome," 608.

<sup>36</sup> Robin Milner-Gulland, *The Russians* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 217.

to build a new church in the Kremlin, which would be intentionally modelled on Solomon's Temple, or the 'Holy of Holies' in ancient Jerusalem and on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in contemporary Jerusalem. At the time, the Dutchman Elias Herckmann wrote that the tsar ordered his assistants to scrutinize the works of Josephus Flavius and other authors, who had described the ancient temple, in order to draw up an appropriate model of the church. It has even been suggested that the fortified wall constructed around Moscow, during Godunov's reign, was designed to symbolize the walled city of Jerusalem.<sup>37</sup>

However, arguably the most daring attempt to symbolically create a New Jerusalem on Russian soil in the seventeenth century actually took place some sixty kilometres northwest of the city, by the River Istra. It was at this spot, in 1657, that Patriarch Nikon (1605–1681), the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, founded his own messianic retreat – the New Jerusalem Monastery. This grand undertaking was to be one of the most extensive architectural undertakings in seventeenth-century Russia and was only completed in the 1690s, after its founder had died.

In planning the monastery complex, Nikon acquired plans of contemporary Jerusalem drawn by Bernardino Amico from Florence, requested information and possibly a model from Patriarch Paisios of Jerusalem and sent an envoy (Arsenii Sukhanov) to the Holy Land in order to undertake further research. The centrepiece of the monastery complex was the Cathedral of the Resurrection, which was directly modelled on the Holy Sepulchre Church in Jerusalem.

The entrance and fortified towers of the New Jerusalem complex were given names stressing their sacred association with the centre of the Holy Land. For example, the entrance tower was also the site of the Church of the Entry into Jerusalem, whilst towers were named after David, Ephraim, Damascus and initially it would seem that there were also Zion and Gethsemane Towers. The complex was also intentionally erected on a small hill to mimic Golgotha in Jerusalem. What is more, even the outlying area was envisioned as an exact topographical replica of Jerusalem's environs.<sup>38</sup> Thus, not only the monastery buildings, but the entire topography of the surrounding area was transformed into a new holy land.

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<sup>37</sup> Rowland, "Moscow – The Third Rome," 609.

<sup>38</sup> T. Mitchell, ed., *Handbook for Travellers to Russia, Poland and Finland* (London, 1868), 178; Rowland, "Moscow – The Third Rome," 610.

Nikon's decision to build his New Jerusalem outside Moscow would have been controversial at any period in early modern Russia, but in the mid-seventeenth century the country was convulsed by religious schism, social unrest and an outbreak of the plague. To many Russian at the time, all these calamities seemed to provide evidence that the end of the world would indeed occur in 1666, when the number of the beast came to pass. Indeed, the official schism of the Russian Orthodox Church took place in 1666, and at this time eschatological fears only served to intensify the religious debate. Nikon himself was at the heart of the religious controversy, as he became a despised figure among many so-called *Starovery* (Old Believers), who rejected his attempts to reform church texts and rituals along Greek lines. Thus, when he chose to locate New Jerusalem outside Moscow, many saw this as an act of blasphemy.

After the official church *raskol* (schism) in 1666–7, Nikon was sent into exile and was separated from his beloved New Jerusalem. Ultimately, Nikon's highly ambitious and symbolic architectural scheme did not replace Moscow as Russia's New Jerusalem, as he did not possess sufficient authority to challenge the religious and state hierarchy – centred in Moscow – which was able to preserve the myth that Moscow was the only New Jerusalem. The next challenge to Moscow's divine status came nearly half a century later and was orchestrated by Peter the Great. Whereas Nikon's New Jerusalem was still in the geographical shadow of Moscow, Peter the Great's monumental architectural project was carried out some 700 kilometres to the north, in a zone relatively devoid of expressions of Muscovite religious and state authority.

If one looks purely from a Russian perspective, one can note that the country experienced three periods of particularly acute apocalyptic anxiety during the seventeenth century: (1) during the so-called Time of Troubles at the beginning of the century; (2) during the religious schism in the middle of the century and (3) at the end of the century. During the first period, Tsar Boris Godunov (1551–1605) sought to legitimize his grip on power by immersing himself in architectural plans centred on promoting his symbolic inheritance of King David's Jerusalem. In the middle of the century, Patriarch Nikon undertook his grand endeavour to build a New Jerusalem in an oasis outside Moscow, whilst the country as a whole was being torn apart by strife.

At the close of the century, apocalyptic sentiments peaked again, especially after 1698, when Peter the Great returned prematurely from his Grand Embassy to Western Europe. The reason for his hasty return was primarily because large elements of the *strel'tsy* (royal guards) had

mutinied. In a highly symbolic twist of fate, the showdown between the rebellious guards and the forces loyal to Peter took place very near the site of Nikon's New Jerusalem. It was as if two opposed camps were fighting a duel over not only the political, but also the spiritual future of Russia.

Ultimately, I believe Peter the Great was acutely aware of the eschatological mindset of his people, in which the role of the tsar assumed messianic importance. Effectively, he could be viewed in negative apocalyptic terms as nothing less than the Antichrist, or, alternatively, as a positive messianic figure (an embodiment of King David). Drawing on Western millenarian thought, this Davidic image could be imbued with prophetic import and with a positive sense of dynamism that actively encouraged the instauration of Russian society. Thus, with this in mind, religion and esotericism become key components of the Petrine reform programme, rather than simply being perceived as relics of a bygone era rigorously discarded by Peter the Great. Hence, it is extremely useful to undertake a study of Peter the Great and a number of his closest foreign advisers and officials in light of notions of Christian-scientific renewal, which bear distinct similarities to the religious and intellectual spirit of Kuhlmann. These plans not only encompassed Christian belief, but also drew on Hermeticism, Neo-Platonism and other esoteric pursuits, including most notably alchemy and astrology.

However, it is still customary to exempt Peter the Great and the Petrine Court from such influences, despite the evidence revealing the extent to which millenarian sentiment fused with elements of esotericism in the upper echelons of Western European society at the turn of the eighteenth-century. This is all the more surprising if one considers how O. A. Belobrova and Aleksandr Gorfunkel have provided tantalizing glimpses into the chiliastic and esoteric worldviews of two relatively minor government officials in early Petrine Russia.

In 1978, Belobrova published the aesthetic works of N. G. Milescu-Spafarios (1636–1708), a Romanian nobleman who settled in Moscow in 1671.<sup>39</sup> During his years in Russia Milescu-Spafarios combined roles as a government chancellery official and a translator, with that of a notable scholar. The subject matter of his works reveal a man obsessed with ancient prophecy. He wrote a tract on the Sybilline Oracles, for example, in which he contemplated their names and number and the meaning of their prophecies. What is more, in *Krismologion* he wrote about the four

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<sup>39</sup> Nikolai Spafarii, *Esteticheskie traktaty*, ed. O. A. Belobova (Leningrad: Nauka, 1978).

ancient monarchies, beginning with Daniel's prophetic words regarding King Nebuchadnezzar.

Significantly, Milescu-Spafarios was patronized by a number of leading supporters of the Naryshkin family. Most notably, the prominent boyar Artamon Sergeevich Matveev (1625–1682) employed Milescu-Spafarios as a private tutor to himself and his son, Andrei Artamonovich Matveev (1666–1728). Indeed, Artamon Matveev's enemies orchestrated his fall from power after the death of Tsar Aleksei in 1676 by claiming that Milescu-Spafarios read a 'black book' to him and his son in a concealed room.<sup>40</sup>

In addition, over several decades the Russian émigré scholar Aleksandr Gorfunkel has illustrated how the Pole Andrei (Jan) Belobotskii (c. 1640s–c. 1700s) played an important role in disseminating mystical literature in Russia that emanated from Western Europe. Belobotskii had undertaken studies in the philosophical and theological sciences in France, Italy and Spain in the 1660s and 1670s, prior to arriving in Moscow in 1681 in the retinue of Simeon, the Archbishop of Smolensk.<sup>41</sup> When in Moscow Belobotskii converted to Orthodoxy and took the name Andrei and succeeded in securing the patronage of two influential courtiers – Petr Matveevich Apraksin and Fedor Iakovlevich Volynskii – both of whom were close to the Naryshkin party of Peter the Great.<sup>42</sup> Belobotskii's patronage by two courtiers close to Peter the Great provides an early illustration of how esoterically-minded individuals were actively endorsed in early Petrine Russia. It is also known that Belobotskii worked as a translator in the *Posol'skii Prikaz* in the 1680s and participated in an Embassy to China under the leadership of Fedor Alekseevich Golovin.<sup>43</sup>

Little other biographical information is known about Belobotskii apart from the fact that he was the first figure to translate a series of seminal mystical and esoteric tracts into Russian, including Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* and Ramon Lull's *Ars Magna* and *Ars Brevis*.<sup>44</sup> Belobotskii's translations of Lull are known to have circulated widely among Old Believer sects at the turn of the century. This was largely due to the standing of one of their foremost leaders, Andrei Denisov (1674–1730), of

<sup>40</sup> Lev Shchepot'ev, *Blizhnii boiarin Artamon Sergeevich Matveev kak kul'turnyi politicheskii deiatel' XVII veka* (St. Petersburg, 1906), 30.

<sup>41</sup> A. Kh. Gorfunkel, "Ispovedanie very Iana (Andreia Belobotskogo)," *Palaeoslavica* 7 (1999): 117–18.

<sup>42</sup> A. Kh. Gorfunkel, "Andrei Belobotskii – poet i filosof kontsa XVII – nachala XVIII v," *Trudy otdela drevnerusskoi literatury* 18 (1962): 191.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 192–97.

the Vyg community near Olonets in Northern Russia, who even prepared his own illustrated version of Belobotskii's translation of Lull's *Ars Magna*. Contrary to the stereotype of Old Believers simply being narrow-minded obscurantists, Denisov was a learned man who sought out theological and philosophical literature and was a skilled polemicist.<sup>45</sup> His knowledge of esoteric forms of religion is even testified in the hagiographical account of his *Zhitie* (Life), written in the late eighteenth century.<sup>46</sup> This *Zhitie* proclaimed that "God gifted him with the most precious talents," which in addition to a knowledge of rhetoric, poetry, logic, grammar and art included "Cabbalistic philosophy."<sup>47</sup>

Denisov's interest in esotericism was combined with a fervent belief that Patriarch Nikon's church reforms in the 1650s and 1660s had initiated, as Robert Crummey notes, "the first act in the apocalyptic drama described by St. John the Divine and St. Cyril of Jerusalem."<sup>48</sup> Thus, whilst not believing that Peter the Great was the Antichrist, as many Old Believers did at the time, Denisov did view contemporary events within a wholly eschatological framework.

At this point it is also worth referring to the important contribution of the Belorussian cleric Simeon Polotskii (c. 1629–1680), and his followers (Sil'vestr Medvedev and Karion Istomin), who brought a potent form of Baroque symbolism to the Muscovite court in the last decades of the seventeenth century. As L. I. Sazonova has outlined, Polotskii and his followers developed an abstruse, religiously infused form of allegorical symbolism that heavily drew on the mystical ideas of Polish Catholicism in the seventeenth century.<sup>49</sup> This Baroque symbolism was saturated with religious and esoteric themes, and, as will be argued in this study, continued to exert a powerful hold on the highest ecclesiastical officials in eighteenth-century Petrine Russia and on the mindset of Peter the Great himself.

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<sup>45</sup> For an account of the life of Andrei Denisov, see Robert O. Crummey, *The Old Believers and the World of Antichrist: The Vyg Community and the Russian State, 1694–1855* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 61–100.

<sup>46</sup> See *Zhitie i podvizi premudraga, drevniago blagochestiia uchitelia, blazhennago ottsa, Andreia Dionisievicha*, Biblioteka Iakova Krotova, accessed February 11, 2011, <http://.krotov.info/acts/18/1/denisyev.html>.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Crummey, *Old Believers*, 14.

<sup>49</sup> See L. I. Sazonova, *Poeziia russkogo barokko: vtoraiia polovina XVII – nachalo XVIII v.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1991).



Lastly, it should be noted that David Zdenek, in an article on the influence of Jakob Böhme in Russia, mentions that a Pietist by the name of Johann Kellner arrived in Moscow in 1690, with plans for a religious community based on Böhme's principles. What is more, Zdenek writes that a number of manuscript copies of work by both Böhme and Kuhlmann were preserved in Russia after Kuhlmann's death.<sup>50</sup>

The dearth of scholarly work on the religious and esoteric interests of Peter the Great and prominent officials at the Petrine court is unsurprising if one considers the long history of portraying the Russian monarch as a progressive embodiment of the early enlightenment ideals of rationalism and secularism. Until the failed Decembrist Revolt in 1825 and the ascension to the throne of the authoritarian Nicholas I (1796–1855), for example, the image of Peter the Great was predominantly one of an enlightened despot who heralded the arrival of scientific knowledge and the 'Age of Reason' throughout the Russian Empire.<sup>51</sup> Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the poetry, odes and orations of Russia's greatest eighteenth-century polymath, Mikhail Lomonosov (1711–1765). A fine example is found in his "Laudatory Oration to Lord Emperor Peter the Great of the Blessed Memory, Pronounced on the Twenty-Sixth Day of April of the Year 1755," at the Imperial Academy of Sciences:

Our most wise Monarch foresaw that it was strictly necessary for His great intentions that knowledge of all kinds spread in the fatherland and that people skilled in the high sciences and also artist and craftsmen multiply there . . . Then the Mathematical and Physical science, formerly considered magic and sorcery, received reverent respect . . . What good the sciences and the arts of all sorts, surrounded by this radiance of majesty, brought us is proved by the overabundant mass of our multivaried satisfactions, which our ancestors, before the great Enlightener of Russia, not only had lacked, but of which in many cases they even had no idea.<sup>52</sup>

In 1872, Sergei Mikhailovich Solov'ev delivered a lecture to commemorate the bicentenary of Peter the Great's birth. Among his many words of praise, he remarked that "a great man appears as the son of his time."<sup>53</sup> By this he meant that Peter the Great embodied the 'new' age of enlightenment,

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<sup>50</sup> David V. Zdenek, "The Influence of Jacob Boehme on Russian Religious Thought," *Slavic Review*, 21:1 (March 1962): 47.

<sup>51</sup> See Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *The Image of Peter the Great in Russian History and Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 303–5.

<sup>52</sup> M. V. Lomonosov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow-Leningrad: Nauka, 1959), 8:591–2. See also Riasanovsky, *Image of Peter the Great*, 31.

<sup>53</sup> S. M. Solov'ev, *Publichnye chteniia o Petre Velikom* (Moscow-Leningrad: Nauka, 1984), 9.

in which belief in the significance of superstition, chance and arbitrariness had been overcome. This view had been commonplace for over a century when Solov'ev made his speech. Indeed, here it was necessary to create such polarities where, as Gary Marker has noted, secularization, enlightenment and progress were championed against religion, reaction and backwardness.<sup>54</sup>

Riasanovsky describes the historical approach towards Peter the Great and the Petrine era in the period between 1860 and 1917 in Russia, as led by "the decline of metaphysics" and the rise of "scientific history."<sup>55</sup> This is epitomized by the so-called Moscow University School, led by Solov'ev, which also included V. O. Kliuchevskii, P. N. Miliukov and M. M. Bogoslovskii. Kliuchevskii, in particular, developed the argument that Petrine reforms were merely the result of day-to-day necessities and "were stimulated by the requirement of war."<sup>56</sup> Thus, whilst he provides a vivid descriptive account of the loutish and drunken behaviour of Peter the Great, he still maintains, as Lindsey Hughes puts it, "that Peter spelled Progress."<sup>57</sup>

Even the Slavophile movement, which began to flourish in the 1830s, did not seek to fundamentally revise the historiography of Peter the Great and the Petrine era. The elements extolled by 'Westernizers' – secularization, enlightenment and progress – were merely denigrated, and notions of religion, backwardness and reaction were championed in the guise of a true national heritage. As Romanticists, they harked back to the supposedly authentic nature of pre-Petrine *Rus*. They did not seek, however, to broaden their perception of the emperor or his reforms; they merely sought to cast the individual and the era as a whole in a negative hue for their own rhetorical purposes. In many ways this negation of the Petrine myth was continued, and even deepened by Fyodor Dostoevskii in the 1860s and 1870s. In *Notes from the Underground* (1864) and *Crime and Punishment* (1866), for example, St. Petersburg, the crowning jewel in the Petrine myth, is portrayed as a poisonous and rancid city. The reforms engendered by Peter the Great were based on a Western model, and led to

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<sup>54</sup> Gary Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700–1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 4.

<sup>55</sup> Riasanovsky, *Image of Peter the Great*, 304.

<sup>56</sup> V. O. Kliuchevskii, *Peter the Great*, trans. Liliana Archibald (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1958), 255, 269–70.

<sup>57</sup> Lindsey Hughes, *Peter the Great: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 222.

the disintegration of Russia's identity and faith symbolized by the artificial and alien atmosphere of its imperial capital. This notion was carried into the twentieth-century by the great writer of the Silver Age, Andrei Belyi, and can be seen most vividly in his prose masterpiece, *Petersburg* (1916).

In the post-revolutionary era, the merits of 'scientific history' continued to be extolled within a Marxist framework. In his *Brief History of Russia* (1920), for example, M. N. Pokrovskii sees the forces of economics as the determining factor in Petrine reform. He is contemptuous of any notion of a pedagogical enlightenment based on theological assumptions.<sup>58</sup> After the Second World War, Soviet historians of the Petrine era became more balanced in their appraisals of the socio-political transformations, but remained dismissive or blinkered to the relevance and import of theological, let alone esoteric, matters. Nikolai Pavlenko, for example, has produced a volume of work on the Petrine era that is rich in fact and anecdote but the author does not address the theological and intellectual climate of the age.<sup>59</sup> This can also be seen in the works of Sergei Luppov and M. S. Fillipov in their surveys of book publications and collections in the eighteenth century.<sup>60</sup>

One of the most recent proponents of the 'progressive' school of thought is Aleksandr Kiriukhin.<sup>61</sup> He argues that whilst Russia needed specialists and educated people in various areas of military and civilian life, it was hampered by an educational system that carried a 'divine character.' This, in his view, could not satisfy the demands of the new state, led by Peter the Great.<sup>62</sup> Thus, according to Kiriukhin, advocacy of a thorough grounding in the Old and New Testaments was simply replaced by the study of fortification, artillery and shipbuilding.<sup>63</sup>

A number of Western academics have also interpreted the Petrine transformations solely from a secular and rationalist perspective. In so doing, they simultaneously underplay the role of religion. This stance is characterized by M. S. Anderson:

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<sup>58</sup> M. N. Pokrovsky, *History of Russia from the Earliest Times to the Rise of Commercial Capitalism*, trans. And ed. J. D. Clarkson and M. R. M. Griffiths (London: Martin Lawrence Limited, 1931), 257–350.

<sup>59</sup> See N. I. Pavlenko, *Petr Velikii* (Moscow: Mysl, 1994); N. I. Pavlenko, *Ptentsi gnezda Petrova* (Moscow: Mysl, 1994).

<sup>60</sup> See S. P. Luppov, *Kniga v Rossii v pervoi chetverti XVIII veka* (Leningrad, Nauka, 1973); A. I. Andreev and G. A. Chebotarev, eds., *Istoricheskii ocherk i obzor fondov sobraniia Petra I* (Moscow-Leningrad, Nauka, 1961).

<sup>61</sup> See Aleksandr Kiriukhin, *Tot samyi kudesnik Brius* (Moscow: Agraf, 2003).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 195–6.

In a limited way Peter was a religious man . . . His faith lacked both psychological depth and intellectual subtlety . . . His personal faith was real. But it was also narrow and above all practical . . . To him religion meant morality, education, positive action.<sup>64</sup>

This 'limited' religious worldview did involve, however, believing that he was an agent of God's will.<sup>65</sup> Thus, Anderson acknowledges religion as part of Peter's everyday life on the one hand, whilst downplaying its significance on the other.

In the past twenty years, however, a number of scholars have sought to chip away at the enlightened and rational model of Peter the Great that has been erected and reinforced by generations of Russian and Western historians. In doing so, they have begun to modify the one-dimensional image of Peter the Great by revealing long hidden complexities in the tsar's religious worldview.

In his fascinating study of the artistic representation of spatial dynamics in St. Petersburg, for example, Grigorii Kaganov notes how Peter the Great's new capital was imagined as a New Jerusalem during a ceremony to mark the unveiling of Aleksei Zubov's *Panorama of Petersburg* (1716).<sup>66</sup> This astute observation uncovered a potent and intriguing religious dimension at the very heart of "rational" St. Petersburg.

In his study of eighteenth-century paradise myths in Russian literature, Stephen Baehr also brings the role of religion to the fore. He demonstrates how a process of appropriating religious concepts, vocabulary and symbols for state institutions was enacted up to fifty years prior to the *Ecclesiastical Regulation* published by Feofan Prokopovich in 1721. According to Baehr, however, these theological motifs were utilized for the benefit of the secular state and do not in themselves represent a religious ideal.<sup>67</sup>

The comprehensive study of the Petrine age by Lindsey Hughes and her biographical study of Peter the Great are also much more receptive to the influence of religion. She casts doubt on the validity of adopting a strictly bipolar approach and rejects what she calls the "religious = bad and backward" and "secular = good and progressive" interpretation, characteristic of many Soviet writers: "But did individuals really have to make a stark choice between secular and sacred, between the traditional and the new

<sup>64</sup> M. S. Anderson, *Peter the Great* (Harlow: Longman, 1995), 120.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Grigorii Kaganov, "As in the Ship of Peter," *Slavic Review*, 50:4 (Winter 1991): 764.

<sup>67</sup> Stephen Baehr, *The Paradise Myth in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 21–2.

culture, a sort of religious decision, binding a man for his whole life?"<sup>68</sup> She answers this by stating that religious culture maintained a powerful hold on everyday life and behaviour at all levels throughout Peter's reign.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, she notes that Peter and his supporters had no problem combining the sacred and the profane.<sup>70</sup> What is more, Elena Pogosian has illustrated the key role religion continued to play in Peter the Great's new calendar of public and civic events.<sup>71</sup>

More recently, Ernest A. Zitser, in his study of the carnivalesque activities of Peter the Great's long-running mock court – the so-called Most Comical All Drunken Council – has powerfully demonstrated how Peter the Great's supposedly 'secular' reforms actually stemmed from a religious conception of his political mission.<sup>72</sup> Zitser draws on the original Judaeo-Christian notion of charisma, or gift of grace, which expressed the idea that God conveyed grace and authority through divine inspiration to the Old Testament prophets and the House of David. Zitser uses this understanding of charisma to demonstrate how Peter the Great sought to invest his rule with divine authority.<sup>73</sup>

However, whereas one can note a revision in recent years vis-à-vis Peter the Great's religious mindset, scant scholarly attention has been paid to the relationship between science, religion and esotericism in Russia for the period under discussion. This is unsurprising considering the way in which science was enthusiastically championed as a bastion of secular process. It was commonly assumed that the rational and enlightened basis of science had liberated it from supposedly 'backward' and 'superstitious' remnants of the past, such as the occult practices of alchemy, astrology, prophecy and mystical Cabbala. This is epitomized by Alexander Vucinich, when he states the following in his history of science in Russian culture: "Peter lived in another age – an age that had gone beyond elementary scientific knowledge and demanded an extensive secularization of both the search

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<sup>68</sup> Lindsey Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 292.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 293.

<sup>71</sup> See Elena Pogosian, *Petr I – arkhitektor rossiiskoi istorii* (St. Petersburg: Iskusstvo – SPB, 2001).

<sup>72</sup> See Ernest A. Zitser, *The Transfigured Kingdom: Sacred Parody and Charismatic Authority* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

<sup>73</sup> For more on the Judaeo-Christian meaning of "charisma" as a divine gift of grace and authority, see Philip Rieff, *Charisma: The Gift of Grace, and How it Has Been Taken Away from Us* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2007).

for and the distribution of knowledge.”<sup>74</sup> This sentiment is shared by Valentin Boss, in his study on the influence of Newtonian thought in Russia between 1698 and 1796, when he argues that the secular state became the guardian of a ‘new science’ during Peter the Great’s reign:

In Russia the “new science” was often regarded as an alternate faith. This in fact is what it eventually came to represent once the revolutionary implications of the Petrine reforms were realised . . . Having crushed the autonomy of the Church, the new secular state that Peter built became the official protector of science, and Newton its undeclared patron saint.<sup>75</sup>

According to Boss, this ‘new science,’ epitomized by Newton, was an alternate faith devoid of any sense of religious or esoteric motivation. It was simply a progressive and secular movement disassociated from all vestiges of an ‘old’ religious mentality and superstitious beliefs.

Moreover, in his lengthy work dedicated to magic in Russia, W. F. Ryan states that “Peter’s practicality belonged more to the Enlightenment than to the seventeenth-century.”<sup>76</sup> Thus, while Ryan recognizes that ‘occult interests’ were present at the courts of Peter the Great’s father, Tsar Aleksei, and his half-sister, the Regent Sophia, he adds that “there is no evidence that these subjects interested him as anything more than offences against good order and manifestations of discontent.”<sup>77</sup> Ryan effectively divides the history of magic at the Russian court into the classic pre and post-Petrine periods, thereby accepting the notion that Peter the Great ushered in a Kuhnian paradigm shift. Hence, whereas Ryan acknowledges the presence of many Western alchemists and astrologers at the Russian court during much of the seventeenth-century, this tradition suddenly ceased on the accession of Peter the Great.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Alexander Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture: A History to 1860*. Vol. 1 (London: Peter Owen, 1963), 42.

<sup>75</sup> Valentin Boss, *Newton and Russia: The Early Influence, 1698–1796* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 6.

<sup>76</sup> W. F. Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight: Magic in Russia* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 23.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. Arthur Dee (1579–1651), the eldest son of John Dee (1527–1608), served as Chief Physician to Tsar Mikhail between 1621–1635. In 1629, whilst in Moscow, Dee wrote *Fasiculus Chemicus or Chymical Collections. Expressing the Ingress, Progress, and Egress, of the Secret Hermetick Science our of the choicest and most famous authors*, trans. Elias Ashmole (London, 1650). Dee’s successor as Chief Physician to Tsar Mikhail Fyodorovich was Wendelin Sybelist (1597–1677), who also wrote hermetic and alchemical tracts, including *Manuale Hermeticum* (Wolfenbuttel, 1655). During the reign of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, a German physician by the name of Andreas Engelhardt practiced astrology at the royal court. See N. A. Figurovskii, “The Alchemist and Physician Arthur Dee (Artemii Ivanovich

In Russia there still remains a scarcity of serious literature on the history of esotericism within the country.<sup>79</sup> The most comprehensive work remains the study by B. E. Raikov on the history of the heliocentric worldview in Russia, which was initially published in 1937. Whilst not a study of esotericism *per se*, Raikov's work contains particularly valuable information on astrological pursuits in Early Modern Muscovy.<sup>80</sup> There are only two modern studies of alchemy in the Russian language. Both are by V. L. Rabinovich and the texts broach the subject without reference to alchemy as a phenomenon existing in Russian cultural history.<sup>81</sup> Rabinovich also views alchemy as a medieval phenomenon, thereby divorcing it from the development of science that was taking place in the early modern period. Timofei Rainov's general history of Russian science up to the seventeenth century briefly mentions alchemy but it does not warrant an entry in the index.<sup>82</sup> V. K. Kuzakov's essay on the development of natural science in Russia between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries is marginally more expansive. He observes that Albertus Magnus, Ramon Lull and Michael Scott were known in Russia by the seventeenth century but then fails to comment further on the matter.<sup>83</sup>

In essence the general consensus among both Russian and Western historians is that the combination of religious mysticism, esotericism and the advancement of the sciences only seriously penetrated into elements of Russian society during the reign of Catherine the Great (r. 1762–1796). This accords with the supposed introduction of Rosicrucian ideas via various esoterically minded Masonic groups amongst which the

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Dii): An Episode in the History of Chemistry and Medicine in Russia," *Ambix* 13:1 (1965–1966): 35–51; John H. Appleby, "Arthur Dee and Johannes Banfi Hunyades: Further Information on their Alchemical Activities," *Ambix* 24 (1977): 96–109; R. A. Simonov, "Rossiiskie pridvornie 'matematiki' XVI–XVII vekov," *Voprosy istorii* 1 (1986): 76–84.

<sup>79</sup> On expressions of popular magic and sorcery in eighteenth-century Russia, see A. S. Lavrov, *Koldovstvo i religiiia v Rossii 1700–1740 gg.* (Moscow: Drevlekhranilishche, 2000); E. B. Smilianskaia, *Volshebnyki. Bogokhul'niki. Eretiki* (Moscow: Indrik, 2003).

<sup>80</sup> A second edition was published in 1947. See B. E. Raikov, *Ocherki po istorii geliotsentricheskogo mirovozzreniia v Rossii. Iz proshlogo russkogo estestvoznaniia*. 2nd edition (Moscow-Leningrad, 1947).

<sup>81</sup> W. F. Ryan, "Alchemy and the Virtues of Stones in Muscovy," in Piyo Rattansi and Antonio Clericuzio, eds., *Alchemy and Chemistry in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1994), 149. Also see V. L. Rabinovich, *Alkhimiia kak fenomen sred-nevekovoi kulturi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979); V. L. Rabinovich, *Obraz mira v zerkale alkhimii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981).

<sup>82</sup> See T. Rainov, *Nauka v Rossii XI–XVII vekov: ocherky po istorii do nauchnykh i estestvenno-nauchnykh vozzrenii na prirodu* (Moscow-Leningrad, Nauka, 1940).

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

Muscovite circle led by Nikolai Novikov (1744–1818), the prominent publisher and satirist, was the most important.<sup>84</sup> However, without dismissing the importance of these groups in the latter half of the eighteenth century in disseminating mystical, eschatological and esoteric views close to Rosicrucianism, I believe one can look to the Petrine court for an earlier penetration of such a potent mix of ideals.

At present one normally only encounters reference to esotericism at the Petrine court in the various brief descriptions of a secretive 'Neptune Society' that convened at the Sukharev Tower in Moscow, which was the home of the Moscow School of Mathematics and Navigation founded in 1701. F. Veselago recorded one of the first known descriptions of such a 'Neptune Society' in 1852, when he noted:

There exists another legend, that in the Sukharev Tower there were meetings of some kind of society of "Neptune", where were represented Lefort, the tsar himself as overseer, Feofan Prokopovich as orator; other members were Menshikov, Apraksin, Bruce, Farquharson, Prince Cherkaskii, Golitsin and several other grandees close to the tsar.<sup>85</sup>

He then goes on to refer to a popular legend in which it was assumed that the Sukharev Tower contained within its walls a 'black book,' subsequently set in a wall, which guards twelve spirits.<sup>86</sup>

Various subsequent Russian historians supplied a Masonic dimension to these legends, without ever broadening their studies to engage the intellectual and religious climate of the Petrine court. In the 1860s, for example, M. N. Longinov recounted a tale whereby Peter was said to have brought a Masonic statute back to Russia after his European Tour in 1717. This statute supposedly gave Peter the authority to found a lodge and according to Longinov this may have been founded on the island of Kronstadt.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> On Rosicrucianism in Russia in the 1780s, see In-Ho L. Ryu, "Moscow Freemasons and the Rosicrucian Order: A Study in Organisation and Control," in J. G. Garrard, ed., *The Eighteenth Century in Russia* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1973), 198–230; Konstantin Burmistrov and Maria Endel, "The Place of Kabbalah in the Doctrine of Russian Freemasons," *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism* 41 (2004): 27–68; Raffaella Faggionato, *A Rosicrucian Utopia in Eighteenth-Century Russia: The Masonic Circle of N. I. Novikov* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005).

<sup>85</sup> F. Veselago, *Ocherk istorii morskago kadetskago korpusa s prilozheniem spiska vosip-tannikov za 100 let* (St. Petersburg, 1852), 22.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> M. N. Longinov, *Novikov i moskovskie martinisty*, (Moscow: Lan, 2000), 111.



A. I. Pypin added to Longinov's Masonic legends in his history of Russian Freemasonry in the eighteenth century. In Pypin's history, more legends are drawn on to connect Peter the Great with Freemasonry. In addition to Longinov's legend relating to 1717, Pypin discusses a legend that Christopher Wren (1632–1723), the famed English architect and polymath, actually initiated the tsar into Freemasonry. This allegedly took place in 1698 during Peter's residence in England. Pypin also discusses the so-called 'Neptune Society,' and lists Franz Lefort as the chairman, Patrick Gordon (1635–1699) as first overseer, and Peter the Great as second overseer.<sup>88</sup> Reference is also made to the fact that later in the eighteenth century Russian Freemasons were known to sing G. R. Derzhavin's *Pesni Petru Velikomu* (Song to Peter the Great) and to revere his name at lodges.<sup>89</sup> P. F. Vernadskii, in his pre-revolutionary account of Russian Freemasonry, also reiterates legends surrounding the 'Neptune Society' and the initiation of Peter the Great as a Freemason.<sup>90</sup>

One other significant legend, recited by the émigré writer Tatiana Bakounine in 1940, describes how one of the tsar's chief lieutenants in the 1690s, Franz Lefort (1656–1699), was initiated as a Mason whilst in Holland on the Grand Embassy in 1697 or 1698.<sup>91</sup> She also retells the legend about Peter the Great being admitted to the Masonic Order by Christopher Wren in London and explains how the first lodges in Russia were founded by Scotsmen: Patrick Gordon and Jacob Bruce.<sup>92</sup>

In recent years the Masonic legends surrounding Peter the Great and his court have frequently been cited and often dismissed but have never been thoroughly investigated. Nor have they been placed in the wider European intellectual and cultural context in which religious and esoteric currents of thought created the milieu for Freemasonry to prosper. Thus we find Douglas Smith, in his history of Russian Freemasonry, briefly referring to nocturnal gatherings of the so-called 'Neptune Society' at the Sukharev Tower. He qualifies this by stating that it is unclear what transpired at these meetings.<sup>93</sup> Anthony Cross also draws attention to the tales surrounding the 'Neptune Society' but argues that any links between Peter

<sup>88</sup> A. N. Pypin, *Masonstvo v Rossii XVIII i pervaiia chetvert' XIX v* (Moscow: Vek, 1997), 83.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 88–89. Also see, Longinov, *Novikov*, 111.

<sup>90</sup> See G. V. Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo v tsarstvovanie Ekateriny II* (Petrograd 1917).

<sup>91</sup> Tatiana Bakounine, *Le repertoire biographique des francs-maçons russes* (Paris: Institut D'Études Slaves de L'Université de Paris, 1967), 290.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 404, 84.

<sup>93</sup> Douglas Smith, *Working the Rough Stone: Freemasonry and Society in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1999), 78.

the Great and Freemasonry were “essentially the creation of later generations of Russian Freemasons who were known to sing Derzhavin’s ‘Song to Peter the Great’ at their lodges.”<sup>94</sup>

It is undoubtedly true that many of the legends surrounding Freemasonry and the Petrine court are in some cases highly speculative in nature and in others blatantly ridiculous. However, this is not a study seeking to authenticate or deny the various legends surrounding Peter the Great and his circle; rather it is an attempt to analyse the religious, philosophical and scientific worldviews of four high-placed foreign servitors to Peter the Great – Jacob Bruce (1669–1735), Robert Erskine (1677–1718), Stefan Iavorskii (1658–1722) and Feofan Prokopovich (1681–1736) – in an effort to determine the extent to which religious (principally millenarian) and esoteric ideas regarding a scientific reformation informed their political activity during their years of service to Peter the Great. By analysing the personal contributions of these individuals to the reforms undertaken during the Petrine era, I will also seek to determine whether their activity informed the policies of the tsar himself, and, if so, the extent to which Peter the Great shared their outlooks.

However, whilst this work focuses on four particular foreign servitors, it should be categorically stated that more research needs to be undertaken on the religious and esoteric worldviews of a host of other figures at the court of Peter the Great. In other words, it is necessary to view Bruce, Erskine, Iavorskii and Prokopovich as illustrative examples of a wider phenomenon, and not merely as the sole purveyors of a limited trend at the Petrine court. In this regard, one can point to the notable astrological interests of Boris Ivanovich Kurakin (1676–1727), who enjoyed a glittering diplomatic career in Paris, The Hague and London in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, as well as serving Peter the Great as the commander of the Semenovskii Regiment during the Battle of Poltava in 1709. Among his archival papers, for example, one finds a written horoscope, entitled *Latitude of Planets*, which relates directly to Kurakin’s own life. His autobiographical *Vita* also follows in the tradition of astrological diaries, such as those written by Marsilio Ficino and Girolamo Cardano, which ruminate on the influence of celestial factors on the body and temperament.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Anthony Cross, “British Freemasons in Russia During the Reign of Catherine the Great,” *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 4 (1971): 43.

<sup>95</sup> On the astrological worldview of Boris Kurakin, see Robert Collis, “‘Stars Rule over People, but God Rules over the Stars’: The Astrological Worldview of Boris Ivanovich Kurakin (1676–1727),” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*. 59:2 (2011): 195–216.

Moreover, one can point to a coterie of Russian officials at the Petrine court, about whom little is presently known regarding their religious and philosophical outlook, yet who display an interest in aspects of Western esotericism. In particular one thinks of the prominent diplomat Andrei Artamonovich Matveev,<sup>96</sup> and the tsar's close associate Prince Dmitrii Mikhailovich Golitsyn (1665–1737).<sup>97</sup> In terms of foreign servitors, one especially thinks of the Genevan Calvinist Franz Lefort, the Catholic Scot Patrick Gordon and the Dutch convert to Orthodoxy Andrei Andreevich Viniius (1641–1717).<sup>98</sup> This triumvirate of foreign officials played a pivotal

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<sup>96</sup> Matveev was a prominent Petrine servitor, who served as a diplomat in the Dutch Republic and Austria between 1699 and 1715. He was also the president of the Naval Academy between 1716 and 1718 and of the Justice College in 1719. For a diary written by Matveev in 1705 whilst on a diplomatic mission to France from Holland, see A. A. Matveev, *Russkii diplomat vo Frantsii (zapiski Andreia Matveevicha)*. Edited by A. D. Liublinskaia and I. S. Sharkova. Leningrad: Nauka, 1972. Whilst on an excursion to the Church of Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie, for example, Matveev notes that the “famous alchemist . . . [Nicolas] Flamel” was buried there and that he “had secretly discovered a way to make gold.” See Matveev, *Russkii diplomat*, 57. The composition of Matveev's personal library also suggests a strong interest in strands of Western esoteric thought. See I. M. Polonskaia, ed., *Biblioteka A. A. Matveeva (1666–1728) katalog* (Moscow, 1985). Thus, the catalogue of Matveev's library lists tomes on natural and artificial magic by Giambattista della Porta (No. 694, 157), Athanasius Kircher (No. 501, 116), Gaspar Schott (Nos. 749–51, 168), Girolamo Cardano (No. 289, 77) and Cornelius Agrippa (No. 182, 56), as well as a large collection of works related to Christian mysticism, theosophy and millenarianism by the likes of Jakob Böhme (No. 257, 70), Johann Arndt (Nos. 191–2, 57), Pierre Poiret (No. 687, 155), Philipp Jacob Spener (No. 780, 176), Thomas à Kempis (Nos. 804–5, 181), Jean Allut (Nos. 183–4, 56) and Pierre Jurieu (No. 493, 115).

<sup>97</sup> In 1697 Golitsyn went to Italy to study navigation. During the reign of Peter the Great Golitsyn undertook various diplomatic missions (including assignments in Constantinople and Vienna) and was the Governor of Kiev (1711–1718). In 1718 Golitsyn was appointed as the first President of the State Revenues College (*kamer-kollegiia*). Golitsyn possessed a very large private library, which included a large selection of works related to Western esotericism, particularly in regard to books of secrets and astrology. For an incomplete catalogue of manuscripts in the Golitsyn library, see B. A. Gradov, B. M. Kloss and V. I. Koretskii, “K istorii arkhangel'skoi biblioteki D. M. Golitsyna,” *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik za 1978 god* 22 (1979): 238–53. In regard to astrology, for example, one finds a manuscript copied from the work of Andrea Argoli (No. 182, 245), as well as more general works on divination (including a fortune-telling book entitled *Fortuna, ili gadatel'naia kniga* (No. 51, 242), a manuscript on interpreting dreams (No. 259, 247) and a work on interpreting the comets of 1680 and 1682. (No. 260, 247). One also finds works on occult secrets by Albertus Magnus (No. 222, 246) and Antoine Mizauld (No. 269, 247), as well as a translation of Athanasius Kircher's *Tariffa Kircheriana* (No. 320, 249).

<sup>98</sup> For more on Lefort, see Moritz Posselt, *Admiral russkago flota Frants Iakovlevich Lefort ili nachalo russkago flota* (St. Petersburg, 1863) and *Der General und Admiral Franz Lefort. Sein Leben und Seine Zeit*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1866). For more on Gordon, see A. Brikner, *Patrik Gordon i ego dnevniki* (St. Petersburg, 1878); Graeme P. Herd, “General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries- A Scot in Seventeenth Century Russian Service,” (University of Aberdeen PhD Thesis, 1994); Dmitry Fedosov, “Cock of the East: A Gordon

role in Peter the Great's formative years, yet little is known about them beyond their official military or government duties.

The first part of my book will concentrate on two of the most prominent foreign servitors during the pivotal first two decades of the eighteenth-century: Jacob Bruce and Robert Erskine. Remarkably both emanated from esteemed Scottish families in Clackmannanshire with strong links to the Stuart monarchy and the Jacobite cause. When studying these two figures, I believe an understanding and awareness of Freemasonry, with its religious and scientific foundations, can help to shed new light not only on their individual worldviews but also on the symbolic and intellectual landscape of Petrine Russia as a whole. This is particularly true when one considers the developments that have been made over the past eighteen years in the academic study of Scottish Freemasonry, led by David Stevenson who has drawn attention to its sixteenth-century origins. However, he also places the development within a wider European context in which the occult sciences were to the fore of experimental inquiry.<sup>99</sup>

The implications of Stevenson's work have a direct impact on the study of Petrine Russia as Peter the Great surrounded himself with a plethora of Scottish Jacobites at the heart of the Russian court. The first notable Scottish Jacobite at Peter the Great's court was General Patrick Gordon. Yet whilst Gordon played a crucial role in Peter the Great's early years as Russian monarch, his death in 1699 meant that his role in government affairs never went beyond military concerns. Consequently, this study will concentrate on examining Jacob Bruce and Robert Erskine, both of whom became pivotal figures in Peter's drive to reform Russia in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. In my opinion it is important to bear in mind the mystical and esoteric hallmarks of Scottish Jacobite Freemasonry when studying the worldviews of these two Jacobite supporters.

However, the overall aim of the first part of this study – comprising the chapters on Bruce and Erskine – is not to reveal Masonic influence at the

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Blade Abroad," in Ljubica Erickson and Mark Erickson ed. *Russia: War, Peace and Diplomacy* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004): 1–10; Robert Collis, "Patrick Gordon and His Links to Stuart and Jacobite Freemasonry," *Faravid* 28 (2004): 73–90. For information on Vinius, see I. P. Kozlovskii, *Andrei Vinius sotrudnik Petra Velikago (1641–1717)* (St. Petersburg, 1911); I. Wladimiroff, "Andries Winius and Nicolaas Witsen, Tsar Peter's Dutch Connection," in Carel Horstmeier and Hans van Koningsbrugge ed. *Around Peter the Great: Three Centuries of Russian-Dutch Relations* (Groningen: INOS, 1997): 5–23; I. N. Iurkin, *Andrei Andreevich Vinius 1641–1716* (Moscow: Nauka, 2007).

<sup>99</sup> See David Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century, 1590–1710* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 77–124.

Petrine court, but to examine how these two senior figures at the Petrine court were fascinated in strands of Western esotericism and elements of mystical and chiliastic religiosity. This is of considerable import as they were both instrumental in shaping the development of Russian science during the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Consequently, if one can observe distinct religious and esoteric elements in their respective scientific worldviews, the foundation of Russian science – commonly perceived as a grand exercise in implementing progressive embodiments of rational and enlightened thought – needs to be re-evaluated.<sup>100</sup>

In methodological terms, the first part of the study draws extensively on the private library collections of both Bruce and Erskine in order to examine their particular worldviews. Historians have largely ignored these valuable sources, which provide a unique insight into the mindsets of two of Petrine Russia's most prominent foreign servitors. Admittedly the library collections on their own would only allow a partial view into the intellectual makeup of these two figures. However, in combination with an examination of a wide variety of source material including correspondence, medical notes and prints – outlined below – it is the aim of the first part of this book to reveal fresh perspectives on these two underestimated statesmen.

The first chapter will concentrate on a study of Jacob Bruce who, although born in Moscow, was descended on his father's side from the Bruces of Clackmannan in Scotland. Bruce was one of the highest-ranking military officials in Petrine Russia as well as being at the head of Russian industry and mining and at the forefront of Russian printing. He was one of the leading diplomats in Petrine Russia and was at the head of the Russian delegation at the peace talks with Sweden on the Åland Islands in 1718–1719 and at Nystad (now known as Uusikaupunki) in Finland in 1721. Bruce was also a man esteemed for his great learning and has been called Russia's first Newtonian.<sup>101</sup> He actively participated in the development of science in Petrine Russia, yet his monumental achievements have not been viewed in light of his deep religious and esoteric interests. I will argue that without such a perspective one cannot fully appreciate Bruce's contribution to Russian culture and society.

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<sup>100</sup> On the rational and enlightened basis of scientific reform in Petrine Russia, see Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture*.

<sup>101</sup> This claim was first made by the Canadian scholar Valentin Boss. See Valentin Boss, "Russia's First Newtonian: Newton and J. D. Bruce," *Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Sciences* 15 (1962): 233–265.

In attempting to highlight Bruce's attraction to various branches of esotericism and by stressing his strong religious outlook, I hope to illustrate how these interests were allowed to flourish at the court of Peter the Great. I will endeavour to achieve this by utilizing a wide variety of source material. The personal library of Bruce – originally amounting to over 1500 tomes – provides a valuable source in order to gain an insight into the Russo-Scot's worldview, and it has surprisingly received little scholarly attention.<sup>102</sup> A profusion of alchemical and other assorted esoteric texts can be detected in what remains of this collection and provide a rich and valuable source for historians. The extensive catalogue of Bruce's private cabinet of curiosities also constitutes an invaluable source for historians seeking to understand the statesman's specific scientific interests.<sup>103</sup>

In conjunction with the above sources I will also extensively draw on the so-called *Bruce Calendars*, published between 1709–1715, which were closely associated with Jacob Bruce. These astrological-astronomical publications illustrate the strong link between Bruce's private interests in esotericism and his willingness to promote such a worldview as the director of the Civil Typographers. In addition, I will also cite Bruce's involvement with various mathematical and scientific publications in order to illustrate the extent to which religion still played a central role in his worldview. Archival sources will also be utilized to trace Bruce's Scottish ancestry and Jacobite links. Bruce's travel itinerary when he was resident in London in 1698 will also be consulted, as well as correspondence he undertook on scientific (particularly chemical) matters. Lastly, I will cite various oral legends that circulated widely in popular Russian culture in the centuries after Bruce's death in 1735. By drawing on these sources, as well as citing contemporary European parallels, I hope to reveal a new side to Bruce's outstanding legacy to Russian society, which was actively infused by religious and esoteric notions.

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<sup>102</sup> For an incomplete catalogue of Bruce's library, see E. A. Savel'eva, ed., *Biblioteka Ia. V. Briusa: katalog* (Leningrad: BAN, 1989). Two nineteenth-century sources provide more comprehensive catalogues, but lack basic supplementary information about the books and artefacts. See I. E. Zabelin, "Biblioteka i kabinet grafa Ia. V. Briusa," in Nikolai Tikhonravov, ed., *Letopisei russkoi literatury i drevnosti*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1859), 28–62; *Materialy dlia istorii imperatorskoi akademii nauk*, vol. 5 (St. Petersburg, 1889), 152–245.

<sup>103</sup> For a catalogue of Bruce's Cabinet of Curiosities, see *Materialy*, 5, 228–45. The catalogue of Bruce's collection of curiosities was compiled on February 9, 1736, after his death, and includes all his "mathematical and other curious things," as well as items relating to geography, military and civil architecture, paintings and manuscript blueprints. For the full title, see *Materialy*, vol. 5, 228.

The second chapter of this study will undertake a long overdue re-evaluation of the prominent role of Robert Erskine in Petrine Russia. He was not only the tsar's personal physician but was also the chief medical officer in Russia, the founder of the St. Petersburg botanical garden, overseer of the *kunstkamera*, a State Councillor and an unofficial diplomat. He was a man of great learning – he became a Fellow of The Royal Society in 1703 – and descended from an extremely prominent Scottish family from Alva in Clackmannanshire with intimate connections with the Stuart dynasty and intriguing links to mystical, heraldic and Masonic thought. Thus, rather suggestively the families of both Bruce and Erskine emanated from Scotland's smallest county – highlighting the interconnected and clannish world of Scottish Jacobitism.

In seeking to reveal Erskine's immersion in esotericism and religion, I will also draw on the Scotsman's personal library. In doing so I aim to reveal Erskine's deep and learned interest in all aspects of esoteric and mystical thought. Erskine's astonishing library collection – amounting to over 2,300 tomes – has remained an almost entirely untapped source.<sup>104</sup> A study of its esoteric and religious content – especially of its huge collection of Paracelsian, Rosicrucian and alchemical texts – in tandem with new insights into his Jacobite family background, his educational training and his adoption of iatrochemical techniques whilst serving Peter the Great can throw a considerable amount of new light onto this remarkable figure.

In terms of his links to the Jacobite movement, I will draw on his private correspondence with close family members, which not only reveals Erskine's key role within the wide network of Jacobite agents on the European Continent, but also strongly hints at a Masonic dimension to the clandestine association of disaffected Stuart sympathizers.<sup>105</sup> I will also

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<sup>104</sup> The only scholars to have undertaken any serious study on the library of Robert Erskine are John Appleby and Andrew Cunningham. See J. H. Appleby and Andrew Cunningham, "Robert Erskine & Archibald Pitcairne – Two Scottish Physician's Outstanding Libraries," *Bibliothek* 11:1 (1982): 3–16.

<sup>105</sup> Various sources can be consulted in order to read Robert Erskine's correspondence. See, for example, Reverend Robert Paul, ed., "Letters and Documents Relating to Robert Erskine: Physician to Peter the Great, Czar of Russia 1677–1720," *Miscellany of the Scottish History Society* 44:2 (1904): 371–430; *Calendar of the Stuart Papers Belonging to His Majesty the King Preserved at Windsor Castle*, 7 vols. (London: Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1902–1923), (hereafter cited as *Stuart Papers*), vol. 2, 388–9, 495; vol. 3, 113, 115–7, 345–6, 371, 479–81, 532–3, 562–3; vol. 4, 242–3, 265–6, 291–7, 313–5, 473–5, 543; vol. 5, 46, 154, 499; Fond 120/1. The Academy of Sciences' Library, St. Petersburg; MSS GD 124/15/773. The National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh.

draw on archival sources to highlight the influence of the chemical philosophers Jacob Le Mort (1650–1718) and Johann Conrad Barchusen (1666–1723) in shaping what I argue to be Erskine's iatrochemical approach to medicine, which he came to embrace during his years at university in Paris and Utrecht.<sup>106</sup> This iatrochemical approach was still common at the turn of the eighteenth century in European medicine and, as the name suggests, was based on a chemical approach to medicine that drew heavily on the alchemical theories of Paracelsus (1493–1541) and Jan Baptista van Helmont. Medical notes and correspondence dating from Erskine's time in Russia will also be used to reveal his iatrochemical approach to medicine, which remained open to esoteric influences.<sup>107</sup> What is more, I will also study the extent to which medicine remained tied to astrological predictions during Erskine's tenure as the leading medical figure in Russia. This will be carried out by examining the manner in which state sponsored annual calendars, including those overseen by Jacob Bruce, continued to advocate medical treatments according to astrological conditions.

Furthermore, in addition to consulting archival material directly related to Erskine, I will also study the medical and religious opinions of his close associates in London, such as George Cheyne and Richard Mead, prior to his departure for Russia. By examining their worldviews, I hope to illustrate how Erskine was far from being on the fringes of accepted medical practice at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Whereas the first part of the study will concentrate on two Scottish figures, the second part will focus on two Ukrainian clerical figures – Stefan Iavorskii (1658–1722) and Feofan Prokopovich (1681–1736) – who were undoubtedly the most important ecclesiastical figures in Petrine Russia. Both Iavorskii and Prokopovich displayed a distinct form of erudition acquired from their mutual training at the Kiev Academy and at various Jesuit institutions. The influence of Simeon Polotskii's baroque panegyric style is evident in both clerics and is testament to its continuing importance in Petrine Russia, yet they ultimately expressed their

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<sup>106</sup> For a notebook dating from Erskine's time at university in Paris between 1697–1700, see MS. O. No. 42 f. 104. The Academy of Sciences' Library, St. Petersburg.

<sup>107</sup> For two manuscripts containing medical notes of Erskine's treatment of Peter the Great, see MS. 28.6.13 and MS. FN 319, The Academy of Sciences Library, St. Petersburg. Medical correspondence between Erskine and various European physicians and apothecaries can be found in Fond 120/121. The Academy of Sciences Library, St. Petersburg.



debt to their predecessor by developing their learning in different (and sometimes opposing) ways. In essence Iavorskii remained closer to the legacy of Polotskii, who espoused the power of “fast flowing type.”<sup>108</sup> Prokopovich, on the other hand, sought to extend his influence beyond the page and envisaged sweeping educational reforms based largely on the Pietist model of August Hermann Francke.

Yet, in spite of their diverging theological worldviews, both figures not only worked within the clerical realm but also played key roles in forwarding the Petrine vision. In this manner, their contribution to the reforms enacted by Peter the Great – particularly Prokopovich – far exceeded their official responsibilities as church officials. Thus, it is of great significance that both of these figures were steeped in knowledge of chiliastic, mystical and esoteric thought.

The third chapter will focus on the striking sermons of Stefan Iavorskii who between 1701–1722 was the *de facto* head of the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>109</sup> Whilst Iavorskii was a fierce rival of Prokopovich and displayed none of the latter’s interest in Pietism and experimental science, it would be a mistake to assume that he did not display distinct signs of a mystical and esoteric outlook. In fact, as this chapter will demonstrate, if one undertakes a close study of his numerous sermons one can discern the startling use of apocalyptic themes, Jewish Merkavah mysticism and various strands of esoteric thought – particularly astrology and strong elements of a Cabbalistic emphasis on the significance of names and numbers.

Crucially, the use of such themes was utilized to extol the reign of Peter the Great and to champion the reforms the tsar was making to the Russian state. Thus, in his own highly distinctive manner, Iavorskii served the cause of Petrine Russia. He principally did this by formulating a panegyrical style that actively drew on the deep reservoir of Christian mysticism and esotericism inherent in elements of seventeenth-century Jesuitism. Iavorskii’s familiarity with this vein of seventeenth-century religious

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<sup>108</sup> V. P. Grebeniuk, ed., *Panegiricheskaia literatura petrovskogo vremeni* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), 10.

<sup>109</sup> For printed editions of Iavorskii’s sermons, see Stefan Iavorskii, “Slovo Stefana Iavorskago, mitropolita riazanskago i muromskago,” *Trudy kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* vols. 3 and 4 (1874) and vol. 1 (1875). For extensive citations of Iavorskii’s sermons, see Lurii Samarin, *Stefan Iavorskii i Feofan Prokopovich kak propovedniki* (Moscow, 1844); F. Ternovskii, “M. Stefan Iavorskii (biograficheskii ocherk),” *Trudy kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* vols. 1–2 (1864): (1) 36–70; 237–90; (2) 137–86.

mysticism will be illustrated by referring to the large presence of such literature in his sizeable private library collection.<sup>110</sup>

The fourth chapter will focus on Feofan Prokopovich, who was in effect the chief religious propagandist of the Petrine era and as Archbishop of Pskov and Novgorod commanded considerable ecclesiastical authority. Prokopovich displayed a breadth of knowledge and susceptibility to scientific inquiry and Protestantism early in his career when he began teaching at the Kiev Academy in 1704. This open-minded and broad outlook, unrivalled among ecclesiastical figures in Petrine Russia, ensured his success at the Court of Peter the Great. He was a master of the panegyric and was the author of the *Ecclesiastic Regulation* (1721), which not only transformed the Russian Orthodox Church, but also the entire Russian educational system. Though scholars have noted his inclination for mathematical and scientific pursuits and for Protestantism, the extent to which this was framed by elements of Christian Neo-Platonism and German Pietism has not been fully explored. What is more, the scale of Prokopovich's interest in millenarianism, Hebraism and esoteric subject matter has not been addressed.<sup>111</sup>

In order to illustrate the extent to which Prokopovich infused his worldview with the above elements, I will undertake an in-depth examination of the cleric's religious and scientific writings. In terms of theological literature, special attention will be paid to the series of tracts written by Prokopovich between 1712–1716, when he was still resident in Kiev.<sup>112</sup> These tracts represent Prokopovich's most complete articulation of his theological system and are consequently a vital means of understanding one of Russia's most influential clergymen and thinkers. The fullest

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<sup>110</sup> For Iavorskii's library collection, see S. I. Maslov, "Dokumenty, otnosiashchiesia k sud'be biblioteki Stefana Iavorskago." *Chtenie v istoricheskoi obshchestve nestora leopista* 24:3 (1914): 17–102.

<sup>111</sup> The principle Western scholar of Prokopovich is James Cracraft. In his *The Church Reform of Peter the Great*, he provides a good biography of Prokopovich, but does not explore esoteric interests. Two Russian academics – V. M. Nichik and Viktor Smirnov – also discuss the scientific interests of Prokopovich, without reference to its religious and esoteric dimension. See James Cracraft, *The Church Reform of Peter the Great* (London: Macmillan, 1971); V. M. Nichik, *Feofan Prokopovich* (Moscow: Nauka, 1977); Viktor Smirnov, *Feofan Prokopovich* (Moscow: Soratnik, 1994).

<sup>112</sup> These tracts will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four. For re-publications and summaries of these tracts, see Platon Cherviakovskii, "Sviashchennoe pisanie, kak nachalo bogosloviia po ucheniiu protestantov ortodokslov XVII veka i po 'Vvedeniiu v bogoslovie' Feofana Prokopovicha," *Khristianskoe chtenie* (1876–1878); Petr Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich kak pisatel* (St. Petersburg, 1880); Feofan Tikhomirov, *Traktaty Feofana Prokopovicha o Boge* (St. Petersburg, 1884).

exposition of Prokopovich's scientific beliefs can be found in his lengthy *Natural Philosophy, or Physics* (1708), and consequently I will devote considerable attention to this key work.<sup>113</sup> In seeking to understand Prokopovich's attitude to religion and science, these works provide an invaluable source, yet have not attracted the scholarly attention they merit.

The same applies to Prokopovich's private library, containing over 3000 tomes, which provides a largely unexamined source that is fruitful for the scholar wishing to explore the multifaceted nature of Prokopovich's worldview.<sup>114</sup> The above-cited *Ecclesiastic Regulation* will also be studied in order to illustrate Prokopovich's debt to German Pietism, alongside the rules formulated by the cleric for his own school on the outskirts of St. Petersburg.<sup>115</sup> The selection of relevant pieces of Prokopovich's correspondence, which variously highlight his eschatological mindset and his close links to Pietism, will further demonstrate the cleric's religious worldview.<sup>116</sup>

After illustrating how key figures at the Petrine court embraced religion and esotericism as a means to enact reform, the third part of my study will place the spotlight on Peter the Great himself. Chapter Five will concentrate on examining how Peter the Great's attempt to reform Russia was consciously represented as a providential mission. In particular, it will be argued that Davidic motifs played a pivotal role in framing perceptions of Peter the Great. This will be illustrated by drawing on a series of official sermons, in which the Davidic theme is heavily utilized to place Peter the Great's actions within a Biblical framework. Other primary sources, such as memoirs and correspondence will also be studied in order to reveal the extent to which the Russian monarch wished others to perceive his

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<sup>113</sup> See Feofan Prokopovich, *Feofan Prokopovich: filosofski tvory v trokh tomakh*, ed. V. I. Shinkaruk, vol. 2, (Kiev, 1979–81).

<sup>114</sup> For a catalogue of Prokopovich's library see P. V. Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie dukhnoivnoi kollegii i dukhovnyi reglament* 2:5, (Rostov-on-the Don, 1916), 1–5; Feofan Prokopovich, *Feofan Prokopovich: filosofski*, vol. 3, 373–450.

<sup>115</sup> For an English translation of the *Ecclesiastic Regulation*, see Feofan Prokopovich, *The Present State and Regulations of the Church of Russia, established by the late Tsar's royal edict*, trans. Thomas Consett, vol. 1 (London, 1729). Also see Thomas Consett, *For God and Peter the Great: The Works of Thomas Consett, 1723–1729*, ed. James Cracraft (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1982). For the rules of Prokopovich's Karpovka school, see Smirnov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 197–201.

<sup>116</sup> For Prokopovich's correspondence, see Feofan Prokopovich, "Materialy dlia istorii russkoi religioznoi i tserkovnoi zhizni: pis'ma Feofana Prokopovicha," *Trudy kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* 1 (1865), 139–59, 297–310, 538–55, 595–613; Prokopovich, *Feofan Prokopovich: filosofski tvory*, vol. 3, 195–209; Smirnov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 185–96.

actions in Davidic terms. Visual sources depicting Peter the Great in a Davidic guise, such as bas-reliefs, sculptures and personal seals, will also be examined in order to highlight the all-encompassing nature of the Biblical parallel.

The focus on Davidic themes will be followed by a section concentrating on the prophetic significance attached to the victorious Nystad Peace of August 1721, which ended the Great Northern War with Sweden. A particular emphasis will be placed on revealing the concerted attempt made by the authorities to stress the divinely governed length of the war. Moreover, an examination of the manner in which motifs connected to Noah and his Ark were utilized will be carried out. It will be argued that this imagery was adopted in order to stress the fact that God had granted the Russian monarch and his people a new dispensation after the deluge of war. Once again a variety of primary sources will be analyzed, including official sermons and a selection of visual sources used at the official celebrations, such as commemorative medals, panel displays and the spectacular use of Peter the Great's first boat.

The final section of Chapter Five will focus on the remarkable manner in which St. Petersburg was envisaged as the embodiment of New Jerusalem, as prophesized in the Book of Revelation. It will be argued that the concerted campaign to portray Peter the Great as a 'New David' went hand in hand with St. Petersburg being perceived as the 'New Jerusalem.' In a sense the two motifs were inseparable. If Peter the Great was indeed a 'New David' then his new northern capital could be nothing less than a 'New Zion' inhabited by God's chosen people.

Such an interpretation runs counter to conventional thinking vis-à-vis St. Petersburg as the embodiment of rational and enlightened thinking. Yet by drawing on Peter the Great's personal correspondence, official sermons, maps, architectural features and officially sanctioned foundation myths, the vital role New Jerusalem motifs played in legitimizing the new capital on the shores of the Gulf of Finland will be demonstrated.

The final chapter will emphasize the influence of religion and esotericism on Peter the Great's scientific vision. More specifically, it will be argued that the notion of instauration played a key role in shaping the manner in which Peter the Great sought to implement scientific and educational reforms. The opening section of the chapter will focus on analyzing the scientific proposals presented to Peter the Great by Francis Lee and Gottfried Leibniz. It will be stressed that both plans were heavily indebted to a religious notion of the advancement of learning, which were open to esoteric influences.

The second part of the chapter will then move on to a study of how Peter the Great enthusiastically developed the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera as both a temple and laboratory dedicated to the advancement of knowledge. I will argue that it can be viewed as the last of the great kunstkammers of Renaissance Europe and as a symbol of Russia's divinely ordained instauration. It will be demonstrated how the tsar's attitude towards this institution bore all the hallmarks of a monarch profoundly intrigued by – and curious in – the secrets of God's divine creation. Such an argument will be advanced by citing the tsar's personal correspondence as well as his official decrees.<sup>117</sup> Official reports on missions undertaken to purchase and study curiosities across Europe will also be studied, along with catalogues describing the contents of the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera.<sup>118</sup> What is more, contemporary descriptions of the burgeoning kunstkamera and its exhibits will also be cited to illustrate the particular nature of the tsar's newly founded establishment.<sup>119</sup> Lastly, the religious beliefs of contemporary collectors – particularly in the Dutch Republic – will be analyzed in order to demonstrate the continued theological dimension inherent in a great number of European cabinets of curiosities.<sup>120</sup>

In the final section of the chapter an examination of the esoteric inclinations of Peter the Great will be undertaken, with a particular emphasis being placed on astrology, alchemy and his profound fascination with perpetual motions machines. First, in terms of the tsar's stance towards astrology, I will examine personal notes and correspondence, alongside his official promotion of state calendars replete with astrological predictions,

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<sup>117</sup> See *Pis'ma i bumagi Imperatora Petra Velikogo*, vols. 1–12 (St. Petersburg-Moscow, 1887–1992) (hereafter cited in *PiB*); P. P. Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura v Rossii pri Petre Velikom*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1862), 54.

<sup>118</sup> See Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 533–55; Osip Beliaev, *Kabinet Petra Velikogo*, 3 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1800); *Materialy dlia istorii imperatorskoi akademii nauk*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1885), 1, 38–9, 42–3, 46, 99.

<sup>119</sup> See for example Christian Friedrich Weber, *The Present State of Russia*, vol. 1 (London, 1722–3), 185–6; Cornelius Le Bruyn, *Travels into Muscovy, Persia and parts of the East-Indies*, vol. 1 (London, 1737), 28; Jakob von Storcksburg Staehlin, *Original Anecdotes of Peter the Great* (New York: Arno Press & The New York Times, 1970), 94–6; V. Naumov, ed., *Neistovyi reformator* (Moscow: RITA-PRINT, 2000), 136, 201–2.

<sup>120</sup> See Caspar Friedrich Neickel, *Museographia, oder Anleitung zum rechten Begriff und nützlicher Anlegung der Museorum, oder Raritäten-Kammern* (Leipzig, 1727); Marion Peters, "Nicolaes Witsen and Gijsbert Cuper: Two Seventeenth-Century Dutch Burgomaster and their Gordian Knot," *Lias: Sources and Documents Relating to the Early History of Ideas*, 16:1 (1989), 111–51; Marion Peters, "From the Study of Nicolaes Witsen (1641–1717). His Life with Books and Manuscripts," *Lias: Sources and Documents relating to the Early Modern History of Ideas* 21:1 (1994), 1–49.

in order to illustrate his penchant for this esoteric science.<sup>121</sup> Secondly, the tsar's approach to alchemy will be assessed by studying his travel itineraries in Western Europe, contemporary memoirs and announcements and by examining alchemical literature present in his personal library collection.<sup>122</sup> Lastly, the tsar's fascination with perpetual motion machines will be highlighted by citing extensively from correspondence, official decrees, official reports and from a contemporary account by a military officer in Russian service.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> For excellent and detailed summaries of the content of the original annual calendars, see Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 137, 162, 177, 191, 208, 225, 232, 234–5, 237–8, 261, 273–4, 294, 301, 309, 235–6, 351, 357, 395–6, 406, 418, 430, 446, 487–8, 532–3, 552–3, 584–5. For the tsar's personal notes and correspondence on astrological matters see Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, 1, 284–9 and Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 310. For the astrological calendars owned by Peter the Great, see E. I. Bobrova, ed., *Biblioteka Petra I: ukazatel spravochnik* (Leningrad: BAN, 1978), 23 (No. 36), 24 (No. 37), 29 (Nos. 84–6), 38 (No. 167), 50 (No. 271), 51 (Nos. 272–3), 71 (Nos. 485–94), 72 (Nos. 495–8), 85 (No. 676), 124 (Nos. 1121–2), 126 (No. 1151), 127 (Nos. 1166–8), 130 (No. 1215).

<sup>122</sup> For a document describing the tsar's audience with the (al)chemist Moses Stringer, see MS. C.20.F2/208/. The British Museum, London. See also L. Loewenson, "People Peter the Great met in England. Moses Stringer, Chymist and Physician," *Slavonic and East European Review* 37 (June 1959): 461; A. K. Nartov, *Razkazy o Petre Velikom*, ed. L. N. Maikov (St. Petersburg, 1891), 95.

<sup>123</sup> For correspondence concerning the subject of perpetual motion, see Christian Wolff, *Briefe von Christian Wolff aus den Jahren 1719–1753* (St. Petersburg, 1860), 1–9, 16, 161–8; John Collins, *Perpetual Motion: An Ancient Mystery Solved? An Investigation into the Legend of Bessler's Wheel* (Leamington Spa: Permo Publications, 1997). For official decrees and reports on perpetual motion machines, see Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 533–43. For a contemporary account of Peter the Great's interest in perpetual motion machines, see Peter Henry Bruce, *Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, Esq. A Military Officer in the Services of Prussia, Russia and Great Britain, containing an Account of his Travels in Germany, Russia, Tartary, Turkey, The West Indies &c. as also Several Very Interesting Private Anecdotes of the Czar, Peter I* (London: Frank Cass, 1970), 166–8.



PART ONE

JACOBITE SERVITORS





## CHAPTER ONE

### JACOB BRUCE (1669–1735): A SCIENTIFIC SORCERER AT THE COURT OF PETER THE GREAT

#### *Introduction*

On the death of Peter the Great in January 1725 the formidable task of organizing the funeral arrangements was given to Jacob Bruce.<sup>1</sup> In effect Bruce had been entrusted with coordinating the symbolic encapsulation of the Petrine legacy in the funeral ceremony and the official period of mourning. This duty was carried out with aplomb, combining religious and secular imagery that championed the wondrous feats undertaken by the monarch for the benefit of the Russian state. A fine example of this mixture of the religious and the secular can be seen in the decoration of the Hall of Mourning, which was resplendent with four pyramids of white marble on pedestals. These pyramids bore the legends 'Solicitude for the Church,' 'Reform of the Citizenry,' 'Instruction of the Military' and 'Building of the Fleet' and compared Peter the Great with figures in the Old Testament such as Japheth and Samson.<sup>2</sup>

The choice of Bruce for such an important duty was entirely fitting. He had been one of Peter the Great's key associates, throughout his reign and enjoyed the reputation of being one of Russia's most learned individuals. This vast learning was extensively utilized by the Russian State. Bruce was pivotal, for example, in the creation of the first astronomical observatory and the Moscow Mathematical and Navigation School in 1701. He also became the Director of the *Grazhdanskaia tipografiia* (Civil Typography) in 1706, overseeing the rapid expansion of the printing press. In addition to these positions Bruce was appointed the President of the newly created Mining and Manufacturing Colleges in 1717. His workload was further increased in 1720 when he was entrusted with the posts of Director of the

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<sup>1</sup> I use the name Jacob Bruce. It should be noted that he is also referred to in other works by his Russian name, 'Iakov' or as 'James.' Furthermore, his middle name is given as either 'Vilimovich,' after his father William, in accordance with the Russian patronymic system of second-names, or as Daniel.

<sup>2</sup> See Hughes, *Age of Peter the Great*, 263. The use of Biblical imagery in praise of Peter the Great will be studied in detail in Chapter 5.

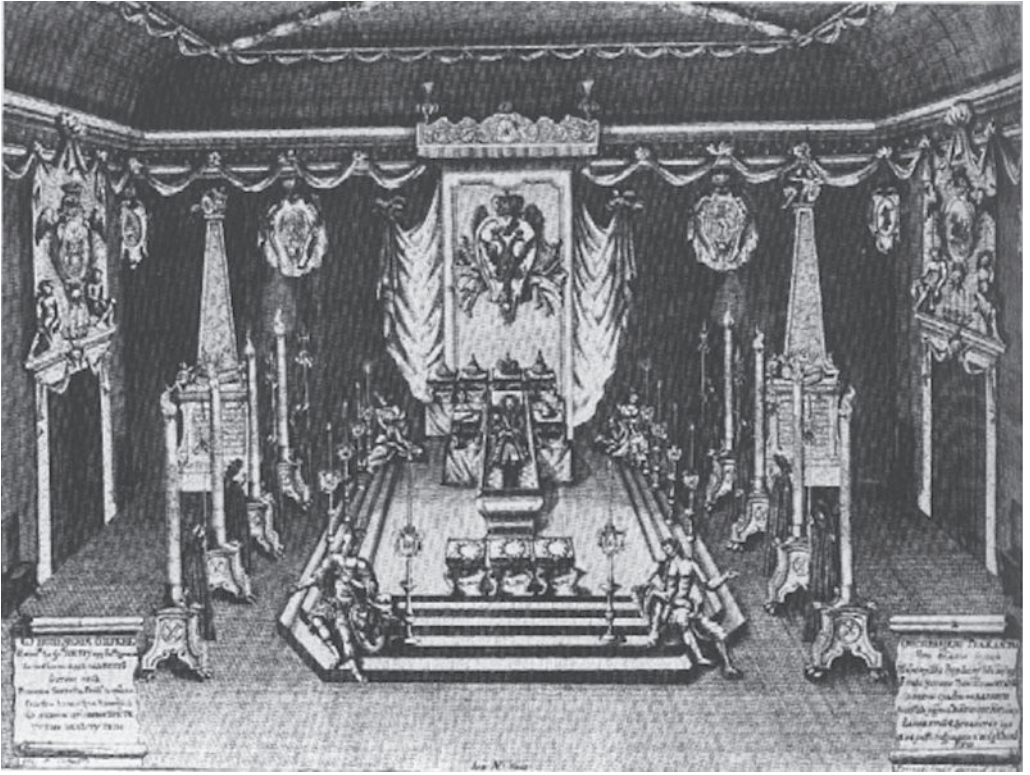


Fig. 2. A. I. Rostovtsev, *View of the Funeral Hall of Peter I, 1725.*

St. Petersburg Mint and the General-Director of fortifications. Bruce was also one of Russia's most astute diplomats, acting as the First Plenipotentiary Minister at the Åland Congress in 1718 and negotiating the eventual Nystad Peace with the Swedes in 1721. Whilst in charge of all these posts Bruce pursued a long and successful military career, retiring in 1726 with the rank of General Field Marshall. Furthermore, in recognition of his military service to Russia, he was awarded the prestigious Order of St. Andrew the First-Called in September 1709 after his exploits at the Battle of Poltava and he became a Count in February 1721.

The sheer scale of Bruce's interests and his contribution to the grand scheme of reforms undertaken in Russia during the reign of Peter the Great are breathtaking. Indeed, the scope of his activities has posed problems for the relatively few academics who have attempted to determine his role and position within the Petrine system of government. The Russian scholar P. P. Pekarskii, for example, writing in 1862, focused on the

astronomical interests of Bruce.<sup>3</sup> Another nineteenth-century Russian scholar, M. D. Khmyrov, cast Bruce in his military guise as *General Fel'dtseikhmeister* (Commander of Artillery), whilst the Marxist historian Pokrovskii dismissively stated that he “was not a politician but simply a good technician.”<sup>4</sup> The Canadian scholar Valentin Boss afforded Bruce greater respect but concentrated on characterizing him as a disciple of rational and secular Newtonian science. Thus, according to Boss, as Russia’s “first Newtonian” Bruce played a crucial role in the secular transformation of the country which was, as has been noted, “often regarded as an alternate faith.”<sup>5</sup>

By far the most enduring and popular portrayal of Bruce in Russia, however, has been as a sorcerer – effectively a court magician – who allegedly engaged in all manner of weird, wonderful and often diabolical exploits. The first recorded legend concerning the magical pastimes of Bruce was recorded in the Ukraine at the beginning of the nineteenth century by an old soldier.<sup>6</sup> This soldier purportedly heard the legend himself from an old shepherd sitting at a bonfire and then narrated it to a student at Moscow University. It was only published in 1871, however, in the journal *Russkaia Starina*. Therein it is stated that Bruce “knew all the secret herbs and miraculous stones and concocted various things from them.”<sup>7</sup> A much more influential contribution in the development of an aura of magic and sorcery surrounding Bruce was made by Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837). In his unfinished novel *Arap Petra Velikogo* (The Moor of Peter the Great), Pushkin likened Bruce to a ‘Russian Faust.’<sup>8</sup> The Faustian image of Bruce in nineteenth-century Russian literature was strengthened by Ivan Lazhechnikov’s novel *Koldun na Sukharevoi Bashne* (The Sorcerer at the Sukharev Tower), published in 1840, which in large measure drew inspiration from Pushkin’s personification. A fictitious letter, dated 12 September, 1726, addressed to Bruce by his real-life diplomatic colleague Baron Andrei Ivanovich Osterman (1686–1747), typifies the characterization of Bruce by Lazhechnikov. Osterman is rueing the death of Peter

<sup>3</sup> See Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 289–313.

<sup>4</sup> See M. D. Khmyrov, “Glavnye nachal’niki russkoi artillerii. Vtoroi general-fel’dtseikhmeister graf Iakov Vilimovich Briusa (1704–1726),” *Artilleriiskii zhurnal* 2, 3 and 4 (1866): 81–136, 153–94, 249–91; Pokrovsky, *History of Russia*, 305.

<sup>5</sup> Boss, *Newton and Russia*, 6. Also see Boss, “Russia’s First Newtonian,” 233–65.

<sup>6</sup> L. M. Khlebnikov, “Russkii Faust,” *Voprosy istorii* 12 (1965): 195.

<sup>7</sup> M. B. Chistiakov, ed., “Narodnoe predanie o Briuse,” *Russkaia Starina* 8 (1871): 167–70. Also see Khlebnikov, “Russkii Faust,” 197.

<sup>8</sup> See Khlebnikov, “Russkii Faust,” 195.



Fig. 3. Portrait of Jacob Bruce by an unknown artist.

the Great and beseeches Bruce to use his magical influence to restore the old order:

You can serve otherwise: by advising, suggesting and connecting with the Cabbalistic... We can use your secret influence on the minds and opinion of the people to our benefit... You are all powerful, not only on the earth but also in heaven.<sup>9</sup>

Evgenii Baranov devoted a section of his collection of Moscow legends to the popular oral tales surrounding the sorcery of Jacob Bruce that had survived into the 1920s among workers in Soviet Russia. A certain painter-decorator named Vasili, for example, narrated to Baranov in a tearoom in the Arbat district of Moscow in March 1923 the legend of how Bruce had engendered a housemaid from flowers:

Bruce lived in the Sukharev Tower. Only jars stood there with various compositions and a telescope, but the main workshop of his was underground – it was there that he worked through the night. He was a master at everything. One time he took there and made a housemaid from flowers. She was a genuine girl: she cleaned the bedroom, served coffee, only she could not speak.<sup>10</sup>

This tale bears a striking resemblance to a popular legend about the medieval ecclesiast and alchemist Albertus Magnus, in which he reputedly created an android in his secret workshop.<sup>11</sup> A further legend, narrated by an old worker in 1924 tells of Bruce's magical power over the elements:

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<sup>9</sup> I. I. Lazhechnikov, *Basurman. Koldun na sukharevoi bashne. Ocherki-vospominaniia* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1989), 382–84. Whilst this letter is the invention of Lazhechnikov, a genuine letter to Osterman, dated January 14, 1741, by a certain Baron de Chevremont, reveals a decidedly esoteric, or more specifically, alchemical subject matter. It reads: "The secret radically cures all illnesses, preserves and maintains a constant and vigorous health until death, which is unavoidable. I would like to justify... as witnessed by the court, the reality of this marvellous secret of the Universal Medicine through the curing of all illnesses reputed to be incurable, and the transmutation of 20 kilos of lead into gold." Cited from, Wilhelm Michael von Richter, *Geschichte der Medicin in Russland* 3 (Moscow, 1817), 405. Although Bruce was dead by this point, this letter does reveal a continued interest in alchemical feats by a man – in the guise of Count Osterman – closely tied to him and a senior servitor at the Russian court. The memoirs of Petr Vladimirovich Dolgoroukov, first published in 1867, also refer to popular legends suggesting that Bruce was a sorcerer. See Prince Pierre Dolgoroukov, *Mémoires du Prince Pierre Dolgoroukov*, vol. 1 (Geneva: Cherbuliez, H. Georg, 1867), 178.

<sup>10</sup> Evgenii Zakharovich Baranov, *Legendy o grafe Briuse* (Moscow: Biblioteka zhurnala shchelkovo, 2003), 9.

<sup>11</sup> For references to Albertus Magnus's supposed creation of an android, see Ephraim Chambers, *Cyclopaedia: or, an universal dictionary of arts and sciences* 1 (London, 1728), 87; "Albertus Magnus and His Automaton," *The New York Times*, April 29, 1883.



And yet another things happened: in the middle of summer, during the heat of the day, it rained and thunder crashed... Here Bruce went out of his tower... and threw about some concoction to the left and right. And here... was thrown snow!... The whole of Moscow in snow! A regular winter: snow on the roofs, snow on the ground, snow in the trees... and thunder clapped. Well, it is known that the people were alarmed and frightened... They ran out into the street, and saw Bruce standing on the tower and laughing loudly. Well, here the people understood that this was his work and noticeably swore at him because snow was harmful to their vegetables.<sup>12</sup>

As another legend remarks, Bruce's interest in the elements was based on the desire "to comprehend everything in the world: what was on the earth, what was underground," in order to "find out the wisdom of nature."<sup>13</sup> In addition to his power to create housemaids and to control the elements, Bruce was also credited with enormous technical and scientific knowledge in many legends. Indeed, one legend accords the invention of the aeroplane, telephones and telegraphs to plans and blueprints made by Bruce, which were taken to Germany after his death.<sup>14</sup>

The plentiful legends concerning the magical feats of Jacob Bruce provide a rich series of fantastical tales. They have succeeded, however, in attaching an air of notoriety to the name of Bruce, which has led to a scarcity of serious scholarship intent on studying the man behind the legends. While dubious methods of inquiry are still being employed in Russia, such as a purported formula of Bruce's soul based on his astrological chart,<sup>15</sup> this long history of neglect appears to be drawing to a close, with a noticeable fresh upsurge in interest among Russian scholars in the pivotal role played by Bruce in Petrine Russia. A. N. Filimon, for example, has recently written a full-length biography in an attempt to rectify this imbalance and to provide a more rounded appraisal of the achievements and character of Bruce.<sup>16</sup> This is unquestionably the most concerted study

<sup>12</sup> Baranov, *Legendy*, 14.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>15</sup> See E. Nekrasova, "Formula dushi Ia. V. Briusa," *Shchyolkovo 2* (2004): 2–7. For contemporary interest in Bruce as "sorcerer" in the Russian press, see Konstantin Kudriashov, "Brius pochti vsemogushchii," *Argumenty i fakty*, 16 November, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> See A. N. Filimon, *Iakov Brius* (Moscow: Chistye Vody, 2003); Kiriukhin, *kudesnik Brius*. This latter text provides an interesting account, but relies extensively on fictionalized episodes and is less grounded in scholarly research. For an English review of these two publications, see W. F. Ryan, review of *Iakov Brius*, by A. N. Filimon and *Tot samyi kudesnik Brius*, by Aleksandr Kiriukhin, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6:1 (2005): 217–21. For a relatively well-balanced online article, see I. Gracheva, "Iakov

to date seeking to find a synthesis between Bruce the soldier, Bruce the astronomer, Bruce the Newtonian and Bruce the ‘sorcerer.’ Extensive biographical material regarding his official positions is combined with a discussion of his scientific pursuits and a pioneering section on Bruce’s occult and mystical interests, as reflected in his library collection. Filimon’s work is also generously interspersed with lengthy extracts of the popular legends recorded by Baranov.

A weakness in Filimon’s work, however, is his discussion of the relationship between Bruce and Freemasonry. The various Russian legends linking Bruce with Freemasonry are cited, but merely as proof of a fantastical distortion of historical reality. An article written in 1997 by the Russian President of Independent Astrologers, K. Dilanian, is also cited as proof of the “threatening scale” of a modern movement intent on branding Bruce a Freemason.<sup>17</sup> It is true that Dilanian’s article is of a speculative bent but in linking Bruce with the Knights Templar tradition the Russian astrologer opens up an interesting, if tenuous, line of thought.

Thus, despite Filimon’s vehement opposition to the notion of linking Bruce with Freemasonry and his apparent belief that this is part of a wider Masonic plot, I will argue that Bruce’s scientific interests and philosophical and religious worldview was similar to the ideals and philosophy of early Scottish Freemasonry. Thus, in light of the revisionist history carried out by David Stevenson, one can draw Bruce into a world in which a myriad of esoteric ideas based on Christianity, utopianism, a profound veneration of the divine geometry of the universe and a faith in experimental science came together in the complex and secretive world of Scottish Freemasonry.<sup>18</sup> Characteristic of this movement was a fascination with Solomonic myths and architecture – most notably the Temple in Jerusalem – Hebraism and an immersion in a heraldic worldview. It was also intrinsically linked with scientific experimentation based on Hermetic and Christian notions of renewal and transformation, the most notorious expression of which was undoubtedly the continued passion for alchemy. It should also be noted that an important factor in the spread of the

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Brius. Real’nost i legendy,” *Nauka i zhizn’* 3 (1998), accessed February 15, 2011, <http://www.nkj.ru/archive/articles/10415/10> Bruce was also the subject of a conference, entitled “‘We were’: Jacob Bruce and his Epoch,” held between 12–14 May, 2004 at the Artillery Museum in St. Petersburg.

<sup>17</sup> Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 281. See K. Dilanian, “Tainaia missiia Iakova Briusa,” *Nauka i religii* 1 (1997): 20–3.

<sup>18</sup> See Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry*.



esoterically minded Scottish Rite form of Freemasonry in the eighteenth century was the establishment of Jacobite communities on the continent after the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688. The continued presence of many Jacobite mercenary soldiers on the continent also helped to promote the ideals of mystical Freemasonry. It should be noted here that Bruce's father – William Bruce (d. 1680) – had been a mercenary soldier in Moscow. What is more, Bruce's mentor in the Foreign Quarter – Patrick Gordon – was not only a staunch Jacobite but also had links with Scottish Freemasons. Thus, despite being raised in Moscow, Bruce's world had been opened to Jacobite influence at a young age.

With this in mind, it is possible to reassess Bruce's family origins, career and role in Petrine Russia. Freemasonry provides a relevant contextual backdrop serving to enlighten and explain the rationale behind Jacob Bruce's phenomenal intellectual and practical knowledge, esoteric interests and loyal service to the Russian tsar. Thus, whilst there is no evidence to suggest that Bruce was a Freemason, it is productive to assess his intellectual and philosophical interests within the context of a similar cultural milieu in which Freemasonry flourished.

### *Scottish Jacobite Roots*

Jacob Bruce was a staunch Jacobite and incredibly proud of his ancestry, being well aware of the esteemed place the House of Bruce occupied in the history of the Scottish nation. His father, William Bruce, left the British Isles in 1647 and in the same year was enlisted into Russian service by the Russian Ambassador in Amsterdam, I. D. Miloslavskii.<sup>19</sup> He entered the Russian army with the position of Lieutenant and served for over thirty years reaching the rank of Major General by the time of his death in 1680. Not much else is known about William Bruce, apart from the fact that at some point he married and had three children: a daughter Elizabeth and two sons, Robert (born 1668) and Jacob, born a year later.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Dmitry Fedosov, "The First Russian Bruces," in Grant G. Simpson, ed., *The Scottish Soldier Abroad 1247–1967* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1992), 56.

<sup>20</sup> Little is known about Bruce's mother. A letter written by Bruce to Andrei Inglis in 1705 indicates that she may have re-married his brother, Iurii Inglis. See Khmyrov, "Glavnye nachal'niki russkoi artillerii," 96. Robert Bruce (1668–1720) was known as Roman Brius in Russia. Though he did not achieve the same degree of success and fame as his younger brother, Robert Bruce played a significant role in Petrine Russia. He was Chief Commander, or General-Mayor of St. Petersburg from 1704 until his death in 1720. In 1704, he commanded the Russian forces in St. Petersburg against an attack by the Swedes. In 1710,

Jacob Bruce was only eleven when his father died, depriving him of a direct source on his family roots in Scotland. Fuelled perhaps by an unwanted sense of detachment from the land of his father, Bruce endeavoured to educate himself in the history, traditions and architecture of Scotland in his adult years. He possessed a sizeable number of books in his library on this subject.<sup>21</sup> Bruce also sought to maintain links with as many contemporary members of the far-flung Bruce family as possible. In a letter to his brother, for example, dated October 12, 1708 Bruce inquires about the origins of a certain Andrei, or Henry Bruce:

Could you please inform me about him: is he from Sweden or did he leave Scottish soil to serve? If he is from Scottish soil then it would do no harm ... to inquire more specifically: from which house does he derive? And about this, please describe to me.<sup>22</sup>

The soldier, Peter Henry Bruce, also notes in his memoirs that in the winter of 1710/11 he “received an invitation from general Bruce, of the ordnance, at Moscow, to enter into the service of the czar.”<sup>23</sup> During the Great Northern War with Sweden he interceded on behalf of Swedish officers with the name of Bruce or Hamilton and he invited Bruces from as far a field as Clackmannan and Westphalia to Russia.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, Henry Bruce, the nephew of the Laird of Clackmannan, along with two James Bruces, came to Russia in 1720.<sup>25</sup> As Rebecca Wills has noted, all these Bruces were Jacobites.<sup>26</sup>

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he also commanded a unit of troops at the siege of Vyborg. Robert Bruce also gathered stonemasons and carpenters from the Novgorod region in order to construct St. Petersburg. For more information on Robert Bruce, see Dolgoroukow, *Mémoires*, 178–9; *Russkii biograficheskii slovar* 3 (St. Petersburg, 1908), 413–4; Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 341–345.

<sup>21</sup> They included George Buchanan's *The History of Scotland* (1690) and George Mackenzie's *The Institutions of the Law of Scotland* (1684). Bruce also had an edition of *The Life and Acts of the Most Valiant Champion Sr. William Wallace* (1640). Bruce could familiarise himself with contemporary and historic Scottish architecture by consulting John Slezer's *Theatrum Scotiae* (1693). Bruce also possessed a work by Alexander Gordon entitled *Itinerarium Septentrionale*. Lastly, W. Udall's *The Historie of the Life and Death of Mary Stuart, Queene of Scotland* (1636) could be found in his collection. See Savel'eva, *Biblioteka*, 60, No. 140; 167, No. 443; 46, 100; 263–64, No. 650; 113–14, No. 300 and 293, No. 732 respectively.

<sup>22</sup> Khmyrov, “Glavnye nachal'niki russkoi artillerii,” 160.

<sup>23</sup> Bruce, *Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce*, 40.

<sup>24</sup> Dmitry Fedosov, “Scotland and Russia: A Boundless Bond,” in Cathryn Brennan and Murray Frame, eds., *Russia and the Wider World in Historical Perspective* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), 72.

<sup>25</sup> Rebecca Wills, *The Jacobites and Russia 1715–1750* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2002), 54.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

In anticipation of the ennoblement of Bruce in 1721, confirmation of his purported aristocratic genealogy was sought in Scotland as a way of inscribing him into the newly reorganized structure of the Petrine *shliakhtha* (nobility). Preserved in the Russian archives is a diploma, dated May 19, 1720, signed by the leading authority on Scottish heraldry, Sir Alexander Erskine, the Second Bart of Cambo and the Lyon King of Arms, which provides proof of Bruce's noble lineage.<sup>27</sup> It is fascinating to note that this Erskine was a distant relative of Robert Erskine, illustrating the tight-knit nature of Peter the Great's pool of Scottish officials. The certificate states that Jacob Bruce was a direct descendant of the House of Clackmannan and that the Eighth Laird of Clackmannan, Robert Bruce, was Jacob's Great-Great-Grandfather.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the first Laird of Clackmannan, Edward Thomas Bruce, was the illegitimate nephew of the renowned Robert the Bruce.<sup>29</sup> Thus, Jacob Bruce could genuinely claim to have royal Scottish blood in his veins and could proudly draw on his distant predecessors' association with the Knights Templar. As well as Erskine's signature, the genealogical diploma was witnessed by three of the most senior members of the Bruce family in Scotland. The first witness was Thomas Bruce, the 7th Earl of Kincardine. The second and third witnesses were the brothers, John and Henry Bruce. John was the 12th Laird of Clackmannan and Henry would later become the 13th Laird of Clackmannan.

An important inclusion in this genealogy was a description of the family coat of arms and motto, which Jacob Bruce was entitled to adopt. Bruce enthusiastically exercised his right to the family coat of arms and quickly devised his own version, utilizing a lion and a unicorn and the cross of St. Andrew, as well as the Latin motto 'Fuimus' (we have been). In Figure 4 can be seen Bruce's personal bookplate, based on his coat of arms with all its symbols of Scottish heraldry.

The use of a lion and a unicorn is redolent of the Royal coat-of-arms introduced by James I (VI) in 1603, when he united the Scottish and English thrones, thereby linking Bruce to the Stuart monarchy. The motto

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<sup>27</sup> See f.154, Op. 2, D.162. L.19, Rossiiskii gosudarstvennii arkhiv drevnikh aktov (hereafter RGADA), Moscow. Alexander Erskine's father, Sir Charles Erskine, First Bart of Cambo and also a Lyon King of Arms, collaborated with the noted Freemason Elias Ashmole and the Earl of Lauderdale on a history of the Order of the Thistle.

<sup>28</sup> V. V. Sindeev, "Rodoslovnaia Ia. V. Briusa," *Istoricheskii arkhiv* 5–6 (1996): 216. This article includes both Russian and Latin versions of the genealogical diploma of Jacob Bruce. Jacob's Great-Grandfather, James Bruce, was the fourth son of the 8th Laird of Clackmannan. Bruce's Grandfather was also called Robert Bruce.

<sup>29</sup> Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 10.



Fig. 4. Jacob Bruce's personal bookplate in his copy of Thomas Burnet's *Theoria Sacra Telluris*.

'fuimus' places Bruce more specifically into the history of one of the most esteemed families in Scottish history. Lastly, the use of the cross of St. Andrew potently combines Bruce's sense of pride at his Scottish ancestry and his high standing among the Petrine inner circle, as he was one of a select few who had been made a Knight of the Order of St. Andrew for his military exploits at the Battle of Poltava in 1709.

*Mathematics, Astronomy and Astrology: Early Training in the Foreign Quarter in Moscow and in London in 1698*

On December 18, 1697 Bruce joined Peter the Great and his Embassy in Amsterdam and on January 6, 1698 he was one of sixteen volunteers who

set sail with the tsar for England. They arrived in London on January 11, 1698 at a time when the city was blessed with some of the finest astronomers and mathematicians to be found anywhere in the world. The next nine months were to be a period of extraordinary discovery and learning for Bruce who, along with the tsar, threw himself into the intoxicating scientific atmosphere.

Little concrete information is known concerning Bruce's education prior to arriving in England, which he received amidst the Foreign Quarter in Moscow. However, the close proximity of specialist foreign craftsmen, medics, soldiers, merchants, artists, jewellers and the eclectic mix of religious outlooks, would have enabled Bruce to enjoy a relatively wide-ranging educational upbringing. Indeed, V. A. Kovrigina has noted that Bruce was one of an elite group of young foreign residents in Moscow who were distinguished by their broader worldview and interests, but who were also fluent in Russian.<sup>30</sup>

It would seem Bruce was earmarked for a military career from a young age, with Patrick Gordon being the natural choice of a mentor after the death of William Bruce in 1680. It is recorded, for example, that both Jacob and Roman Bruce were included among Peter the Great's *poteshnyi polk* (play regiment) in 1683.<sup>31</sup> By 1687 Bruce was already a *praporshchik* (ensign) in the Russian army and participated in the first Crimean campaign.<sup>32</sup> A military apprenticeship, under the supervision of Gordon, would have entailed a firm mathematical grounding. Bruce's skill in this field of expertise is testified by the fact that during the siege of Azov in 1696 he produced the first map of the land between Moscow and Asia Minor, which was subsequently printed in Amsterdam.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, on the eve of the tsar's Grand Embassy to Western Europe, Bruce was already showing signs of his scientific prowess. However, Peter the Great was also well aware of the comparative shortcomings of Russia's brightest minds and was keen to send them abroad to learn from the greatest intellects of the time in Europe. Bruce was arguably the greatest of all the tsar's talents; he was certainly entrusted with one of the most

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<sup>30</sup> V. A. Kovrigina, "Nemetskaia sloboda v Moskve kontsa XVII – nachala XVIII veka," *Voprosy istorii* 6 (1997): 148.

<sup>31</sup> As a former member of the *poteshnyi polk*, Bruce went to the aid of Peter the Great at the Trinity Monastery outside Moscow in 1689, when the young monarch was threatened by the Strel'tsy revolt. See Khmyrov, "Glavnye nachal'niki russkoi artillerii," 83.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

crucial foreign missions. This was to perfect his knowledge of mathematics and astronomy, which were skills crucial to the long-term development of Russia.

Peter the Great was resident in London and Deptford for a total of 105 days and only fifty-two of these are recorded in the semi-official *Journal*, which gives a brief outline of the tsar's itinerary.<sup>34</sup> From this record, one sees that the tsar definitely paid two visits to the Astronomer Royal, John Flamsteed, at The Royal Observatory in Greenwich on February 6 and March 9.<sup>35</sup> We know that Bruce accompanied Peter the Great on these visits to the Observatory by Flamsteed's own record, which states that in the tsar's company was "Bruceus Parentibus Scotis Moscuæ Natus."<sup>36</sup>

It is also known that after the tsar's departure in April 1698 Bruce maintained a close friendship with Flamsteed, who referred to Bruce as "the Collonel" in correspondence.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, it seems likely that Flamsteed played some part in organizing Bruce's six-month period of mathematical and astronomical studies in London. This supposition is based on the fact that the tsar is known to have dined with a certain mathematical teacher by the name of 'Ivan Kolsun,' or John Colson (fl. 1671–1709), on February 7, that is, the day after visiting Flamsteed in Greenwich.<sup>38</sup> Flamsteed and Colson were acquaintances and are known to have co-operated on simultaneous astronomical observations from Greenwich and Wapping respectively of a lunar eclipse on December 22, 1675 and a solar eclipse on June 1, 1676, which they reported to the Royal Society.<sup>39</sup> Flamsteed, Edmond Halley (1656–1742) and Colson also exchanged astronomical data

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<sup>34</sup> Anthony Cross, *Peter the Great Through British Eyes: Perceptions and Representations of the Tsar Since 1698* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 18. For a Russian edition of this journal, see *Zhurnal ili podennaia zapiska, blazennia i vechnodostoinia pamiati gosudaria imperatora Petra Velikago c 1698 goda* 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1770–72). For an English edition of the journal covering the tsar's residence in England, see Simon Dixon, ed., *Britain and Russia in the Age of Peter the Great: Historical Documents* (London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 1998).

<sup>35</sup> A. I. Andreev, ed., *Petr Velikii* (Moscow-Leningrad: Nauka, 1947), 71.

<sup>36</sup> See *Observing Book of the Mural Arc*, MS 6 and MS. 16, RGO, London. See also Boss, *Newton and Russia*, 19.

<sup>37</sup> Boss, *Newton and Russia*, 20.

<sup>38</sup> Dixon, *Britain and Russia*, 22. John Colson the Elder should not be confused with his relative Reverend John Colson F.R.S (1680–1760). The younger Colson lived with his older relative at his home in Prescot Street in Goodman's Fields. Boss mistakenly writes that it is probable the younger Colson taught Bruce. At the time, however, Colson was only 17 or 18 and was still studying at Oxford.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas Birch, *The History of the Royal Society of London for Improving of Natural Knowledge* 3 (London, 1760), 318; John Lowthorp, ed., *The Philosophical Transactions and Collections to the end of the year 1700* 1 (London, 1722), 318.



concerning a comet visible in the skies in the winter of 1680–1681.<sup>40</sup> Thus, it seems probable that Flamsteed personally recommended Colson to be Bruce's tutor.

Prior to Peter the Great's departure, on April 17, 1698, Colson was indeed paid 48 guineas for "training Jacob Bruce over a period of six months, as arranged by contract, including board and lodging."<sup>41</sup> At the time John Colson had gained a reputation as one of the finest mathematical and astronomical teachers in the land, having established a boarding school in Marsh Yard, near the Hermitage Stairs in Wapping. In 1693 he moved this school to Prescot Street in Goodman's Fields and soon received a ringing endorsement in the second edition of John Newton's *The English Academy* (1693):

There are few School-Masters that can Teach these things (arithmetic, geometry and astronomy-RC). But yet amongst them, the well Accomplished Mr, *John Colson*, now living in *Goodmans-Fields*. . . Report hath rendered him to the World a worthy Master and Teacher of that Science. And there are not many Tutors in either of our Universities that do.<sup>42</sup>

Colson did not publish any mathematical treatises in his own name, but did edit, revise and enlarge the popular work by Captain Samuel Sturmy (1633–1669), entitled *The Mariners Magazine*, first published in 1669.

In the fourth edition, published in 1700, Colson wrote a letter to his readers, explaining that he had only "endeavoured to render the Mathematical Arts contained herein as familiar as I could" and wrote that he had "added the Doctrine of the Spherical Triangles, also somewhat in the

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<sup>40</sup> See John Flamsteed, *The Correspondence of John Flamsteed: First Astronomer Royal*, ed. Eric G. Forbes, Lesley Murdin and Frances Willmoth 1 (Bristol: Institute of Physics Publishing, 1995), 762. On February 17, 1681 Flamsteed wrote to Halley and mentioned that "I did your Commands and presented your French observations of the Comet to Sir Christopher Wren who is now president of the Society I heare of others from Strasburge Dantzick and other places which you sent to Mr Colson. I seldom see him . . . I sent Mr Colson mine but have not seene him since."

<sup>41</sup> M. M. Bogoslovskii, *Petr I. Materialy dlia biografii* 2 (Moscow: Nauka, 1941), 378; Boss, *Newton and Russia*, 29. This was a considerable sum for the time. As Boss remarks, this almost matched the annual salary Flamsteed received for his duties as Astronomer Royal at Greenwich. See Boss, *Newton and Russia*, 31.

<sup>42</sup> John Newton, *The English Academy, or, a Brief Introduction to the Seven Liberal Arts*, 2nd ed. (London, 1693), 4–5. John Newton (1622–1678) studied at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford. Taught mathematics and drew up a scheme for a mathematical school at Ross in Hertfordshire. See E. G. R. Taylor, *The Mathematical Practitioners of Tudor & Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 225.



Fig. 5. Frontispiece to the second edition of Samuel Sturmy's *The Mariners Magazine* (1679), edited by John Colson.



Astronomical part, and more in the Dialling.”<sup>43</sup> An advertisement was also attached underneath this letter in which Colson promoted his Mathematical School:

In Prescott-Street, in Goodmans-Fields, are taught these Mathematical Sciences, (viz.) Arithmetick, Algebra, Trigonometry, Navigation, Astronomy, Dialling, Surveying, Gauging, Fortification, and Gunnery, the Use of the Globes, and other Mathematical Instruments, Projection of the Sphere, and other parts of the Mathematicks. And Youth Boarded.<sup>44</sup>

It is not known whether Bruce had any personal contact with contemporary English astrologers whilst he was boarding with John Colson in Goodman’s Fields. Bruce did own a 1697 edition of *The Mariners New Kalendar*, a practical work on navigation, by the almanac-maker Nathaniel Colson (fl. 1674), who was probably a relative of his host.<sup>45</sup> Yet, too little is known about Colson to know whether he was closely acquainted with London’s many astrologers. However, it is known that John Flamsteed had friendly relations with many astrologers - both locally and on the Continent. It is clear from a letter from Flamsteed to Colson, dated October 10, 1698, that Bruce enjoyed regular contact with the Astronomer Royal. On this day Flamsteed wrote: “I Shall not have leasure to See the Collonel (i.e. Bruce-rc) at your house I Shall be at Garways betwixt one and two If you come down hither in the mean time let it not be on Wednesday . . . at any other you Shall be welcome to.”<sup>46</sup>

Thus, in light of the close contact between Bruce and Flamsteed, it is intriguing to note that England’s first Astronomer Royal was not hostile to all astrological practices and enjoyed relatively close contact with a number of well-known astrologers. Indeed, Michael Hunter has charted how Flamsteed’s early career was framed in an astrological context.<sup>47</sup> In 1664,

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<sup>43</sup> Samuel Sturmy, *The Mariners Magazine, stor’d with these Mathematical Arts* (London, 1700), 4. Bruce owned the third edition of Sturmy’s *The Mariners Magazine*, edited by Colson. See Savel’eva, *Biblioteka*, 281, No. 698.

<sup>44</sup> Sturmy, *Mariners Magazine*, 4.

<sup>45</sup> Savel’eva, *Biblioteka*, 75, No. 187. The 1706 edition of *The Mariners New Kalendar* contains a section entitled *Sailing by Mercator’s Chart* by John Colson. Interestingly, a certain Lancelot Colson (fl. 1668–87), who was a well known physician, astrologer and almanac-maker practised at Great Tower Hill, near John Colson’s home in Wapping at the time. It is not known whether the pair were related. See Taylor, *Mathematical Practitioners*, 268.

<sup>46</sup> John Flamsteed, *The Correspondence of John Flamsteed: First Astronomer Royal*, ed. Eric G. Forbes, Lesley Murdin and Frances Willmoth 2, (Bristol: Institute of Physics Publishing, 1997), 699.

<sup>47</sup> See Michael Hunter, “Science and Astrology in Seventeenth-Century England: An Unpublished Polemic by John Flamsteed,” in Patrick Curry, ed., *Astrology, Science and Society. Historical Essays* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1987), 261–300.

for example, he befriended the astrologically minded George Linacre and William Litchford, because of their knowledge “of the fixed stars” and “of the erratic, and judgements on them.”<sup>48</sup>

In the following year Flamsteed wrote that “I also busied myself very much in calculating the nativities of several of my friends and acquaintance, which I have since corrected, and shall transcribe on a convenient paper.”<sup>49</sup> It is also interesting to note that Flamsteed recorded his precise age (nineteen years, six days and eleven hours) when he set out to Ireland to be cured by Valentine Greatrackes of an affliction of the joints that had rendered him weak since childhood. As Flamsteed notes, Mr. Greatrackes was renowned for curing patients “by the stroke of his hands, without the application of any medicine.”<sup>50</sup> What is more, Flamsteed directly links reports of these miraculous cures to the appearance of a comet in the skies.

In the summer of 1666 Flamsteed also “spent some part” of his “time in astrological studies,” although he adds that his “labours were rather astronomical.” Despite this qualification he goes on to write:

Amongst others, I spent some time on Mr. Linacre’s and another great person’s schemes; yet could I not anyways satisfy myself in the arcs of directions for the measuring of time . . . Yet I think Kepler’s measures most rational and best grounded: though, in the great person’s nativity which I directed, I used Naboyd’s measure, which is most in use amongst astrologers. In fine, I found astrology to give generally strong conjectural hints, not perfect declarations.<sup>51</sup>

Flamsteed’s partial acceptance of the value of astrological studies was maintained for at least the remainder of the century. Flamsteed certainly used his acquaintance with the astrologer John Stansby, a friend of Elias Ashmole, to gain acceptance in London scientific circles in 1669. Furthermore, Flamsteed’s knowledge of astrology was in clear evidence at the opening of the Royal Observatory in Greenwich Park on August 10, 1675. On this occasion he drew up an astrological nativity for the new Observatory (see Fig. 6 below).

A qualified acceptance of astrology is also in evidence in a letter he wrote to Richard Towneley on July 4, 1678, when he states: “You know I

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<sup>48</sup> John Flamsteed, *An Account of the Revd. John Flamsteed, The First Astronomer-Royal*, ed. Francis Baily (London, 1835), 11.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

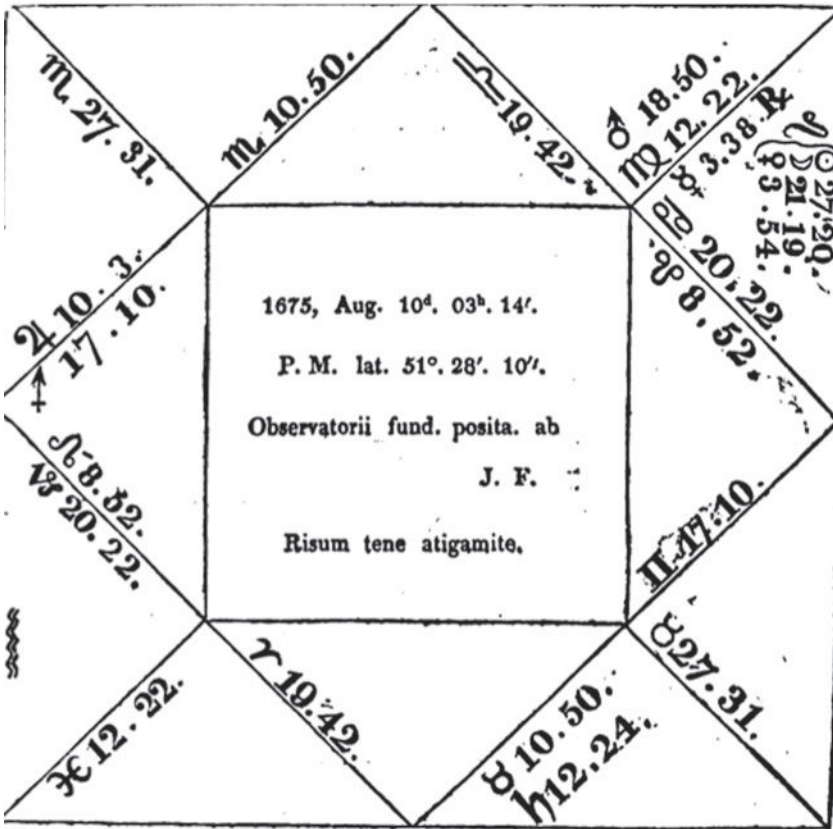


Fig. 6. John Flamsteed's "Scheme of the Heavens" drawn up at the foundation of the Royal Greenwich Observatory on August 10, 1675.

put no Confidence in Astrology. Yet dare I not wholly deny the influences of the stars since they are too sensibly imprest on."<sup>52</sup>

In the 1680s and 1690s Flamsteed is known to have helped John Wing and George Parker assemble their astrological almanacs.<sup>53</sup> What is more, Flamsteed was in correspondence with Johann Jacob Zimmermann (1644–1693), a chiliastic astrologer, and had a copy of his *Comet-Stern* (1682) in his library collection.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, it seems Flamsteed's close rela-

<sup>52</sup> Flamsteed, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, 640.

<sup>53</sup> Bearing in mind Flamsteed's friendship with Parker in the 1690s, it is significant that Bruce bought the 1698 edition of the latter's ephemeris.

<sup>54</sup> See Flamsteed, *Correspondence*, vol. 2, 41–4, 106, 113–5; Eric G. Forbes, "The Library of the Rev. John Flamsteed, F. R. S., First Astronomer Royal," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 28:1 (1973), 138.

tionship with a number of astrologers led some to believe the Astronomer-Royal was an astrologer himself. On August 1, 1683, for example, the highly respected John Evelyn noted in his diary that the “famous Astrologer from his Observatorie at Greenewich” had paid him a visit in Deptford.<sup>55</sup>

It is also fascinating to note a work attributed to Flamsteed, entitled *Flemstadts Most Strange and Wonderful Prophecy, foretelling what may be the Wonderful Effects and Continuance of this Present Frost and Great Snow*, which was published in London in 1695. This short treatise, which stretches to eight-pages, is heavily influenced by John Goad’s astrological studies of weather patterns that culminated in his *Astro-Meteorologia* of 1686.<sup>56</sup> In 1678 Flamsteed had commented favourably about Goad’s astro-meteorological observations, stating to Richard Towneley:

I cause my man to transcribe you the remainder of an Ephemeris of the weather for this moneth composed by Dr. Goad, whose conjectures I find come much nearer truth than any I have hitherto met with, they are derived from the aspects and positions of the planets, and establish his rules hee has made 30 yeares observations.<sup>57</sup>

Furthermore, Flamsteed adds that he is venturing to replicate Goad’s methods: “I cause my man to note dayly the accidents of weather with us and the station of my Baroscope and Thermometer.”<sup>58</sup>

In the 1695 treatise, the author praises the “incomparably ingenious and most Elaborate Student in the Changes of the Weather, the Learned Dr. Goad” for highlighting the influence of the moon on terrestrial affairs.<sup>59</sup> The remainder of the tract then highlights recent and historical occurrences of great frosts and snows entirely in the spirit of Goad’s method. Thus, whilst the work may well be spurious, it is also noticeable that the veneration of Goad’s astro-meteorological observations in the 1695 treatise is wholly in keeping with Flamsteed’s earlier estimation of his studies.

Whilst Flamsteed never fully embraced astrology, he did demonstrate long-standing sympathies towards the natural and reformed variety of the mathematical science, as practiced by the likes of Thomas Streete and

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<sup>55</sup> John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E. S. de Beer, 4 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1955), 333.

<sup>56</sup> On John Goad (1616–1689), see Patrick Curry, *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 67–72.

<sup>57</sup> Flamsteed, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, 640. In this light, Sir Jonas Moore’s testimony to the Royal Society in January 1679 that Flamsteed had examined some of Goad’s predictions and found them not to be true appears to be misleading. See Curry, *Power and Prophecy*, 71.

<sup>58</sup> Flamsteed, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, 640.

<sup>59</sup> John Flamsteed, *Flemstadts Most Strange and Wonderful Prophecy* (London, 1695), 3.

John Goad. He also freely mixed with many of London's most celebrated astrologers in the 1690s, such as George Parker. In light of this, it is easy to imagine how Bruce could have positively imbibed the spirit of what was still, according to Capp, the 'golden age' of English astrology.<sup>60</sup>

Indeed, the inclusion of many of the leading English astrologers of the second half of the seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth century is a distinctive feature of Bruce's astrological collection. Whilst Bruce's residence came at the tail end of this 'golden age,' which lasted from 1640–1700, he was, nonetheless, able to soak up an intellectual and popular culture in England that was still saturated with astrological notions.

The stock of contemporary astrological publications present in Bruce's library is testament to this fact. One is struck, for example, by the presence of William Lilly's *Catastrophe Mundi: or Merlin Rediviv'd* (1683). This posthumous text provides a survey of Lilly's prophecies, predictions and astrological 'hieroglyphicks.'<sup>61</sup> The enlarged 1671 edition of Richard Saunders's *Physiognomie and Chiromancie, Metoposcopie*, dedicated to Elias Ashmole, is another astrological work present in Bruce's library.<sup>62</sup> The book is replete with the complementary doctrines of the microcosm-macrocosm and sympathy and antipathy. Saunders claimed that the hands were an abridgment of the three worlds – elementary, celestial and intellectual – and contained "certain secrets of astrology and astronomy."<sup>63</sup> He also discusses how through the art of chiromancy it is possible to locate celestial signs in the hands that denote the day of our birth, our temperaments and the parent we most resemble.

The *Ephemeris of the Coelestial Motions* (1698) by the astrologer George Parker (1654–1743) was also in Bruce's library collection.<sup>64</sup> Parker has been described as the successor to the famed English astrologer John Gadbury (1627–1704) and indeed published and edited his last twenty ephemeris.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Bernard Capp, *Astrology and the Popular Press: English Almanacs 1500–1800* (London: Faber & Faber, 1979), 24.

<sup>61</sup> Savel'eva, *Biblioteka*, 161. No. 426.

<sup>62</sup> Savel'eva, *Biblioteka*, 247. No. 603. The full title is *Physiognomie, and Chiromancie, Metoposcopie, the Symmetrical Proportions and Signal Moles of the Body, Fully and accurately explained; with their natural-Predictive Significations both to Men and Women. Being Delightful and Profitable: with the subject of Dreams made plain: Whereunto is Added the Art of Memory.*

<sup>63</sup> Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. 8 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 463.

<sup>64</sup> Savel'eva, *Biblioteka*, 195. No. 519.

<sup>65</sup> Curry, *Power and Prophecy*, 76.

Furthermore, he was far from residing at the periphery of the scientific community of the day – even though he openly championed “the verity of the Astral Science” – enjoying a long-term association with Edmond Halley.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, Parker’s almanac for 1690 carried a commendation for its astronomical accuracy from Halley himself.<sup>67</sup>

It is also apparent from the *Materialy* catalogue that Bruce owned other key English astrological texts, such as *Kliuch k Astrologii*, which was printed in London in 1676. This is *Clavis Astrologiae Elimata: or a Key to the whole art of Astrology* (1676) by Henry Coley (1633–1695?). This is a sizeable work of over seven hundred pages, which seeks to provide a comprehensive account of all areas of astrology.<sup>68</sup> The nature of this work is epitomized in the following citation, which outlines a list of what will be good or ill advised to do during the hour of Saturn:

In the hour of Saturn take no Voyage to Sea, neither take any long Journey by Land; for crosses will surely at-tend and small success may be expected; take no Physick; entertain no Servant, for they will prove idle, careless Persons: Not good to put on a new Garment or cut your Hair; but this hour is good to buy or take Leases of Houses, or Lands; good to buy any kind of Grain or dig in the Earth or Plow; not good to borrow Money in this hour or to fall sick in for it threatens a long Disease; and sometimes terminates in death.<sup>69</sup>

Furthermore, at number 1320 in the *Materialy* catalogue is listed *Vvedenie v astrologiiu*, which was in English and printed in London in 1694. It would seem certain that this refers to a work by William Eland entitled, *A Tutor to Astrology. Or Astrology made easie. Being a plain Introduction to the Whole Art of Astrology* (1694). This work contains ephemeris for the years 1694, 1695 and 1696 and “all other necessary tables that belong to the art of astrology.” Eland’s text also contains a comprehensive account of the particular qualities of each sign of the zodiac with Cancer being described as follows: “Cancer is of the watry triplicity, cold and moist, flegmatick, nocturnal, Septenrional, moveable, fruitful and mute; it presents generally one of a short and low stature.”<sup>70</sup> Eland also lists a series of diseases linked to Cancer that include: “weak digestion, plurisie, tysick, cough, salt flegm,

<sup>66</sup> George Parker, *An Ephemeris of the Coelestial Motions and Aspects* (London, 1697), i.

<sup>67</sup> Curry, *Power and Prophecy*, 77.

<sup>68</sup> *Materialy*, vol. 5, No. 811, 195.

<sup>69</sup> Henry Coley, *Clavis Astrologiae Elimata; or a Key to the whole art of Astrology* (London, 1676), 271.

<sup>70</sup> William Eland, *A Tutor to Astrology, or Astrology made easie. Being an Introduction to the Whole Art of Astrology* (London, 1694), 5.

canker, and imperfections all over the body.”<sup>71</sup> As we will see shortly, such prognostications were very close in spirit to those that emerged in Russia under Bruce’s direct supervision.

*Bruce Returns to Russia*

The mathematical and astronomical training Bruce received in London, under the principal tutelage of John Colson, was soon put to good use on his return to Moscow in the early part of 1699. On March 22, 1699, for example, Bruce enthusiastically wrote from Moscow to Peter the Great in Voronezh regarding a telescope he would bring to the tsar in order to observe an eclipse:

I will bring, when you wish (something) to perceive the darkening of the sun, then if you wish to select a government office, in which it would be possible to cover all the windows in order that there is no light in the room.<sup>72</sup>

Furthermore, on June 29, 1699 Bruce wrote to Peter concerning a navigational device he had sent, which would enable him to gauge latitude from the polar stars and whether or not it had proved of use:

I sent to you, hoping, that it would be pleasing to you, my kind Sire, such a thing . . . which is necessary to a person who in journeys resides, how to find the poles of the globe (or the elevations of the poles), without any deductions and not knowing the declensions of the sun and not having instruments, except for a compass and a plumline; And how to find this, I have made a sketch and description, which will allow you to see it on paper . . . I will be sad, if this is not quite intelligible and understandable to you, sir.<sup>73</sup>

It was also in 1699 that the tsar instructed Bruce to organize a Mathematical and Navigational School in Moscow, a central institution in the development of an indigenous educated elite class. It is highly likely that Colson’s mathematical and navigational school in London acted as something of a model for the new Russian school. This notion is strengthened by the fact that Bruce was meant to transmit a letter addressed to Peter the Great from Colson in regard to the development of the tsar’s ‘state science.’<sup>74</sup> However, Bruce confessed in the letter of June 29, 1699 that

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Khmyrov, “Glavnye nachal’niki russkoi artillerii,” 88.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>74</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 292.



“I have not delivered the letter to you, my Lord... In truth, my Lord, I forgot.”<sup>75</sup>

Bruce was to be its director and the head teacher of this school was to be Henry Farquharson (c.1675–1739), the Liddel Mathematical Tutor from Marischal College in Aberdeen. This was an extremely intriguing choice. Farquharson had been enlisted into Russian service after the tsar held a personal audience with the Scot whilst in England in either late March or early April 1698.<sup>76</sup> The tsar and Bruce were no doubt impressed by Farquharson’s mathematical prowess, but they would have also been attracted by the fact that the young Scot had been supervised by Professor George Liddel. Under the mentorship of Liddel, Farquharson excelled in mathematics, geometry, astronomy, fortification, navigation and gunnery.<sup>77</sup> Liddel, however, was not only known for his academic learning; he was also a prominent Jacobite. Indeed, he was one of seventeen Aberdonians imprisoned in the dungeons of Dunnottar Castle, just south of Aberdeen, in 1689 for his loyalty to the Stuart cause. Furthermore, Liddel was also a Mason of the Aberdeen Lodge.<sup>78</sup> Liddel’s espousal of mathematics, astronomy and geometry as key disciplines of learning tallied with the common Masonic belief that God had founded the universe on mathematical principles. Therefore, an understanding of these principles was a fundamental key to unlocking the secrets of God’s creation. Farquharson certainly shared Liddel’s mathematical learning and Jacobite sympathies and, as his protégé, it is possible that he also embraced his master’s enthusiasm for Freemasonry and a mystical belief in the powers of mathematics and geometry.

The official founding of this school was announced by a royal *ukaz* (decree) made by Peter the Great on January 14, 1701, although the Russian

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Dmitry Fedosov, “A Scottish Mathematician in Russia: Henry Farquharson (c. 1675–1739),” in Paul Dukes, ed., *The Universities of Aberdeen and Europe: The First Three Centuries* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1995), 104. The school also had two other teachers enlisted whilst the tsar and Bruce were in England. These were Stephen Gwyn and Richard Grice, who were students at The Royal Mathematical School of Christ’s Hospital in London. This school had been founded in 1673 under the sponsorship of Charles II and can be considered the first “modern” school of mathematics and navigation. For more information on these individuals, see Nicholas Hans, “The Moscow School of Navigation and Mathematics (1701),” *Slavonic and East European Review* 29:73 (1951): 532–6.

<sup>77</sup> Fedosov, “A Scottish Mathematician,” 103.

<sup>78</sup> David Stevenson, *The First Freemasons: Scotland’s Early Lodges and their Members* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), 122, 146. Significantly, George Gordon, the Master of Arithmetick at Marischal College, also joined the Aberdeen Lodge. Thus, a Masonic tradition existed among mathematic tutors at the college.



scholar Dmitry Fedosov has recently demonstrated that lectures were actually given by Farquharson from as early as August 19, 1699. He cites I. Golikov, one of the first historians of Peter's reign, who affirms that Farquharson "opened the said school during the departure of His Majesty to Voronezh," which took place on August 19.<sup>79</sup>

After the official foundation of the School in 1701, the Sukharev Tower was chosen as the most suitable site in Moscow. It had been built between 1692 and 1695 on one of the highest spots in the city and stood some sixty-four metres tall. In January 1700 Bruce also constructed an astronomical observatory on one of the highest floors of the tower, equipped with a telescope, measuring instruments such as sectors and squares for calculating the time according to the Great and Little Bears and a large celestial globe with a diameter of 2.13 metres.<sup>80</sup> This building was also allegedly the venue for the 'Neptune Society' and not only became an astronomical base for Bruce but also Farquharson's home for fifteen years.

The initial curriculum of the school consisted of arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, navigation, astronomy, geography and surveying. One of the subjects taught by Farquharson was astronomy and on the order of the tsar he observed and noted all the eclipses visible in Russia.<sup>81</sup> Leontii Magnitskii (1669–1739), a mathematician trained at the Moscow Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy, taught arithmetic, geometry and trigonometry.<sup>82</sup> In 1703, Magnitskii published *Arifmetika*, which became the principal text used at the school.<sup>83</sup> The text of *Arifmetika* is wholly practical but it does contain an intriguing illustration by M. P. Pnevskii (?-1718), entitled *Allegoriia Matematiki*, which emphasizes how the study of arithmetic and the mathematical sciences in general, provide a key to divine laws.<sup>84</sup>

In the centre of the illustration can be seen *Wisdom* sitting on a throne. In her hands, she is holding a key and a triangular measuring device.

<sup>79</sup> Fedosov, "A Scottish Mathematician," 105.

<sup>80</sup> Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 219.

<sup>81</sup> John Perry, *The State of Russia under the Present Czar* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1967), 211.

<sup>82</sup> For more on Magnitskii see D. D. Galanin, *Leontii Fillipovich Magnitskii i ego arifmetika* (Moscow, 1914).

<sup>83</sup> In 1703 Farquharson also published the first Russian edition of John Napier's *Tables, Logarithms, Sines, Tangents and Secants* (1616).

<sup>84</sup> Pnevskii is known to have produced wooden engravings at the Moscow typographers between 1693–1718. Among his works were twenty-five illustrations for N. G. Krenovskii's *Zlatoustogo besedy i apokalipsis Andreia Kesariuskogo* (1712). For more information on Pnevskii, see M. Alekseeva, *Graviura petrovskogo vremeni* (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1990), 64.

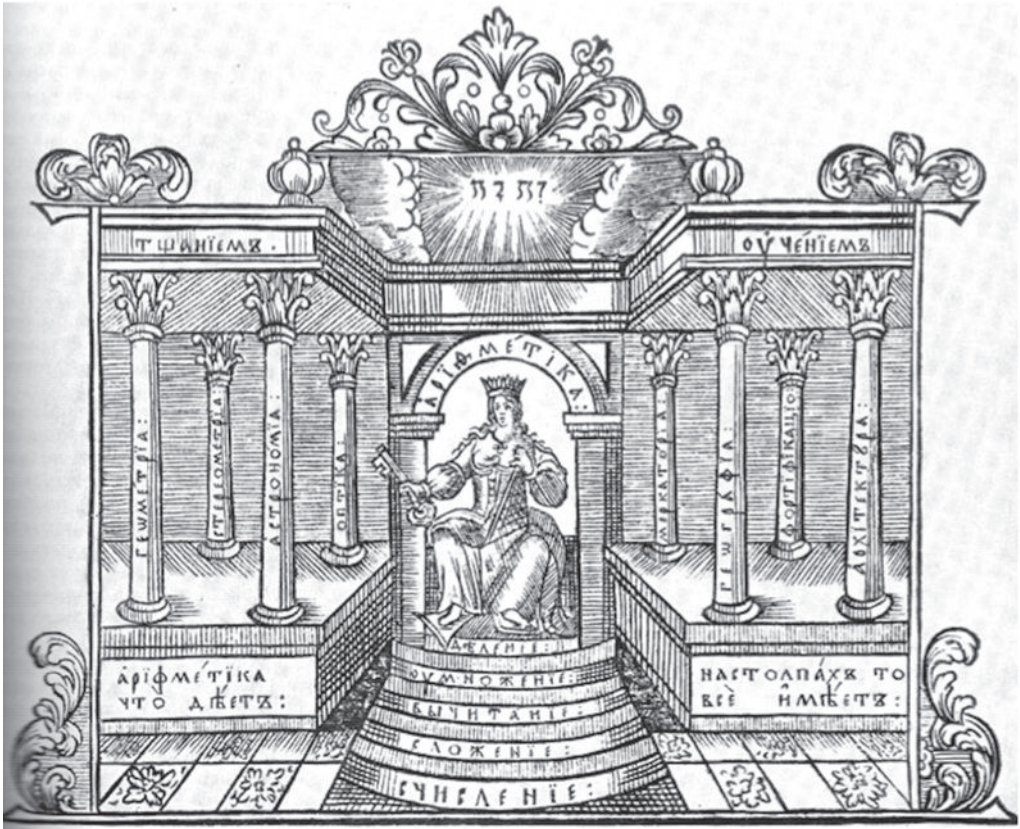


Fig. 7. A photograph of a plate from an original 1703 edition of *Arifmetika*. The engraving *Allegoriia Matematiki* is by M. P. Pnevskii.

Directly above her head is an arch with the word *arifmetika* and above this arch is a radiant sun with the *Tetragrammaton* (the Hebrew name of God). Thus, wisdom is shown as the high priestess holding the key to enlightenment and divine truths. Below her are five steps, and on each is a word, beginning with ‘counting’ at the bottom and followed by ‘addition,’ ‘subtraction,’ ‘multiplication’ and ‘division.’ These symbolize the steps that are necessary in order to approach wisdom and the secrets of the divine.

Above the left-hand columns can be seen the word ‘zeal’ and above the right-hand columns can be seen the word ‘teaching.’ Each of the eight columns supporting the ‘Temple of Wisdom’ is also adorned with a word, signifying a branch of the mathematical sciences. From the left they read:

'geometry,' 'stereometry' (solid geometry), 'astronomy,' 'optics,' '*merkatoria*,' 'geography,' 'fortification' and 'architecture.'

Another book translated and supervised by Bruce, in conjunction with Farquharson, for direct use in the St. Petersburg Naval Academy, which was established in 1715, was the *Tablitsy sinusov* (1716).

This work contained information on logarithms, astronomy, the mathematical sciences and the triangular spheres. The frontispiece to this work is dominated by the central image of a gardener watering a tree. This gardener has light radiating from his head and is a symbolic representation of Adam in the Garden of Eden. On either side of this Edenic scene can be seen men utilizing modern astronomical apparatus in order to study the spheres and aid navigation. The use of Biblical imagery from Genesis is a statement that the pursuit of astronomy and science in general can lead to a return to Adamic knowledge and the paradise of Eden. It also illustrates the way in which religion and science were intertwined in the search for the secrets of God's universe.

### *Astrology*

In 1707, Jacob Bruce and Vasilii Kiprianov printed a stunning celestial map in Moscow through the Civil Typography that displayed astrological representations of the signs of the zodiac. Each corner of the illustration depicted four celestial systems according to Ptolemy, Tycho Brahe, Copernicus and Descartes, along with portraits of each astronomer. This highly symbolic depiction of the heavenly sphere marked the first collaborative endeavour between Bruce and Kiprianov, who had been appointed the head of the Civil Typography in May 1705. Subsequently the pair went on to produce six equally ornate astrological calendar sheets through the Civil Typography between 1709–1715 (popularly known as *Bruce Calendars*).<sup>85</sup>

In artistic terms, the calendars were produced by Kiprianov. However, the overseeing director of these calendars and of the entire typographers was Jacob Bruce. Indeed, each calendar bears the names of both Kiprianov and Bruce. At the very least, therefore, Bruce played a supervisory role

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<sup>85</sup> The calendars first bore the name 'Bruce' in the 1740s during the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna. Each calendar contains six copper plates (60cms × 80cms). Only three complete editions survive, at the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg and the Museum of Applied Arts (the Pushkin Museum) in Moscow.



Fig. 8. Frontispiece to *Tablitsy sinusov* (1716).

in their production and was willing to approve their publication. These remarkable documents combine astrological cosmology and predictions, astronomical observations and religious symbolism.<sup>86</sup> L. M. Khlebnikov goes as far as to state that there is little to distinguish them from medieval almanacs.<sup>87</sup> This is unfair as the accurate use of astronomical observations clearly demonstrates scientific expertise. This expertise was centred on the observations made by Bruce and Farquharson in Russia in the first decades of the eighteenth century.

<sup>86</sup> For an in-depth summary of the content of the six calendar sheets. See D. Rovinskii, *Russkiiia narodnyiia kartinki*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1881), 360–90.

<sup>87</sup> Khlebnikov, “Russkii Faust,” 195.





Fig. 9. *Izobrazhenie globuza nebeznaго* (Representation of the Heavenly Globe) (1707).

The first sheet, for example, gives information on the rising and setting of the sun according to Moscow's latitude and the length of days and nights. The heading of the sheet – *Novo sia tablitsa izdana* – is rather prosaic, simply referring to the fact that a new plate is being published. Below the heading, however, one can see two cherubim holding a shield with a two-headed eagle (the Russian State emblem) and the crest of St. Andrew. The ribbon above the cherubim is inscribed with an extract from Psalm 21, which reads: "O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!" To the left and right of the cherubim can be seen two symmetrical models of the creation of the universe according to the old geocentric Ptolemaic model. It also provides twelve vertical columns with symbols and emblems of the twelve signs of the zodiac (see Fig. 10 below).

Underneath each astrological star sign one can also note a brief accompanying description. Thus, the first inscription, in the upper-left column, reads: "Aquarius by nature is warm and damp. The month of January, in the middle of winter, has 31 days." The emblem for Aquarius depicts a

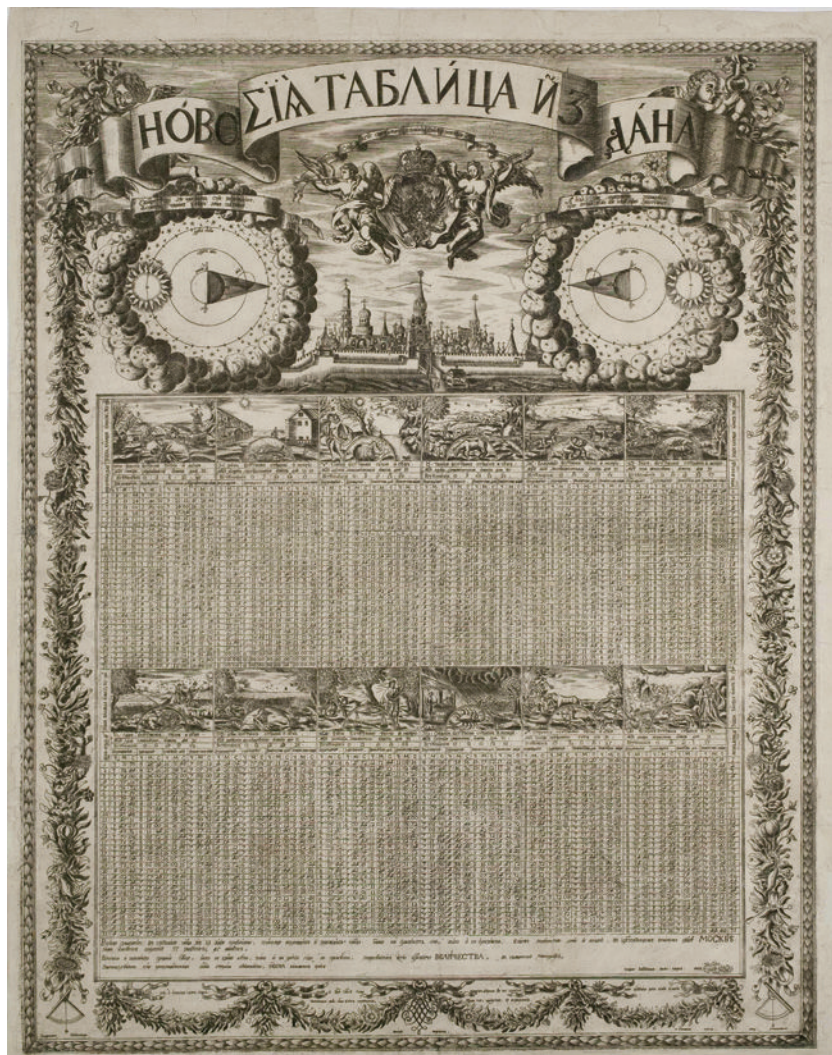


Fig. 10. The first sheet of the 1709 calendar by V. O. Kiprianov denoting astronomical observations for Moscow.



windmill and two sleighs, standing separately.<sup>88</sup> To the right lies Pisces (February), which is described as being “very cold and damp by nature.” The accompanying emblem (see Fig. 11 below) shows two fishermen with rods, sitting in two places. To the left can be seen a kitchen garden being illuminated by the sun and to the right can be seen a house.

The third column in the upper section (from the left), related to Aries (March), which is described as being “warm and dry by nature.” The corresponding emblem depicts a woodcutter chopping wood and a person sailing in a boat. To the left can be seen a child holding a garland in its



Fig. 11. The Emblematic depiction of Pisces, accompanied by relevant astrological and astronomical information, as found in “A New Published Plate” (1709).

<sup>88</sup> For a commentary on this passage, see Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 418. In this and all other citations, Filimon uses the copy of the calendar held at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow.

hands. Taurus (April) is then referred to as being “very cold and dry by nature,” and its emblem portrays a shepherd’s flock. The fifth column in the section (from the left) relates to Gemini (May), which is said to be “warm and damp by nature.” The emblem above shows a field of working peasants, one of whom is ploughing, a second is sowing and a third is harrowing. The last column in the upper section relates to Cancer (June), which is noted as being “very cold and damp.” The accompanying emblem depicts a shepherd shearing a sheep and in the right can be seen a woman with the horn of plenty.

The first column (from the left) in the lower section describes Leo (July), which is said to be “warm and dry by nature.” The emblem above shows a meadow in which a peasant is mowing the grass and a woman is raking hay. The next column relates to Virgo (August), which is “very cold and dry by nature.” The emblem for this star sign portrays a wheat field in which a peasant is having lunch. The following column describes Libra (September), which is “warm and damp by nature.” Its emblem depicts a harvest being gathered.<sup>89</sup> Scorpio (October) is then said to be “very cold and damp by nature,” with its emblem depicting a kitchen garden, where cabbages are being picked. The penultimate column relates to Sagittarius (November), which is apparently “warm and dry by nature.” Its emblem depicts hunters and a bull. The last column describes Capricorn (December) as being “very cold and dry by nature,” with its accompanying emblem showing ships on a stormy sea. To the right can be seen a crowned Neptune with a sceptre in his hands.<sup>90</sup>

The second sheet from 1709 compiles the name days of the saints and the holy festivals of the Russian Orthodox calendar and provides a key for the calculation of the days of the week in any year and for the calculation of the predominating planetary influence. It also provides a description of planetary characteristics to complement the previous descriptions of the twelve signs of the zodiac. Thus, Venus is described as being very cold and damp, Saturn is very cold and dry, the Sun is warm and dry, the Moon is very cold and damp, Mars is hot and dry, Mercury is simply very cold and wet and Jupiter is warm and *volgat* (?).<sup>91</sup>

One can also note a distinctly mystical religiosity in the use of a radiant all-seeing-eye (in the shape of a triangle) at the top of the sheet. Around

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 419.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 420–1.



this is the inscription “Divine God in his holiness, God of the Israelites” and quotes from psalms 20 and 67.<sup>92</sup> Further praise to the “glory of the triple-hypostasis of God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” is then followed by the names of Bruce and Kiprianov.<sup>93</sup> The extensive use of Old Testament symbolism and literature in Petrine Russia will be discussed in Chapter Five. It is enough here to note the mix of science, astrology and religion in official publications.

Whilst the first two sheets do embrace astrological imagery and provide brief descriptions of the qualities of the twelve signs of the zodiac and the seven planets respectively, the emphasis in each sheet is on the provision of astronomical data regarding the sun and in relation to the Orthodox calendar respectively. However, the third sheet – entitled *Predznamovanie vremeni na vsiakoi god po planetam* (The Omens of All the Seasons According to the Planets) – concentrates on providing astrological predictions based on the qualities of the planets and when they will have most influence during the course of each year (up until 1821).<sup>94</sup>

Astrological verses are inscribed on either side of the ornate banner displaying the title. To the left can be read: “The seven planets show their influence to us, they narrate the quality of every year [and] they change various things. They [the planets] are administered in the four seasons.” The verse to the right reads: “As in spring, so in summer, as also in autumn and in the depths of winter, finally they proclaim all afflictions [with regard to] what happens to man.” The top third of the sheet is also replete with a fine panoply of astrological symbols, with the twelve signs of the zodiac encompassing allegorical depictions of the four seasons.

The main body of the sheet is split into seven principal columns at the top, each illustrated by a human depiction of the planets in the spirit of the *planetenkinder* tradition.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, a lefthand column is divided into fourteen sections, with the first providing general information on the qualities of the planets. This is then followed by sections on how the ruling planet influences the four seasons, as well as its impact on sowing crops in the spring and autumn. One also finds sections devoted to how the ruling planet affects plants and trees, vines and wine, as well as meteorological influences. Moreover, it is also possible to discern the influence of ruling

<sup>92</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 305.

<sup>93</sup> Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 421.

<sup>94</sup> For extensive extracts from this calendar, see Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 421–29.

<sup>95</sup> For more on the *planetenkinder* tradition, see Dieter Blume, *Regenten des Himmels: Astrologische Bilder im Mittelalter und Renaissance* (Berlin: Akademie, 2000).

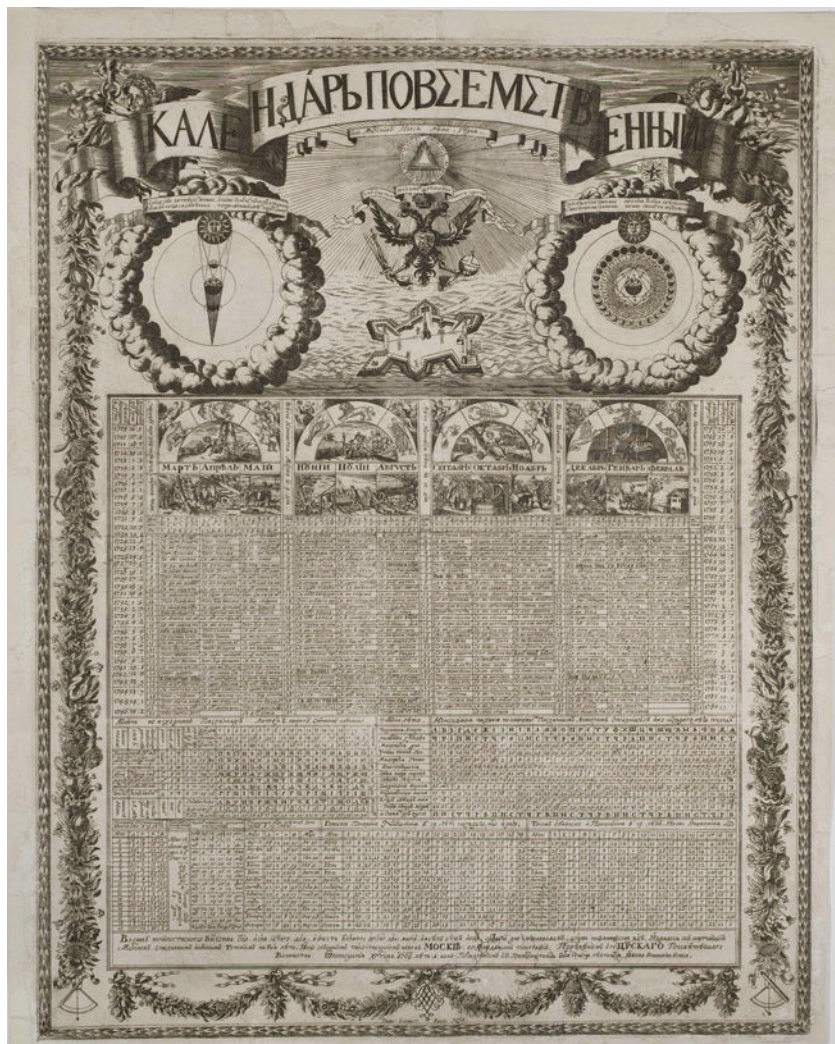


Fig. 12. *Kalendar' povsemstvennyi ili mesiatseslov na vse leta Gospodnie* (Everyday Calendar for the Entire Year of the Lord) (1709).



Fig. 13. The third sheet of the *Bruce Calendars* entitled *Predznamenovanie vremeni na vsiakoi god po planetam* (The Omens of All the Seasons According to the Planets) (1710).



planets on reptiles and fish, as well as the impact on human health and afflictions. Lastly, the paschal number of each planet is given, alongside information relating to the years in which it correlates to solar cycles.

In a Russian context, this sheet provides remarkable evidence of the attraction of astrological predictions and symbolism amongst leading Petrine courtiers. Moreover, it is highly significant that the source of all the astrological information is drawn verbatim from a table found in the first volume of *Specula Physico-Mathematico-Historica*, a work published in 1696 by Johann Zahn (c. 1641–1707), of the Premonstrate Order in Würzburg.<sup>96</sup> Zahn was very much in the mould of the encyclopaedic polymath Athanasius Kircher. However, unlike Kircher, Zahn was an enthusiastic advocate of astrology. Thus, in the monumental three-volumes of his *Specula*, Zahn's section on astrology repeatedly cites the work of Agrippa, Cardano, Paracelsus, Robert Fludd, and Antonio Francisco de Bonattis, among others, in order to expound his approach towards the celestial art.

Zahn hardly warrants a footnote in contemporary accounts of natural philosophy in the late seventeenth century, yet the enthusiastic embrace of his astrological predictions in Moscow in 1710 illustrates his widespread influence at the time. Moreover, the baroque aesthetic of his astrological oeuvre is not only replicated in the *Bruce Calendars*, but is also in broad accord with the wider cultural inclinations of the Petrine court (as will be demonstrated in Chapter 4 in relation to Feofan Prokopovich).

The fourth sheet, entitled *Predznamenovanie deistv na kazhdyi den' po techeniiu lunny v zodiaci* (Daily Predictions of Influences According to the Course of the Moon in the Zodiac), is in the same vein as the preceding publication. Verses on an astrological theme adorn the banner on both sides of the main heading. The upper third of the sheet contains an illustration of the twelve signs of the zodiac in the shape of an arch, underneath which is a depiction of the moon. The main body of the sheet is then divided into three tables, with the first containing information on the lunar cycle throughout the twelve zodiacal signs. The second table is split into the twelve signs of the zodiac, and has data relating to the lunar cycle and days, in combination with the relevant zodiacal sign. Lastly, the third table then provides extensive descriptions that recommend whether

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<sup>96</sup> The table is entitled "Tabula Significationum & Electionum Oeconomiarum ex Planeta validiore, ac Dominatore per Annum." See Johann Zahn, *Specula Physico-Mathematico-Historica*, vol. 1, (Augsburg, 1696), 300.



Fig. 14. Frontispiece to the first volume of Johann Zahn's *Specula Physico-Mathematico-Historica* (Augsburg, 1696).



Fig. 15. The fourth sheet of the *Bruce Calendars* entitled *Predznamenovanie deistv' na kazhdyi den' po techeniu luny v zodiac* (Daily Predictions of Influences According to the Course of the Moon in the Zodiac) (1710).



it is good, bad or inconsequential to undertake specific actions, which correlate to the signs of the zodiac.

In other words, the sheet provides information vis-à-vis the position of the moon in relation to the signs of the zodiac and the corresponding possible influences on an extraordinary range of human activities. A small sample will suffice to give a flavour of the intriguing nature of the astrological advice. For example, it provides medical help, suggesting the best times to take medicines or buy precious stones, as well as advice on when it is best to conduct alchemical experiments or to inquire about secret arts. Practical advice is also dispensed, as regards shaving, when to buy produce or move home, when to teach lessons in school, suitable times to steam in the *bania* (a Russian sauna) without being struck down with sickness, conducive times to let blood, the appropriate time to hang minerals in order to emit pleasant effects and even the right time to build a house in order to ensure it stands for a long time. It also lists the best times to instigate a battle and the most suitable days to buy wild animals, as well as when best to release prisoners in order to lessen the chance of them seeking revenge.<sup>97</sup> In short, the sheet offers a cornucopia of astrological advice for an esoterically-minded Russian courtier. Moreover, the sheet also contains twelve accompanying illustrations (replete with the appropriate astrological sign) denoting various activities that are affected by celestial influences. Thus Fig. 16 (below) shows an illustration in relation to when it is most conducive to cut hair and to take medicine according to astrological influences.

It is once again fascinating to note that a German source is used verbatim for all the astrological information. In this instance the sheet cites the influence of “Martin Albert, a Theophrastic and Spagyric Medic and Metallist from Chemnitz.” In other words, a Paracelsian physician, whose tables on the passage of the moon through the twelve signs of the zodiac appeared in the third book of *Magia Naturalis* by Wolfgang Hildebrand (fl. 1610–1631), which was first published in 1610 and continued to be republished into the eighteenth century.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> For a full list of the information contained in the fourth sheet, see Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 432–4.

<sup>98</sup> For the original astrological tables by Martin Albert, see Wolfgang Hildebrand, *Neuvermehrt, Vortrefflich, Ausserlessen Curieuses Kunst und Wunderbuch*, Book 3 (Frankfurt am Mayn, 1704), 514–17. For more on Hildebrand, see Laura Balbiani, “Wolfgang Hildebrand e la fortuna editoriale della *Magia Naturalis*,” *L’analisi linguistica e letteraria* 5 (1997): 153–86.



Fig. 16. Detail from the fourth sheet of the *Bruce Calendar* showing a drawing denoting when it is best to cut hair and to take medicine.

The astrological opinions of Wolfgang Hildebrand are also cited in the fifth plate, dating from 1715, once again in regard to the fact that the closer proximity of the moon to the earth than other planets renders it a more powerful influence on human affairs.<sup>99</sup> The inclusion of Hildebrand as one of the principal sources of astrological information in the *Bruce Calendars* is also interesting as it again suggests the direct influence of Bruce in the overall formation of its astrological basis. Hildebrand is a largely forgotten figure who did not even exert huge influence during the seventeenth century. His work, however, would have been known to anyone with a keen interest in astrology, natural magic and witchcraft. One such man was evidently Jacob Bruce, who possessed an original edition of his *Magia*

<sup>99</sup> For an extensive commentary on the fifth sheet, see Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 435–40.





Fig. 17. Frontispiece to Wolfgang Hildebrand's *Neu-vermehrte, Vortreflich, Ausser-  
lessen Curieuses Kunst und Wunderbuch* (Frankfurt am Mayn, 1704).

*Naturalia das ist, kunst und Wunderbuch darinnen begriffen Wunderbare Secreta, Geheimnisse und Kunststuckke*, published in Leipzig in 1610.<sup>100</sup>

Given the distinct German predilection of the *Bruce Calendars*, and their mixture of astronomy, astrology and religion, it is significant to note that Bruce possessed a large quantity of other astrological works by German authors. These works tend to be of a decidedly more mystical and chiliastic hue than their contemporary English equivalents. Of the tracts owned by Bruce, arguably the most intriguing examples were penned by Johann Jakob Zimmermann. Bruce possessed two of Zimmermann's works, which are saturated with an astrological worldview borne out of a profound sense of mystical and chiliastic religiosity. The first work by Zimmermann is listed at No. 1055 in the *Materialy* catalogue as *Fundamentalniia zadachi o mesiashnykh i solnechnykh zatmeniiakh* and was written in German and printed at Hamburg in 1691. This is undoubtedly *Auf alle und jede Hypothesen applicable Fundamental-Aufgaben von den Sonn-und Mond- Finsternissen*, which was published in Hamburg in 1691. The second book by Zimmermann is listed at No. 1195 in the *Materialy* catalogue as *Shar nebesnyi*. It would seem that this is *Sternenkegels, einer veränderten version des Himmelsglobus*, which was published in the 1690s. Zimmermann was a Lutheran deacon in Württemberg and an authoritative astronomer and mathematician who passionately embraced astrological, mystical and chiliastic beliefs along Rosicrucian and Pietistic lines.<sup>101</sup>

In addition to the chiliastic astrological works of Zimmermann one can also find a work by Christoph Nottnagel (1607–1666) of Wittenburg in the *Materialy* catalogue, entitled *Izvestie o kometakh* and published in 1665.<sup>102</sup> This refers to a work purporting to interpret the meaning of recent comets and to reveal their probable importance. Another tome of particular note to be located in Bruce's collection is a first edition of Tobias

<sup>100</sup> *Materialy*, vol. 5, 193, No. 772. Notably, the leading courtier Andrei Vinus, who worked closely with Bruce on scientific matters, also owned a copy of Hildebrand's *Magia Naturalis* (as well as another work entitled *Goitia vel Theurgia*). See E. A. Savel'eva, *Knig sobraniia Andreia Andreevicha Vinusa: katalog* (St. Petersburg: Al'faret, 2008), Nos. 119–20, 99–101.

<sup>101</sup> For more on Zimmermann, see Julius Friedrich Sachse, *The German Pietists of Provincial Pennsylvania 1694–1708* (Philadelphia, 1895), 460–72; Gerhard Dünnhaupt, "Johann Jacob Zimmermann (1644–1693)," in *Personalbibliographien zu den Drucken des Barock* 6 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1993), 4344–55.

<sup>102</sup> *Materialy*, vol. 5, 227. No. 26 in the manuscript section. The German title is *Christophori Nottnagels Appendix vom neuen Cometen und dessen Vermuthlichen Bedeutung*, published in Wittenberg in 1665.

Beutel's *Arboretum Mathematicum*, published in Dresden in 1669.<sup>103</sup> Beutel was court astrologer at Dresden and head of its famous *kunstkammer*. In this work he combined geometrical studies on the position of the planets and the moon with astrological remarks on the horoscopes of reigning monarchs. In doing this he produced a unified perspective connecting the microcosm of seventeenth-century European politics with the cosmic movements in an erudite 'summa' of the German Renaissance astronomical and chronological science. It also gives the latitude and longitude of some five hundred cities.<sup>104</sup> No doubt, the relevance of this text to Bruce was not lost, considering the important political role he played at the tsar's side. Indeed, the extensive list of the latitude and longitude of cities – in direct connection with astrological dictates – is entirely in keeping with the tone of the *Bruce Calendars*.

The last German work I will cite – the *Calendarium Perpetuum Universale* – is not only worthy of attention because of its rich astrological and alchemical colouring but also because it was published as relatively late as 1707.<sup>105</sup> The author of this work was Stanislaus Reinhard Acxtelmeier, who in the previous year had published *Ideae Harmonicae Correspondentiae superiorum cum inferioribus*, which as its title suggests wholeheartedly embraced the doctrine of the microcosm and macrocosm. The *Calendarium* continues in the same spirit and states in German that it is a "perpetual and general calendar of nature and rearing, art and science, virtue and health, reason and wisdom, commerce and pleasure," for the edification of the mind.

The sixth sheet of the *Bruce Calendars*, published in 1715, is a fine example of the emblematic worldview, closely associated with Neo-Platonic thought, still prevalent in Petrine Russia. The symbol was an all-pervasive feature of the universe in Neo-Platonic thought and could simultaneously reveal and conceal divine truths. Nature was viewed as a vast repository of symbolic meaning – through a system of hierarchic correspondences – and if these symbols could be correctly interpreted the secret order of the universe could be unlocked. The Egyptians, with their complex system of hieroglyphics, were past masters of this art. Much of their meaning had been lost, however, and it was the task of Early Modern emblems

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<sup>103</sup> Savel'eva, *Biblioteka*, 39. No. 82.

<sup>104</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 330.

<sup>105</sup> *Materialy*, vol. 5, 167, No. 409.

to express a profound knowledge, with the aid of an accompanying text, which could surpass mere written meaning.

The sixth sheet is dominated by a pedestal supported by two columns. Centrally positioned above the pedestal is a globe with Mercury and Minerva sitting on either side. Under the pedestal are seven emblematic representations with inscriptions. The first is entitled *To the Four Parts of Summer* and is represented by a tree on which there are three birds and to the right is a wine grower. The second emblem is entitled *To the Parable* and depicts fortune on a wheel in the middle of the sea. The third is entitled *From Scientific letters of the immortal* and shows a triton blowing a shell. The fourth emblem is named *About God enjoying himself* and is symbolized by an eagle, representing Jupiter abducting Ganymede.<sup>106</sup> The fifth emblem is simply entitled *Nature* and is represented by a satyr who is running and holding a branch in his hand. The sixth image is entitled *Science aiding nature* and is depicted by Fortune on a sphere with Mercury. The last emblem is named *To Astrologers* and is symbolized by a picture of Icarus falling; no doubt a warning not to over extend the art of astrology.

The sixth sheet also promotes Peter the Great's endorsement of the *Bruce Calendars* by displaying a prominent depiction of the tsar at its base.<sup>107</sup> The monarch is seen wearing a suit of armour adorned with astrological symbols and standing beside a globe, around which can also be seen representations of the twelve signs of the zodiac. Saturn can also be seen standing to the right of the monarch, as well as a depiction of the Peter and Paul Fortress above the globe (see Fig. 18 below).

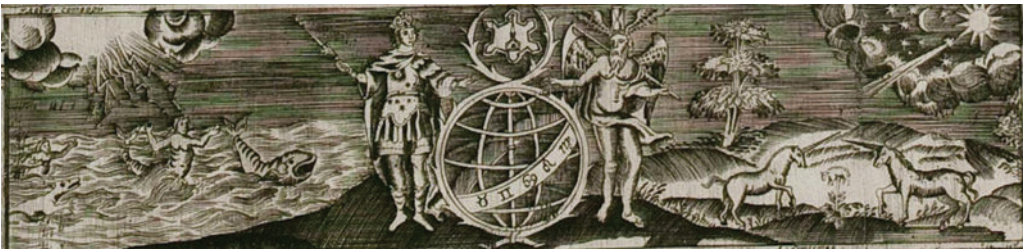


Fig. 18. Detail of the lower section of the sixth sheet of the *Bruce Calendars* (1715).

<sup>106</sup> This clearly evokes Ovid's *Metamorphoses* when Jupiter transforms himself into an eagle to snatch the youth from earth. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. David Raeburn (London: Penguin, 2004), 389–90.

<sup>107</sup> A portrait of Peter the Great is also present on the fifth sheet, printed in 1715.



It is significant that this illustration is based on an almost identical image that adorns the base of Paul Halcke's *Verbesserte Hamburgische Curiositäten Aus das 1715*, published several months before the *Bruce Calendars* (see Fig. 19 below). The influence of Halcke on the development of Petrine calendars in general will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

The emblematic nature of this *Bruce Calendar* is entirely in keeping with Bruce's own worldview, epitomized by his highly symbolic coat-of-arms accompanied with the Latin inscription 'Fuimus.' In his library are located a number of key symbol and emblem publications from the seventeenth century. Of particular note is a 1669 German edition of Cesare Ripa's classic work *Erneuerte Iconologia oder Bilder-Sprach*, which was a key text in the seventeenth century tradition of allegorical symbolism.<sup>108</sup> Bruce also possessed copies of Nicolas Verrien's *Recueil d'emblemes devises, medailles et figures hieroglyphiques* (1696) and Otto Vaenius's *Amorum Emblemata* (1608), which were also hugely influential sourcebooks for many emblem engravers throughout the century.<sup>109</sup> As well as these books, Bruce had a 1655 edition of Diego de Saavedra Fajardo's *Abris eines Christlich-Politischen Printzens*, which contained a hundred devices suitable for a Christian Prince.<sup>110</sup>



Fig. 19. Image from the frontispiece of Paul Halcke's *Verbesserte Hamburgische Curiositäten Aus das 1715* (Hamburg, 1714).

<sup>108</sup> Savel'eva, *Biblioteka*, 233. No. 570.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 291,294. Nos. 728 and 735.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 242. No. 591.

While it is impossible to ascertain the precise personal involvement of Bruce in the actual production of the calendars, it is safe to say that his support for the project was a decisive factor in their success. Furthermore, knowing that Bruce had an active interest in astronomy and a wide knowledge of astrological texts, it seems unlikely that he would have chosen to distance himself from such a prominent and state-endorsed venture.

The so-called *Bruce Calendars* ceased to be printed after 1715, but it would be a mistake to conclude that calendars saturated with prognoses and astrological information disappeared from Petrine Russia. Indeed, calendars replete with prognostications were enthusiastically published and remained popular throughout the first quarter of the eighteenth century in Russia. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

In concluding this section, it is worth stressing that far from embracing all forms of rational and secular practice, Bruce and the Civil Typographers were extremely willing to endorse beliefs rooted in astrology. One must remember that these publications were not simply an attempt to please ‘the masses,’ as the reading public in Russia at the time was extremely small and confined to the highest echelons of society. On the contrary, they reflect the complex way in which calculated science – in the form of mathematics and astronomy – could still be utilized for what would now be regarded as occult practices.

### *Natural Philosophy*

It is understandable that a figure such as Bruce aroused the suspicion and curiosity of the people in early eighteenth-century Russia and was the source of countless legends. His deep interest in scientific experimentation combined with religious mysticism and the occult was an explosive cocktail, especially when considering his privileged position at the tsar’s side and his foreign roots. One must remember that as recently as 1689 Kuhlman had been burned at the stake for espousing a religious mysticism rooted in the alchemical spirituality of Jacob Böhme. Having said this, although many of the legends surrounding Bruce do indeed cast him as a Faustian figure; it should also be noted that many portray Bruce in a less negative light. Arguably the most well known legend, for example, tells of an occasion when Bruce invited guests to Glinka, his country estate, during the summertime. They were entertained by fireworks and were invited to ice-skate on a pond, which Bruce had succeeded in freezing

during the preceding banquet.<sup>111</sup> An element of supernatural sorcery is evident here of course, but the dominant feeling is of Bruce as a master of artificial – not diabolical – magic. One should also recall the Soviet worker in Baranov's cycle of legends, who stated that Bruce wanted "to comprehend everything in the world: what was on the earth, what was underground" in order to "find out the wisdom of nature."<sup>112</sup> This is an entirely reasonable and plausible statement and is consistent with a long tradition of Renaissance experimental scientists who drew on the occult secrets and inherent magic of nature in order to harness and understand its powers.

It is clear from his library collection that Bruce had a deep interest in precisely such a tradition of scientific inquiry. As well as the presence of Hildebrand's *Magia Naturalia* one can also locate a sizeable quantity and variety of other authors purporting to reveal the secrets of the natural world. Most notably, one finds a 1680 edition of Giambattista della Porta's *Magia Naturalis* and Gaspar Schott's *Magia Universalis Naturae et Artis* (1657–59). One can also cite other authors, such as Cardano, Athanasius Kircher and Pierre le Lorrain Vallemont, as well as less well-known works by Johannes Staricius on the utilization of magic in war.<sup>113</sup>

Cabinets of rarity were a discernible feature of Early Modern Europe. Scholars, such as Aldrovandi, Kircher and the English Freemason and antiquarian Elias Ashmole, amassed phenomenal private collections in order to discover the secrets, marvels and wisdom of nature.<sup>114</sup> At the same time, these collections of various minerals, plants, stuffed animals, human oddities, numismatics and general artefacts of antiquity were envisaged as attempts to form a microcosm of the larger macrocosm of the world and the universe upon which personal scholarly experimentation could be carried out.

It is unsurprising, therefore, to discover that Bruce also amassed a large personal cabinet of rarities, which encompassed far more than a fashionable collection of oddities for the trivial amusement of a court grandee. Bruce himself could draw on numerous descriptions of royal or public *kunstkammer* and private cabinets found in his own library. In his collection, for example, could be found Tobias Beutel's work on the Dresden

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<sup>111</sup> Filimon, *Iakov Brius* 285.

<sup>112</sup> Baranov, *Legendy*, 18.

<sup>113</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>114</sup> Ashmole's private collection was bequeathed to the University of Oxford and opened as the Ashmolean Museum in 1683.

Kunstammer.<sup>115</sup> He also had a manuscript copy of Christian Maximilian Spener's *Museum Spenerianum*, an edition of Michael Bernhard Valentini's *Museum Museorum* (1714) and a description of Georg Eberhard Rumphius's renowned cabinet of rarities containing the collection he gathered whilst stationed on the East Indonesian island of Ambon.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, he owned John White's *A Rich Cabinet, with Variety of Inventions* (1677) and other works such as a Dutch book entitled *Cabinet of Minerals*, a book on the curiosities of Rudolf II of Bohemia, books on underground curiosities in Rome and Holland and a book on nuministics.<sup>117</sup> After Bruce's death he bequeathed his cabinet to the State and it became an important part of the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera collection.<sup>118</sup>

The contents of Bruce's cabinet of rarities are recorded in the *Materialy* catalogue, which gives a basic description of all the items.<sup>119</sup> This is an invaluable source for gaining insights into the sheer scale of Bruce's passion for the wonders of nature and as a sign of the continuing tradition of Baroque experimental science. Bruce's interest in astronomy is reflected by the presence of a large number of celestial and earthly globes. The first item listed in the inventory, for example, is a celestial globe according to the system of Tycho Brahe with a diameter of one and a half *arshins* (approximately eighty-seven centimetres).<sup>120</sup> Bruce also had a small table of the Copernican spheres, a selection of copper and wooden astrolabes, copper sundials and a copper meridian. The inventory also lists an array of telescopes and measuring devices such as compasses, slide-rules and triangles and a large quantity of lenses and glass. One of the most intriguing pieces of glass is described as circular in which it is possible to see a large face.<sup>121</sup>

The range of *naturalia* found in Bruce's Cabinet is extensive. Included are such things as ninety-nine shells and the claw of a crab, the bark of a rotting tree, the teeth, tongue and gill of a fish, a stuffed duck and the skull, teeth, legs and ivory of a mammoth.<sup>122</sup> One can also find the nail of

<sup>115</sup> Savel'eva, *Biblioteka*, 40. No. 84.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 15, 291–291. Nos. 19 and 729. The Rumphius book is entitled *The Ambonese Curiosity Cabinet* in English and was first published in 1705.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 307. No. 767; *Materialy*, vol. 5, 176, 159, 153, 195, 156, Nos. 664, 163, 22, 796 and 130 respectively.

<sup>118</sup> The St. Petersburg Kunstkamera will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

<sup>119</sup> See *Materialy*, vol. 5, 180–92.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 180–4.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 185, 191, 244.



a polar bear, a bird's tongue and most curious of all a unicorn excavated from the soil.<sup>123</sup> It is apparent that Bruce also had a thirst for Chinese and Eastern artefacts. The contents of one box, for example, contained such things as Chinese stirrups, wattle shoes, stockings, quilts, two pairs of Kamchatkan boots, knives, nameplates, perfumes, mirrors, a wash basin and landscape painting.<sup>124</sup> Bruce also possessed a variety of Chinese and Persian goblets and wine bowls, as well as numerous idols, a large white jasmine frog and a Chinese copper crab.<sup>125</sup> An interest in Eastern philology is also shown by the presence of letters in Mongolian, Chinese and Tartar and a collection of Hebrew commands.<sup>126</sup> One can also find large sections devoted to cartography, with maps charting the oceans and continents and outlining the plans of European cities.<sup>127</sup> Considering Bruce's military career, it is also not surprising to find a sizeable quantity of military artefacts including blueprints for canons and plans for fortifications and samples of gunpowder.<sup>128</sup>

The largest part of Bruce's cabinet, however, is devoted to stones, minerals, metals and dry powders. In one box alone can be found bezoar stones from a she-goat and from Beluga, which were reputed to counter poisons, as well as dry measures of cornelian, turquoise, a small horn of silver minerals, eastern crystals, aster, a stone mushroom and a silver horn. Various magnets are also found in the cabinet, including two pieces from Siberia.<sup>129</sup> The last section of the inventory is completely dedicated to minerals and metals and includes specific sections listing the quantities of minerals and metals retrieved from the St. Petersburg region and from Siberia. It also includes metals and minerals, such as Hungarian copper, tin, bismuth, white iron, silver, a white quartz and Hungarian quartz, steel cobalt, vitriol, a vitriolic mineral, vermilion, azure and emeralds.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 185–6.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 189–91.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 186–7.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 192, 228–32.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 232–7.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 244–5.

*Alchemy and Mysticism*

The presence of so many minerals, stones and dry powders in Bruce's private cabinet indicates a particular interest in metallurgy and is evidence of his active interest in chemical experimentation. This interest in chemical experimentation is borne out by the presence of a specially constructed chemical laboratory in a building on his Glinka estate and by his library collection, which is replete with metallurgical and alchemical texts.<sup>131</sup> The presence of so many books in Bruce's library with obvious alchemical and mystical subject matter was either completely ignored or abruptly dismissed in both the tsarist and Soviet era. In the 1860s, for example, Pekaarskii deemed it unnecessary to mention their existence within Bruce's library, whilst over a century later Khlebnikov claimed:<sup>132</sup>

Very few books in the library of Bruce were of the popular large collections of medieval publications mystical contents according to astrology, chiromancy, physiognomy, white and black magic.<sup>133</sup>

The Soviet historian S. P. Luppov also emphasized the "very insubstantial number" of "anti-scientific" publications in Bruce's library, in his work on books in Russia in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. According to his categorization of the content of Bruce's library only thirteen works, or 0.8% of the total, were listed under the joint subheading of astrology, magic and alchemy.<sup>134</sup> This is a substantial underestimation and one can only assume that among the three hundred plus works (amounting to 20.8%) deemed to be of 'unclear' origin can be found many alchemical, astrological and hermetic tracts.

The one work that does address the alchemical and mystical element of Bruce's library collection is Filimon's recent biography. In this publication one can find a section written by A. Svionov devoted to the presence of occult and mystical texts in Bruce's library.<sup>135</sup> In his analysis of these texts, Svionov notes that scholars during both the tsarist and Soviet eras either completely ignored or abruptly dismissed the import of such texts. In seeking to redress this oversight Svionov lists a total of seventy-three

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<sup>131</sup> Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 174. See Appendix A for a list of alchemical authors found in Bruce's library collection.

<sup>132</sup> See Pekaarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 289–311.

<sup>133</sup> Khlebnikov, "Russkii faust," 198.

<sup>134</sup> Luppov, *Kniga*, 194.

<sup>135</sup> Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 245–276.

occult and mystical texts. However, even this list is far from exhaustive. Apart from the above-cited works on astrology, geomancy and natural magic, for example, one can locate over one hundred and forty alchemical works by at least eighty-eight noted alchemists.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, whilst listing these works, it is also noticeable that Svionov is at pains to justify their extent by stressing the fact that Bruce was not constrained by dogma and, akin to a modern researcher, was intent on finding their rational basis.<sup>137</sup> Bruce the academic-encyclopaedist is divorced from the Renaissance tradition of Aldrovandi, Kircher and Elias Ashmole and is instead perceived in a modern context as a “thoroughly rounded [and] developed person.”<sup>138</sup>

Can it be that Bruce had succeeded in expunging all trace of Hermeticism and mysticism attached to the art of alchemy, which had been so dominant throughout the Renaissance and up to the end of the seventeenth century? Had the mystical worldview of the alchemist been overthrown at the close of this century by what Thomas Kuhn would call a paradigm shift in which a new, mechanistic science gained complete ascendance? As Allen Debus has shown, this was far from the case. In France, for example, Debus highlights how alchemy “remained a subject of great interest” well into the 1720s, and the “search for the philosopher’s stone and the elixir of life was pursued by many scholars and true believers.”<sup>139</sup> In his chapter devoted to alchemy between 1650 and 1700 Lynn Thorndike also stresses that even late in the century it differed little from that of the early seventeenth century and highlights the continued perseverance of “religious rhapsodies and magic dreams” thirty years after the publication of Robert Boyle’s classic work *The Sceptical Chymist* in 1661.<sup>140</sup> Indeed, Thorndike highlights the fact that Boyle himself “expressed his philosophy in religious terms.”<sup>141</sup> This sentiment is borne out by a brief examination of Boyle’s *The Christian Virtuoso* (1690), published a year before his death. In this work Boyle extolled the ideal experimental philosopher as a devout Christian, a ‘priest of nature’ who sought to make manifest the truths that God had planted in the natural world. In this regard, Boyle compared the laboratory to a place of divine worship.

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<sup>136</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>137</sup> Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 275.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> Ingrid Merkel and Allen G. Debus, eds., *Hermeticism and the Renaissance: Intellectual History and the Occult in Early Modern Europe* (Washington D. C.: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988), 244.

<sup>140</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 117 and 402.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 402.

It is clear that chemical experimentation and an expert understanding of metallurgical matters were of central importance to Bruce in a number of his official capacities. His position as *General Feldtseikhmeister* of the Russian Artillery, for example, demanded a wide chemical knowledge of the techniques and methods necessary for the preparation of gunpowder and explosives. The importance of the alchemical art of separation is vividly stressed in an illustration at the head of the third part of *Uchenie i praktika artilerii* (A Textbook in Practical Artillery), published in 1711 and translated by Bruce himself (see Fig. 20 below). Here can be seen a priest-like (al)chemist at work concocting chemical mixes in his laboratory.

In 1717, Bruce was also appointed President of the Board of Mining; a post he no doubt secured because of his knowledge of the fields of metallurgy and chemistry. Furthermore, in 1720 he became the Director of the St. Petersburg Mint, a position that demanded expertise in the process of smelting, separating and purifying metals. An insight into Bruce's expertise in the art of chemical separation and experimentation can be gleaned from a letter he wrote on February 1, 1731 to the German scientist and pastor Johann Georg Leutmann (1667–1736), in which he describes in detail various methods for purifying metals:

For purifying metals various methods are used in certain measures. Gold may be purified with either antimony or saltpetre. The last, namely saltpetre, acts the stronger. I purified silver at first in drops, then separated the gold from there by means of strong vodka. Both were repeated three times. After this, the silver melts finely . . . and a spirit solution of volatile alkali is poured over it, which purifies the remaining silver from the copper. But, I never noticed that after two dips in the silver there is left a little copper. For receiving the most purified copper the best method appears the renewal of it from verdigris. The Chinese method gives somewhat better results than the French.<sup>142</sup>

Small wonder, considering Bruce's attraction to metallurgy and chemical experimentation and the important roles he occupied within the Russian state, that he chose to take up residence in St. Petersburg on Liteinyi Prospekt. The picture below (see Fig. 21) shows Bruce's residence, as it appears in Aleksei Zubov's *Panorama Peterburga* (1716). The word *liteinyi* means casting or founding in Russian and the street derived its name from the presence of the city's main foundry.

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<sup>142</sup> V. L. Chenakal, "Pis'ma Iakova Vilimovicha Briusa k Iogannu-Georgu Leitmanu," *Nauchnoe nasledstvo* 2 (1951): 1092.



Fig. 20. Frontispiece to Book 3 of *Uchenie i praktika artilerii* (1711).



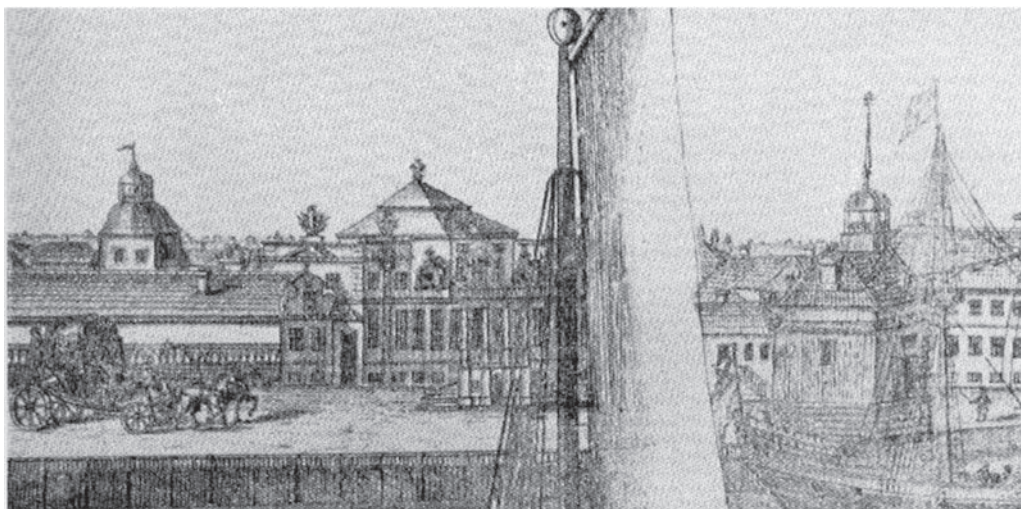


Fig. 21. Bruce's Residence in the Liteinyi Dvor.

Throughout Europe, equivalent positions of power within states still attracted individuals imbued with a profound sense of the religious and mystical nature of metallurgy and alchemy. These disciplines were still very much linked to the search for the divine truths and wisdom in nature and a belief system still stemming from a microcosm-macrocosm perception of the universe. This meant that the study of astronomy or astrology could be intimately tied to alchemy and metallurgy, as part of a wider search for God's heavenly and earthly order.

In England, for example, the post of Mineral Master General was held by Moses Stringer who amalgamated the Society of Mines Royal and the Mineral and Battery Works in 1709–1710.<sup>143</sup> Stringer was a respected figure in the English establishment and was a physician and chemist to William III and a mineralist to Queen Anne. The Royal Navy also ordered the first recorded therapeutic trials of two of his chemical medicines in August 1701. Stringer also pursued a successful academic career at Gloucester Hall (Worcester College) and according to one document he was Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University in 1695.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>143</sup> John H. Appleby, "Moses Stringer (fl. 1695–1713): Iatrochemist and Mineral Master General," *Ambix* 34:1 (1987): 31.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

It is clear from a series of letters addressed to the “learned Dr. Woodrofe, Master of Worcester College in Oxford” between 1704 and 1707 that Stringer adopted a mystical, Paracelsian view of medicine and chemistry. As Appleby notes, the subject matter is dominated by an *elixir renovans*, which he had concocted under the influence of “what Paracelsus reports concerning the force of medicines in Recovering Old Age.”<sup>145</sup> Small wonder, considering his preoccupation with elixirs, that Appleby refers to Stringer as an alchemist in the Paracelsian mould.<sup>146</sup> The alchemical pursuits of Moses Stringer also had a direct impact on Peter the Great (and most probably Bruce as well) who was entertained by Stringer personally in London in March 1698 in an exhibition which showed the “Extraordinary Separations of Metals, and the Artificial Gem demonstration,” which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.<sup>147</sup>

The position of Warden of the Royal Mint in London between 1696 and 1699 and subsequently Master of the Royal Mint between 1699–1727 was also occupied by a man who, according to Betty Jo Dobbs, “understood alchemy to be one of the most, if not the most, important of his many studies.” This man was Sir Isaac Newton, who could successfully combine the practical demands of state with the more private desire to use his knowledge of alchemy:

To demonstrate God’s action in the world in an absolutely irrefutable fashion by demonstrating the operations of the nonmechanical vegetable spirit, and thus lay the spectre of atheism to rest forever.<sup>148</sup>

Curiously, it is known that Bruce accompanied the tsar to the Royal Mint – then located inside the Tower of London – on April 13, 1698. This is attested by the semi-official *Zhurnal*, which noted “the Decurion (the tsar) was at the Tower with James Bruce, where they make money.”<sup>149</sup> It seems likely therefore that Bruce and Newton would have had the opportunity to discuss subjects relating to coinage during this visit.

It is also extremely interesting to note the parallels between Jacob Bruce and the career and beliefs of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), the famed Swedish mystic, alchemist and spiritualist, who believed the Lord

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<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 37. Stringer even named his children Hermes Hippocrates, Thomas Helmont Paracelsus and Aesculapius Elisha.

<sup>147</sup> Loewenson, “People Peter the Great met,” 460.

<sup>148</sup> Dobbs, *Janus Face*, 37.

<sup>149</sup> Dixon, *Britain and Russia*, 23.

had elected him to reveal the “spiritual meaning of the Sacred Scriptures which he had promised to the Prophets and in the Book of Revelation.”<sup>150</sup>

Swedenborg’s mystical and spiritual vision of the universe was reinforced and not undermined by his great scientific and academic learning, which encompassed a wide spectrum of disciplines. On the advice of Erik Benzelius, librarian at the University of Uppsala and later Bishop of Linköping, Swedenborg set sail for London in the spring of 1710 to immerse himself in one of the leading scientific communities of his day. His stay lasted for two years and during this time he studied with the astronomers Flamsteed and Halley. Thus, Swedenborg learnt mathematical and astronomical expertise in much the same way and in the same milieu as Bruce had some twelve years previously. During his period of travel abroad it is already apparent that Swedenborg’s scientific learning was a tool helping him to demonstrate, as he wrote at the time, “the soul of wisdom is the knowledge and acknowledgement of the Supreme Being.”<sup>151</sup>

On his return to Sweden, Swedenborg’s mathematical and astronomical knowledge was much appreciated by King Charles XII. As Swedenborg himself noted on September 14, 1718, “when the eclipse took place, I took his Majesty out to see it, and talked much to him about it. This, however, is a mere beginning.”<sup>152</sup> Swedenborg’s knowledge of geology and metallurgy was also much valued by the king who appointed him Extraordinary Assessor of the Board of Mines in 1716. In 1724, he became a Full Assessor and remained in this position at the Royal College of Mines until his retirement in 1747. Furthermore, his expertise regarding metallurgy and the process of smelting was put to good effect in an essay he wrote in 1722, entitled “Modest Thoughts on the Deflation and Inflation of Swedish Coinage.” The parallels between Swedenborg and Bruce are strong. What is more, it is likely that they were mutually acquainted as a result of their participation at the Åland peace negotiations in 1718. Bruce was at the head of the Russian delegation and whilst Swedenborg did not lead the Swedish contingent, he was privy to secret information and had direct contacts with the Russians.

In addition to these contemporary parallels one can also cite a number of late seventeenth-century alchemists, with a decidedly mystical bent, who appear in Bruce’s library collection and who exercised authority

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<sup>150</sup> Ralph Shirley, *Occultists and Mystics of all the Ages* (New York: University Books, 1972), 106.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.



within various state mining and metallurgical offices. This is illustrated by the career of Johann Joachim Becher (1635–1682), who was invited to England in 1679 by Prince Rupert in order to inspect the mines of Cornwall and Scotland. Bruce owned three works by this respected European alchemist and metallurgist who reputedly had charge of the finest chemical laboratory in Europe in Munich.<sup>153</sup> Becher retained a belief in the conception of macrocosm and microcosm, which were produced by angels who arranged particles by rarefaction into “the ideas of various species and bodies.” Furthermore, Becher held that perfect minerals were formed instantaneously and that all metals can be changed into mercury and that in the marvellous sympathy of earth fluidifying with metals lies the entire secret of the philosophers.<sup>154</sup>

One can also cite the career of Johann Kunckel von Löwenstern (c. 1612–1702) who was appointed as a Councillor of Mines by King Charles XI of Sweden in 1689.<sup>155</sup> Kunckel was a member of the Academia Caesarea Leopoldina (with the suitably esoteric name of ‘Hermes’) in Germany and the Academie Royal Des Sciences in France, and had built his reputation on a series of alchemical works. Bruce possessed three works by Kunckel including arguably his most famous, the *Nutzliche Observationes* (1676).<sup>156</sup> In this work, Kunckel argued in favour of the philosophers’ stone as a real substance and outlined a method for producing gold, which began by alternating layers of powdered *sal gemmae* and a silver plate in an earthen vessel.<sup>157</sup> The *Het Cabinet der Mineralen* (1670) by the Dutch hermetic alchemist Goossen van Vreeswyk (1626–c. 1689), who was an expert on mining and official *Berg-meester* in the Netherlands, can also be found in Bruce’s library.<sup>158</sup> This work features the Hermetic Tablet and the latter continuation of the *Cabinet*, published in 1675, contained a series of seventeen engravings saturated with alchemical symbolism.

Thus, in highlighting the large amount of alchemical works with a distinctly mystical, hermetic and Paracelsian nature in Bruce’s library collection, it is important to stress that such an attraction to esoteric beliefs retained a hold among some of the most prominent and respected scien-

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<sup>153</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 7, 578–579. See Appendix A for the three works. On the alchemical career of Becher, see Pamela H. Smith, *The Business of Alchemy: Science and Culture in the Holy Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 580.

<sup>155</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 379.

<sup>156</sup> See Appendix A for details.

<sup>157</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 379.

<sup>158</sup> *Materialy*, vol. 5, 176, No. 664.

tists of the day who occupied parallel positions to those of Bruce in Russia. Furthermore, they were not attracted to alchemy out of mere objective curiosity, but as a profound and sincere way of perceiving the world.

With this in mind it is fruitful to draw attention to a number of other works in Bruce's library collection that help to illustrate his attraction to Hermetic and alchemical work of the highest order. One such work is attributed to Abderita Democritus (c. 460–360 BC) and is entitled, *De Rebus Sacris Naturalibus et Mysticis*. In Pliny's *Natural History*, which appeared in AD 77, Democritus is accredited with being the greatest single factor in the spread of the doctrine of magic in the ancient world.<sup>159</sup> Included in the 1717 edition owned by Bruce was *H.V.D. Tumba Semiramidis Hermeticae Sigillatae*. This work first appeared in Latin in 1674 and purports to reveal the secrets of the philosophers' stone. The inclusion of writings by Basil Valentine, reputedly a fifteenth-century Benedictine Monk, also indicates Bruce's attraction to the mystical nature of alchemy. In the *Chymische Schrifften*, published in Hamburg in 1717, for example, Bruce could read Valentine's key alchemical tracts. As well as pieces entitled, *De Microcosmo* and *De Macrocosmo, Vond den Naturlichen und Ubernaturlichen Dingen* (Of Natural and Supernatural Things) and *De Occulta Philosophia*, this edition also contained *The Twelve Keys* and *The Triumphal Chariot of Antimony*.

In addition to the 1717 edition of Valentine's *Triumphal Chariot of Antimony* Bruce also possessed a German edition of Theodor Kerckring's annotated version, which was first published in 1678.<sup>160</sup> The *Triumphal Chariot of Antimony* was a cherished work of many alchemists in the latter quarter of the seventeenth century and first quarter of the eighteenth century. It purported to describe the alchemical preparation of antimony and salt.

Other works of note in Bruce's library manifesting a pronounced degree of Hermetic thought and alchemy include Johann Neithold's *Sancta Veritas Hermetica* (The Holy Truth of Hermetica), which as its name suggests, was a work dedicated to the history and merits of the ancient esoteric belief.<sup>161</sup> Bruce also owned two editions of *Medicina Spagyrica, oder Spagyrische Artzney-Kunst*, by the alchemist Johann Pharamundus Rhumelius.<sup>162</sup> This

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<sup>159</sup> Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), 58.

<sup>160</sup> Savel'eva, *Biblioteka*, 32, 142. Nos. 63 and 375 respectively.

<sup>161</sup> Neithold wrote this book under the name Johannes Ehrd von Naxagaras. See Appendix A.

<sup>162</sup> See Appendix A.

work contained, among other things, Rhumelius's *Compendium Hermeticum*, which discussed subjects such as universal medicine, the influence of the stars in magnetic cures, mineral, vegetable and animal stones, potable gold, the universal menstruum, quintessence of pearls and the elixir of life.<sup>163</sup> A 1682 edition of Adrian von Mynsicht's oft-reprinted *Thesarus et armamentarium medico-chymicum*, published in Stuttgart, was also part of Bruce's collection. This work attested that it revealed to the "sons of doctrine and wisdom" a secret method of compounding drugs. Printed with this work was *The Testament of Hadrian*, the subject of which was the philosophers' stone.<sup>164</sup> One can also find Baro Urbigerus's *Besondere Chymische Schrifften*, which included *Aphorismi Urbigerani*, containing methods for preparing the "philosophical elixir" and addressed "to all True Lovers of the Hermetic Philosophy."<sup>165</sup>

The theosophical approach to alchemy, evident in the above-mentioned works, was particularly ripe in Germany and Central Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and was linked to the development of Rosicrucianism. The presence, therefore, of such a large quantity of tomes in Bruce's library displaying a theosophical approach to alchemy is already suggestive. However, in addition to these works, one can locate a series of extremely rare tomes in the Bruce library directly associated to the hermetic and chiliastic Rosicrucian movement.<sup>166</sup> He possessed, for example, a Dutch edition of Trajano Boccalini's *Ragguagli del Parnaso* (1612).<sup>167</sup> A chapter of this work, concerning the general reformation of the world, had been included in the original *Fama* Rosicrucian manifesto. Its call for a new reformation based on Christian love and charity was an ideal shared by the author of the *Fama*.

Bruce also owned a number of publications emanating from the printing press of Lucas Jennis in Frankfurt. Jennis was a renowned Rosicrucian sympathizer who brought to press some of the most provocative and radical alchemical and mystical tracts during the 1610s and 1620s. Foremost of

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<sup>163</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 7, 193.

<sup>164</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 84.

<sup>165</sup> *Materialy*, vol. 5, 205, No. 1001. In this catalogue it is noted that the work is by an "Usbegera" and contains a *Special Chemical Letter* and a tract about "how the great philosophical elixir is made." The work is listed as in German and published in Hamburg in 1705. This refers to the *Besondere Chymische Schrifften*, which includes *Wege das Grosse Elixir der Philosophorum zu bereiten* and was published in Hamburg in 1705 under the pseudonym of Urbigerus.

<sup>166</sup> The works by Johann Jakob Zimmermann can also be viewed as Rosicrucian in spirit.

<sup>167</sup> Savel'eva, *Biblioteka*, 48, No. 108.

these controversial publications was the *Philosophia Mystica* (1618), which contained four authentic tracts, including the title tract, by Paracelsus, two tracts by the Rosicrucian proselytiser Adam Haslmayr (c. 1555–1630), four tracts by the mystical theologian Valentin Weigel (1553–1588) and a short appendix by the editor (and alchemist) Johannes Siebmacher.

In the *Philosophia Mystica*, Paracelsus adopted alchemical principles in a study of the ancient Biblical prophecies – particularly the Book of Daniel – in order to purportedly bring forth the true, concealed meaning from the intentionally confusing symbolism. In the two treatises penned by Haslmayr contained within *Philosophia Mystica* – entitled *Astronomia Olympi Novi Theophrasti* and *Theologia Cabalistica de perfecto homine* – he sought to elaborate the Christian magic of Paracelsus. Haslmayr effected this by evolving a visionary mystical system centred on the three cabalistic principles, the “four rules of our Christendom” and “eight virtues of holiness” based on the Sermon on the Mount. The following of these rules were the “key to the holy secret science and the magnalia of God.”<sup>168</sup>

Bruce also owned another edition of previously unprinted tracts by Paracelsus, published by Lucas Jennis in 1619. Included in this collection were his *Commentatio uber die Epistolam Judae* and *Sermones in Antichristum*. One can see in the latter work in particular the eschatological nature of Paracelsus’s thought.<sup>169</sup> A re-print of Johann Ambrosius Siebmacher’s *Waterstone of the Wise*, originally published by Jennis in 1619, can also be found in Bruce’s collection.<sup>170</sup> According to Carlos Gilly this is one of the most fascinating alchemical-theosophical books ever printed.<sup>171</sup> This exposition of the philosophers’ stone purports to reveal and describe the method of obtaining the universal tincture, which God had shown Adam and that was known by a number of true Sages, such as Hermes Trismegistus, Pythagoras, Plato, Ramon Lull, Basil Valentine and Paracelsus.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Carlos Gilly, “Theophrastia Sancta’: Paracelsianism as a religion in conflict with the established churches,” [http://www.ritmanlibrary.nl/c/p/res/art/art\\_01.html](http://www.ritmanlibrary.nl/c/p/res/art/art_01.html) (Feb. 18, 2011).

<sup>169</sup> See Appendix A. Bruce also possessed a first edition of Paracelsus’s treatise on the Last Supper, entitled, *Philosophia de limbo*, which was published in 1618 by the alchemist Johann Staricius. One can also find an English work by John Headrich setting forth the “Chymical Secrets” of Paracelsus. See Appendix A.

<sup>170</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>171</sup> Gilly, “Theophrastia Sancta,’” [http://www.ritmanlibrary.nl/c/p/res/art/art\\_01.html](http://www.ritmanlibrary.nl/c/p/res/art/art_01.html) (May 30, 2011).

<sup>172</sup> J. A. Siebmacher, *The Waterstone of the Wise*, <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/hydrolit.html> (Feb. 18 2011).

One can also find two responses from the F. R. C., or in other words, the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, attached to the main text.<sup>173</sup>

The books published by Jennis were at the initial forefront of the Rosicrucian furore in the second and third decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>174</sup> Whilst never completely disappearing in the second half of the century, it is possible to detect a resurgent interest in the doctrine of Rosicrucianism in Germany at the beginning of the eighteenth century. This interest was centred on a movement – the *Gold und Rosencreutz Orden* – led by a Silesian pastor, Samuel Richter. Under the pseudonym ‘Sincerus Renatus’ he published *Die Wahrhafte und Vollkommene Bereitung des Philosophischen Steins der Bruederschafft aus dem Orden des Gulden und Rosen Kreuzes* in 1710. As Rafal Prinke has argued, it seems probable that this codification of the rites and grades of the Rosicrucian Order was a description of a real order.<sup>175</sup> A year later the same author published *I. N. J. Göldene Quelle der Natur und Kunst* (Golden Font of Nature and Art), a copy of which is in Bruce’s library.<sup>176</sup>

The role of Samuel Richter, a Lutheran pastor, in promoting the theological-alembic doctrine of the *Gold und Rosencreutz Orden* highlights the intimate link between certain strands of Protestant religious thinking and esoteric pursuits. This is also reflected by Johann Jakob Zimmermann who combined his role as a Lutheran priest in Wurtemberg with extensive scientific and esoteric undertakings. In many ways the Rosicrucian Manifestos set forth a concrete doctrine stemming from Paracelsus’s potent mix of scientific inquiry and an alchemical worldview based on the doctrine of the macrocosm-microcosm, set within a framework dominated by eschatological expectancy. This proved extremely attractive to many radical Lutherans seeking a general reformation of the world based not only on Christian principles but also on the revelation of fundamental and divine truths through scientific inquiry. Thus, far from being a secondary consideration in the pursuit of knowledge, religion was at the crux of alchemy. Whether one studies the alchemy of Paracelsus or of Isaac Newton a century and a half later one finds at its heart a profound spiritual

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<sup>173</sup> Savel’eva, *Biblioteka*, 138, No. 362. A further noteworthy text published by Jennis’s printing press in Frankfurt in 1618 was a book with the curious title *Libellus Theosophiae de Veris Reliquiis seu semine Dei in nobis post lapsum relicto*. The title of this anonymous work suggests that it discusses godly seed and the Fall.

<sup>174</sup> This will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Two on Robert Erskine.

<sup>175</sup> Rafal T. Prinke, “The Jagged Sword and Polish Rosicrucians,” *Journal of Rosicrucian Studies* 1 (1983): 11.

<sup>176</sup> See Appendix A.

quest. It is with this thought in mind that one now turns to consider the religious side of Bruce's character.

### *Religion*

Can one detect a similar sense of spirituality underlying the scientific and esoteric interests displayed by Bruce? Certainly not according to Soviet and post-Soviet historians alike, who are loathed to recognize any form of religious sensibility that would threaten their construction of a wholly secularized character profile of one of Russia's pioneering scientific figures. L. M. Khlebnikov, writing in 1965, embodies this sentiment:

Books devoted to . . . theology, of which there were few in his library, carried the shade of their owners. Bruce approached theology, not as a believing Lutheran, but as an academic, as a historian and as a linguist.<sup>177</sup>

This stress on Bruce's secular and academic interest in theological matters was reiterated almost word-for-word much more recently by Svionov when he also stated that Bruce engaged in studying the history of religion as "an academic, historian and linguist."<sup>178</sup> In Western accounts, Bruce has also been championed as a secular Newtonian, although W. F. Ryan has noted that the latter part of his English language library collection was "sadly more commonly devoted to religion."<sup>179</sup>

This dominant perception of Bruce has remained unchallenged up to the present day despite the fact a wealth of evidence exists that highlights Bruce's religious nature. In this regard it is of great import to note the close bond that existed between Bruce and the Halle Pietist movement. These links are briefly discussed by the German historian Eduard Winter, in his seminal study on the links between the University of Halle and Russia in the eighteenth century.<sup>180</sup> Winter highlights Bruce's close connections to the Pietist movement, led by August Hermann Francke, which he argues arose at an early age and stemmed from the Lutheran opinions of his mother.<sup>181</sup> Indeed, Winter states that it is evident that Bruce played

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<sup>177</sup> Khlebnikov, "Russkii Faust," 198.

<sup>178</sup> Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 275.

<sup>179</sup> Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*, 144.

<sup>180</sup> See Eduard Winter, *Halle Als Ausgangspunkt der Deutschen Russlandkunde im 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953).

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

a crucial role in the attempt to disseminate Pietist ideas in Russia at the beginning of the eighteenth century:

Jacob Bruce was closely connected with A. H. Francke. Francke found in his house . . . a sanctuary and his house was a centre for Pietists from Halle. Countless Pietists began their activity in Russia as priests or teachers in his house. It was from there that they took their first steps.<sup>182</sup>

If one examines why Bruce would be drawn to the Pietist movement and act to promote its cause in Russia, it becomes clear that there is much in their religious worldview that would have been attractive to the learned Russo-Scot. Francke was the direct inheritor of a Pietist movement inspired by Philipp Jakob Spener and centred at the University of Halle. Spener's ideas, which first gained popularity in 1675 with the publication of his *Pia Desideria*, were based on a millenarian call for a reform of the clergy and religious practice. An emphasis was placed on the need for piety, the establishment of small groups (*collegia pietatis*) to spread the word of God through prayer, song and spiritual reading and a worldview that stressed unity between the faiths. It has been noted by F. Ernest Stoeffler that this tolerant branch of Protestantism was a religious movement "with its face turned towards the future" and that its followers were "pre-eminently the advocates of change in their day."<sup>183</sup>

Thus, in seeking to aid Halle Pietists in Russia, Bruce was actively promoting a religious outlook that potently fused mysticism, a tolerant ecumenicalism and the positive embrace of science (incorporating distinct esoteric elements) geared towards fulfilling their vision of a reformed society. Crucially, it seems that this Pietist fusion of religion and science was broadly in line with Bruce's own worldview.

If one consults Bruce's personal library one finds ample confirmation of his particular attraction to Pietist and Reformed theological literature permeated with a great deal of spiritual mysticism. Significantly, for example, Bruce had an extensive collection of Spener's personal writings, including *Der Klagen uber das Verdorben Christenthum* (1687), which encompasses his main ideas.<sup>184</sup> Bruce also owned a work edited and pref-

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>183</sup> Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, x.

<sup>184</sup> The four works in the Helsinki Collection are *Behauptung der Hoffnung Kunfftiger besserer Zeiten* (Frankfurt, 1693), *Einfältiger Erklärung der Christlichen Lehr* (Frankfurt, 1687), *Der Klagen uber das Verdorbene Christenthum* (Frankfurt, 1687) and *Sprüche Heliger Schrift* (Frankfurt, 1693). See Sirkka Havu and Irina Lebedeva, eds., *Collections donated by the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg to the Alexander University of Finland in 1829*



aced by Spener containing significant tracts of German Christian mysticism such as Johann Tauler's *Die Predigten, Das Arme Leben Christi, Medulla Animae* and the *Teutsche Theologia* as well as Thomas a Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ*.<sup>185</sup>

Spener played a crucial role in the founding of the University of Halle in the early 1690s, with the express goal of furthering the Pietist cause in an educational establishment. Many of the professors and teachers at this university shared Spener's religious outlook and some, such as Georg Ernst Stahl (1659–1734), the Professor of Medicine, the physician, Friedrich Hoffmann the Younger (1660–1742) and Johann Franz Budde wrote alchemical treatises. Bruce possessed alchemical works by Stahl and Hoffmann, as well as tracts by Budde and another Halle academic, Christian Thomasius.<sup>186</sup> The work of proto-Pietists is also in evidence in Bruce's library, with two works in Swedish by Lewis Bayly (c. 1575–1631) including his *Praxis Pietatis* and a series of works by the German theologian, Johann Balthasar Schupp (1610–1661) including *Salomo oder Regenten-Spiegel* (1657), dedicated to the virtuous reign of Solomon.<sup>187</sup>

As well as works by Pietists, or proto-Pietists, Bruce also owned works by similarly minded Puritans, such as William Ames, Joseph Symonds and Thomas Shephard and a Dutch edition of Nicolas Fontaine's (1625–1709) *The History of the Old and New Testament*. Fontaine was a Jansenist and a member of the Port Royal Movement and wrote the aforementioned work whilst imprisoned in the Bastille accused of Protestantism. A German edition of *Catechism and Confession of Faith* by the renowned Quaker Robert

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(Helsinki: Helsinki University Library, 1997), 233, Nos.90–93. In addition, one finds a work by Spener in the *Materialy* catalogue listed as *Pritchki sviashchennago pisaniiia*. This would seem to be *Das Nötige und Nützliche Lesen der Heligen Schrift*, published in Frankfurt in 1704. See *Materialy*, vol. 5, 204, No. 983.

<sup>185</sup> The work is entitled *Des Hoherleuchten... Lehrers J. Tauleri*, published in Frankfurt in 1681. It is listed in the *Materialy* catalogue as by Spener and entitled *Tolkovanie khristianskago ucheniia* (Interpretation of Christian Teaching). See *Materialy*, vol. 5, 213, No. 1176. The catalogue also states that this text was published in Frankfurt in 1681. The fact that these are one and the same book is not only suggested by the similarity in subject matter suggested by the Russian title, but also by the fact that this is the only book by Spener published in Frankfurt in 1681.

<sup>186</sup> See Appendix A for alchemical works by Stahl and Hoffmann. See Savel'eva, *Biblioteka*, 60–61, Nos.142 and 143 for work by Budde and for Thomasius, see Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 234, No. 98.

<sup>187</sup> See Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 221, Nos. 5 and 6 for the works by Bayly. See also Savel'eva, *Biblioteka*, 255, Nos. 622–25 for works by Schupp. For the work on Solomon, see *Materialy*, vol. 5, 188, No. 631.



Barclay (1648–1690) is also present in Bruce’s library.<sup>188</sup> This work expounds the Quaker doctrine in the form of a catechism and is still widely regarded as one of the principal source books for the movement.

Bruce’s sizeable theological collection also contains a plethora of other authors associated with mystical and spiritualist Christian (and largely Protestant) sects that flourished in the seventeenth century, as well as a huge quantity of Biblical texts and a series of books devoted to Hebraism, the ancient religious rites of the Jews and Egyptians and the history of Jerusalem.<sup>189</sup> Far from merely being an exercise in academic curiosity by a man devoid of religious sympathies, they display further evidence of an individual immersed in an unorthodox and tolerant form of Protestant Christianity rooted in a theosophical-alchemical worldview.

There is no better evidence to support this argument than to cite the presence of numerous theological and theosophical works in Bruce’s collection by the German mystic, alchemist and cobbler, Jakob Böhme. The appeal of Böhme in the seventeenth century (and beyond), as Andrew Weeks has demonstrated, lay in his anticipation of a pansophic synthesis of theology, alchemy, astrology and astronomy with Hermetic wisdom. This was immersed within a millenarian outlook that looked forward to a seventh age – or Enochian period – in which all branches at last realise that “they all belong to one tree” and “rejoice in their common root.”<sup>190</sup> It was precisely this doctrine that Quirinus Kuhlmann espoused during his

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<sup>188</sup> Savel’eva, *Biblioteka*, Nos.2, 96, 88. The Fontaine book, originally published in France in 1670, can be found in Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 226, No.37. For the book by Barclay, also see Havu and Lebedeva, 221, No. 4.

<sup>189</sup> The quantity of biblical texts in Bruce’s library collection is colossal. In German, one can find a rare 1562 edition of the Bible translated by Martin Luther and a further 1698 translation of the New Testament by the same figure and a 1703 edition of the New Testament printed by Triller. See Savel’eva, *Biblioteka*, 43, Nos.91 and 92; Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 222, No.12. It should be noted that the *Materialy*, catalogue lists six German Bibles and a Germany prayer book. See *Materialy*, vol. 5, Nos. 149, 271, 629, 914, 941, 1168 and 1366 respectively. Bruce also had numerous English biblical works, including three editions of Sternhold & Hopkins *The Whole Book of Psalms*, printed in 1598, 1689 and 1698, and a 1695 edition of the Holy Bible. See Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 222, Nos.8–11. Various other editions of the Bible in Swedish, Finnish, Dutch, Russian, Greek and Latin can also be found in Bruce’s library. See Savel’eva, *Biblioteka*, 189, No. 506; Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 222–3, Nos. 13 and 20 for Swedish Bibles; *Materialy*, vol. 5, 201, No. 936 for a Finnish language evangelical volume. For a joint Dutch and Russian edition of the New Testament, see *Materialy*, vol. 5, 153, No. 19. For A Dutch Bible, see *Materialy*, vol. 5, 192, No. 745. For Greek editions of the Bible appear in Bruce’s library, see Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 222–3, Nos. 14–18. For a Latin edition, see Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 223, No. 18.

<sup>190</sup> Jacob Böhme, *Mysterium Magnum*, as quoted in Thune, *The Behmenists*, 31.

six-month residence in Moscow and which attracted sympathetic overtures from a number of prominent residents. After all, there were already many followers of Böhme living peacefully in the Foreign Quarter prior to Kuhlmann's arrival.<sup>191</sup> Being a young adult of twenty at the time, and brought up in the heart of this eclectic and mystical Protestant milieu, it is likely that Kuhlmann's exposition of a form of mystical Christianity that was close to Böhme's worldview would have aroused the curiosity of Bruce.

Indeed, judging by the theological bent of Bruce's library it would seem that he came to share many of Kuhlmann's Böhman views. Although Böhme was a direct heir of Luther, Sebastian Franck, Paracelsus and Valentin Weigel in his strain of Protestant mysticism he was more explicit than his predecessors in proclaiming the way in which the divine permeates all realms of existence. This theory is demonstrated in *Von Christi Testamenten* (1623), a work of which Bruce possessed two editions.<sup>192</sup> In this commentary Böhme describes the macrocosmic influences on the microcosm of the sacraments and the occult nature of baptism.

Bruce also owned two editions of Böhme's *A Table of the Three Principles of the Divine Essence* (1624), which provides an exposition of the threefold nature of divinity.<sup>193</sup> In addition, Bruce possessed a copy of *The Table of the Divine Manifestation or an Exposition of the Threefold World* (1623) and *Von der Gnaden-Wahl* (The Election of Grace). The collection of shorter writings by Böhme, first published in 1624 under the heading *Der Wegk zu Christo* (The Way to Christ), was also present in Bruce's collection. This comprised tracts entitled, *Of True Repentance, Of True Resignation, Of Regeneration, Of the Supersensual Life, Of Heaven and Hell and The Way from Darkness to True Illumination*.

The alchemical and theosophical influence of Böhme's conception of creation and of the inevitable apocalypse is in clear evidence in Bruce's copy of Georg Friedrich Retzel's *Der Sechs Tage-Wercke* (1722).<sup>194</sup> In this

<sup>191</sup> Tikhonravov, "Kvirin Kul'man," vol. 12, 575.

<sup>192</sup> Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 223–4, Nos. 21 and 22.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> *Materialy*, vol. 5 227, No.31. The work is listed in the catalogue as by G. F. Retzelna and is given the title *Tainoe tolkovanie sovershennago mira v shest dnei* (1722). The full German title is *Der Sechs Tage-Wercke dierser Welt Geheime Bedeutung im Spiegel der uhralten, und Mosaischen Philosophie entdeckt, Was die Eigenschafft der Oberen, und unteren Wasser sey; und wie daraus alles seinen Ursprung habe, Wie die Wurckung des Oberen in das Untere Vollenbracht und daher in dierser Welt alles erhalten, und fortgeplantzet werde; Worde jeder sein Leben, auch wieder seinen Tod, und Verderben bekomme; Was der in Eden gepflantzte*

work Retzel discusses the secret meaning of the creation of the world in six days in terms of Mosaic philosophy and treats of the Garden of Eden and the eventual demise of all existence within a worldview saturated with alchemical symbolism.

It is clear that Bruce chose his religious tomes with care and precision. One does not find a whole raft of literature encompassing Catholicism and Orthodoxy but a series of volumes exploring and expounding various shades of Protestant or quasi-Protestant religiosity. What is more, within this literature there is a marked emphasis on mystical spirituality. In this regard, it is significant that the only religious/philosophical work of antiquity present in Bruce's library (apart from Biblical texts) is by the theosophist Ammonius Saccas (c. 175–242), the founder of the Neo-Platonic School in Alexandria.<sup>195</sup> At this school he taught Clement, Origen and Plotinus and advocated a universal brotherhood and the essential unity of all religions.

The historical and exegetical books in Bruce's library also display a marked interest in Judaic history and culture. This is testified by the fact that Bruce owned a 1609 edition of *Der Juden Talmud* and German, old Dutch and English editions of work by Josephus Flavius (AD 37–c. 95). The English edition owned by Bruce contains the complete works of Josephus, with a map of the Holy Land. Bruce could also acquaint himself with contemporary surveys of Jewish customs by reading Lancelot Addison's *The Present State of the Jews*, Paul Christian Kirchner's *Judisches Ceremoniel* (1720) and Humphrey Prideaux's *The History of the Jews*.<sup>196</sup> A number of other works in Bruce's library provided him with the opportunity to visualize all manner of Hebraic customs and buildings, including some remarkable examples of the visualization of Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple by Renaissance cartographers and architects. In Augustin Calmet's *An Historical, Critical, Geographical, Chronological, and Etymological Dictionary of the Holy Bible*, for example, Bruce could not only read an account of minerals, gems and stones connected to the Bible; he could also view 160 copper plates "representing the antiquities, habits, buildings, sepulchres, and other curiosities of the Jews."<sup>197</sup> These last works reveal Bruce's

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*Garten, auch der von Eden ausgehende Strohm mit seiner vierfachen Abtheilung seyn könne; Was der Baum des Erkäntnisses, wie auch die List, und Sprechen der Schlangen gewesen.*

<sup>195</sup> Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 221, No. 3.

<sup>196</sup> *Materialy*, vol. 5, 220, 176, Nos. 1314 and 672; Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 231, No. 75.

<sup>197</sup> Savel'eva, *Biblioteka*, 62, No. 147.

interest in Biblical – particularly Solomonic – architecture which played such a crucial part in the foundation myth of Freemasonry and held great appeal to many of the greatest minds in seventeenth and early eighteenth century Europe, such as Isaac Newton.<sup>198</sup>

### *Advancement of Learning*

Bruce played an extraordinary role in promoting the advancement of learning in Petrine Russia. His stewardship of the Mathematical and Navigation School in Moscow, his directorship of the Civil Typography and his tireless endeavours spreading astronomical knowledge would alone be sufficient to warrant a place among the pantheon of greatest contributors to Russian science and education. The breadth of his involvement in advancing knowledge in Russia, however, extended much beyond these fields of learning.

Peter the Great, for example, entrusted Bruce with a number of missions to hire craftsmen and architects. The first such mission was ordered by Peter the Great in a note sent to Bruce on September 19, 1711, in which “this learned person, skillful and knowledgeable in the tastes of things and people” was instructed to visit various German towns in order to conclude contracts with “craftsmen of calling.”<sup>199</sup> On December 7, 1712, Peter wrote to Bruce in Germany once again, with an instruction to enquire about whether or not a craftsmen was skilled in civil architecture and if so to attempt to bring him into Russian service.<sup>200</sup> Four days later Bruce received a further command from the tsar to find a landscape architect who was able to draw gardens and park perspectives and a garden designer from Potsdam or another kingdom. On one further occasion, in 1713, Bruce was again sent to Germany to hire craftsmen.<sup>201</sup>

Bruce was also entrusted with a string of other vital duties including purchasing scientific instruments and books. In October 1711, whilst at the wedding of the Tsarevich Alexei, Bruce also became acquainted with Leibniz and subsequently received a written greeting from the famed

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<sup>198</sup> Much of Masonic lore centres on the building of the Temple in Jerusalem by Solomon’s Master Mason, Hiram of Tyre. For an overview of this Hiram legend, see Albert G. Mackay and H. L. Haywood, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, vol. 2 (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2003), 653–4.

<sup>199</sup> Khmyrov, “Glavnye nachal’niki russkoi artillerii,” 175.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

philosopher.<sup>202</sup> Bruce, indeed, played an intermediary role between Leibniz and the tsar and continued corresponding with Leibniz over a number of years. In 1714, for example, on the instruction of the tsar, Bruce continued a correspondence with Leibniz on the origins of the Russian people.<sup>203</sup>

Bruce also acted as one of the primary transmitters of scientific thought and pedagogic literature into Russia through his extensive work as a translator. It seems that even during military campaigns Bruce's passion for transmitting Western learning was undimmed, using his private moments for further linguistic deliberations.<sup>204</sup> A whole raft of books appeared in 1717 ranging from a book on moral instruction for children, entitled *Iunosti chestnoe zertsalo* (A Mirror of Honour for Youth) to lexicons of Russian-Dutch and Dutch-Russian. Other translations by Bruce included the previously mentioned *Uchenie i praktika artilerii* by Johann Siegmund Buchner, and the *Tablitsy sinusov* by Adriaan Vlacq, as well as a book on navigation entitled *Zemnovodnogo kruga kratkoe opisanie*, originally by Hubner. Arguably the most impressive and important of Bruce's translations appeared in 1717 with the publication of a Russian edition of Christiaan Huygen's *Cosmotheoros* (1698). Peter the Great had directly ordered the translation of this work and it ranks as the first book of a scientific nature to be published in Russia.<sup>205</sup> One can also interpret the fact that the tsar read the manuscript of the introduction by Bruce as a sign of the priority attached to this work.<sup>206</sup>

In this introduction, Bruce used a number of quotations from the Bible and promises to reveal to the reader a "mystery worthy of amazement."<sup>207</sup> Blessings are also affixed to the beginning and ending of the translation – the latter reading "Soli Deo Gloria" – that as Boss notes gave the work the aura of ecclesiastical approval.<sup>208</sup> What Boss fails to mention, however, is that this religious 'aura' is entirely in keeping with the spirit of Huygen's original text, which is consistently religious in tone. If one consults the

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<sup>202</sup> Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 93.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>205</sup> The Russian title is *Kniga mirozreniia ili mnenie o nebesnozennykh globusakh i ikh ukrasheniakh*.

<sup>206</sup> Bruce wrote to the tsar on November 2, 1716 regarding this introduction and it is clear from the letter that the tsar had already read the manuscript introduction. See Pekar-skii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 299–300. Boss also argues that the tsar himself contributed to the writing of the introduction. See Boss, *Newton and Russia*, 51.

<sup>207</sup> Boss, *Newton and Russia*, 52.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

1698 English edition, for example, one quickly becomes aware of Huygen's desire to validate his scientific enquiries within a profoundly Christian framework. One of the earliest chapters is entitled "These Conjectures do not contradict the Holy Scriptures" and is followed in quick succession by a chapter entitled "These Studies useful to Religion," the final sentence of which states:

We shall worship and reverence that God the Maker of all these things; we shall admire and adore his Providence and wonderful Wisdom which is displayed and manifested all over the Universe, to the confusion of those who would have the Earth and all things formed by the shuffling Concourse of Atoms, or to be without beginning.<sup>209</sup>

In a chapter devoted to the presence of animals and plants on other planets in the solar system, Huygens refers to the clear manifestation in them of "the finger of God and the Wisdom of Divine Providence" and later describes God as the "Divine Architect."<sup>210</sup> In consideration of the gift of sight and perception Huygens states "is there anything in which God has more plainly manifested his excellent Geometry?"<sup>211</sup>

Despite its religious tone and veneration of the 'Wise Creator,' its translation and publication by Bruce in 1717 caused a stir among many sections of society – especially the Old Believers. This fact is illustrated by Mikhail Petrovich Avramov, the official publisher of the book. Avramov was a moderate Old Believer who was broadly in favour of the reforms being carried out by the tsar, but he clearly could not stomach the Copernican blasphemy contained within Huygens's text. Avramov labelled the work "satanic perfidy" and stated;

In 1716 General Iakov Bruce presented His Imperial Highness... with a newly translated book (*knizhichikha*). Affecting the secretive and cunning flattery that was habitual with him when before the Sovereign, thus concealing his godless, frenzied, and atheistic heart, Bruce praised the book by the delirious author Kristofor Huiens, and others like it, pretending that it was very clever and wholesome for the educating of all the people, and moreover very necessary for navigation.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Christiaan Huygens, *The Celestial Worlds Discover'd, or Conjectures concerning the Inhabitants, Plants and Productions of the Worlds in the Planets* (London, 1698), 11.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 20–21.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>212</sup> I. A. Chistovich, *Feofan Prokopovich i ego vremia* (St. Petersburg, 1868), 264; Boss, *Newton and Russia*, 62–4.

Bruce would have certainly faced a considerable degree of hostility to his educational endeavour if his own publisher held these views! Yet, the choice of translating *Cosmotheoros* was far from based on ‘godless’ and ‘atheistic’ grounds, as the content of Huygens’s work illustrates. On the contrary, it reflects the belief of both Bruce and Peter the Great in a form of science in awe of God’s divinity and marvelling at the harmony and wonders of his universe. Once again, in Bruce’s educational endeavours, we see the merger of religious and scientific beliefs for the benefit of the Petrine reform programme.

In the past the driving force behind Bruce’s enormous contribution to the advancement of learning in Russia, which included a considerable role in the foundation of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, has not been contemplated within a religious, let alone a millenarian framework. Throughout the seventeenth century, however, many champions of the advancement of learning based their reforming message on a belief that they were living in the “autumn of the world,” as Francis Bacon remarked, and in accordance with the prophecy of Daniel, knowledge will be increased. This belief not only underpinned the writing of Bacon but also dominates the Rosicrucian Manifestos of the same period and the later writings of educational and scientific pioneers, such as Jan Amos Comenius whose programme for universal knowledge, colleges and schools was rooted in a millenarian concept of a regenerate last age.<sup>213</sup> In turn, Comenian ideas of *pansophia* were at the heart of Gottfried Leibniz’s worldview. A century after the publication of Bacon’s *Advancement of Learning* (1603), this fundamental belief is still evident in the thought of Isaac Newton who repeatedly refers to living in “the last times” in his manuscripts, in which pre-lapsarian knowledge is being restored.

### *Conclusion*

Jacob Bruce has long posed something of an enigma for those seeking to understand this most erudite of Petrine statesmen. On the surface the Faustian image of a sorcerer meddling in the black arts – transmitted in popular legends and consequently in literary works – is wholly at odds with the traditional scholarly interpretation of the Petrine inner circle being zealously committed to rational and secular ideals of moderniza-

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<sup>213</sup> See Webster, *Great Instauration*, 26.



tion. Thus, since the nineteenth century it has been customary to portray Bruce as either a magician of the black arts *or* a serious scientist and statesman. Whilst the latter interpretation is certainly correct, it has been the intention of this chapter to argue that it would be a mistake to disregard Bruce's genuine attraction to esoteric questions.

An interest in mysticism and esotericism is more easily understood if one looks at Bruce's background. On his father's side, for example, Bruce could draw on powerful family associations with the mysterious medieval Knights Templar and on a burgeoning form of Jacobite chivalry that espoused mysticism and led to a distinctive form of Scottish Rite Freemasonry. In addition Bruce was inclined towards forms of German Christian mysticism, as espoused by Böhme and the Pietists, possibly as a result of the Lutheran upbringing he received from his mother, a German native. One should also bear in mind that esoteric pursuits, such as alchemy, astrology and Cabbala, still attracted widespread interest from sizeable sections of the European educated upper class – particularly in German-speaking areas. One only has to look at the enormous amount of contemporary publications on esoteric matters possessed by Bruce, which mostly originated from Germany, to understand that the Russian statesman was not ploughing alone in this field of inquiry.

Yet, ultimately despite his Scottish and German roots, Bruce was a figure who acted on a Russian stage. This stage was dynamic, progressive and most importantly relatively open and tolerant in regard to religious and philosophical issues; ideal for an inquisitive and energetic individual such as Bruce. This was certainly not the case with the massed audience from whence the majority of legends surrounding Bruce derived. However, despite the fantastical quality of many of the legends surrounding the so-called 'Sorcerer at the Sukharev Tower,' it is important not to lose sight of the fact that Bruce *was* fascinated in esoteric matters. This does not make him a *koldun* (wizard), but simply one of many learned Europeans at the time who continued to explore the secrets of what they perceived to be God's divine and glorious creation. What did make Bruce stand out, however, was that he unashamedly carried out his esoteric enquiries into natural science in a land hitherto largely unaccustomed to such overt displays of scientific endeavour.





## CHAPTER TWO

### ROBERT ERSKINE (1677–1718): AN IATROCHEMIST AT THE PETRINE COURT

#### *Introduction*

The untimely death of the Scottish physician Robert Erskine on November 30, 1718 (St. Andrew's Day), at the age of forty-one, was keenly felt by Peter the Great. His funeral, which was accorded full state honours, took place in St. Petersburg on January 4, 1719. It was a solemn and magnificent occasion befitting a man holding a number of key positions in Petrine Russia. A vivid description of the proceedings is provided by Friedrich Christian Weber, the Hanoverian Ambassador to the Russian court at the time:

Doctor Areskin the Czar's first Physician and titular Councillor, being lately dead at Alonitz, his Corpse was sent for to *Petersbourg*, from whence it was carried in Procession with great funeral Pomp on the 4th of January 1719 to the new Monastery *Alexander Nevsky*, seven Wersts from *Petersbourg*. The Czar himself assisted at the Funeral; in the House where the Corpse lay in State the Minister of the Reformed Church made a funeral Speech in Low-Dutch in Praise of the deceased: His Majesty hereupon gave some Marks of the Esteem he had had for the deceased, and at the same time shewed particular Favour towards his Relation Sir *Harry Stirling*, who was come to *Russia* under the Czar's Protection to see the Doctor's last Will put in Execution. The Corpse was carried on the Shoulders of the Physicians and the principal Surgeons who wore long Mourning Cloaks, and was followed by a numerous Procession and two hundred Flambeaux, as far as the Bridge of the *German Slaboda*. From thence the Funeral proceeding upon Sledges to the aforesaid Monastery, Soldiers being ranged on both Sides of the Way leading from the Gate to the Chapel, with lighted Flambeaux in their Hands. The Czar himself followed the Corpse carrying a burning Taper in his Hand according to the Russian Custom, as far as the Vault, which was built between two others in which the Corpses of the late Princess *Natalia*, and a certain Dutch Rear-Admiral were deposited.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of his death Erskine had become one of the tsar's closest and most intimate advisers and exercised considerable influence on shaping the direction of the monarch's grand reformist project. Having arrived in

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<sup>1</sup> Weber, *Present State of Russia*, vol. 1, 246–7.

Russia in the summer of 1704, Erskine was initially the house doctor for Alexandr Menshikov, the tsar's personal favourite.<sup>2</sup> According to many sources, however, by January 1705 Erskine had already been appointed chief physician to the tsar. Indeed, a letter written to Erskine in June 1705, by his close friend Thomas Crawley, addresses him as "Chief Physician to the Tsar" and in the same year Charles Whitworth, the British Ambassador in Russia, also listed him as "Physician to the Czar."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, in March and April 1706, two official *ukazy* confirmed Erskine as *Archiator* and President of the *Aptekarskaia kantseliariia* (Medical Chancery), making him the chief authority on all medical matters in the vast empire.<sup>4</sup> Charles Whitworth acknowledged the importance of Erskine within the Russian hierarchy when he wrote to the Royal Society in London on March 7, 1713 stating that Erskine's "Employment there [is] of very great Consideration and Power."<sup>5</sup> In Danzig (Gdansk), on April 30, 1716, Peter the Great not only officially reconfirmed these prestigious posts but also awarded his chief physician the title of State-Councillor, which brought with it the privilege of hereditary nobility.

In addition to these responsibilities Erskine was also the driving force behind the creation of Russia's first wholly medicinal and botanical garden – the St. Petersburg Apothecary Garden – on the appropriately named *Aptekarskii Ostrov* (Apothecary Island) in 1714. This year also marked the appointment of Erskine as the Director and Chief Librarian of the newly established St. Petersburg Kunstkamera, a position which required an encyclopaedic knowledge of all branches of the arts, science and religion. This learning was greatly appreciated by the tsar and was utilized on his second foreign embassy between 1716 and 1717, when Erskine facilitated meetings with some of the most learned and eminent scientists, medics and theologians in Denmark, Holland, France and a number of German states.

<sup>2</sup> I. E. Andreievskii, ed., *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' Brokgauza i Efrona*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1890), 64.

<sup>3</sup> *Whitworth Papers*, Add MSS. 37,354, f.278v, British Library, London. See also John H. Appleby, "British Doctors in Russia, 1657–1807: Their Contribution to Anglo-Russian Medical and Natural History" (PhD diss., University of East Anglia, 1979), 45. Mark Mirskii, however, claims that Erskine only became the tsar's Chief Physician in 1713. See M. B. Mirskii, "Doktor Robert Erskin – pervyi rossiiskii arkhiatr," *Otechestvennaia istoriia* 2 (1995): 136.

<sup>4</sup> Appleby, "British Doctors," 47. The Apothecary Office was renamed *Aptekarskaia kantseliariia* in 1707, having previously being called the *Aptekarskii prikaz*.

<sup>5</sup> Whitworth Letter, March 7, 1712/1713 Royal Society Letter Book, 15, The Royal Society Library, London.

Even from this cursory overview of Erskine's key responsibilities within Peter the Great's Russia it is clear that he was no second-rung official, merely attracted to the eastern fringe of Europe by the lure of financial rewards. Yet, with this in mind it is remarkable to note the extent to which his valuable contribution to Petrine Russia has been largely overlooked by historians. This is a sentiment expressed by Mark Mirskii, who has written that "unfortunately the contemporary reader knows hardly anything about this remarkable personality."<sup>6</sup> His brief ten-page article sought to redress the balance by outlining some of Erskine's noteworthy achievements. In addition to this work one can also refer to an article written in 1983 by I. N. Lebedeva, dedicated to Erskine and his library, for some additional information regarding the Scottish physician.<sup>7</sup>

In the West one must thank two British historians for doing much to preserve Erskine's legacy. In 1904 the Reverend Robert Paul published a series of letters and documents pertaining to Erskine in a Scottish historical journal.<sup>8</sup> Drawing on these documents, John Appleby devoted a chapter of his doctoral thesis (submitted in 1979) on British doctors in Russia to the medical career of Erskine.<sup>9</sup> Subsequently he wrote articles focusing on Erskine as a natural scientist and on his personal library.<sup>10</sup> Arguably his greatest service to preserving the legacy of Erskine, however, was to transcribe the catalogue of the Erskine library collection held at the Academy of Sciences Library in St. Petersburg.<sup>11</sup>

With the exception of these two praiseworthy figures, the modern English-speaking scholar is faced with limited material regarding Erskine. The most comprehensive study of Erskine published in recent years can be found in Rebecca Wills's *The Jacobites and Russia, 1715–1750*, where a number of pages are devoted to his role in the political intrigue surrounding the lead up and aftermath to the Jacobite Rebellion in 1715.<sup>12</sup> Steve Murdoch also discusses Erskine's Jacobite links in an article dating from 1996 and in a publication on Scottish networks in northern Europe between

<sup>6</sup> Mirskii, "Doktor Robert Erskin," 135.

<sup>7</sup> I. N. Lebedeva, "Leib-medik Petra I Robert Areskin i ego biblioteka," in *Russkie biblioteki i ikh chitatel*, ed. S. P. Luppov (Leningrad: Nauka, 1983), 98–105.

<sup>8</sup> See Paul, "Letters and Documents," 371–430.

<sup>9</sup> See Appleby, "British Doctors."

<sup>10</sup> See J. H. Appleby, "Robert Erskine: Scottish Pioneer of Russian Natural History," *Archives of Natural History* 10:3 (1982): 377–98; Appleby and Cunningham, "Robert Erskine & Archibald Pitcairne," 3–16.

<sup>11</sup> Transcribed copies of Erskine's catalogue were presented to the Royal Society Library and The National Library of Scotland in 1981.

<sup>12</sup> See Wills, *Jacobites and Russia*, 41–55.

1603–1746.<sup>13</sup> In addition, one can glean general biographical information on Erskine from three pages in Anthony Cross's *By the Banks of the Neva* (1997).<sup>14</sup>

Although there is a need for a thorough biographical account of the life of Robert Erskine, this chapter does not attempt to analyze all sides of Erskine's character and career. Its primary objective is to reveal his fascination with, and knowledge of, all manner of experimental esoteric pursuits – particularly alchemy – and attraction to mystical forms of Protestantism. Furthermore, I will argue that these 'unorthodox' scientific and theological leanings were imbued by a sense of Paracelsianism and Rosicrucianism inherited from his tutors at university and his intellectual peers in both Edinburgh and London. In this regard, it is also of crucial importance to trace the roots of Erskine's interest in esotericism to his family background in Scotland, to his direct links with Jacobites and to his medical training in Paris and Utrecht.

No legends exist in Russia concerning the Faustian sorcery of Erskine as they do with Bruce, yet this does not detract from the fact that in many ways they shared a similar outlook regarding science, esotericism and religion. Thus, when light is shed on this side of Erskine's life and character it also directly reflects onto both Peter the Great personally and Petrine Russia as a whole, as the Scottish physician was able to exert tremendous influence at a critical period in the tsar's attempt to transform Russia.

### *Robert Erskine's Ancestry and Jacobite Links*

Robert Erskine was born in September 1677 in the small village of Alva in Clackmannanshire, Scotland.<sup>15</sup> He was the sixth surviving son of Sir Charles Erskine, Bart of Alva and Lady Christian Dundas and had the good fortune of being born into one of the most eminent and successful families in Scotland with extremely close ties to the Stuart monarchy.<sup>16</sup> His Great-Grandfather, John Erskine (d.1572), had successfully petitioned Parliament for the title of Earl of Mar and from 1566 was the Sheriff of

<sup>13</sup> See Steve Murdoch, "Soldiers, Sailors, Jacobite Spy: Russo-Jacobite Relations 1688–1750," *Slavonica* 3:1 (1996): 7–27; Steve Murdoch, *Network North: Scottish Kin, Commercial and Covert Associations in Northern Europe, 1603–1746* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 315–32.

<sup>14</sup> Anthony Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva: Chapters from the Lives and Careers of the British in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 33, 95, 123–6.

<sup>15</sup> His baptism was registered in the Alva Parish Register on September 8, 1677. See Paul, "Letters and Documents," 375, fn.1.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 374–5.

Stirlingshire and the warden of Stirling Castle. Upon the birth of Queen Mary's son James (the future James VI of Scotland and James I of England), John Erskine was entrusted with keeping the young Prince and raising him in the Protestant faith and indeed became the chosen regent for a time in 1571, prior to his death.

Robert Erskine's Grandfather, John Erskine the 2nd (or 7th) Earl of Mar (c. 1558–1634), was the favourite companion of the young King James, who gave him the nickname 'Jock o' the Sclaits' and remained a lifelong confidante, even negotiating James's ascension to the English throne in 1603. The second Earl of Mar shared the spiritual and mystical interests of James, who has been referred to as "the most learned and intellectually curious monarch of the age."<sup>17</sup>

An extremely interesting relative of Robert Erskine's was Sir George Erskine of Innerteil (c. 1570–1646), who was a cousin of his Grandfather and also a fellow classmate. George Erskine has been described as the most important of a number of followers of Hermetic philosophy or alchemy in the time of King James VI.<sup>18</sup> This is testified by George Erskine's grandson George MacKenzie, the Earl of Cromartie (1630–1714), who donated an important collection of his Grandfather's alchemical manuscripts to the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in 1707. These included Erskine's own "Epitome of Architecture," which refers to 'frie masons' and handwritten copies of the Rosicrucian manifestos, probably written by Erskine himself, entitled *Fama Fraternitatis, or Discovery of the Fraternitie of the Most Laudable Ordour, of the Rosy Cros and Confessio Fraternitatis: or The Confession of the Laudable Fraternitie of the most honored ordour of the Rosy Cross wrettin to the Learned of Europe*.<sup>19</sup> The Earl of Cromartie himself attests to the Hermetic and possible Rosicrucian links of his Grandfather in the inscription preceding Volume I of the manuscripts:

I having found by letters directed from one Dr Politius to my grandfather Sr George Areskine of Invertile . . . was a great student in naturale philosophy, evn to a considerable advancement in the Hermetic Schoole & had a

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<sup>17</sup> Maurice Lee, Jr., *Great Britain's Solomon: James VI and I in His Three Kingdoms* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 32.

<sup>18</sup> J. Small, "Sketches of Early Scottish Alchemists: Michael Scott- King James IV- Sir George Erskine of Innerteil," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. 11 (Edinburgh: Sessions, 1874–1875/1875–1876), 189.

<sup>19</sup> For details of the alchemical manuscripts donated to the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, see R. I. McCallum, "Sir George Erskine of Innerteil (c. 1570–1646) and the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh," *The Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh* 32 (2002): 220–3.

correspondence in very remote parts wt the sonnes of Hermes: & of whose fruits of his extensive & secret correspondence with them I have deposited some volumes of manuscripts, mostly of his owne handwritt. This was sent to him, by the Societ at Hess; & directed under the convoy of the sd Dr Politius.<sup>20</sup>

The 'Society at Hess' arguably refers to the alleged Rosicrucian movement, which was supposedly centred in this district of Germany, and alludes to Erskine apparently being an important and respected contact in the diffusion of their radical vision. The manner of the Earl of Cromartie's inscription also leads one to believe that he was rather proud of his Grandfather's Rosicrucian links and alchemical pursuits. It is likely that Robert Erskine would have been aware of his relative's reputation as one of Scotland's greatest adepts, especially as the Earl of Cromartie and Robert Erskine shared close ties with founding members and high-ranking officials of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh.<sup>21</sup>

The prominent role of the Erskine family in Scottish and British life was to continue into Robert's lifetime. His paternal uncle, William Erskine (d.1685), for example, was a cupbearer to Charles II and was elected to the Philosophical Society on September 11, 1661 prior to becoming an original Fellow of the Royal Society on April 22, 1663. What is more, in 1662 and 1663 he was voted onto the Council of the Philosophical/Royal Society. In 1677 he was elected as Master of Charterhouse, a post he occupied until his death.<sup>22</sup>

One can also cite the contributions of Sir Charles Erskine (d. 1677) and his son Sir Alexander Erskine (1663–1727) of the Cambo branch of the family. Both father and son were Lyon King of Arms, which was the title given to the leading authority on Scottish heraldry. Robert Erskine himself was not adverse to the attractions of heraldry, enthusiastically utilizing the family motto of 'Je Pense Plus' and a personal coat-of-arms as a bookplate affixed to many tomes in his personal library (see Fig. 22 below).

<sup>20</sup> Erskine Manuscripts, vol. 1, folio 1, The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, Edinburgh. Quoted in McCallum, "Sir Geogre Erskine," 214.

<sup>21</sup> Both men were close to the eminent physician Archibald Pitcairne (1652–1713), and Robert Erskine's maternal Uncle and occasional medical studies supervisor, Dr. Alexander Dundas, was appointed President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in 1703.

<sup>22</sup> Alsager Vian, "Erskine, William (d. 1685)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://oxforddnb.com/index/101008877/William-Erskine> (Feb. 21, 2011). In his diary, John Evelyn remarked that William Erskine was 'wise and learned'. See Evelyn, *The Diary*, vol. 4, 262.





Fig. 22. Robert Erskine's personal bookplate with the motto "Je Pense Plus" (I think more [than I say or write]) visible above. Taken from Johann Buno's *Memoriale Juris Civilis Romani* (1673–1674).<sup>23</sup>

More significantly, Robert Erskine was a cousin of John Erskine the 6th (or 11th) Earl of Mar (1675–1732), who led the unsuccessful Jacobite Rebellion in 1715. The Erskine family had always been loyal to the Stuart cause and although the Earl of Mar initially pledged allegiance to the Hanoverian monarch George I, in 1714, he quickly rescinded this vow and travelled incognito from London to Scotland in August 1715. This about-turn earned the Earl of Mar the unflattering nickname 'Bobbing John.' The Earl was

<sup>23</sup> The motto "Je pense plus que je ne parle" (I think more than I say) was also inscribed onto Erskine's coffin. See Friedrich Christian Weber, "Zapiski Vebera o Petre Velikom i ego preobrazovaniikh," *Russkii arkhiv* 9 (1872): 1642.



ultimately a failure on the battlefield – fleeing to France with James Stuart in February 1716 – yet in many ways his reputation deserves to be remembered for more than this inglorious debacle. Not only was the Earl of Mar at the summit of the intricate and far-reaching network of Jacobite sympathizers; he has also been strongly linked to the Masonic fraternity. In 1872, for example, John Yarker wrote that the Earl became Grand Master of the Order of the Temple in 1715.<sup>24</sup> The foundations upon which this claim is made are strengthened by two further factors, the first of which is that his only surviving son, Thomas, Lord Erskine (1705–1766) was initiated into the Kilwinning Lodge, Scots Arms, Stirlingshire in 1736 and was the Grand Master Mason of Scotland between 1749–1750.<sup>25</sup>

Secondly, one must consider the close relationship between the Earl of Mar and Chevalier Andrew Ramsay (1686–1743), of whom mention was made regarding his championing of *Ecossais* Freemasonry in France and his mystical and spiritual interests in the previous chapter. This relationship extended to the Earl of Mar patronizing Ramsay and the two retained an extremely close friendship for many years. Intriguingly, Ramsay's patronage by the Earl of Mar was cemented by clan connections on his mother's side. In fact, Ramsay's successful attempt in 1723 to gain an official certificate of nobility and membership of the Order of St. Lazarus, bringing with it the title of Chevalier, was made possible because of his family ties with the Erskine's of Mar. The patent, granted by James, the Old Pretender states:

It having been certified by several Lords of our realm living in Paris that Andrew Michael Ramsay Esquire, a gentleman of Scotland, is descended . . . through his mother from the most noble and very illustrious house of the Duke of Mar, Duke of Erskine and Peer of Scotland, we have graciously pleased to grant him this our authentic declaration of the nobility of his descent.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> John Yarker, *Notes on the Scientific and Religious Mysteries of Antiquity* (London, 1872), 124; *Statutes of the Religious and Military Order of the Temple, as established in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1843), xv–xvi; Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, *The Temple and the Lodge* (London: Arrow Books, 1998), 228–334, 376–77.

<sup>25</sup> See Alexander Whitehead and Philip Maley, "An Historical Sketch," The Provincial Grand Lodge of Stirlingshire, <http://www.pgls.co.uk/history/the%20of%20opgl.htm> (Feb. 21, 2011).

<sup>26</sup> *Stuart Papers*, Miscellaneous 21/26, Windsor Castle. For a facsimile of the patent, see C. N. Batham, "Chevalier Ramsay, a new appreciation," *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 81 (1967): 283.

With his prominence in the Jacobite hierarchy and his links to Freemasonry, it is intriguing to note the intimate bond between the Earl of Mar and the Erskine's of Alva. Robert Erskine's elder brother, Sir John Erskine (1672–1739), was an extremely close confidante of the Earl and was a loyal lieutenant when he raised the Jacobite banner in 1715.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, Sir John was shipwrecked near St. Andrews in the middle of January 1716 whilst attempting to bring money and arms from France for the Jacobite rebels.<sup>28</sup> At the beginning of February 1716 Sir John was also commanded by James Stuart and the Earl of Mar to sail to France with dispatches for the Duke d'Orleans, James Stuart's wife and for the exiled king's secretary, the Earl of Bolingbroke.<sup>29</sup>

The role of Robert Erskine in the aftermath of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715 has been debated by a number of historians over the past century and a half. The main source of debate has been the so-called Gyllenborg Conspiracy of February 1717, when the British government published a document entitled *Letters which passed between Count Gyllenborg, Baron Goertz, Sparre, and Others, relating to raising a Rebellion in his Majesty's Dominion*. This document caused a sensation in the diplomatic world, with its incriminating evidence against a string of Swedish diplomats and against Robert Erskine. Essentially the British government accused Erskine of attempting to effect a Russo-Swedish-Jacobite alliance against the Hanoverian regime. Implicated with Erskine in this conspiracy were his cousin, the Earl of Mar and a clutch of Swedish ambassadors: Count Carl Gyllenborg, the Swedish Ambassador to Britain and a Jacobite sympathizer, Erik Sparre, the Swedish Ambassador to France and Baron Görtz, Ambassador at The Hague and First Minister to Charles XII.<sup>30</sup> Erskine did indeed secretly meet with Baron Görtz and his agent Stanislaus Poniatowski in Amsterdam in early 1717, whilst accompanying the tsar on his second grand tour of Europe. When news of the scandal broke, however, the involvement of Erskine was strenuously denied by the tsar and Erskine himself. An official memorial was sent

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<sup>27</sup> The pair evidently went to school together, where they developed a close bond. In a letter from Sir John Erskine to the Earl of Mar, dated April 6, 1716, the former wrote: "You may remember at school we were taught, and I believe 'tis not wrong:- *Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata.*" See, *Stuart Papers*, vol. 2 (1904), 63.

<sup>28</sup> *Stuart Papers*, vol. 1 (1902), 486, 490, 494.

<sup>29</sup> Paul, "Letters and Documents," 393.

<sup>30</sup> Gyllenborg was a friend of the Earl of Bolingbroke, the secretary to the Old Pretender. For more on Gyllenborg's Jacobite sympathies, see Marsha Keith Schuchard, "Ramsay, Swift, and the Jacobite-Masonic Version of the Stuart Restoration," in *Ésotérisme, Gnosés & Imaginarie Symbolique: Mélanges Offerts à Antoine Faivre*, ed. by Richard Caron and others (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 491–506.

by the Russian resident in Britain, F. D. Veselovskii, to the Secretary of State, James Stanhope, on March 12, 1717:

His Majesty's Surprize in that Respect, was the greater in that his Enemies, to give some Colour to their malicious Insinuations, have been so daring, as to mention in their Letters, That the Sieur Erskine, Physician to His Czarish Majesty, had held a Correspondence with the Earl of Mar . . . he protested that he was entirely innocent of this whole Plot; the rather, because he never received Orders from his Czarish Majesty to enter into such affairs . . . and he afterwards declar'd upon Oath, and on the forfeiture of his Life, that he never wrote such letters, either to the Earl of Mar, or any other<sup>31</sup>

Erskine is also known to have written to Stanhope protesting his innocence.<sup>32</sup> These vows of innocence were enough to defuse the personal attack on Erskine, and have been taken at face value by most subsequent historians. Solov'ev, for example, wrote that as far as Erskine is concerned, there is to this day no direct incriminating evidence linking him to the Jacobite plot.<sup>33</sup> Robert Paul, writing in 1904, also took a sceptical view vis-à-vis Erskine's involvement, arguing that "with regard to Dr. Erskine's conduct in this business, it is exceedingly difficult to come to any certain determination. Any positive proof of his actual complicity in the plot is wanting indeed."<sup>34</sup>

Yet, if one consults the *Stuart Papers* relating to the period 1716–1718, it soon becomes clear that Dr. Robert Erskine played an absolutely pivotal role in trying to secure a peace between Russia and Sweden, in order to further the Jacobite cause.<sup>35</sup> However, according to Rebecca Wills, Erskine's substantial involvement with the Stuart cause after the Jacobite rising of 1715 sprang from an individual who prior to this was a "passive and rather lazy Jacobite sympathizer."<sup>36</sup> Contrary to this claim, however, it is clear that Dr. Erskine did maintain links – albeit infrequently – with both family members and Jacobites after his arrival in Russia in 1704 and prior to

<sup>31</sup> F. D. Veselovskii, *A Memoriale Presented to His Britannick Majesty by Mousieur Weselowsky, Minister from His Czarish Majesty* (London, 1717), 4.

<sup>32</sup> L. N. Nikoforov, *Russko-angliiskie otnosheniia pri Petre I* (Moscow, 1950), 152–3.

<sup>33</sup> S. M. Solov'ev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneshikh vremen*, vol. 4 (St. Petersburg, 1911), 357.

<sup>34</sup> Paul, "Letters and Documents," 386–7.

<sup>35</sup> See *Stuart Papers*, vols. 2–6 (1904–1914). Rebecca Wills, in her study of Jacobites in Russia, does much to quash the air of doubt and ambiguity surrounding Erskine's role in the whole affair. She used the *Stuart Papers* to demonstrate that not only did Erskine meet with Swedish representatives; he was also deeply enmeshed in the political intrigues of his cousin, the Earl of Mar, after his failed attempt to secure the throne for James Stuart in 1715. See Wills, *Jacobites and Russia*, 41–62.

<sup>36</sup> Wills, *Jacobites and Russia*, 41.

the Jacobite Rebellion in 1715. In 1705, for example, Erskine received a letter from a certain William Willys in Hamburg dated April 2. The contents of this letter make it clear that Erskine had strong links with Lord James Drummond (c. 1673–1720) – the noted Jacobite and Knight of the Thistle – whose father (also James Drummond (1648–1716)) was allegedly the head of the Templar-Masonic order between 1686 and 1708.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, this eminent figure is keen to stress what appears to be his patronage to him:

Here is in this town a country man, and an acquaintance of yours my Lord Drummond, who has mentioned you to me severall times, and now desires me to let you know he bears a part in every thing that concerns you. He left England upon being engagd in some of the troubles in his own Country Considering who is his father, and what his Principles, its certainly a fault for a man to follow his Conscience in the one, and in other matters to provide for his own Interest. When you answer this letter you may send it to Mr Goodfellow the English Consul at your place to be inclosed to Mr Francis Stratford Merchant here who will take care to deliver it to me.<sup>38</sup>

The National Archives of Scotland also holds a letter from Robert Erskine to the Earl of Mar from Moscow, dated January 20, 1708.<sup>39</sup> In it Erskine informs his cousin of his time in Poland, refers to Ovid’s description of those parts and complains that “it is so cold that the ink freezes” and berates “those terrible dogs the Swedes.” He notes, however, that “I thank God that I find myself very well here being very kindly entertained by His Majesty and Prince Menshikoff.” This letter is clear evidence of sustained links between Robert Erskine and his cousin, the Earl of Mar. It is also clear from the family letters published by Robert Paul that Erskine corresponded at least once to his brother, John Erskine, on February 12, 1710.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, on October 8, 1714 – that is prior to the Jacobite Rising – George MacKenzie, the official British Resident in St. Petersburg between 1714–1715, sent a letter to the Earl of Mar.<sup>41</sup> The content of this letter is highly intriguing, as it indicates that Dr. Erskine wished to communicate some sensitive information to his cousin:

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<sup>37</sup> Werner G. Zimmerman, *Von den alten zur neuen Freimaurerei: Briefwechsel und Logenreden von Diethelm Lavater nach 1800* (Zurich: Modestia cum Libertate, 1994), 375.

<sup>38</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Fond 120, Opus 1, Box 48. Library of the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg.

<sup>39</sup> MS. GD 124/15/773. National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh.

<sup>40</sup> Paul, “Letters and Documents,” 400–1.

<sup>41</sup> Mackenzie was appointed British Resident in 1714, during the reign of Queen Anne, when John Erskine, the Earl of Mar was Secretary of State. See Appleby, “British Doctors,” 58.

I here write by his allowance, to assure you he has passed me a formal promise to write your Lordp. So soon as I shal think meet; but as 'tis on an affair that we both conclude may yet abide some respite, and perhaps be the better for it, your Lordp. May upon honour expect within less than a ffort-night hence that either he himselfe or I by his appointment will write you an ample detail of what concerns himselfe and something beside that, we imagine may not be altogether indifferent to yourselfe. This I have bound myselfe to transmit in the manner was concerted, when I took leave of your Lordp.<sup>42</sup>

Some three weeks later, Mackenzie wrote to Mar once again, where it is not only made clear that Robert Erskine was acting as intermediary between the Earl and the Russian court, but is also laden with Masonic overtones:

St. Petersburg, ye 29th of October o.s. 1714

My Lord,- To the very best of Guarantys there is stil allow'd time according to the circumstances, or nature of the principals, for whose sake these are enter'd into; tis true I had the honour to write yor Lordp. The 8th instant, that within a ffortnight thence and less, you were to expect a letter from Dr. Areskine; tho' it may not so soon appear to yor Lordp. Both of us has acted with the utmost good faith, for there's above a week, that he gave Mr. Naroskin a letter of recommendation to your Lordp. He is chambellan and Realtion of the Czar, and has the advantage to be destin'd the Bearer of an answer to a letter, our Monarch wrote this Prince from Hanover; as he is to have several other matters given him in charge, whereof, Without breaking throw the Masson Word, I hope, as to a Bror Mechanick of his Czarian Maty, it will as yet be allow'd me to acquaint you so far, that he is to carry, say they, a sea Compass to our King: the value of that present is that 'tis of this Prince's own gradation, and the box of his own turning. What the other things may be? Are also Joyner's work; but not being so compleat a Carpenter as to let out all the cunning, without being seen, your Lordp, having so long ago pass't the Essay Master will enough be apprised of it there, before the whole is come to a walding, to return to the Dr's excuse and my own, that Gentleman having being kept up here till sledge-way, which My Lord in good English is to say, more snow; tho' that's been already our weather above a month.<sup>43</sup>

It would seem that George Mackenzie was an agent acting on behalf of the Earl of Mar.<sup>44</sup> In the above-cited letter, in addition to notifying the

<sup>42</sup> Paul, "Letters and Documents," 405.

<sup>43</sup> Paul, "Letters and Documents," 408–10.

<sup>44</sup> MSS GD 124/15/709. National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh. The likelihood of this being the case is strengthened by a series of letters in the archives of the National Archives

Earl of Mar to expect a letter from Dr. Erskine, he also reveals that Erskine had transmitted correspondence to a chamberlain and member of the Naryshkin clan (relatives of Peter the Great on his mother's side). The Naryshkin in question was Semen Grigor'evich (c. 1680–1747), who in addition to being a chamberlain also acted as a diplomatic envoy for the tsar on various missions in Western Europe and had studied in England and Germany.<sup>45</sup>

The letter is suitably cryptic, but it contains plentiful examples of Masonic phraseology. One encounters obvious references, such as “the Masson word”, “Bror. Mechanick” and “Essay Master” in combination with symbolic allusions to the Masonic craft, such as a sea compass and repeated descriptions of the craftsmanship of joiners and carpenters. One must also draw attention to the tantalizing reference to a member of “his Czarian maty” being a “Bror. Mechanick.” In this letter, therefore, one can discern a direct link between Robert Erskine's intimate connections with Jacobitism and Freemasonry – vis-à-vis the Earl of Mar – and the infiltration of Masonic ideas into the Russian court. Instead of viewing Erskine's years in Russia as an escape from his ties to the Jacobites, one can regard it as opening up a new channel in which to exert leverage, when called upon.<sup>46</sup> Far from disavowing the traditional family bonds to the Stuart dynasty, Erskine chose to exercise his learning and knowledge in an increasingly powerful political arena open to diverse influences. This factor must be borne in mind when one considers Erskine's career in Russia, as he played a pivotal role at the heart of the Petrine court in some of the most crucial years of radical reform in Russian history.

What the following sections aim to illustrate is that this influence was profoundly imbued with an esotericism in line with Masonic ideas emanating from Jacobite émigré circles at the beginning of the eighteenth century. With regard to medicine, I will argue that Erskine was immersed in a form of Paracelsian iatrochemistry – still widespread at the beginning of the eighteenth century – which relied heavily on an alchemical

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of Scotland written by George Mackenzie to the Earl of Mar. In November 1707 and May 1708, for example, Mackenzie reported to the Earl from Turin.

<sup>45</sup> For more information on Semen Grigor'evich Naryshkin, see Robert Collis, “Semen Grigorovich Naryshkin (c. 1680–1747): Russia's First Freemason?” *Faravid* 29 (2005): 85–91.

<sup>46</sup> Up until the death of Queen Anne, on August 1, 1714, the need for Dr. Erskine to show his Jacobite colours did not occur. However, it is surely no coincidence that renewed contact between Erskine and the Earl of Mar began only two months after the Queen's death, that is, at the onset of Hanoverian rule. At this point, Erskine's high esteem at the Petrine Court became a crucial weapon in the Jacobite's arsenal.

worldview. This worldview was also intrinsically linked to botany and natural history and extended to a marked curiosity in many forms of the occult and natural magic. Furthermore, one can note a decided interest in mystical forms of Protestant Christianity in Erskine's outlook.

*Medicine and Alchemy: An Iatrochemist at the Petrine Court*

Robert Erskine's spectacular collection of alchemical manuscripts and textbooks ranks as the largest of its kind in Russia. At the very least, it is possible to identify 157 noted authors and 287 works devoted to the alchemical art, predominantly in the catalogue of Erskine's private library held at the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, though with a number of additions from the 248 titles held by the National Library of Finland in Helsinki.<sup>47</sup> Although Erskine had an enormous library of over 2,300 tomes – covering all spheres of learning – this figure still accounts for over 12% of the total collection.<sup>48</sup> Erskine had at his disposal a veritable treasure chest of alchemical lore, the scope of which can be appreciated if one compares its size to other renowned collections of his day. In the last few decades scholars, such as Betty Jo Dobbs, have revealed Sir Isaac Newton's obsession with alchemy and have drawn on his private collection of manuscripts and books.<sup>49</sup> If one consults John Harrison's catalogue of Newton's library, one discovers he had a total of 138 alchemical and 31 chemical texts, totalling 169 tomes, and accounting for 9.5% of his total collection.<sup>50</sup> Another fine example is the alchemy collection of Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753) – scientist and Fellow of the Royal Society – commonly regarded as one of the finest of its kind in the world, which on his death formed the cornerstone of the new British Museum. The index to the Sloane Manuscripts lists 141 alchemical authors and eighteen reels of microfilm are held by the British Library containing 204 manuscripts.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> See Appendix C for a list of these works. It should be noted that if one includes the alchemical authors contained within collections, such as the Horlacher edition of Manget's famous *Bibliotheca chemico-curiosa*, the figure is very close to 200.

<sup>48</sup> John Appleby and Andrew Cunningham counted 2,320 titles and 2,535 books in Erskine's library, although 29 titles are repeated. See Appleby and Cunningham, "Robert Erskine & Archibald Pitcairne," 12.

<sup>49</sup> For a reproduction of Newton's manuscripts concerning alchemy, see Dobbs, *Janus Face*, 256–305.

<sup>50</sup> John Harrison, *The Library of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 59.

<sup>51</sup> See Edward J. L. Scott, ed., *Index to the Sloane Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: The British Museum Trustees, 1904). The microfilms (reels 76–93) form Part 5



Thus, Erskine's alchemy collection is on a par with that of Sloane and significantly larger than Newton's collection and, indeed, eclipses Bruce's private collection in Russia. Therefore, preserved within the archives of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences Library is one of the most outstanding private collections of alchemical works assembled anywhere in Europe during the eighteenth century. What drove Erskine to assemble such an enormous collection with rare alchemical treatises dating back to 1476? Certainly both Newton as an active alchemist and Sloane as an inquisitive and esoterically minded naturalist assembled their collections with enthusiastic zeal and a genuine fascination with the search for uncovering esoteric and divine secrets. Erskine too, I would argue, can be viewed within this mindset. Not only do his family links to Scottish Freemasonry and to the study of the Hermetic and alchemic suggest a connection to the embrace of the esoteric; his medical training in Paris and Utrecht in the 1690s was supervised by tutors imbued with an iatrochemical and Paracelsian worldview. This is entirely in accord with Lynn Thorndike's claim that "alchemy and iatrochemistry and medicine of the late seventeenth century differed little from that of the early seventeenth century" and Allen Debus's assertion that alchemy not only persisted into the early eighteenth century; it actually witnessed a period of intense interest.<sup>52</sup> Thus, one would be mistaken to view alchemy as a relic of the Renaissance era, on the fringes of late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century medical science. On the contrary, it was still relatively widespread in the upper echelons of scientific communities throughout Europe.

This fact has already been illustrated in the previous chapter on Bruce, where the continued link between the pursuit of alchemy and the development of metallurgy within official government departments and Royal establishments was highlighted. The same sentiment rings true for the medical world in which Erskine was an esteemed figure. Indeed, prior to his departure to Russia in 1704 he had already established a reputation as a respected and talented physician and anatomist. The extent of his success in this field is illustrated by the fact that he was elected a Fellow of the

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of *The Papers of Sir Hans Sloane, 1660–1753*, under the heading "Alchemy, Chemistry and Magic" from the British Library. These were published in microfilm form by Adam Matthew Publications in 2003.

<sup>52</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 117; Allen G. Debus, *The French Paracelsians: The Chemical Challenge to Medical and Scientific Tradition in Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 201.



Royal Society on November 30, 1703 along with Richard Mead (1673–1754) for anatomical experiments carried out on vipers and pigeons.<sup>53</sup>

Erskine began his medical career in 1692, at the age of fifteen, as an apprentice to Hugh Paterson, an apothecary and surgeon practising in Edinburgh.<sup>54</sup> Little is known of this period, apart from the fact that the position was arranged by Erskine's Uncle, Dr. Alexander Dundas, who became President of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh in 1703 and was physician to King James II.<sup>55</sup>

In 1697, after five years of his apprenticeship in Edinburgh, Erskine travelled to Paris in order to further his medical studies at the Jardin des Plantes. This was to be a crucial and formative stage in his career in which he became acquainted with some of the leading French scientists of the day. One of the most notable academics at this institution was Professor Moysse Charas (1619–1698). In Erskine's early work on vipers one can see a continuation of the work of Charas, who in 1669 published his acclaimed *Nouvelles Experiences sur la vipere*.<sup>56</sup> The latter work argued that the poisonous effect of a viper's bite was because of its vexed and enraged spirits and that a cure could be found in the salt of vipers.<sup>57</sup> Charas is principally known, however, for his *Pharmacopée Royale Galénique et Chymique* (1676). Erskine owned an original edition of this work, which ranks as one of the largest compendiums of remedies and formulas (including the alchemical variety) in the seventeenth century.<sup>58</sup>

During his studies in Paris it is clear that Erskine devoted considerable time to the study of chemical pursuits. This fact is revealed by a

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<sup>53</sup> Richard Mead cited "Dr. Areskine concerning the Viper." See Richard Mead, *A Mechanical Account of Poisons* (London, 1702), 22–3. Also see Mead's citation in the January/February 1703 edition of *Philosophical Transactions* vol. 23, 1320. An intriguing aspect of Erskine's election as a Fellow is that he was nominated by Sir Hans Sloane. See Code NA5704, Royal Society Notes on Erskine's election. Royal Society Archives, London. Writing in 1721, James Handley stated that "Dr Areskine has made divers Experiments with this juice," that is the venom of vipers, "which he collected and apply'd to the wounded parts, which proved as pernicious as if cast in by the enraged Animal her self." See James Handley, *Mechanical Essays on the Animal Oeconomy* (London, 1721), 300.

<sup>54</sup> Paul, "Letters and Documents," 375.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 376; *The Dispensatory of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh* (London, 1727), 291.

<sup>56</sup> Evidence of its popularity is shown by the publication of a second edition in 1694.

<sup>57</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 24–25.

<sup>58</sup> 140b. Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 155. *Katalog knig biblioteki Areskina 1719*. Fond 158, Opis 1 d214a. Library of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences (hereafter *Erskine Archives*).

small notebook, with the heading “This Booke belongs to Rt. Areskin.”<sup>59</sup> It is significant that among the notes, one finds considerable handwritten extracts from the chemical works of Jacob Le Mort (1650–1718). The chemist had worked in the alchemist Johann Glauber’s famous laboratory in Amsterdam, where he learnt a considerable amount of alchemical knowledge, and later became Professor of Chemistry at the University of Leiden.<sup>60</sup> His successor, Herman Boerhaave, noted that Le Mort would “by no means allow of mathematical and mechanical explanations in chemistry,” thereby affirming his iatrochemical approach.<sup>61</sup>

In his works Le Mort put forward the theory that there were five chemical principles: (1) mercury, or spirit; (2) sulphur, or oil; (3) salt; (4) phlegm and (5) earth.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, Le Mort advanced four goals when studying chemistry: (1) contemplative chemistry, centred on using fire to study the chemical anatomy of bodies; (2) medico-pharmaceutical; (3) metallurgy and (4) transmutation or alchemy.<sup>63</sup> Thus, alchemy remained one of the central pillars of Le Mort’s medico-chemical teachings, which is significant considering the clear influence the Leiden professor exerted on Erskine’s own medical studies.

Erskine entitles his extracts “Oseranoes qaedam ex Collegio Chimico De Le Morte excerptae” and “Observaones quaedam ex Collegio pharmaceutico Dni Le Mort.”<sup>64</sup> These extracts are cited from *Pharmacia medico-physica. Chymia medico-physica. Cui annexa est, mettallurgica contracta* (1684) and *Chymiae veris nobilitas et utilitas, in physica corpusculari, theoria medica, ejus material et signis* (1696), both of which are replete with alchemical experimentation and symbolism.<sup>65</sup> In Erskine’s notes one finds listed many herbal and chemical preparations, such as a recipe for making diaphoretic antimony, which was used to induce sweating.<sup>66</sup> According

<sup>59</sup> MS. o, no. 42. Library of the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg.

<sup>60</sup> Debus, *The French Paracelsians*, 142. Erskine owned two works by Glauber, including his most well known work, *Furni Novi Philosophici* (1650). See Appendix C.

<sup>61</sup> Herman Boerhaave, *A New Method of Chemistry; translated from the original Latin of Dr. Boerhaave’s Elementa Chemiae*, vol. 1 (London, 1741), 48.

<sup>62</sup> See Jacobus Le Mort, *Chymia, Rationibus et Experimentis Auctoriibus, Iisque Demonstrativis, Superstructa* (Leiden, 1688), 7. See also, Allen G. Debus, “Chemistry and the Universities in the Seventeenth Century,” *Estudos Avançados* 4:10 (1990): 192–3.

<sup>63</sup> See Le Mort, *Chymia Rationibus*, 2. See also, Debus, “Chemistry and the Universities,” 193.

<sup>64</sup> MS. o, no. 42, f. 37, f. 49 & ff. 50–64. Library of the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg.

<sup>65</sup> Appleby, “British Doctors” ff.6. These works are also listed in Erskine’s catalogue in St. Petersburg, as well as one other work. See Appendix C.

<sup>66</sup> MS o, no. 42, f. 37. Library of the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg.

to John Huxham, writing in 1756, antimonium diaphoreticum was “little more than the dead Ashes of that Mineral, deprived of its internal or metallizing Sulphur by repeated Deflagrations with Salt-petre.”<sup>67</sup> Huxham dismisses the medical qualities of diaphoretic antimony, but in *Collectanea Chymica Leidensia* Le Mort provides a recipe for the remedy and refers to its use in a curative powder used by Marco Cornacchini.<sup>68</sup> According to Cornacchini, writing in 1620, the remedy had been invented by Robert Dudley, the Earl of Warwick, and was something of a universal elixir.<sup>69</sup>

In 1699, after two years studying at Paris, Erskine transferred to the University of Utrecht where he was awarded his medical M. D. on July 17, 1700. His dissertation is largely physiological and anatomical studying the arrangement of the body and describing the reproductive organs of the male and female body. He also discusses pregnancy and conception and describes the brain and the respiratory system as well as the digestive system and the structure of the glands.<sup>70</sup> The reason for Erskine’s transfer to the University of Utrecht is unclear but it is possible that the reputation of its chemistry lecturer, Johann Conrad Barchusen, played a significant part. From 1694, Barchusen had been granted permission by the university to hold private ‘chemical colleges’ and in 1695 the city council authorized a site near to the city’s botanical garden to be converted into a chemical laboratory, in which Barchusen could promote his teaching.<sup>71</sup> By May 1698, Barchusen had been given an official salary to teach at the university although he could not be recognized as an official professor on account of the fact that he did not hold a medical degree. This loophole was overcome in August when the university honoured Barchusen with a degree as Doctor of Medicine and appointed him ‘lector’ in chemistry.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, Erskine’s enrolment at the University of Utrecht in 1699 came immediately after Barchusen assumed the post of ‘lector’ in chemistry. No record survives of the students who attended Barchusen’s laboratory

<sup>67</sup> John Huxham, *Medical and Chemical Observations upon Antimony* (London, 1756), 56.

<sup>68</sup> Jacob Le Mort, *Collectanea Chymica Leidensia* (Leiden, 1696), 32.

<sup>69</sup> John Temple Leader, *Life of Sir Robert Dudley, Earl of Warwick and Duke of Northumberland* (Florence, 1895), 87–8.

<sup>70</sup> Appleby, “British Doctors,” 36. The dissertation is entitled, *Dissertatio Medica Inauguralis, circa oeconomiam corporis humani quam . . . pro gradu Doctoratus, summisque in medicina honoribus & privilegiis rite ac legitime consequendis, eruditorum examini subjicit Robertus Areskinus . . . ad diem 17. Julii, loco horisque solitis, Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1700*. The National Library of Scotland owns a microfilm copy of this dissertation.

<sup>71</sup> O. Hannaway, “Johann Conrad Barchusen (1666–1723) – Contemporary and Rival of Boerhaave,” *Ambix* 14 (1967): 99.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

courses and public lectures, but it has been noted that most would have been medical students.<sup>73</sup> It is fair to assume, therefore, that one of the medical students present was none other than Robert Erskine. At this time, Erskine was still in his early twenties and bearing in mind his prior attraction to the alchemical leanings of Le Mort he would have been receptive to the ideas of a lecturer renowned for his championing of an iatrochemical/alchemical approach to learning.

This attraction is demonstrated by the fact that all of Barchusen's principal works can be found in the Erskine library collection.<sup>74</sup> Erskine possessed, for example, Barchusen's early pharmaceutical textbook *Pharmacopoeus Synopticus* (1696) and two editions of his main work, *Pyrosophia*, which contains the basis of his chemical philosophy, which was expounded in the following terms: "Chemistry is the art which demonstrates how mixed bodies should be separated from each other by means of fire, or how they should be changed into another substance."<sup>75</sup> Barchusen then divides chemistry into three parts: (1) metallurgy and assay (*Docimastica*); (2) alchemy (*alchemistica*), or what he also refers to as *Ars Hermetica* and (3) medical chemistry (*Medica*) or Iatrochemistry.<sup>76</sup>

The aim of Barchusen's chemistry is to prepare superior medicaments than Galenic pharmacy and secondly, as Hannaway states, "to bring to light very many hidden facts which are useful in the arts and sciences."<sup>77</sup> Throughout the text Barchusen uses a myriad of distinctly alchemical symbols. Indeed, the revised edition of this work – published in 1718 under the title *Elementa Chemiae* – is accompanied by a series of nineteen alchemical plates, which Barchusen attests he came upon in a monastery in Swabia. In Barchusen's mind these plates represented the production of the philosophers' stone "not only in better order, but also with a more correct emphasis" than any other source he had previously scrutinized.<sup>78</sup> Thus, aware of their great alchemical import he endeavoured to publish them with his own interpretation of their meaning.<sup>79</sup> The highly mystical and religious relationship between an alchemist and God is highlighted below

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>74</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>75</sup> Joannis Conradi Barchusen, *Pyrosophia* (Leiden, 1698), 4. See also Hannaway, Johann Conrad Barchusen," 104.

<sup>76</sup> Johann Conrad Barchusen, *Elementa Chemiae* (Leiden, 1718), 4–5.

<sup>77</sup> Hannaway, "Johann Conrad Barchusen," 105.

<sup>78</sup> Barchusen, *Elementa Chemiae*, 481–2; Alexander Roob, *The Hermetic Museum: Alchemy and Mysticism* (Cologne: Taschen, 2006), 114.

<sup>79</sup> Hannaway, "Johann Conrad Barchusen," 103.

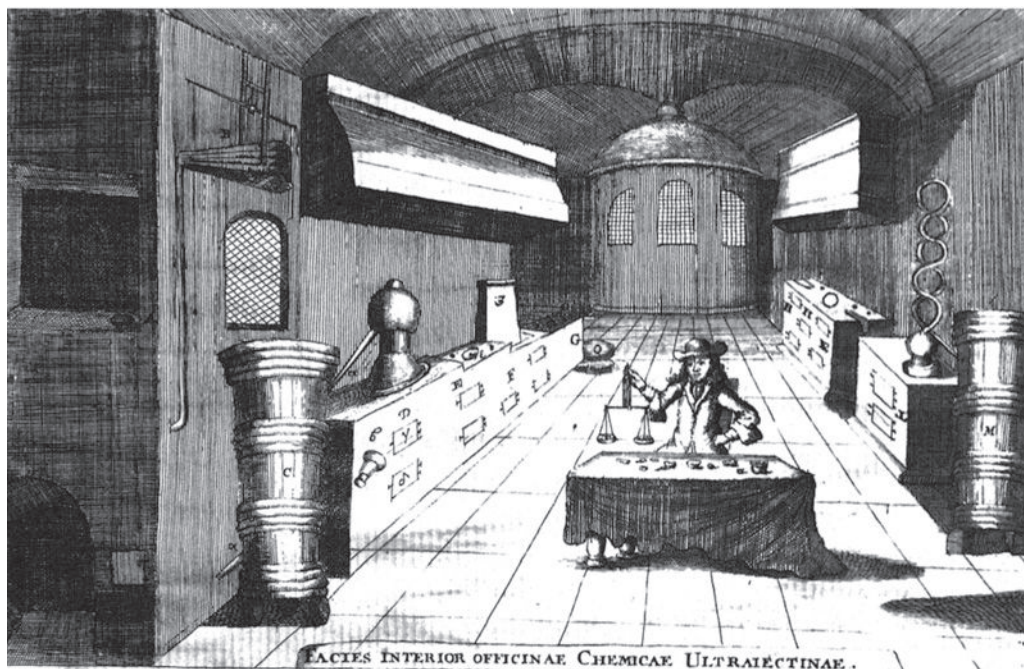


Fig. 23. Illustration of the interior of Johann Conrad Barchusen's chemical laboratory in Utrecht.

in Emblem 2 (in the upper right-hand corner). One can clearly see here the divine nature of the alchemist's art and the intriguing representation of God in human form accompanied by a symbolic triangle representing not only the divine trinity, but also the triunal nature of alchemy itself, which is divisible into three parts: (1) salt, (2) sulphur and (3) liquid.

The first emblem (in the upper left corner) illustrates the emblems of the *lapis* (the philosophers' stone) on the crescent moon. The text accompanying this emblem describes how "normal gold (the lion) must be twice driven by antimony (the wolf) in order to lose its impurities. The dragon is philosophical quicksilver (mercury)."<sup>80</sup> The emblem in the middle denotes chaos, whilst the fourth emblem (in the bottom left-hand corner) depicts the coat-of-arms of the *lapis*. Finally, the fifth emblem (in the bottom right-hand corner) provides an illustration of the four elements.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Roob, *The Hermetic Museum*, 115.

<sup>81</sup> Barchusen, *Elementa Chemiae*, 504–5; Roob, *The Hermetic Museum*, 115.



Barchusen's attempt to "bring to light" the secrets of the world is overtly mystical and espouses the pivotal roles of alchemy and observation of nature, both hallmarks of a Paracelsian worldview and in total harmony with Allen Debus's description of a chemical philosophy: "This Chemical Philosophy was to be a universal philosophy of nature founded on new observations and indisputable philosophical precepts, which conformed to religious truth."<sup>82</sup>

The ideal of a priest-physician using alchemy to reach the divine essence of nature – illustrated in the second emblem in Figure 24 – had been advanced by the Italian physician Marsilio Ficino. Walter Pagel has commented that Paracelsus subsequently spent his whole life seeking to implement Ficino's ideal.<sup>83</sup> That Erskine continued in Barchusen's footsteps – vis-à-vis his attraction to Paracelsus's ideal of a physician – alchemist is suggested by the extraordinary collection of extremely rare editions he amassed by the Swiss maverick. The oldest – *Theophrasti Paracelsi Philosophiae et Medicinae Utriusque Universae, Compendium* – dates back to 1568 and was published in Basel by Jacques Gohorry (d.1576). This compendium comprises the philosophy and medicine of Paracelsus and is accompanied by a biography, catalogue and scholia.<sup>84</sup> One also finds a work entitled *Onomasticon* published by one of the earliest and most vociferous defenders of Paracelsus, Adam von Bodenstein (1528–1577), in Basel in 1572. Gerard Dorn was also an ardent Paracelsian proselytiser in the 1570s and Erskine owned a 1578 edition of *Theophrasti Germani Paracelsi*, in which original German manuscripts were translated into Latin. In addition to these sixteenth century texts one can also find in Erskine's library a 1616 edition of the complete works of Paracelsus by Johann Huser, published by Lazarus Zetzner in Strasbourg.

Erskine's library collection is testament to the continued influence of Paracelsus on subsequent medical theory throughout the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth century.<sup>85</sup> Noteworthy examples of the resoundingly Paracelsian and iatrochemical flavour of Erskine's library from the first two decades of the seventeenth-century include three works

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<sup>82</sup> Allen G. Debus, *Chemistry, Alchemy and the New Philosophy, 1550–1700* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987), 236.

<sup>83</sup> Andrew Weeks, *Paracelsus: Speculative Theory and the Crisis of the Early Reformation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 57.

<sup>84</sup> Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. 5 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), 636.

<sup>85</sup> See Appendix C for information regarding all the texts mentioned in the section below.



Fig. 24. The first plate, containing emblems 1–5, in Johann Conrad Barchusen's *Elementa Chymiae* (1718).

by Oswald Croll (1550–1609) – one being an original 1608 Prague edition of *Basilica Chymica*. One also finds six works by Martin Ruland (1532–1602) who treated Rudolf II in Prague, including his most well known work, *Lexicon Alchemiae*. Other early seventeenth-century champions of Paracelsian medicine present in Erskine’s library include Joseph Duchesne (c. 1544–1609) (5 works), Johann Wolfgang Dienneim and Heinrich Nolle, whose *Systema Medicinae Hermeticae Generale* (1613) was later translated into English by Thomas Vaughan, the Welsh alchemist and Rosicrucian sympathizer.<sup>86</sup> Erskine also owned the collected works of Johann Hartmann (1568–1631), commonly regarded as the first professor of chemistry in a European university and friend of Michael Maier, another prominent Rosicrucian sympathiser. The English Rosicrucian sympathizer Robert Fludd (1574–1637) wrote tirelessly in praise of Hermetic and Paracelsian alchemy and all of his substantial works – spanning a period between 1617 and 1638 – are present in Erskine’s library.

The mid seventeenth century witnessed the rise of a new generation of alchemical or iatrochemical physicians/writers. The most outstanding of these was arguably Johannes Baptista van Helmont, who developed Paracelsian ideas and introduced his own terminology. Erskine possessed the complete works of van Helmont; indeed, he owned the renowned first edition, published in Amsterdam in 1648. The reputation of van Helmont at the beginning of the eighteenth century was such that in the 1707 introduction to his collected works he was compared to Francis Bacon and Descartes.<sup>87</sup> Another extremely influential alchemical work of this period present in Erskine’s library was Johann Rudolph Glauber’s (1604–1670) *Furni Novi Philosophici*. In this text, Glauber elaborated on panaceas, universal medicines and methods for the successful transmutation of metals. He shrouded this in a decidedly mystical and religious worldview in which “God would never allow pseudo-Christians and the proud and avaricious to discover the secret of the Philosopher’s stone.”<sup>88</sup>

In the third quarter of the seventeenth century one finds a significant number of eminent physicians espousing Paracelsian alchemical medicine with continued enthusiasm. This phenomenon is richly illustrated in Erskine’s library, which contains an edition of Werner Rolfinck’s (1599–1670) *Chimia in artis formam redacta*. This is a pharmaceutical collection

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<sup>86</sup> See Appendix C for details. The Thomas Vaughan translation is also found in the Erskine catalogue.

<sup>87</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 7, 218.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.



of chemical remedies “sprinkled with alchemical symbols.”<sup>89</sup> Rolfinck worked in close collaboration at the University of Jena with Georg Wolfgang Wedel (1645–1721) who also advocated an approach to medicine imbued with an alchemical outlook, reflected by his continued belief in the possibility of the transmutation of metals. Wedel’s medical pupils at Jena included Georg Ernst Stahl (1659–1734) and Friedrich Hoffmann, who both followed in the alchemical traditions of their tutor and Rolfinck. Erskine’s library also holds a 1668 edition of Johann Friedrich Helvetius’s (1625–1709) *Guldenes Kalb* (Golden Calf). Helvetius was the physician to the Prince of Orange and in the above mentioned tract he recounts how a stranger visited his study in The Hague in 1666 and proceeded to demonstrate to him the transmutation of an inferior metal into gold. No doubt Erskine was interested in the “viperine salt” remedy prepared by Otto Tachenius (c. 1640–c. 1670) and described in his *Hippocrates Chymicus* (1668). As Thorndike notes, Tachenius ascribed a “sort of soul, prudence and intelligence to acids, and every acid consisted of soul and spirit.”<sup>90</sup> Erskine also owned a 1678 edition of Olaus Borrichius’s (1626–1690) *Hermetis Aegyptiorum et Chemicorum Sapientia*, which strongly praises Paracelsian medicine and chemical remedies.

It is also fascinating to note that many of the medical works in Erskine’s library from his own generation display a far from ‘rational’ approach. Small wonder Debus can write about a sense of continuity – of the old coexisting with the new – at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century when works by physicians, such as Michael Ettmüller (1644–1683), still continued to tread “close to the border which separates medicine and science from magic.”<sup>91</sup> The various works of Johann Helfrich Jungken (1648–1726) in Erskine’s library reflect the medico-pharmaceutical beliefs of a physician who argued that a universal medicine could be achieved by separating the sulphur of gold from its mercurial part.<sup>92</sup> Other notable German physicians of this period present in Erskine’s library, who displayed marked Paracelsian tendencies, include Phillip Fraundorffer (1650–1702), with his *Tabula Smaragdina Medico-Pharmaceutica* (1699) and Johann Helfrich Cohausen (1665–1750) in his *Lumen Novum Phosphoris Accensum* (1717).

<sup>89</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 134.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.

<sup>91</sup> Merkel and Debus, *Hermeticism and the Renaissance*, 232; Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 161.

<sup>92</sup> See Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 392–3.

*Erskine the Chemical Philosopher*

Erskine's library collection is an excellent indicator of his deep interest in alchemical matters. However, his medical training at Paris and Utrecht also indicate that Erskine leaned strongly towards iatrochemical theories. Added weight is given to this argument by the extensive notes he wrote in Paris on the alchemical works of Jacob Le Mort. However, this does not necessarily mean that Erskine actively engaged in alchemical pursuits during his time in Russia. As Erskine wrote no theoretical tracts after his dissertation in 1700 – dedicating himself to the onerous duties of practical medicine – one cannot draw on an alchemical oeuvre as with other physicians of the period.

Yet, one can state that as the head of the Apothecary Chancery Erskine had at his disposal the means to undertake alchemical experiments. In Moscow, for example, Erskine oversaw the construction of new headquarters for the Chancery between 1706 and 1709. Cornelius Le Bruyn, the famed Dutch travel writer, gives an excellent description of the pharmacy as it stood in 1707:

Within the last year and a half it has been converted into a dispensatory for medicines. It is a very fine and lofty building, with a beautiful tower in the front . . . There are two doors to this apartment, one of which affords a passage into the magazine of medicinal herbs . . . There are also very beautiful halls finely vaulted, particularly two, which entirely correspond in structure, one of which serves for a laboratory, and the other for a library, wherein extraordinary plants and animals are likewise preserved.<sup>93</sup>

It is also explicitly stated that a responsibility of the director of the *kunstkamera*, during its residence in the Kikin Palace in St. Petersburg, was to “diligently fulfil chemical work.”<sup>94</sup>

An indication of Erskine's predilection towards iatrochemistry can be gleaned in a letter he received in December 1711 from Albert Seba (1665–1736), the eminent Dutch apothecary and owner of a fine cabinet of rarities.<sup>95</sup> Seba wrote that a merchant had informed him of Erskine's “special predilection for exotic medicines” and knowing that he had a rich supply of “officinal” drugs, both “Chimica, Simplitia and Composita.” Significantly,

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<sup>93</sup> Le Bruyn, *Travels into Muscovy*, vol. 2, 179.

<sup>94</sup> T. V. Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera peterburgskoi akademii nauk* (Moscow-Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1953), 26.

<sup>95</sup> Albert Seba's Cabinet was bought by Erskine and transferred to St. Petersburg. This will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter and in Chapter 6.

Seba also presented Erskine with a gift of one ounce of phosphorus in a glass.<sup>96</sup> Alchemists were particularly enamoured with phosphorus, which had been discovered by Henric Brand of Hamburg in 1669.<sup>97</sup> Attracted by its ability to contain light, which alchemists perceived as the spirit, and to spontaneously burn, it was repeatedly referred to in mystical and spiritual terms. Johann Daniel Krafft described it as a “perpetual fire” in 1676, when performing ‘natural magic’ to the Margrave of Brandenburg. Furthermore, in 1680 Georg Caspar Kirchenmaier wrote of its divine nature and as a “philosophic fire.”<sup>98</sup> Indeed, as Thorndike tellingly states “the discovery of phosphorus would seem to have encouraged rather than detracted from the pursuit of the philosophers’ stone.”<sup>99</sup>

Erskine also wrote to a certain Dutch alchemist, Johannes de Wilde, in Amsterdam in 1717 with regard to various “chimico-pharmaceutical preparations” and invited him into Russian service.<sup>100</sup> Interestingly, de Wilde referred to this arrangement with Erskine in a letter to Empress Anna in April 1740, with regard to a secret alchemical recipe “by which 100 ducats of gold and 50 marks of the finest silver” could be delivered to St. Petersburg. The Dutchman promoted this alchemical concoction with reference to the fact that he had struck the same deal with Erskine in 1717, when he had received a payment of 72, 000 roubles.<sup>101</sup>

It is also curious to note that Jacob Bruce wrote to Erskine in 1712 requesting a “Spiritu Cephalico,” or a spirit for the head, and other medicines for his own use.<sup>102</sup> Precisely such a remedy had been described and promoted by the alchemist George Wilson (b. c. 1631), in his *Compleat Course of Chymistry*, first published in London in 1699. He champions his *Spiritus Cephalicus* as a “most effectual pectoral medicine,” which can “immediately remove most pains of the head.”<sup>103</sup> It should be administered “up the nostrils” or the temples can be “a little rubbd with it.”<sup>104</sup> In order to prepare such a remedy an elaborate chemical process must be undertaken, which Wilson describes in the following manner:

<sup>96</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Fond. 120/1, No. 119. See also Appleby, “Robert Erskine,” 384.

<sup>97</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 378.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 378–80.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 378.

<sup>100</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Fond 120/1, No. 37.

<sup>101</sup> Richter, *Geschichte der Medicin*, vol. 3, 402–3.

<sup>102</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Fond 120/1, No. 20.

<sup>103</sup> George Wilson, *A Compleat Course of Chymistry containing near three hundred operations* (London, 1709), 246.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

Take of the Essential Oils of Cloves, Cinnamon, and Nutmegs, of each half a Dram; of Marjoram, Lavender, and Rosemary, of each two Scruples; of Oranges and Limons, *and* one Scruple and a half; of fine Benjamin in Powder, one Ounce. Mix these all together in a Cucurbit, with three Pints of Tartariz'd Spirit of Wine; place them in a Sand Furnace, fitting, and luting too, the Head and Receiver; kindle the Fire, which gradually increase to the second Degree, and in that Heat continue it till three Pints are drawn off.

Then take off the Receiver, and put the Spirit into a clean Matrass, to which put of *Marum Syriacum*, and Lillies of the Valley, *and* one Ounce, of *Sal Volatile Oleosum*, two Ounces, and of Essence of Ambargrease one Dram and a half; shake them well, and invert a blind Head to the Matrass, and keep it in a gentle Heat of Digestion three or four Days, and then put it into a Vial well stop't for Use.<sup>105</sup>

However, whilst Erskine's correspondence provides some evidence of his iatrochemical orientation, undoubtedly the best source for studying the Scot's medical methods is provided by two surviving notebooks charting how the physician treated Peter the Great. The earliest notebook dates from between October and November 1712, when Erskine treated Peter the Great at Carlsbad in Teplice in the Czech Republic and Slovakia respectively. This will be discussed in depth below in connection to Erskine's embrace of balneological medical remedies.

The second notebook was compiled throughout 1714 and is written on a "Kalendar" published in Russia.<sup>106</sup> The first entry dates from February 17 and 18 and lists a remedy evidently intended to relieve some respiratory difficulties suffered by the tsar. The first ingredient is listed as "Aq. Hyssop," or in other words Water Hyssop, an ancient herbal remedy used to alleviate nervous conditions, such as epilepsy or anxiety. Erskine then lists a "Sal Succin," or amber salt. According to William Salmon (1644–1713), who edited and expanded subsequent editions of George Bate's *Pharmacopoeia Bateana* (1688), salts of amber have the same virtues as the *Spiritus Succini*, or spirit of amber.<sup>107</sup> Thus, it may be taken inwardly and serves to alleviate "all Hysterick Distempers, Palsies, Apoplexies, Epilepsies, Vertigo's, Lethargies, and other Distempers of the Brain, Nerves and

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>106</sup> FN 319 72ff. Library of the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg. See Chapter Six for more information on the contents of the annual Calendars published in Moscow and St. Petersburg during Peter the Great's reign.

<sup>107</sup> Erskine owned five editions of Bate's *Pharmacopoeia* edited by William Salmon. See *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri 5, No. 161; Areskine Libri 6, No. 189; 26 ob. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, Nos. 371–73. The first three editions all date from 1694, whilst the fourth dates from 1691 and the last dates from 1700.

Womb.”<sup>108</sup> The *Pharmacopoeia* also states that “the Spirit is an excellent Aperitive, and is successfully given against all the aforesaid Distempers, but chiefly against the Epilepsie, Jaundice, Stopage of Urine, Ulcers in the Neck of the Bladder, Scurvy, Cachexia, Dropsies, and other the like Diseases.”<sup>109</sup>

The third ingredient in Erskine’s remedy is ten drops of “Tinct. Asthmal,” that is, a tincture against asthma. Salmon advises that the tincture should be made from the “roots of Elecampane, Florentine Orrice, seeds of sweet Fennel, Caraways, Liquorice bruised . . . pot ashes . . . raisons stoned . . . sena . . . powder of Mecoachan or Jalliap” and “Aniseed-mater.”<sup>110</sup> The virtues listed by Salmon in regard to *Tinctura Asthmatica* are lengthy, going well beyond a mere remedy against asthma. Thus, he states that in addition to all “diseases of the Breast and Lungs,” it also “effectually cleanses all the Bowels, carrying off all the Crudities, and Tartarous Matter.”<sup>111</sup> Moreover, Salmon comments on its powers against “the King’s Evil, the Scurvy, Gout, Stone, Gravel, and all Obstructions, whether in Reins or Bladder, Rheumatisms, Sciatica, Gripping of the Guts, dry Belyach, Dropsy, and Yellow Jaundice.”<sup>112</sup> Salmon’s praise of this tincture is such that he even claims that it has “cured such as have been Bed-rid many years, and restored to several the use of their Limbs.”<sup>113</sup> According to Salmon, the virtue of this tincture emanates from “the Spirituous *Menstruum*, with which the Purgatives are mixt.”<sup>114</sup>

It is worth noting that the name of Le Mort was especially associated with the above tincture, or elixir. Indeed, even as relatively late as 1776 the London chemist Francis Spilisbury wrote in praise of what he calls the *Elixir Asthmaticum* concocted by Le Mort.<sup>115</sup> Although Spilisbury pronounces that “Le Mort’s name ought . . . to be written in golden letters, and never pronounced but with reverence,” it is evident that by 1776 the French chemist was commonly being labelled a “Quack.”<sup>116</sup> In effect Spilisbury’s treatise, entitled *Free Thoughts on Quacks and their Medicines*, is

<sup>108</sup> George Bate, *Pharmacopoeia Bateana: or, Bate’s Dispensatory* (London, 1706), 109.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 178–9.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> Francis Spilisbury, *Free Thoughts on Quacks and their Medicines, occasioned by the death of Dr. Goldsmith and Mr. Scawen* (London, 1776), 21–4.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

defending the use of minerals, and especially mercury and antimony, in medicine.<sup>117</sup>

Lastly, the influence of Le Mort can also be seen in Erskine's use of fifteen drops of "Sal. Vol. Ol" (Sal Volatile Oleosum).<sup>118</sup> Given the familiarity of the Scottish physician with the work of Le Mort, it is not improbable to imagine that he followed his method of concocting this preparation. Herman Boerhaave describes how to prepare Le Mort's recipe in his renowned work *Elementa Chymiae*:

Take one part of the salt of tartar, three parts of sal-ammoniac, twelve parts of aromatics, reduced to powder, and twenty-six parts of rectified spirit of wine; mix them together, by long shaking in a bolt-head. The alkaline salt will thus immediately unite with the alcohol, that floats above, the water being attracted into the salts; at the same time the salts and spirits will attract the oil out of the spices, and thus the liquor, that floats above, will presently become the *sal volatile* required; as the famous *Le Mort* has observed.<sup>119</sup>

Salmon remarks that this remedy is "a *Panacea* in all sorts of Diseases, and cures Fevers by Sweating."<sup>120</sup> Fittingly, nine days after administering this preparation Erskine records that the tsar was "fully restored."

No other medical notes were written by Erskine until May 23, when it is recorded that the tsar was suffering from "nausea with a painful sensation in the diaphragm" whilst on *Berezoyi Ostrov* (Birch Island) near the mouth of the River Neva in the Gulf of Finland. In order to counter this ailment Erskine administered an essence of trifolium (clover) along with some form of undisclosed tincture. Various herbal and chemical remedies are also listed in November 1714, including the use of "Extract. Absinth," which Bates describes as a tincture "drawn forth from the tops of Wormwood dried." It is then "evapyrated to the consistency of an *Extract*," after which "fixed or elementary Salt" is added.<sup>121</sup> Apparently this medicine worked to counter nausea and scurvy, as well as actually killing worms.<sup>122</sup> In this month the tsar was also given the spirit of orange peels, which according to Salmon strengthens the stomach and "comforts all the Spirits Natural, vital, and animal."<sup>123</sup> One also finds listed the use of an iron

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., xviii, xvi.

<sup>118</sup> For Le Mort's recipe for this chemical remedy, see Le Mort, *Collectanea Chymica Leidensia*, 160–1.

<sup>119</sup> Boerhaave, *A New Method of Chemistry*, vol. 2, 235.

<sup>120</sup> Bate, *Pharmacopeia Bateana*, 487.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 271.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 272.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 93.

tincture (“Tinct. Chalybeata”) and a bitter tincture (“Tinct Amara”), prepared from the root of gentian, the dried rind of Seville oranges, cardamom seeds and two pints of alcoholic spirit. One imagines this particular remedy being very much to Peter the Great’s liking!<sup>124</sup>

However, undoubtedly the most curious medicine listed as being given to Peter the Great by Erskine can be found on November 10, 1714, when something called “Panacea Starkii” was administered. This refers to a preparation promoted by the notable American alchemist George Starkey (1628–1665), who also wrote under the name of Eirenaeus Philalethes.<sup>125</sup> Starkey outlined the wonderful virtues of his medicine in a tract entitled *The Admirable Efficacy, and almost incredible virtue of true Oyl which is made of SULPHUR VIVE, set on fire, and called commonly Oyl of SULPHUR per Campanam*.<sup>126</sup> The treatise begins by extolling “this most noble Liquor, and not vulgar Medicine” and by commenting that Van Helmont discusses it “in his excellent Discourse concerning the Tree of Life.”<sup>127</sup> After describing the chemical nature of what Starkey refers to as his “Antidote or Pill, or rather Anodinous Elixir,” he praises “its virtues, and advancement, to almost a true Universality.”<sup>128</sup>

At the end of his postscript to the tract Starkey also makes it clear that only two individuals – Richard Mathews and Paul Hobson – were able to truly prepare the medicine.<sup>129</sup> Subsequently, Mathews in particular promoted Starkey’s so-called pill to great effect. Indeed, one still finds George Wilson lauding the medicinal merits of Starkey’s panacea in the 1709 edition of his *A Compleat Course of Chymistry*. He writes, for example, that he has “hear’d it affirm’d by several Gentlemen, who have made use of it in their Practice, to be the best Laudanum they ever met with.”<sup>130</sup> What is more, Wilson supplies the recipe for creating Starkey’s panacea:

Take Extract of Opium four Ounces, Nutmegs and Mineral Bezoar, and two Ounces; Saffron and *Virginia*- Snake-Root, and one Ounce; beat the Nutmegs

<sup>124</sup> James Robert, *Pharmacopeia: or, a New Universal English Dispensatory* (London, 1764), 487–8.

<sup>125</sup> For more on Starkey, see William R. Newman, *Gehemical Fire: The Lives of George Starkey, an American Alchemist in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

<sup>126</sup> See Eirenaeus Philalethes, *Collectanea Chymica: A Collection of Ten Several Treatises in Chemistry* (London, 1684), 139–51.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>130</sup> Wilson, *A Compleat Course of Chymistry*, 306.



and Saffron together into a Paste; so that the Saffron cannot be discernably distinguish'd from the Nutmegs. Also let the Mineral Bez., and Snake-Root be in Impalpable Powder. Then mix all together, with half a Pound of the *Corrector*; half an Ounce of Oil of Saffafras, and two Ounces of Tincture of Antimony; let them all be well Incorporated, by beating in a Mortar: Then keep them in a Glass or Gally-Pot, ty'd over with Bladder or Leather for Use.<sup>131</sup>

The accuracy of the recipe is defended by reference to the fact that Wilson heard it “from the ingenious Dr. *Starkey's* own Mouth, in the Year 1665.”<sup>132</sup>

More than any other chemical or herbal remedy recorded in Erskine's medical notebook for 1714, the use of Starkey's so-called panacea is testament to the Scot's debt to chemical philosophers saturated in alchemical theory. It is fascinating to note that by 1747 the Royal College of Physicians in London saw fit to publish a scathing attack on George Starkey and his reputed panacea in *The Dispensatory of the Royal College of Physicians, London*. In this work, the body castigated Starkey as “a boasting quack, pretending to the possession of *Van Helmont's* whimsies, the alkahest, horizontal gold, and other the like chimeras.”<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, they pour scorn on the “unlearned alchemist” Richard Mathews, who they criticize for successfully being able to “sell it many years, as a universal medicine.”<sup>134</sup> Ridicule is also heaped upon George Wilson, before *The Dispensatory* finally remarks that the “very tedious and pompous processes” involved with composing this “soap of tartar with opium, and other such materials” has absolutely no medicinal value whatsoever.<sup>135</sup> However, it is important to remember that three decades earlier the medical establishment in Europe did not display such a unified front against the vestiges of alchemical tradition; a fact testified to by Erskine's medical treatment of Peter the Great in 1714.

#### *Erskine, Balneology and His Treatment of Peter the Great*

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the merits of balneotherapy, that is the medicinal taking of mineral waters, began to be passionately championed by a number of eminent iatrochemical physicians. They drew

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 305–6.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

<sup>133</sup> *The Dispensatory of the Royal College of Physicians, London* (Dublin, 1747), 86.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.



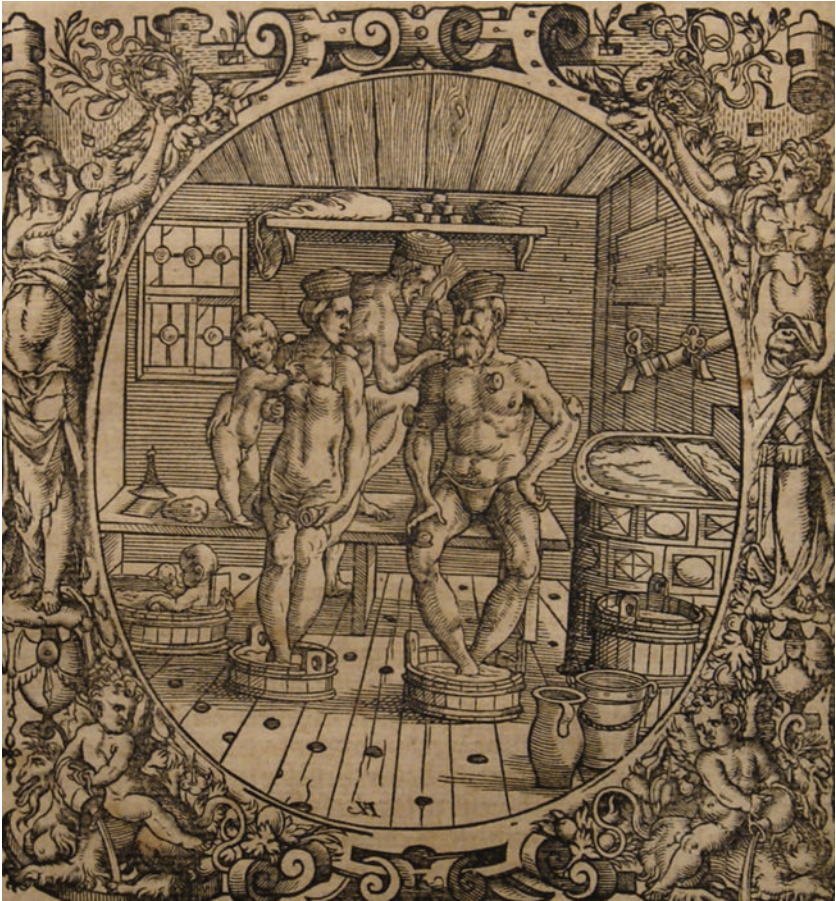


Fig. 25. Illustration of balneotherapy in Paracelsus's *Opus Chyrgurgicum. Wund- und Artzney-Buch* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1565).

on the ideas of Paracelsus – referred to by Hans Schadewaldt as “the real father” of this science – who described thermal springs in his native land, incorporating the doctrine of the macrocosm-microcosm, and advocated the healing powers of water.<sup>136</sup>

Undoubtedly the greatest proponent of balneotherapy at this time was Friedrich Hoffmann the Younger, who taught at Halle University and was royal physician in Berlin between 1708–1712. In 1703 Hoffmann published

<sup>136</sup> See H. Schadewaldt, “Paracelsus and Balneology,” *Schweizerische Rundschau für medizin Praxis* 83:13 (1994): 371–6.

his seminal work *Methodus Examinandi aquas salubres*, which sought by “various chemical and philosophical experiments” to illustrate the wondrous medicinal virtues of mineral waters across Europe.<sup>137</sup>

Hoffmann passionately embraced balneotherapy and he pronounced mineral waters to be “the nearest of any in Nature to what has been so much searched after, an universal Medicine, suited to the Cure of all Diseases.”<sup>138</sup> In other words Hoffmann believed that balneotherapy represented an almost perfect form of universal panacea. Thus, a physician “versed in practical Knowledge and verified Experience in his Art,” that is an iatrochemist, could ensure that a patient was cured of “impure Humours lodged in the Stomach and Intestines” and would be able to “Discharge of all peccant, saline and unctuous Matter, by the Conduits of Urine.”<sup>139</sup>

Fascinatingly, Hoffmann attributes the virtuous qualities of mineral water to what he refers to as a “universal mineral spirit,” which he seeks to explain by means of a “chemical consideration of the subject.”<sup>140</sup> According to Hoffmann, this universal spirit is an “extremely movable, subtle and elastic principle.”<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, he goes as far as to state that it is “the Fountain and Cause of all the particular Spirits in other things, whether of the vegetable, animal or mineral Kingdom.”<sup>142</sup> Thus, Hoffmann accepts the ancient division of nature into three kingdoms. Hoffmann then argues that the principal feat of this spirit is “chiefly to exercise its Power in what we, in a chemical sense, term Sulphur.”<sup>143</sup> Consequently the physician writes that:

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<sup>137</sup> Friedrich Hoffmann, *New Experiments and Observations upon Mineral Waters*, Second ed. (London, 1743), 4. It is also worth noting how Frederick Slare F.R.S (1648–1727) championed the virtues of balneotherapy. Indeed, in 1713 he had praised the virtues of taking the waters at Bath. Furthermore, in February 1717 he outlined the virtues of the waters at Pyrmont in a paper presented to the Royal Society in London. Slare was a leading chemical experimenter in English scientific circles between the 1680s and 1720s, acting as the Curator of Experiments in Chemistry at the Royal Society. He gained initial renown for demonstrating phosphorus and promoting its medical virtues. For a biographical essay on Slare, see Marie Boas Hall, “Frederick Slare, F. R. S. (1648–1727),” *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 46:1 (Jan. 1992): 23–41. For Slare’s paper on the virtues of the waters at Pyrmont see *Philosophical Transactions*, Vol. 30 (1717–1719), 564–70.

<sup>138</sup> Hoffmann, *New Experiments*, 5.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 71, 29.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

As this Sulphur is of three kinds, according to the three Kingdoms... this universal Spirit coming to be differently modified, altered or changed, according to the different Sulphur wherein 'tis lodged, thus assumes a different Nature, and becomes productive of different effects.<sup>144</sup>

After discussing the origin of this universal spirit in mineral waters, Hoffmann speculates whether its virtuous qualities can be chemically contrived:

And the present Consideration suggests a question of considerable moment; *viz.* Whether this most efficacious Principle of Mineral Waters cannot by Art, or some chemical Contrivance, be separated, obtain'd pure, and concentrated, or reduced to an admirable Medicine? For my own part, I conceive it a thing of great difficulty; yet have no room to question that... a Spirit of great medicinal Virtues might be procured.<sup>145</sup>

This iatrochemical approach to the investigation of mineral waters drew extensively on the Paracelsian tradition of studying the inherent qualities of the natural world when physicians sought to treat patients.

Crucially, it is an approach that Erskine came to enthusiastically adopt when treating Peter the Great, who was frequently ill in the 1710s. At least twenty-two books on balneology can be found in Erskine's library, including Hoffman's pivotal work from 1703.<sup>146</sup> As early as 1702, however, Archibald Pitcairne had written to Erskine asking for advice as to the course of treatment (involving doses of mercury) of a mutual friend who was going to take the waters in Bath.<sup>147</sup> Evidently Pitcairne esteemed Erskine's balneological skills, which, as we will see, drew heavily on the application of iatrochemical principles.

Evidently the first occasion Erskine had to employ balneological medical techniques in Russia came in October 1712, when Peter the Great began to suffer from violent colic whilst travelling through Germany.<sup>148</sup> The course of treatment advocated by Erskine involved spending a number of weeks taking the supposedly therapeutic waters at the renowned

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>146</sup> Appleby, "Robert Erskine," 383. Erskine owned five works by Hoffmann, including *Dissertationes Physico-Medicæ Curiosæ Selectiores* (1708), which contained *Methodus Examinandi Acquæ Salubres*. See *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Medici et Physiologica in Octavo et Duodecimo 29, No. 492.

<sup>147</sup> Fond 120/1, No. 140a, fr. 1–2. Library of the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg. See also Appleby, "British Doctors," 37.

<sup>148</sup> Robert K. Massie, *Peter the Great: His Life and World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), 567.

spa towns of Carlsbad and Teplice. A surviving fifty-nine-page notebook made by Erskine recording his treatment of Peter the Great in Carlsbad and Teplice between September and November 1712 is a revealing source of his medicinal methods.<sup>149</sup> In Teplice, for example, Erskine recorded observations on acidity versus alkalinity, the mixture of salts and colour therapy. He also made meticulous notes regarding the colour and quantity of his patient's urine, his food intake and the composition of the goblets of water he drank and even his stools. Such observations and experiments were wholly in line with Hoffmann's iatrochemical approach to balneology. In *Methodus Examinandi aquas salubres*, for example, Hoffmann advocates close study of "all the excretions, by stool, by urine, by sweat and other outlets" as water acts as a remedy able to "wash away and discharge all matters prejudicial to the Body."<sup>150</sup> From a letter Peter the Great wrote to his wife Catherine whilst in Carlsbad it is evident that he found the process of taking the waters to be somewhat tedious: "You write that I shouldn't hurry back to join you on account of my cure, but I think it's because you have found someone taller than me."<sup>151</sup>

In spite of the Russian monarch's initial lukewarm attitude to taking the waters, Erskine's enthusiastic embrace of balneotherapy continued to play a decisive role in the future treatment of his principal patient. Thus, after the tsar fell perilously ill in November 1715 (after a drinking bout), a physician – presumably under Erskine's direct orders – went to Holland and Germany in order to consult with experts in the respective countries.<sup>152</sup> Apparently it was their opinion that the Russian monarch should travel to Pymont, near Hanover, as soon as possible, where mineral water bubbled out of the earth that was purportedly milder than the waters at Carlsbad.<sup>153</sup> It is not known whether Hoffmann was one of the experts consulted by the physician in Russian service, but the choice of Pymont is certainly one that he would have wholeheartedly supported.

Heeding the advice of the Dutch and German experts, Erskine and the tsar embarked for Pymont, where the latter began his mineral water cure, which lasted for three weeks, in May 1716. Erskine would have also been aware from Hoffmann's *Methodus Examinandi aquas salubres* of

<sup>149</sup> MS 28.6.13. Library of the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg. Also see Appleby, "British Doctors," 66–7.

<sup>150</sup> Hoffmann, *New Experiments*, 105.

<sup>151</sup> *PiB*, vol. 11 (ii), 138. See also Hughes, *Peter the Great*, 98.

<sup>152</sup> Massie, *Peter the Great*, 624.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 624–5.

the special virtues the German physician attributed to the mineral waters at Pyrmont. The German wrote that the Pyrmont waters “are the strongest or most spirituous of all in Germany” and that more than any others they “very copiously abound in a pure, penetrating, elastic mineral Spirit.”<sup>154</sup> Moreover, Hoffmann noted that the cold-springs had “a strong operation and effect” and thus he recommended that “the use of them is rather suited to such as are of robust and corpulent Habits.”<sup>155</sup> Naturally, Erskine deemed these cold-springs to be the perfect remedy for the tsar’s troubling ailments. What is more, in view of the fact that he forbade Peter the Great from consuming alcohol, it is possible that Erskine gained some respite by way of the powerful effects of the spring waters themselves, which Hoffmann describes:

If these Waters be drank cold, upon an empty Stomach, in the morning, they not only briskly strike the Nose with a subtle penetrating Vapour that rises from them; but also render the Head giddy, as if the Person had drank too much Wine.<sup>156</sup>

It seems the Pyrmont waters failed to provide a decisive cure for the tsar’s ills as in the summer of 1717, whilst still on his second Grand Tour of Europe, the monarch also spent five weeks taking the waters at Spa in the Low Countries.<sup>157</sup> On leaving Spa Peter instructed Erskine to write the following statement to the local authorities testifying to the qualities of the waters:

I, the below-signed State Councillor and Chief Physician of his Highness the Emperor of Russia, give witness to the fact that His Highness, setting out for Spa, suffered from a loss of appetite from a weakening of stomach fibres, a swollen leg, bilious colic and paleness of the face. Utilizing the Spa waters, His Highness recovered day by day. His Highness took the effort upon himself to set out to the source of the Geronstère, lying four miles from the town, knowing that the wasters are more beneficial at this place. Although His Highness has previously used waters in other places, he has nowhere found such which have brought so many benefits to him as the waters of Spa.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Hoffmann, *New Experiments*, 26, 61.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>157</sup> Massie, *Peter the Great*, 655.

<sup>158</sup> Mirskii, “Doktor Robert Erskin,” 144–5. In memory of his cure at Spa, Peter the Great presented a plaque made of black marble and inscribed in Latin to the local authorities. In 1820 the Peter the Great Pouhon (*Le Pouhon Pierre le Grand*) Building was constructed in the heart of the town in honour of the Russian monarch. See John W. Lund, “Spa ‘Pearl of the Ardennes,’” *GHC Bulletin* (Sept. 2000): 9–10.



Whilst supervizing the tsar's treatment in Western European spas Erskine also instructed individuals in his medical chancellery to seek out mineral waters with curative powers in the vast Russian Empire. In 1717, for example, Erskine wrote a detailed letter from Germany to Gottlieb Schubert, the Chief Inspector of the Apothecary Department, instructing him about the necessity to undertake research on mineral waters, especially in the North Caucasus region.<sup>159</sup> Subsequently Schubert did indeed venture to the North Caucasuses and discovered waters he regarded as "extremely healing for many illnesses."<sup>160</sup>

At the same time as Erskine's letter to Schubert it also came to the attention of the authorities that curative mineral waters were in fact located much closer to St. Petersburg; at a site to the north east of the capital, near the Olonets ironworks. As early as 1714, Ivan Reboev, a local inhabitant and worker at the ironworks, reported the miraculous powers of their spring waters, known as the *Martsial'nye vody* (Martial Waters).<sup>161</sup> In 1716, the renown of this curative water in the Olonets area reached the attention of the authorities, when Wilhelm Henning, the Chief Inspector of Mines, 'officially' discovered the spring.<sup>162</sup>

Unsurprisingly, it seems that Erskine was excited by the prospect of curative waters being located so near to the Russian capital as on his return to Russia in the autumn of 1717, he immediately set out with his protégé, Laurentius Blumentrost (1692–1755), to personally inspect the springs. A thorough chemical analysis was subsequently carried out in order to understand the curative powers of the waters, which was very much in the spirit of Friedrich Hoffmann's iatrochemical approach.

In July 1720, Georg Remus, the personal physician of Aleksandr Menshikov, wrote an interesting account of the experiments conducted by Blumentrost.<sup>163</sup> Thus, we learn from Remus that Blumentrost poured 100 *libres* of the Martial waters into an earthen vessel, which was slowly heated over a fire during the course of three days.<sup>164</sup> After this period Blumentrost

<sup>159</sup> Mirskii, "Doktor Robert Erskin," 140.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> I. I. Golikov, *Deianiia Petra Velikogo*, vol. 8 (Moscow, 1788–9), 32.

<sup>162</sup> Hughes, *Peter the Great*, 136.

<sup>163</sup> Georg Remus, "De Aquis Martialibus Olonicensibus Epistola ad Virum Excellentissimum et Experientissimum D. Johannem Philippum Breynium," in Johann Philipp Breyn, *Epistola de Melonibus petrefactis Montis Carmel vulgo creditis, ad Illustrem Virum Dominum, Johannem Anderson* (Leipzig, 1722): 25–34. For more on Remus, see Richter, *Geschichte der Medicin*, vol. 3, 160–1.

<sup>164</sup> Remus, "De Aquis Martialibus," 29.

observed sediment of red ochre at the bottom of the vessel, as well as clear water with a distinctive smell that he named *Salis Vitriolici Martialis*.<sup>165</sup> These two distilled parts were then heated again, with iron being extracted from the ochre and a salt of a dark hue deriving from the water.<sup>166</sup> Subsequently, Blumentrost carried out a number of chemical experiments on the nature of the salt extractions, which included tasting the substance with his tongue (it had a burning sensation and was ‘vitriolic.’ A number of other experiments were also conducted to test the acidity and alkalinity of the substance, including mixing a powder of black nuts with the water.<sup>167</sup> In conclusion, Remus notes that Blumentrost’s chemical experiments revealed that the water “contains a little of the *spiritis acidi*, a little of sulphur, two or three grains of iron and four to five grains of *Vitriolici Martialis*.”<sup>168</sup> Moreover, according to Blumentrost the *Essentia Martialis* medicine, which he concocted from the Martial waters has the “power to separate and nourish” and can be used “in all constipations of the liver and spleen” and for all those who suffer from melancholia.<sup>169</sup>

In February 1718, that is, shortly after this inspection, a work entitled *Podlinnye doznaniia o deistve martsial'nyia konchezerskiiia vody raznymi cheloveki* (Genuine enquiries about the effects of the Martial Konchezerskiiia waters by various persons) was published by a surgeon named Antonio Ravinel in St. Petersburg.<sup>170</sup> The tract contained brief accounts of the illnesses of ten individuals and the manner in which they had been successfully cured by the Olonets waters.<sup>171</sup> Ravinel, describes, for example, the treatment of of an aristocratic schoolboy who was suffering from a urinary problem as well as pains in his lower abdomen and kidneys. After receiving increasing doses of the *Vitriolici Martialis*, Ravinel describes how “with the help of God the illness ceased.”<sup>172</sup>

The Russian historian of medicine, Mark Mirskii, argues that there is a solid basis to conclude that Erskine played a direct role in this publica-

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 28–9.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 28–30.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 30–1.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 31–2.

<sup>169</sup> L. I. Kapusta, *Martsial'nyie vody: Stranitsy istorii pervogo russkogo kurorta* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2006), 33.

<sup>170</sup> See “Podlinnye doznaniia o deistve martsial'nyia konchezerskiiia vody raznymi cheloveki,” in *Kopii ego tsarskago velichestva ukazov. Publikovannykh ot 1714 goda, s marta 17 dnia. Po nyneshnen 1719 god* (St. Petersburg, 1719), 159–63. For a brief description of this work, see Mirskii, “Doktor Robert Erskin,” 140.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> “Podlinnye doznaniia,” 159–63; Kapusta, *Martsial'nyie vody*, 32.

tion, which is strengthened by the fact that Erskine named Ravinel as a beneficiary in his will for all his “trustworthy services.”<sup>173</sup> In addition, it is known that Erskine personally discovered what he thought to be curative spring water on the right bank of the Neva, near St. Petersburg, at a place called Bolshaia Okhta. He apparently found these iron-rich waters particularly relieving for headaches and nervous tension.<sup>174</sup>

Erskine’s strong endorsement of the curative waters at Olonets is borne out by the fact that he himself journeyed to the Russian spa when he fell seriously ill in the autumn of 1718. In spite of the purported curative powers of the waters Erskine made no miraculous recovery and died at the new spa on November 30, 1718. The physician’s untimely death prevented him from witnessing the burgeoning popularity of the mineral spring in Petrine Russia, yet one must not underestimate the Scot’s enormous contribution to balneology in his adopted homeland, which was based on iatrochemical principles.

Indeed it is highly probable that Erskine played a crucial role in formulating Peter the Great’s publication of an official *ukaz* on March 20, 1719, which bore the heading: “The healing waters found at Olonets: An announcement about the Martial Waters at Olonets.”<sup>175</sup> This remarkable document begins by citing the various illnesses that had been cured by the Olonets waters, namely: scurvy, hypochondria, jaundice, a weak stomach, vomiting, diarrhoea, haemorrhoids, constipation, epilepsy, intestinal worms, hernias, and in treating either a lack of or excess of bloodflow during women’s periods, as well as “other illnesses that have great strength.”<sup>176</sup> The belief in the extraordinarily extensive curative powers of the Martial Waters is wholly in the spirit of Hoffmann’s endorsement of mineral waters as the nearest things to a universal remedy.

After promoting the beneficial qualities of the Martial Waters, the official proclamation proceeds to outline the strict regime necessary to maximize their curative potential. Thus, it is immediately made clear that only those adopting a disciplined approach entailing a controlled degree of abstinence from food and nourishment will gain from the treatment. Indeed those who continue to eat harmful food are warned that they risk exacerbating their illness.<sup>177</sup> Consequently a series of thirteen regulations,

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 140; Paul, “Letters and Documents,” 426.

<sup>174</sup> Appleby, “British Doctors,” 66–7; Mirskii, “Doktor Robert Erskin,” 140–1.

<sup>175</sup> *Polnoe sobranie zakonov rossiiskoi imperii*, vol. 5 (St. Petersburg, 1830), 684.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*



or 'Doctor's Rules,' are written out to instruct the spa users. First, it is stated that it is necessary to rest for several days prior to taking the waters. The importance of following the advice of the resident physician and taking the prescribed medicine is then stressed. Secondly, the order outlines how it is necessary to take the waters in the mornings and that one should not eat for at least three hours prior to this. Furthermore, it is written that users should not sit whilst taking the waters, but should instead seek to move as much as possible in order to enhance the curative effects.<sup>178</sup>

After taking the waters the *ukaz* stipulates that users should eat after drinking a glass of vodka or anise. The lenient attitude towards alcohol is also highlighted by the fact that the *ukaz* recommends that individuals drink three glasses of "Burgundy, Rhine wine or light French wine" after eating.<sup>179</sup> The document also allows the drinking of a little "light beer."<sup>180</sup> Specific dietary regulations also form a crucial part of the *ukaz*. Thus, on the one hand it is permitted to eat mutton, veal, beef, chicken, fish, black grouse, Indian chickens, hares, venison and fresh soft-boiled eggs. On the other hand, it is prohibited to eat supposedly harmful foods, such as hard-boiled eggs, any salty, sour or smoked meats or fish, milk, buttery dishes, berries and the following vegetables: turnips, garlic, onions, radish, mushrooms, milk-agaric, peas and carrots. Lastly, the *ukaz* states that individuals should not sleep for at least two or three hours after evening meals, but does permit drinking light beer.<sup>181</sup>

The most favourable times of the year to take the waters are also outlined, they being the warm summer months of June and July and the frosty winter period between the middle of January and the middle of March. The stated reason for these periods is that the spring thaw and autumn rain dilutes the essence of the spring water, thereby rendering it less beneficial. The concluding section of the announcement on the Olonets mineral waters stresses their divine nature, stating that "the Lord God, in all His grace" saw fit to create such healing waters precisely in this location.<sup>182</sup> The tsar also adds a firm endorsement in their curative powers by stating that he and his family, as well as many eminent persons, have received benefits from taking the waters, which he ranks as surpass-

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 685.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 686.

ing both Pyrmont and Spa in their strength.<sup>183</sup> The esteem in which the mineral waters were held by the Russian monarch and his *grande*es is testified by Friedrich Weber, a Hanoverian diplomat, who visited the spa and wrote:

A Spring of Mineral Waters being lately discovered near Alonitz, a Physician was sent thither to inquire into the Nature of the Water, and to give it to some sick Persons to drink. The Waters proving beneficial to those People, others made use of them to good Effect, and even the Czar himself which in time made the Wells of Alonitz so famous that they were frequented by People from all Parts, and the Waters are at present looked upon in Russia as an universal Medicine. They are of a chalybeate Quality and their Virtue consists in purging and creating an Appetite; they leave a reddish Sediment, and from an Experiment which I saw made, it is judged that the chalybeate Particles of Steel make up one third Part of the Substance of this mineral Water.<sup>184</sup>

Thus, although Peter the Great was initially lukewarm towards taking the waters earlier in the decade, it is clear that under Erskine's influence he had been fully converted to their curative benefits as a 'universal medicine' by 1719. Indeed the tsar ordered the construction of a wooden palace, which he inspected in February and March 1718. Subsequently, the tsar spent several weeks at the spa in the winter months of 1719, 1720, 1722 and 1724, and even designed a church named in honour of St. Peter, in 1720–1721, thereby reinforcing the beliefs of many locals that these were indeed holy waters. Some historians have viewed Peter the Great's official support of the Olonets mineral waters as a sign "which bears witness to his peculiar sense of perspective- or lack of it," yet this completely loses sight of the fact that the discovery of a spring that seemingly offered a universal medicine was far from being a trivial matter.<sup>185</sup> What is more, Peter's perspective was wholly in keeping with the contemporary embrace of balneotherapy by iatrochemical physicians, such as Friedrich Hoffmann and Robert Erskine.

### *Astral and Divine Medicine*

A second 'pillar' of Paracelsian medicine involved the study of astrology/astronomy vis-à-vis the influence of the heavens (the macrocosm) on the

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Weber, *The Present State of Russia*, vol. 1, 204–5.

<sup>185</sup> Alex De Jonge, *Fire and Water: A Life of Peter the Great* (London: Collins, 1979), 240.

human body and mind (microcosm).<sup>186</sup> According to Paracelsus, in order to understand the microcosm of the human body a true physician should understand the astral influences at work in the celestial realm:

Now that the human being in his composition shall be considered by every physician, so know now in the second ground of astronomy, which is the upper part of philosophy, through which the human being can be entirely understood, how their bodies are to be understood and recognized through the upper sphere as in the lower one of the microcosm, as one firmament, one star, one nature and one being, which is subdivided in figure and form.<sup>187</sup>

This belief in a Christian Neo-Platonic system of a hierarchical unity, descending from God and the heavens to the terrestrial world and man, was imbued with an acceptance that correspondences exist between the two realms. Whilst it is undoubtedly true that this worldview was at its height during the Renaissance, it was by no means obsolete by the early years of the eighteenth century. Indeed, throughout Europe vestiges of this worldview can be seen among some of the leading physicians and scientists of the age. I would argue that this should also be borne in mind in regard to Robert Erskine's medical approach in Petrine Russia.

Evidence of Erskine's fascination with astral medicine can once again be gleaned from his library collection. Therein are an amazing variety of astrological tracts dating back to the mid-sixteenth century but also containing a significant quantity of contemporary late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century volumes purporting to aid the physician in his daily duties. Needless to say Erskine's comprehensive collection of works by Paracelsus himself comprised a major source of astral medicine.

In addition to this source, however, he could also draw on many other medical practitioners espousing a thoroughly astrological worldview. Included in his library, for example, was a 1669 edition of *De Secretis Mulierum* (The Secrets of Women), attributed to Albertus Magnus.<sup>188</sup> Astrological medicine features strongly in this tract and the author explicitly states that "all the virtues which the soul comprehends in the body it draws from the supercelestial spheres and bodies."<sup>189</sup> Thus, each of the

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<sup>186</sup> See Weeks, *Paracelsus*, 149–52.

<sup>187</sup> Theophrastus von Hohenheim Paracelsus, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Suhoff, vol. 8 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1922–33), 91. See also Weeks, *Paracelsus*, 151.

<sup>188</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 200b. Erskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 120, No. 115.

<sup>189</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 2, 744.

seven planets, starting with Saturn, rule for a month and affect the formation of a child in the womb.

Erskine also owned a rare 1553 Basel edition of Cardano's *De Subtilitate*, a work noted in the previous chapter for its astrological hue. Cardano was first and foremost a physician, renowned throughout Europe. At the root of Cardano's medical philosophy was a belief that, as Thorndike notes, the stars should be observed in administering medicines.<sup>190</sup> Furthermore, critical days were proposed, taking into account solar and lunar influences.

Another significant and extremely rare work possessed by Erskine was Thomas Bodier's *De Ratione et usu dierum criticorum*.<sup>191</sup> This is a book concerning critical days and contains fifty-five cases of sickness between 1549 and 1554 accompanied by astrological observations and figures.<sup>192</sup> Attached to this tract was an astrological-medical text purportedly by Hermes Trismegistus entitled *De Decubitu Infirmorum*.<sup>193</sup> This argued that the seven planets play a determining role for humans from the moment of conception and that they exercise influence over particular organs of the body. For example, the sun rules the right eye and the moon the left eye, whilst Saturn influences hearing. Illness stems from the malignant influence of a planet alien to a specific organ and the remedy for this consists of sympathetic treatments allied to the correct planet, such as plants, symbols, essences and spells.<sup>194</sup>

A seminal work of early seventeenth-century medico-astrology was Rudolph Goclenius the Younger's (1572–1621) *Apologeticus pro Astromantia*. Once again in Erskine's library, we find an extremely rare edition: the original 1611 Marburg publication. Goclenius was a physician and Professor of Physics at The University of Marburg and in this published lecture he discussed the extent that celestial influences affected individuals in relation to their specific genitures. He concluded that the former cannot override the latter, but that they can alleviate symptoms and that critical days are connected with the moon.<sup>195</sup> Erskine also held a copy of *De Magnetica Curatione*

<sup>190</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 5, 572.

<sup>191</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog in Quarto 39, No. 55.

<sup>192</sup> See Thomas Boderius, *De ratione & usu dierum criticorum opus* (Paris, 1555), 1–51; Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 5, 302.

<sup>193</sup> This tract was published as *Iatromathematica* by Johann Stadius in 1560.

<sup>194</sup> Hermes Trismegistus, "Ratio iudicandi de morbis et infirmorum decubitu ex mathematica scientia ad Amonem Aegyptium," in Boderius, *De ratione*, 52–7.

<sup>195</sup> See Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 7, 139–40.

*Vulnerum* by Goclenius, written in 1608, which treated of magnetic cures, weapon salves, sigils and the magic powers of the imagination.<sup>196</sup>

If one were to assume that these works represented the final salvo of a dying belief system, which subsequently fell into rapid decline as the seventeenth century wore on, one would be mistaken. Erskine's library is testament to the continued vitality of medico-astrological beliefs throughout the century. A good example of this in Erskine's library is Israel Hiebner von Schneeberg's *Mysterium Sigillorum* first published in 1651. Hiebner was a Professor of Astronomy and physician at the University of Erfurt in the mid-seventeenth-century and in this work he described the protective powers of sigils (small circular medals) adorned with an image of a planet in keeping diseases at bay. The continued relevance of this work is illustrated by the fact that Erskine acquired a 1696 edition and by the appearance of an English edition in 1698 (see Fig. 26 below).

The above illustration purports to show the reader the conjunction of the seven metals with sigils, or what Hiebner refers to as an *Electrum*, which is able to cure all diseases.<sup>197</sup>

If anything one finds the greatest concentration of medico-astrological works in Erskine's library from the 1670s and all from respected physicians. In 1673, for example, Sebastian Wirdig (1613–1687), the Professor of Medicine at the University of Rostock, published *Nova Medicina Spirituum*.<sup>198</sup> In this work, which Wirdig presented to the Royal Society in London, Erskine could read about the supposed magnetic influence between celestial and terrestrial bodies.<sup>199</sup> The continuing link between alchemy and medico-astrological beliefs is demonstrated by Johann Friedrich Helvetius, whose *Guldener Kalb* has already been referred to. Erskine had an original 1676 edition of *Microscopium Physiognomiae Medicum* by this physician to William, the Prince of Orange.<sup>200</sup> It is a work rich in astrological belief, as Thorndike notes:

Each planetary *complexio* has its own appropriate ferment or internal mixture of salt, sulphur and mercury, and there is a harmony of the external lineaments with the internal passion of the soul, with the natural forces of

<sup>196</sup> See Caesar Longinus *Trinum Magicum*, Book 2 (Frankfurt, 1616). See Appendix C for details.

<sup>197</sup> Isaac Hiebner, *Mysterium Sigillorum* (London, 1698), 181–2.

<sup>198</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>199</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 436.

<sup>200</sup> See Appendix C.

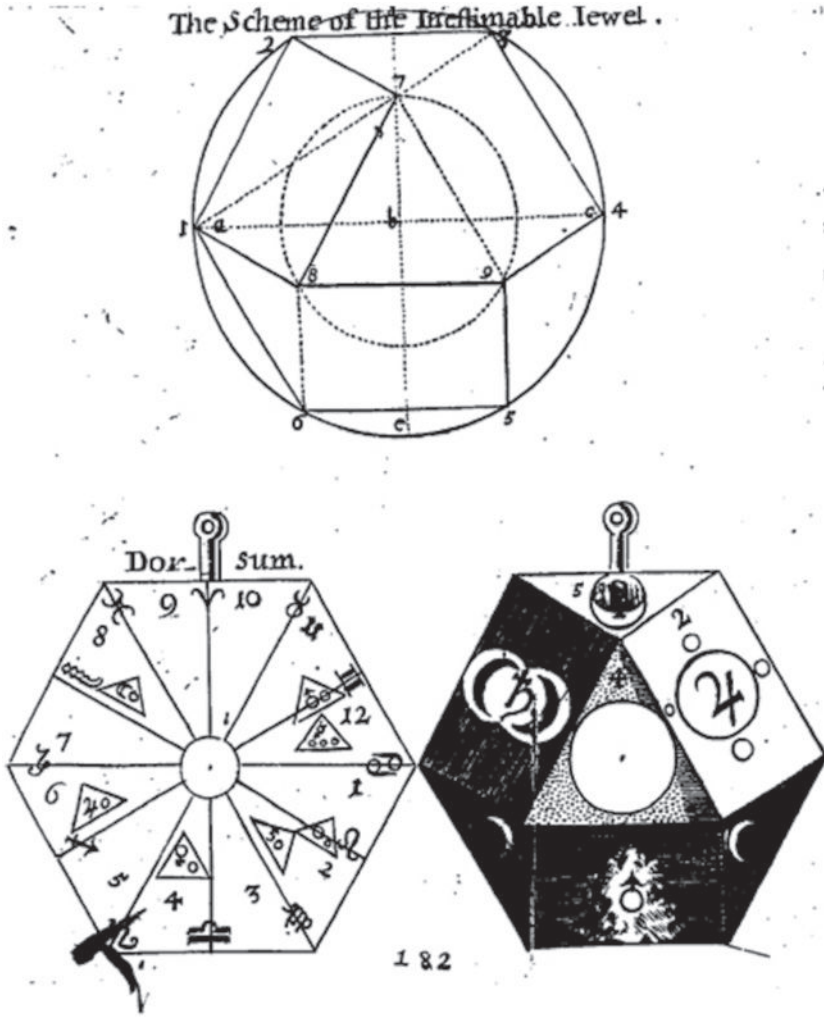


Fig. 26. Illustration from the 1698 edition of Isaac Hiebner's *Mysterium Sigillorum*, 182.

the body, and with disease internal, or external, which takes a different form in each planetary *complexio*.<sup>201</sup>

Well into the eighteenth century notable physicians continued to embrace a branch of medicine enveloped in divine, mystical and astral influences. A pertinent example in this respect is the Scottish physician George Cheyne (1671–1743). Erskine and Cheyne had much in common. Not only were they both Scottish physicians; they also shared a common bond with Archibald Pitcairne, who was Cheyne’s mentor at university in Leiden and in Edinburgh. Furthermore, Cheyne was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1702 and frequented many of the same coffee houses as Erskine in London. Indeed a correspondent writing to Erskine from a hospital in Jamaica in March 1704 supposed that he saw a lot of Cheyne.<sup>202</sup>

Cheyne is principally remembered nowadays for being England’s leading ‘nerve doctor’ in the first half of the eighteenth century. It is worth noting, however, that he ardently espoused a medical philosophy drawing heavily on Christian Neo-Platonism, Hermeticism and Paracelsianism. In the second edition of *Philosophical Principles of Natural Religion* (1715), for example, as G. S. Rousseau states:

He resorted to fanciful linguistic analogies between the body of man and the body of the universe, and reasoning again ‘by way of analogy’ but now espousing a more mystical, if indeed somewhat more emphatically Neo-Platonist, theory of attraction than before. Creatures of the world were now direct reflections, or embodiments, of the Creator. Because of this similitude, Cheyne purported one could reason *exclusively* by analogy and without hesitation from the material to the spiritual realm.<sup>203</sup>

Thus, as comparatively late as 1715 Cheyne used analogies between the body of man and the body of the universe in his medical theory. These views were espoused by a Scottish Episcopalian at the epicentre of English medical society rather than an eccentric quack on the fringes.

It is also extremely significant to note the astrological bent of Erskine’s friend and colleague Richard Mead, who gained a reputation as one of London’s most eminent physicians in the early eighteenth century – treating Isaac Newton and Edmond Halley – and who in 1717 became Vice-President of the Royal Society. In 1704 Mead published *De Imperio Solis ac Lunae in Corpora Humana, et Morbis inde Oriundis*, in which he argued in

<sup>201</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 470.

<sup>202</sup> Appleby, “British Doctors,” 43–4.

<sup>203</sup> Merkel and Debus, *Hermeticism and the Renaissance*, 205.



favour of the influence of gravitational interactions of the planets (in particular the Sun and Moon), which affected the Earth's atmosphere and had sizeable physical and aetiological consequences. Mead cited lunar influences on medical phenomena, such as the periodicity of menstruation and epilepsy and permitted the influence of comets and planets, which "may variously disturb the Influence of the Sun and Moon, &c."<sup>204</sup> Mead cites a number of learned authorities in defence of his argument, including the astrologer John Goad and his text *Astro-Meteorologica*. Mead also positively cites Jan Baptist Van Helmont on the influence the moon plays on inducing asthma. Most curious, however, is Mead's credulous citation of Theodore Kerckringius's *Observationum Anatomicarum* (1670–1673), when contemplating the "most uncommon Effect" of the "attractive Power" of the moon:

He knew a young Gentlewoman, whose Beauty depended upon the Lunar Force, insomuch that at Full Moon she was Plump and very Handsome, but in the Decrease of the Planet so wan and ill-favoured, that she was ashamed to go abroad 'till the Return of the New Moon gave *Fullness* to her Face, and *Attraction* to her charms.<sup>205</sup>

Understandably, Patrick Curry notes Mead's preservation of astrological inclinations:

Mead, the contemporary exemplar of learned medicine, was clearly willing to go farther towards explicitly acknowledging astrology, when drawing on its explanatory resources, than were astronomers.<sup>206</sup>

Bearing this in mind, Erskine's attraction to literature concerning celestial influences on medicine would not have placed him on the fringes of contemporary medical practice. Indeed such views can be seen to have penetrated the worldviews of two of his closest associates during his residence in London between 1700–1704. If one turns to Russia in the period immediately following Erskine's arrival, one can also see the preservation of a medical philosophy resting on an astrological basis. In this light, one can refer to the publication of annual calendars in Moscow and St. Petersburg from 1708. These official publications give a clear indication of the state-sanctioned endorsement of medicine based on astrological premises

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<sup>204</sup> Richard Mead, *A Discourse Concerning the action of the sun and moon on animal bodies; and the influence which this may have in many diseases* (London, 1708), 11.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>206</sup> Curry, *Prophecy and Power*, 151.

in Petrine Russia. In the illustrations from the 1721 edition below the astrological basis of bloodletting is clearly revealed.

It can clearly be seen that twelve separate parts of the body are designated as appropriate for bloodletting according to the signs of the zodiac. A chart is also displayed underneath, outlining the appropriate days for the months of January and February. The use of astrological signs for different parts of the body – known as *melothesia* – can be traced back to antiquity and similar illustrations remained prevalent throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>207</sup>

Mention has already been made in the first chapter to the astrological basis of the so-called *Bruce Calendars*. A significant element of information contained within these calendars refers to medicinal matters. For example in the third sheet a list of “illnesses and sorrows” linked to the seven planets are stated.<sup>208</sup> Under Saturn, for example, one finds various ailments listed, such as “feverish evils,” “diarrhoea,” “epilepsy,” “a cough,” “coldness” and that “the young will suffer from small-pox in spring.”<sup>209</sup> It is stated that illnesses will be rare under the influence of Jupiter only having some effect at the end of winter.<sup>210</sup> These will be flank illnesses, injuries and boils, sharp and severe fevers, heart palpitations and an inflamed stomach, which will begin to cause severe stench and rotteness. Listed under Mars can be found: “an unremitting severe fever for three uninterrupted days and fistulas lasting for four days, carbuncles, cancer, dysentery and symptoms which with wine cause a dry heat.”<sup>211</sup>

It is written that “few sorrows” are linked to the Sun, except the following: feebleness, convulsions, colds, heart flickers and internal chills of the entire stomach.<sup>212</sup> Among the illnesses associated with Venus are: internal illnesses of the stomach, French illness, dysentery, diarrhoea, swollenness, flank illnesses and general mortality.<sup>213</sup> A description of the illnesses associated with Mercury follows, which include eye illnesses. In spring and autumn one can especially expect sleeping sickness, confused

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<sup>207</sup> For more on the history of the anatomical division of “zodiacal man”, see Katharina Volk, *Manilius and His Intellectual Background* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 58–126; Harry Bober, “The Zodiacal Miniature of the Très Riches Heures of the Duke of Berry: Its Sources and Meaning,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11 (1948): 1–34.

<sup>208</sup> See Filimon, *Iakov Brius*, 423–29.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 423.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 424.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 425.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 426.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 427.

О КРОВОПУСКАНИИ.  
 ЖІЛНОМЪ и рожечномъ, и когда  
 ЛѢКАРСТВО ПРИНИМАТЬ.

ВЪ ГЕНВАРѢ.

Кровь пускать жїлную и рожечную.  
 Мокротнымъ 2. 3. 4. 11. 12.  
 Холерикамъ 9. 10. 18. 19.  
 Меланхоликамъ 7. 8. 25. 26. 27. числ.

ЛѢКАРСТВО ПРИНИМАТЬ

Проносное 1. 9. 10. 18. 19.  
 рвотное 5. 6. 11. 12. 13. 14.  
 Слабителное 7. 8. 16. 17. 25. 26.  
 Крѣпителное 5. 6. 13. 14. 23. 24.

ВЪ ФЕВРАЛѢ.

Кровь пускать жїлную и рожечную.  
 Мокротнымъ 7. 8. 26. 27.  
 Холерикамъ 5. 6. 14. 15. 16.  
 Меланхоликамъ 3. 4. 22. 23.

Fig. 27. From the 1721 *Kalendar' ili Mesiatsoslov*.

articulation, epilepsy or falling sickness, coughs, vomiting and colds. It is also necessary to cure melancholy illnesses. Lastly, livestock will be easily infected.<sup>214</sup> Under the last planet, the Moon, there are listed: severe and burning sorrows, especially in the autumn. One also finds, palsy, plumpness, illnesses related to the spleen, erysipelas and flank complaints.<sup>215</sup>

The fourth sheet is also brimming full of medicinal advice drawn from astral influences. Not only are times to let blood given, one can also learn the appropriate times in the month to take internal and external remedies and when allow commonplace ores to flow.<sup>216</sup> The sixth sheet too provides some useful information regarding astrological medicine. Underneath the sign of Taurus, for example, are located three tables, each divided into three parts. Above each of these parts one finds representations of the twelve signs of the zodiac.<sup>217</sup> Various influences are derived from these characters and are located opposite the sign of Taurus, on the left-hand side. The first is stated as bloodletting. A letter 'S' is then affixed opposite the sign of Taurus to denote that the given moment is 'bad' or 'evil' to undertake such an action, whilst the letter 'P' denotes appropriate times for internal and external remedies.<sup>218</sup>

Although Erskine did not play a direct role in the printing of these various calendars, he definitely utilized them in his daily medical work. Mention has already been made, for example, to the fact that during 1714 Erskine made his medical notes on the annual *Kalendar*.<sup>219</sup> This almanac was extremely similar in content to both the 1721 edition and the so-called *Bruce Calendars* described above. The front page of Erskine's notebook illustrates the religious nature of the 1714 *Kalendar* by stating the years that had elapsed since the following Biblical events: (1) 7222 years since the Creation (2) 4980 years since the Flood (3) 3797 years since the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The calendar also chronicled the time elapsed since the fall of the four great monarchies: (1) 2416 years since the fall of the Babylonian Empire (2) 2222 years since the fall of the Persian Empire (3) 2041 years since the fall of the Greek Empire and (4) 1786 years since the fall of the Roman Empire. It is also stated that

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 428.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 429.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 432. See Fig. 16 for an illustration in the fourth *Bruce Calendar* depicting when to take medicines according to astrological influences.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 450.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> FN 319 72ff. Library of the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg.

3392 years had passed since the exodus of the Israelites. The only modern event noted is the invention of the printing press, which is stated as having occurred 274 years previously, apart from various significant dates related to the reign of Peter the Great (his coronation, the birth of Tsar-evich Aleksei, the foundation of the Russian Fleet and finally the Russian victory over Sweden at Poltava). Curiously, Erskine's use of a contemporary Russian calendar-almanac is wholly in keeping with an edict of the University of Paris dating back to 1437. This stipulated that every physician and surgeon had to own a copy of the latest almanac as an essential guide to medical practice.<sup>220</sup>

What is more, it is also important to highlight the fact that Erskine, as personal physician to Bruce – in addition to the tsar – would have been the natural and easiest source for medical information for the various calendars-almanacs published in Petrine Russia. Furthermore, one cannot argue that the continued use of astrological medicine in Petrine Russia was simply endorsed by the authorities to cater for popular demand among the wider population. First, the majority of the Russian population at this time were still illiterate. Secondly, it is important to realize that the aim of the State Typographers was not to publish outdated beliefs; but rather works beneficial to the development and well being of the country. These points are strengthened when one considers that the calendars were the only form of publication containing medical information printed during the Petrine era. Indeed, the total print-run of all calendars at the St. Petersburg Press between 1713–1722 was only 10,700.<sup>221</sup>

### *Erskine and Natural Philosophy*

The last pillar of Paracelsian medicine was natural philosophy. This demanded that a physician should be tireless in his study of the natural world and its curiosities and wonders. After all, it was only in studying the natural world – in which sympathetic influences and signatures were all encompassing – that a physician could learn to penetrate the secrets of God's universe and truly harness its powers. As Paracelsus states:

So now if the physician is to grow out of nature, what is nature other than philosophy, what is philosophy other than the invisible nature? One who

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<sup>220</sup> See Capp, *Astrology and the Popular Press*, 17.

<sup>221</sup> See Marker, *Publishing*, 37. A lengthier survey of these calendars will take place in Chapter Six.

recognises the sun and moon and knows with closed eyes how the sun and moon are, has the sun and moon in him as they stand in the heavens and the firmament. Now that is philosophy: that it stands in the human being as (it stands) outside palpably, like someone who sees himself in a mirror.<sup>222</sup>

In many respects Paracelsus's ideal of a physician rested on a profound sanctification of nature. Therefore, it is essential to realize that the search for truths hidden within nature was not to be conducted at the expense of the environment. On the contrary, scientific inquiry was merely a means to marvel at and increase knowledge of the divine wonder of God's creation.

This outlook (unlike much of Paracelsus's iconoclastic medical doctrine) was in broad harmony with the widespread Renaissance belief in the affinity between the microcosm and the macrocosm and the ancient tradition – dating back to Pliny the Elder and Dioscorides – of studying and actively utilizing the wonders and curiosities of nature. Lynn Thorndike notes that this sentiment was still shared by many natural scientists at the close of the seventeenth century. Writing in regard to the various academic societies in Europe at the close of the seventeenth century he states: “their spirit was curious rather than sceptical and critical.” Furthermore, he states that “in the case of many of their observations and scholia the interest is rather in the odd and curious, the astounding and marvellous, the unnatural and the abnormal.”<sup>223</sup>

Small wonder Thorndike made this claim after coming across a wealth of observations and theories regarding all manner of weird and wonderful curiosities of nature contained within many of the leading European journals.<sup>224</sup> Notable topics raised included numerous monstrous phenomena, such as J. J. Waldschmidt's account of an abominable monster, J. J. Wepfer's description of a monster that breathed through its neck and P. J. Sachs von Lowenheimb's observation of a monstrous turnip shaped like a man. The power of the imagination in inciting various ills is also a common subject of discussion. Its effects range from fevers and melancholy to a black spot found on a man's breast which appeared after he had dreamt that a giant had hit him with a stone.<sup>225</sup> Indeed, in an edition of the

<sup>222</sup> Paracelsus, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 8, 71. See also Weeks, *Paracelsus*, 149.

<sup>223</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 261, 234.

<sup>224</sup> The leading European journals of the day were the German *Academia Caesarea Leopoldina*, the Danish *Acta Medica et Philosophica Hafniensis*, the French *Journal des Scavans* and the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society based in London.

<sup>225</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 235–37.

*Philosophical Transactions*, a correspondent attests that a monstrous baby was born in the form of an ape as a result of its mother seeing somebody dressed as such an animal on stage when she was five months pregnant!<sup>226</sup> This is an excellent example of the continued belief in the power of the mother's imagination during conception and pregnancy to create all manner of monstrous offspring. As Huet states:

A remarkably persistent line of thought argued that monstrous progeny resulted from the disorder of the maternal imagination. Instead of reproducing the father's image, as nature commands, the monstrous child bore witness to the violent desires that moved the mother of mother at the time of conception or during pregnancy. The resulting offspring carried the marks of her whims and fancy rather than the recognizable features of its legitimate genitor. The monster thus erased paternity and proclaimed the dangerous power of the female imagination.<sup>227</sup>

Huet then goes on to demonstrate how this belief actually only culminated in the eighteenth century, with a hotly debated 'Quarrel of the Imagination.'<sup>228</sup>

Even those natural scientists regarded as honoured members in the pantheon of 'modern' and empirical science in this period strove to reveal the inexhaustible wonders of nature as evidence of God's divine work. The most famous work of the Dutch natural scientist Jan Swammerdam (1637–1680), *The Book of Nature*, for example, contained "exhortations to praise the 'Supreme Architect' God... and the wonders revealed by the microscope and the dissecting instruments as proof of the glory of the Creator."<sup>229</sup> The acclaimed English naturalist John Ray (1628–1705) in his principal work, *The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation*, also continually marvels at the divine majesty of the natural world.<sup>230</sup> Other significant English naturalists of the time, such as John Woodward and Francis Willughby did not stray from this outlook. In his *An Essay Toward*

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 253.

<sup>227</sup> Marie-Hélène Huet, *Monstrous Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 1.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>229</sup> M. Cobb, "Reading and Writing *The Book of Nature*: Jan Swammerdam (1637–1680)," *Endeavour* 24 (2000): 126. Erskine owned two works by Swammerdam: *Historia Insectorum* (1673) and *Uteri Muliebris Fabrica* (1685). See *Erskine Archives*, 16ob. Areskine Libri Medici et Physiologici Quarto, 218 & 240b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, 290 respectively.

<sup>230</sup> Charles E. Raven, *John Ray: Naturalist: His Life and Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 455. Erskine possessed six works by Ray, including a 1704 edition of *The Wisdom of God*. See *Erskine Archives*, 50b. Areskine Libri, 180.



a *Natural History of the Earth* (1695), for example, Woodward argued that the discovery of fossils uncovered in mines proved conclusively the Biblical description of the Flood.<sup>231</sup>

Thus, it is within this awe-inspired and deeply religious mindset that I believe one should study Erskine's pioneering role as the leading natural scientist in Petrine Russia and a man of whom "the Czar usually informs himself in the *Curiosities of Nature*."<sup>232</sup> Prior to his departure for Russia Erskine had already established a reputation in Europe as a physician and natural scientist of some repute – a fact illustrated by his election to the Royal Society in 1703. In Russia, however, he had at his disposal the means to fulfil every imaginable scientific curiosity. The broad scope of his responsibilities in Petrine Russia – incorporating the roles of personal physician, chief medical officer, founder of the St. Petersburg Botanical Garden and the first librarian and director of the St. Petersburg *Kunstkamera* – is illustrative of the way in which the natural scientist willingly integrated a dizzying variety of disciplines. This spirit was a remnant of the Renaissance passion for encyclopaedic knowledge embodied by such figures as Ulisse Aldrovandi, Conrad Gesner and Athanasius Kircher.

Indeed, Erskine's evident passion for encyclopaedic knowledge included a distinct interest in occult philosophy of all guises. One can discern an interest in ancient Egyptian magic, for example, which is redolent of the continued passion for Hermetic wisdom at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Erskine owned a number of tracts purportedly written by the mythical Egyptian Hermes Trismegistus, for example, including *De Decubitu Infirmorum*, the *Tabula Smaragdina, Cui Titulus Verba Secretorum, Expositiones Dornei* and *Tractatus Aureus de Lapidis Physici Secret*.<sup>233</sup> In addition to this, it is noteworthy that Erskine owned a 1552 edition of *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum Chaldaeorum* by Iamblichus (c. 285–330).<sup>234</sup> This was undoubtedly one of the most influential works on Egyptian magic and religion written in antiquity and appealed to many great occultists during the Renaissance, such as Agrippa and John Dee.

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<sup>231</sup> Frank E. Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton: The Freemantle Lectures 1973* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1974), 38.

<sup>232</sup> Perry, *The State of Russia*, 170.

<sup>233</sup> All these tracts were published in Manget's *Bibliotheca Curiosa*. See Appendix C under Horlacher.

<sup>234</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Philosophic. Histor. et Philologici in 8vo et 12o, 55., No. 381.

Furthermore, Erskine possessed a host of tomes by renowned Renaissance occultists who were themselves fascinated by ancient sources of magical knowledge. Erskine owned a first edition of a work attributed to Caesar Longinus, for example, entitled *Trinum Magicum, sive Secretorum Magicorum Opus* (1616).<sup>235</sup> The third book of this volume contains a rich collection of ancient sources of magic encompassing the oracles of Zoroaster in verse, and the mystic philosophy of the Egyptians, Orphics, Pythagoreans, Chaldeans, Greeks, Persians and Hebrews in prose.

Erskine also possessed a 1706 copy of Johann Staricius's early seventeenth century work *Geheimnisvoller Heldenschatz Egyptische Magische Schild*.<sup>236</sup> This tract, as the title suggests, describes the magical powers of an Egyptian shield, and was written by an alchemist who also wrote on wartime magic. Without any doubt, however, the greatest work on Egyptian magic in the seventeenth century was Athanasius Kircher's monumental undertaking, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, first published in Rome in 1652. Erskine had a complete original edition of this work, which passionately championed the pre-eminent place of Hermes among the precursors of Christianity and exhorted the study of hieroglyphics in order to reveal the true, hidden meaning of his ancient wisdom. The influence of Kircher's theory, in relation to Hermes and hieroglyphs, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 (in regard to Feofan Prokopovich).<sup>237</sup> Erskine also held Kircher's earlier studies *De Lingua Aegypt* (1644) and *Obeliscus Pamphilius* (1650), which further demonstrate Kircher's fascination for the primacy of ancient Egyptian religion and culture.<sup>238</sup>

In addition to occult works dedicated to ancient magic, Erskine also owned a whole host of other key Renaissance and early modern texts dedicated to expounding a dizzying variety of magical theories. Indeed, a brief roll call of occult authors present in Erskine's library reads like a who's who of Renaissance magi. One finds, for example works by Ramon Lull, Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484–1558), Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535), Giorlamo Cardano (1501–1576), Heinrich Khunrath (1560–1605), Robert Fludd (1574–1637), Gabriel Naude (1600–1653) and Athanasius

<sup>235</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 310b. Areskine Libri Medici in 8vo et 120, No. 583.

<sup>236</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 570b. Areskine Libri Philosophici, Histor. et Philologici in 8vo et 120, No. 478.

<sup>237</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog, in Folio 33, No. 12.

<sup>238</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 430b. Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog. In Quarto, No. 253; Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog. In Folio 33, No. 13.

Kircher (1601–1680) as well as many less well known exponents of occult magic.<sup>239</sup>

Given Erskine's role as a secret Jacobite agent, it is also worth noting his collection of esoteric works on cryptography. He owned an original edition of Gustavus Selenius's monumental *Cryptomenytices Cryptographia* (1624), which is arguably the most complete tome on esoteric cryptography ever published.<sup>240</sup> Selenius was a pseudonym used by Augustus, Duke of Braunschweig-Lüneburg (1579–1666), the patron and long-time correspondent of Johann Valentin Andreae who was at the epicentre of the Rosicrucian controversy.<sup>241</sup>

In *Cryptomenytices Cryptographia* Selenus outlines a "complete system of cryptography" wherein he provides in Book 3 a "clear elucidation of the *Steganographia*" by Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516), a work "composed in magic and enigmatic form."<sup>242</sup> In Book 4, Selenius also provides a translation of Trithemius's *Polygraphia* (1518), his other main treatise on cryptography. This is then followed by a section concentrating on Della Porta's *De furtivis literarum notis: Vulgo de ziferis* (1563) in which the noted Neapolitan writer on natural magic expounds his own cipher system. Book 5 includes general considerations on Blaise de Vigenere's cryptographic work *Traicte des Chiffres ou Secretes d'Ecrire* (1586). Vigenere was a French diplomat with more than a passing interest in the occult sciences. In addition to his cryptographic treatise he also wrote an alchemical tract, and believed that true knowledge could only be achieved through the utilization of Cabbala and natural magic, which he states is "nothing else (as *Orpheus* saith) but a forme of marriage of the starry heaven with the earth."<sup>243</sup> The fifth book also contains Gabriel Collange's 1561 translation of Trithemius's *Polygraphia* accompanied with his own article *De Cabala*. This encyclopaedic tome' more than any other work on cryptography,

<sup>239</sup> See Appendix D for a list of notable esoteric works in Erskine's library collection.

<sup>240</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 360b. Areskine Philosoph. Historici et Philolog in Folio, No. 162. It is also noteworthy that Erskine owned Selenus's pioneering tome on chess, entitled *Das Schach oder König Spiel* and a tract entitled *Rythmomachia dess Pythagorae*, a board game with an obvious Pythagorean basis. See *Erskine Archives*, 360b. Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog in Folio, Nos. 163 and 164 respectively. Moreover, Erskine owned John Wilkin's *Mercury, or, The Secret and Swift Messenger* (London, 1641). See *Erskine Archives*, 4 ob. Areskine Libri, No. 142.

<sup>241</sup> Dickson, *The Tessera of Antilia*, 59–60.

<sup>242</sup> Gustaf Selenus, *The Cryptomenytices and Cryptography of Gustavus Selenus*, trans. Dr. John William Henry Walden (Harvard, 1900), title page.

<sup>243</sup> Debus, *The French Paracelsians*, 48. The alchemical tract is entitled *Traicte du Feu et du Sel* and was published posthumously in 1608.

clearly demonstrates the intrinsic link during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries between the art of concealing and codifying messages and esoteric practice derived from both hieroglyphics and Egyptian magic and Jewish Cabbala.

Both Freemasons and Jacobites were naturally attracted to the potent combination of secret codes and esotericism fused in the art of cryptography. On a practical level a mastery of secret communication was a valuable skill for a Jacobite in exile or a Freemason seeking to preserve an air of secrecy. This begs the question as to the motivation behind Erskine's collection of key cryptographic texts? He certainly had use of secret codes on a practical level as a Jacobite with strong ties to the sprawling network of fellow émigrés. Erskine's marked attraction to the esoteric side of cryptography is also highly indicative of a Masonic worldview epitomized, for example, by the Stuart agent and Freemason Sir Robert Moray, who became an expert in all forms of secret communication. This included an active interest in Kircher's belief that secret messages could be transmitted by the use of magnets.<sup>244</sup>

For many of the giants of occult philosophy in the Renaissance the temple and laboratory for the adoration and study of natural philosophy was the *kunstkammer*, or cabinet of curiosities.<sup>245</sup> This was still the case in Petrine Russia and Erskine played a pivotal role in developing Peter the Great's famed *kunstkamera* in St. Petersburg. Initially, Erskine had been appointed Keeper of the tsar's first natural history collection in the Apothecary Department, located in the Moscow Kremlin.<sup>246</sup> According to Osip Beliaev, this collection primarily consisted of birds, fish, insects, several physical monstrosities, anatomical specimens, arms, ambassadors' gifts and ethnographic rarities.<sup>247</sup>

In 1714, this collection was transferred to St. Petersburg and Peter the Great officially founded the city's *kunstkamera*. Erskine was appointed the first director of the St. Petersburg *Kunstkamera*, which was located in Peter the Great's Summer Palace. However, from July 1718 the *kunstkamera* was located in the confiscated Kikin Palace. Erskine was able to draw on his

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<sup>244</sup> Schuchard, *Temple of Vision*, 469.

<sup>245</sup> A number of other names were used to describe such early museums, including *Cabinet of Rarities*, *Kunstschränk* and *wunderkammer*.

<sup>246</sup> Beliaev, *Kabinet Petra Velikago*, vol. 2, 4. See also Oleg Neverov, "His Majesty's Cabinet' and Peter I's *Kunstammer*," in *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (London: House of Stratus, 2001, 72).

<sup>247</sup> Beliaev, *Kabinet Petra Velikago*, vol. 2, 4.

predecessors in order to mould his vision of an ideal chamber, alongside Peter the Great, in a way that embodied the wonders of the macrocosm and God's creation. Although he did not live to see the completion of the current *kunstkamera*, on Vasilievskii Island, Erskine was able to plan the layout and functions of the Kikin Palace. Thus, it is significant to note that Staniukovich describes that in this palace "was concentrated a complete scientific complex, incorporating a museum, library and laboratory."<sup>248</sup>

Furthermore, Erskine's debt to the Renaissance heritage of the *kunst-kammer* is demonstrated by his remarkable collection of tracts describing many of the most outstanding cabinets of the past and present. Erskine could, for example, draw on David Kellner's account of Aldrovandi's *Musei* written in 1701 and a 1695 edition of Ferrante Imperato's *Historiae Naturalis Libri XXIIIX*, in which his Neapolitan cabinet is discussed at length.<sup>249</sup> Both these editions demonstrate the continued demand for knowledge of two of the most outstanding cabinets in sixteenth century Italy. Erskine also owned a rare edition of *Epitome Thesauri antiquitatum . . . ex Museo Iacobi de Strada* (1553) by Jacobo de Strada (1507–1588) the antiquary-royal to both Emperor Maximilian II and Rudolf II. In addition, Erskine possessed a work by his grandson Octavius de Strada (1550–1607), who was also a favoured collector under Rudolf II in Prague. This work, *De Vitis Imperatorum et Caesarum Romanorum* (1615) was a posthumous collection of his materials.<sup>250</sup>

These classic works were well supplemented by later seventeenth century accounts of both private cabinets and royal *kunst-kammern*. As regards private cabinets, Erskine could consult descriptions by various German collectors, such as Michael Besler, Christian Spener, Michael Bernhard Valentini, Georg Eberhard Rumphius and Georg Nicolaus Schurtz. He could also study Dutch cabinets by such esteemed figures as Jacob de Wilde (1645–1745) and Frederick Ruysch (1638–1731) and the English cabinet of the botanist, James Petiver (c. 1663–1718), as well as Nehemiah Grew's 1681 description of the museum of the Royal Society.<sup>251</sup>

<sup>248</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 25.

<sup>249</sup> See *Erskine Archives*, 310b. Areskine Libri Medici in 8vo et 120, No. 605; 150b. Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 185.

<sup>250</sup> See *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog. In Quart. 44, No. 270; 350b. Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog in Folio, No. 131.

<sup>251</sup> Besler's works are entitled *Gazophilacium Rerum Natural* (1692) and *Rariora Musei Besleriani* (1716). See *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Physiologici in Folio, Nos. 42 & 44. Spener's work is entitled *Museum Spenerianum* (1693). See *Erskine*, Areskine Libri Philosophici. Histor et Philologici in 8vo et 120, 57, No. 449. Valentini's work is *Natur und*

One of the finest private collections amassed during the seventeenth century was the Museum Wormianum of the Danish scholar Ole Worm (1588–1654) in Copenhagen. The publication of his magnum opus, *Musaeum Rerum Rariorum* a year after his death, of which Erskine had a first edition, heralded a significant milestone in the history of literature related to cabinets of rarities. King Frederick III of Denmark bought Worm's collection on his death and moved it to the newly established Köngens Kunstkammer.<sup>252</sup> Erskine possessed a description and catalogue of this kunstkammer, made in 1710 by Jacobaeus Holger, as well as an account by Adam Olearius (1603–1671) of the renowned Gottorp Kunstkammer in Schleswig.<sup>253</sup>

Erskine was also the driving force behind the purchase for the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera of some of the most outstanding private cabinets in Europe. As has been noted above, Erskine had been in correspondence with the Dutch apothecary and cabinet collector, Albert Seba, since 1711. By October 1715 he was orchestrating negotiations for the purchase of this collection, which were formally agreed in June 1716 for the sum of 1,500 guilders.<sup>254</sup> Seba wrote to Peter I in October 1715 giving a description of his collection, which contained more than 400 glass bottles in which there were “unspeakable, miraculous, strange animals placed in wine spirit for preservation.”<sup>255</sup> The catalogue also includes many animals fixed on wooden boards and another 400 separately bottled animals.<sup>256</sup> It includes “such rarities” as an East Indian Philander, different sorts of crocodile, an armadillo, flying snakes and flying fish. What is more, one finds

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*Materialien Kamer* (1704). See *Erskine*, 100b. Areskine Libri Physiologici in Folio, No. 36. Rumphius' work is his classic text *Amboinsche Raritetkammer*. See *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Physiologici in Folio, No. 47. The work by Schurtz is entitled *Neu-eingerichtete Material-Kammer* (1672). See *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 9, No. 45. One finds three works by De Wilde: *Signa Antiqua* (1700), *Selectae Numismata Antiqua* (1697) & *Selectae Gemae Antiquae* (1703). See *Erskine Archives*, 440b. Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog. In Quarto, Nos. 294–296. Ruysch's work is entitled *Thesaurus Anatomicus* (1701). See *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto 14, No. 150. The work by Petiver is *Musei Petiveriani*. See *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 461. Nehemiah Grew's work is entitled *Museum Regalis Societatis*. See *Erskine*, Areskine Libri Physiologici in Folio, No. 40.

<sup>252</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Physiologici in Folio, No. 39.

<sup>253</sup> *Erskine Archives*, *Museum Regium, seu Catalogus rerum tam naturalium, quam artificialium, quae in basilica bibliothecae*, Areskine Libri Physiologici in Folio, No.45; *Die Gottorffischer Kunst-und Natrualienkammer*, Areskine Libri Medici et Physiologici in Quarto 17, No. 254.

<sup>254</sup> Appleby, “Robert Erskine,” 384.

<sup>255</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 558.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 558–59.

salamanders and a certain *Tavianskii Devil*, as well as frogs that reputedly changed into fish.<sup>257</sup> In a separate box one finds birds of paradise and other curious birds, whilst in another was to be found the root of aloë, otherwise known as the “Tree of Paradise.”<sup>258</sup> Descriptions of all these curiosities, as well as the vast collection of other things, are found in the enclosed copies of works by the noted collectors, Aldrovandi, Johnston, Rumphius and Merian.<sup>259</sup>

Judging by the prefaces to the first two volumes of Seba’s *Thesaurus*, in which special attention is drawn to *signatura rerum* (the signature of things) the Dutch collector still embraced the Renaissance belief in the macrocosm-microcosm analogy.<sup>260</sup> Indeed, as Hendrik Engel notes, Seba “liked to see Nature as the creation of One whom he adored in His many creatures.”<sup>261</sup> This is entirely in the spirit of Paracelsus, who described the ‘signature of things’ as the seal of God implanted “on the wonderful work of creation” and as “a certain vital organic activity” expressed in the “exterior form of things.”<sup>262</sup>

The other principal cabinet purchased by Erskine was that of Frederick Ruysch (1638–1731), the Dutch anatomist and botanist. Peter the Great had been introduced to Ruysch in 1697, during his first Grand Embassy, and on his second trip to Holland in 1717, he once again paid a visit to Ruysch in Amsterdam accompanied by Erskine. Subsequently, Erskine assured the purchase of Ruysch’s entire anatomical cabinet for 30,000 guilders.<sup>263</sup> The cabinet contained some 2,045 embryological and human anatomical preparations including 105 human embryos and foetuses, 98 male genitali and 66 female genitalia. Significantly, the cabinet also contained 105 monsters.<sup>264</sup> Less well-known collections acquired by Erskine include the *Collectanea Curiosa* of David Krieg F.R.S (d. 1710), a member of the Temple Coffee-House Club in London, and the collection of the city physician of

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 559; Hendrik Engel, “The Life of Albert Seba,” *Svenska Linné-sällskapets årsskrift* 20 (1937): 83.

<sup>258</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 560.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 561.

<sup>260</sup> See the unnumbered prefaces in, Albert Seba, *Locupletissimi Rerum Naturalium Thesauri*, vols. 1 and 2 (Amsterdam, 1734–1765).

<sup>261</sup> Engel, “Life of Albert Seba,” 91.

<sup>262</sup> Cited from Arthur Edward Waite, *The Real History of the Rosicrucians* (London: George Redway, 1887), 204.

<sup>263</sup> Appleby, “Robert Erskine,” 386.

<sup>264</sup> Beliaev, *Kabinet Petra Velikago*, vol. 2, 35.





Fig. 28. Portrait of Albert Seba.

Danzig, Christopher Gottwald, which largely contained minerals, shells and precious stones.<sup>265</sup>

Unsurprisingly Erskine had his own private cabinet, which was acquired by the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera in 1726. Beliaev describes this Cabinet as a “fine collection of minerals, shells and various rarities” and Appleby states that it was “very valuable and diversified.”<sup>266</sup> Erskine’s collection was actually kept at the royal court by Peter the Great until 1726 and an indication of its content can be gleaned from the will of the former, which describes certain curiosities, medals and surgical instruments: “All the curious things and medals, and all other instruments are to go to nobody but his Royal Highness, my All Merciful Sovereign.”<sup>267</sup> It is also known that Erskine’s collection of Chinese objects was bequeathed to the tsaritsa.<sup>268</sup> Unfortunately, however, a full record of Erskine’s private Cabinet has not survived, unlike his library collection.

It is notable that Erskine took an interest in the power of bezoar stones (found within the intestines of animals) as antidotes to poisons of all varieties. Indeed, the Scot displayed a particular curiosity in bezoar stones prior to his departure for Russia. On 12 January, 1704, for example, the *Journal Book* of the Royal Society in London describes how “Doctor Areskyn shewed a Stone taken out of a Horses Stomach in Jamaica. It consisted of Laminae Stratum Super Stratum and had a Nucleus.”<sup>269</sup> In other words, Erskine was promoting the curious virtues of a West Indian bezoar stone, which had fascinated European physicians since the publication of Nicolás Monardes’s *Historia medicinal* (1565–1580). As Marcia Stephenson has noted, bezoar stones emanating from the New World “constituted a surprising meeting point for different discourses on the intertwined theme of wonder, profit, occult forces and hidden treasure.”<sup>270</sup> In terms of occult forces and medicine, della Porta remarked:

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 4–5.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 7; Appleby, “British Doctors,” 80.

<sup>267</sup> I. A. Chistovich, *Istoriia pervykh meditsinskikh shkol v Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1883), CCCLXIX.

<sup>268</sup> Appleby, “British Doctors,” 81.

<sup>269</sup> *Journal Book of the Royal Society*, January 12, 1704. Royal Society Archives, London.

<sup>270</sup> Marcia Stephenson, “From Marvelous Antidote to the Poison of Idolatry: The Transatlantic Role of Andean Bezoar Stones during the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 90:1 (2010), 39.

The Bezoar Stone, brought from the West Indies, being hung about the neck nigh to the heart, or four grains of it in powder, taken in wine is good against the Plague, and the infection of all pestilential fevers.<sup>271</sup>

At the turn of the eighteenth century the occidental bezoar stone was still valued by many Western physicians for its medicinal virtues. The French druggist Pierre Pomet (1658–1699), for example, citing Nicolas Lémercy, made the following remarks on West Indian bezoar stones in *L'Histoire générale des drogues* (1694): “Occidental Bezoar . . . is a Stone usually larger than the Oriental . . . they separate likewise into *Laminae* . . . interspersed with a great many small Points on the inside; this has the same Virtues [as the oriental bezoar stone].” Namely, “it contains in it some small Matter of volatile Salt that is sulphureous and oily; it is esteem’d as a great Cordial, proper to promote Sweat, and drive away malignant Humours.”<sup>272</sup> Only in 1715 can one note a decided turn against the medicinal virtues of the bezoar stone among fellows of the Royal Society, with the publication of Frederick Slare’s scathing indictment against their efficacy based on a series of experiments.<sup>273</sup>

In Russia, Erskine owned two key works on the virtues of bezoar stones: *De Lapide Bezoard*, published by Jean Bauhin and Angelo Sala’s *Ternarius Bezoarticorum et Hemetologia*.<sup>274</sup> These would have been the ideal reference books for Erskine when studying the bezoar stone of a gazelle that formed part of the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera collection.<sup>275</sup> It is also significant that Erskine kept up-to-date on contemporary scholarship regarding discoveries of mythical animals, such as unicorns and the fire-dwelling salamander. He owned, for example, Georg Henning Behren’s *Hercynia Curiosa* (1703), which described the wonders of the Hartz Forest in Germany and told of the discovery of unicorn remains.<sup>276</sup> Erskine also owned a work by Johann Paul Wurffbain completely dedicated to salamanders, and appropriately entitled *Salamandrologia* (1683).<sup>277</sup> Wurffbain discussed the purported ability of the salamander to live in fire and cited

<sup>271</sup> Giambattista della Porta, *Natural Magick* (London, 1658), 227.

<sup>272</sup> Pierre Pomet, *A Compleat history of druggs*, vol. 1 (London, 1712), 237.

<sup>273</sup> Frederick Slare, *Experiments and observations upon oriental and other bezoar-stones, which prove them to be of no use in physick* (London, 1715).

<sup>274</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 300b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 120, No. 556; Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 27, No. 397.

<sup>275</sup> Beliaev, *Kabinet Petra Velikago*, vol. 2, 140.

<sup>276</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 160b. Areskine Libri Medici et Physiologici Quarto, No. 216.

<sup>277</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Medici et Physiologici in Quarto 16, No. 199.

fifty authors in favour of this viewpoint and only ten against, based on experiments.<sup>278</sup>

It is also evident that Erskine also took an avid interest in human aberrations and monstrosities. He owned, for instance, Abraham Zacuto's *Praxis Medica Admiranda* (1637), which provided examples of 'monstrousa rara'.<sup>279</sup> A sixteenth-century tract on the history and phenomenon of giants, entitled *De Gigantibus*, by the Frenchman Jean de Chassanion (1531–1598) was also present in Erskine's library.<sup>280</sup> A couple of other (extremely rare) texts in Erskine's library are worth citing for their fantastical treatment of changelings and human freaks. First, one must mention John Bulwer's *Man Transform'd; or, the Artificial Changeling* (1650), in which the author describes all manner of transformed human bodies. The strange quality of the text is only strengthened by the pseudonym taken by Bulwer: J. B. Sirnamed (aka Merlin) the Chiroosopher. Secondly (and even more remarkably), the inclusion in Erskine's library of *De Infantibus* (1678) by Johann Valentin Merbitz (1650–1704) is testament to the continued open-mindedness of many respected scholars towards natural phenomenon.<sup>281</sup> The text actually combines two academic dissertations by Merbitz – the first on diabolic changelings and the second on spectral water nymphs – and even discusses the legal rights of sub-human beings.

These are but a few choice examples of the copious amount of material contained within Erskine's library speculating on the myriad wonder and monstrosities of nature. That these tracts on *curiosa* were not merely vestiges of a curious age, but instructive source material for Erskine when planning the conception of the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera is illustrated by a letter of Laurentius Blumentrost, who was Erskine's successor as physician to the tsar. Writing to his brother Johannes (also a doctor) in October 1726, he stated: "On the conception of the Kunst-Kamera, according to the command of the late archiater, Gospodin Areskin, many different monsters and natural things were sent."<sup>282</sup>

Many of these 'monsters' formed part of the Ruysch collection purchased by Erskine in 1717. Erskine was still alive, however, when the tsar issued a *ukaz* calling on his subjects across his vast realm to bring living

<sup>278</sup> Thorndike, *A History of Magic*, vol. 8, 47.

<sup>279</sup> *Erskine*, Areskine, Libri Medici in Octavo et 12mo 18, No. 16.

<sup>280</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 530b. Areskine Libri Philosophici, Histor. et Philologici in 8vo et 12o, No. 306.

<sup>281</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Medici et Physiologici in Quarto 17, No. 253.

<sup>282</sup> *Materialy*, vol. 1, 203.

or dead monsters to the *kunstkamera* in St. Petersburg. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, but it is clear from the quote above that Erskine and the tsar shared a fascination with monsters, which Huet has shown was far from an eccentric concept for leading scientific luminaries of the age.

As chief librarian and head of the *kunstkamera*, Erskine also oversaw the acquisition of a number of outstanding library collections containing a large quantity of mystical and esoteric tomes. The library collection of the Dukes of Courland, for example, was incorporated into the library of the *kunstkamera* in 1714, with over 850 tomes.<sup>283</sup> This collection was particularly rich in mystical and prophetic literature. Notable inclusions, for example, included two works by Sebastian Franck (1499–1542). Other significant mystical and prophetic authors in the Courland collection include five works by Girolamo Savonarola; seven works by the German mystic Valentin Weigel and three by Jacob Böhme; ten works by the French millenarian Pierre Du Moulin (10 works) and two texts by Pierre Jurieu; one work by the English Quaker, Robert Barclay and one work by the Scottish mathematician and millenarian John Napier.<sup>284</sup>

The purchase of the outstanding library of Archibald Pitcairne, who died in 1713, was also organized by Robert Erskine – his friend and correspondent – on behalf of the St. Petersburg *Kunstkamera*. Erskine became aware of the sale of the Pitcairne library in 1718, and used family connections to ensure its purchase. In March 1718 Erskine's nephew, Henry Stirling, wrote to Erskine's brother, Charles, the Lord Justice Clerk of Scotland, asking him to purchase the library and to draw money on his uncle's behalf from his business agent Charles Goodfellow in London.<sup>285</sup> Stirling wrote again in May 1718 with an acknowledgement of letters addressed to himself and his uncle from Charles Erskine and with a request to send the library with the summer fleet, if possible.<sup>286</sup> Robert Erskine, unfortunately, did not live to see the arrival of the Pitcairne library in St. Petersburg in 1719.

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<sup>283</sup> The library was acquired by Peter the Great on account of the marriage of his niece, Anna Ivanovna, to Frederick Wilhelm, the Duke of Courland, in 1710, who died shortly afterwards in 1711. It came to form part of the original *kunstkamera* library in 1714, as is indicated by a manuscript edict signed by Peter the Great. For more on the Dukes of Courland Library, see Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 23–139.

<sup>284</sup> See the catalogue of the Dukes of Courland Library in Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 25–139.

<sup>285</sup> Paul Papers, MS. 5163, ff.49–50. National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh. Erskine paid £500 for the Pitcairne library.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*



This does not detract, however, from the pivotal role he played in ensuring its purchase for the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera. Indeed, the sum of £500 for the library collection was actually paid by Erskine himself. Pitcairne's close ties to the Erskine family and shared Jacobite loyalties no doubt helped secure the purchase of the library for Robert. Whilst not as substantial or as eclectic as Erskine's own collection, the addition of Pitcairne's library – amounting to 1522 volumes – to the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera assured the assemblage of a remarkable array of rare tomes.

In many ways the content of Pitcairne's library does much to explain the element of controversy in Scotland surrounding a figure regarded as having “unusual religious opinions” and whom according to G. S. Rousseau was marked by “enthusiasm.”<sup>287</sup> Contemporary Presbyterians – outraged at Pitcairne's satirical portrayal of them in his play *The Assembly* (1692) – labelled him a deist and atheist.<sup>288</sup> This judgement also characterizes the latter Presbyterian Church historian Robert Woodrow, who declared Pitcairne a “professed Deist” and an atheist. Yet, in the same breath Woodrow directly contradicts himself by remarking “every day he did read a portion of Scripture” and furthermore that “he has frequently professed his belief of a God and said he could not deny a Providence.”<sup>289</sup>

Whilst these claims were ultimately unsubstantiated and frequently based on all too evident contradictions, Pitcairne's library certainly reflects an individual who sought knowledge far beyond the strict boundaries of Presbyterian Christianity. In particular, it contains an abundance of mystical mathematical texts dating back to antiquity. This befits a man who aimed to posthumously publish a “Religio mathematici or Euclidis” in order to advance the cause of mathematics as a key to true religion.<sup>290</sup>

One finds, for example, a staggering stock of Pythagorean tomes, befitting of a man who viewed mathematics, and geometry in particular as the “king of sciences.”<sup>291</sup> He owned 1655 editions of *Vita Pythagorae* and the *Philosophi Pythagorici de Abstinentia* by the famed Neo-Platonist, Porphyry (c. AD 232–305), as well as a 1598 edition of *De Vita Pythagorae*

<sup>287</sup> Appleby and Cunningham, “Robert Erskine and Archibald Pitcairne,” 9; Merkel and Debus, *Hermeticism and the Renaissance*, 198.

<sup>288</sup> Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 214. Pitcairne was an Episcopalian.

<sup>289</sup> John Friesen, “Archibald Pitcairne, David Gregory and the Scottish Origins of English Tory Newtonianism, 1688–1715,” *History of Science* 41 (2003): 171.

<sup>290</sup> Simon Schaffer, “The Glorious Revolution and Medicine in Britain and the Netherlands,” *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 43:2 (July 1989): 177.

<sup>291</sup> Friesen, “Archibald Pitcairne,” 179.

by his pupil, Iamblichus.<sup>292</sup> In addition, he possessed the commentary on Pythagoras's *In Aurea Carmina* by another Neo-Platonist, Hierocles (fl. 430) and an interpretation of Pythagorean symbolism by the Renaissance writer Gregorius Giraldi (1479–1550).<sup>293</sup> Significantly, Pitcairne also had a 1707 edition of Andre Dacier's anthology of Pythagorean writings, entitled *The Life of Pythagoras, with his Symbols and Golden Verses*.<sup>294</sup>

Pitcairne also had a rich store of Platonic and Neo-Platonic literature. Arguably the most impressive inclusion is a 1602 *Opera Omnia* edition of Plato's works, translated by Ficino.<sup>295</sup> One can also find texts by such renowned Neo-Platonists as Plutarch, Maxmus Tyrius, Proclus, Appianus and Longinus, as well as works by the Christian Neo-Platonists, Dionysius Areopagite and Nemesius. In all, the Pitcairne library collection provides a veritable wealth of Platonic mystical thought.

It is also fascinating to note that Pitcairne had an original edition of Giordano Bruno's *De Umbris Idearum* published in Paris in 1582.<sup>296</sup> This is a work based on solar magic, which the author has directly inherited from Hermes Trismegistus himself. Furthermore, Pitcairne also owned an original edition of *De Monade Numero et Figure*, published in Frankfurt in 1591, in which Bruno expounds a mystical numerology based on Hermetic and Pythagorean philosophy.

Other occult authors in the Pitcairne library worthy of note include Cardano, Tomasso Campanella, Levinus Leminus, Antonio Luiz and Giambattista della Porta.<sup>297</sup> In addition, his library contained a sizeable quantity of alchemical works. One finds at least forty-two authors of alchemical tracts, a figure that pales in comparison with Erskine's collection but is significant nonetheless. Noteworthy inclusions are the *Opera Omnia* (1658) of Paracelsus and the *Ortus et progressus medicinae inaudita*

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<sup>292</sup> Pitcairni Libri in Octavo et Infra 18, No. 16; Pitcairni Libri in Quarto, No. 12. *Catalogus Bibliothecae Pitcairni Recepta anno 1718*, Fond 158, Opis No. 1, Edinitsas khreneniia No. 213. Library of the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg (hereafter *Pitcairne*).

<sup>293</sup> *Pitcairne*, Pitcairni Libri in Octavo et Infra, No. 39.

<sup>294</sup> *Pitcairne*, Pitcairni Libri in Octavo et Infra, No. 38.

<sup>295</sup> *Pitcairne*, Pitcairni Libri in Folio 1, No. 4.

<sup>296</sup> *Pitcairne*, Pitcairni Libri in Quarto et Infra 25, No. 351.

<sup>297</sup> Three works by Cardano can be found in Pitcairne's library, including a 1550 edition of *De Subtilitate*, see *Pitcairne*, Pitcairni Libri in Folio 4, No. 155. Pitcairne owned a 1635 edition of Campanella's *Medicinalia juxta propria principia*, see *Pitcairne*, Pitcairni Libri in Quarto, No. 291. The work by Leminus is his well-known *De Miraculis Occultis Naturae* (1665), see *Pitcairne*, Pitcairni Libri in Octavo et Infra, No. 661. Luiz's work is entitled *De Occultis proprietatibus*, see *Pitcairne*, Pitcairni Libri in Folio 5, No. 199. Pitcairne owned three works by Della Porta, including a rare third 1561 (Plantini of Antwerp) edition of *Magiae Naturalis*, see *Pitcairne*, Pitcairni Libri in Folio, No. 658.



(1652) by Johannes van Helmont.<sup>298</sup> In all the content of Pitcairne's library reflects a clear predilection towards Pythagoreanism, Neo-Platonism and the occult. Its acquisition by Erskine is entirely in keeping with his own evident partiality towards such beliefs and constituted a major addition to the already considerable fount stored at the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera.

Thus, the contribution of Erskine to the overall formation of the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera was immense. Not only did he orchestrate the early (and highly significant) purchases for the grand cabinet and library; but he also ensured his legacy was continued by his protégé Blumentrost and his able secretary Johann Daniel Schumacher (1690–1761).<sup>299</sup> This will become apparent in later chapters in relation to the tsar and in relation to the prominence of the kunstkamera within the overall plan of St. Petersburg.

### *Erskine the Natural Philosopher*

Erskine's passion for natural philosophy and experimentation is revealed by a number of sources. It is known, for example, that Erskine compiled Russia's first herbal in 1709 containing two hundred numbered specimens and entitled *Catalogus Plantarum Circa Moscuam Crescentium*.<sup>300</sup> Erskine almost certainly also helped the tsar to draw up his own herbal, which was unfortunately destroyed in Moscow during the great fire of 1812.<sup>301</sup> Cornelius Le Bruyn provides an excellent account of Erskine's verve for compiling herbals for medicinal purposes:

He was then employed in collecting from all quarters, and disposing with the utmost elegancy on paper, all the principal herbs and flowers which are useful in medicine, and of which he had already filled a book. He likewise shewed me a large piece of petrified brown bread, and assured me that he intended to send into Siberia for a collection of simples, flowers and plants.<sup>302</sup>

Charles Whitworth also wrote to the Royal Society in London in 1713, stating that Erskine had "made a very curious Collection of herbs and fre-

<sup>298</sup> *Pitcairne*, Pitcairni Libri in Folio 5, No. 190; Pitcairni Libri in Quarto 14, No. 267.

<sup>299</sup> For more on Schumacher's career in Russia, see Simon Werrett, "The Schumacher Affair: Reconfiguring Academic Expertise across Dynasties in Eighteenth-Century Russia," *Osiris* 25:1 (2010): 104–26.

<sup>300</sup> Appleby, "British Doctors," 51.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>302</sup> Le Bruyn, *Travels into Muscovy*, vol. 2, 179.

quently makes several observations in Natural Philosophy.”<sup>303</sup> One such observation was performed for the benefit of the tsar’s second wife Catherine and involved an experiment to deprive a swallow of air using a pneumatic machine and a glass cloche.<sup>304</sup> A letter from Alexander Menshikov to Peter I, dated February 22, 1710, also provides an insight into Erskine’s experimental nature (and predilection for balneotherapy). Menshikov writes: “I send to your grace a blueprint for a cold *bania*, of which I took at the house of Doctor Areskine.”<sup>305</sup>

Erskine’s knowledge of the great expanse of Russian land and his privileged position within the Petrine hierarchy was duly noted by the Royal Society in London. In 1713 they formed a ‘Russia Committee’ in order to send queries to Erskine and Farquharson with regard to various curious natural phenomena. This committee included Isaac Newton, Edmond Halley and John Woodward and other Fellows associated with Erskine, such as Hans Sloane, Richard Mead and James Petiver. The queries provide an intriguing insight into the continued fascination with marvels of nature. In all, fifty-three queries were sent, including the following four:

- (No. 21): What is certainly known of swallows as to their wintering places? And whether being found in winter and being brought into stoves they will revive? The same as to woodcock, and other birds commonly reckoned itinerants.
- (No. 33): What the Mammoth is? Tis said to be Dug out of the Earth in Siberia and used in Physick as an Unicorn’s horn. The Common People there are Said to Tell Strange Effects of it
- (No. 38): Whether Vollschnoy Koron or Wolfs Root has a Specificque Virtue in healing wounds as Some Say by Chewing it.
- (No. 40): What Medicinal Plants, Roots, herbs barks flowers or Seeds are sold in their Markets or Shops either by Chymists or Apothecarys?<sup>306</sup>

Erskine’s knowledge of natural philosophy was also greatly admired by Leibniz, who entered into correspondence with the Scot. An extremely illuminating letter from Leibniz to Erskine, dated August 3, 1716, reveals a form of natural science that was far from ‘modern’ and still profoundly attracted to marvels and secrets of nature and curious chemical

<sup>303</sup> Letter from Whitworth dated London, March 7, 1712/13. Royal Society Letter Book. The Royal Society Archive, London.

<sup>304</sup> *Sbornik otdeleniia russkago iazyka i slovesnosti imperatorskoi akademii nauk* (St. Petersburg, 1891), 69.

<sup>305</sup> *PIB*, vol. 10, 505.

<sup>306</sup> Royal Society Letter Book, No. 15. The Royal Society Archive, London.

experiments imbued with decidedly alchemical overtones.<sup>307</sup> A subject of particular attention is the *Perpetuum Mobile* invented by a certain Orffyreus. This was the pseudonym for Johann Ernst Bessler (1680–1745) a German Pole who had studied theology, medicine and chemistry and who served as Councillor to Karl, the Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel.<sup>308</sup> Erskine and Leibniz were not alone in their fascination with Bessler's wheel. Peter the Great himself was to be one of the keenest fans of the *Perpetuum Mobile*, a subject that will be examined in depth in Chapter 6.

A further topic of discussion was a 'vegetable mummy' to accelerate plant growth cultivated by Dr. Georg Agricola (1672–1738), a physician and naturalist from Regensburg in Germany. The methods of Agricola first gained prominence in 1716 when he published a work translated into English as *A Philosophical Treatise of Husbandry and Gardening*. It was described in the sub-heading as a "very curious work" containing "many useful secrets in nature" and advanced the claim that the author had discovered a technique to fantastically speed up plant growth. According to Agricola, the 'vegetable mummy' could be prepared in the following manner:

Take a large Kettle or Earthen Pot, and fill it about a third part with common black *Pitch*, and if you don't value the Charge, you may add to it a little fine *Rosin* or sulphurated *Pitch*, and a little yellow *Wax*; melt all this together, and when it is liquid take it from the Fire, and let it stand till it has done smoaking. Being cool, you may with a Brush made for that purpose, plaister the *Incisions*.<sup>309</sup>

A proposal by Professor Lehmann of Leipzig for marketing his method of making flowers bloom in mid-winter was also discussed.<sup>310</sup> Both these subjects address chemical matters that had enticed and frustrated alchemists for centuries.

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<sup>307</sup> W. Guerrier, *Leibniz: In Seinen Beziehungen zu Russland und Peter dem Grossen* (St. Petersburg, 1873), 361–4.

<sup>308</sup> Rupert T. Gould, *Oddities of Nature: A Book of Unexplained Facts* (New York: University Books, 1966), 92.

<sup>309</sup> Georg Andreas Agricola, *A Philosophical Treatise of husbandry and gardening* (London, 1721), 266.

<sup>310</sup> Guerrier, *Leibniz: In Seinen Beziehungen zu Russland*, 362–3.

*Erskine and Religion*

It is known that whilst Erskine lived in Moscow he took an active role in the church life of the city's English Congregation. This fact is testified by a statement made by Charles Thirlby, the English Chaplain, entitled "The Names of all the persons of the English Congregation in Mosco Anno Domini 1706," in which Erskine's name appears third in rank of seniority.<sup>311</sup> A letter also survives from Thirlby to Erskine, dated 21 April, 1709, revealing that the pair were on very amicable terms and also that Erskine was good friends with Dr. Kellerman, the pastor of the Lutheran Church in Moscow.<sup>312</sup> Erskine's Protestantism was entirely in keeping with his family's Episcopalian traditions. It should be stated once again that his paternal Great-Grandfather instructed the young King James VI/I in the Protestant faith in the sixteenth century.

Erskine's Episcopalian roots are a factor that should not be ignored when studying his worldview. As a scion of one of the noblest families emanating from the east of Scotland, Erskine grew up in the bosom of the Episcopal heartland and among a family who embodied its aristocratic and Jacobite outlook. Aristocratic Episcopalians in Scotland in general held Presbyterianism in contempt for what they regarded as its religious fanaticism and anti-intellectualism. As John Friesen has remarked, this dislike for the Presbyterian worldview led, in many cases, to either religious scepticism or religious mysticism.<sup>313</sup> It was precisely in the period that Erskine reached maturity that Scottish Episcopalians embraced a form of mysticism that placed an emphasis on personal piety or the direct union of the soul with God and religious toleration. Indeed, Bruce Lenman has remarked that it was 'Episcopal Spirituality' that "provided the steel in the Jacobite soul."<sup>314</sup>

Robert Erskine personally knew many such Episcopal Spiritualists, including George Cheyne, who in the early eighteenth century came to

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<sup>311</sup> MS. 1192/B. "Copy of the Original Register Book of the British Chapel at St. Petersburg, 1706–1730. 12. 1815." London Metropolitan Archives. Also see J. H. Appleby and John V. Howard, "Theological Works from Dr Robert Erskine's Library Located in the Helsinki University Library's Collections," *The Bibliothek* 11:5 (1983): 105.

<sup>312</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Fond 120/1 no. 166.

<sup>313</sup> Friesen, "Archibald Pitcairne," 167.

<sup>314</sup> Bruce Lenman, "The Scottish Episcopal Clergy and the Ideology of Jacobitism," in *Ideology and Conspiracy: Aspects of Jacobitism 1689–1759*, ed. Eveline Cruickshanks (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982), 46.

believe in the imminence of the millennium and the advent of a New Jerusalem and who began to connect medicine with the apocalypse.<sup>315</sup> Erskine's own cousin James Erskine, Lord Grange (1679–1754), the Lord Chief Justice and brother of the Earl of Mar, was also known for his intense religious beliefs. A spiritual diary kept by Lord Grange between October 13, 1717 and November 5, 1718 has been preserved in the National Archives of Scotland and provides a fascinating insight into his daily religious experiences.<sup>316</sup> What is more, he later became an active supporter of the Evangelical Movement, not only attending services at the Foundry in Moorfields, but also corresponding with the Wesley brothers. On one occasion, for example, he wrote a brief to John and Charles Wesley entitled: "Of Outward Christian Communion."<sup>317</sup> Furthermore, he used his high standing in the legal profession to secure the release of the lay preacher, John Nelson, after he had impressed into the army.<sup>318</sup>

The theological nature of Erskine's character has been ignored, or arguably censored at times, by Soviet and Russian scholars, in much the same way as have his alchemical interests. According to two of the leading Soviet bibliographers, Erskine's library catalogue was largely devoid of theological reading matter. M. S. Fillipov, for example, remarked in 1964 that "in the library of Erskine there were very few theological books. Apparently he was not interested in questions of religion."<sup>319</sup> Almost a decade later, Sergei Luppov did not dispute this statement when he calculated a total of sixty-seven theological volumes comprising a paltry 3% of Erskine's total collection.<sup>320</sup> This assumption has subsequently not been questioned within Russia by the few scholars who have undertaken research on Erskine's life and library.<sup>321</sup>

The only doubt cast on this Soviet view of Erskine's theological interests has been made by John Appleby and John Howard. In 1983, they published a short article focusing on the theological works in Erskine's library cata-

<sup>315</sup> See G. S. Rousseau, "Mysticism and millenarianism: Immortal Doctor Cheyne," in Merkel and Debus, *Hermeticism and the Renaissance*, 202.

<sup>316</sup> MS GD124/15/1179. National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh.

<sup>317</sup> See Richard B. Steele, ed., *Gracious Affection and True Virtue According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1994), 369–83.

<sup>318</sup> See Nolan B. Harmon, ed., *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, vol. 2 (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1974) 1714–5.

<sup>319</sup> M. S. Fillipov, ed., *Istoriia biblioteki akademii nauk 1714–1964* (Moscow-Leningrad: Nauka, 1964), 19.

<sup>320</sup> Luppov, *Kniga*, 230–40.

<sup>321</sup> See, for example, Mirskii, "Doktor Robert Erskin," 135–45.

logue and made a substantial upgrade in its theological content.<sup>322</sup> Thus, according to Appleby and Howard one can count 194 theological titles representing nearly 8 % of Erskine's overall collection and therefore they suggest he had "a much greater preoccupation with religious matters" than previously estimated.<sup>323</sup> Whilst Appleby and Howard's attempt to redress the gross oversight of Soviet bibliographers provided a notable reappraisal of theological issues vis-à-vis Erskine's library; one should note that even this figure underestimated the full extent of his immersion in theological questions. For example, the Helsinki University Collection of Erskine *ex libris* books amounts to 248 titles, of which 231 relate to theological matters.<sup>324</sup> In addition, the Erskine catalogue at the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences Library also contains at least an additional 110 clearly defined theological tomes, which makes a minimum total of 341 titles comprising 13.5% of the entire collection.<sup>325</sup>

On the one hand it can be observed that Erskine's theological collection reflects the religious mores of a seemingly uncontroversial, church-going Episcopalian. It is evident that he kept abreast of current English church affairs even after his departure for Russia, by the inclusion in his library of a substantial amount of contemporary sermons preached in London and across England in the early 1700s. Erskine also possessed a large selection of Church of England Books of Common Prayer (eight in total) dating from 1608 to 1710 and including both Latin and Italian translations.<sup>326</sup> In addition, he also owned a book containing the ecclesiastical constitutions and canons of the Church of England, as well as a publication of Church of England homilies.<sup>327</sup> Erskine also had numerous English language Bibles and Psalm books, ranging from a 1608 edition of Sternhold and Hopkins's Old Testament Psalms to a 1709 edition of the Holy Bible.<sup>328</sup> Interestingly, apart from English language Bibles, Erskine possessed a plethora of foreign language editions, which included translations into Latin, Greek,

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<sup>322</sup> Appleby and Howard, "Theological Works," 101–7.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>324</sup> See Havu and Lededeva, *Collections*, 168–98.

<sup>325</sup> This does not take into account the many alchemical tracts laden with religious meaning, such as can be seen, for example, in the works of Paracelsus and Robert Fludd.

<sup>326</sup> Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 176–7, Nos. 63–70.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, 177, Nos. 71 and 72 respectively.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, 172, Nos. 24–28 and 30.

German, Spanish, Italian (by the Protestant Giovanni Diodati), French, Finnish and Latvian.<sup>329</sup>

On the other hand, however, a large part of Erskine's substantial theological collection bears the distinct hallmarks of a man drawn to more radical and esoteric espousals of Protestant doctrine saturated with chiliastic expectancy. Testament to this is the inclusion in his library of a number of Hermetic and Rosicrucian tracts expressing an explicit utopian, religious and political agenda. Indeed, undoubtedly two of the most remarkable inclusions in Erskine's enormous library collection are a rare 1615 edition of the Rosicrucian Manifestos published in Frankfurt and an original Strasbourg edition of *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz 1459* (*Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosencreutz 1459*) published the following year.<sup>330</sup> Erskine's edition of the Rosicrucian Manifestos includes a second preface to the *Fama* (first published in 1614) and a second German translation of the second manifesto, the *Confessio*. In addition, it also contains a chapter on the need for a general reformation of the world from Trajano Boccalini's *Ragguagli del Parnaso* (1612) and four replies affirming the credibility of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, including Adam Haselmeyr's *Antwort*, or reply, in which he hails the Rosicrucians as "theosophists who had rent the dark clouds obscuring the light of true wisdom."<sup>331</sup>

Haselmeyr's enthusiastic extolment of the Rosicrucian Order is symptomatic of the frenzied reaction these anonymous tracts created in many quarters of Europe. They are indeed laden with chiliastic expectation and alchemical symbolism and hold out the hope that a great divine reformation and advancement of learning is at hand revealing the ancient wisdom passed down from Adam to Moses and Solomon.

A fervent belief in the renewal of learning and understanding in the Last Days stemmed from the intense scrutiny of prophetic texts, which held the key to the divine eschatological scheme. It is in the expectation in the imminent spiritual and scientific enlightenment, confirmed by Biblical prophecy, which is the driving force behind the Rosicrucian proclamations. A key feature of the Rosicrucian Manifestoes was the call for the

<sup>329</sup> Ibid., 172, No. 29; *Erskine Archives*, 370b. Areskine Libri Theologici in Folio, Nos. 1–4; Areskine Libri Theologici in Quarto 45, Nos. 315–319.

<sup>330</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 27, Nos. 389 and 390.

<sup>331</sup> Erskine also owned a 1644 edition of Boccalini's influential work, published in Frankfurt. See *Erskine Archives*, 420b. Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog in Quarto, No. 200. Dickson, *The Tessera of Antilia*, 75.



institutionalisation of science through an invisible *Collegium Magiae*. It was through such an institution, promoting scientific inquiry founded on a blend of magia, Cabbala and alchemy and combined with mathematics, cosmology, physics and a humanitarian form of medicine, that the great transformation of the world would be promoted.<sup>332</sup>

The *Chemical Wedding* is not a manifesto but an alchemical allegory and as such bears none of the didactic qualities of the earlier publications.<sup>333</sup> The tale is split into seven days (in imitation of the creation of the world in *Genesis*), the first two of which concern the pilgrimage of the protagonist, Christian Rosencreutz, to a royal wedding. On the third day Rosencreutz is admitted to the Royal Castle and is adorned with special emblems and is shown the rarities of the castle, the library, a remarkable globe in which it is possible to seat four people who can observe the motions of the heavens and the castle gardens and fountains. On the fourth day he is entertained by a ‘merry comedy’ interspersed with displays of Biblical emblems, such as ‘the four beasts of Daniel’ and then witnesses the entrance into the castle of six coffins in which are the corpses of six beheaded men. The next day, however, these men are miraculously resuscitated. The sixth day is dominated by Rosencreutz observing alchemical apparatus and the strange creation of an alchemical bird. Finally, the last day describes the departing ceremonies, including the arrival of twelve ships, each bearing a sign of the zodiac.<sup>334</sup>

There has been much speculation as to the authorship of the Rosicrucian Manifestos. It has now been proved, however, that Johann Valentin Andreae can be directly linked to two of the three Rosicrucian texts: the *Confessio* and *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz*.<sup>335</sup> Andreae was also the author of *Christianopolis* (1619), a Christian-Utopian blueprint for a community of scholar-scientist-craftsmen and was at the centre of the utopian schemes of Christian Brotherhood, such as *Societas Christiana* or *Civitas Solis*, which included twenty six scholars from across

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<sup>332</sup> Karin Johannisson, “Magic, Science and Institutionalization in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in Merkel and Debus, *Hermeticism and the Renaissance*, 254.

<sup>333</sup> Although only published in 1616, the *Chymische Hochzeit* was actually written in 1605 and therefore precedes the Manifestos.

<sup>334</sup> For a translation of this text, see Waite, *The Real History*, 99–196.

<sup>335</sup> See Dickson, *Tessera of Antilia*, 21. Much of Andreae’s intellectual and spiritual nourishment was supplied by a circle of scholars in Tübingen, where he studied and worked as a minister. This Tübingen circle, which included fourteen members of the *Societas Christiana*, all shared a belief in the need for a second, more fundamental Protestant reformation, based on the advancement of scientific knowledge.

German-speaking Europe.<sup>336</sup> As Edward Thompson writes in his introduction to Andreae's *Christianopolis*:

He was the friend of scientists and an enthusiastic student of mathematics who held that science leads both to an appreciation of the wonders of the material world and its rejection in favour of more spiritual concerns.<sup>337</sup>

Andreae's advocacy of Christian learned societies therefore, as Donald Dickson states, was based on "a utopian belief in a world in which reformed religion should preside over all aspects of human activity, including the science they also advocated."<sup>338</sup>

It is also highly significant that Erskine also owned a number of earlier works advocating moral reform emanating from the absorption of Neo-Platonic and Hermetic beliefs. One can cite, for example, Erskine's edition of Marcellus Palingenius's *Zodiacus Vitae*, originally published in 1534.<sup>339</sup> In his description of the twelve signs of the zodiac Palingenius called for moral reform, which endeared him to Protestants and according to Yates was clearly influenced by Neo-Platonic and Hermetic thought.<sup>340</sup> The work of Palingenius was a significant influence on Giordano Bruno's *Spaccio della Bestia Tironfante* (1584), of which Erskine had the notorious English translation made by John Toland in 1713.<sup>341</sup> In this work, Bruno declares that: "the marvellous religion of the Egyptians will return."<sup>342</sup> According to Bruno this reform emanates from the heavens with a "cleansing" of the images of the constellations of the zodiac and thenceforth descends to the lower spheres. Bruno's work manifested a radical call for reform, although it abandoned any pretence of Christian legitimacy as earlier adopted by Ficino or Pico della Mirandola. This discarding of a Christian framework was undoubtedly controversial and extremely bold – even bordering on the reckless – but his call for fundamental moral improvement in society was far from unique.

Among Erskine's theological collection in his library it is also possible to discern an attraction to the ideals of religious toleration and mysti-

<sup>336</sup> Ibid., 45, for a description of these members.

<sup>337</sup> Andreae, *Christianopolis*, xiii.

<sup>338</sup> Dickson, *Tessera of Antilia*, 11.

<sup>339</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 550b. Areskine Libri Philosopic. Histor et Philologici in 8vo. Et 120, No. 385.

<sup>340</sup> Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), 224.

<sup>341</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 20b. Areskine Libri, No. 73.

<sup>342</sup> Yates, *Giordano Bruno*, 215.

cism shared by many of his aristocratic Scottish Episcopalian peers. Furthermore, one can note a fascination with eschatological literature, which was in keeping with his above-cited attraction to chiliastic visions of Hermetic and Christian reform and in line with a renewed spirit of foreboding in Europe at the close of the seventeenth century. Margaret Jacob has brought attention to bear on the fact that millenarianism in England at the close of the seventeenth-century was widespread among many ‘respectable’ latitudinarian churchmen who were also advocates of the ‘new science.’<sup>343</sup> This sentiment peaked, according to Jacob, during the 1680s and during the reign of Queen Anne (1702–1714).<sup>344</sup> It has even been argued by a number of recent scholars, such as Maria Rosa Antognazza and Howard Hotson, that millenarianism reached its peak at the close of the seventeenth century.<sup>345</sup>

One of the most vociferous and controversial harbingers of the coming millennium in this period was the French Huguenot Pierre Jurieu (1637–1713). The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 fuelled Jurieu’s eschatological obsessions, and after establishing himself in exile in Rotterdam he set about expounding a doctrine that calculated the destruction of the Roman church and the beginning of the millennium between 1710 and 1715 and the resurgence of Huguenot fortunes after 1689, in anticipation of this event. These dates were based on the calculation that the reign of the Antichrist began in AD 450 or 455 and that 1260 years would pass until the advent of the millennium. Furthermore, Jurieu based his faith on the revival of Huguenot fortunes on a prophecy in Revelation (17:7–10), in which two witnesses would be slain. This accorded to the events in France in 1685, whilst the Huguenot revival was based on the prophesized revival of the witnesses, as written in Revelation (11:11), three and a half days later.

Erskine’s attraction to Jurieu’s firebrand style of Protestant millenarianism is testified by the presence of eleven of his works in his library – a quantity only surpassed in the entire collection by the natural scientist

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<sup>343</sup> Margaret C. Jacob, “Millenarianism and Science in the late Seventeenth Century,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37:2 (1976): 335.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 338.

<sup>345</sup> Maria Rosa Antognazza and Howard Hotson, eds., *Alsted and Leibniz: On God, the Magistrate and the Millennium* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), 128. Schwartz also provides a compelling account of the powerful impact of the French Camisard Prophets in England in the early eighteenth-century. See Hillel Schwartz, *The French Prophets: The History of a Millenarian Group in Eighteenth-Century England* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1980).

Thomas Bartholin.<sup>346</sup> One also finds other notable expressions of contemporary millenarian sentiment reflected in Erskine's library, such as a 1698 edition of Thomas Burnet's *Theoria Sacrae Telluris*.<sup>347</sup> Erskine also had numerous works by the Newtonian theologian, William Whiston, who spent a considerable amount of time calculating the eminent arrival of the millennium, which he initially thought would occur in 1736. Included in one of these publications were two replies to the well-known Huguenot, Pierre Allix, a "devoted millenarian," whose own treatise on the Antichrist was also possessed by Erskine.<sup>348</sup> Lastly, a copy of Edward Young's *A Poem on the Last Day* (1713) provides further proof of Erskine's familiarity with his contemporaries musings on millenarian themes.<sup>349</sup>

Erskine's library collection not only reveals his own epoch's preoccupation with millenarian questions; it also highlights the way in which this outburst stemmed from a movement stretching back to the sense of religious anxiety fermented during the Reformation. In this regard, one can cite a series of key prophetic texts from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in Erskine's library. The earliest such text is the *Mantia sive Divinatio Syderalis* (1518) by Ramiro Gaditano who made a series of prognostications based on astrological and astronomical calculations made in Antwerp.<sup>350</sup> Erskine also owned an extremely rare 1531 edition of Johannes Stoeffler's *Ephemerides*; a text that precipitated a scare surrounding the imminence of a second flood. It also told of ill-favoured conjunctions between the Moon and Mars and Saturn, which signalled religious and political change and the coming of false prophets.<sup>351</sup> In addition, one finds in Erskine's library a rare 1543 edition of Johann Carion's influential *Chronica*, in which this court astrologer of Joachim I of Brandenburg made various predictions, with strong political overtones, up until the

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<sup>346</sup> See Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 185, Nos. 135–137; *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Theologici in Quarto, 45, No. 308; 45ob. Areskine Libri Theologici in Quarto, No. 325; 58ob. Areskine Libri Theologici in Octavo et Duodecimo, Nos. 1–5; Areskine Libri Theologici in Octavo et Duodecimo 59, No. 41.

<sup>347</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 150b. Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 189.

<sup>348</sup> Schwarz, *The French Prophets*, 55, fn. 51. This treatise is contained within Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*. Erskine owned a 1702 edition of this work, published in Rotterdam. See *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog in Folio, No. 152.

<sup>349</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 50b. Areskine Libri, No. 170.

<sup>350</sup> Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 191, No. 185.

<sup>351</sup> See Thorndike, *History of Magic*, vol. 5, 379.

year 1550.<sup>352</sup> An edition of the notorious prophecies by the French physician Michel Nostradamus (1503–1566), first published in 1555, is a further notable inclusion in Erskine's collection.<sup>353</sup>

Last, but certainly not least, one finds two prophetic texts by Tommaso Campanella in Erskine's collection. First, Erskine owned a second edition (1630) of *Astrologia*, in which Campanella warns his readers to heed St. Paul's warning to be vigilant for signs "for the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night."<sup>354</sup> Thus, Campanella advocates the constant scrutiny of the heavens in order to understand their mutations. No one was better suited to take on this onerous task, according to the author, than Campanella himself who, as Headley notes, was able to pronounce on the prophetic import and explicate as it were the "prophetability" of these celestial changes.<sup>355</sup>

The other text possessed by Erskine was a first Latin edition (1640) of *Monarchia di Spagna*, which had been first published in 1620 by Christoph Besold, a close friend of Johann Valentin Andreae. In this text Campanella expounds his eschatological thesis that the Spanish Monarchy was in fact the realization of the prophesized Fifth Monarchy. One of the foundations of Campanella's claim rested on the belief that the Spanish Monarchy represented the best means of extirpating the ominous Turkish threat. A parallel can be drawn here with Peter the Great's own campaigns against the Turks at the end of the seventeenth century and in the beginning of the eighteenth century, in which many European thinkers (including Leibniz) envisaged the Russian monarch as a leader capable of finally crushing the Ottoman threat to Europe and Christendom.

Whilst it is true that the prediction of heavenly portents did not entirely wane in the seventeenth century, the prevailing preoccupation of eschatologists during the first half of the seventeenth century, was to look back in time, rather than upwards to heaven. Astrological calculations slowly came to be replaced by painstaking mathematical and historical scrutiny of the Holy Scriptures and in particular the Book of Revelation. An astrological dimension is still evident, however, in Johann Heinrich Alsted's *Thesaurus Chronologiae* (1624); a grand attempt at an apocalyptic

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<sup>352</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 48ob. Areskine Libri Philos. Histor. et Philolog in 8vo et 120, No. 120.

<sup>353</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Theologici in Octavo et Duodecimo 59, No. 32. Erskine's copy dates from 1662 and was published in Lyon.

<sup>354</sup> Headley, *Tomasso Campanella*, 83.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*

synthesis. In later works Alsted expounded a millenarian outlook, calculating 1694 as the year in which the thousand-year reign of Christ would commence, but in *Thesaurus Chronologiae* the Herbon polymath sought to reconcile the Protestant apocalyptic tradition of scriptural prophecy, historical chronology and astrological history.<sup>356</sup> Erskine owned the much-expanded fourth edition of this work, published in 1650.

One of the first exponents of a strictly mathematical and chronological approach to exegesis of an eschatological persuasion was the Scot John Napier (1550–1617). His skills as a mathematician were such that his work on logarithms was still being utilized well into the eighteenth century; a fact demonstrated by Henry Farquharson’s Russian translation of 1703. Arguably of equal import, however, was his interpretation of the Apocalypse, *A Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation of Saint John*, first published in 1593. This was an oft-published volume and Erskine had a copy of the fifth edition, printed in Edinburgh in 1645.

Erskine and Napier not only shared a common heritage, close to the heart of the Stuart dynasty; they were also individuals of great intellects and scientific skills with a distinct penchant for the esoteric. Napier was an ardent Protestant and the publication of his text on the Book of Revelation was dedicated to King James VI in order to dissuade him from reintroducing Roman Catholicism into Scotland. Napier was also a “dabbler in the black arts,” prone it would appear, as Robert Clouse reluctantly admits, to alchemical fancies.<sup>357</sup>

Napier was a post-millenarian as in his commentary on the Apocalypse he calculates, according to Revelation 20, that the millennium had actually occurred between AD 300–1300.<sup>358</sup> Thus, he believed the world in which he was living was in its last age, a fact he reinforces to his reader by quoting the much-utilized phrase in the Book of Daniel 12:4, prophesying an increase in knowledge at the end of time. Significantly, Napier pinpoints the years 1698–1700 as marking the time when Christ would return in judgement. Erskine also possessed a work on the Book of Revelation by arguably England’s most celebrated millenarian Joseph Mede (1586–1638)

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<sup>356</sup> See Howard Hotson, *Paradise Postponed: Johann Heinrich Alsted and the Birth of Calvinist Millenarianism* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), 29–30.

<sup>357</sup> Robert G. Clouse, “John Napier and Apocalyptic Thought,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 5:1 (April 1974): 101–103.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

and two works by James Ussher, both of whom devoted much energy to calculating the beginning and ending of time.<sup>359</sup>

The millenarian flavour of Erskine's theological collection was complemented by the prevalence of mystical texts of a predominantly Protestant hue, espousing religious piety, spirituality and toleration. Indeed, millenarianism and mysticism went hand-in-glove at the turn of the eighteenth century, as many mystical groups eagerly awaited the anticipated and imminent new age of the Spirit. Two pervasive influences on the development of mystical spirituality in Europe during the latter half of the seventeenth century were the medieval priest Thomas à Kempis (c. 1380–1471) and the unorthodox Protestantism of Johann Arndt (1555–1621). Erskine owned the key works of these writers: a 1576 edition of Kempis's famous *Imitatio Christi* (translated into Latin by Sebastian Castellione) and a 1708 Latin edition of Arndt's *De Vero Christianismo*.<sup>360</sup> Both these texts were essential reading for those seeking mystical and spiritual enlightenment at the turn of the eighteenth-century.

The scope of Erskine's contemporaneous collection of mystical texts was wide-ranging. From his homeland he possessed the work of the noted mystics Henry Scougal (1650–1678) and George Garden (1649–1733).<sup>361</sup> The latter figure flourished in the 1690s and exerted considerable influence on Scottish Episcopalians, such as George Cheyne and Chevalier Ramsay (both of whom can be connected to Erskine) and drew on the ideas of the Flemish mystic Antoinette Bourignon and the Spanish Quietist Miguel de Molinos. One of the most ardent admirers of Molinos and his Quietist doctrine in Italy was Cardinal Pietro Matteo Petrucci. Although a high-ranking Catholic, Petrucci's advocacy of spiritual Quietism led to an official papal decree condemning all his books in February 1688 and attempts by the Inquisition to prosecute him for heresy.<sup>362</sup> This harsh judgement was

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<sup>359</sup> Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 187, No.155. The work by Mede is entitled *Paraleiomena. Remaines on some Passage in the Revelation* (1650). The two tracts by Ussher are entitled *The Body of Divinitie, or The Summe of Religion and Immanuel, or the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God*, both published in 1658. See Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 197, No. 236.

<sup>360</sup> Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 184, No. 132; *Erskine Archives*, 58ob. Areskine Libri Theologici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 6.

<sup>361</sup> Erskine owned a 1707 edition, prefaced by Gilbert Burnet, of Scougal's main work, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*. See Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 192, No. 198. The work by Garden in Erskine's collection is *The Case of the Episcopal Clergy* (1703). See Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 181, No. 104.

<sup>362</sup> See Henry Charles Lea, "Molinos and the Italian Mystics," *The American Historical Review* 11:2 (Jan. 1906): 260.



clearly not shared by Erskine, who possessed a 1704 edition of Petrucci's most well known text, *Christian Perfection, Consisting in the Love of God*.<sup>363</sup> Erskine also owned a 1683 edition of Nicolas Malebranche's *Meditations Chrestiennes*, which incorporated his belief in "the vision of God," which was propelled by a Platonism imbued with mystical elements.<sup>364</sup>

As regards English authors, one can cite numerous works by the moderate proto-Pietist Jeremy Taylor and a text calling for liberty of conscience by the famous Quaker William Penn.<sup>365</sup> Erskine also had two works by John Norris (1657–1711), whose form of mystical spirituality influenced both John Wesley and Emanuel Swedenborg.<sup>366</sup> Furthermore, one finds two theological tracts by the Christian Platonist Ralph Cudworth and numerous works by the non-juror Charles Leslie, who keenly studied Jewish mysticism in order to propagate religious union. In addition one finds a 1707 edition of *Enchiridion Precum ad promovendum solidioris pietati* by the Pietist Anton Wilhelm Böhme (1673–1722), who studied under August Francke at Halle and who became a preacher to Queen Anne in England.<sup>367</sup>

Erskine also owned a significant collection of works by other German Pietists, who venerated Arndt's earlier writings. Most notable are four works by Gottfried Arnold, one of the most widely known radical Pietists at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Arnold had vexed the orthodox Lutheran authorities in Quedlinburg by the publication of *Unparteiische Kirchen-und Ketzer- Historie* in 1699. Erskine owned an original edition of the first two volumes of this work, as well as the latter supplement of 1703, in which Arnold defended heretics throughout church history.<sup>368</sup> Although not specifically a text wholly influenced by Böhme, Arnold is sympathetic to the theosophy of Böhme and his followers. This sympathy stretched as far as Quirinus Kuhlmann, of whom he had an "extensive knowledge" and who is included as a "true witness" in Arnold's account of heretics. Significantly, the *Kirchen und Ketzer Historie* contained a detailed biography of Kuhlmann's life, an account of his major works and a description of his

<sup>363</sup> Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 190, No. 177.

<sup>364</sup> Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 187, No. 150.

<sup>365</sup> Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 195 Nos. 224–226 and 189, No. 175.

<sup>366</sup> On the influence of Norris on Wesley, see John C. English "John Wesley's indebtedness to John Norris," *Church History* 60:1 (March 1991): 55–69. For Norris's influence on Swedenborg, see Marsha Keith Schuchard, "Swedenborg, Jacobitism and Freemasonry," in *Swedenborg and His Influence*, ed Erland J. Brock (Bryn Athyn: The Academy of the New Church, 1988), 359–379.

<sup>367</sup> Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 179, No. 85.

<sup>368</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 370b. Areskine Libri Theologici in Folio, No. 8; 450b. Areskine Libri Theologici in Quarto, No. 323.

burning on Red Square.<sup>369</sup> Erskine also owned Arnold's *Das Geheimnisz der Göttlichen Sophia* (1700), discussing the theosophical nature of *Sophia* and its relationship to the individual and an attachment of poetry displaying the distinct influence of Böhme and Kuhlmann.<sup>370</sup> In addition, Erskine also had works by the Pietists Joachim Lange and Christian Richter, as well as the earlier seminal work *Pia Desideria* (1663) by Johann Quistorp the Younger, who is regarded as a forerunner of the latter radical Pietist movement.<sup>371</sup>

Inherent among the vast majority of 'mystical spiritualists,' such as the radical Pietists, Quakers, Quietists and Philadelphians, was a belief in religious toleration. This stemmed from a desire to promulgate ideas of a universal Christian church, in which the community respected an individual's experience of God and worked towards both social and personal transformation. Thus, far from being isolationist and religiously introspective and conservative, such "mystical spiritualists" at the close of the seventeenth century and at the beginning of the eighteenth century actively engaged in trying to reform society. This ideal was no doubt extremely attractive to a man like Erskine, whose own Episcopalian roots in Scotland harboured many similar adherents. Erskine's attraction to the ideal of religious toleration is also reflected in other religious volumes in his library collection. He owned, for example, various printed disputations, orations, tracts and epistles by the Dutch reformed theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560–1609), who preached a doctrine of religious toleration at the turn of the seventeenth century.<sup>372</sup> One also finds a significant tract by Jacobus Anconcio (1492–1566) entitled *Stratagematae Satane*.<sup>373</sup> In this volume, first published in 1565, Anconcio argues for heterodoxy as a defence against the stratagems of Satan, which was embodied, according to Anconcio, by the dogmatism of official church movements.

One can also discern a clear interest in Hebraic culture in Erskine's library. This is in accord with a trend that began to develop among Christian theologians during the Renaissance, who sought confirmation of the truth of the Holy Scriptures from ancient Jewish sources. In Erskine's era this phenomenon was continued by such luminaries as Isaac Newton,

<sup>369</sup> Peter C. Erb, *Pietists, Protestants, and Mysticism: The Use of Late Medieval Spiritual Texts in the Work of Gottfried Arnold (1666–1714)* (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1989), 91.

<sup>370</sup> Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 170, No. 14.

<sup>371</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Theologici in Octavo et Duodecimo 59, No. 29.

<sup>372</sup> Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 170, Nos. 11–13.

<sup>373</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 58ob. Areskine Libri Theologici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 16.

who scoured Jewish texts for definitive proof of Biblical truths and, as mentioned in the previous chapter, by Freemasons who found in the work of writers, such as Josephus, a source of ancient wisdom.

Erskine's interest in the Jewish mystical practice of Cabbala is one indication of his willingness to embrace the legacy of Jewish culture. Of particular note in regard to Erskine's interest in Cabbala is the fact that he owned two works by Jacobus van Hochstraten, who was the principal prosecutor against Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522), the Hebraist and author of *De Arte Cabbalistica*, in a theological dispute that raged between 1513–1520. Whilst the two works owned by Erskine clearly express the views of a rabid anti-Cabbalist, they are nonetheless invaluable source material for both scholars and enthusiasts of Cabbala. The publication in 1518 of *Acta Judiciorum inter F. Iacobus Hochstraten inquisitorem Colonien-sium & Johannem Reuchlin*, for example, meticulously outlined the course of the dispute.<sup>374</sup> Furthermore, the following year Hochstraten published a rebuke to Reuchlin's *De Arte* entitled *Destructio Cabale, seu Cabalistiche Perfidie ab Ioanne Reuchlin*.<sup>375</sup> Once again, rather than serving to dampen the flames surrounding the supposed heretical beliefs of Reuchlin, Hochstraten unintentionally succeeded in attracting fresh scrutiny of the supposed Cabbalistic heresy.

It is also possible to discern a much more wide-ranging interest in Hebraism in Erskine's library collection. He possessed, for example, two notable works by Josephus— a collected edition published in Basel in 1582 and a 1611 edition of his most famous work *Antiquitates Judaicae* published in Geneva.<sup>376</sup> In addition, he owned an original five-volume edition of the monumental *Histoire des Juifs* (1706) by the French Protestant divine, Jacques Basnage (1653–1723), which has been regarded as the first historical work sympathetic to the Jews and their history.<sup>377</sup> As well as a lengthy section devoted to the analysis of Cabbala (chapters 7–28 of Book 3), Basnage also provided a comprehensive survey of Jewish history, customs and rituals up until his day. Interestingly, one of the key underlying factors behind Basnage's phenomenal endeavour was, as Elukin states,

<sup>374</sup> Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 184, No. 127.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, 184, No. 128.

<sup>376</sup> *Erskine Archives*, Areskine Libri Philosphi. Historici et Philolog in Folio 35, No. 93 & Areskine Libri Philos. Histor. et Philolog in 8vo et 12o 49, No. 133.

<sup>377</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 470b. Areskine Libri Philos. Histor. et Philolog in 8vo et 12o, No. 75. See Jonathan M. Elukin, "Jacques Basnage and the History of the Jews: Anti-Catholic Polemic and Historical Allegory in the Republic of Letters," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53:4 (Oct–Dec, 1992): 606.

“to convert the remnants of the chosen people before the second coming, which he expected in 1716.”<sup>378</sup> Thus, once again, we see the millenarian fervour underpinning much of Protestant thinking during Erskine’s age, and his own susceptibility to the prevailing *Zeitgeist*. Erskine also possessed a work by John Alexander (a converted Jew) entitled *God’s Covenant* (1689), which provided further demonstrations of the impending millennium.<sup>379</sup>

Furthermore, Erskine could refer to a very rare and early edition of Marco Antonio Coccius Sabellico’s *Historia Hebreorum* (1515), an edition of Johann Buxtorf’s renowned work *Synagoga Judaica* and a work of illustrations and descriptions of Jerusalem by Nikolai Radziwill (1549–1616).<sup>380</sup> It is also significant that Erskine had a copy of Christoph Besold’s *Historia Urbis et Regni Hierosolymitani Neapolis et Siciliae* (1636).<sup>381</sup> Besold was an extremely close associate of Johann Valentin Andreae at Tübingen and has been intimately linked with the Rosicrucian Manifestos. In the above-mentioned text, Besold provides a history of Jerusalem and believed in general that the Scriptures prophesied the conversion of the Jews.

A remarkable inclusion in Erskine’s library is the first complete Latin translation of the Jewish *Mishnah*, published in six volumes between 1698 and 1703 in Amsterdam by Willem Surenhuis. The *Mishnah* is a principal source of the religious texts of rabbinic Judaism. The Surenhuis edition was extraordinary in that it included a colossal amount of information and interpretation incorporating the original Hebrew version alongside commentaries by Moses Maimonides and Rabbi Obadiah of Bertinoro and including most Latin translations of the seventeenth century.<sup>382</sup> It should be noted that the Temple in Jerusalem occupies a central place in the *Mishnah*, with one of its six volumes dedicated to laws governing the Temple. In this spirit, Surenhuis’s edition was embellished with two hundred etchings related to the Temple by the noted Jew, Jacob Jehuda Leon, who spent much of his life recreating plans and models of the Temple at Jerusalem.<sup>383</sup> Erskine could also consult David Wilkin’s 1715 publication in Aramaic and Latin of the Old Testament Chronicles entitled *Paraphrasis*

<sup>378</sup> Elukin, “Jacques Basnage,” 608.

<sup>379</sup> Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 170, No. 6.

<sup>380</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 400b. Areskine Libri Philosoph Historici et Philolog in Quarto, No. 114.

<sup>381</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 480b. Areskine Libri Philos. Histor. et Philolog in 8vo et 12o, No. 115.

<sup>382</sup> See Peter van Rooden, “The Amsterdam translation of the Mishnah,” in *Hebrew Study from Ezra to Ben-Yehuda*, ed. William Horbury (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 257–67.

<sup>383</sup> Van Rooden, “The Amsterdam Translation,” 262. These etchings were provided by Solomon Jehudah Leon Templo. Other etchings by Moses Aquillar were also provided by Isaac de Matatia Aboab.

*Chaldaica* and a 1601 edition of Elias Hutter's polyglot bible *Lectiones Evangeliorum & Epistolarum*, which featured a Hebrew translation of the liturgical epistles and gospels, as well as accompanying Latin, Greek and German versions.<sup>384</sup>

Thus, whilst Erskine's theological collection is extensive it is possible to note distinctive religious propensities, centred on a tolerant, open-minded and mystically inclined form of Episcopalian Protestantism. These views were prevalent amongst Scottish aristocratic Jacobites, and furthermore particularly among physicians, such as Cheyne, James Cunningham and Dr. James Keith.

### *Conclusion*

Despite Erskine's death in November 1718 at the age of only forty-one, his contribution to Russian science was considerable. In the fourteen or so years that the Scot was at the summit of the Russian medical establishment, he managed to introduce a whole raft of innovative initiatives and concepts into the country. He was the first man in Russia, for example, to collect a herbal; he initiated the foundation of Russia's first botanical garden in St. Petersburg; he co-ordinated the development of the *kunst-kamera* and oversaw the purchase of some truly remarkable collections. Not only have historians largely overlooked these sizeable achievements, but the philosophical basis of his medical doctrine has also been entirely neglected. This is surprising considering the fact that Erskine learnt his trade in an age of transition and controversy, when rival factions vied for supremacy at medical institutions and royal courts. Many of Erskine's peers in Britain, such as George Cheyne, established respected reputations whilst espousing medical doctrines couched in Paracelsianism and religious mysticism. In other words, it was not impossible for esoterically minded physicians to establish a distinguished career in early eighteenth-century Europe. One must also bear in mind that Erskine learnt his medical outlook under the influence of Jacob Le Mort and Johann Conrad Barchusen, who both championed a chemically based approach to medicine. Barchusen in particular still retained distinct vestiges of an alchemical outlook that he saw fit to promote in his numerous publications.

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<sup>384</sup> *Erskine Archives*, 450b. Areskine Libri Theologici in Quarto, No. 326; Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 184, No. 131.

Robert Erskine's family background, with its links to Jacobite Freemasonry (the Earl of Mar and Chevalier Ramsay), religious mysticism (his cousin James Erskine) and esoteric interests (George Erskine of Innerteil), also provides a valuable ancestral insight into the reasons underpinning the Scot's fascination with esoteric literature. This fascination is most clearly evident in the staggering alchemical collection amassed by Erskine in Russia, which on his death was bequeathed to the St. Petersburg *Kunstkamera*.

Alongside Jacob Bruce, Erskine provided a distinctly Scottish and Jacobite hue to the Petrine court. They both occupied key positions in Petrine Russia and were pivotal figures in the transformations that changed many aspects of the Russian state. Whilst Bruce had been born in Moscow, Erskine only arrived in Russia when he was already in his mid-twenties. Thus, he brought with him attitudes prevailing in Western Europe. In the past it has been assumed that these attitudes were overwhelmingly imbued with an enlightened sense of rationalism and secularity. However, in recent decades it has been powerfully demonstrated how many leading Western scientists and physicians retained vestiges of the Renaissance fascination with various forms of esotericism and continued to express strong religious sentiments. It is my belief that Erskine was one such figure, who consequently exported these attitudes to an enthusiastic coterie based around the towering figure of Peter the Great.





PART TWO

UKRAINIAN CLERICS



### CHAPTER THREE

## STEFAN IAVORSKII (1658–1722): AN ESOTERIC WORDSMITH AT THE COURT OF PETER THE GREAT

### *Introduction*

In January 1700 Stefan Iavorskii set out from Kiev en route to Moscow on a mission entrusted to him by Varlaam, the Metropolitan of Kiev. This was to prove a life-changing event for the forty-one year old Ukrainian clergyman, who at the time was the *igumen* (Father Superior) of the St. Nicholas the Hermit Monastery near Kiev. Iavorskii was accompanied on his journey by Father Zakhariia Kornilovich and the nature of their Moscow mission was relatively modest: they were to present a letter to Patriarch Adrian from Metropolitan Varlaam, in which the latter requested permission to found an ecclesiastical diocese at Pereslavl. The patriarch was also asked to appoint one of the two messengers as the new bishop of this new eparchy.<sup>1</sup>

The two monks arrived in Moscow in February 1700 and presented their letter to an ailing Patriarch Adrian, who promised to give a reply after consulting Peter the Great. In expectation of a lengthy wait, the two monks settled into the Little Russian (Ukrainian) Residence in the city.<sup>2</sup> However, Iavorskii was not to enjoy a winter sabbatical in the Russian capital as he soon became embroiled in the maelstrom whipped up by the onset of the tsar's campaign of reforms. Indeed, Iavorskii's arrival in Moscow coincided with an intense period of eschatological expectancy and anxiety in the city following the successful Azov Campaign against the Turks in 1696 and Peter the Great's return from Western Europe in August 1698. In addition to crushing the Strel'tsy Revolt and infamously shaving off the beards of his Boyars, in the autumn of 1698, Peter the Great also fanned the sense of *fin de siecle* anxiety in Moscow in January 1700 by adopting the Julian calendar. This deeply symbolic action was intended to signal the arrival of a new age in Russia, in which the custodians and adherents of the old era were to be banished. Thus, on his arrival in Moscow Iavorskii entered

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<sup>1</sup> A. V. Korolev, *Stefan Iavorskii mitropolit Riazanskii: biograficheskii ocherk* (St. Petersburg, 1908), 6; Ternovskii, "M. Stefan Iavorskii," 69.

<sup>2</sup> Ternovskii, "M. Stefan Iavorskii," 237.



Fig. 29. Portrait of Stefan Iavorskii in *Kamen' very* (Moscow, 1729).

an extremely tense atmosphere, which, on the one hand was awash with reforming zeal, but on the other hand was seething with religious and political resentments.

It was not to be long before the Ukrainian Father Superior was to be enlisted by Peter the Great in the bitter campaign against the old guard and their perceived obscurantism. Indeed, the event that was to change the course of Iavorskii's life and precipitate his rise to the top of Russian Orthodoxy occurred during the Ukrainian's first weeks in the Russian capital. This event was the oration delivered by Iavorskii at the funeral of General Aleksei Shein (1662–1700), a hero from the Azov Campaign, who had died on February 12, 1700. It is unknown who recommended Iavorskii for such a prestigious and exacting duty, but their good faith was not disappointed. Despite the fact that Iavorskii had little time to prepare,

he successfully managed to dazzle Peter the Great at the funeral with his oratorical skills. This favourable outcome was helped by the fact that at one point during the sermon, Iavorskii personally addressed the tsar and uttered the following glowing remark: “My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared by tearing down the mighty fortresses of Azov, Kizirm and the Tatars.”<sup>3</sup>

Shortly afterwards, the tsar went to speak with the patriarch regarding the necessity of installing Iavorskii in a Great Russian bishopric in close proximity to the capital.<sup>4</sup> Evidently, the tsar wished to enlist the support of Iavorskii (and his gift with words) in his bitter campaign against the old guard. The tsar’s entreaty was soon granted, as in March 1700 Avramii, the Metropolitan of Riazan and Murom, wrote to the patriarch requesting to be relieved of his ecclesiastic duties.<sup>5</sup> This convenient turn of events led to the rapid investiture of Iavorskii on April 7, 1700 as the new Metropolitan of Riazan and Murom. What is more, within just over six months, Patriarch Adrian died and the tsar appointed Iavorskii as the temporary administrator of the Patriarchal domains, effectively making him the most powerful clerical figure in Russia.

This meteoric rise was primarily founded on Iavorskii’s literary and oratorical skills, which the tsar envisaged as a valuable weapon against his numerous domestic (and foreign) enemies. With this in mind, it is remarkable to note that prior to his arrival in the Russian capital Iavorskii had written a series of panegyrics saturated with mystical, astrological and apocalyptic themes. Thus, the first part of this chapter will concentrate on elucidating the extent to which the above elements formed central motifs in a number of Iavorskii’s key panegyrics written in the 1690s. This will be accompanied by examining Iavorskii’s debt to a number of eminent seventeenth-century Jesuits, whose writings exuded distinct mystical, emblematic and astrological qualities. It will then be argued that in the years following Iavorskii’s arrival in Moscow, Peter the Great utilized the Ukrainian’s abundant use of mystical, apocalyptic and esoteric themes in his panegyrics and sermons as a potent and extraordinary propaganda weapon. Their objective was nothing less than to reveal and explain the divine and prophesized mission of Peter the Great to construct a holy

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<sup>3</sup> F. Ternovskii, “Ocherki iz istorii russkoi ierarkhii v XVIII v. Stefan Iavorskii,” *Drevnaia i novaia Rossiia* 8 (1879): 308; Jurij Serech, “Stefan Yavorsky and the Conflict of Ideologies in the Age of Peter I,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 30 (1951/2): 44.

<sup>4</sup> Ternovskii, “M. Stefan Iavorskii,” 238.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

realm befitting his status as the long-anticipated messianic heir to Noah and the House of David and Russia's status as a New Israel.

*Iavorskii's Kievan Period*

In 1689 Iavorskii returned to Kiev and to the Orthodox fold after spending five years studying philosophy and theology as a Uniate Catholic at Jesuit colleges in the Polish cities of Lvov, Lublin, Vilnius and Poznan.<sup>6</sup> Whilst Iavorskii quickly renounced Uniate Catholicism on his return to the Ukraine and took monastic vows in the Russian Orthodox Church at the Kiev Caves Monastery, he did not relinquish the Jesuitical and scholastic education he had received. Indeed, he was soon appointed to teach rhetoric and oratory at the monastery's affiliated academy – the Kiev Mohyla College – where his ability to compose poetry in Latin and Polish, as well as in Russian, earned him the respect of his pupils, who called him the *poeta laureates*.<sup>7</sup>

In 1691 Stefan Iavorskii became the Prefect and Professor of Philosophy at the Kiev Mohyla College. These powerful positions, at arguably the leading theological and philosophical academy in the expanding Russian Empire, enabled Iavorskii to hone his burgeoning literary and oratorical reputation in a conducive scholastic environment. Iavorskii had received his initial education at the Kiev Mohyla College between approximately 1673 and 1684. Metropolitan Petr Mohyla had founded this academy in 1632 and its emphasis on Latin-taught education and scholasticism was deliberately modelled on Jesuit colleges. Thus, Iavorskii's five years spent at Jesuit colleges in Poland only served to cement the scholastic education he had already received in the Ukraine.

From the very beginning of his tenure as Prefect and Professor of Philosophy at the Kiev Mohyla College, Iavorskii demonstrated that he was familiar with (and endorsed) elements of the Western esoteric tradition. Hence, his course in natural philosophy (entitled “*Agonium philosophicum in arena gymnasia Mohilaeanae Kijoviensis orthodoxo*”) included sections on astrology and about the nature and qualities of the stars. Iavorskii also taught about the “substantial links in nature” and about “art and magic.” One lecture was also entitled “About Interpretation” and focused

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<sup>6</sup> During his five-year period as a Uniate Catholic, Iavorskii assumed the name Stanislav Simon.

<sup>7</sup> Korolev, *Stefan Iavorskii*, 4.

on understanding signs.<sup>8</sup> As will be explained in more detail in the following chapter on Prokopovich, Iavorskii's inclusion of elements of occult philosophy was wholly in keeping with the tradition of eclectic Aristotelianism espoused at the academy by Innokentii Gizel in the 1640s.

In the early 1690s Iavorskii also began writing sermons of a distinctly mystical and astrological bent. These tracts drew extensively on the mystical and emblematic writings of a number of prominent seventeenth-century Jesuits. It is striking to note, for example, that Iavorskii often cites Jeremiah Drexelius (1581–1638), who wrote the popular *Zodiacus Christianus* and Maximilian Sandaeus (1578–1656), who wrote a series of mystical and astrological tracts on the Holy Virgin. One can find the entire collection of Drexelius's works in Iavorskii's personal library, as well as two works by Sandaeus, including *Maria Sol Mysticus* (1636).<sup>9</sup> Iavorskii also possessed an extensive collection of mystical emblematic works by many of the leading Jesuit practitioners of the genre in the seventeenth century. Thus, one finds editions of Heinrich Engelgrave's influential works *Lux Evangelica* (1658) and *Caeleste Pantheon* (1647), Hermann Hugo's *Pia Desideria* (1624) as well as Sebastianus a Matre Dei's *Firmamentum Symbolicum* (1652).<sup>10</sup>

Small wonder, therefore, that when one turns to the content of Iavorskii's early panegyrics and sermons one is immediately struck by the fact that, as Chistovich remarks, he "had lost all ability to observe things with simple eyes" and viewed everything symbolically, prophetically and according to astrological influences.<sup>11</sup> This spirit was also noted by Iavorskii's nineteenth-century biographer, F. Ternovskii, who commented that his sermons were permeated with more of a medieval conception of nature,

<sup>8</sup> Ia. M. Stratii, V. D. Litvinov and V. A. Andrushko, eds., *Opisanie kursov filosofii i ritoriki professorov kievo-mogilianskoi akademii* (Kiev: Naukova Dumka, 1982), 175–81.

<sup>9</sup> For works by Drexelius, see Maslov, "Biblioteka Stefana Iavorskago," 22, 30, 50–1; Nos. 32, 33, 203, 515, 581, 589. For works by Sandaeus, see 27, 51; Nos. 139 and 541.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 25, 50, 45; Nos. 94, 97, 536 and 402 respectively. Iavorskii also owned important emblematic works by Joannis Michael von der Ketten (*Apelles Symbolicus*), Diego Saavedra (*Symbola Politica*) and a work entitled *Symbola Amoris*. See 28, 51, 50; Nos. 170–1, 547 and 525 respectively. A manuscript also exists in Iavorskii's library, entitled *Hipomnema Symbolorum*, which, according to an attached note, was written by Iavorskii himself. It is also worth noting that Chistovich states a number of other important Jesuit influences on Iavorskii, such as Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), Antonio Vieira (1608–1697), Thomas Stapleton (1535–1598), Thomas Le Blanc (1597–1669), Diego Alavrez (d. 1635), Paolo Segneri (the Elder) (1624–1694) and Matthias Faber (1586–1653). See I. A. Chistovich, "Neizdannyya propovedi Stefana Iavorskago," *Khristianskoe chtenie* 1 (1867): 264–70.

<sup>11</sup> Chistovich, "Neizdannyya propovedi," 262.



rather “than the outlook developed by the new science.”<sup>12</sup> Ternovskii then provides a quote from one of Iavorskii’s early sermons, serving to illustrate the clerics tendency to expound upon medieval astrological learning: “from the stars, we all have good influences . . . and time is applied to us according to astrological understanding.”<sup>13</sup>

Iavorskii’s penchant for astrological interpretations of Biblical matters is perfectly illustrated in one of the first sermons he gave as Prefect and Professor of Philosophy at the Kafedral’nii Sobor, on the Day of the Beheading of John the Baptist on August 29, 1691.<sup>14</sup> In this sermon, Iavorskii considered the significance of the ‘Palestinian Zodiac’ and gave zodiacal signs to a number of prominent Biblical figures.<sup>15</sup> Thus, Judas Iscariot is designated as a Capricorn – the sign of the goat – as he was, according to Iavorskii, an evil-smelling, stinking sinner. The sons of Ephraim, who are described in Psalm 78:9 as breaking the covenant of God after they turned back in the day of battle whilst carrying bows, are described as being Sagittarians: the sign of the archer. The two most prominent Jewish sects during Christ’s lifetime – the Pharisees and the Sadducees – are described as Scorpios. Furthermore, Iavorskii states that the Jews who approached John and confessed their sins, before subsequently reverting to their former ways, were Cancerians.

In 1694 Iavorskii also used the occasion of the day marking the beheading of John the Baptist to deliver a sermon at the Kiev Caves Monastery saturated with astrological and apocalyptic symbolism.<sup>16</sup> In the title of the sermon, Iavorskii makes an allusion between cutting off a bunch of ripe fruit and the severing of John the Baptist’s head by Herod. The sermon begins by illustrating how the fruits of the earth ripen in various stages under different signs of the zodiac. Thus, Iavorskii remarks that the sign of the lamb (Aries) reigns in the month of March and accordingly the earth is warmed and repaired by being covered with a certain kind of fleece. In April, Iavorskii states that the sign of the ox (Taurus) reigns during which time one can plough the earth and life is enriched. Iavorskii then proceeds to describe that the sign of the twins (Gemini) reigns in May, which is

<sup>12</sup> Ternovskii, “M. Stefan Iavorskii,” 55.

<sup>13</sup> Cited from Ternovskii, “M. Stefan Iavorskii,” 55.

<sup>14</sup> See Chistovich, “Neizdannyya propovedi,” 417.

<sup>15</sup> Jeremiah Drexelius undertook a similar venture in his *Zodiacus Christianus*, in which the twelve apostles are accorded an astrological star sign and a principle attribute. For a description and table outlining Drexelius’s scheme, see Wolfgang Hübner, *Zodiacus Christianus* (Königstein: Verlag Anton Hain, 1983), 50–3.

<sup>16</sup> See Chistovich, “Neizdannyya propovedi,” 417–8.

characterized by “nourishment, the fruits of the earth and all manner of abundance.”<sup>17</sup>

After these astrological links to the agricultural cycle, Iavorskii then remarks that “all this applies to John the Baptist, as this bunch of fruit flourishes under various signs of the Zodiac.”<sup>18</sup> In addition, the Ukrainian cleric explicitly states that “we shall only take an apocalyptic perspective,” when discussing how John the Baptist first prospered under the sign of the Lamb, that is, during the reign of Christ. Reference is then made to Chapter Five of the Book of Revelation, in which John the Divine describes his vision of a slain lamb opening the seven seals and a direct quote is taken from Revelation 5:9, which states: “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

One can also discern distinct astrological content in a sermon given in honour of Archangel Michael, in which Iavorskii wrote that various stars and planets are extinguished by the “solar face of the brilliant angel.”<sup>19</sup> Whereas the archangel is lauded, Iavorskii refers to many other planets and star signs in derogatory terms. Thus, Venus is referred to in terms of “voluptuous sin;” the constellation of Virgo is described as being “in carnal desire,” the Cancerian Crab returns in sin to its filth and Libra is drunkenly searching for an amphora.<sup>20</sup>

Sermons marking St. Nicholas’s Day on December 6 were also used by Iavorskii to develop astrological, mystical and apocalyptic themes. One such sermon was entitled *Sol ab oriente tendens ad Occasum per duodecim Signa Zodiaci* (The Sun tending from the east to the west along the twelve constellations of the zodiac). Evidently, this unpublished work elaborated upon the astrological significance of the sun from its ascent in the east to its descent in the west.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, in a sermon entitled *Quintuplex Altare Mysticum* (The Five Mystical Altars), which was delivered on St. Nicholas’s Day 1697, Iavorskii drew symbolic parallels between St. Nicholas and the angel described in Revelation 8:3, which stands at the golden altar before the throne of God. The cleric also drew symbolic parallels between the life of St. Nicholas and the five types of altar mentioned in the Bible – golden, brass, wooden, stone and earthen – that each symbolize one of

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 417.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 417–8.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 418. The date of this sermon is not given.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

the five wounds Christ supposedly suffered on our behalf.<sup>22</sup> Thus, for example, Iavorskii uses the golden altar created by Solomon, mentioned in Chronicles 4:19, as a basis for reflecting on how “for wise people gold is the sign and symbol of love.” This association is fitting, according to Iavorskii, because gold has the ability to gild and under its influence a special union can be created which covers all defects and transgressions. Iavorskii then states that St. Nicholas brought sacrificial alms to an Altar of Love.<sup>23</sup>

It is also fascinating and remarkable to note that Iavorskii interpreted various heavenly phenomena as portentous and as apocalyptic signs. In a sermon entitled *On the Sign of the Mother of God*, for example, Iavorskii begins by citing Revelation 12, which states: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun.” He then proceeds by remarking that “various signs occur in the heavens.”<sup>24</sup> As an example, he refers to a recent *Smutnoe vremia* (Time of Troubles) in Russia, in which there had been bloody rebellion.

In the [7]189th year [i.e. 1681 – RC] according to the 15th day of December from the first hour of night appeared a strange comet in the West in likeness of a bright and white column, in the shape of a spear . . . and it went in a like manner with the stars in the north [on] the 40th day; and then began a kind of confusion in our Russia.<sup>25</sup>

In other words, Iavorskii is not referring to the Time of Troubles that beset Russia at the turn of the seventeenth century, but to the Strel'tsy Revolt of 1682. Thus, it is highly significant that Iavorskii reads direct political consequences as having arisen from the inauspicious comet that appeared in the skies the following December.<sup>26</sup>

Iavorskii's preoccupation with apocalyptic symbolism and interpretation remained unabated at the close of the seventeenth century. In 1699, for example, he delivered a sermon entitled *Descriptio Concionatoria Angeli Apocalypticici in Custodiam nostram Descendentis* (Oratorical Description of the Angel of the Apocalypse descending to guard us) at the Zlatoverkhonii

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 275–79.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 819.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 419–20. The comet visible would have been Halley's Comet.

<sup>26</sup> On contemporary Russian reactions of foreboding at the comet of 1680–1681, see S. I. Nikolaev, “Komety v perevodnoi literature XVII v.,” *Trudy otdela drevnerusskoi literatury*, 50 (1996): 684–88. Also see D. O. Sviatskii, “Kometa 1680 g. v Rossii,” *Mirovedenie* (1929): 350–3.

Monastery.<sup>27</sup> This sermon focused on the mystical vision described by John the Divine in Revelation 10, in which an Angel of the Apocalypse descends from heaven: “I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.” As will be seen in the following section, Iavorskii’s passion for apocalyptic, prophetic and mystical themes was to serve Peter the Great well in the early years of the next century.

*For Tsar and Country: The Apocalyptic, Mystical and Esoteric Sermons  
of Stefan Iavorskii*

The tangible sense of eschatological fervour present in Moscow during the first year of the eighteenth century was heightened still further in July 1700 by the outbreak of the Great Northern War against Sweden. The outbreak of a pivotal war against Sweden – Russia’s great Northern rival – followed hot on the heels of the successful Azov Campaign against the Islamic Turks. Thus, a general sense of apocalyptic divine mission permeated the air in the Russian capital, which was both shared and manipulated by the Russian authorities. In this regard, Iavorskii’s panegyrical talent was one of the tsar’s prime weapons and the Ukrainian cleric was given permission to unleash an arsenal of literary and oratorical salvos aimed at extolling Russia’s leaders and triumphs and denigrating the country’s enemies.

These panegyrical salvos form an astonishing record illustrating the dazzling manner in which Iavorskii was able to utilize a series of apocalyptic, mystical and occult motifs, over a nineteen year period between 1702 and 1721, in order to promote the divinely ordained mission of Peter the Great and the Russian nation. Even a cursory glance at the motifs adopted by Iavorskii during this period is sufficient to reveal the extraordinary scope of his literary palette. Thus, in addition to the concerted and consistent use of eschatological themes drawn particularly from the Book of Revelation, one can also note how Iavorskii drew extensively upon the tradition of Merkavah mysticism. This tradition was inextricably linked to the prophet Ezekiel’s vision of a triumphant chariot ascending to heaven, as well as on other visionary literature, such as the account of Jacob’s Ladder in Genesis 28 and Elijah’s ascent to heaven in the second book of Kings. Iavorskii was fascinated with this mystical and visionary literature

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 821.

and ingeniously incorporated the motif of Ezekiel's triumphant chariot into a series of four new-year sermons delivered between 1703 and 1706.

Iavorskii also frequently sought to imbue Cabbalistic significance into various names and continued to enthusiastically incorporate astrological themes in his works. Indeed, Iavorskii's use of astrology was so pronounced that in a sermon performed on Peter the Great's birthday on May 30, 1709 he examined the tsar's horoscope at birth for portentous signs of his greatness. Lastly, Iavorskii was not averse to incorporating alchemical themes into his sermons, as will be demonstrated by examining a sermon he delivered in 1711 to commemorate the name day of the apostles Peter and Paul, in which he referred to God as a divine alchemist.

*The Russian Apocalypse: Iavorskii's Welcome Sermon of 1702*

In 1702, Iavorskii delivered a welcome speech (*Slovo privetstvuiushchee*) in Moscow.<sup>28</sup> The occasion for the sermon was the return of Russian troops to the capital after their first victory in the Great Northern War at the Battle of Erestfer in Livonia in December 1701. Against this backdrop, Iavorskii composed a speech brimming with apocalyptic verve, in which he outlines three specific types of sign, which convey "certain knowledge" of the divine role pre-ordained for Peter the Great and Russia.<sup>29</sup> The first such sign is stated as being *Signum Rememordium*, which refers to past events. The second category is referred to as *Signum Demonstratium*, which addresses contemporary events and the third category is *Signum Prognosticum*, which foretells future events.<sup>30</sup> However, prior to discussing the particular characteristics of these three signs, Iavorskii lists a number of notable Biblical precedents, in which holy men have observed divine signs. Indeed, the sermon begins with an astute and pertinent citation from Psalm 86:17, in which King David recites a prayer to God beseeching him to reveal a sign of his divine benevolence and protection: "shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me." To Iavorskii's

<sup>28</sup> Stefan Iavorskii, "Slova Stefana Iavorskago, mitropolita riazanskago i muromskago," *Trudy kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* 3 (1874): 85–98. The full title of this sermon is as follows: "Slovo privetstvuiushchee, pobed, okolo Pskova i Livonii po porazhenii pod Narvoiu poluchennykh, i pokhval'noe znamenii tsarskago gerbovago, – 1702 g v Moskve propovedannoe preosviashchennym Stefanom mitropolitom Riazanskim i Muromskim." Also see Stefan Iavorskii, *Propovedi Stefana Iavorskogo za 1702–1716 gg.* Sobranie knig Moskovskoi dukhovnoi akademii (dopolnitel'noe), Rossiiskaia gosudarstvennaia biblioteka, F. 173 II, No. 112, 18r–26v.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 85. Iavorskii, "Slova Stefana Iavorskago," 3 (1874), 85.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

contemporary listeners the parallels between David's exhortation to the Lord and Peter the Great's predicaments would have been apparent. Iavorskii then continues by citing three examples of divine signs given to men of God in the Old Testament. Iavorskii begins by referring to the dove that returned to Noah's Ark carrying an olive branch, thus indicating that the Flood had receded.<sup>31</sup> This is followed by citing how God used Gideon's fleece to convey a sign that the Israelites would be victorious in battle against the Midianites.<sup>32</sup> Thirdly, Iavorskii cites the example of how God indicated Aaron's authority to the Israelites by making his rod blossom.<sup>33</sup>

These Old Testament signs are swiftly followed by a number of examples from the New Testament, the first of which is drawn from Luke 2:10–12. This passage describes how an angel appears before a group of shepherds on the hills surrounding Bethlehem and bids them "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." The angel then announces that "unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you." Iavorskii then proceeds to cite Luke 2:34, in which Simeon blesses Mary on the birth of Jesus and informs her that "this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against."

After then repeating the citation from Psalm 86, in which David beseeches God to show him a divine sign, Iavorskii turns to interpreting the apocalyptic signs observed by St. John, "the divine seer" (*bogovidnii*) in the Book of Revelation. In particular, Iavorskii focuses on interpreting Revelation 12:1 and 12:14, which state:

- And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.
- And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle.

By drawing on this specific passage in the Book of Revelation, which describes "a woman clothed with the sun," Iavorskii was tapping into a rich Ukrainian tradition, evident in literature, icons and engravings. Furthermore, the political connotations inherent in Iavorskii's apocalyptic analysis were first used in the Crimean Campaigns (1687–1689) against the Ottoman Turks. Moreover, as Elena Pogolian has noted, the celebration

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<sup>31</sup> See Genesis 8:11: "And the dove came in to him in the evening; and lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth."

<sup>32</sup> See Judges 6:36–40.

<sup>33</sup> See Numbers 17:5.

held to mark the victorious second Azov campaign of 1696 made extensive use of the apocalyptic ‘women clothed in the sun’ motif.<sup>34</sup> Thus, it is important to bear in mind that Iavorskii is drawing on a potent apocalyptic motif already associated with Peter the Great’s military exploits against the Ottoman Turks.

Iavorskii begins his exegesis of these two prophetic verses by asking: “But what does this signify?”<sup>35</sup> In reply to his question, he states that the woman clothed with the sun is the Eastern Orthodox Church. Iavorskii then explains that “the moon under her feet” refers to the “pride of dishonest Muslims.” Furthermore, the “crown of twelve stars” is interpreted as a reference to the twelve apostles. Lastly, Iavorskii asks: “What is the essence of the ‘two wings of a great eagle?’” In answer, he states that this is a sign of the “ancestors of the Orthodox monarchs of Russia” and that upon these wings the Orthodox Church will be raised high, as if carried by cherubs.<sup>36</sup> According to Iavorskii, the wings of the soaring eagle also preserve the Orthodox Church from the malicious arrows cast by the Biblical sons of Ephraim. Iavorskii had drawn on the example of these violators of God’s covenant as early as 1691, but in the context of the sermon delivered in 1702, they unmistakably refer to the Swedish enemy. Iavorskii then exclaims: “O, sign of prosperity!” The rich and increasingly ecstatic language used by Iavorskii also appears to ascend to great heights as he describes the futility of the archers’ desire to cast down the ascending eagle. Iavorskii concludes this passage by stating that ultimately the ‘royal eagle’ will be victorious by God’s grace.

After this initial salvo, Iavorskii provides a summarized description of the three types of sign, outlined in the opening passage of this section. Thus, he begins by simply stating that a *Signum Rememordium* is a sign, such as an arc radiating in heaven, which indicates a previous event. Precisely such an arc, or rainbow, was made manifest by God, according to Iavorskii, when he wanted to inform Noah that the Deluge was no more.<sup>37</sup> In regard to *Signum Demonstratum*, Iavorskii describes how groaning and breathing indicate sadness in a person, whilst laughter indicates a certain

<sup>34</sup> E. Pogolian and M. Smorzhevskikh, “‘Ia devu v solntse zriu stoiašču...’: obraz apokaliptičeskoi ženy v russkoi ofitsial’noi kul’ture 1695–1742 gg.” *Studia Russica Helvingiensia et Tartuensia* 8 (2002): 13.

<sup>35</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 3, 86.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 86–7. Although Iavorskii did not directly refer at this juncture to Ezekiel’s vision of an ascending chariot, the direct reference to cherub-carriers is highly suggestive as four such figures appear in Ezekiel 1.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.



joy and gladness and that smoke is an indicator of fire. Finally, Iavorskii remarks that *Signum Prognosticum* concern signs of future events and that common Greek prognostications centred on solar and lunar eclipses and comets. Indeed, he adds that Christ himself recognised such signs as heralds of future events, citing his words, as stated in Luke 21:25: “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars.” In concluding his brief summary of the three signs, Iavorskii tellingly notes that “we can clearly see all three of these signs in the Royal symbol of the insurmountable three-crowned, Orthodox, monarchical Russian eagle.”<sup>38</sup>

A more detailed examination of each sign then ensues. In regard to signs of remembrance, Iavorskii begins by questioning the symbolism of the three crowns that appear above the regal eagle. He notes that according to the Holy Scriptures this symbol denotes victory and that a crown is given for martial efforts, exploits and victories. To confirm this claim, he cites 2 Timothy 4:7–8, which states: “I have fought a good fight . . . I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.” Iavorskii also cites Hebrews 2:9, which writes of Jesus “crowned with glory and honour.” Leading on from this interpretation, Iavorskii consequently states that the three crowns radiating above the royal eagle symbolize victories and rejoicing.<sup>39</sup> In addition, however, Iavorskii goes on to say that they also represent the Holy Trinity. Iavorskii then combines these two interpretations by exhorting the valour and bravery of Orthodox Russian monarchs who had not spared their blood in defence of the Trinitarian Orthodox faith. Furthermore, Iavorskii draws on coronation ceremonies in classical Rome, in which the Caesars were usually given three crowns of iron, silver and gold. According to Iavorskii, such crowns are visible above the Russian eagle and symbolize courage, piety and magnanimity.<sup>40</sup>

Next, Iavorskii focuses on the meaning of the two-headed eagle and why it is black. On the first point, Iavorskii states that the two-headed nature of the eagle befits an entity that is both in heaven and on earth, as Christ himself reigned in heaven and was the head of the Church on earth. On the second point – concerning the darkened appearance of the eagle – the author quotes certain unnamed philosophers who teach that ‘blackness’ occurs both internally and externally in humans and animals.<sup>41</sup> Thus, on an internal level, those who have black powers have considerable

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. Ironically, the motif of three crowns was also adopted by the Swedish monarchy.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 89–90.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 90–1.

fire and heat in their bodies and are consequently of a fiery disposition. However, blackness on the outside occurs because of the effects of fire, smoke or the wind. When applied to the black two-headed Russian eagle, Iavorskii notes that it possesses three internal qualities typical of its fiery nature: (1) a love of God; (2) a fiery love for those near and loyal subjects who are ready to lay down their lives and (3) a martial or military quality.<sup>42</sup> Externally, the blackness of the eagle is said to derive from the smoke and soot of bombs and the “terrible thundering canons of war.”<sup>43</sup>

The concluding passage in Iavorskii’s treatment of *Signum Rememoratum* draws on past Russian displays of military valour and victories. It begins by citing the courage of the Grand Princes of Moscow who defeated the Tartar military commander, Mamai, at the Battle of Kulikovo in 1380. Iavorskii also cites, in chronological order, the glorious deeds of Ivan the Terrible, Tsar Aleksei and Tsar Fedor III and the recent victories against the Ottoman Turks in the 1690s at Azov, Kazikermen and Taganrog. These recent triumphs are viewed in unambiguously apocalyptic terms. Iavorskii associates Azov with Babylon and cites Revelation 14:8: “Babylon is fallen, is fallen that great city.” In addition, the fortress garrisons of Kazikermen and Taganrog are paralleled with the Biblical town of Capernaum, which is described in Matthew 11:23 as being “brought down to hell.” In all these conflagrations, Iavorskii remarks that the Russian Imperial eagle was blackened, but remained beautiful, just as in the Song of Songs, the Bride of Christ sings: “I am black but comely” (The Song of Solomon 1:5). Thus, Iavorskii stresses that whilst the present Russian eagle may be blackened by the throes of war, it can look to its past for reassurance as to its preordained and exalted role.

The apocalyptic fervour of Iavorskii’s sermon is heightened still further when he begins to discuss the *Signum Demonstratum*. At the very onset, for example, he asks his audience if they want to see this sign and then continues by stating that it is presently represented in the sign of an armed king of war, who is astride a horse and lancing a serpent. On one level, this symbolically alludes to St. George the Dragon-Slayer, a Russian royal emblem. However, Iavorskii adds an apocalyptic dimension to this traditional image by posing another question for his audience: “And what does this indicative sign indicate to us?” This is immediately followed by the answer: “The four horsemen of the Apocalypse, as represented to us in

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 92.

Apocalypse, Chapter 6.”<sup>44</sup> Iavorskii then quotes an extensive passage from Revelation 6:1–8, in which St. John writes:

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.

Whilst Iavorskii then states that he does not want to add to this for the sake of interpretation, he does note that one should be amazed at how “the Russian Apocalypse similarly indicates the vision!”<sup>45</sup> This extraordinarily powerful statement forms the crux of Iavorskii’s sermon, from which he outlines the signs revealing the apocalyptic reality faced by Russia and its tsar, Peter the Great, who takes on the guise of a glorious warrior-rider. Thus, he instructs his listeners to look at the “royal seals” and at the black horse in particular, which has been darkened by the smoke of war; for none other than a ‘Russian Mars’ sits astride this horse, with lance in hand. This “Russian Mars... attacks the serpent, the scorpion and the Devil” and is described as a “most glorious indication.”<sup>46</sup> This “armed cavalier” and “most glorious warrior” is then painted as the embodiment of “he that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High,” as David describes in Psalm 91, who shall “tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.” The “young lion” in question refers to the young Swedish monarch, Charles XII (1682–1718) and the adder represents “the seven thousand Swedish serpents whose bodies lay on a field of blood.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 92–3.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 93–4.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Iavorskii then expounds upon the righteous cause of the “most glorious” Russian “cavalier” in his current apocalyptic battle against the forces of evil by citing a number of fitting extracts from the Old Testament. Thus, he quotes Psalm 144:1, which states: “Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.” Iavorskii also compares the Russian Cavalier with his lance to Moses with his rod, when the former casts the ‘Swedish Pharaoh’ into the sea.<sup>48</sup> This analogy is also used to compare the Russian Cavalier with Aaron and his rod, before Iavorskii states that the rider is also the embodiment of Habakkuk’s prophecy in Habakkuk 3:8: “Thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation.”

In concluding, Iavorskii repeats the assertion that the *Signum Demonstratum* is reflected in the sign of a “splendid tsar most gloriously striking a lance into the seven-headed serpent, that is, the enemy of seven thousand.”<sup>49</sup> Iavorskii also stresses that he is not able in his “feeble-minded” and “confusingly articulated” rhetoric to express the triumphal victory represented by the sign. Only the “Russian Mars,” writes Iavorskii, with his “refined sword” and with blood can adequately display the military glory embodied in the *Signum Demonstratum* and not ink that is liable to decay.<sup>50</sup>

The third part of Iavorskii’s sermon focuses on *Signum Prognosticum* or as the orator states, “heralds . . . of future things.”<sup>51</sup> The cleric begins his examination of prognostications by addressing a major theological stumbling block: “It is said . . . that nobody can know of future things except God himself.”<sup>52</sup> Iavorskii overcomes this theological obstacle by not denying God’s omnipotence, whilst asserting that on occasions people can acquire knowledge of the future: “It is true that only God knows future events, however people can also sometimes have a knowledge of future events.”<sup>53</sup> These harbingers of future events can be gleaned, writes Iavorskii, from “signs of foretelling” and people, such as “astrologers (*zvezdochettsy*) know of future solar and lunar eclipses from certain signs of foretelling.”<sup>54</sup> Other people, according to Iavorskii, are able to know of fine weather in the

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid. Iavorskii cites Exodus 15:1: “I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

morning from the setting sun and thus “we can prophesize something of things to come from signs of foretelling.”<sup>55</sup> The sign by which Iavorskii and his listeners can prophesize the future is then revealed: “Look at the birds in the sky, look at the three-crowned royal eagle, look and reason about what its outstretched wings represent? It represents none other than the Cross of Christ.”<sup>56</sup>

Thus, Iavorskii writes that Christ’s crucifixion symbolized a victory against his three enemies: death, Satan and the world. The cleric then writes that the sign of the cross was also used by Moses and Daniel in the Old Testament to bring about victory. Indeed, Moses reputedly made the sign of the cross when stretching out his hands in a prayer beseeching God to help defeat Amalek, who was prevailing in battle.<sup>57</sup> As regards Daniel, Iavorskii writes that the prophet stretched out his hands in a cross-shape to bar the lion’s mouth when he was trapped in its den.<sup>58</sup> What is more, Iavorskii notes that in days gone by the sign of the cross was seen in the stars, as occurred on one occasion with Emperor Constantine. Iavorskii draws this example from Eusebius’s *Life of Constantine*, in which it is written that the Emperor “saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, and bearing the inscription, CONQUER BY THIS.”<sup>59</sup> Significantly, Peter the Great utilized this powerful motif at the Battle on the Pruth against the Ottoman Turks in 1711. During the campaign the Russian standards were emblazoned with a cross and bore the inscription: “UNDER THIS SIGN WE CONQUER.”<sup>60</sup>

Iavorskii then concludes his sermon by stating that when “we see the three-crowned royal eagle with wings outstretched in the shape of a cross” it will be a herald that “with God’s help and word we shall claim victory over our enemies.”<sup>61</sup> What is more, this sign will occur in the not very distant future, as Iavorskii makes explicitly clear: “The Cross of the Lord will be removed from the Russian Orthodox Ark- not much time is left.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> See Exodus 15:12.

<sup>58</sup> See Daniel 6:16–22.

<sup>59</sup> Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Series 2, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 490. Iavorskii owned an edition of Eusebius’ *Historia Ecclesiastica*. See Maslov, “Biblioteka Stefana Iavorskago,” 41, No. 319.

<sup>60</sup> Hughes, *Peter the Great*, 96.

<sup>61</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 3, 97.

<sup>62</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 3, 97.

The degree to which Iavorskii co-ordinated his apocalyptically-fuelled sermons with other officially sanctioned expressions proclaiming Peter's (and Russia's) providential role is demonstrated by the performance of a play, entitled *Torzhestvo mira pravoslavnago* (Triumph of the World of the Orthodox), in Moscow in 1703 by the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy. In 1701 Iavorskii was officially appointed as Protector of the Academy, and consequently he was in a position to shape the theatrical productions staged by the institution.<sup>63</sup> His input in *The Triumph of The World of the Orthodox* would seem to be considerable. In Act 3, Scene 4, for example, the theme of Constantine's vision prior to the Battle of Milvian Bridge is again employed to laud Peter the Great's God-given military campaign against the Swedes:

Going into battle, the Russian Mars Genius (*geneusha*) prayed to God to provide him with assistance [and] a cross appeared from a shining star in the sky with the inscription: "in this sign we conquer."<sup>64</sup>

Thus, the play utilizes the same symbolic language as in Iavorskii's welcome sermon of the previous year. Namely, Peter is portrayed as a 'Russian Mars,' who in an apocalyptic struggle against devilish forces (the Swedes) receives the same divine omen as signalled by God to Constantine.

The apocalyptic themes permeating Iavorskii's welcome sermon are also abundantly evident in the contemporaneous performance in Moscow of *Strashnoe izobrazhenie vtorago prishestviia gospodnia na zemliu* (A Terrible Representation of The Second Coming of the Lord on Earth). The identity of the playwright is not known, but once again the style and language adopted in the play would seem to point to Iavorskii's considerable input. Thus, Act 4 in the play dramatizes Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (see Daniel, Chapter 2) about "what shall be in the last days."<sup>65</sup> The eighth act of the play also acted out Daniel's vision of four beasts emerging from the sea, in which the prophet also proclaimed that he "saw in the night visions . . . *one* like the Son of man [who] came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days."<sup>66</sup>

What is more, as with Iavorskii's sermons, the play fuses Old Testament prophecy with contemporary political and military events. Hence, Act 7 refers directly to the recent Russian victory at the Battle of Erstfer

<sup>63</sup> Sergei Smirnov, *Istoriia moskovskoi slaviano-greko-latinskoi akademii* (Moscow, 1855), 80.

<sup>64</sup> N. S. Tikhonravov, ed., *Russkiiia dramaticheskiiia proizvedeniia 1672–1725 godov.*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1874), 22.

<sup>65</sup> Tikhonravov, *Russkiiia dramaticheskiiia proizvedeniia*, vol. 2, 8.

<sup>66</sup> See Daniel 7:13.

in Livonia, and portrays the Polish king reproaching his senators for their internecine feuding that had weakened his realm.<sup>67</sup> This interpretation of contemporary events – in terms of its apocalyptic framework – further highlights the manner in which Iavorskii (and other clerics) sought to champion Peter the Great's rule.

*The Signs of the Coming of the Antichrist and the end of the Ages (1703)*

In many ways Iavorskii's *Welcome Sermon* of 1702 and the performance of *The Second Coming of the Lord on Earth* can be regarded as a positive response to the apocalyptic fervour whipped up by Grigorii Talitskii, a copyist, who in 1700 began to promulgate that Peter the Great was the Antichrist, Moscow was a new Babylon and the end of the world would occur in 1702. Talitskii's manuscripts attracted considerable attention and a notable degree of support, including from Bishop Ignatii of Tambov.<sup>68</sup> The copyist based his claims on a combination of numerical calculation and Cabbalistic interpretation, whereby he abbreviated the name of Jesus to "Is" (Ic), and designated the numerical values of 10 and 200 to the respective letters. The numerical value of 210 was then added to 7,000 years to indicate that the end of world would occur 7,210 years after the creation of the world, that is in 1702.<sup>69</sup> What is more, Talitskii calculated that Peter's name (Пётр) tallied with the number of the beast (666) and that the three and a half year reign of the Antichrist accorded with the (false) tsar's return from abroad in 1698.<sup>70</sup>

The threat posed by Talitskii's claims was considered sufficient for the tsar to personally instruct Iavorskii to meet with the copyist. This meeting occurred in 1701, during which Talitskii accused Iavorskii of being the prophet Balaam, who was hired by King Balak of Moab to curse Israel.<sup>71</sup> Whilst Talitskii was subsequently quartered for his views, his fanatical beliefs did not die with him. In this context, one must view Iavorskii's

<sup>67</sup> Tikhonravov, *Russkiiia dramatičeskiiia proizvedeniia*, vol. 2, 9.

<sup>68</sup> G. Esipov, *Raskol'nich'i dela XVIII stoletii: izvlečenniiia iz del preobrazhenskago prikaza i tainoi rozysknykh del kantseliarii* (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia pol'za, 1861), 61–4. For archival material on the Talitskii affair, see "Fragmentsy dela o G. V. Talitskom i ego storonnikakh 1700–1702." RGADA F. 371, Preobrazhenskii i Semonovskii prikazy, 16 355 ed. kh., 1691–1729. Op. 1–4. "Sekretnye dela" 1697–1724. Op. 1, ch. 1. Op. 2,4.; "O syske G. V. Talitskogo 1700." RGADA F. 141, 20 221 ed. Khr., 1505–1705. Op. 1–8.

<sup>69</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 80.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ternovskii, "M. Stefan Iavorskii," 259. The description of Balaam can be found between Numbers 22–25.

sermon of 1702 as a concerted attempt to turn Talitskii's apocalyptic worldview upside-down. Far from being the embodiment of the Antichrist, Peter the Great is portrayed as a messianic figure matching the warrior feats of King David in the Old Testament.

In combination with providing an inverted (and positive) interpretation of Peter the Great's apocalyptic role, the cleric also sought to directly refute Talitskii's claims. Accordingly, in 1703 Iavorskii published the tract *The Signs of the Coming of the Antichrist*, which drew on *De Antichristo* (1604) by the Spanish theologian Thomas Malvenda (1566–1628). In the preface to his text Iavorskii explains to the reader that it had not been written “on the web of superstitious opinion, and not on loose sand (*na zybkom peske*), like the morals of the schismatics, but on the firm basis of the Holy Scriptures and a true interpretation of the Church Fathers.”<sup>72</sup>

The structure of Iavorskii's tract mirrors his sermon of the previous year, in which he divides apocalyptic signs into three categories: (1) prior signs; (2) aggregate or contemporary signs and (3) subsequent signs.<sup>73</sup> In the first category Iavorskii lists the destruction and end of the Roman Empire and the preaching of the gospels to all peoples throughout the world.<sup>74</sup> In the second category, Iavorskii states that it will be marked by the coming of Elijah and Enoch, who will both be dressed in sackcloths. They will prophesize that 1260 days remain until the end of the world and that during this time not a single drop of rain will fall.<sup>75</sup> The Antichrist shall advance upon them and strike them down and they shall lay unburied in Jerusalem for three and a half days. After this time, they shall be resurrected and will ascend to heaven. Finally, there will be an earthquake and a tenth of the city shall perish.<sup>76</sup> Iavorskii also asserts that during this second period, the Antichrist will be accepted as the Messiah by the Jews.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore the Antichrist will perform false miracles, such as drawing down fire from the heavens.<sup>78</sup> This figure will also persecute the followers of Christ and whilst refuting God will also aspire to become a God. Iavorskii then states that the name of the Antichrist shall correlate to the number 666 (the mark of the

<sup>72</sup> A. S. Grishin and K. G. Isupov, eds. *Antikhrisť (Iz istorii otechestvennoi dukhovnosti): Antologiya* (Moscow: Vysshiaia shkola, 1995), 66.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*; Iurganov, 426.

<sup>75</sup> A. L. Iurganov, *Kategorii russkoi srednevekovoi kul'tury* (Moscow: Institut otkrytoe obshchestvo, 1998), 426.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 426–7.

<sup>77</sup> Ternovskii, “M. Stefan Iavorskii,” 260.

<sup>78</sup> Iurganov, *Kategorii*, 427.



beast), whereby the cleric draws on the Cabbalistic practice of gematria, which assigns numerical value to letters.<sup>79</sup> As a result, practitioners believe that they are able to reveal the hidden significance of names.<sup>80</sup> It is fascinating to note that the practice of gematria was a particular characteristic of cabbalistic literature in Polish-controlled areas of the Ukraine (Galicia, Podolia and Volhynia).<sup>81</sup> Iavorskii was born in the Western Ukrainian town of Iavoriv (fifty kilometres west of Lvov) and was educated in areas of the Ukraine and Poland that were inhabited by large Jewish populations. Whilst it is difficult to gauge the precise degree of influence of Jewish cabbala on Iavorskii (and Ukrainian Orthodoxy in general) in the seventeenth century, it is striking that distinctive features of this form of Jewish mysticism, such as the practice of gematria, were evident among the local Orthodox clergy. This theme will be elaborated upon in more detail below, in regard to apocalypticism and Merkavah mysticism.

However, in regard to Talitskii's claims, the cleric devoted an entire chapter to refuting "some unlearned and ignorant fools, who want to find such" the number of the beast "in our Slavonic language." Thus, on the one hand he provides an overview of the various names (in Greek) that have been calculated to tally with the number of the beast.<sup>82</sup> Yet, on the other hand Iavorskii specifically refuted the claims of Talitskii, who equated the name Peter (Πῆτρος) with the number 666. This denial was noted in the contemporaneous memoirs of J. G. Vockerodt, the Secretary to the Prussian Embassy in Russia:

One of the most notable demonstrations why Peter was not the Antichrist, was concluded from the fact that the Antichrist's number of 666 could by no cabbalistic means be compiled from the name Peter.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 427–8.

<sup>80</sup> For more on gematria, see Frederick Bligh Bond and Thomas Simcox Lea, *Gematria: A Preliminary Investigation of the Cabala Contained in the Coptic Gnostic Books* (Idyllwild, CA: Sacred Science Institute, 2002); Calvin C. Clawson, *Mathematical Mysteries: The Beauty and Magic of Numbers* (New York: Perseus Books, 1999), 39–52; Shirley Blackwell Lawrence, *The Secret Science of Numerology: The Hidden Meaning of Numbers and Letters* (Franklin Lakes, NJ: New Page Books, 2001), 55–60; Marke Pawson, *Gematria: The Numbers of Infinity* (Sutton Mallet: Green Magic, 2004).

<sup>81</sup> Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah 1626–1676* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 81.

<sup>82</sup> Grishin and Isupov, *Antikhrst*, 54–9. The names discussed by Iavorskii are Lateinos (the Pope), Teitan (the Sun), Lampetis (Most Serene), Onikhthos (Victor), Kakos Odhgos (An Evil Leader), Maometis (Mohammed), Alhohs Blabepos (Truly Harmful), Amnos Adikos (Lamb of Iniquity), Antemos (Adversary), Saxoneios (Saxon) and Benediktos (Blessed).

<sup>83</sup> Naumov, *Neistovyi reformator*, 18–9.

Iavorskii also correctly noted that Peter the Great could not be the Antichrist, as argued by Talitskii, because his reign was legitimate and had far exceeded three and a half years.<sup>84</sup> Finally, Iavorskii notes the war of Gog and Magog, the fall of Babylon and the killing of the Antichrist as events occurring in the second category. In the third category, Iavorskii notes that there will be tremendous natural miracles, the dead shall rise and then the world shall end.<sup>85</sup>

In this tract Iavorskii is happy to draw on the futurist interpretation of the apocalypse outlined by Malvenda. In adopting the general arguments advanced by Malvenda in *De Antichristo*, Iavorskii sought to repudiate Talitskii's subversive interpretation of the demonic actions and behaviour of Peter the Great. Yet, it is important to remember that whilst in this tract a futurist interpretation of the apocalypse served Iavorskii's needs – vis-à-vis repudiating the claims of Taltiskii – in many other works he enthusiastically drew favourable apocalyptic conclusions from contemporary events. This characteristic is in clear evidence in his welcome sermon of 1702 and as will be shown below continued to be a hallmark of Iavorskii's panegyrics.

*The Apocalyptic Visionary: Iavorskii, Merkavah Mysticism, Cabbala and The Russian State*

The four New Year panegyrics delivered by Iavorskii in Moscow between 1703 and 1706 are a remarkable testament to the cleric's literary and oratorical craftsmanship and were an integral part of official state theatre in Petrine Russia. They fulfilled a crucial role in the lavish New Year festivities held in the capital in the early years of the eighteenth century, alongside military processions and firework spectacles. In other words, they represented a key component in Peter the Great's new calendar of public, civic celebrations.<sup>86</sup>

In this regard, Iavorskii's sermons not only illustrate the visionary imagination of Russia's leading cleric, but also crystallize the grandiose vision of the entire Russian State, led by Peter the Great. Thus, it is highly significant to note that Iavorskii used these dramatic moments of official state theatre to undertake his most concerted use of mysticism and

<sup>84</sup> Iurganov, *Kategorii*, 428.

<sup>85</sup> Ternovskii, "M. Stefan Iavorskii," 260.

<sup>86</sup> For more on the new calendar of public and civic celebrations in Petrine Russia, see Pogosian, *Petr I*.

esotericism. His goal was nothing less than to portray a prophetic and apocalyptic vision of Russia's divinely sanctioned ascendance.

The pivotal motif in each of these panegyrics centres on Ezekiel's vision of a triumphant and ascending chariot. Significantly, this motif is central to the Jewish tradition of Merkavah mysticism.<sup>87</sup> Modern scholars of Jewish mysticism have noted that the tradition of Jewish visionary writings, or apocalypses, describe the ascension of a hero into the heavenly realm, where he receives revelations.<sup>88</sup> In this regard, Ezekiel became the model, as Ithamar Grünwald has noted, for visionaries to imitate.<sup>89</sup>

Moreover, as the contemporaneous French Protestant Jacques Basnage (1653–1723) noted, the tradition of Merkavah mysticism associated with Ezekiel's Chariot, is one of the two central parts associated with the Cabbala:

The *Cabbala* is commonly distinguish'd into two Parts, One whereof treats of the Knowledge of the Divine Perfections, and Celestial Intelligences and is call'd the *Chariot*, or *Mercava*, because they imagine, that *Ezechiel* has explain'd the chief Mysteries in the miraculous Chariot he mentions at the beginning of his Visions.<sup>90</sup>

Indeed, in the seminal Cabbalist text, *The Zohar*, it is written that “the four splendours (that is the four animals) whirl around” the tree of knowledge “(in four wheels) on their four sides (after the fourfold description of the chariot of Yechezkiel (Ezekiel)).”<sup>91</sup> Basnage provides the following commentary on this critical passage of Cabbalistic literature, beginning with an interpretation of the four animals:

Some will have . . . the Four Animals to be Four Angels that presided over the Monarchies: The Wheels denoted the Empires, which received their motion and progress, and decay from the Ministry of Angels. There was one Wheel in another, because one Monarchy destroyed another . . . This is the literal sense, but then they find here many other Mysteries, both in Nature and in Religion: The Four Animals, are Four celestial living intelligent Bodies. The Wheel is the Matter, and the Four Wheels are the Four Elements: But this is the surface of the Chariot, if you dive farther into it, you'll discover the

<sup>87</sup> Ezekiel's chariot vision appears in Ezekiel 1 and Ezekiel 10.

<sup>88</sup> See, for example, David Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot* (Tübingen: JCB Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1988), 63.

<sup>89</sup> I. Grünwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden, Brill, 1980), viii.

<sup>90</sup> Jacques Basnage, *The History of the Jews from Jesus Christ to the Present Time*, trans. Thomas Taylor (London, 1708), 187.

<sup>91</sup> Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, trans. S. L. MacGregor Mathers (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1926), 104.

Essence of God, his Attributes and Perfections; the Nature of Angels, and the State of the Soul after Death: All these Mysteries are contain'd in it. *Lastly*, Dr. More, a great *Cabbalist*, has found the Reign of the *Messiah* in it.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, Iavorskii's decision to utilize the motif of Ezekiel's triumphant chariot was based on an ancient visionary and mystical tradition that was connected to Cabbalistic doctrine. It is not clear how Iavorskii came to embrace Merkavah mysticism, although it seems likely that he was introduced to such thought by his clerical mentors in the Ukraine and Poland – particularly Simeon Polotskii – who it would seem absorbed aspects of mystical Cabbalistic philosophy from the large surrounding Jewish population.<sup>93</sup>

Indeed, I would argue that it is highly significant that Iavorskii's use of gematria, Merkavah mysticism and use of apocalyptic motifs was redolent of cabbalistic traditions that specifically flourished in Western Ukraine. As Gershom Scholem has noted, the persecutions suffered by Jews in the Ukraine after 1648, in the wake of Bogdan Khmel'nitskii's Cossack revolt against Polish rule, only intensified their sense of crisis and messianic expectancy.<sup>94</sup> By drawing on the cabbalistic practice of gematria, alongside aspects of Jewish apocalyptic thought, such as Merkavah mysticism, many Jews in the region came to believe in the messianic role of Sabbatai Sevi (1626–1676). This self-declared messiah declared that the massacres endured by Jews in the Ukraine and Poland marked the onset of the era of redemption.<sup>95</sup>

Thus, the Ukrainian cleric's immersion in aspects of this distinctly Ukrainian tradition of cabbalistic mysticism is underlined by his immersion in the culture of Merkavah mysticism. This is epitomized by the manner in which Iavorskii compiled an enormous notebook entirely devoted to Ezekiel's Chariot, entitled: *Haec sunt potata sev materies ad construendam Ezechielis Quadrigam Quatuor concionibus declamatum* (This is the material used in arranging [the theme of] Ezekiel's four-horse chariot declaimed in four sermons).<sup>96</sup> This notebook was undoubtedly an

<sup>92</sup> Basnage, *The History of the Jews*, 187. Basnage here refers to Henry More (1614–1687).

<sup>93</sup> The absorption of Cabbalistic philosophy at the Kiev Academy is demonstrated by the curriculum for 1685, which included a poetry course on *Carmen cabalisticum*. See Makarii Bulgakov, *Istoriia kievskoi akademii* (St. Petersburg, 1843), 66.

<sup>94</sup> On the Khmel'nitskii revolt, see Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 4th ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 103–77.

<sup>95</sup> Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 591.

<sup>96</sup> Chistovich, "Neizdannyya propovedi," 419. The notebook is undated.

invaluable sourcebook, enabling the cleric to construct a complex mystical vision intrinsically related to the situation faced by Russia at the time.

In this section I will examine each individual panegyric, although it should be stressed that the four tracts form an intrinsic whole in which one can discern a co-ordinated plan. In essence, Iavorskii's grand vision entailed outlining the means and path by which Russia as a nation would ascend to the heavenly realm. Thus, this series of sermons are thoroughly Baroque in style, in that Iavorskii brings a sense of continuity to his work by drawing on a stock of Biblical, historical and mythological sources.

The first two tracts concentrate on the means by which this ascendancy will be achieved: highlighting the role of the tsar and the four estates of the Russian State respectively. The third tract plays on the theme of sacrifice and courage and uses the metaphor of harvesting crops in order to emphasize the fact that the time had come for Russia to load and board its chariot and set off on the path ascending to heaven. Consequently, the fourth tract is devoted to examining the appropriate path (or more accurately paths) the Russian chariot should take whilst ascending to the heavenly realm.

Prior to writing his series of four panegyrics devoted to Ezekiel's triumphant chariot, Iavorskii had already displayed a strong attraction towards other Biblical passages in which visionary ascendances can be found. On August 2, 1700, on St. Elijah's Day, for example, Iavorskii delivered a sermon in Riazan devoted to the vision of the saint's ascent to heaven in what many, including Iavorskii, interpreted as a fiery chariot, as described in 2 Kings 2.<sup>97</sup> On November 8, 1700, Iavorskii delivered a further sermon in Riazan, entitled *Scala Angelorum*, which examined Jacob's vision of a ladder ascending to heaven in Genesis 28:12: "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it."<sup>98</sup> The notion of Jacob's Ladder was frequently utilized by Iavorskii in latter years and he delivered two further sermons entitled *Scala Angelorum* in 1707 and 1708.<sup>99</sup>

#### *Iavorskii's New Year Panegyric for 1703: "The Triumphant Chariot"*

The official New Year celebrations in Moscow in 1703 were dominated by pageants extolling the victorious feats of the Russian troops, who had taken the Swedish fortress of Nöteborg (renamed Schlüsselburg) in

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 823.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 821.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 821.

October 1702. Iavorskii's panegyric is wholly in keeping with this spirit and is centred on extolling the heroic qualities of the Russian warrior-tsar.<sup>100</sup> In the full title, the Russian monarch is referred to as a "new Daniel" obstructing the mouth of the roaring Swedish lion, and in the introductory passage the tsar is proclaimed to be "the most glorious Russian Cavalier."<sup>101</sup> Despite the powerful resonance of these two metaphors, which had previously been used in Iavorskii's *Welcome Sermon* of 1702, they took a back seat in comparison to the Ukrainian's innovative and inventive use of Ezekiel's vision. The title of the sermon – *The Triumphant Chariot moved by four creatures, from the prophet Ezekiel's Vision* – made it abundantly clear from the onset that the focus of the speech would concentrate on the vision of the Old Testament prophet.

The Bishop of Riazan and Murom began his discussion of Ezekiel's vision by stating: "As soon as I begin to contemplate about this triumphal chariot, there appears before my eyes the miraculous chariot envisaged by Ezekiel."<sup>102</sup> This opening comment, which would have also suggested to the congregation the real triumphal procession they were witnessing, was then followed by an extensive citation from Ezekiel 1:3–21.

And the hand of the Lord was there upon him. And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures... As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle... And their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went... And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went... for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

Iavorskii then proceeded to cite a further passage from Ezekiel 1:26, in which the prophet describes the heavenly throne upon which a man sits:

And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

<sup>100</sup> See Iavorskii, *Propovedi*, 27r–45r.

<sup>101</sup> Samarin, *Stefan Iavorskii i Feofan Prokopovich*, 104–5.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

After providing this extensive citation from the first chapter of Ezekiel, Iavorskii exhorted his listeners to speculate upon the meaning of this passage: “What do you imagine by this listeners?”<sup>103</sup> This was immediately followed by the orator exclaiming that “this handsome chariot is filled with secrets! The craftsmanship of the chariot is not earthly, but heavenly!”<sup>104</sup>

At this point, Iavorskii then turned to providing a detailed exposition of how Ezekiel’s visionary chariot relates to the Russian tsar and state. He begins by stating that the Church Fathers interpreted a chariot as signifying a *gosudarstvo* (royal realm or dominion) and in particular one that is pious and orthodox and therefore an expression of Christ.<sup>105</sup> The sermonizer then explains that he recognizes a monarch in this idea of a “realm,” and more specifically, the “three-crowned tsar of Moscow.”<sup>106</sup> Iavorskii then proceeded to compare the characteristics of the four living creatures, or cherubims, described in Ezekiel 1 with those of the Russian tsar.<sup>107</sup> In the Book of Ezekiel these cherubims are the bearers of a crystalline “firmament,” which supports the throne upon which God sits.<sup>108</sup> In this sense, the Russian monarch was envisaged as a pious upholder of God’s covenant. Thus, the cherubim with the face of an eagle purportedly signified *slava* (glory) and the aspiration to ascend. According to Iavorskii, this sign of the eagle was wholly befitting of “the high Tsar Monarch of our Russian race.”<sup>109</sup> What is more, the tsar-eagle was “invisible in its height” and derived from “Holy kin, a divine tribe,” the name of which contains elements of God himself.<sup>110</sup> This last remark alluded to the Cabbalistic significance attached to the actual name of the Russian people. In this instance, Iavorskii did not elaborate further, but in later panegyrics we find a more detailed analysis of the divine significance of particular names.

The cherubim with the face of a lion, states Iavorskii, signified *muzhestvo* (courage). The cleric then drew upon the astrological significance of the lion: “Astrologers represented harvest time with a lion, and according to their opinion the harvest was not possible without a lion.”<sup>111</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>107</sup> In the first chapter of Ezekiel the living creatures are referred to as *hayyot* in Hebrew and are only named as “cherubims” in chapter ten of the same book.

<sup>108</sup> See Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 40.

<sup>109</sup> Samarin, *Stefan Iavorskii i Feofan Prokopovich*, 108. By stating ‘Russian race,’ Iavorskii is referring to the whole Slavic “nation”.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

This understanding was then directly linked with the fortuitous timing of the Russian army's successful siege of the Swedish fortress of Nöteborg (Schlüsselberg), which began in September, that is, during harvest time:

And what does this harvest begin to say about the victorious Mars? . . . Witness the truth yourselves . . . the spirit of Mars breathes . . . in the Russian Cavalier! . . . The bay-trees and dates would not have flourished so abundantly at harvest time, if the sign of the lion, that is courage, had not become clear in the heart of our zodiac.<sup>112</sup>

Iavorskii's reference to propitious days in this citation reveals the extent to which officials credulously accepted astrology in calendars.

The Ukrainian cleric then noted the qualities of the ox, which is seen in the face of the third cherubim. He noted that an ox carrying a heavy yoke represents a pleasing sacrifice to God and then directly applied this analogy to Russian soldiers: "Forgive me brave warriors, that I name you as oxen, but oxen are not simple, but the name of a cherubim from the prophet Ezekiel."<sup>113</sup> Finally, the fourth cherub, with the face of a human, is compared to the suffering endured by Christ at the hands of Pilate.

These somewhat generalized observations are then followed, as Iurii Samarin noted, by the explicit revelation that all four faces were united in the single visage of Peter the Great, as they were in Jesus Christ. Thus, Christ was born as a human, suffered like an ox, in resurrection he was like a lion and in his ascension he was like an eagle. Similarly, Iavorskii remarked that "I see in a single Royal face all four cherubims."<sup>114</sup> The tsar is said to be like an eagle, for example, in his "high prudence and ingenuity" and like a lion in his "magnanimity and courage."<sup>115</sup> The tsar appeared "in the face of an ox" when he equated himself with other warriors and did not shirk the labours, dangers and deprivations that occur during the time of war.<sup>116</sup> Lastly, when describing the human face of the tsar, Iavorskii drew on a citation in Mark (8:24), which states: "I see men as trees." He then praised the tsar and his son, the tsarevich, by remarking that we do not judge a tree by its leaves, but by its fruit. Iavorskii then concluded his

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 108–9.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.



sermon by stating that he will keep this chariot for the future and that God will give victories.<sup>117</sup>

*Iavorskii's New Year Panegyric for 1704: "The Triumphant Chariot"*

Russia did indeed gain a number of notable victories in 1703 – securing much of Ingria, including the Swedish garrison of Nyenshans. Naturally, these military feats were not ignored by Iavorskii in his New Year sermon for 1704.<sup>118</sup> Indeed, he began by stating: “Your promise is fulfilled, not by rows of chariots, but by the four-wheeled chariot rolled out from the Bible, from the Book of Ezekiel the Prophet.”<sup>119</sup> The cleric then proceeded to expound upon the significant role of the chariot’s four wheels, which were deemed to signify the four ranks of the Russian State. These four ranks are “represented by the wheel,” which carries a quantity of weight in continual movement in order to work and serve, and “in a bog and in mud it meagrely climbs.”<sup>120</sup> The vigilance and diligence of the authorities are also compared with Ptolemy’s heavenly sphere:

The heavenly sphere does not lie, stand or come to rest, as a certain new philosophy from Copernicus falsely teaches, but it is in continual motion . . . And if the wheel and heavenly circle ceased from its course and to radiantly shine, then the confusion would be great under the sun and the earth would have no kinds of fruit; it would have no kind of vegetation . . . such is it also befitting to philosophize about people’s authority.<sup>121</sup>

The first wheel was said to comprise of the upper echelons of the Russian nobility and included members of the tsar’s council, princes, boyars and other advisers.<sup>122</sup> The second wheel was signified as being formed from the “ranks of military people,” whilst the third wheel represented “the ranks of the clergy.”<sup>123</sup> The final wheel was said to be drawn from the “ranks of the common people.”<sup>124</sup> Iavorskii then described how this “squeaky wheel” is never able to advance quietly, but is “always squeaking and grumbling.” Significantly, however, if one “lay’s something heavy on it,

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>118</sup> See Iavorskii, *Propovedi*, 46r–62v.

<sup>119</sup> Samarin, *Stefan Iavorskii i Feofan Prokopovich*, 114.

<sup>120</sup> A. A. Morozov, “Metafora i allegoriia u Stefana Iavorskogo,” in *Poetika i stilistika russkoi literatury*, ed. M. P. Alekseev (Leningrad: Nauka, 1971), 42.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 42–3.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>124</sup> Samarin, *Stefan Iavorskii i Feofan Prokopovich*, 114.

it becomes fastened together.”<sup>125</sup> This obvious call for Russian unity is then compared to the necessity for all the wheels of a chariot to be in mutual harmony and what is more, they should subject their will to the governance of the cherubims. Indeed, Iavorskii threatened any “obstinate” and “disobedient” wheel with the “torments of hell” if they failed to harmonize their movements.<sup>126</sup> The orator then proceeded to exhort “our most dear Saviour,” alluding to both Christ and Peter the Great, to advance on “this, your chariot of our regiments.”<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, when the “most sinful” and incomplete cart of the Pharaoh, that is Charles XII, comes into view, Iavorskii entreated “our all-powerful God” to change the vessel into Ezekiel’s chariot.<sup>128</sup>

It is notable that Iavorskii’s motif of a triumphal (Russian) chariot was also adopted in a play, entitled *Revnost pravoslaviia* (The Zeal of Orthodoxy), staged by the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy in Moscow in 1704.<sup>129</sup> As mentioned earlier, Iavorskii was the Protector of this institution, and thus it would once again appear that he was orchestrating a concerted campaign to promote his visionary interpretation of the role of the Russian State in its conflict with Sweden.

The New Year sermon concluded with a fascinating prognostication regarding Russian fortunes for the coming year. Iavorskii stated that he “perceives great pleasures” for the Russian nation in 1704 and based his justification for such claims on an analysis of the Russian letter D (Д):

You know that as the fourth year (i.e. 1704 – RC) is represented by the letter Д, we place . . . hope and trust in God, [that] as this year is represented by good (*dobro* in Russian – RC), everything good will be given.<sup>130</sup>

In support of this prediction, Iavorskii referred to the fact that Little Russia (*Malorossia*) was “returned to the pious Sovereign Tsar” in 1654, “when the last letter of the year was Д and the paschal letter [was] Д.”<sup>131</sup> In this instance, it would seem that Iavorskii drew on the ancient dominical letters system, in which the letters A-G are used to designate a particular day of the week. This style of prognostication was to be developed in much more detail for his New Year sermon for 1705, as will be seen below.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Morozov, “Metafora,” 43.

<sup>127</sup> Samarin, *Stefan Iavorskii i Feofan Prokopovich*, 114.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> See Tikhonravov, *Russkiiia dramatičeskiia proizvedeniia*, vol. 1, 32 (Act 3, Scene 13).

<sup>130</sup> Ternovskii, “M. Stefan Iavorskii,” 266.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

*Iavorskii's New Year Panegyric for 1705: "The Triumphant Harvest & the Triumphant Chariot"*

The third New Year sermon delivered by Iavorskii, which utilized the theme of Ezekiel's Chariot, is constructed around the theme of a triumphal harvest being fittingly collected and laid on a chariot.<sup>132</sup> The harvest in question referred to the victories enjoyed by Russian troops in 1704, on the "Livonian Fields of Mars" during the harvest months of July and August. On these fields, the Russian army, with "sickles" had successfully captured the towns of Narva and Dorpat.<sup>133</sup> The extent to which the themes of this sermon were co-ordinated with the overall presentation of the New Year pageant held in Moscow can be gleaned when one surveys the visual transparencies by A. Zubov, which were created for the occasion. The illustration below, for example, (see Fig. 30) depicts a strip of cultivated wheat alongside which rests a sickle. The inscription at the top reads: "As God blessed the cultivation, so it is completed and reaped."<sup>134</sup>

The main part of the panegyric was divided into three parts: (1) the first Field of Mars (2) the second Field of Mars and (3) the third Field of Mars. These sections are preceded by an apt citation from Psalm 126:5–6 at the beginning of the sermon: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." This Biblical reference is adopted in the first section, which reflects on how "four years of tears" and "sorrow" were turned into "sweetness" in 1704 and led to a "triumphal harvest."<sup>135</sup> This harvest, which was cultivated on "blood, sweat and tears," was then reaped by the victorious Russian "heroes" and laid on the triumphant chariot.<sup>136</sup>

The second section reflected on the notion that "a harvest without death never occurs;" a clear reference to the casualties inflicted upon Russia in their quest for victory against Sweden.<sup>137</sup> Iavorskii began by drawing

<sup>132</sup> See Iavorskii, *Propovedi*, 77r–94v.

<sup>133</sup> Iavorskii, "Slova Stefana," 99. The full title of the sermon is: "Triumphal Harvest, with marked sickles the Russian victors, on the Livonian Fields of Mars, at the very harvest time, that is, in the months of July and August in the year 1704, by strong Russian hands the most glorious towns of Narva and Dorpat were captured and collected on the Triumphant Chariot, composed from Ezekiel's prophecy and laid out in Moscow at the beginning of 1705."

<sup>134</sup> V. N. Vasil'ev, *Starinnye feierverki Rossii* (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennyi Ermitazh, 1960), 35.

<sup>135</sup> Iavorskii, "Slova Stefana," vol. 3, 108.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

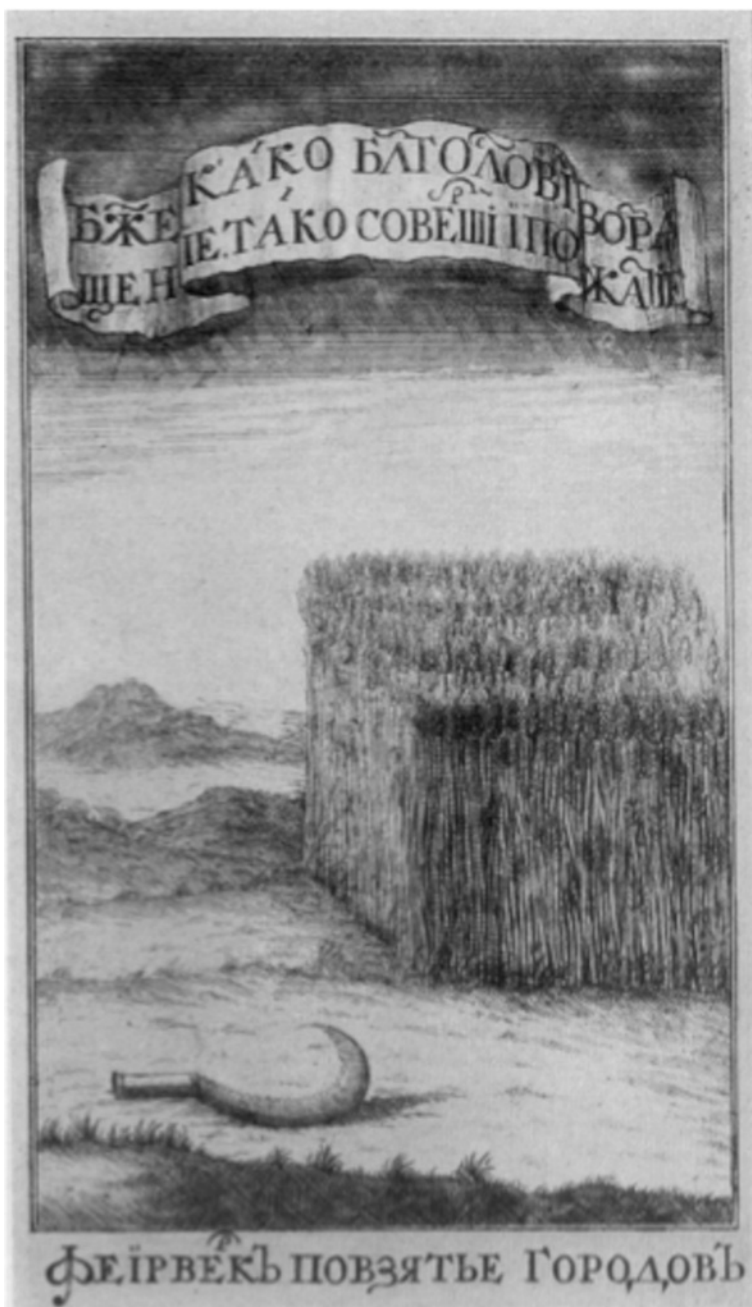


Fig. 30. *Transparent feilverka* – 1 January 1705, Artist: A. Zubov.

on nature to illustrate that “from death a kernel is born” and that “from falling semen rises up.”<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, he highlights how a seed can abundantly re-grow in many fruits from a state of decay, citing a philosophical saying: “the birth of one is the decay of another.”<sup>139</sup> Intriguingly, Iavorskii went on to state that “blood in a human cannot be engendered if it is not extirpated internally.”<sup>140</sup>

The cleric then switched to Biblical analogies and characteristically uses two visions of ascendance. He drew upon and compared the vision of Elijah ascending to heaven in a fiery chariot and the ascension of Christ to heaven in a cloud. Thus, whilst a fire consumes all other things in order to preserve itself, Iavorskii remarked that a cloud evaporates and perishes. In doing so, however, it allows other things to be increased or to remain unharmed. It was for this reason that Christ ascended to heaven in a cloud, in order to sacrifice himself for the sake of humanity.<sup>141</sup>

The theme of the third section focuses on the idea that all things appear more distinct when viewed against an opposed phenomenon. As examples, Iavorskii stated that rest is sweeter after labour and “health would not be so valued if there were no illnesses.”<sup>142</sup> This analogy is then applied to the Russian army, who, according to Iavorskii, took strength and courage from the toils and burdens endured on the field of battle.<sup>143</sup> The concluding part of Iavorskii’s exposition of the triumphant harvest reaped by the Russian army at Narva and Dorpat once again stressed that it has been laid out on the triumphant chariot. The Ukrainian also invoked astrology to illustrate the divine providence aiding the Russian military. Hence, he observed that the town of Narva was taken in August, “when the sun was radiating in the sign of the heavenly virgin.”<sup>144</sup> This was therefore an extremely opportune moment to act, as the virgin (Virgo), according to Iavorskii, can also be understood as the “most pure Mother of God” and “the Protector of the Orthodox kingdom.”<sup>145</sup> Iavorskii also added that astrologers interpret the virgin as subduing the lion (Leo) in the celestial zodiac, and thus was correspondingly able to provide aid in taming the ferocious Swedish lion on the field of battle.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 111–2.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

As with his New Year sermon for 1704, Iavorskii ended this tract by prognosticating on the fate of Russia in the forthcoming year. Whilst his prognostications are similar in nature to those he made in the previous year, Iavorskii provided a much more elaborate analysis of the discernible signs. He began by asking: "Now we are already in 1705, this New Year from the birth of Christ... Thus, what shall we prophesize about it?"<sup>147</sup> Once again, we find that Iavorskii attached key significance to the correlation between names, letters and numbers. Hence, he immediately continued his prognostication by musing on the significance of the letter E and its relationship to the fifth year of the century: "this fifth year is written with the letter E: Glory to God! Good is its amount and good is its sign."<sup>148</sup> In a similar manner to his prognostication for 1704, Iavorskii seems to be utilizing the dominical letters system in order to link favourable words with a specific time period. Consequently, he asked: "who inquires about victory in this year?" In response, he states that the word *est* (ЕСТЬ) appears, which in Russian means "there is" and in Latin means "is." Furthermore, he stated that ЕСТЬ also appears to those who inquire about whether there will be a "healthful climate and an increase in the fruits of the earth."<sup>149</sup> Lastly, Iavorskii also stated that the word ЕСТЬ will appear to those asking about health and prosperity.

This was by no means all Iavorskii had to predict, however, about how events will unfold in 1705, as he himself stated: "But I have still much more to say to you, listeners, about the pleasures in this year."<sup>150</sup> At this point, Iavorskii began to interpret the prophetic significance between the fifth year of the century and the names of Jesus and Maria:

This fifth year begins from the name of Jesus, from the circumcision of the Lord... and his naming of him Jesus. Consider, what letters the most sweet name of Jesus has? The name Jesus has five letters: the most Holy name Maria also has five letters. Then there shall be for us genuine pleasure in this year.<sup>151</sup>

The orator then outlined how the fifth year of the century actually commences from the five-lettered name of Jesus and that the five-lettered

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<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

name of Maria protects. According to Iavorskii, these harbingers were signs filled with “hope and joy.”<sup>152</sup>

The divine power attached to names and their ability to impact upon the fates of mortal men is then stressed by citing how they can influence the outcome of battles. Significantly, Iavorskii notes that King David utilized divine names on the field of battle to overcome his enemies. Thus, he states that it was no accident that David had precisely five stones in his pouch when he challenged Goliath. What is more, Iavorskii revealed that five different names were inscribed onto each stone: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Jesus of Navin. According to Iavorskii, at the moment David wanted to strike down Goliath, he plucked out of his pouch none other than the stone inscribed with the name of Jesus of Navin. This is interpreted by Iavorskii as a prophetic sign of the coming of the Messiah. Finally, the orator proclaimed that “in this fifth year that is commencing we await with anticipation the name of the five-lettered Jesus.”<sup>153</sup> Iavorskii then concluded by referring to the fact that “our supreme Peter” is both raising and has raised “the fallen” and is rectifying what had been overthrown.<sup>154</sup>

*Iavorskii's New Year Panegyric for 1706: The Two-fold Path of the Triumphant Chariot*

Iavorskii's fourth and final sermon on the theme of Ezekiel's Chariot was delivered on New Year's Day 1706.<sup>155</sup> In this panegyric, Iavorskii contemplated the many paths it is possible to take when seeking religious enlightenment. Once again Iavorskii turned to the Psalms at the beginning of the speech to provide a suitable introduction to the subject matter: “Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk.” (Psalm 143:8). More specifically, Iavorskii made it clear in the opening paragraph that he is actually contemplating the way in which the Russian Royal Chariot should advance to its divine place at the side of God's throne: “Now it is already time to contemplate about . . . which path this chariot takes to its future undying glory.”<sup>156</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 120–1.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> See Iavorskii, *Propovedi*, 77r–94r.

<sup>156</sup> Stefan Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana Iavorskago, mitropolita riazanskago i muromskago,” *Trudy kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* 4 (1874): 124.

The ensuing preamble outlined the various paths to Christian enlightenment, which, first and foremost, “begins in the mind of . . . our Christ God who said: ‘I am the way, the truth and the life.’” (John 14:6)<sup>157</sup> Iavorskii then proceeded to list the various paths stemming from this foundational principle. Thus, there is “a narrow and lamentable path,” a “strict path,” a “smooth path” and a “righteous path.” There is also a “dark red path,” as the Israelites advanced through the Red Sea, and a “solar path,” which, according to Iavorskii, proceeds through the twelve signs of the heavenly sphere.<sup>158</sup>

Iavorskii then revealed that the Triumphant Russian Royal Chariot takes all these paths. Hence, from the very onset the Russian Chariot advanced along the path of Christ, as testified by the faith of the Eastern Church. Orthodoxy had also proceeded along the “narrow” and “lamentable” path, according to Iavorskii, by following the example of Christ, who bore the burden of the cross on his shoulders.<sup>159</sup> Furthermore, Iavorskii testified that the “hard or strict” path can be seen in the lives of many in the realm, as is witnessed in the renowned and miraculous holy relics.<sup>160</sup> The Russian royal realm also followed the “smooth path,” the “righteous path” and the “dark red path,” which is “stained with the blood of the enemy.”<sup>161</sup>

Lastly, Iavorskii discussed the solar path of the Russian Royal Chariot, which is tellingly by far the most detailed and lengthy description. He began by stating that “astronomers teach how the sun advances on a path” where the twelve signs, according to the twelve months of the year, can be found.<sup>162</sup> The cleric then provided an intriguing astrological interpretation of the troubles besetting the Russian Royal Chariot on its solar path to glory. His astrological analysis concentrated on four particular signs: “Among these signs is to be found the *lev rykaiushchii* (roaring lion), the *byk ostrorogii* (sharp-horned ox), the *skorpii iadovityi* (poisonous scorpion) and the *strelets smertonosnyi* (death-dealing archer).”<sup>163</sup> According to Iavorskii, the sun is able to pass by “these and other similar monsters”

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. One thinks of the Kiev Caves Monastery holy relics, for example, which were some of the most revered remains in the Russian Empire. Belief in their miraculous preservation was widespread, including among ‘progressive’ figures, such as Feofan Prokopovich. See Chapter Four.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. These refer to the following astrological signs: Leo, Taurus, Scorpio and Sagittarius.



without harm as these obstacles are situated lower in its course.<sup>164</sup> However, Iavorskii questioned whether the advancing Russian Chariot is too small to pass beyond these monsters. Concerning the first three “monsters” he once again cited Psalm (22:12–13) to encapsulate the scenario: “Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me . . . They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.” Iavorskii reserved his greatest torrent of abuse, however, for the “solar archer,” who “creates much evil” in the *skoroprekhodiashchee* (transitional) month of November; inflicting “cruel illnesses, ailments and death, like poisoned arrows . . . on earth-born mortals.”<sup>165</sup> The orator then stated that “we can also speak about our *Strel'tsy*,” who harbour “fierce anger” on the Royal Chariot. Iavorskii’s reference to “our *Strel'tsy*” uses an ingenious wordplay to implant an astrological significance (in Russian the word refers to the zodiacal sign of Sagittarius) onto the rebellious *Strel'tsy* Guards, who had earned the deep enmity of Peter the Great by mutinying in 1682, 1689 and 1698.<sup>166</sup> Significantly, the *Strel'tsy* guards had also mutinied in Astrakhan on June 30, 1705.<sup>167</sup> Iavorskii stated that these “lawbreakers” had created “an evil colic” and exclaimed that they were: “beasts, not humans!”<sup>168</sup> Highly poetic language is then used to lament the betrayal inflicted upon Mother Russia, who is still mourning for her sons, who sprang from her womb and who were “raised on her milk.”<sup>169</sup> The mutinous *Strel'tsy* are then equated to the monstrous offspring of the mythological Echidna and are described as ferociously ripping and consuming their mother’s womb.<sup>170</sup> What is more, these and other “monsters,” such as the asp, basilisk, lion and serpent were said to be rushing upon the Russian Royal Chariot, but with God’s help and protection, it will be safeguarded on its way. The reference to other “monsters” could well be aimed at those taking part

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid. Compare Iavorskii’s zodiacal description with Ovid’s tale of Phaëthon in Book II of *Metamorphoses*, in which Phoebus warns his son of the dangers inherent in borrowing his chariot. ‘Your path is beset with beasts that are lying in ambush . . . your journey will take you straight to the horns of the charging Bull, straight to the centaur Archer and straight to the jaws of the raging Lion; then on to the Scorpion, whose menacing arms are bent in a long wide sweep, and the Crab with his claws of a smaller range’. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 50–1.

<sup>165</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 4, 125.

<sup>166</sup> A *Strelets* was a member of the military corps founded by Ivan the Terrible, who enjoyed special privileges. They were finally disbanded by Peter the Great, on his return to Moscow from his first Grand Embassy in 1698.

<sup>167</sup> I. I. Golikov, *Dopolneniia k deianiam Petra Velikogo*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1837–43), 133.

<sup>168</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” 125.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

in the serious Astrakhan Revolt of 1705–1706. Unrest within the Russian realm was rife at this time, as indicated by the subsequent Bulavin Cossack Revolt of 1707–1708 that swept across the south.

The orator then asked his listeners to contemplate the paths by which “our triumphant chariot advances.”<sup>171</sup> In response, Iavorskii argued that there are two earthly paths leading to immortal glory: (1) the path of heritage and (2) a path of rewards, upon which one can arrive by way of glory, labour, thought and virtue. He then added that he wishes to demonstrate how the “Triumphant Russian Royal Chariot” is “most gloriously advancing” on both these paths.<sup>172</sup>

Iavorskii began by embarking upon a fascinating analysis of the Biblical heritage of Russia’s forefathers. He quickly revealed that the “most glorious name” of Moscow and the genealogy of the Muscovites can be traced back to Chapter Ten of Genesis.<sup>173</sup> Therein, one can read about the generations of the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth. The progeny of Noah’s third-named son, Japheth, were of special concern to Iavorskii, as among them was a son, known in English as Meshech. In Russian, however, this son of Japheth is named Mosokh’ (Мосохъ).<sup>174</sup> According to Iavorskii, this grandson of Noah, along with his tribe, was dispersed from their ancestral lands on account of the confusion of the tongues and eventually settled on Muscovite territory. Hence, the River Moskva and the land of Muscovy were named after Mosokh, the son of Japheth.

The Russian, or more correctly Muscovite, lineage to Japheth is underlined by Iavorskii, who highlighted the honourable way in which in Genesis 9:23 he covered the nakedness of Noah, his father. Iavorskii then quoted Genesis 9:27, in which it states that Noah foresaw that God would reward this act by enlarging Japheth’s lands. Thus, in a mere two steps Iavorskii was able to trace the ancestral heritage of the Muscovites back to Japheth via his third-named son, Meshech and could proclaim: “High indeed generation, handsome ancestry, blessed tribe!”<sup>175</sup> Iavorskii pointed to the Holy Scriptures for confirmation of his thesis, as well as a number of foreign chroniclers, including Boethius, Jan Dlugosh and Cesare Baronius.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> In Greek Meshech is named Moschoi.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 134–5.

One can also trace similar sentiments back to Russian and Ukrainian sources. In 1667, for example, Paisius Ligarides (c.1609–1678), a former Metropolitan of Gaza, wrote a letter to Tsar Aleksei in which he brought attention to the prophecy found in the *Life of Andrew the Holy Fool* that stressed that a fair-haired people would possess Constantinople. Ligarides considered that this prophecy referred to the Russian people and argued his case by directly proclaiming Muscovites to be the descendants of Meshech.<sup>177</sup>

Arguably the most direct influence on Iavorskii's thesis derived from Innokentii Gizel's *Sinopsis* (1674–80).<sup>178</sup> This pioneering work on Russian history was written at a time when Gizel (c. 1600–1683) was the Archimandrite of the Kiev Caves Monastery and consequently a direct mentor to the young Iavorskii.<sup>179</sup> The parallels between Iavorskii's thesis and Gizel's *Sinopsis* are striking in regard to how the latter cleric advanced the notion that the Muscovites can be traced back to Japheth via Meshech.<sup>180</sup> In both works one can note a marked emphasis on Moscow as the legitimate centre of Slavonic power and spirituality, alongside a stress on the city as the rightful heir to the religious and historic cultural traditions stemming from Kievan *Rus*.<sup>181</sup>

It should also be noted that Iavorskii followed in the tradition of Metropolitan Makarii's *Stepennaia kniga* (The Book of Degrees), written between 1560–1563.<sup>182</sup> This seminal tome sought to portray the Russian tsars, from St. Prince Vladimir (956–1015) up until the reign of Ivan IV (1530–1584),

<sup>177</sup> Ligarides had arrived in Moscow in order to attend the Church Council convened in 1666 to debate the reforms introduced by Patriarch Nikon. See Solov'ev, vol. 12, 543.

<sup>178</sup> For a recent edition of Gizel's *Sinopsis*, see Innokentii Gizel, *Mechta o russkom edinstve. Kievskii Sinopsis (1674)*, ed. I. Iu Sapozhnikova and O. Ia. Sapozhnikov (Moscow: Evropa, 2006).

<sup>179</sup> Not only is Gizel's *Sinopsis* present in Iavorskii's library collection, but a number of other books also bear the archimandrite's signature. For Iavorskii's copy of *Sinopsis*, see Maslov, "Biblioteka Stefana Iavorskago," 28, Nos. 151. For the books bearing Innokentii Gizel's signature, see Maslov, "Biblioteka Stefana Iavorskago," 21–2; Nos. 6, 21, 22 and 42. For a biographical study of Gizel, see N. F. Sumtsov, "Innokentii Gizel (k istorii iuzhno-russkoi literatury XVII veka)," *Kievskaiia starina* 10 (1884): 183–226.

<sup>180</sup> Gizel, *Sinopsis*, 87–8.

<sup>181</sup> On the political dimension to Gizel's *Sinopsis*, see S. L. Peshtich, "Sinopsis' kak istoricheskoe proizvedenie," *Trudy otдела drevnerusskoi literatury* 15 (1958): 284–98. Also see I. Iu. Sapozhnikova and O. Ia. Sapozhnikov, "Predislovie," in *Mechta o russkom edinstve. Kievskii sinopsis (1674)*, Innokentii Gizel (Moscow: Evropa, 2006), 41–2.

<sup>182</sup> For more on Metropolitan Makarii (1482–1563) and the *Stepennaia Kniga*, see Miller, "The Velikie Minei Chetil," 263–313. Also see Gail Lenhoff and Ann Kleimola, eds., *The Book of Royal Degrees and the Genesis of Russian Historical Consciousness* (Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica, 2011).

as being divinely appointed and their land as a 'New Israel.' Highlighting how the divinely sanctioned mission of the monarchs was reflected in their names reinforced these claims. Makarii astutely writes, for example that Vladimir's name describes him as being the *vladyi mirom* (ruler of the world). Moreover, this is reinforced by highlighting how his baptized name of Vasilii means 'tsar' in Russian.<sup>183</sup>

Similarly, Iavorskii emphasized the role of St. Prince Vladimir in generating the country's spiritual birth.<sup>184</sup> Hence, Iavorskii proclaimed Vladimir to be "our Russian Abraham" and drew significant comparisons between the two figures. Thus, just as the twelve tribes of Israel descended from Abraham, so too did Prince Vladimir divide the Russian State into twelve parts ruled by twelve Grand Princes: (1) his eldest son, Vyasheslav, Duke of Velikii Novgorod, (2) Iziaslav of Polotsk, (3) Sviatopolk of Turov, (4) Iaroslav of Rostov, who on the death of Viasheslav, became Duke Iaroslav of Novgorod, (5) Boris of Rostov, (6) Gleb of Murom, (7) Sviatoslav of Drevliany, (8) Vsevolod of Vladimir, (9) Mstislav of Tmutarakan, (10) Stanislav of Smolensk, (11) Sudislav of Pskov and (12) Briachislav of Volyn and Lutsk. Iavorskii then concluded his analysis of Russia's divinely ordained heritage: "Thus, this is the path of heritage, and to it and to immortality the Triumphant Russian Royal Chariot most gloriously advances."<sup>185</sup>

Iavorskii then turned to addressing the second way to "undying glory" – the path of rewards. This involved a detailed examination of the secret meanings and significance God attached to names. In this section it is possible to detect similarities to the Cabbalistic doctrine of divine language, which acts as the substance of reality. At this juncture, it is once again helpful to draw on Jacques Basnage's early eighteenth-century description of this aspect of Cabbalistic thought:

"Tis an Error to imagine that the Letters have no other Use than to make words by their combination; for according to the *Cabbalists*, the World was formed by Analogy to the *Hebrew* Alphabet, and the harmony of Creatures resembles that of the Letters, which God made use of to compose the Book of Life. 'Tis a certain combination of Letters that makes the Beauty and Excellence of the Universe; and since the World was made with relation to

<sup>183</sup> D. S. Likhachev, ed., et al., *Biblioteka literaturny Drevnei Rusi*, vol. 12 (St. Petersburg: RAN IRLI, 2003), 380–2, 388. Also see, E. Pogolian, "Kniaz Vladimir v russkoi ofitsial'noi kul'ture nachala pravleniia Elizavety Petrovny," *Trudy po russkoi i slavianskoi filologii. Literaturovedenie*, n.s., 5. (2005): 32, fn. 14.

<sup>184</sup> Vladimir was baptised in 988 and proclaimed Christianity to be the official religion of Rus.

<sup>185</sup> Iavorskii, "Slova Stefana," vol. 4, 137.

the Alphabet, certain things must necessarily be annex'd to a respective Letter, whereof it is the Symbol and Emblem; which is a thing of easy discovery to those that are initiated in the *Cabbala*.<sup>186</sup>

Whilst Cabbalists regard Hebrew as the primary language, exponents such as Abraham Abulafia (1240–c. 1291) also contemplated the possibility, as Gershom Scholem notes, of transforming every language into a transcendental medium of the one and only language of God. Ultimately, Cabbalists, such as Abulafia, regarded every language as stemming from Hebrew. Therefore, each word still retained vestiges of sacred letters and could be analyzed and contemplated in order to reveal its esoteric meaning.<sup>187</sup> Thus, bearing this in mind, it is striking to note the extent to which Iavorskii's sermons also shared this intrinsic element of Cabbalistic thought.

Iavorskii began his examination of names with a proclamation wholly in the spirit of Cabbalistic philosophy: "it is agreed by many that names are the very truth."<sup>188</sup> He then backed this claim up by providing examples from both the Old Testament and the New Testament demonstrating the divine significance imbued in the names of a number of Biblical characters. Appropriately, he begins with Adam, whose name in Hebrew means 'man' and is also based on the Hebrew word for earth, which is 'adamah.' This second meaning is stressed by Iavorskii, who drew on the description in Genesis 2:7, which states that God formed man (Adam) "of the dust of the ground." Judging by this description, it is indeed evident that the name bequeathed to the first man (Adam) by God was invested with symbolic meaning, derived from the source of his creation.

Iavorskii also went on to note that a number of figures have philosophized that the name 'ADAM,' with its four letters, "contains within itself all the four parts of the world."<sup>189</sup> The Ukrainian cleric then outlined the following analysis of the name, whereby each letter is rendered into Greek and is accorded a compass point:

A= ανατολη	(Anatole, or East)
D= δυσις	(Dusis, or West)
A= αρχτος	(Arktos, or North)
M= μεσυμβρια	(Mesembria, or South)

<sup>186</sup> Basnage, *The History of the Jews*, 190.

<sup>187</sup> See G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1969), 134–5.

<sup>188</sup> Iavorskii, "Slova Stefana," vol. 4, 137.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

Thus, Iavorskii noted that “all four parts of the earth within the name ADAM” contain a secret sign, symbolizing the manner in which the first man spread his domain over all parts of the world.<sup>190</sup> The source of this interpretation are the so-called Pseudo-Sibylline Oracles composed between the second to the sixth century, which purportedly prophesized many calamitous events. The relevant passage occurs in Book 3 (30–33), in which the unity and power of God is extolled: “This is the God who formed four-lettered Adam, the first one formed, and filling with his name East, West, South and North.”<sup>191</sup> Whilst the Pseudo-Sibylline Oracles are undoubtedly the source of Iavorskii’s analysis, it is highly likely that he derived his knowledge via St. Augustine, who looked on the scrolls as genuine Scripture. In his *Eharratio in Psalmum*, for example, he wrote: “According to the Greek tongue, Adam himself signifies the whole world. For there are four letters, A, D, A, M, and in Greek speech these are the initial letters of the four quarters of the earth.”<sup>192</sup>

Iavorskii’s study of Adam’s name is subsequently followed by a brief analysis of the appropriate significance of Abraham’s name, whereby the cleric correctly states that in Hebrew it means “father of many.” Similarly, he correctly states that Isaac’s name means “laughter” in Hebrew, and describes how Sarah “laughed within herself” when she became barren (Genesis 18:12).

The names of a number of New Testament figures are also cited to illustrate how they were imbued with divine significance. Thus, the name of Jesus Christ denoted his role as anointed sovereign and saviour. Iavorskii also noted how the name John means “God is gracious”<sup>193</sup> and that Christ re-named the Apostle Simon “Peter,” meaning rock, because he wanted him to build an immovable Church.

Iavorskii concluded his general examination of the names of Biblical characters by stressing the way in which God concealed esoteric meaning when bestowing names: “So the Lord God conceals secrets in names.”<sup>194</sup> This secret action is carried out, observes Iavorskii, because God wishes the divine meaning of the word to be actuated and fulfilled by the person. The cleric then cited Revelation 3:1–2 and the example of the Church of

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Milston S. Terry, ed., *The Sibylline Oracles* (New York: Easton & Mains, 1899), 22.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 22, fn. 2.

<sup>193</sup> John in Hebrew is transliterated as “Yochanan” and means “YAHWEH is gracious.”

<sup>194</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 4, 138.

Sardis to indicate that if, on the contrary, the secret meaning of a name is not fulfilled, the guilty party will invoke God's wrath:

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write . . . I know thy works, that thou has a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things, which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

In other words, the flock of the Church of Sardis were not fulfilling the life-giving qualities inherent in their name, but were instead denigrating the title.

The next part of the sermon examined a number of names closely associated with the Russian people. Iavorskii began by revealing that the name of "the first head of our race," Japheth, means 'broadening' or 'broad' in Hebrew.<sup>195</sup> This name is entirely befitting of a man who supposedly led his people to European lands, and more particularly, according to Iavorskii, to Russian lands. The name of Japheth's son, Meshech, is also said to translate as 'expanding' in Hebrew. Iavorskii demonstrated the aptness of this name, by charting how one hundred and thirty one years after the flood, the "forefather of the Muscovites" left Babylon with his people.<sup>196</sup> They journeyed north, to the banks of Pontus on the Black Sea and onwards until they reached the Don and Volga rivers and the Sea of Azov.<sup>197</sup> This passage repeats almost word-for-word a passage in Gizel's *Sinopsis* entitled *About Meshech, the Forefather of the Slavic-Russians and about his Tribe*.<sup>198</sup>

Thus, the tribe of Meshech were widely spread and therefore were in harmony with the intrinsic nature of their leader's name. Corresponding to this harmony, Iavorskii once again drew almost verbatim from Gizel's *Sinopsis* in order to detail how the origin of the Russian name itself reflects the divine mandate bestowed upon Japheth and his son. Hence, according to Iavorskii, the name for Russians (*Rossiiian* or Россiян) derives from the word *rasseianie* (рассеяние), meaning 'dispersion' or 'diffusion'.<sup>199</sup> A poetic comparison is then made to the celestial magnificence of the Russian people, in which they are likened to the dispersion of stars "radiating

<sup>195</sup> Compare with the almost identical passage in Gizel's work. See Gizel, *Sinopsis*, 72.

<sup>196</sup> Iavorskii, "Slova Stefana," vol. 4, 139.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.* In antiquity The Sea of Azov was known as the Maeotian Lake. Iavorskii refers to it as 'Lake Meotis'.

<sup>198</sup> See Gizel, *Sinopsis*, 87–8. The relevant chapter is entitled "O Mosokhu, praroditeliiu slavenorossiiskom i o plemeni ego."

<sup>199</sup> Compare with Gizel's chapter entitled "O narode Ruskom, ili svoistvenee Rossiiskom, i o narechii, ili nazvis'ku ego," in Gizel, *Sinopsis*, 82.

in the heavens.”<sup>200</sup> Iavorskii also drew significance from the Russian word for dew (*ros*), thereby likening the Russian people to “heavenly dew” and suggesting that it is as if their “beginning, increase and multiplication” originated in the celestial realm.<sup>201</sup>

After ascending to heaven in order to grasp the meaning behind the Russian name, Iavorskii next directed his attention to contemplating the derivation of the Slavonic name. Here, Iavorskii’s task is relatively easy as in keeping with Gizel he associated the word “Slav” with the Russian word for glory (*slava*). Consequently, he exclaims that the Slavs are renowned for their “glorious deeds” – especially their military valour. Furthermore, Iavorskii repeated Gizel’s explanation that the glory of the Slavic people was reflected in the names of many ancient Russian Princes.<sup>202</sup> Thus, he noted that Sviatoslav’s name celebrated “holy glory,” Svetoslav honoured the “shining glory” of his people and that the glory of Mechislav was rewarded as if from a sword (*mech*).<sup>203</sup> Moreover, Iavorskii noted that these glorious deeds were not confined to the past, but were transmitted from generation to generation up until his own time. In other words, the Triumphant Russian Royal Chariot was advancing “from glory to glory” on its path leading to a final realm of undying glory.<sup>204</sup>

At this point we reach the culminating part of Iavorskii’s discussion on the secret meaning inherent in names, in which we are treated to an absorbing analysis of the significance of the name ‘Peter.’ This analysis plays on both the Aramaic (*Cephas*) and Greek (*Petros*) understanding of the name, whereby it means ‘rock’ or ‘stone.’ Iavorskii’s intent is nothing less than to illustrate the long-prophesized role played by ‘Peter’ in the establishment of the Fifth Monarchy and the divine church. The ‘Peter’ in question is, of course, none other than Peter the Great – a point explicitly stressed by Iavorskii as the panegyric develops. Moreover, the means by which the Russian tsar will achieve his destiny is by ascending on his “Triumphant Royal Chariot.”

In the opening passage of this section, Iavorskii invoked Scripture, including verses from Isaiah and Daniel, to confirm the genuineness of what he states. Indeed, he began by citing Isaiah 28:16, in which God

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<sup>200</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 4, 139.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> Compare with Gizel’s chapter, entitled “O imeni i o iazytse Slavenskom,” in Gizel, *Sinopsis*, 74.

<sup>203</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 4, 139.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.



promises to lay a cornerstone when founding Zion: “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.” Whilst Iavorskii cited St. Paul (1 Corinthians 10:4) in affirmation that Christ was this rock, he also suggests that there is nothing to prohibit a person also being so-named. Thus, he referred to the fact that Christ himself re-named Simon ben Jonah, ‘Peter or Stone.’<sup>205</sup> Iavorskii also extolled the words of St. Peter in 1 Peter 2:4–6, who spoke of living stones chosen by God to “build up a spiritual house.” This is interpreted to mean that a favourable outcome is ensured when “living stones” form the cornerstone of united temples, governments and assemblies.<sup>206</sup>

Subsequently, Iavorskii portrayed Peter the Great as the embodiment of this ‘living stone,’ or spiritual church, which was first entrusted to St. Peter. As the “All Augustine Monarch and all Russian Sovereign,” Peter the Great is the new rock upon which the unity of the Orthodox faith remains intact. Indeed, the right hand of God, the “divine Architect,” creates Zion and the Temple when founded upon the “rock” of the “Thrice Crowned Russian Sovereign.”<sup>207</sup> Iavorskii then drew on Christ’s sermon on the Mount, as described in Matthew 7:25, to state how the cornerstone laid by the Russian Monarch was able to withstand blows inflicted by the enemy: “And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.” Thus, whilst Iavorskii portrayed Peter the Great as the rock upon which the divine church was established, he was also the so-called “stumbling stone,” as described in 1 Peter 2:8–9, upon which the enemy is annihilated.<sup>208</sup>

In this sense, Iavorskii drew on the destructive potential of the ‘stone’ foreseen in the noted prophecy of Daniel. Indeed, it is highly significant that the cleric alluded to and then directly quoted Daniel 2:45, which states: “The stone was cut of out the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold.” These substances formed an idol, in which the head was made of gold, the

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<sup>205</sup> Iavorskii is referring to Matthew 16:18, in which Christ states: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”

<sup>206</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 4, 140.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> 1 Peter 2:7–8 reads: ‘Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them, which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed’.

breast and arms from silver, the belly and thighs from brass and the legs and feet from iron and clay.<sup>209</sup> Daniel interprets these four bodily parts as four great kingdoms, which will be destroyed and replaced by a divinely appointed fifth kingdom.

Was Iavorskii suggesting that Peter the Great was the prophesized Fifth Monarch, whose kingdom “shall stand for ever?”<sup>210</sup> If a listener harboured any uncertainty as to Iavorskii’s meaning, this would have rapidly dissipated as the cleric continued by stating that “our Russian stone cuts out from mountains high.”<sup>211</sup> The cleric then described how “in our Russian land,” the “unruly,” “disdainful” and “dishonest” idols, which breathe with the “spirit of demons,” would be struck by a “stone cut out of the mountain.”<sup>212</sup> The same fate also awaited Russia’s external enemies – the “worn Goliath,” “southern demons” and “roaring beasts” – who will all be struck by the “Russian stone given from the heavenly mountain.”<sup>213</sup> The “shameless Goliath” will be struck on the brow by the “right hand of the Divine.”<sup>214</sup> Iavorskii concluded this remarkable passage by exhorting Russians to behold the glory of their “Russian Stone”:

Behold your glory, Slavs! Behold the thrice-crowned Russian Sovereign your stone, and look on with joy, as your enemy is the stumbling stone, but to you only, with God’s help, there is the steadfast cornerstone.<sup>215</sup>

On this note Iavorskii began to draw the sermon to a close by reiterating to his listeners the two-fold path of the Triumphant Russian Royal Chariot as it advances to immortal glory. This “triumphal wagon” and “cherubic chariot” can advance gloriously “without stumbling.”

The final paragraph was reserved for a short prognostication, in which Iavorskii predicted that the forthcoming year will be as prosperous and joyful as the preceding year. Once again he drew meaning from the specific number of the year. On this occasion, the sixth year in Russia is equated to the six carriers who bore the water to Jesus that he turned into wine.<sup>216</sup> Thus, Iavorskii beseeched the Holy Spirit to give the Russian

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<sup>209</sup> See Daniel 2:32.

<sup>210</sup> Daniel 2:44.

<sup>211</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 4, 143.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 152–3.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 153. The tale of the water-carriers is told in John 2:6–8.

water-carriers the power to convert the harmful and troublesome water into wine, which would gladden their hearts.<sup>217</sup>

Whilst this was to be the last of Iavorskii's panegyrics devoted to the theme of Ezekiel's Triumphant Chariot, there is evidence to suggest that he actually planned to present a fifth such sermon. The outline of this unfinished tract appears to be related to the fourth sermon, as it describes the various paths it can take to immortal glory. Yet, it also contains distinct elements that shed further light on his conception of how Russia and its tsar would ascend to the divine realm. Nine paths are listed in all: (1) *Solaris, qua sol gradatur per duodecim signa Zodiaci* (The Solar Path); (2) *Via alia, per quam magi reversi sunt ad domun suam* (The Path of Sorcerers); (3) *via Israëlitica ex Egypto duce duplici columna* (The Path of the Israelites); (4) *via lacteal* (The Milky Way); (5) *via regna non declinando nec ad dexterum* (The Royal Path); (6) the direct path; (7) the two-fold path; (8) the severe or hard path and (9) The Way of Christ. In addition, it seems that a drawing of Ezekiel's Chariot was attached to this material. The second path to immortal glory is a particularly noteworthy addition, which clearly designates a magical route to the divine realm.<sup>218</sup>

*St. Petersburg: The Russian Tabernacle and Peter the Great as a New Noah and New Elijah*

The glorious cornerstone being laid by Peter the Great, the 'Russian Stone,' was most evident in the construction of St. Petersburg. Iavorskii perceived the foundation of the city in 1703 as confirmation of his claim that the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven had been given to Peter, the Russian tsar.<sup>219</sup> In his New Year sermon delivered in 1703, he had referred to the capture of the Swedish fortress town of Nöteborg, renamed by Peter the Great as Schlüsselburg, or *kliuch gorod* (key town) as a divine sign that Christ had bestowed the keys of heaven to his new 'rock' – Peter the Great. Subsequently, the construction of a new city on this land was viewed by Iavorskii as a holy venture blessed from above.

This sentiment was blatantly expressed in 1708, when Iavorskii officially laid the first stone on the bulwark of the Trubetskoi Bastion of the Peter

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>218</sup> Chistovich, "Neizdannyya propovedi," 419.

<sup>219</sup> In Matthew 16:18–19, Jesus is stated as giving the keys to the kingdom of heaven to Peter: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."

and Paul Fortress.<sup>220</sup> To mark the occasion the cleric delivered a sermon entitled “Three Tabernacles, created by St. Peter,” which was based on St. Peter’s words to Jesus in Matthew 17:4: “Lord it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”<sup>221</sup> Accordingly, Iavorskii divided his sermon into three sections, in which Peter the Great is portrayed as the architect of three separate, but interrelated, tabernacles of the Russian State, which fostered the holy church, the Russian fleet and the army.<sup>222</sup>

Fittingly, Iavorskii then proceeded to outline how the city of St. Petersburg is the first tabernacle: a sacred space wherein the holy church can flourish. In this regard, Iavorskii drew on the description of New Jerusalem described in Revelation 21:2–3, in which the holy city descends from heaven and the tabernacle of God is established on earth. Iavorskii also drew on the idea of New Jerusalem being a restored Garden of Eden. This prophetic vision of St. Petersburg as the embodiment of the long-awaited New Jerusalem is supported by reference to certain geographical and topographical features, which are described as matching certain Biblical criteria. Thus, Iavorskii referred to the notion that Jesus abhorred high mountains, whereas Satan loved them and established his throne up high.<sup>223</sup> The cleric also referred to the third temptation of Christ, as described in Matthew 4:8–9, in which Satan took him to a high mountain and showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. Hence, for this reason Peter decided not to establish his Tabernacle to the Lord on a mountain, but in the valley plains. Secondly, Iavorskii stressed that the favourite abode of “our Saviour and all the Holy Trinity” was by water.<sup>224</sup> Both these topographical features accorded with the location of St. Petersburg, which was both on the coast of the Gulf of Finland and on the banks of the River Neva and situated on low-lying land.

Moreover, Iavorskii proclaimed the tabernacle of St. Petersburg to be nothing less than the restored Garden of Eden, in which Peter the Great is

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<sup>220</sup> Ternovskii, “M. Stefan Iavorskii,” 267. Peter the Great wrote to Aleksandr Menshikov on May 4, 1708: “Yesterday evening the Trubetskoi bulwark began to be filled, and the first stone, after a handsome sermon was laid by Iavorskii.” Iavorskii had also been the dignitary with the honour of placing the first stone on the old earthen fortress on May 3, 1706.

<sup>221</sup> Iavorskii, *Propovedi*, 95r–n8v.

<sup>222</sup> As Ernest Zitser has noted, the theme of Christ’s transfiguration, as described in Matthew 16: 18–19 was frequently utilized at Peter’s court from the 1690s. See Zitser, *Transfigured Kingdom*, 1–17.

<sup>223</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 4 (1874), 509.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 510.

proclaimed as a “New Adam”: “O Russian! O Russian Son! O New Adam!”<sup>225</sup> Iavorskii initially described St. Petersburg as a place in which softness and sweetness reign, where once there was only hardness and woe.<sup>226</sup> He then proceeded to proclaim that “your four seas, Russia, our mother, are precisely the four . . . seas of paradise, about which the Holy Scriptures narrate.”<sup>227</sup> Iavorskii listed the four Russian seas as: (1) the Baltic Sea at St. Petersburg; (2) the Black Sea at Azov; (3) the Okian (White) Sea at Arkhangel’sk and (4) the Caspian Sea at Astrakhan.<sup>228</sup> These are directly linked to the description found in Genesis 2:8–14 of the river flowing out of the Garden of Eden, which divides into four heads:

And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed . . . And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

After quoting the above passage from Genesis, Iavorskii proclaimed: “O splendid paradise, with four seas, like the four rivers of paradise!”<sup>229</sup> The eulogy to St. Petersburg then concluded by praising the newly created city for proclaiming the name of Jesus in a place in which his name was previously unknown and establishing a tabernacle in his honour on ground that had been desolate.<sup>230</sup>

In the first part of this sermon, Iavorskii highlighted the close vicinity of St. Petersburg to the Baltic Sea as a divinely propitious location in keeping with Scriptural precedents. In the second part of the sermon, Iavorskii developed this idea to stress the notion that God gave Peter a key to open a gate to view the world.<sup>231</sup> In other words, God had provided Peter with an opportunity to establish a gateway, or port, leading to the entire world. From this location the tsar could build a naval fleet worthy of Russia’s divine destiny. In fulfilling this role Peter the Great is lauded as a “New Noah” and a “Russian Noah” and “Russia’s first admiral and most glorious master!”<sup>232</sup> Furthermore, Iavorskii proclaimed that the building of a Russian fleet – the second tabernacle of Peter – honours Moses. The

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<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 517. On the invocation of Peter the Great as a “New Adam” in the 1690s, see Zitser, *Transfigured Kingdom*, 85–6.

<sup>226</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 4 (1874), 516–7.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 517.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 518.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>231</sup> Stefan Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana Iavorskago, mitropolita riazanskago i muromskago,” *Trudy kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* vol. 1 (1875): 122.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 122–3.

cleric links Moses to the Russian fleet by stressing the way in which the prophet's mother had saved him from the wrath of the pharaoh by building "an ark of bulrushes" (Exodus 2:3), or *korablik*. Iavorskii also referred to the Hebrew derivation of the prophet's name, which is said to mean "drawn out of water" and to his mastery over the sea as shown when he parted the Red Sea.<sup>233</sup>

The third tabernacle to be built by Peter is devoted to Elijah and his military valour. Iavorskii asked his listeners what kind of person Elijah was and responded that he was "all Martial, all warlike, all fiery" and was merciless with those who opposed the law of God.<sup>234</sup> Thus, Iavorskii stressed that his warlike deeds were righteous in the eyes of the Lord. Moreover, Iavorskii observed that "all battles and wars originate from God," whereas rebellions stem from the intrigues of Satan.<sup>235</sup> Iavorskii's intent was clear: to justify the military campaigns of the Russian tsar by drawing on Biblical precedents in which warrior kings had fought righteous wars.

He began by citing Revelation 19:11, in which St. John describes his vision of a righteous warrior rider: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war." Iavorskii then laid out his case by citing various Biblical personages, commencing with Abraham, who in Genesis 14 is described as leading 318 servants into a victorious battle against Chedorlaomer's army.<sup>236</sup> He also cited the just wars of Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Jephthah, Samuel, and finally David. Thus, in citing these precedents Iavorskii is clearly stating the Russian tsar's holy right to take up arms against his aggressors and in defence of the glorious tabernacles he has built in the name of God.

#### *Poltava and Daniel's Prophetic Vision*

In June 1709 the Russian army vanquished the Swedes, led by Charles XII, at the Battle of Poltava in the Ukraine. This was a momentous victory for Peter the Great's Russia and inspired Iavorskii to write a panegyric completely dedicated to revealing the messianic role of the Russian tsar, as prophesized by Daniel. Iavorskii seized the potential offered by the

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 631.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 632. Iavorskii is drawing on the description of Elijah's struggle against the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:20–46.

<sup>235</sup> Iavorskii, "Slova Stefana," vol. (1875), 632.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 635.

Russian victory to portray the event as the actual realization of his interpretation of Daniel's prophecy, first expressed in 1706. This fact is boldly proclaimed in the opening title, in which Daniel's prophecy is inextricably linked to recent events on the battlefield: "The Stone Smashing Nebuchadnezzar's Idol, that is, Peter the First, Emperor of All-Russia, most gloriously defeating the Swedish King with his army at Poltava, in the year of our Lord 1709, June 27th."<sup>237</sup> Immediately below the title one also finds the following quote from Daniel 2:34: "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay and brake them to pieces."

This opening salvo is then reinforced by arguments outlining the manner in which the Swedish forces embody the four parts of the idol – gold, silver, brass and iron/clay – that appeared before Nebuchadnezzar, as described in Daniel 2:32. Thus, the golden head represented the Swedish King and the silver breast and arms are Swedish ministers, without whom, Iavorskii stated, it is as if the king was without arms. The brass belly signifies cavaliers, generals, field marshals and various other officers, who, according to Iavorskii, fulfil an extirpating role similar to the function of the stomach. Lastly, the legs and feet of iron and clay represent the infantry.<sup>238</sup> The fate of the Swedish army during the on-going Great Northern War is also said to have followed Daniel's prophecy, in which Iavorskii described the fortune of the earth descending from a golden dawn to a fragile clay ending. Hence, at the onset of the war, the Swedes had a golden head, or in other words a favourable beginning – as indeed was manifested in their initial victory at Narva in 1700. Yet, looking at the end, Iavorskii stated that the Swedish army is akin to fragile clay and is characterized by dishonest crimes and eternal shame.<sup>239</sup>

The four elements are also characterized according to distinct qualities of the Swedish nation. Thus, gold is likened to Swedish military skills, whereby the latter's art of leading themselves into misfortune is compared with the former being tempted by a furnace.<sup>240</sup> The silver arms and breast are likened to those who will go to any lengths to acquire the metal. Hence, the Swedes are labelled as extortionists, robbers, thieves,

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<sup>237</sup> Stefan Iavorskii, "Slova Stefana Iavorskago, mitropolita riazanskago i muromskago," *Trudy kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* vol. 2 (1875): 463. For a manuscript edition, see Iavorskii, 140r–161v.

<sup>238</sup> Iavorskii, "Slova Stefana Iavorskago," vol. 2 (1875), 465.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, 467.

oppressors and defilers of many provinces. They had pillaged the treasure chests of many realms, according to Iavorskii, such as Poland, Livonia, Saxony, Silesia, Courland and parts of Prussia.<sup>241</sup> The brass belly and thighs represented the way in which the Swedes proclaim their glory and courage, as if they had no equal. Lastly, iron is equated to bloodshed, a trait Iavorskii traced back to the ancient Goths and Vandals and which is evident in more recent Swedish kings, such as Gustav Vasa (c. 1496–1560) and Gustav Adolphus (1594–1632).<sup>242</sup>

Iavorskii also remarked that according to his interpretation Swedish land is actually the “damned daughter of Babylon,” referred to in Psalm 137:8: “O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed.” What is more, Iavorskii added that the children of Babylon were none other than the sons of Sweden. At this point, Iavorskii combined the ending of Psalm 137, which states that “thy little ones” shall be “dashed against the stones,” and Daniel’s prophetic vision of a stone descending from heaven and smashing to pieces the feet of the idol.

After devoting considerable energy to denigrating the Swedes, Iavorskii switched to extolling the divine providence bestowed upon the Russian people in the form of the prophesized stone – that is Peter the Great – descending from heaven. Such divine benevolence, Iavorskii stated, had also been conferred upon Old Testament Kings and warriors, such as David and Samson. Indeed, Iavorskii sought to highlight the divine nature of the Russian victory at Poltava by directly linking the circumstances of the battle with these Biblical personages. Thus, the height of David’s arch enemy, Goliath, is stated as being six cubits and a span in I Samuel 17:4 and this was compared to the number of adversaries faced by Russia. The six are listed as the Swedes, Poles, Livonians, Saxons, Wallachians and the “treacherous” Cossacks, with military recruits from the Silesian realm representing the extra span.<sup>243</sup> Iavorskii also read divine significance into the fact that the Battle of Poltava took place on June 27, the name day of Sampson the Welcomer of Wanderers (*Strannopriimets*). Iavorskii used all of his Baroque expertise to draw Biblical connections to the similar sounding tale of Samson as found in Judges 14:5–9. As he wrote, “the Lord God wanted on this very day to appear, and send to you help from above to rip apart the roaring lion.”<sup>244</sup> Consequently, on this fortuitous day, Iavorskii

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 467–8.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 470–2.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 476.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.



noted, the idol of Nebuchadnezzar lay under the “horns of the humble Peter,” struck down at the feet by the Russian stone.

As mentioned above, according to Iavorskii’s interpretation the iron and clay feet of Nebuchadnezzar’s idol represented the Swedish infantry. This comparison fitted perfectly into Iavorskii’s prophetic scheme as it was indeed the Swedish infantry that had attacked the Russian lines at Poltava: “They fell upon the hard stone with a sharp *sechivo* (pole-axe), that was not only blunted but also smashed.”<sup>245</sup> This victorious resolution was viewed by Iavorskii as the manifestation of Russia’s destiny. In his eyes, it fulfilled the prophecy made by Daniel, whereby the country would become a great mountain and would fill the earth.<sup>246</sup> Thus, with God’s will, the Russian stone and a Russian Jerusalem had descended from the mountainous Zion and their glory would soon spread to all parts of the globe.<sup>247</sup> The victory at Poltava conformed to Iavorskii’s scheme, whereby Russia was advancing on a two-fold path to immortal glory, built on an unshakeable cornerstone and rewarded by glorious deeds.

#### *The Russian Moses and the War Against the Ottoman Turks*

In February 1711 Iavorskii delivered a sermon in the Uspenskii Cathedral in Moscow entitled “The Russian Moses, chosen by God to liberate the Christian people from the toils of the Egyptian-Turks.”<sup>248</sup> The speech was made during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1710–1711, but prior to the ignominious defeat inflicted on Peter the Great by the Ottoman army at the River Pruth under Grand Vizier Baltacı Mehmet Pasha (1662–1712).<sup>249</sup>

As the title suggests, the dominant theme of the sermon was that of Peter the Great as a Russian Moses delivering Christians – namely the Orthodox Moldovans and Balkans – from the fetters of Ottoman rule. Iavorskii opened the sermon with a passage from Exodus 3:9–10, which he then returned to throughout his speech:

Behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 479.

<sup>246</sup> See the Book of Daniel.

<sup>247</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 2, 491.

<sup>248</sup> The Russian title of the sermon is “Moises Rossiiskii, k osvobozhdeniiu liudei khristianskikh ot raboty egipetskiia-turetskiia Bogom izbrannyi.” See Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 4 (1875), 124–45. Also see Iavorskii, *Propovedi, 162r–175v*.

<sup>249</sup> For more on the Pruth Campaign, see Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*, 45–50.

therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.<sup>250</sup>

Thus, once again Peter was portrayed as a monarch with a providential role and compared to Old Testament figures. In this instance Iavorskii elaborated upon the miraculous signs shown to Moses by God, including the burning bush and the rod that turned into a serpent, in order to convince him of his role as liberator of the Jews.<sup>251</sup> Significantly, Iavorskii also referred to the holy cross that appeared to Constantine and promised him victory.<sup>252</sup> Iavorskii had previously used this legend to promote Peter the Great as a providential warrior monarch, and here again he drew on the same meaning.

Consequently, Iavorskii once again developed an apocalyptic theme in his sermon, with Peter as a Christian monarch crusading against the Muslim Ottomans. In this regard, the cleric cited Revelation 17:3–6:

I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.<sup>253</sup>

Immediately following this citation Iavorskii drew on Andrew of Caesarea's interpretation of this passage as a reference to the Turkish monarch. As Eugenia Constantinou has noted, this commentary came to prominence amongst Eastern Orthodox Church after the fall of Constantinople in 1453.<sup>254</sup>

Warming to this line of thought, Iavorskii also announced that the sultan was none other than satan – playing in a cabbalistic sense on the similarity of names. The cleric then returned to the “signs, secrets and prognostications” conveyed by God to Moses in the Old Testament and pronounced a similar divine beneficence had been granted to Peter the Great. The sermon concluded with a lengthy citation from Psalm 79:6–8,

<sup>250</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 4 (1875), 124, 127.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 127–39.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>254</sup> Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou, “Andrew of Caesarea and the Apocalypse in the Ancient Church of the East: Studies and Translation,” PhD diss. University of Laval, 2008, 109.

which effectively revealed Russia's sorry plight against the Ottoman Empire:

Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place. O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.

Here Iavorskii did not disguise the troubles faced during the Pruth Campaign, but by evoking Peter as a Russian Moses and in drawing on apocalyptic themes the cleric sought to maintain morale. Indeed, Iavorskii's sermon formed part of a concerted campaign to promote the war against the Ottoman Empire as a crusade to liberate the Orthodox people of the Balkans (particularly those in Moldavia and Wallachia).<sup>255</sup>

#### *Astrology and the Tsar's Horoscope*

The present chapter has already demonstrated an abundance of astrological influence present in Iavorskii's panegyrics. Furthermore, it is evident that considerable store was attached to his New Year astrological prognostications at the Russian court. This is testified by the tsar himself, who wrote the following note to Count Fedor Matveevich Apraksin (1661–1728) after listening to the cleric's favourable New Year prognostication for 1707: "I congratulate you on the New Year . . . God permit that in this year the prophecy of Iavorskii will be realized."<sup>256</sup>

Arguably the most remarkable and fascinating use of astrology made by Iavorskii took place on May 30, 1709, in a sermon entitled *Gaudium solemne die Nativitatis serenissimi nostri caesaris P.A* (Annual joy on the birthday of our most serene Caesar, P.A.). The first part of the panegyric was dedicated to extolling the myriad qualities of the Russian tsar. As Iavorskii described:

Give him any kind of philosophical material . . . it is as if he is the true pupil of the very philosophical director (*nachalnik*) Plato . . . Give him any kind of theological material . . . it is as if he is the true pupil of Gregory the

<sup>255</sup> Peter the Great issued direct appeals to the Orthodox peoples of the Balkans on March 3 and 23, 1711. See *Pis'ma i bumagi*, vol. 2, 151–2. Also see B. H. Sumner, *Peter the Great and the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1949), 45–7; Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter*, 47.

<sup>256</sup> Golikov, *Dopolneniia*, vol. 14, 474; Ternovskii, "M. Stefan Iavorskii," 267.

Theologian. He knows by heart mathematics, arithmetic, geometry [and] cosmography.<sup>257</sup>

Why had Peter the Great been blessed with such Solomonic wisdom? For Iavorskii, one must look to the astrological portents contained in the monarch's nativity horoscope.

In antiquity it was usual for tsars, boyars and grandees, and nowadays it is also usual among many, to invite astrologers to interpret the time, day, hour, month, planet and heavenly sign when a child is born. From the celestial signs of the type of horoscope and the type of ascendance, they could foretell and prophesise about the birth of adolescents, about what they shall be, about what kind of disposition they shall have and about their kind of behaviour. To be born under the influence of the Sun is stated to be jolly and bright; under the lunar planet is stated to be damp; under the planet Mars, it is stated to be warlike; under the planet of Mercury, it is stated to be wise; under the planet Jupiter – rich; under the planet Venus – flesh loving; under the planet Saturn – melancholic and confused.<sup>258</sup>

Turning to the tsar's own horoscope, Iavorskii drew favourable omens from the fact that the monarch was born on St. Isaac's Day, which fell on May 30. Significantly, Iavorskii was not the first person to draw favourable astrological signs from Peter the Great's nativity. Indeed, it seems probable that Iavorskii drew on the astrological observations made by Simeon Polotskii at the birth of Peter the Great in 1672. Many parallels can be drawn between the careers of Polotskii and Iavorskii: both were products of the Mohyla College in Kiev and converted to Uniate Catholicism in order to study at Jesuit Colleges. This education imbued both figures with a poeticism considerably influenced by Polish Jesuit literature. Polotskii and Iavorskii also shared the same fate of travelling to Moscow in order to assume positions of key importance at the Russian court.

On the birth of Peter the Great in 1672, Polotskii and his fellow cleric Epifanii the Greek interpreted that the combination of the planetary influence of Aries and Sagittarius (Mars and Jupiter) signalled that the newly born tsarevich would be an able ruler. They also interpreted his success in state and military matters in line with the evangelical meaning of the name 'Peter' as 'Fortress' (*krepost*).<sup>259</sup> An early biographer of Peter

<sup>257</sup> I. A. Chistovich, "Neizdannyya propovedi Stefana Iavorskago," *Khristianskoe chtenie* 2 (1867): 114–5.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>259</sup> A. P. Bogdanov and R. A. Simonov, "Prognosticheskie pis'ma doktora Andreasa Engel'hardta Tsariu Alekseiu Mikhailovichu," in *Estestvenno-nauchnye predstavleniia Drevnei Rusi*, ed. R. A. Simonov (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), 153.

the Great also stated that Polotskii envisaged a glorious future for the tsar based on astrological predictions calculated from the supposed day of his conception: August 11, 1671.<sup>260</sup> One cannot help but note the affinities between Polotskii's use of both astrology and the divine significance of names and Iavorskii's own panegyric style.

Iavorskii's combined use of astrological and mystical Christian symbolism continued unabated until late into his life. This is testified by a sermon delivered in August 1720 to mark the day commemorating the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. On this occasion he once again read secret significance into the way in which the zodiacal sign of the Virgin (Virgo) was located between the Lion (Leo) and the Scales (Libra). Iavorskii recalled how the victories enjoyed by the Russian fleet off the coast of Hangö in 1714 and the victory on Swedish land itself in 1719 both occurred in July, "when the Lion appeared in its zodiac sign."<sup>261</sup> Thus, the Virgin, according to Iavorskii, was able to victoriously tame the ferocious Swedish lion by barring its open mouth.<sup>262</sup>

### *The Divine (Al)chemist*

Whilst astrological symbols were undoubtedly the favoured esoteric medium employed by Iavorskii in his espousal of Christian mysticism, it is also notable that he made considerable use of the motif of God as a divine chemist. Thus, in a sermon delivered on the Day of Peter and Paul, Iavorskii addressed God, proclaiming him as a "divine chemist" who can miraculously perform alchemical deeds.<sup>263</sup> Iavorskii remarked that these divine alchemical transmutations enabled God to transform poisons into remedies.<sup>264</sup> Significantly, Iavorskii also added that God, the divine chemist, was able to transform bile into manna and is able to tranquilize the ferocity of the lion. Once again, Iavorskii drew contemporary political significance into God's divine work. Iavorskii draws on Peter's vision of

<sup>260</sup> P. N. Krekshin, "Kratkoe opisanie blazhenykh del velikago gosudaria, imperatora Petra Velikago, samoderzhitsa vserossiiskago," in *Zapiski russkikh liudei. Sobytiia vremeni Petra Velikago*, ed. N. Sakharov (St. Petersburg, 1841), 8–9.

<sup>261</sup> Chistovich, "Neizdannyya propovedi," vol. 2, 422. The victory off Hangö took place on July 27, 1714. In July 1719, Peter the Great led raids on Swedish towns and villages from Gävle to Norrköping. These places were plundered and burned and the tsar let his emblem and date be chiselled into a granite rock at Ledsund to commemorate the victorious outcome. See Matts Dreijer, *Ålands bebyggelse i Ord och Bild*, [http://sfhs.eget.net/p\\_articles/X\\_artiklar/Dreijer.html](http://sfhs.eget.net/p_articles/X_artiklar/Dreijer.html). (Feb. 23, 2011).

<sup>262</sup> Chistovich, "Neizdannyya propovedi," vol. 2, 422.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 428.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*

a descending sheet, containing “all manner of four-legged beasts” (Acts 10:12), to assert that the “roaring lion” (Charles XII) and the “disgusting boar” (the Ottoman Sultan) should be cast off and transformed into something palatable.<sup>265</sup>

In 1711 Iavorskii performed a similar sermon, entitled *Theriaca ex venenis confecta*.<sup>266</sup> As the title suggests, Iavorskii drew on the ancient theriaca remedy, which worked as an antidote against poisons. The remedy was produced from a compound of sixty-four drugs, which were prepared, pulverized and then reduced to an electuary by honey. As Iavorskii remarked, “there is in apothecary medicine” a highly beneficial and effective remedy, known as *Friak* in Russian.<sup>267</sup> Apothecaries make this medicine from “snakes, grass snakes and other poisonous animals.” In this manner the all-mighty himself is extolled as an “Alchemist God” who has the ability to transform a lethally poisonous substance into something beneficial. To reinforce this point, Iavorskii once again cited Acts 10, in which God has the power to cleanse food in order for Peter to eat. Finally, Iavorskii also accorded Peter the Great the God-like ability to transform bitterness into the sweet taste of success.<sup>268</sup> As this sermon was delivered in 1711 it is possible that Iavorskii referred to the “bitter” defeat suffered by the Russian army at the hands of the Turks at Pruth.

The use of divine alchemical imagery provides yet another example of how esoteric practices and symbolism were embraced by foreign servitors and utilized on behalf of the Russian tsar and state on a variety of levels. In the case of Iavorskii, one can discern a number of possible sources for his knowledge of (al)chemical practices. His personal library, for example, contained a number of tomes concerned with chemical recipes, remedies and even natural magic. Thus, one finds three works by the noted early seventeenth-century iatrochemist, Daniel Sennert, who was also so admired by Prokopovich: (1) *De Scorbuto Tractatus* (1624); (2) *Epitome Institutionum Medicinae* (1634) and (3) *Epitome Scientiae Naturalis* (1618). This extensive collection of Sennertian tracts permitted Iavorskii to glean a vast amount of information on various aspects of natural science,

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Chistovich, “Neizdannyya propovedi,” vol. 1, 119. In 1718 Iavorskii delivered a similar sermon entitled *In celebra regia urbe Peterburgenst Theriaca Maximus ex advers tatibus fructus, utilitas et animae medicina*. See Chistovich, 1867, 120–22.

<sup>267</sup> Chistovich, “Neizdannyya propovedi,” vol. 1, 119.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 120.

chemistry, alchemy and medicine.<sup>269</sup> Iavorskii's library also contains an unaccredited work entitled *Magia Naturalis*.<sup>270</sup> This work is probably the eponymous title by Giambattista della Porta on natural magic and the occult. Lastly, one also finds an anonymous Polish work entitled *Apteczka Domowa* (The Home Apothecary).<sup>271</sup>

Whilst the quantity of Iavorskii's (al)chemical and magical tracts pale in comparison with the size of Bruce, Erskine and indeed Prokopovich's collections, he used his chemical knowledge in a highly effective symbolic manner. This was wholly in keeping with a man who shunned what he regarded as the mundane practicalities of experimentation, in favour of a purely mystical and symbolic interpretation.

### *Conclusion*

By the time of Iavorskii's death in 1722 Feofan Prokopovich had successfully challenged his pre-eminent role as the de facto head of the Russian Orthodox Church. Iavorskii's hostility towards the Protestant spirit of Prokopovich's ecclesiastical reforms is crystallized in his *Kamen' very* (Rock of Faith), published posthumously in 1729. In this polemical tract, Iavorskii upheld the tenants of the Russian Orthodox faith against what he viewed as the heretical encroachments of Protestantism. At the same time, it is also customary to chart the gradual estrangement between Iavorskii and the tsar, beginning from 1712, when the former delivered a speech praising the Tsarevich Aleksei, Peter the Great's first-born son and presumptive heir.<sup>272</sup>

Whilst it is undoubtedly true that Iavorskii's star did wane in the second decade of the eighteenth century, it would be misguided to underestimate the importance of his role in Petrine Russia. Iavorskii staunchly championed the Petrine reform programme for over a decade, in one of the most pivotal periods in Russian history. Iavorskii's rise to the summit of the Russian church had been orchestrated by Peter the Great, on the basis of the cleric's oratorical and literary talents. This talent was thoroughly saturated with mystical, apocalyptic and esoteric motifs, which

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<sup>269</sup> See Maslov, "Biblioteka Stefana Iavorskago," 29, 31 and 48; Nos. 181, 219 and 477 respectively.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 50; No. 520.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 30; No. 201.

<sup>272</sup> Ternovskii, "M. Stefan Iavorskii," 139.

were skilfully combined to portray the glorious and divinely ordained rise of the tsar and the Russian State.

These themes did not disappear from Iavorskii's work, even in the period between 1712 and 1722. Hence, the very title of his principal work – *The Rock of Faith* – was drawn from the same passage in Matthew 17 to which Iavorskii had turned when addressing the qualities of tsar Peter: the rock. In this work, the Ukrainian cleric also berates Lutherans for denying past, present and future signs, which he argues are repeatedly referred to in the Holy Scriptures.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Ioann Morev, "Kamen' very" Mitropolita Stefana Iavorskago ego mesto sredi otechestvennykh protivoprotstantskikh sochinenii i kharakteristicheskiiia osobennosti ego dogmaticheskikh vozzrenii izsledovanie (St. Petersburg, 1904), 58.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### MYSTICAL ORTHODOXY, PROGRESSIVE PIETISM AND ESOTERIC SCIENCE: THE ECLECTIC WORLDVIEW OF FEOFAN PROKOPOVICH (1681–1736)

#### *Introduction*

Archbishop Feofan Prokopovich (1681–1736) was undoubtedly the most influential ecclesiastical figure in Petrine Russia and is rightly regarded as the chief ideologist of Peter the Great's reforms of the Russian State.<sup>1</sup> Prokopovich only arrived in the Russian citadel of reform – St. Petersburg – in October 1716 after being summoned by the tsar from his post as Professor and Rector of the renowned Kiev Academy late in 1715. Thenceforth the Ukrainian cleric quickly established himself as Peter's principal church ally: a process no doubt accelerated by a series of powerful panegyrics extolling the virtues of the tsar's ideology of absolute rule. In 1718, Prokopovich was appointed Archbishop of Pskov and was commissioned by the tsar to formulate the *Dukhovnyi reglament* (Ecclesiastical Regulation), which was published and enacted in 1721. This seminal document provided the blueprint for the radical transformation of the Russian Church along the lines of the pre-existing administrative college system and outlined the manner in which a Holy Synod would replace the Patriarchy.

In addition to theology and oratory, Prokopovich's abundant intellectual abilities were utilized by the tsar in many other branches of learning. He was the author, for example, of a historical account of the reign of Peter the Great up until the Battle of Poltava (*Istoriia Imperatora Petra Velikago*, 1773) and in 1717 assembled a table of Russian rulers from the reign of Vladimir I. There is considerable evidence that he penned *Pravda voli Monarshei* (The Justice of the Monarch's Right) in 1722, which drew extensively on the theories of Samuel Pufendorf and Hugo Grotius in order to justify Peter the Great's right to absolute rule and he also made a

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<sup>1</sup> See for example, Riasanovsky, *Image of Peter the Great*, 10; James Cracraft, "Feofan Prokopovich," in *The Eighteenth Century in Russia*, ed. J. G. Garrard (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1973), 75.

Russian translation of Diego de Saavedra Fajardo's influential symbol and emblem book, *Idea Principis Christiano-Politici*.<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter, I will seek to challenge long-held attitudes regarding the belief-system underpinning Prokopovich's espousal of progressive, 'enlightened' policies. This approach will seek to broaden our perception of the Ukrainian cleric by illustrating his eclectic worldview, which I argue drew heavily on elements of Christian mysticism, chiliasm and esotericism. In particular, I hope to suggest that the so-called 'enlightened' outlook of Prokopovich actually rested on three theological and philosophical pillars: 1) Pietist Protestantism; 2) an Orthodox faith based on the writings of Eastern Church Fathers and 3) an esoteric worldview that embraced eclectic elements of Aristotelianism, Christian Neo-Platonism and Hermeticism. Thus, I will argue that an embrace of modern, rational science did not fundamentally fuel the momentum for reform enacted by Prokopovich. Instead, one can see a uniquely Russian (or more accurately Ukrainian) Early Modern expression of eclecticism that incorporated Reformed Protestant chiliasm and Biblical exegesis, the distinct mysticism of early Eastern Church Fathers and a continuing belief in occult correspondences and powers.

Prokopovich's staunch advocacy of state and church reform immediately courted controversy in Russia and undoubtedly contributed to subsequent polarised, clear-cut assessments of his legacy. Indeed, many of his ecclesiastic colleagues denounced him at the time as nothing less than a heretic. In 1726, for example, Markell Rodyshevskii wrote a tract, entitled *About the Life of the Heretic Feofan Prokopovich*, in which he charted incidences of Prokopovich's heresy against the Orthodox Church.<sup>3</sup> Rodyshevskii did not mince his words when elucidating his charges against Prokopovich:

With daring and great audacity he began to manifestly wrestle with the Holy Church and destroy and reduce all dogma and tradition, and godless Lutheranism and other heresies were introduced and inculcated, and this time was highly lamentable for the people.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For an English translation of "The Justice of the Monarch's Right," see Antony Lentin, ed., *Peter the Great: his law on the imperial succession in Russia, 1722: the official commentary: Pravda voli Monarshei vo opredelenii naslednika derzhavy svoei: the justice of the monarch's right to appoint the heir to the throne* (Oxford: Headstart History, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> See "Delo o Feofane Prokopoviche," *Chtenüia v Imperatorskom Obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh* 1 (1862): 1–92.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.



Fig. 31. Portrait of Feofan Prokopovich.

Rodyshevskii's fervent attack on the reforms enacted by Prokopovich provides an early and pertinent example of how this seminal figure in Russian history has been consistently characterized in stark black and white terms. The reason for such characterizations is based on a clear dichotomy revolving around an accepted notion of Prokopovich as a harbinger of the Russian Enlightenment. Within the confines of this dichotomy, one can either castigate or extol Prokopovich as a rational, secular and progressive anti-cleric.

Archpriest Georgii Florovskii (1893–1979) wrote one of the most influential negative portraits of Prokopovich in his seminal work *The Ways of Russian Theology* (1937). As an émigré writing in the wake of the revolutionary upheaval in the early decades of the twentieth century, Florovskii is scathing of the legacy bequeathed to Russian society by Feofan Prokopovich. According to him, Prokopovich “simply did not experience Orthodoxy” and “was a typical man of the ‘Enlightenment’” who fought against delusions, such as miracles, “with the tenacity of an arrogant rationalist.”<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Rodyshevskii is championed by Florovskii and takes on the guise of a martyr who “suffered cruelly” for his boldness.<sup>6</sup>

In opposition to Florovskii's scornful denouncements one can cite a long and diverse tradition of commentators who have championed Prokopovich's immense contribution to the development of a ‘modern’ Russian state. Recent positive descriptions still write of a man who “went from scholasticism to the philosophy of the enlightenment”<sup>7</sup> and represented “the first authentic voice in Russia of the Early Enlightenment.”<sup>8</sup> Such accolades are hardly surprising, and not entirely unwarranted, when one considers that he possessed an intellect on a par with any of his illustrious colleagues at the Russian court. He was one of the most vociferous advocates of the advancement of learning and displayed a genuine passion for scientific experimentation. Prokopovich not only played an active role in the foundation of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences in 1725 and provided help to its scholars; he was also a principal founder of a literary-philosophical circle in St. Petersburg – the *Uchennaia družhina* (Brotherhood of Learning) – which included Jacob Bruce, V. N. Tatish-

<sup>5</sup> Georgii Florovskii, *Puti russkogo bogosloviia* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1937), 92, 94.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>7</sup> O. M. Buranok, *Russkaia literatura XVIII veka: Petrovskaia epokha Feofana Prokopovicha* (Moscow: Nauka, Flinta, 2003), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Cracraft, *Church Reform*, 54.

chev and Antiokh Kantemir.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Prokopovich's patronage of young academics and literary figures, such as Tatishchev and Kantemir – whom he called a 'Learned Guard' – was an important factor in their subsequent intellectual development and success.<sup>10</sup>

Soviet historians viewed Prokopovich as a progressive figure in eighteenth-century Russia and tended to echo G. V. Plekhanov's earlier assertion that "Prokopovich and his friends were staunch enlighteners."<sup>11</sup> Prokopovich's angry opposition to the "moral vices, money-lending and ignorance of the clergy," according to one Soviet historian writing in the 1960s, demonstrates evidence of his overriding anti-clericism, which he viewed as the "chief bulwark of obscurantism, and the main enemy of science and enlightenment."<sup>12</sup>

As the above statements testify, Prokopovich's religiosity has been routinely dismissed and should be viewed as a major contributory factor in the continuing predominance of simplistic portraits of an extremely complex figure. It has readily been taken for granted, for example, that Prokopovich was anti-clerical *per se* because he was a wholehearted foe of what he believed to be the conservative obscurantism of many within the Russian Orthodox hierarchy and the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church.

With this in mind, the first part of this chapter will focus on Prokopovich's theological writings in order to illuminate the way in which his Christian faith, based on a literal interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and grounded in the writings of Eastern Church Fathers, fundamentally shaped his understanding and vision of the world. This will then be followed by an analysis of his scientific writings – in particular his *Natural Philosophy, or Physics* (1708) – in which one can detect a synthesis of his Christian faith with strong elements of occult belief derived from an eclectic mix of Aristotelianism, Neo-Platonism and Hermeticism. Lastly, I will examine how religion and science were harmoniously combined in Prokopovich's educational vision. I will argue that Prokopovich actively sought to enact his educational vision along the lines of August Hermann Francke's Pietist model, which was enthused with millenarian goals.

<sup>9</sup> V. M. Nichik, *Feofan Prokopovich* (Moscow: Mysl, 1977), 15.

<sup>10</sup> See P. P. Epifanov, "‘Uchenaia družina’ i prosvetitel'stvo XVIII veka," *Voprosy istorii* 3 (Mar. 1963): 37–53.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.



*Prokopovich's Theological System: Introduction*

Prokopovich expounded his theological system in a series of seven Latin tracts written to accompany his course in theology whilst he was Professor of Theology at the Kiev Academy between 1712–1716. These tracts were entitled: (1) *An Introduction to the Tasks of Theology and about the Holy Scriptures (Prolegomena)*;<sup>13</sup> (2) *On God and his Attributes*;<sup>14</sup> (3) *On the Trinity*;<sup>15</sup> (4) *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*;<sup>16</sup> (5) *On Creation and Prophecy*;<sup>17</sup> (6) *On the condition of Man before the Fall* and (7) *On the condition of man After the Fall*.<sup>18</sup>

In the first tract, Prokopovich emphasizes that it is necessary, first and foremost, to hold to a literal understanding of the Holy Scriptures, echoing St. Basil, who declared that he “takes all in the literal sense.”<sup>19</sup> Prokopovich states that the Scriptures are an infallible higher authority and utterly refutes the stupidity of those who adhere to allegorical interpretations:

You see in order to correctly interpret the Scriptures, it is necessary to have an intellect, common sense, to lengthily examine the Holy Scriptures and the works of the Fathers, in general – to do much studying and labour; but anyone has the ability to invent stupid allegories, even the most ignorant street charlatan.<sup>20</sup>

It might initially strike one as amazing to find Russia’s “first authentic voice of the early Enlightenment” adhering to a view that is nowadays regarded as wholly unscientific. Yet, Prokopovich – like a host of other ‘progressive’ ecclesiastic figures and natural scientists across Europe – passionately advocated a scientific approach to exegesis in order to demonstrate the divine truth of the Holy Scriptures. Underpinning this scientific approach, as Matt Goldish has pointed out, was a belief that God was granting a

<sup>13</sup> See Feofan Prokopovich, *Christianae Orthodoxae Theologiae in Academia Kiowiensi*, vol. 1 (Königsberg, 1773).

<sup>14</sup> See Feofan Prokopovich, *Christianae Orthodoxae Theologiae in Academia Kiowiensi*, vol. 2 (Königsberg, 1774).

<sup>15</sup> See Feofan Prokopovich, *Christianae Orthodoxae Theologiae in Academia Kiowiensi*, vol. 3 (Königsberg, 1775).

<sup>16</sup> See Feofan Prokopovich, *Tractatus de Processione Spiritus Sancti* (Gotha, 1772).

<sup>17</sup> See Feofan Prokopovich, *Christianae Orthodoxae Theologiae in Academia Kiowiensi*, vol. 5 (Königsberg, 1775).

<sup>18</sup> For these two works, see Feofan Prokopovich, *Christianae Orthodoxae Theologiae in Academia Kiowiensi*, vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1792–1793).

<sup>19</sup> Thorndike, *History of Magic*, vol. 1, 484.

<sup>20</sup> Feofan Prokopovich, *Christianae Orthodoxae Theologiae*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1782), 158; Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 132.

key to the people of the 'Last Times' in order to unlock the secrets of the prophets.<sup>21</sup> I would argue that this essentially outlook also characterized the exegetical method of Prokopovich.

### *Biblical Prophecy*

Tellingly, in his *Prolegomena* Prokopovich cites both pagan and Biblical prophecy as a fourth demonstration of the divine origin of the Holy Scriptures. Prokopovich places great emphasis, for example on the Sibylline Oracles as predictions that anticipated Christian milestones and thereby validated the authority of the Holy Scriptures. In support of the prophetic powers of the Sibyls, Prokopovich draws on a host of Church Fathers, including Lactantius, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Theophilus of Antioch and Augustine. Thus, he directly cites from Lactantius's *Divine Institutes* in support of the authority of the Sibylline Oracles, as therein the Church Father wrote that "all these Sibyls . . . bear witness that there is but one God."<sup>22</sup> What is more, Prokopovich devotes an entire tract to citing the positive testimony of a host of Church Fathers in regard to the Sibylline Oracles.<sup>23</sup>

However, Prokopovich goes on to refute Porphyry's objections to the genuineness of the Book of Daniel and champions the pre-eminence of Biblical prophecies over his "pagan forebodings." Thus, he states that pagan prophecies were either demonic delusions or conjectural predictions based on natural reasons and paled in comparison to the prophecies of Daniel, Ezekiel and others.<sup>24</sup> Essentially the same message is repeated in his fifth tract on prophecy, where he names magicians, soothsayers and ventriloquists as people who "voluntarily give themselves over to the devil under the conditions of known service from his side."<sup>25</sup> This is followed by a brief study on pacts with the devil and on methods of extricating oneself

<sup>21</sup> Matt Goldish, *Judaism in the Theology of Sir Isaac Newton* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1998), 75.

<sup>22</sup> Lactantius, *The Works of Lactantius*, vol. 2, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1871), 96. Feofan Prokopovich, "Prolegomena," *Christianae Orthodoxae Theologiae*, vol. 1 (Königsberg, 1773), 66–9. Also see P. A. Cherviakovskii, "Sviashchennoe Pisanie kak nachalo bogosloviia po ucheniiu protestantov-ortodoksalov XVII v. i po 'Vvedenie v bogoslovie' Feofana Prokopovicha," *Khristianskoe chtenie* 7–8 (1876): 126.

<sup>23</sup> See Feofan Prokopovich, "Oracula Sibyllina, Patrum Testimonia," *Christianae Orthodoxae Theologiae*, vol. 3 (Königsberg, 1775), 375–98.

<sup>24</sup> Prokopovich, "Prolegomena," 90–1.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 93–4; Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 142. It is interesting to note that Prokopovich owned Antonius Van Dale's influential work *De Oraculis Ethnicorum*, first published

from such agreements.<sup>26</sup> The final part of the tract is dedicated to various questions regarding the special nature of theological prophecies.

The prophecies of Daniel, with their eschatological character, are central to Prokopovich's fourth demonstration of the divine nature of the Holy Scriptures. In particular, Prokopovich cites Daniel 9:24–27, in which the Hebrew prophet predicts the coming of an anointed one, or Messiah, who will be 'cut off' and the subsequent destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem:

Daniel...prophesized about Christ and named him most holy (*Sanctum Sanctorum*); consequently God named him so through Daniel, for God revealed this to Daniel... If the truth of the prophecy of Daniel is confirmed by the fulfilment of his prophecy, then Daniel was a prophet and the Scripture is the word of God; but Daniel recognised the Holy Scripture of Moses; he took for the Word of God and all the Holy Scriptures, of which existed in his time, and God himself gave evidence through Daniel about the Holy Scriptures, as about his Word.<sup>27</sup>

In the twelfth chapter of *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*, Prokopovich also undertakes a detailed textual analysis of a passage of John's prophecy of the Apocalypse in Revelation 22, which states: "he shewed me a pure river of water of life as clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."<sup>28</sup> Tikhomirov notes that this analysis bears a striking similarity to a tract by Adam Zernikav (1652–c. 1692), who was born in Königsberg and studied theology, law, military architecture, geometry, astronomy, astrology and languages at the University of Jena and utilized libraries in Oxford, Cambridge, London and Padua before settling in Chernigov and converting to Orthodoxy.<sup>29</sup>

Both Prokopovich and Zernikav outline identical interpretations of three Church Fathers regarding this passage. First, they state that this can be interpreted to baptism, secondly to the fruits of baptism and lastly to the eternal grace of God, which at some point in the future will pour

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in 1683, which discusses pagan prophecies. See P. V. Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie dukhovnoi kollegii i dukhovnyi reglament*, vol. 2 (Rostov-on-the-Don, 1916), 23, No. 1091.

<sup>26</sup> Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 143.

<sup>27</sup> Prokopovich, "Prolegomena," 70–1; P. A. Cherviakovskii, "O metode 'Vvedeniia v bogoslovie' Feofana Prokopovicha," *Khristianskoe chtenie*, 3–4 (1878): 341–2.

<sup>28</sup> Prokopovich, *Tractatus de Processione Spiritus*, 210–16.

<sup>29</sup> Tikhomirov, *Traktaty Feofana Prokopovicha*, 121. For a short biography of Zernikav, as well as autobiographical passages, see Adam Zernikav, "Adam Zernikav (obozrenie rukopisi, soderzhashchei v sebe avtobiografiu ego)," *Trudy kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* 3 (1860): 173–204.



forth onto the Holy New Jerusalem.<sup>30</sup> Crucially, Tikhomirov states that both theologians were inclined to agree with the final interpretation: “The pouring forth of the river is still in the future – the river must still water the holy city and New Jerusalem.”<sup>31</sup> The millenarian standpoint of this interpretation is clear and draws Prokopovich into the milieu of chiliasm that emerged in seventeenth-century Europe. What is more, in his *Prolegomena*, Prokopovich sets out the following catechism:

- We ask: Are the Scriptures necessary for our times, beginning from Moses, or from the time when it was given to us? And are there or not such people, through which God speaks to us, or shall speak before the end of the world?
- Our answer is affirmative.<sup>32</sup>

In other words, Prokopovich is affirming the possibility of contemporary prophets being able to convey divine message before the end of the world.

The degree to which Prokopovich immersed himself in the exegetical study of prophecy is strikingly revealed by the contents of his private library collection. One finds countless commentaries on Old Testament prophets and the Apocalypse by figures, such as Johannes Oecolampadius, Robert Bellarmine, Heinrich Bullinger, Johannes Drusius, Abraham Scultetus, Matthias Höe, Johann Tarnow, Johannes Winckelmann, Salomon Gesner and Christian Michaelis.<sup>33</sup> One can also find a selection of texts by a number of key scholars and divines who meticulously examined the Holy Scriptures in order to calculate and chronologize the onset of the millenarian. Prokopovich owned five works by Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588–1638), for example, including a revised edition of *Thesaurus Chronologiae* published in 1628.<sup>34</sup> Therein Prokopovich could read Alsted’s calculation that the sevens vials and the fall of Babylon had begun in 1517, that is in the year of Luther’s 95 Theses, and would be completed in 1694, after which the millennium would follow.<sup>35</sup> Prokopovich also owned an edition of *Anales Veteris Testamenti* by James Ussher (1581–1656), in

<sup>30</sup> Prokopovich, *Processione*, 211–16.

<sup>31</sup> Tikhomirov, *Traktaty Feofana Prokopovicha*, 122.

<sup>32</sup> Prokopovich, *Christianae Orthodoxae Theologiae*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1782), 66; Cherviakovskii, “Sviashchennoe Pisanie,” 130.

<sup>33</sup> Verkovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 60–71.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 23, 27, 33–4, 51; Nos. 1088, 1276, 1666, 1741, 2917. The titles of these works are, in order: *Encyclopaedia* (1630), *Thesaurus Chronologiae* (1628), *Compendium Lexici Philosophici* (1626), *Panacea Philosophica* (1610), *Orator, sex libris informatus* (1616)

<sup>35</sup> See Hotson, *Paradise Postponed*, 115.

which he dated creation to 4004 BC and calculated the millennium to be in the year 6,000, or 1997.<sup>36</sup> One also finds three works by the Dutch millenarian Campegius Vitringa (1659–1722) including his interpretation of the Apocalypse.<sup>37</sup> Remarkably, Prokopovich also possessed two editions of *Lux e Tenebris* (an original 1657 print and a second print from 1665), a collection of notorious prophecies edited by Comenius from the writings of Christoph Kotter, Christina Poniatowska and Nicolai Drabic.<sup>38</sup> At the base of the frontispiece to the 1665 edition of *Lux e Tenebris* can be seen a depiction of the prophesized arrival of New Jerusalem on earth (see Fig. 32 below).

The notoriety of these prophecies is attested by the central role they fulfilled in Quirinus Kuhlmann's chiliastic mission to Moscow in 1689. Indeed, a decisive factor in his subsequent indictment and burning on Red Square was that he sought to promote these 'heretical' tomes on Russian soil.

*Biblical Miracles: A Further Demonstration of the Divine Origin of the Holy Scriptures*

Feofan Prokopovich has repeatedly been portrayed as an "implacable foe of superstition" who harboured a "repugnance for . . . miracles."<sup>39</sup> Prokopovich did rail against folk superstitions still widespread among the Russian population and adopted a highly critical stance against the superstitious practices and rituals of the Catholic Church. Yet, it would be a mistake to conclude that Prokopovich categorically denied the miraculous in favour of a purely rationalistic outlook. Indeed, the recording of Biblical miracles by Old Testament scribes is actually cited as the second demonstration of the divine origin of the Holy Scriptures in his *Prolegomena*. Thus, Prokopovich attributes the miracles attested in the Holy Scriptures as serving as a "witness of the divine contents and significance and wonder of his

<sup>36</sup> Verkovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 23, No. 1043.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 10, 12; Nos. 71, 283, 284. The cited work on the Apocalypse is entitled: (*Anakrisis*) *Apocalypsios Joannis Apostoli: qua in versa interpretandae ejus hypotheses diligenter inquiritur, & ex iisdem interpretatio facta, certis historiariis, monumentis confirmatur atque illustratur: tum quoque quae Meldensis Praesul Bossuetus hujus libri commentario supposit, ex exegetico protestantium systematic in visis de Bestia ac Babylone mystica objecit, sedulo examinantur*, (Amsterdam, 1719).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 12, Nos. 273–4.

<sup>39</sup> Cracraft, "Feofan Prokopovich," 75; Florovskii, *Puti russkogo bogosloviia*, 94.

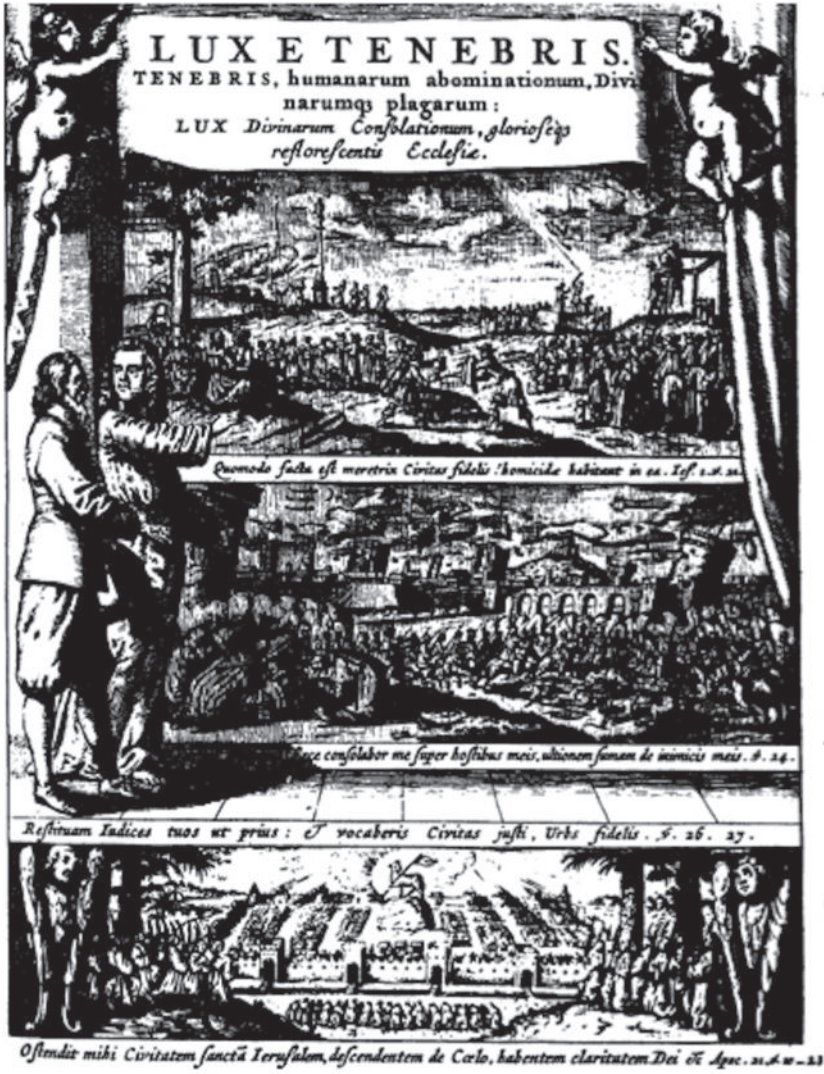


Fig. 32. Frontispiece to the 1665 edition of *Lux e Tenebris*, edited by J. A. Comenius.

teaching, which could neither be made by humans nor by the devil.”<sup>40</sup> The Archbishop then proceeds to state that “although there are very many” of these miracles “one must turn one’s attention” before others to “those miraculous phenomenon which relate to the sun.”<sup>41</sup> Accordingly he cites how Isaiah records how the “sun retreated for almost five hours,” referring to chapter 38:8, in which it is stated: “Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.”<sup>42</sup> Prokopovich also cites Ezekiel 32:7, in which the prophet narrates the words of the Lord: “And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a clod, and the moon shall not give her light.”<sup>43</sup>

Lastly, in this regard, he refers to the eclipse that occurred at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus as described by Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite in a letter addressed to Polycarp: “What have you to say about the solar eclipse which occurred when the Saviour was put on the cross?”<sup>44</sup> Regarding this event, Prokopovich states: “Of such an eclipse of the sun occurred at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, as this eclipse, contrary to the laws of nature, occurred at midnight.”<sup>45</sup> He then seeks to augment his argument and discredit those who deny the genuineness of Biblical miracles by providing further evidence from the Holy Scriptures. As he states in his own words:

Against the genuineness of miracles: I ask: “who names our miracles as inventions? If they are pagans- then they give empty accounts, why believe more the history of pagans than Moses and the prophets? Especially in view of the fact that the demons that showed . . . them several miracles demanded divine honour, whereas holy angels, which with the strength of God made amazing signs to God, forbade worship to themselves”.<sup>46</sup>

In support of his case he cites Judges 13:3–24, in which the Angel of the Lord appears unto a barren woman and promises that “thou shalt conceive and bear a son,” which subsequently transpires. The son, what is more, turned out to be Samson, the famed lion slayer and defender of

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<sup>40</sup> Prokopovich, “Prolegomena,” 52.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 53–4.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>44</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, trans. Colin Luibheid (London: SPCK, 1987), 268.

<sup>45</sup> Prokopovich, “Prolegomena,” 54.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

Israel. Prokopovich also draws on Revelation 19:10, in which John narates how the heavens opened up to reveal a white horse, upon which sat he that “was called Faithful and True.” Lastly, Prokopovich devotes considerable effort in arguing against interpreting the vision of Samuel engendered by the Witch of Endor as an act of sorcery. He notes the Jesuit Cornelius à Lapide, who attributes this incident to God and also states that he prefers the opinion of Eusathius of Antioch, who argues that the apparition of Samuel was a ghost, over Origen, who expounded an allegorical interpretation.<sup>47</sup>

### *The Devil and his Minions*

In his defence of the Holy Scriptures Prokopovich repeatedly warns against false miracles and false prophecies, which he regards as “demonic delusions,” perpetrated by followers of the Devil, who he refers to as the “father of lies and enemy of truth.”<sup>48</sup> Thus, the ability to differentiate between a divine and a demonic miracle or a prophecy clearly takes on critical significance in Prokopovich’s theological system. Hence, it is no surprise to find a detailed study on demons and the demonic occurring in his tract on the condition of man after the Fall. This incorporates a broad discussion regarding questions, such as their names, the reasons for their fall, their quantity and about their knowledge and power to perform miracles.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, in a series of catechisms, Prokopovich asks whether there exists a hierarchy and command (*quasi magistratus quidam*) and whether Satan, above all others, is the *rex* (ruler) at the head? Prokopovich answers both questions affirmatively, but states that the reasons remain unknown as to . . .

What kind of power demons have – whether it is despotic or individually controlled by coercion, or similar to the power of a President of a free republic (*ducis liberae republicae*): and also in what way one demon is made the leader over others?<sup>50</sup>

This is then followed by a detailed discussion on the subject of possessed demons and by what signs it is possible to recognize and expel these spirits. Thus, he acknowledges the existence of possession, but notes that

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>49</sup> Feofan Prokopovich, “Liber Quartus de Creatione et Providentia Communi,” *Christianae Orthodoxae Theologiae*, vol. 5, 131–49.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 156.

“as many worthless people sometimes pretend to be possessed, it is necessary to have in mind precise and true signs, according to which it is possible to distinguish genuine possession.” Prokopovich then proceeds to outline three legitimate signs indicating possession: (1) *Occultorum revelatio* (the revelation of a secret) which a person in a natural state cannot explain; (2) to converse in a language that a person has never studied and (3) supernatural phenomena.<sup>51</sup>

These three legitimate certifications of possession are then corroborated by narrating an incident relayed to Prokopovich by a certain Father Aloisii during his three years of study at the Greek College of St. Athanasius in Rome between 1698–1701:

Several years ago in Rome, during the papacy of Innocent X, in the Church of St. Mark at Via Lata, a seven-year-old boy argued with great learning about philosophical and theological questions and he dedicated the theses of his dispute to the Pope. Soon afterwards, however, it was found out that he was instructed in all this by a demon, introduced to him by his teacher, Friar Servit, a magician. This history is known by all and everyone in Rome.<sup>52</sup>

As regards exorcising demons from the possessed, Prokopovich rejects the use of roots and amulets. He states that demons are not afraid of these “toys”:

If sometimes they give the appearance of being afraid, then this is done on purpose in order to convince dullards in favour of their superstitions and in this time they split their sides with laughter.<sup>53</sup>

This statement provides an excellent example of how Prokopovich actually believed in the same demons as the common people, but simply differed in the methods he prescribed for tackling their malevolent influence. In contrast to their ‘superstitious’ methods, Prokopovich recommended a Christian remedy consisting of faith, abstinence and prayer.<sup>54</sup>

### *Angels*

Prokopovich’s discussion of demons is preceded by a similar analysis of angels. This centres on a detailed investigation of questions, such as the nature and characteristics of angels and about their purpose and time

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 162–3. Also see Feofan Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra Variis Temporibus Edita* (Bratislava, 1744), 60–1.

<sup>53</sup> Prokopovich, “Creation et Providentia,” 165.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.



of creation. Prokopovich also broaches the subject of whether they have proper names, due to their great number, and whether it is possible to define them in an exact manner. Furthermore, he asks whether their power and knowledge is limited and whether it is possible to recognize them as beings with a human nature, as well as questioning whether they sin and whether defined ranks exist between them.<sup>55</sup>

Of particular importance in Prokopovich's theological system is the so-called Angel of Jehova.<sup>56</sup> Much of his tract on the Trinity is concerned with the appearances of this Angel in the Old Testament and in demonstrating that it was in fact a manifestation of the pre-incarnate Christ.<sup>57</sup> First and foremost he cites Isaiah 63:7–11, in which the prophet remarks in verse 9: "The angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them; and he carried them all the days of his life."<sup>58</sup> Prokopovich asks who is this "bearer of the people" and answers that it is he, whom God speaks about in Hosea 1:7: "I will have mercy upon the house of Judah and will save them by the Lord their God."<sup>59</sup> This, according to Prokopovich, is the Son of God, or the "counselor" prophesized by Isaiah in 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given . . . and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."<sup>60</sup> Prokopovich then proceeds to elaborate upon the many other instances in the Old Testament when the Angel of Jehovah appears, such as before Abraham in Genesis 18 and Patriarch Joseph in Genesis 32, before Moses in Exodus 2 and Gideon in Judges 6, 12 and 13. Lastly, he cites Zechariah 3:1, in which it is stated: "And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing and his right hand to resist him."<sup>61</sup> Thus, Prokopovich uses all these Biblical quotations to argue that the Son of God was a "protector and bearer" of the Israelites and was uninterrupted "in all the days of the ages."<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, only the Son of God

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 75–131.

<sup>56</sup> Also referred to as the Angel of the Covenant or the Messenger of the Covenant.

<sup>57</sup> See Feofan Prokopovich, "De Augustissimo Mysterio Sanctissimae et Individuae Trinitatis," *Christianae Orthodoxae Theologiae*, vol. 3. For a summary of Prokopovich's writing on the Angel of Jehovah, see Tikhomirov, *Traktaty Feofana Prokopovicha*, 38–40.

<sup>58</sup> Prokopovich, "Trinitatis," 43–4.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 51–2.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 47–50.

<sup>62</sup> Tikhomirov, *Traktaty*, 39.

appeared in the form of an angel and the Father and the Holy Ghost acted through the Son.<sup>63</sup>

*Paradise and The Flood*

In his tract on the condition of man before The Fall, Prokopovich provides a detailed examination on *rai* (paradise) and seeks to demonstrate that it was not simply an allegory.<sup>64</sup> Thus, by having the Book of Genesis and a geographical map in front of him and by drawing on the works of the “learned writers” Emmanuel Tremellius (1510–1589), Franciscus Junius (1542–1602) and August Pfeiffer (1640–1698), Prokopovich indicates the precise location of the Biblical paradise, which he states lied on the Persian Gulf, to the south of Mesopotamia.<sup>65</sup> Prokopovich denies that there were roses without thorns in the pristine Garden of Eden, but states that there were poisonous herbs. Yet Prokopovich notes that only Talmudists can thoroughly engage in such questions. He states, however, that in the present (fallen) age, paradise was not to be found on Earth. Crucially, however, Prokopovich does not dismiss the possibility of a restored paradise in the future.

In his next tract – on the condition of man after The Fall – Prokopovich notes that one of the main consequences of sin was the recognition of the corruption of human nature and the corruption of the body and soul. Signs of the perversion of the intellect can be observed in such things as superstition, lack of faith, doubt and coldness to faith, scepticism, religious indifference, rationalism, enthusiasm, fanaticism and heresy. Prokopovich considers scepticism to be the most dangerous affliction of the intellect, on an equal footing with religious dreaminess or enthusiasm, which demonstrate insufficient strengths of imagination and memory.<sup>66</sup> After expounding upon the consequences of sin, he turns to the cause of these calamities and outlines how the serpent-tempter that seduced Eve was genuine and not allegorical and describes the subsequent meaning and form of the subsequent sinful fall of her ancestors.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>64</sup> Prokopovich, *Christianae Orthodoxae Theologiae*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1783), 234. Also see Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 143.

<sup>65</sup> Prokopovich, *Christianae Orthodoxae Theologiae*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1783), 234. Also see Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 144. The works in question are the *Biblia Sacra* (1576) of Tremellius and Junius and the *Hermeneutica Sacra* (1694) and the *Antiquitates Hebraicae* (1687) by Augustus Pfeiffer.

<sup>66</sup> Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 144.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.



In the same tract, as well as in his *Prolegomena*, Prokopovich also reveals a strong interest in matters pertaining to the Flood. In particular, he sought to mathematically demonstrate that it was indeed possible for all the animals to be placed in Noah's Ark. The only creatures exempt from his mathematical calculations, as Prokopovich states, were those capable of spontaneously generating (*samoproizvol'no*) without parents from decomposed matter. Included in this category were the following species: mice, larvae (of bees), wasps, bees, flies and scorpions.<sup>68</sup>

Thus, Prokopovich's arguments in favour of the feasibility of placing all of the planet's animals on Noah's Ark utilizes mathematical calculations and a belief in the possibility of spontaneous generation. Such an approach was far from innovative, as it drew on a rich heritage of classical, early Christian and Renaissance texts in order to verify the claims. Indeed, Prokopovich openly cites various Early Modern scholars, such as Cornelius à Lapide, Benito Arias Montano, Benedict Pereira, Ulisses Aldrovandi and Conrad Gesner in regard to the number of animals and the possibility of spontaneous generation.<sup>69</sup>

As regards his scientific calculations, Prokopovich's arguments also bear a striking resemblance to those propounded by Athanasius Kircher in his *Arca Noe* (1675).<sup>70</sup> In this text Kircher calculated that an ark 300 cubits long provided adequate space to house Noah's family, animals, provisions, rooms and passageways. Kircher listed 130 mammals, 150 birds and 30 snakes and attempted to outline their specific needs and the amount of space each species would need.<sup>71</sup> As Jared Diamond has noted:

For its time, the design of Kircher's ark represented a sophisticated application of the scientific method. He began with a specified set of assumptions (the ark's biblical dimensions, the number of crew and passengers, and their requirements for a year's voyage). He worked out the mathematical consequences (the necessary space and provisions), then compared these detailed predictions with reality. For Kircher, the Genesis account of Noah's ark was scientifically plausible.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Prokopovich, "Prolegomena," 77. Also see Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 130.

<sup>69</sup> Prokopovich, "Prolegomena," 76–7.

<sup>70</sup> It seems highly likely that Prokopovich would have been familiar with Kircher's text. Prokopovich was certainly attracted to the works of Kircher, as his private library contains four of his principal publications: *China Monumentis Illustrata*; *Ars Magna Lucis et Umbrae*; *Ars Magnetica* and *Musurgia Universalis*. See Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 22, 29; Nos. 949, 1458–1460 respectively.

<sup>71</sup> Bruce G. Stewart, "Historical Perspective: Mythical Beliefs on Origins," <http://www.sciencethinking.org/zoology/myths.htm> (Feb. 23, 2011).

<sup>72</sup> Jared Diamond, "Voyage of the Overloaded Ark," *Discover* 6 (June 1985): 85–92.

Furthermore, Kircher attested that the dimensions of Noah's Ark were in harmony with the proportions of the human body and thus its structure and contents represented a microcosm of the larger macrocosm.<sup>73</sup>

Prokopovich's advocacy of the theory of spontaneous generation from decomposed matter, in order to explain why it was unnecessary to include such creatures as scorpions, flies, mice, wasps and bees on Noah's Ark, draws specifically on Cornelius à Lapide's commentary on Genesis.<sup>74</sup> However, Lapide's own stance rested on a wealth of testimony and arguments dating back to antiquity. Prokopovich could read in his various editions of Pliny's *Natural History*, for example, that houseflies were engendered from wet wood and that mice were spontaneously generated from river-mud.<sup>75</sup> Pliny also outlined substances capable of generating life, such as excrement, stagnant water, wood and the carcasses of large animals and how putrefaction generates hornets in dead horses, wasps in asses, bees in oxen and scorpions in crocodiles.<sup>76</sup> It seems extremely likely that Prokopovich also drew on St. Augustine's exegetical account of the Flood in his *City of God*.<sup>77</sup> In this famed text, Augustine argued that it had been unnecessary for Noah to include "very minute creatures, not only such as mice and lizards, but also locusts, beetles, flies, fleas, and so forth" as "there was no need for those creatures being in the Ark which are born without the union of sexes from inanimate things, or from corruption."<sup>78</sup> The clear parallels between the texts by Augustine and Kircher on this matter are striking.

Prokopovich could also consult a host of works by Renaissance authors on the subject of spontaneous generation, including tomes by Julius Caesar Scaliger, Girolamo Cardano and Giambattista della Porta.<sup>79</sup> The

<sup>73</sup> Joscelyn Godwin, *Athanasius Kircher: Renaissance Man and the Quest for Lost Knowledge* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1979), 26.

<sup>74</sup> Prokopovich, "Prolegomena," 77. Also see Cornelius à Lapide and Augustinus Crampon, *Commentaria in Scripturam Sacra: Edito nova accurate expurgata mendis quoque in priorem irreperant: Genesis et Exodus* (Paris, 1881).

<sup>75</sup> Prokopovich owned three volumes of Pliny's *Natural History*, as well as a further fourth edition, containing a commentary by Jakob Milich (1501–1559). See Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 27, 24; Nos. 1321, 1324, 1326 and 1101.

<sup>76</sup> Philip P. Wiener, ed., *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, 4 (New York: Charles Scribner, 1973–74), 308.

<sup>77</sup> Prokopovich owned the complete works of Augustine. See Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 9; Nos. 1–14.

<sup>78</sup> Cited from Wiener, *Dictionary*, 309.

<sup>79</sup> Prokopovich owned Cardano's *De Rerum Varietata*, Scaliger's *Esoteric Exercises on Cardano's De Subtilitate* and della Porta's *Magiae Naturalis*. See Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 32, 27, 24; Nos. 1661, 1281 and 1144 respectively.



Fig. 33. Illustration of Noah's Ark from Athanasius Kircher's *Arca Noe* (1675).

first two authors even conducted a critical debate on the spontaneous generation of bees, with Cardano arguing that they were generated from honey, whilst Scaliger replied that putrefaction was a necessary prerequisite.<sup>80</sup>

True, the foundations of this theory had begun to rapidly erode by the turn of the eighteenth century, after the publication of Francesco Redi's *Esperienze Intorno alla generazione degl'insetti* in 1668 and works discrediting the theory by Jan Swammerdam (1637–1680). There were still many authorities at the close of the seventeenth century, however, who were still prepared to espouse the theory. Johann Kestler, a disciple of Kircher, published a work based on his mentor's experiments in 1680, for example, entitled *Physiologia Kircheriana Experimentalis*. Among many

<sup>80</sup> Thorndike, *History of Magic*, Vol. 6, 283–4.

experiments, two outlined how to generate bees from cow-flaps and scorpions.<sup>81</sup>

Prokopovich also deliberated on the manner in which waters were separated from land after the Deluge. Fascinatingly, he examined at length the theory of Thomas Burnet outlined in *Sacra Telluris Theoria*.<sup>82</sup> Burnet himself based his theory regarding the foundation of the earth upon the seas on scriptural evidence – particularly Job 38:8–10 and Genesis 7:11:

Or who shut up the Sea with doors when it brake forth, as if it had issu'd out of a womb? Who can doubt but this was at the breaking open of the Fountains of the Abyссе, Gen. 7:11 when the waters gush out, as out of the great womb of Nature; and by reason of that confusion and perturbation of Air and Water that rise upon it, a thick mist and darkness was round the Earth, and all things as in a second Chaos... Namely the present Chanel of the Sea was made when the Abyссе was broke up, and at the same time were made the shory Rocks and Mountains which are the bars and boundaries of the Sea.<sup>83</sup>

On Burnet's theory, Prokopovich remarks that whilst it is expertly written and interesting, he has decided not to entirely accept it in view of several irrefutable objections. Indeed, Prokopovich provides a series of responses outlining his views (both positive and negative) on Burnet's text.<sup>84</sup>

In Prokopovich's exegetical writings on the Garden of Eden and the Flood one encounters a brand of scientific inquiry much more akin to the Renaissance worldviews of Scaliger, della Porta and Kircher, than an enlightened representative of eighteenth-century rational science. This outlook is even more pronounced, however, in his *Natural Philosophy*, which will be examined in detail in the current chapter.

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<sup>81</sup> Thorndike, *History of Magic*, vol. 8, 226–7.

<sup>82</sup> Feofan Prokopovich, "Creation et Providentia Communi," 34–44; Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 139–40. Morozov notes that Burnet's work was translated into Russian during the reign of Peter the Great, although never published. One cannot be entirely certain, but an extremely likely candidate for translator would be Jacob Bruce. Bruce owned a 1698 Hamburg edition of Burnet's work, written in Latin and he was the principle translator of scientific texts into Russian during the reign of Peter the Great. For Bruce's copy of *Theoria Sacra Telluris*, see Havu and Lebedeva, *Collections*, 224, No. 26.

<sup>83</sup> Thomas Burnet, *The Sacred Theory of the Earth* (London: Centaur Press, 1965), 77–8.

<sup>84</sup> Prokopovich, "Creation et Providentia Communi," 34–44; Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 140.

*Protestant Influence and Eastern Church Fathers*

Prokopovich's seven theological tracts, written between 1712–1716, reflect the strong influence of a number of prominent seventeenth-century Protestant theologians. Indeed, the most frequently cited authorities in these tracts – Johann Gerhard (1582–1636), Johann Quenstädt (1617–1688), Amandus Polanus (1561–1610) and David Hollaz (1648–1713) – all preached Lutheran Orthodoxy.<sup>85</sup> In structural terms, Feofan Tikhomirov has convincingly demonstrated how the progression of Prokopovich's seven tracts closely resembles Gerhard's *Methodus Studii Theologici Publicus* (1622).<sup>86</sup> Prokopovich's espousal of the primacy of the Holy Scriptures and the need for close scrutiny of its meaning is closely reliant upon these Lutheran clerics as are many of his other dogmatic beliefs. His view that the Angel of Jehovah was a manifestation of the pre-incarnate Christ, for example, relies heavily on arguments expounded by Gerhard, in his seminal work *Loci Communes* (1610–1622) and Quenstädt in his voluminous *Theologia Didactico- Polemica* (1685).<sup>87</sup>

A number of Russian critics have actually accused Prokopovich of completely renouncing Russian Orthodoxy in favour of Protestantism. In an article addressing the Orthodoxy of Prokopovich, written in 1915, A. Kartashev wrote that "Prokopovich was actually a Protestant."<sup>88</sup> This sentiment is echoed by Florovskii, who wrote that "Feofan did not simply borrow from seventeenth-century Protestant scholasticism, he belonged to it."<sup>89</sup> These categorical pronouncements were specifically intended to vilify

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<sup>85</sup> For more on the influence of these theologians on Prokopovich, see Tikhomirov, *Traktaty Feofana Prokopovicha*, 102–21. Interestingly, although Gerhard, Quenstädt and Hollaz were orthodox Lutherans, each had links to and tolerated Arndtian Pietism. Gerhard's writings displayed elements of mystical piety and his theological system was influenced by being a student and friend of Johann Arndt. Gerhard was also listed as one of twenty-six supporters of Johann Valentin Andrae's Christian Society (*Societas Christiana*). See Andrae, *Christianopolis*, 13. Quenstädt also merged Lutheran Orthodoxy with the concept of *Unio Mystica*, close to Arndtian mysticism and was the teacher of Gottfried Arnold, the noted radical Pietist. Peter Erb refers to Hollaz as a "Pietistically influenced Lutheran scholastic," who had apparent similarities to Arndt. For a general discussion of the Arndtian sympathies of these three figures, see Erb, *Pietists*, 57.

<sup>86</sup> Tikhomirov, *Traktaty Feofana Prokopovicha*, 106–7, 118–20, 215.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 118–20.

<sup>88</sup> A. Kartashev, "K voprosu o pravoslavii Feofana Prokopovicha," *Sbornik statei v chest' D. F. Kabeko* (St. Petersburg, 1913), 236.

<sup>89</sup> Florovskii, *Puti russkogo bogoslovia*, 92.



Prokopovich's un-Orthodox and un-Russian legacy and are not wholly devoid of truth.

Yet, whilst one cannot ignore the extremely strong influence of Protestant thought on the composition of Prokopovich's theological tracts, I believe it would be a mistake to dismiss his debt to certain strains of Eastern Orthodox thought. One should recall, after all, that he wrote a short theological tract in Kiev entitled "An Apology of the Orthodox Faith," which served as an answer to sermons preached at the Kiev Caves Monastery by a Lutheran theologian, Michael Schi from Königsberg.<sup>90</sup> This contained objections to all twelve principal sections of Schi's sermons.<sup>91</sup> Prokopovich also often cites in favour of Eastern Church Fathers, such as the Cappadocian Fathers – St. Basil, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory Nazianzen – as well as John of Damascus, Synesius of Cyrene and Maximus the Confessor.<sup>92</sup> Arguably the greatest influence on Prokopovich, however, were some of the writings of the Christian Neo-Platonist, Dionysius the Areopagite.<sup>93</sup> This may seem surprising, as two of Prokopovich's fiercest rivals – Stefan Iavorskii and Markell Rodyshevskii – used his writings on Dionysius as evidence of his heresy against the Russian Orthodox Church. Stefan Iavorskii wrote in 1718, for example, that Prokopovich asserted that Dionysius the Areopagite's famed *Celestial Hierarchies* was actually written by a *basnotvorets* (storyteller).<sup>94</sup>

In a reply, written in 1726, Prokopovich did not deny the charges made by Iavorskii and Rodyshevskii. Instead, he sought to dismantle their objections by exposing the folly of blindly accepting all works attributed to Church Fathers. Prokopovich was well aware of the debate surrounding the authenticity of the oeuvre attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, who was converted to Christianity by St. Paul in AD 34 and subsequently became

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<sup>90</sup> See Feofan Prokopovich, "Apologia Fidei," *Miscellanea Sacra* (Bratislava, 1743), 1–64; Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 148.

<sup>91</sup> Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 148.

<sup>92</sup> See Tikhomirov, *Traktaty Feofana Prokopovicha*, 48.

<sup>93</sup> The writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite are now thought to have been written in the late fifth or early sixth century of the Common Era. Thus, the author of the works is commonly referred to as Pseudo-Dionysius. The writings show the distinct influence of renowned Neoplatonists (especially Proclus and the Platonic Academy in Athens) but are set in a Christian context. Prokopovich owned the complete works of Dionysius the Areopagite, published in 1634 and containing a frontispiece by Rubens. See Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 10, Nos. 72–73.

<sup>94</sup> I. A. Chistovich, *Reshilovskoe delo. Feofan Prokopovich i Feofilakt Lopatinskii. Materialy dlia istorii pervoi poloviny XVIII stoletia* (St. Petersburg, 1861), Appendix, 4.

Bishop of Athens. This is highlighted by the fact that he owned works by Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457) and Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536), who both cast significant doubt on the veracity of Dionysius's works.<sup>95</sup>

In his defence Prokopovich did not draw on the work of these writers, but advanced an argument that astutely drew on two ancient sources.<sup>96</sup> First, he cites the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680), which officially endorsed the genuineness of the Dionysian writings.<sup>97</sup> Prokopovich also cites the *Bibliotheca* of Patriarch Photius of Constantinople (c. 815–c. 897).<sup>98</sup> In this work, Photius provides a summary of Theodore the Presbyter's *On the Genuineness of the Works of Dionysius the Areopagite*:

Read the treatise of Theodore the Presbyter, in which he undertakes to prove the genuineness of the works of St. Dionysius. The following arguments against it are refuted: (1) If they are genuine, how is it that none of the later Fathers cites them or quotes any passages from them? (2) How is it that Eusebius Pamphili, in his list of the writings of the Holy Fathers, does not mention them? (3) How is it that these treatises describe in great detail rites and customs which only became established in the Church gradually and after a long time? (4) How is it that a letter of the divinely-inspired Ignatius is referred to? For Dionysius flourished in the time of the Apostles, whereas Ignatius suffered martyrdom during the reign of Trajan... Theodore endeavours to solve these difficulties and does his best to prove the genuineness of the treatises.<sup>99</sup>

Thus, in highlighting ancient precedents, in which the writings of (Pseudo) Dionysius have undergone critical examination by hallowed councils and personages in Eastern Orthodoxy, Prokopovich sought to ward off the charges made by those who, according to him, were intent on slandering his name.<sup>100</sup>

Prokopovich also strengthens his case for critically examining the Pseudo-Dionysian oeuvre by referring to the fact that many false treatises written by anonymous figures have been wrongly attributed to Holy Fathers:

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<sup>95</sup> See Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 48; No. 2671 for Valla; 12, 17, 21, 43, 46, 52; Nos. 299, 619, 904, 2341, 2515–19, 2997, 2999–3002 for Erasmus.

<sup>96</sup> "Delo o Feofane Prokopoviche," 33.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> Photius, *The Library of Photius*, trans. J. H. Freese, vol. 1 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920), 16–7.

<sup>100</sup> "Delo o Feofane Prokopoviche," 34.

We know that there are many books of the Holy Fathers in which there is their direct essence and the Church accepts them, but we also know that that many tracts have the essence of anonymous writers but were published in the name of this or that Saint; for example: there is an interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew written by John Chrysostom and also a different interpretation of the Gospel published by a certain Arian, which contains abuse of the Son of God but is adorned with the name of Chrysostom.<sup>101</sup>

The works of Justin the Martyr, Cyprian, Athanasius the Great, St. Basil, Cyril of Jerusalem and John of Damascus are also cited as examples of how genuine and false works have been mistakenly conflated. Furthermore, early Church Fathers demonstrated a proper method for dismantling and judging what books were genuine and which were false. In support of this argument, Prokopovich refers to the Seventh Ecumenical Council in which an alleged work of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, was demonstrated to be an erroneous tract. He also refers to the success of Patriarch Photius in dismantling all false texts in his voluminous *Bibliotheca*.<sup>102</sup>

Thus, of critical importance vis-à-vis Prokopovich's attitude toward the oeuvre of Dionysius the Areopagite, is that he did not advocate a wholesale rejection of the canon. Indeed, in denying that *The Celestial Hierarchy* belonged to the Dionysian canon, Prokopovich is actually also stating that other works purportedly written by the Areopagite are genuine. This stance helps to explain why the name of Dionysius the Areopagite is ranked second in a list compiled by Prokopovich of Church Fathers deemed essential reading for theological students. It also helps to explain why Prokopovich devoted considerable attention to positively expounding two central tenets of Pseudo-Dionysian thought that were closely tied to the latter's espousal of Christian Neo-Platonism: negative theology and the divine names of God.

Prokopovich's indebtedness to these theological standpoints is most clearly expressed in his second theological tract, entitled *On God and his Attributes*.<sup>103</sup> In opening this work, Prokopovich begins by stating: "As with other things, so with God, we first and foremost seek a definition, or at least a description, of the fact that He is."<sup>104</sup> He then posits the question: what is God? This is followed by asking whether or not it is possible

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 33–34.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>103</sup> The full Latin title is "De Deo ad Intra, quantum ad essentiam, existentiam et attributa." See Feofan Prokopovich, *Christiane Orthodoxae Theologiae*, vol. 2 (Königsberg, 1774).

<sup>104</sup> Prokopovich, "De Deo," 62–3.



for a person to have a very clear, deep and distinct knowledge of God. Prokopovich replies negatively and adds that God is incomprehensible. According to Prokopovich, God lives in the world incomprehensibly and is “unknown not only to people, but also to angels.” Thus, a person cannot comprehend God, but can only know him if God reveals himself to the person.<sup>105</sup> What is more, Prokopovich states that absolute knowledge of God is impossible for a person (even in the future life). By this, Prokopovich argues that if it says in the Holy Scriptures that in our future life we shall see God “face to face,” as it states in 1 Corinthians 13:12 or John 3:2, then this actually refers to “contemplation of God” or contemplation of *divinae praesentiae*, and not knowledge of him.<sup>106</sup> Whilst Prokopovich states that he knows God is all wise, he also adds that this wisdom is completely unknowable for him.<sup>107</sup>

Prokopovich then advances his argument by stressing that God cannot be entirely understood and cannot be fully expressed in language, and therefore the names attributed to him in the Scriptures remain a long way from expressing his divine nature. He then draws directly on Pseudo-Dionysius when he states:

Dionysius speaks splendidly in his book on the names of God, that God is *ωνομημοζ*, without names, and *πολυωνημοζ*, with many names, because he has infinite attributes, by which he may be named, but however he [does not have] any kind of name . . . neither taken separately or together, although there are a great many of them, they are not entirely sufficient for describing him or naming him.<sup>108</sup>

This embodies the key concept of Pseudo-Dionysius’s negative theology, as can be seen if one quotes the concluding section of *On the Divine Names of God*:

We use the names Trinity and Unity for that which is in fact beyond every name, calling it the transcendent being above every being. But no unity or trinity, no number or oneness, no fruitfulness, indeed nothing that is or is known can proclaim that hiddenness beyond every mind and reason of the transcendent Godhead which transcends every being. There is no name for it nor expression . . . In our urge to find some notion and some language appropriate to that ineffable nature, we reserve for it first the name which is most revered. Here, of course, I am in agreement with the scripture writers.

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 4–5.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 62.

But the real truth of these matters is in fact far beyond us. That is why their preference is for the way up through negations.<sup>109</sup>

Whilst Prokopovich states that the names ascribed to God in the Scriptures do not come near to embodying the divine nature of God, he is in agreement, nonetheless, with Pseudo-Dionysius, who accords them a revered place. Thus, Prokopovich devotes considerable attention to studying the nine Hebrew names of God, which he calculates can be found in the Holy Scriptures. These are (in Latin script): *El, Elohim, Iehova, Iah, Ehieh, Shaddai, Adonai, Elyon (Helion) and Tzaboath*.<sup>110</sup> In his study on the names of God, Prokopovich examines whether they can be used about creatures. He answers that the four 'proper' or 'true' names of God – Iehova, Iah, Ehieh and Helion – can only be used exclusively about God, whilst all the other names can be used about creatures, but only by analogy with God.<sup>111</sup>

Prokopovich's attraction to elements of the Christian Neo-Platonism of Pseudo-Dionysius provides a fascinating example of how his theological worldview embraced more than a simple imitation of Lutheranism. Indeed, in Prokopovich's outlook, one can sense an intriguing blend of Protestant exegesis, traditional Orthodox veneration for the mystical writings of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, and distinct elements of Renaissance Neo-Platonism, which drew heavily on his Christian and Platonic synthesis.

### *Prokopovich's Natural Philosophy: Introduction*

In 1707 Prokopovich became the Prefect of the Kiev Academy, a rank bestowing the power to exercise considerable authority over the educational curriculum.<sup>112</sup> Consequently, in 1708 Prokopovich saw fit to implement a new course in natural philosophy, with himself as lecturer. His approach caused something of a stir in the cloistered scholastic environment of the theological institution. Prokopovich must have made quite an impression arriving at lectures weighed down with intricate devices,

<sup>109</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, 129–30.

<sup>110</sup> Prokopovich, "De Deo," 36–61.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>112</sup> The prefect was officially the second position at the Academy, although, as Smirnov notes, it can be argued that it was the most important rank. See Smirnov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 42.

preparations and astronomical globes.<sup>113</sup> Students were not simply passive listeners and spectators at Prokopovich's lectures, but were actively encouraged to diligently explore mineral stools, observe protozoan organisms in microscopes, to measure atmospheric pressure and to study the uses of a compass and an astrolabe.<sup>114</sup> Lectures were also conducted outdoors on occasions, such as in the monastery courtyard. It is reported that in one such outdoor lecture, Prokopovich declared the never-ending goal of transformation, or metamorphosis, in nature: "from the ground arise plants, from fruit arises food, from food – a person, from a person a corpse, from a corpse worms and from worms the earth and all anew."<sup>115</sup>

Scholars invariably refer to the practical and experimental nature of Prokopovich's course as evidence of his passion for the progressive 'new science.'<sup>116</sup> The modernizing character of his scientific outlook is reinforced by stressing his familiarity with the works of a select list of acknowledged giants on the path to the Enlightenment, including Erasmus, Luther, Descartes, Galileo, Kepler, Bacon, Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locke – all conforming to the image of Prokopovich as a modern man of science.

A different picture emerges, however, if one actually consults the accompanying textbook to Prokopovich's lecture course – written in Latin and simply entitled *Natural Philosophy, or Physics*.<sup>117</sup> Whilst experimental philosophy is actively embraced in the textbook, it is never separated from the study of Scripture. Indeed, in its attempt to harmonize Holy Scripture with the natural world, Prokopovich's course in natural philosophy followed in the tradition of so-called eclectic Aristotelianism espoused at the Kiev Academy since the middle of the seventeenth century, when Innokentii Gizel taught at the institution.<sup>118</sup> Charles Schmitt coined the term "eclectic Aristotelianism" to describe a trend in Early Modern thought, which sought to accommodate the predominant Aristotelian framework vis-à-vis the natural world, with Christianity *and* other intellectual traditions, such as Platonism and Hermeticism, in order to

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 42–3.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>117</sup> A Ukrainian translation of the original Latin manuscript was published in 1980 in Kiev. See Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 115–501.

<sup>118</sup> Gizel taught natural philosophy in Kiev between 1645 and 1647. For a modern edition of Gizel's course, see Ia. M. Stratii, ed., *Problemy natur-filosofii v filosofofskoi mysli ukraïny XVII v.* (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1981), 145–96.

construct “a synthesis of all philosophy.”<sup>119</sup> This embrace of eclecticism enabled these thinkers to incorporate significant elements of occult philosophy, such as alchemy, astrology and the doctrine of sympathies and antipathies inherent in nature, into their Aristotelian frameworks, which were based on an elucidation of the Stagirite’s *Physics*, alongside *De generatione et corruptione* (On generation and corruption), *De caelo* (On the Heavens) and the *Meteorology*. Thus, in essence Prokopovich’s course in natural philosophy maintained an Aristotelian framework, but in adhering to the eclectic tradition espoused in Kiev the Ukrainian cleric was able to incorporate other intellectual and scientific trends – including strong elements of occult philosophy – into his own course.

Moreover, Prokopovich’s course in natural philosophy also drew near to the idea of *Pansophia* developed by Jan Amos Comenius in the middle of the seventeenth century.<sup>120</sup> The concept of *Pansophia* entailed the interdependent and complementary use of Biblical exegesis and experimental science in order to reveal God’s Word and divine plan and to create what Frank Manuel has called “a new, organic, Christian synthesis of science and religion.”<sup>121</sup> In Prokopovich’s case, this synthesis was in large part cemented by distinct vestiges of occult belief principally ground on Aristotelianism, but also fused with Hermetic and Neo-Platonist ideas; a stance wholly in keeping with the pansophic ideal of actively embracing all possible knowledge. This eclectic spirit permeates the whole of Prokopovich’s *Natural Philosophy*, which cites an astonishingly diverse range of ancient and modern sources from Aristotle, Plato, Pythagoras, Orpheus and Hermes Trismegistus to Daniel Sennert and Athanasius Kircher.

Prokopovich sets out his understanding of natural philosophy in the introduction by immediately drawing on the Apostle Paul’s epistle to the Romans (Romans 1:20): “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen.” Prokopovich then comments that God himself let it be known to all humans that there is a divine and merciful law to

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<sup>119</sup> Charles B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 95–103. Also see, Charles B. Schmitt, “John Case on Art and Nature,” *Annals of Science*, 33 (1976): 543–59. In her study of Daniel Sennert, Emily Michael uses the terms “Latin Pluralism” and “Aristotelian Pluralism” to describe his natural philosophy, which in large measure echoes Schmitt’s notion of eclectic Aristotelianism. See Emily Michael, “Daniel Sennert on Matter and Form: At the Juncture of the Old and the New,” *Early Science and Medicine* 2:3 (1997): 272–99.

<sup>120</sup> Prokopovich was familiar with Comenius’s ideas on pansophia, as he owned an edition of his famed *Prodromus Pansophiae*, written in London in 1641. See Verkhovskoi, *Uchrzhdzenie*, 35; No. 1797.

<sup>121</sup> Manuel, *Religion of Isaac Newton*, 28.

the natural world, although it is only possible to comprehend God's divine plan through observation:

Only with the help of physical observations is it possible to understand God, who judges people by merit. God reveals to them knowledge of the world in his creations and shows them his eternal majesty, from his words he creates everything.<sup>122</sup>

Prokopovich also expressly promotes the benefits of studying natural philosophy for illuminating the concealed meaning of the Holy Scriptures:

If physics is so helpful for illuminating the secrets of the Holy Scriptures, by which our piety is bound, then by what great diligence and by great industry we should strive for knowledge of this exceedingly agreeable and extremely useful discipline, if we wish to be concerned about our life.<sup>123</sup>

These opening salvoes are concluded with a humble request to his "highly respected students," among others, to help him in expounding this "difficult deed."<sup>124</sup>

#### *God, the Universe and Nature*

Underpinning Prokopovich's entire philosophical worldview is the belief in the omnipresent nature of God's essence in the universe. This standpoint is crystallized in a section of *Natural Philosophy* entitled "Where is explained the Nature of Active Causes," in which Prokopovich states that God's essence is everywhere and is unlimited and that he "supports and preserves everything."<sup>125</sup> In order to corroborate this thesis, Prokopovich draws on a wealth of sources, which reveal the extent to which he used Aristotelian, Hermetic and Platonic ideas in order to cement his Christian worldview.

Prokopovich stresses the Christian basis of his views regarding the all-pervading essence of God by citing numerous passages from Scripture, which "most excellently" confirm his argument.<sup>126</sup> He begins by quoting the Epistle of Paul to the Romans 11:36: "For of him, and through him and to him *are* all things." This is then followed by a quote from the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews 1:3: "(he) upholding all things by the word of his

<sup>122</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 116.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 160–1.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

power.” Lastly, he cites the Acts of the Apostles (17: 27–28): “He be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being.” Significantly, this passage of The Acts concerns Paul’s description of going to Athens and meeting the believer, Dionysius the Areopagite.

It is surely no coincidence, therefore, that Prokopovich begins outlining how these sentiments were preserved in the expressions of the Church Fathers by citing the tenth book of Dionysius the Areopagite’s *On the Divine Names*, which states: “As the omnipotent foundation of everything he preserves and embraces all the world.”<sup>127</sup> Prokopovich then states that the same understanding can be gleaned from Gregory Naziansen’s *Theology*, St. John of Damascus’s *Against the Manicheans* and Philo Judeaus’s *About the Confusion of the Tongues*.<sup>128</sup> Dionysius’s statement in the tenth book of *On the Divine Names* is almost identical to Prokopovich’s own wording in his *Natural Philosophy* and provides further proof of the considerable influence of Christian Neo-Platonism on the Ukrainian cleric.

After further demonstrations of the validity of his thesis, drawn from Augustine and John Chrysostom, Prokopovich moves on to discuss how “this truth was also not unknown to the ancients,” who were “most sensible wise men.”<sup>129</sup> Thus, in other words, Prokopovich is here espousing the doctrine of *prisca theologia*, which advanced the notion that a secret wisdom had been passed down from ancient adepts.<sup>130</sup> Accorded an esteemed place among Prokopovich’s pantheon of wise ancients are Plato and Hermes Trismegistus, who are both said to have espoused the unity of God. In his *Prolegomena* Prokopovich also writes that “Plato and his disciples have taught us many proofs” of the truths of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>131</sup> Indeed, Prokopovich argues that Plato was directly influenced by Mosaic doctrines. In support of this argument the Ukrainian cleric cites extensively from the works of the Christian Platonist Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215). Thus, he quotes from a passage in Clement’s *Stromata*, which states: “Aristobulus, in his first book addressed to Philometor, writes in these words: ‘And Plato followed the laws given to us, and had

<sup>127</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, *Complete Works*, 119.

<sup>128</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 162.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>130</sup> On the concept of *prisca theologia*, see Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “Tradition,” in Wouter J. Hanegraaff, ed., *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* (Leiden, Brill, 2006), 1125–35.

<sup>131</sup> Prokopovich. “Prolegomena,” 26.

manifestly studied all that is said in them."<sup>132</sup> Prokopovich also cites the words of Numenius, as quoted by Clement: "For what is Plato, but Moses speaking in Attick Greek?"<sup>133</sup> In concluding his defence of Plato as a follower of Moses, Prokopovich also draws on Clement's *Exhortation to the Heathen*, which states:

When O Plato, is the hint of the truth which thou givest? . . . You have learned geometry from the Egyptians, astronomy from the Babylonians; the charms of healing you have got from the Thracians; the Assyrians have taught you many things; but for the laws that are consistent with truth, and your sentiments respecting God, you are indebted to the Hebrews.<sup>134</sup>

Thus, Prokopovich is a staunch advocate of Plato's debt to the Mosaic writings and in the Greek philosopher's belief in the unity of God.

In addition to numerous demonstrations of the sagacity of Plato, Prokopovich also expressed a deep respect for the ancient wisdom of Hermes Trismegistus and his compatibility with Christian doctrine. Indeed, Prokopovich begins his discussion of ancient sages in his *Natural Philosophy* by citing *Asclepius*, the Latin text attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. Thus, he notes that in various places in this text, Hermes Trismegistus pronounced God to be "the deliverer of all things" and that "everything lives and is found only in him."<sup>135</sup>

What is more, in his *Prolegomena* Prokopovich quotes directly from Lactantius's *Divine Institutes* when praising Hermes Trismegistus:

Mercurius Trismegistus, who on account of his virtue and his knowledge of many arts, deserved the name of Trismegistus, who preceded the philosophers in the antiquity of his doctrine, and who is revered by the Egyptians as a god, in asserting the majesty of the one God with infinite praises, calls Him Lord and Father, and says that He is without a name because He does not stand in need of a proper name, inasmuch as He is alone, and that He has no parents, since He exists of Himself and by Himself.<sup>136</sup>

Prokopovich made an astute choice in drawing on Lactantius in support of the wisdom of pagan seers who had anticipated Christianity. As Frances Yates has noted, the acceptance of Hermetic tradition in the Renaissance

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 28. For an English translation of the relevant passage in Clement of Alexandria, see Clement of Alexandria, *The Writings of Clement of Alexandria*, trans. William Wilson (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1867), 448–9.

<sup>133</sup> Prokopovich, "Prolegomena," 28; Clement of Alexandria, *Writings*, 449.

<sup>134</sup> Prokopovich, "Prolegomena," 29; Clement of Alexandria, *Writings*, 71.

<sup>135</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 163.

<sup>136</sup> Prokopovich, "Prolegomena," 26; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, 95.



largely rested on the authority of credulous Church Fathers – particularly Lactantius and Augustine.<sup>137</sup>

Significantly, Prokopovich also devoted an entire section in his *Prolegomena* to Hermes Trismegistus and the links between Egyptian and Jewish theology. Prokopovich begins by speculating that Hermes's espousal of the Trinity was influenced by "the wise men of the Jews." More specifically he argues that Patriarch Joseph "became openly a prince of Egypt, and also indeed he was able with weighty authority to speak of the true God."<sup>138</sup> At this juncture Prokopovich draws on Psalm 105:22, which states that Joseph was able "to bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom." This discussion of Hermes's foreknowledge of the Trinity follows in a Kircherian spirit. Indeed, as Yates has noted, Kircher was adamant that Hermes Trismegistus foresaw the Trinity and although he did not explicitly define it he "spoke of it first and better than any subsequent Gentile."<sup>139</sup>

Prokopovich's debt to Athanasius Kircher becomes even more apparent when he directly cites the famed Jesuit polymath in his articulation of the dual nature of Egyptian natural philosophy. Thus, Prokopovich argues that the first form of Egyptian philosophy is exoteric, in that it is "clear and open to all as Geometry, Arithmetic, Music etc." However, the second form of Egyptian philosophy "is obscure and hieroglyphic," or in other words esoteric.<sup>140</sup> In support of this argument, Prokopovich refers to the "erudite compositions of Athanasius Kircher". More specifically, Prokopovich positively draws on Kircher's interpretation of the hieroglyphs on the obelisk of Heliopolis.

As Frances Yates has noted, Kircher believed that Hermes Trismegistus had inscribed his secret wisdom in the form of hieroglyphs, and consequently anyone able to decode their meaning would be privy to divine knowledge.<sup>141</sup> Consequently, it is particularly significant that Prokopovich placed an emphasis on Kircher's interpretation of the obelisk in Heliopolis.<sup>142</sup> This Kircherian reading argued that the hieroglyphic symbols – especially the cross, sun and phoenix – indicated that Hermes antici-

<sup>137</sup> Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2002), 6.

<sup>138</sup> Prokopovich, "Prolegomena," 29.

<sup>139</sup> Yates, *Giordano Bruno*, 2002, 452.

<sup>140</sup> Prokopovich, "Prolegomena," 30.

<sup>141</sup> Yates, "Giordano Bruno," 2002, 453.

<sup>142</sup> Prokopovich, "Prolegomena," 30–1.



pated Christianity and the concept of the Trinity.<sup>143</sup> In short, Prokopovich is drawing on Kircher to validate his favourable stance towards Hermes Trismegistus as a pagan sage who anticipated Christianity.

Tellingly, Prokopovich makes absolutely no reference to the doubts cast on the antiquity of the *Corpus Hermeticum* by Isaac Casaubon in 1614. Thus, one can argue that the Ukrainian cleric maintained a genuine belief in the ancient character of the Hermetic writings, which are used to demonstrate ancient wisdom. Whilst Casaubon's views became increasingly prevalent during the seventeenth century, it would be a mistake to judge Prokopovich's apparent belief in the antiquity of the Hermetic corpus as anachronistic. Throughout the seventeenth century, religious and scientific figures of great influence, such as Robert Fludd and Athanasius Kircher, remained avowed adherents of the genuine antiquity of the Hermetic doctrine. Others, such as the Cambridge Platonists Ralph Cudworth and Henry More, accepted that some of the Hermetic Corpus were counterfeits, but denied that all the works were only written in the Christian era.<sup>144</sup>

In his *Natural Philosophy* Prokopovich also refers to Plato's *Timaeus*, various works by Seneca and Justin the Martyr's *Apologies* as works in accord with Hermetic thinking on God and the universe. This is indeed true, as in Book 9 of *Timaeus*, Plato writes:

We must declare that this Cosmos has verily come into existence as a Living Creature endowed with soul and reason owing to the Providence of God... He constructed it as a Living Creature, one and visible, containing within itself all the living creatures which are by nature akin to itself.<sup>145</sup>

Seneca also identified God with the universe, stating that: "the universe in which we dwell is one and is God" and that "what else is nature than God and divine reason diffused through the whole world and all its parts."<sup>146</sup> Lastly, in Chapter 28 of his *First Apology* to the Roman Emperor, the Senate and the Roman people, Justin the Martyr expounds upon heathen analogies with Christian doctrine:

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<sup>143</sup> Athanasius Kircher, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, vol. 3 (Rome, 1654), 332–4; Yates, "Giordano Bruno," 2002, 456.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 433–70.

<sup>145</sup> Plato, *Plato IX* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 55.

<sup>146</sup> Henry, F. Burton, "Seneca's Idea of God," *The American Journal of Theology* 13:3 (July 1909): 358–9.

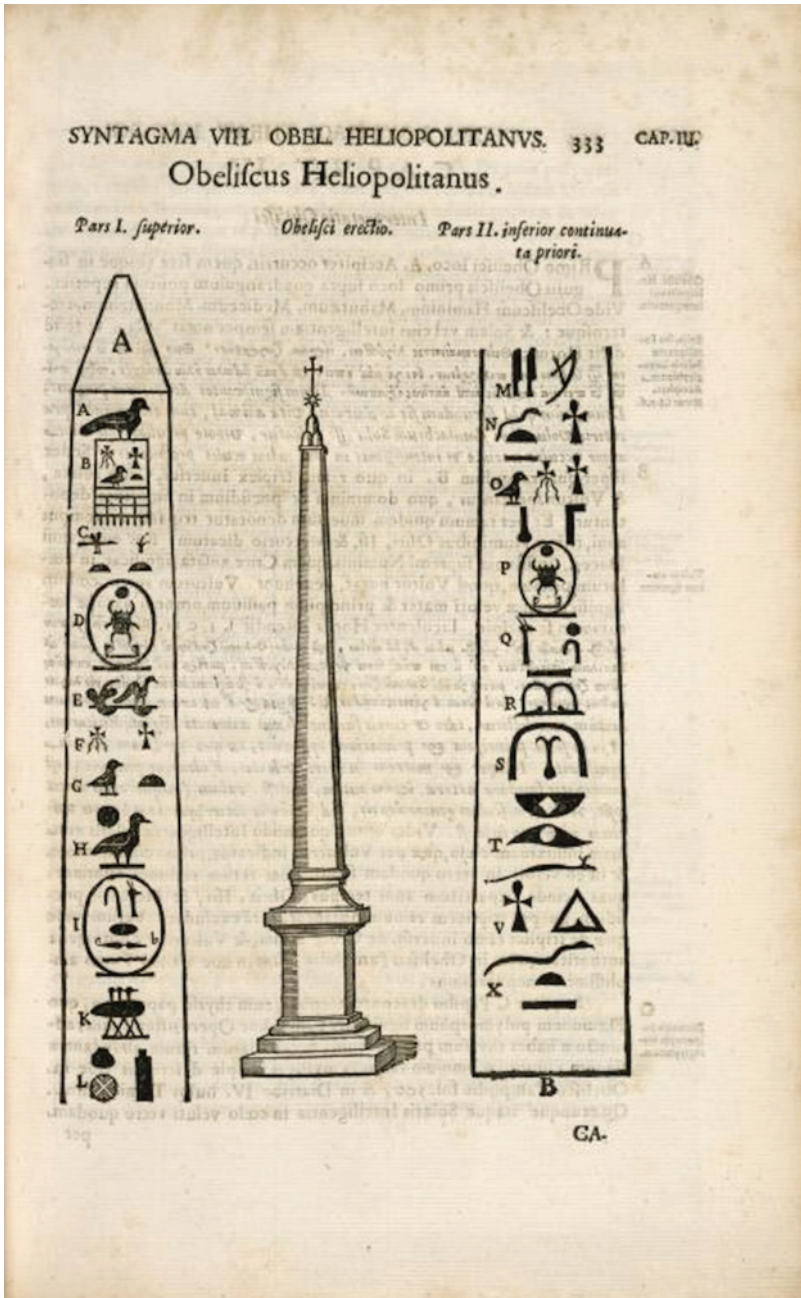


Fig. 34. "Obeliscus Heliopolitanus," from Athanasius Kircher, *Oedipus aegyptiacus*, vol. 3 (Rome, 1654), 333.

If, then, we hold some opinions near of kin to the poets and philosophers in greatest repute among you, and others of a diviner strain, and far above out of their sight, and have demonstration on our side into the bargain, why are we to be thus unjustly hated, and to stand distinguished in mystery above the rest of mankind? For in saying that all things were made in beautiful order by God, what do we seem to say more than Plato? When we teach a general conflagration, what do we teach more than the Stoics? When we assert departed souls to be in a state of sensibility, and the wicked to be in torments, but the good free from pain and in a blissful condition, we assert no more than your poets and philosophers. By opposing the worship of the works of men's hands, we concur with Menander the comedian, and such as affirm the workman to be greater than his work.<sup>147</sup>

Prokopovich then proceeds to argue that one can use the above cited authors as a basis in order to compare the divine power sustaining created things with a statue reflected in water or a weight held aloft in the air by hands. Thus, if one removes the statue or the hand, then the figure in the water immediately disappears and the weight falls to the ground respectively. Prokopovich concludes the passage by stating: "It is exactly the same if God would want in one moment to deprive creation of protection, then everything would quickly be transformed into nothingness."<sup>148</sup> This statement contradicts the claim by V. M. Nichik that Prokopovich's discussion of God and nature contains notable elements of deism closely approaching the views of Benedict Spinoza.<sup>149</sup> Nichik also claimed that Prokopovich harboured elements of pantheism similar to those espoused by Giordano Bruno.<sup>150</sup>

Whilst Prokopovich certainly saw God's imprint in everything existing in nature, it would be a mistake to deduce from this that he believed that God and the material world were one and the same thing. In order to grasp the intrinsic difference between the doctrine of pantheism and Prokopovich's theology, it is appropriate to return to a major influence: the Negative Theology of Dionysius the Areopagite, as developed in *On the Divine Names*. As noted above, Prokopovich favourably cited the tenth chapter of this work, in which Dionysius writes of God as the omnipotent founder, preserver and embracer of the world. In chapter four of *On*

<sup>147</sup> Justin the Martyr, *The First Apology of Justin Martyr*, ed. John Kaye (London: Griffith Farran Okeden & Welsh, 1889), 28–9.

<sup>148</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 163.

<sup>149</sup> Nichik, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 23. For Prokopovich's polemic against Spinozian atheism, see Feofan Prokopovich, *Razsuzhdenie o bezbozhii* (Moscow, 1784), 15–18.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

*the Divine Names*, Dionysius utilizes his concept of Negative Theology in order to discuss God's role and place in the universe:

They say he is in our minds, in our souls, and in our bodies, in heaven and on earth, that while remaining ever within himself he is also in and around and above the world, that he is above heaven and above all being, that he is sun, star and fire, water, wind, and dew, cloud, archetypal stone and rock, that he is all, that he is no thing.<sup>151</sup>

Thus, whilst God is within and around humans and the entire universe, he is also an unknowable supra-essence transcending the finite consciousness of the lower human realm. It is within this mystical negative theology that one should seek to ground Prokopovich's own understanding of God and the universe.

### *Cosmology and Astronomy*

Prokopovich was one of the most knowledgeable authorities on astronomical matters in Petrine Russia and was able to use his elevated position of power to indulge in private astronomical observations. It is known that he had his own observatories at Karpovka, his wooden residence in the capital on Apothecary Island and at his coastal dacha situated between the tsar's Peterhof Palace and Menshikov's Oranienbaum Palace.<sup>152</sup> Prokopovich owned numerous astronomical instruments and devices, such as a quadrant with a radius of 7 feet and a sextant measuring 3 feet.<sup>153</sup> The inventory of his personal items found in his will also lists a copper sphere, four sundials and two globes.<sup>154</sup> A mere one month prior to his death, Prokopovich also wrote to the Academy of Sciences requesting the use of a Gregorian telescope, which after several experiments was returned to the Academy Observatory.<sup>155</sup>

His personal library contains a wealth of astronomical texts and is testament to his wide reading in such matters. One can find many tomes with a distinct astrological bent, such as Joannes Regiomontanus's *Astrologia*, David Origanus's *Ephemerides Brandenburgicae* and Marcellus Palinge-

<sup>151</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, *Complete Works*, 55–56.

<sup>152</sup> N. I. Nevskaiia, *Peterburgskaia astronomicheskaia shkola XVIII v* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1984), 71.

<sup>153</sup> S. Maslikov, "Istoriia liubitel'skoi astronomii v Rossii i SSSR. Chast' I. Liubiteli-odinochki. XVII-nachalo XX vv.," <http://www.astronomer.ru/library/php?action=2&sub=2&gid=66> (Feb. 24, 2011).

<sup>154</sup> Chistovich, *Prokopovich i ego vremia*, 650.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 625.

nus's *Zodiacus Vitae*.<sup>156</sup> His collection of sixteenth-century astronomical works included tomes by Michael Maestlin and Georg von Peurbach.<sup>157</sup> From the seventeenth-century, one finds a rich variety of volumes, including works by Galileo, Kepler, Jakob Bartsch, Christopher Clavius, Erhard Weigel, Laurentius Paulinus and Christian Vurstisius.<sup>158</sup>

A significant inclusion in Prokopovich's astronomical collection is Otto Casmann's *Cosmopoeiae et Ouranographiae Christiana* (1598), which sought to base astronomy and natural science on a strict reading of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>159</sup> This approach was embraced by Prokopovich and is clearly reflected in his *Natural Philosophy*. In this regard, one must remember that Prokopovich vigorously upheld a literal interpretation of the Bible and was consequently hostile to the heliocentric system advocated by Copernicus. Indeed, after providing a basic outline of the main tenets of Copernicus's heliocentric system in his *Natural Philosophy*, Prokopovich makes it clear that it runs counter to the Holy Scriptures.<sup>160</sup> Prokopovich does not deny that Copernicus made many talented observations and that a great number of contemporary astronomers recognize his system; but, at the same time, he is keen to highlight that the Copernican system "is insufficient for the explanation of the many stated questions of astronomy" and has been rejected by many other contemporary astronomers, such as Christopher Clavius (1538–1612) and Paolo Antonio Foscarini (1565–1616).<sup>161</sup>

A much more acceptable astronomical system for Prokopovich is that propounded by Tycho Brahe (1546–1601), the celebrated Danish astronomer. Prokopovich notes that in order to explain the movements of the planets, Brahe agrees with Copernicus in placing the Sun at the centre, around which the nearest planets – Mercury and Venus – and the more distant planets of Mars, Jupiter and Saturn all move.<sup>162</sup> According to Brahe's system, however, the Sun and Moon still revolve around the Earth, thereby not conflicting with the Holy Scriptures. As Prokopovich states: "Most contemporary astronomers accept this system . . . and in its turn [it]

<sup>156</sup> Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 31, 30, 48; Nos. 1529, 1501, 2678 respectively.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 34, 32; Nos. 1729, 1654 respectively.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 30–2, 44, 15; Nos. 1512–1513, 1559, 1464, 1580, 1632, 2385, 1558, 449 and 1629 respectively.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 34; No. 1746.

<sup>160</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 289.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 288–89. Prokopovich also argues against the Copernican system in his theological tract entitled *Liber Quartus de Creatione et Providentia Communi*. See Prokopovich, *De Creatione et Providentia*, 46–8.

<sup>162</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 289.

does not contradict the Holy Scriptures. It is not dangerous because it expounds cautiously."<sup>163</sup> The importance of the Holy Scriptures to Tycho Brahe's system is repeatedly stressed by the Dane himself, who wrote that he was consistently led by their "unquestionable authority."<sup>164</sup>

Prokopovich also drew upon Josephus Flavius's *The Jewish Wars*, when discussing how comets can be seen for up to six months: "Josephus Flavius says that prior to the destruction of Jerusalem a comet was visible, which was situated above the place of [impending] doom. I reply that the explanation has many reasons."<sup>165</sup> A number of scientific reasons are then given as to why comets remain in the sky for such long periods of time. The comet witnessed by Flavius, however, purportedly stood above Jerusalem for an entire year and thus Prokopovich states that it is necessary to believe that this was due to the will of God.<sup>166</sup>

The concluding paragraph of Prokopovich's discussion of Tycho Brahe's system centres on the empyrean, or the supposed tenth sphere beyond the nine spheres of the celestial realm in which God and the blessed reside. Prokopovich cites in favour of its existence, stating that "according to generally accepted opinion . . . there exists an unmoving sphere above the moving spheres in which the blessed dwell."<sup>167</sup> He then states that theologians call this realm the empyrean, whilst the apostles named it the third heaven.<sup>168</sup> In a latter section, Prokopovich states that no experiments have been able to determine whether the empyrean heaven manifests its strength or acts on the sublunary body.

Whilst Prokopovich does not elaborate upon the influence of the empyrean zone on sublunary bodies, he does affirmatively state that the heavens and stars affect sublunary bodies. Indeed, he berates those who argue that the heavens play no role in the acts of the sublunary realm:

There were several authors that deprived heaven not only of the ability to significantly stimulate with regard to a sublunary act, but to deny it the strength of heat, and were convinced that before heaven, stars were only attached for embellishment, just as to embellish a dining-room inlay and mosaic. I do not know which considerations forced them to such thoughts,

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ann Blair, "Tycho Brahe's Critique of Copernicus and the Copernican System," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 51:3 (1990): 362.

<sup>165</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 448.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 449.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 289.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.



possibly, not knowing and ignorant themselves, and possibly the fact that they were blind in experimental science.<sup>169</sup>

One should not construe, however, that Prokopovich espoused an astrological standpoint in which celestial bodies are able to influence human will. Indeed, in the tract *Liber Quartus de Creatione et Providentia Communi* he expresses his scorn for judicial astrology.<sup>170</sup> More specifically, he picks out contemporary mathematicians at Cracow for particular criticism, in regard to their almanacs that drew on astrology to predict the fortunes of monarchs and cities in war and peace.<sup>171</sup> Prokopovich's focus on the astrological calendars of Cracow mathematicians is not surprising, as they exerted considerable influence among his clerical colleagues in Kiev. Moreover, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 6, Peter the Great was also drawn to the astrological calendars produced by various Polish mathematicians in both Cracow and Zamosc. Prokopovich also chastized those people who succumbed to astrological charlatanism: "Only the most very gullible people can be amused by these vanities; and people of power carry in their soul a heavy sin if they do not forbid this fraud."<sup>172</sup>

Yet, whilst repudiating astrological powers on human free will, Prokopovich provides evidence of the affects engendered by celestial bodies on the natural environment of the sublunary world.<sup>173</sup> This stance bears a marked similarity to arguments expounded by Johannes de Mey (d. 1678) in his *Sacra Physiologia* (1655), which was present in Prokopovich's private library.<sup>174</sup> In this work de Mey argues that the stars affect much in nature, but are not able to influence future contingents "which are unknown to astrologers and render their predictions uncertain."<sup>175</sup> Prokopovich's arguments are also very similar to those expounded by St. Basil, who remarks that "the variations of the moon do not take place without exerting great influence upon the organization of animals and of all living things," and that the moon makes "all nature participate in her changes."<sup>176</sup>

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 329.

<sup>170</sup> Prokopovich, "Creatione et Providentia Communi," 30–3.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>172</sup> Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 139.

<sup>173</sup> On Maxim the Greek's stance on astrology and free will in sixteenth-century Muscovy, see Robert Collis, "Maxim the Greek, Astrology and the Great Conjunction of 1524," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 4:1 (Oct. 2010): 601–23.

<sup>174</sup> See Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 14; No. 413.

<sup>175</sup> See Thorndike, *History of Magic*, vol. 8, 279.

<sup>176</sup> Thorndike, *History of Magic*, vol. 1, 492–3.

Prokopovich begins his own analysis of the issue by citing “a great number of accurate inquiries,” which have demonstrated that the Sun produces four fateful periods and that several constellations “hang unproductively,” while “others bring weather or augers, widely affecting illnesses or their remedies.”<sup>177</sup> Thus, Prokopovich remarks that even the sick and wounded, who shun the light of the sun and the moon, experience significantly less sickness during times of solar and lunar change.<sup>178</sup>

Prokopovich also cites the fact that cockerels are able to wake at midnight in order to sing because they are somehow able to sense the returning sun and thus pay tribute to it. Furthermore, when there is a full moon, oysters and molluscs grow and ants diligently engage in work until the next new moon, when they always relax. On the ninth day after mating, Prokopovich also notes that ants do not leave their anthills, as this is not conducive for them. The Ukrainian cleric also marvels at the capacity of metals and minerals to be engendered underground although deprived of light and of a compass needle to point north, even in thick fog or when conducting an experiment in a closed room.<sup>179</sup>

Unknown occult qualities inherent in celestial bodies are discussed in the concluding paragraph of this section, in which Prokopovich posits that it is extremely likely that they possess many other powers:

To this it is necessary to state that the heavens and stars possibly also have, as several consider, other powers, apart from those four mentioned: dryness, dampness, heat and cold, either similar or correlating to them. They are as if instruments in various ways [and] can act and change the sublunary body. In accordance with this . . . it is highly probable that in the heavens are completed various extremely great transformations. Thanks to these transformations, the very nearest elements receive various half-real powers and through them they spread to distant things.<sup>180</sup>

Whilst Prokopovich is noticeably vague regarding how these powers are “spread to distant things,” he does devote the last section of his *Natural Philosophy* to an overview of the occult qualities of gems and stones, which, in many places bear a remarkable similarity to *Of Stones and Jewels*

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<sup>177</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 329.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 330.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*



by Daniel Sennert (1572–1637), the influential Lutheran professor of medicine at Wittenberg University who himself drew on Paracelsus.<sup>181</sup>

*The Occult Qualities of Gems and Stones*

Prokopovich begins this section of his *Natural Philosophy* with a brief preamble in which he states various stones known to man: the one-horned fossil, marble, black coral, bezoar stones, stones of creatures and “the most renowned and most amazing” magnet.<sup>182</sup> He then devotes five pages to describing various gems and stones and providing details of their respective powers and benefits. In this section Prokopovich draws extensively on *Of Stones and Jewels* by Sennert and on Julius Caesar Scaliger’s *Exotericarum Exercitationum de Subtilitate*. He also cites various other authors, including Pliny the Elder, Girolamo Cardano, Jean Beguin and Marsilio Ficino. After largely descriptive accounts of the appearance and form of marble and coral, Prokopovich moves on to covering the bezoar stone, which was supposedly thought to grow in the stomachs of goats: “The Bezoar of Arabs is considered a remedy because it has great power against poison. It is not from a mineral but is formed in the stomach of goats.”<sup>183</sup> This explanation of its powers closely matches that found in the *Secretum Secretorum*, which remarks that the bezoar is an antidote to animal, mineral and vegetable poison.<sup>184</sup> Furthermore, it matches Daniel Sennert’s assertion that “it is both precious and rare, and commended against poyson.”<sup>185</sup>

Prokopovich then proceeds to describe the many stones generated in creatures, such as toads and states that the most valued are the so-called Stag’s Tears, or *lacrima cervi*, described by Julius Caesar Scaliger in *Exotericarum Exercitationum de Subtilitate* (1565), which can be found

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<sup>181</sup> For the tract *Of Stones and Jewels*, see Daniel Sennert, *Thirteen Books of Natural Philosophy* (London, 1661), 142–51. For more on Sennert’s influence on seventeenth-century medicine and chemistry, see William R. Newman, *Atoms and Alchemy: Chymistry and the Experimental Origins of the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 83–154. It is also possible to note similarities to *Secretum Secretorum*, a medieval Russian document attributed to Aristotle. For more on the *Secretum Secretorum*, see William F. Ryan, “The Old Russian Version of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum*,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 56:2 (1978): 262–60; Ryan, *Bathhouse at Midnight*, 359–72.

<sup>182</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 495.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 496.

<sup>184</sup> See Ryan, *Bathhouse at Midnight*, 361.

<sup>185</sup> Sennert, *Thirteen Books*, 148.

in Prokopovich's private library.<sup>186</sup> He then quotes directly and at length from the 112th exercise of this text, which describes how a bony concretion is formed in the corner of a stag's eye when it reaches one hundred years of age. Scaliger claimed it was a smooth and light substance that could easily slip through the fingers of a person holding it. In a similar manner to the bezoar stone, the stag's tear was seen as a medicinal remedy against poisons and purportedly acted as an antidote to the plague if powdered and taken with wine. According to Scaliger this will result in the patient profusely sweating over their entire body.<sup>187</sup>

The so-called aerie stone, which Prokopovich notes next, is apparently used by an eagle to expel her fledglings from the nest, and is said by the author to strengthen and preserve human offspring. In order to induce these powers, Prokopovich recommends that it should be fastened to the hands in order to preserve the bearer and tied around the hips in order to have strengthening powers.<sup>188</sup> Once again, it seems Prokopovich has drawn extensively on Sennert's description of this stone:

The Stone *Aetites*, or Eagle-Stone, so called because 'tis believed that the Eagle carries it to her Nest to help her bringing forth of her young ones. It contains another stone within it. 'Tis found in many places: the Oriental ones are best. But they are found also in *Saxony*, *Misna* and *Silesia*. 'Tis thought to further Child-birth and to prevent abortion. To prevent abortion they tie it to the Womans Arme: to further Child-birth, to her thigh.<sup>189</sup>

According to Prokopovich, a sapphire is said to oppose poison and has the ability to improve eyesight. However, if dishonest and greedy people wear a sapphire, it will soon lose its brilliance and nobility.<sup>190</sup> Yet again, this description seems to be taken from Sennert's treatise *Of Stones and Jewels*, which states:

It resists Poyson and strengthens. Being worn it hinders Pestilential Carbuncles from breaking forth, and laid upon a Carbuncle it extinguishes the same, and hinders venomous exhalations from passing thence to the Heart: being worn by a lascivious Person it looseth its brightness and beauty. It hinders fleshly desires, also 'tis commended against Diseases of the Eyes, and is said to strengthen them.<sup>191</sup>

<sup>186</sup> Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 27; No. 1281.

<sup>187</sup> Sennert quotes extensively from Scaliger's text. See Sennert, *Thirteen Books*, 149.

<sup>188</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2 497.

<sup>189</sup> Sennert, *Thirteen Books*, 149.

<sup>190</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 499.

<sup>191</sup> Sennert, *Thirteen Books*, 150.

Next Prokopovich lists jacinth, which he states can be used for the stimulation of dreams and the strengthening of the heart. In this instance it is intriguing to note the similarities between the qualities denoted by Prokopovich and those found in the *Secretum Secretorum*:

And if anyone should wear a red jacinth it will strengthen his heart and men will honour him. And if anyone should engrave on it the figure of a lion and the planet Leo and do this in the middle of the day of the Sun and *zavady* far from it, will be much honoured and shall attain what he desires in abundance and shall see no bad dreams in his bed.<sup>192</sup>

The carnelian, a hard, reddish and translucent gemstone, is said by Prokopovich to stop blood-flow and the menstrual cycle if consumed with strong wine; whilst granite strengthens the heart and can prevent melancholia and depression. The emerald is a “remarkably beautiful gem and highly appreciated by people,” which “restores and strengthens the eyes with its pleasant green colour.”<sup>193</sup> Prokopovich advises that an emerald acts against poisons and the bites or stings from poisonous animals and against the fever of the plague. Moreover, Prokopovich states that “an emerald worn on the finger or hung to its full extent, protects against epilepsy” and that if a love-struck person is unfortunate enough to touch an emerald, then their feelings of love will immediately disappear!<sup>194</sup> Once again, one can observe how Prokopovich’s description closely follows that of the *Secretum Secretorum*, which states that an emerald worn in a ring can ward off the onset of palsy.<sup>195</sup>

The legendary load-stone, “has huge powers and opposes poisons” and the ruby also has the power to oppose poisons and putrefactions, as well as protecting from the plague and “gladdening the soul.”<sup>196</sup> Prokopovich quotes Book 27 of Pliny’s *Natural History* when describing the opal and states that it is known, first and foremost, for the benefits it conveys for preserving the sharpness of light. One then reads that topaz can be used to stem blood-flow from wounds and beryl can be ground into small particles of powder and used to treat eye wounds.<sup>197</sup> The penultimate gem

<sup>192</sup> Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight*, 361.

<sup>193</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 499. This is again strikingly similar to Sennert’s description: “The *Smaragd* is a most neat jewel . . . and by its pleasant Greeness it refreshes and recreates the Eyes.” See Sennert, *Thirteen Books*, 150.

<sup>194</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 499.

<sup>195</sup> See Ryan, *Bathhouse at Midnight*, 361.

<sup>196</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 500.

<sup>197</sup> These descriptions closely match those of Sennert: “The *Topazzi* . . . is commended to strengthen the Heart and to drive away Melancholy: but is especially used against the

to be discussed by Prokopovich is the crystal, which he states quenches thirst if placed under the tongue.<sup>198</sup> Furthermore, it can be used against poisons if mixed with oil and can heal agitated stomachs. Lastly, Prokopovich remarks that jasper stops blood-flow from the nose and haemorrhaging wounds. He then directly cites Daniel Sennert, who claims that jasper can stem external and internal blood-flow if it is tied or fastened to the hip or thigh.<sup>199</sup>

### *The Occult*

Prokopovich's discussion of the occult qualities of gems and stones is not an incongruous adjunct to his *Natural Philosophy*. In fact it forms part of a much broader survey of natural philosophy that draws extensively on occult philosophy, in harmony with an eclectic form of Aristotelianism that incorporated elements of Christian Neo-Platonism, when seeking to understand, explain and utilize natural phenomena. The absence of any serious scholarly research on this area of Prokopovich's thought is remarkable and is testament to the enduring strength of portraying and viewing both the Archbishop and Peter the Great as beacons of modern, rational and enlightened thought. Yet, the occult elements in Prokopovich's worldview are strong and impossible to ignore.

Given the strong influence of Daniel Sennert vis-à-vis the occult qualities of gems and stones, it is worth examining his thoughts concerning occult and hidden qualities. In affirmation of occult qualities in the natural world Sennert writes:

Now that there are occult Qualities and actions proceedings from occult Qualities is from two things chiefly apparent. The first is, That there are many actions in Nature which totally differ from the actions of the Ele-

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Falling-sickness, and applied to Wounds to stop the Blood. The *Beryl*... is chiefly commended for Wounds in the Eyes, being reduced to a most fine Powder." See Sennert, *Thirteen Books*, 150.

<sup>198</sup> Sennert similarly writes that "the *Crystal*... held under the tongue, it quenches thirst." *Ibid.*, 150-1.

<sup>199</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 500. Prokopovich's citation is accurate, as Sennert has the following to say regarding the powers of jasper: "That which is reddish is much commended against a Flux of Blood from the Nose, Womb and Hemorrhoids; Yea, and it is also commended for Wounds: and credible persons report, that a Flux of Blood and the Womb Flux, which could by no means be stopped, hath been staid by a Jasper Stone bound to the Womans thigh." See Sennert, *Thirteen Books*, 151.

ments; The second is, That the way and manner of such things as work by occult Qualities, is far different from that of the Elements.<sup>200</sup>

Sennert then proceeds to outline six particular sorts of occult qualities discernible in the natural world. First, he writes that “there are certain hidden and wonderful Properties, which alwaies are found in some sorts of living Creatures.”<sup>201</sup> As an example, Sennert points to the “admirable . . . forces of a live Basilisk,” which on dying “may be handled without danger.”<sup>202</sup> Secondly, Sennert argues that occult properties exist in individual living creatures. Here he draws on the doctrine of sympathies and antipathies in order to account for why some people, for example, “cannot abide Cheese, this or that Fish, or other meat or drink.”<sup>203</sup> The third discernible sort of occult quality concerns “things which do not live,” such as precious stones and minerals. Fourthly, Sennert states that “there are Occult Properties in Natural things which have formely lived but now do not live any more.”<sup>204</sup> As examples, he cites how dried toads can be used to draw out poison and how crayfish can cure the bite of a mad dog. The penultimate form of occult quality stated by Sennert relates to “such things as are Naturally bred in Plants and Animals,” with specific reference being made to the poisons found in scorpions, asps and tarantulas and the bezoar stone.<sup>205</sup> Lastly, Sennert cites “malignant Humors and Poysons” that are “preternaturally bred in the bodies of Animals, and do al operate by hidden Qualities.” In this instance Sennert uses the example of humors that lead to “the Falling-sickness, Mother-fits, Malignant Dysenteries, Malignant and pestilential Feavers, the Plague itself, the Scurvy” and “the Leprosie.”<sup>206</sup>

The overarching influence of occult and hidden properties on Sennert’s natural philosophy played a pivotal role in shaping Prokopovich’s own worldview. However, the wider breadth of Prokopovich’s immersion in occult thought is powerfully illustrated by studying his library collection, in which one can find a mass of works by Early Modern occultists. Thirty-nine notable tomes on various aspects of magic and the occult are

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<sup>200</sup> Sennert, *Thirteen Books*, 432.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 439.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 441.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

included in Appendix F, including seminal works by Agrippa, Lemnius, Kircher, Cardano, J. C. Scaliger and della Porta. One can also find more obscure texts, such as Franco Burgersdijck's *Idea Naturalis Philosophiae* (1622), in which is retained a belief in the occult origins of spontaneous generation and in animal spirits in the human body.<sup>207</sup> The full title of Valerio Martini's *Magica Physica* typifies the subject matter of many of the tomes when stating that it is "most curios and most useful, stuffed with celestial and divine cult, and offering keys to all the shrines of most recondite Nature."

Thus, Prokopovich had a wealth of material on the occult at his disposal, which he was able to draw on when setting forth his own natural philosophy at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Prokopovich's willingness to openly and positively discuss all manner of ancient wisdom, laden with occult meaning, is apparent throughout his *Natural Philosophy* and suggests that he harboured a belief in the *prisca sapientia* scheme for the transmission of knowledge. This rested on a premise whereby primitive wisdom was passed down by a line of semi-mythical figures. Hermes Trismegistus is openly lauded by Prokopovich when he states: "Let us praise the thought of Hermes Trismegistus." Furthermore, in a section entitled "About the World in General," the cleric expounds upon the idea that the world is living and cites Hermes Trismegistus, Zoroaster and Orpheus.<sup>208</sup> It is then stated that other thinkers accept Daniel Sennert's argument that everything is filled with spirit and draws upon the thought of Pythagoras and Plato, who often named the world as an essence and attributed to it an all encompassing soul.<sup>209</sup>

The clearest indication that Prokopovich endorsed the *prisca sapientia* scheme is displayed in a passage in which he discusses metempsychosis and palingenesis and stresses the primary wisdom of Pythagoras:

Primitive wisdom was not born among the Egyptians by accident, as Pythagoras had already written about metempsychosis, that is, the transportation of the soul, that transfers from one body to another, as is transmitted in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* . . . or about palingenesis, that is, about the return of the soul from a previous body and as if (re)born, as writes the Grammatician, Servius . . . or states that the soul, leaving the body, first transfers to birds, then on to fish and from fish to crops etc. . . . after which or after an

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<sup>207</sup> Thorndike, *History of Magic*, vol. 7, 405.

<sup>208</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 122, 284.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

intermediate time once again return to a human's body. One can read about this in Plato.<sup>210</sup>

In his discussion regarding the origins of extracting metals from the earth, Prokopovich also credulously cites the Biblical legend of Tubal Cain in Genesis 4:22, which states that he was "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron."

Prokopovich spells out in *Natural Philosophy* that the legacy bequeathed by ancient sages can be attained by those able to utilize powers inherent in nature. According to Prokopovich, such "eminent mathematicians" are able to make wooden birds fly and clocks that function with the motion of wheels.<sup>211</sup> Prokopovich also notes that historians have written of a golden tree, around which flew a golden bird, at the side of the throne of a certain Polish king. In the same kingdom, Prokopovich then notes that seven towers were erected as workshops and when something was shouted from one tower, the same shout resounded consecutively in the remaining six towers. One also reads of Archimedes's legendary mechanical glass sphere, or planetarium, which enabled observation of the movement of the sun, moon and planets.

These examples of artificial magic are accompanied by direct citations from Athanasius Kicher, in whose works, according to Prokopovich, "the great art of natural magic is described."<sup>212</sup> Indeed, Prokopovich gives one example, whereby the construction of a statue is described, which rises independently into the air by the movement of arms and whose countenance blinks and is able to turn to various sides. Prokopovich is here describing Kircher's so-called 'Delphic Oracle,' which according to the renowned Jesuit was a statue that "opens and closes its mouth as if it was speaking and moves its eyes."<sup>213</sup>

In addition to providing examples of so-called artificial, or mathematical, magic, Prokopovich also writes that it is possible to use natural magic in order to create genuine life, thereby overcoming the normal boundary between artistry and nature. He writes that "with the help of artistry," or in other words natural magic, "it is possible to create genuine creatures."<sup>214</sup> As a demonstration of this fact, Prokopovich cites Book 15 of Ovid's

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 407. For Ovid's description of Pythagoras's belief in the transmigratio of souls, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 597–616.

<sup>211</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 154.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Athanasius Kircher, *Phonurgia nova* (Kempton, 1673), 112.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

*Metamorphoses*, in which a real scorpion is described as capable of being engendered from the flesh of a crab:

If you remove the branching claws of a crab on the seashore and bury the rest in the earth, a scorpion will shortly emerge from the part you have carefully covered, and threaten your feet with its hooked tail.<sup>215</sup>

However, by far the lengthiest exposition in Prokopovich's *Natural Philosophy*, regarding the possibilities inherent in nature, is accorded to the practice of alchemy.

### *Alchemy*

Prokopovich devotes three pages of his *Natural Philosophy* to the subject of alchemy, providing something of a potted history and expressing views highly favourable to its practice and goals. In his opening paragraph on alchemy in *Natural Philosophy* Prokopovich states that "it is not necessary to object to the fact that the art may possess the power of nature and therefore I hold that it is not to be separated from nature."<sup>216</sup> Prokopovich then proceeds to acknowledge that despite "great persistence and remarkable stubbornness" alchemists have not up until his day successfully created real gold.<sup>217</sup> Yet, whilst Prokopovich admits the failure of alchemists in the past to perfect their art, he certainly does not deny the possibility of them mastering it in the future. He gives a number of reasons to back up this stance, beginning with the argument that the art has the potential to imitate nature and provides a curious example:

First, when the art imitates nature and on many occasions copies nature itself, then it obtains true powers and accommodates the power of nature to the extent that it is possible to be able to take the place of a thing, for example, the possibility to engender bees from fresh guts covered by dirt.<sup>218</sup>

He then states: "is it not possible from this art to inherit from nature the creation of real gold?"<sup>219</sup> Prokopovich replies positively to his own question and provides truly extraordinary proof of the potential for alchemists to produce real gold. This proof comes in the form of angels, who are credited with the knowledge to foresee correct alchemical processes:

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<sup>215</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 611.

<sup>216</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 155.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*



Angels by nature have the knowledge to foresee which material and which correlations are somehow necessary for the creation of real gold. Consequently when [alchemists] set everything correctly and mix at the right time, then real gold is created.<sup>220</sup>

Therefore, according to Prokopovich, “although alchemists up until now have not produced real gold in their furnaces, this does not have decisive meaning” as in the future “human ability may establish the creation of real gold.”<sup>221</sup> What is more, in “breaking their heads to create gold” alchemists have actually succeeded in revealing other scientific theories and inventions that may well even be more beneficial than gold. Prokopovich then cites the mastery of the separation of metals as an example.<sup>222</sup>

It is significant that Prokopovich’s stance towards alchemy is markedly similar to that espoused by Innokentii Gizel in his natural philosophy course taught in Kiev between 1645 and 1647. Thus, Gizel wrote that “together with several *physics* we state that it is possible to achieve genuine gold with the help of chemical art, which unites active and passive aspects of nature, although this is a very arduous process.”<sup>223</sup> Hence, Prokopovich’s attitudes towards alchemy reflect an older Kievan tradition, which was first articulated by Gizel in the 1640s, and that reflected the manner in which Aristotelian doctrine could be fused with other elements of Early Modern occult philosophy.

In his *Natural Philosophy*, Prokopovich also displays an expert knowledge of both the practical and theoretical nature and process of (al)chemical separation, writing an entire section on chemical elements and their powers. This section draws heavily on the work of Daniel Sennert; a fact demonstrated in his description of the chemical element Mercury: “Daniel Sennert names it a divine fluid or spirit, of which with great effort it is possible to separate from fine sulphur and very rare salt.”<sup>224</sup>

Prokopovich defended his stance on alchemy, and scientific experimentation in general, by arguing that knowledge of nature is not opposed to Christ’s Laws. Indeed, he argues that God respects those who endeavour to study nature and faith provides the foundation for the intellect to aspire to knowledge. Prokopovich also states that true inspiration of reason is received from the consciousness of the divine harmony of nature, which

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<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> Stratii, ed., *Problemy natur-filosofii*, 168.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 394.

seems redolent of a belief in the analogy of macrocosm and microcosm.<sup>225</sup> This sentiment is strengthened by what the Soviet historian V. M. Nichik calls Prokopovich's 'Neo-Platonic' ideas about the origin of the world by the path of divine emanation.<sup>226</sup>

A remarkable testament to Prokopovich's continued embrace of an alchemical worldview after writing on the subject in 1708 is found in the sermon Prokopovich delivered at Peter the Great's funeral in St. Petersburg on March 8, 1725.<sup>227</sup> As Stephen Baehr has noted, Prokopovich deliberately portrays Peter as an alchemist-monarch who had transformed Catherine, his second wife, from base metal into gold.<sup>228</sup> In one richly suggestive passage Prokopovich writes of how "over the course of many years" Peter the Great had "created an heir to his crown, his empire and his throne" akin to how an alchemist creates "gold that has been refined in the crucible."<sup>229</sup>

Baehr rightly states that in this passage Prokopovich "panegyrically transforms the marriage of Peter and Catherine into the alchemical *coniunctio*, the unification of male and female opposites that leads to perfection."<sup>230</sup> In this respect, it is fitting that Prokopovich chose to use such alchemical imagery at Peter the Great's funeral, as the creation of gold (the philosophers' stone) was inextricably linked to sacrifice and death.<sup>231</sup>

Prokopovich's familiarity with alchemical philosophy and practice is testified by the significant number of alchemical tomes present in his library collection. At least thirty-four separate alchemical authors, including Daniel Sennert, can be found in Prokopovich's library.<sup>232</sup> When one considers that alchemical interest has been considered as an all but non-existent phenomenon in Petrine Russia, it is remarkable to note that one

<sup>225</sup> Smirnov, *Feofan Prokopoich*, 45.

<sup>226</sup> Nichik, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 21–2.

<sup>227</sup> The sermon is entitled "Slovo na pogrebenie vsepresvetleishago derzhavneishago Petra Velikago" (Sermon at the Funeral of the All-Illustrious Sovereign Peter the Great). See Grebeniuk, *Panegiricheskaia literatura*, 279–82.

<sup>228</sup> See Stephen Baehr, "Alchemy and Eighteenth-Century Russian Literature: An Introduction," in Joachim Klein, Simon Dixon and Maarten Fraanje, eds., *Reflections on Russia in the Eighteenth Century; 6th International Conference of the Study Group on Eighteenth Century Russia* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2001), 156–7.

<sup>229</sup> Grebeniuk, *Panegiricheskaia literatura*, 281. Baehr also astutely remarks how Prokopovich uses the word *sotvoril* to describe how Peter "created" his successor, which is also the word used to express how God created the universe. See Baehr, "Alchemy," 157.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>231</sup> See Lindy Abraham, *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 37.

<sup>232</sup> See Appendix E.

of its chief religious representatives actually harboured a notable stock of literature on the controversial theme.

Prokopovich possessed a broad scope of Hermetic and Paracelsian alchemical works from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which would have been the envy of any true adept. One finds, for example, a rare first edition of Petrus Severinus's *Idea Medicinae Philosophicae* (1571), in which the author expounded and developed Paracelsian medicine and alchemy.<sup>233</sup> A first edition of Johann Vincent Finck's *Dogmatic-Hermetic Handbook* (1618) was also in Prokopovich's collection.<sup>234</sup> In this tome, the Archbishop could consult an impressive collection of chemical remedies edited by Finck into 38 chapters, which includes tracts by Paracelsus, Oswald Croll and Martin Ruland.<sup>235</sup> Prokopovich could also consult four editions of Johann Schröder's *Pharmacopoeia Medico-Chymica*, first printed in 1641, to discover a rich source of fantastical information vis-à-vis all manner of alchemical recipes and experiments by the likes of Paracelsus, Croll, Quercetanus and Schröder himself.<sup>236</sup> Prokopovich also owned an edition of *Theatrum Sympatheticum*, which provided a compilation of tracts relating to sympathetic powders by various alchemists, including Robert Fludd, Kenelm Digby, Johannes Baptista van Helmont and Rodolphus Goelenius.<sup>237</sup>

A further significant alchemical work Prokopovich was able to consult in his library included a complete copy of the *Emerald Tablet* – “the Bible of the alchemists” – which was attributed to Hermes Trismegistus.<sup>238</sup> This is widely viewed as one of the most important sources of medieval alchemy and related to a legend in which Noah carried a tablet with him during the Flood and was subsequently found by Abraham's wife Sarah in the hands of Hermes as he rested in his tomb.<sup>239</sup> Other alchemical tomes in Prokopovich's collection worthy of mention are Adrian Mynsicht's influential *Thesaurus et Armamentarium Medico-Chymicum*, Otto Tachenius's *Hippocrates Chymiacus*, Olaus Borrichius's *Hermetis Aegyptiorum et*

<sup>233</sup> Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 31; No. 1530.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 21; No. 925.

<sup>235</sup> Thorndike, *History of Magic*, vol. 7, 175.

<sup>236</sup> Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 30–1; Nos. 1521–1524. For information on Schröder's text, see Thorndike, *History of Magic*, vol. 8, 88–92.

<sup>237</sup> Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 52; No. 2993.

<sup>238</sup> A full copy of the *Emerald Tablet* appeared in Johann Sperling's *Physica Anthropologica*. Prokopovich owned an impressive 5 copies of the 1684 Halle edition. See Verkhovskii, *Uchrezhdenie*, 33, 35; Nos. 1688, 1790–3.

<sup>239</sup> Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, 69.

*Chemicorum Sapientia*, Johann Hartmann's *Praxis Chymiatrica*, Guerner Rolfinck's *Chimia in Artis Formam Redacta* and Lazarus Rivieri's *Praxis Medicina*.<sup>240</sup> Prokopovich's alchemical collection may not have been as large as those of Jacob Bruce and Robert Erskine, but it is highly significant nonetheless.

Lastly, it is intriguing to note the striking presence of a certain Iakov Alkhimist or 'Jacob the Alchemist' at Prokopovich's deathbed in 1736. Indeed, this obscure character also appears as a prominent beneficiary in Prokopovich's official will – listed at the head of the fourth row of *nasledniki* (inheritors).<sup>241</sup> It is hard to imagine any other ecclesiastical figure in Russia at the time being able to pursue a successful theological career whilst harbouring such 'dubious' scientific interests. Prokopovich's hoarding of a significant alchemical collection in his library was a bold and risky move that certainly relied on the tolerant protection offered to heterodox thinkers by Peter the Great. The patronage of the tsar was certainly crucial to Prokopovich's early career in St. Petersburg, where he faced considerable opposition from rival clergymen. His appointment as Bishop of Pskov in 1718, for example, was opposed by Stefan Iavorskii, his bitter rival, on the grounds that he was a heretic who advocated heterodoxy. This was still a serious accusation. It should be borne in mind that Quirinus Kuhlmann, the Protestant mystic who embraced alchemy, had been burnt for heresy on Red Square as relatively recently as 1689. That Prokopovich was able to avoid a similar fate is testament to the dramatic sea change that had been engendered by Peter the Great's wave of radical reforms.

### *Monsters, Freaks and Marvels of Nature*

It is fascinating to read Prokopovich's account of monsters and freaks of nature as it highlights the extent to which he still relied upon antique accounts when outlining his eighteenth-century course on natural philosophy. The two most notable and frequently cited authors used by Prokopovich are Josephus Flavius and Pliny, both of whom still retained an air of scientific authority in Early Modern Europe. Prior to drawing upon the works of these authors, however, Prokopovich provides a general outline emphasizing what he regards as the two circumstances in which one must categorize monsters and freaks of nature. The first category of 'monster' described by Prokopovich consists of creatures that "deviate from their

<sup>240</sup> Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 30–1, 35, 33; Nos. 1518, 1814, 1553, 1708, 1509 and 1721.

<sup>241</sup> Chistovich, *Prokopovich i ego vremia*, 649.

correct and characteristic condition.”<sup>242</sup> In order to illustrate this phenomenon, Prokopovich quotes from Patriarch Nicephorus and Flavius’s *Jewish Wars*, in which is described how a sacrificial cow gave birth to a lamb in the middle of the Temple court in Jerusalem. According to Prokopovich, such a birth is monstrous, even though the lamb is completely normal in form, “because there is a deviation from the characteristics for its type of condition.”<sup>243</sup> The second category of ‘monster’ does not deviate from its natural condition, but appears to include exotic creatures. Prokopovich includes mythical creatures in this category such as “dragons, the giant asp, the basilisk and other wild creatures” and states that “although they appear terrifying and unusual for us” they are “normal for their kind.”<sup>244</sup>

Prokopovich is faced with something of a quandary, however, when discussing whether or not to admit pygmies and giants into his categorization of monstrous beings:

Here it is possible to raise the question about whether or not to call pygmies monsters, the whole multitude of which not even exceeds one foot, and giants, for which even the Holy Scriptures call colossal towers of meat.<sup>245</sup>

In order to answer this question Prokopovich refers to Pliny’s celebrated *Natural History*, in which the Roman author writes of Scythian tribes, such as the long-eared Panotioroi who reputedly had ears capable of covering their entire body and in which they could sleep. Prokopovich also cites Pliny’s description of the Arimaspoi tribe, who were reputedly one-eyed men who fought griffins for gold. Even more remarkably, Prokopovich cites Pliny’s description of a tribe who had the heads of dogs with no back and whose eyes were on their shoulders! Prokopovich acknowledges that several authors argue that such people should not be considered as monstrous because they are conscious creatures, are born similar to their ancestors and their form relates to the construction of their body as a whole. In spite of this, however, Prokopovich states that in his opinion they should be considered as monsters “as their type of people is the very lowest” and “everything that is place in deviation from the normal construction is monstrous.” Thus, in the case of pygmies and giants, for

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<sup>242</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 180.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

example, he states that they can be considered monstrous because such heights are not found “among us.”<sup>246</sup>

What role does Prokopovich afford to God in the creation of monsters? According to the cleric “it is necessary to note that God does not foresee the way of monsters by naturally assisting them.”<sup>247</sup> However, Prokopovich argues that God does not want nature to be deviated and foresees that their births are permitted. Therefore, God permits monsters to be born in opposition, or above, nature.

Whilst Prokopovich displays a keen interest in monstrous aberrations from nature, he also pays homage to the marvellous qualities inherent in many creatures living in the world. On the question of whether or not creatures possess reason, Prokopovich begins by citing Porphyry’s *On Abstinence*, in which the Neo-Platonist writes that all animals have feeling, sense and memory and are gifted with reason and the ability to speak. Prokopovich also notes that several other ancient philosophers shared this stance, such as Apollonius of Tyana and Teiresias of Thebes.<sup>248</sup>

In spite of the fact that Prokopovich ultimately denies that creatures possess reason and free will, he professes his worthy admiration of the amazing skills and abilities of many species. Thus, he cites the ability of birds to build nests, bees to construct hives in which they are able to maintain geometric order and spiders to weave “remarkable webs.”<sup>249</sup> Indeed, Prokopovich even suggests certain creatures can instruct humans and cites the testimony of the Cappadocian Church Father Gregory of Nazianzen, who marvels at the craft of spiders and cranes and the architectural skills of swallows. Furthermore, Prokopovich states that humans learnt to practice phlebotomy by observing Nile hippopotami. According to Prokopovich, these creatures are naturally voracious and have the ability to sense their own blood flow, which to them smells sweetly fragrant. Consequently, they endeavour to make an incision in their thighs by cutting themselves on sharp reeds in order to emit blood. When they see that a sufficient quantity of blood has been drained, they stem the flow by rolling in thick and slimy mud.<sup>250</sup>

Conversely, Prokopovich states that certain creatures have the ability to imitate various human skills. In this regard, he cites the capacity of par-

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 183–4.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

rots, ravens, crows and magpies to vociferate various words and phrases. Prokopovich also notes the ability of elephants to mimic various human gestures, such as bowing, saluting and waving a sword. The Ukrainian also highlights the ability of certain creatures, such as ants and bees, to have the presence of mind to instinctively direct their own dominions and the capacity of storks to love their fathers and turtledoves to display loyal friendship.<sup>251</sup>

Lastly, Prokopovich states that in the acts of a number of creatures are manifestly displayed the signs of astronomical knowledge. At this juncture he refers to Pliny's *Natural History* and St. Basil's *Hexameron*, which both tell of the ability of certain creatures to foresee climatic change and who can predict storms more accurately than astronomy.<sup>252</sup> The influence of St. Basil, an Eastern Church Father, is particularly striking as Prokopovich wholeheartedly endorses his call to see "great wisdom in small things" and to observe "in nature a thousand reasons for believing in the marvellous."<sup>253</sup> In this regard, Lynn Thorndike's description of St. Basil as a man "alive to the absorbing interest of the world of nature and to the marvellous intricacies of natural science" is equally befitting of Feofan Prokopovich.<sup>254</sup>

#### *Prokopovich's Hexameron*

Prokopovich's account of the six days of creation provides an excellent example of how he intrinsically entwined a literal interpretation of Christianity with observations on natural science. The title of this section explicitly states that it is based on the esteemed hexamerons of St. Basil, Ambrosius, Chryostomus, Theodoretus, Eustathius of Antioch and others, and in the opening passage he asserts the necessity of recognizing that the world was not created in an instant but in stages during six days.<sup>255</sup> On this note, Prokopovich embarks on a detailed account of creation according to what transpired on each particular day.

He begins his account of the first day of creation by stating that "God created heaven and earth and also light."<sup>256</sup> It was on the basis of the five basic elements – earth, water, air, heaven and elementary fire – that other parts of nature arose. Various commentators on Genesis are cited, such as

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>253</sup> Thorndike, *History of Magic*, vol. 1, 490.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., 489.

<sup>255</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 299.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., 300.



St. Basil, Chyrystomus and Theodoretus, as well as Psalm 147, in what is a relatively short and standard account.<sup>257</sup>

Prokopovich's account of the second day of creation is slightly longer and focuses exclusively on various interpretations of the firmament. He begins by largely paraphrasing the words of Genesis: "on the second day God completed the separation or division of the waters, establishing something firm, that he called heaven."<sup>258</sup> However, he is quick to acknowledge that the account in Genesis leaves a great deal unclear and consequently the question of how to understand the firmament has agitated a number of celebrated intellects. Thus, Prokopovich proceeds to relate how Jerome and Augustine understand the firmament as the middle sphere of air, in which rainy waters are separated from our water. However, Prokopovich does not regard this interpretation as "sufficiently instructive" because it remains unclear precisely about what they are writing.<sup>259</sup> Next, Prokopovich considers the similar interpretations of Theodoretus and Josephus Flavius, which purport that the firmament arose from the strong condensation of water immediately after its completion. Prokopovich notes, however, that St. Basil ridicules this reading and labels them "childish prattlers," in as much as they argue that the firmament only arises from water.<sup>260</sup> According to Prokopovich, St. Basil himself admits that the firmament arises from the accumulation of fine, subtle matter that is airy, but is able to coagulate and become solid. At this point, Prokopovich underlines that it is very difficult to say anything with certainty regarding the water situated above the firmament.<sup>261</sup>

Subsequently, Prokopovich cites Origen, by way of Jerome's commentary, in which the former states that below the waters – that is in the firmament – are intelligent angels who endeavour to observe fallen demons. Prokopovich adds that neither Jerome nor Basil are convinced by this theory and moves on to discuss how Augustine, Albertus Magnus and others maintain that the ninth and tenth celestial spheres are located below the waters.<sup>262</sup>

Following this, Prokopovich notes that whilst authorities, such as St. Basil, Justin the Martyr, Eustathius of Antioch, Epiphanius, Chyrysotomus,

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<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 300–1.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, 302.



Cyril of Jerusalem, Theodoretus, Ambrosius and Jerome, write that the firmament exists, it is evidently very difficult to establish why the waters flow out above the firmament. Theodoretus argues that although the sun, moon and stars have fiery natures, they cannot melt heaven, and consequently water freezes and is transformed into ice. Justin the Martyr, however, argues that the firmament exists in order to prevent water moving upwards, while others claim that the waters repel the rays of the sun and moon and deflect them downwards towards earth. Furthermore, Prokopovich elaborates that others hold that the waters simply act as adornments for the universe, whilst others still claim that the waters serve the empyrean zone in the same manner as water serves the air in our atmosphere. In conclusion, Prokopovich notes that nothing precise can be established with regard to the firmament, apart from the fact that it was created by God.<sup>263</sup>

The beginning of Prokopovich's description of the third day of creation is paraphrased from Genesis: "On the third day God drained those parts of the earth which up until then had been submerged and covered by water and deprived of living substances and plants."<sup>264</sup> Interestingly, the remainder of the short account of the third day of creation is drawn entirely from the work of a contemporary German, Johann Zahn.<sup>265</sup> The work in question is entitled *Specula Physico-Mathematico-Historico notabilium ac mirabilium sciendorum* (1696) and significantly it is the only contemporary source utilized by the Ukrainian cleric. Prokopovich's citation draws on Zahn's description of how the "earth was raised above the water" and thrust out slopes in various parts "into which poured a great quantity of water, creating various seas and oceans."<sup>266</sup> The thrusting of the earth also created protuberances and mountains and, according to Zahn, God succeeded in emptying the deepest layers of the bowels of the earth in order to provide reservoirs of underground water and the concealment of minerals (see Fig. 35 below).<sup>267</sup>

The works of Johann Zahn are little known to modern readers, but at the turn of the eighteenth century they had a sizeable readership and

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 302.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 302–3. See the chapter on the origins of the world in Johann Zahn, *Specula Physico-Mathematico-Historico notabilium ac mirabilium sciendorum*, vol. 1 (Nuremberg, 1696), 1–32. Significantly, Zahn also influenced the astrological content of the so-called *Bruce Calendars*, as discussed in Chapter One.

<sup>266</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 302–3.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 303.



Fig. 35. Illustration from Johann Zahn's *Specula Physico-Mathematico-Historico notabilium ac mirabilium sciendorum*, vol. 1 (Augsburg, 1696).

elicited a favourable response among those still retaining a Kircheresque curiosity and credulity regarding natural philosophy. The work cited by Prokopovich was an encyclopaedic volume in three parts and was richly illustrated. The first part contained Zahn's account of Creation, in addition to sections on cosmography, cosmology and astrology. The second part dealt with geography, geology, mining, earthquakes, botany and zoology and included descriptions and illustrations of monsters, whilst the third part focused on the microcosm of men and monsters and discussed many curious inventions. Numerous citations and references to Zahn can be found in Prokopovich's *Natural Philosophy* and it is clear that the German's Kircherian worldview, in which religious faith and scientific credulity are embraced, is shared by his Ukrainian contemporary.

Prokopovich's analysis of the fourth day of creation discusses the contradictory interpretations of Theodoretus, St. Basil and the Jesuit Cornelius à Lapide (1567–1637) regarding the need to reconcile and explain the creation of light and darkness – and hence day and night – on the first day and the account of lights in the firmament outlined on the fourth day.<sup>268</sup>

Next Prokopovich discusses the creation of fish and birds on the fifth day. In the opening section he quotes St. Basil's description of how a crab is able to devour a turtle on a beach by wedging a pebble between its body and shell to prevent it closing. He then remarks that if primitive creatures, such as crabs, oysters and molluscs, possess such great abilities, then what is it possible to say about the great number of more perfect fish? Prokopovich then advances an argument in which "it is necessary to maintain" that fish were not only created from a single watery element, but also contained parts of the three other elements.<sup>269</sup>

As regards birds, Prokopovich cites Church Fathers and draws on ornithological observations in order to defend the description of Genesis 1:20, which states: "And God said. Let the waters bring forth . . . fowl that may fly above the earth." First, he quotes St. Ambrose's *Hexaemeron*, in which the Church Father notes that water and air – the respective habitats of fish and birds – have similar and related elements.<sup>270</sup> Secondly, Prokopovich observes that both fish and birds share a natural lightness, mobility and adroitness and possess almost the same type of movement and have tails to aid navigation and steering. Furthermore, he asserts that both female fish and birds do not produce milk and do not suckle their offspring. Thirdly, Prokopovich notes that many birds live in water, such as swans, geese, ducks and pelicans. Indeed, he adds that these birds, and swallows, immerse themselves in water when dying in order to warm their bodies with a related element that can somehow give life anew. Thus, whilst Prokopovich acknowledges that fish are more dependent on water than birds, he also adds that water outweighs all other elements in both species. In addition, he cites St. Augustine's account of Genesis, when remarking that fish originate from denser water than birds, which derive from thinner water approaching the air and which can also be transformed into clouds.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 303–4.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 304.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 305.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

Prokopovich's account of the sixth day is by far the longest. The first part of the description concerns the creatures created at the beginning of the sixth day, which excludes humans. Thus, Prokopovich states that God granted a living essence to more species of fish and birds dependent on the elements of water and air. He notes, however, that creatures derived from fiery elements were not created at this time. Thus, he rejects the possibility that the fire-residing salamander, whose existence he regards as "a genuine fairytale," was given a living essence at the beginning of the sixth day.<sup>272</sup> In support of his argument, Prokopovich cites Galen and Cornelius à Lapide regarding the fantastic nature of the legendary salamander.<sup>273</sup>

The next point of discussion addresses whether or not all land creatures were created on the sixth day. Prokopovich answers by stating that "all authors without exception" write that "only perfect creatures," that is, those born from the union of two sexes, were born on this day.<sup>274</sup> Included in this category are dangerous and poisonous creatures. Not included, however, are all creatures that have an "unusual method of birth," such as fleas, mosquitoes, worms and frogs. According to Prokopovich, Augustine adopts such a stance in his commentary on Genesis, in which he writes that the existence of fleas and mosquitoes, among others, would threaten the state of blissful innocence experienced by man.<sup>275</sup> However, Prokopovich also cites the opposing views of St. Basil and Tertulian, who attest that even wretched creatures are no less dazzling manifestations of divine wisdom.<sup>276</sup>

A fascinating passage then ensues regarding the fact that hybrid species were not conceived on the sixth day of creation. Many of the examples of hybrid species provided by Prokopovich appear startlingly odd to the modern reader and are a further proof of how he retained distinctly archaic viewpoints regarding natural philosophy. Thus, he draws on Pliny the Elder's assertion in his *Natural History*, which outlines how a leopard derives from the crossbreeding of a panther and a lion, and how a mule is derived from the crossbreeding of a horse and a she-ass. Remarkably, Prokopovich then writes that a lynx derives from a wolf and a roe and that the tiger originated from the successful mating of a goat and

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 306.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 306–7.

sheep!<sup>277</sup> According to Prokopovich, these hybrid offspring were initially rare, defective and born in contradiction to the order of nature. Prokopovich then notes that a number of authors have noted that new kinds of monster still arise in Africa.

Whilst these hybrids are born as a result of the reproduction of a pair, Prokopovich casts doubt on the existence of the phoenix as it reputedly burned itself on a pyre in order to be re-born from the ashes. In addition to citing the sceptical opinions of Cornelius à Lapide and the great Renaissance encyclopaedist Ulisse Aldrovandi, Prokopovich also drew on Scripture in order to refute the existence of the phoenix:

And leading from the fact that God ordered creatures of different types to be taken on board Noah's Ark in pairs for their protection from the Flood, then with regard to the Phoenix it is not possible it was fulfilled, as it was not given a pair.<sup>278</sup>

After discussing the legendary phoenix, Prokopovich devotes the remaining part of his description of the sixth day of creation to man – “the most perfect creature” – who embodies both temporal and spiritual natures.<sup>279</sup> The twofold organization of man, as outlined by Prokopovich, is extremely reminiscent of a passage in Gregory of Nyssa's mystical commentary on the creation of man, which states:

He gives him as foundations the instincts of a twofold organisation, blending the Divine with the earthy, that by means of both he may be naturally and properly disposed to each enjoyment, enjoying God by means of his more divine nature, and the good things of earth by the sense that is akin to them.<sup>280</sup>

It also mirrors the sentiments allegedly expressed by Hermes Trismegistus in the Latin text *Asclepius* – a work familiar to Prokopovich – when discussing the fact that only humans are capable of being in conjunction with the gods:

Mankind is the only living thing that is twofold: one part of him is simple... what we call a form of divine likeness... From it is made the body

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<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 307.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, 308.

<sup>280</sup> J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*, 44 (Paris, 1857), 132–3.

that covers over what we have already termed divine in mankind; it covers the divinity of pure mind, which rests alone with its kindred.<sup>281</sup>

According to Prokopovich, not even angels possess the image of God in such a direct sense as that achieved by man. Thus, it is wholly appropriate that at this juncture Prokopovich invokes the concept of man as a microcosm of the divine macrocosm: "it is entirely correct that ancient philosophers called man a microcosmos, that is, a little... or reduced form of the world."<sup>282</sup> Angels may be beautiful and do indeed follow the form of God, according to Prokopovich, but humans are all parts of the "divine substance."<sup>283</sup>

Lastly, Prokopovich addresses the question of why God only created people as complete entities after the creation of all other life forms. In reply, he draws directly on Gregory of Nyssa's mystical commentary *On the Making of Man* as well as on Gregory Nazianzen's forty-third oration or funeral panegyric to St. Basil and a tract by Ambrosius. Thus, Prokopovich uses the analogy of an extremely beautiful palace, which is permanently secure and wondrously adorned and a banquet hall. In both edifices everything is prepared for the utility of living and fit for entertainment and learning.<sup>284</sup> Consequently, Prokopovich argues that it is necessary to prepare these structural edifices in advance and then to encourage people to go there, as guests or inhabitants. This analogy does indeed closely mirror the above-cited authors and one can note a particular similarity to Nyssa's mystical commentary *On the Making of Man*.

For not as yet had that great and precious thing, man, come into the world of being; it was not to be looked for that the ruler should appear before the subjects of his rule; but when his dominion was prepared, the next step was that the king should be manifested. When, then the Maker of all had prepared beforehand, as it were, a royal lodging, for the future king (and this was his land, and island, and sea, and the heaven arching like a roof over them), and when all kinds of wealth had been stored in this palace (and by wealth I mean the whole creation, all that is in plants and trees, and all that has sense and breath and life; and- if we are to account materials also as wealth – all that for their beauty are reckoned precious in the eyes of men, as gold and silver, and the substances of your jewels which men delight

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<sup>281</sup> Brian P. Copenhaver, ed., *Hermetica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 70.

<sup>282</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 309. For further discussion by the cleric of the concept of man as a microcosmos, see Prokopovich, "De Deo," 67.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*



in- having concealed, I say, abundance of all these also in the bosom of the earth as in a royal treasure-house), he thus manifests man in the world, to be the beholder of some of the wonders therein, and the lord of others; that by his enjoyment he might have knowledge of the Giver . . . And as a good host does not bring his guest to his house before the preparation of his feast, but when he has made all due preparation, and decked with their proper adornments his house . . . brings his guest home when things suitable for his refreshment are in readiness . . . He had decked the habitation with beauties of every kind, and prepared this great and varied banquet, then introduced man, assigning to him as his task not the acquiring of what was not there, but the enjoyment of the things which were there.<sup>285</sup>

What is more, Prokopovich evokes decidedly Neo-Platonic language when he states that “people belong more to heaven from whence is held a more beautiful destiny than from earth” which gave man “a worse share.”<sup>286</sup> Prokopovich then writes that it was for this reason that people received the special condition of their bodies, unlike all other living beings.<sup>287</sup> In the concluding passage of his remarkable *Hexaameron*, Prokopovich quotes part of Ovid’s Platonic account of creation contained in Book 1 of *Metamorphoses*, in which the Roman states: “Where other animals walk on all fours and look to the ground, man was given a towering head and commanded to stand erect, with his face uplifted to gaze on the stars of heaven.”<sup>288</sup>

Prokopovich’s *Hexaameron*, situated in the middle of his *Natural Philosophy*, is testament to the intrinsic importance he placed on Scripture and Patristic commentary. The brevity of the Biblical account of Genesis left many ambiguities and unanswered questions for commentators. Thus, Prokopovich’s account clearly seeks to explore various key patristic interpretations in order to elaborate upon the account supposedly laid down by Moses. Whilst Prokopovich principally drew on the works of Church Fathers, it is also interesting to note that he was willing to cite Josephus Flavius, Ovid, the Jesuit Cornelius à Lapide, the Renaissance encyclopaedist Ulisse Aldrovandi and the Kircherian work of Johann Zahn. Once again, the eclectic nature of Prokopovich’s worldview is to the fore; built nonetheless on the foundations of Patristic authors and particularly the Eastern Cappadocian Fathers. This last fact is not surprising, as the Cappadocian Fathers embraced a form of Christianity open to Neo-Platonic

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<sup>285</sup> Migne, *Patrologiae*, 132–3.

<sup>286</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 309.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>288</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 5.

elements and in awe of the divine majesty of the natural world. Furthermore, they sought to inquisitively investigate and observe the wonders of the natural world through scientific inquiry.

*The Holy Relics at Kiev*

Prokopovich's lengthy discussion in defence of the divine preservation of the holy relics at the Kiev Caves Monastery encapsulates the way in which he expressed his Christian faith by way of scientific endeavour and an understanding of occult influences.<sup>289</sup> Catholics sceptical of the divine nature of the preserved relics at Kiev apparently argued that a method had been employed to protect the bodies from decay.<sup>290</sup> However, Prokopovich utterly renounced this accusation:

That this argumentation is incorrect is not doubted by anyone and from the very beginning is in harmony with logic. All the same, nothing may blindly be attributed exclusively to divine acts with the exception of those acts about which we are firmly convinced cannot possibly be by chance.<sup>291</sup>

Prokopovich then attempts to scientifically demonstrate the divine preservation of the relics by exposing the inadequacy of other theories purporting to explain more earthly or human reasons for their non-decay. First, he rejects the arguments of Catholics, who maintained that the general terrain of Kiev and the environment of the caves was conducive for the preservation of relics. Prokopovich's defence begins by once again drawing on Johann Zahn. In this instance, he cites Zahn's account in *Specula physico-mathematico-historica* of the non-putrefaction of relics in sea caves on the Aran Islands off the coast of Connaught in Ireland, despite the hostile maritime climate.<sup>292</sup> However, in relation to the Kievan relics, he points to the piles of bones apparently belonging to victims of the sack-

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<sup>289</sup> Prokopovich entitled this discussion: "Whether it is possible to attach entirely natural reasons to the ability to preserve the Holy Relics that are found in our Kiev Caves." See Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 401. It should also be noted that this theme was also addressed in a separate tract, published in 1718: *Apologia sacrarum reliquiarum partum nostrorum qui post suum obitum in cryptis nostris Kijoviensibus quieverunt*. For a later edition of this work, see Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 65–122.

<sup>290</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 401–2.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, 402–3.

<sup>292</sup> Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 70. For the citation in Zahn, see Zahn, *Specula Physico-Mathematico-Historico*, vol. 2, 36. Zahn himself draws on an account given by Georges Fournier. See Georges Fournier, *Geographica orbis notitia* (Paris, 1667), 201.



ing of Kiev by Batu Khan in 1240, which had remained unpreserved in the same place.<sup>293</sup>

Secondly, he refutes the argument that some kind of “stone soul” chemically stimulates the hardening of the bodies and transforms them into stone. Prokopovich states that Daniel Sennert explains the principle of this argument in a work on chemical elements, using the example of caves in Britain in which all the water that flows into them is transformed into stone. Furthermore, he recounts an incident narrated by Johannes Aventinus (1477–1534) in his history of Bavaria, *Annalium Boiorum*, in which during an earthquake more than fifty peasants, with the cows they were milking, were struck down by an pestilential air, which stiffened their bodies into statues of salt.<sup>294</sup>

Prokopovich then states that “our enemies dare to claim” that such processes “exist in our caves” and that due to these actions “the monks started to stiffen and avoided decomposition.” The Ukrainian cleric counters his opponents by questioning why not all corpses are transformed into stone if such a quality is eternally present in everyone. What is more, he denies that his fellow monks in the Kievan Caves have any spirit capable of transforming corpses into either stone or salt statues and, in this case, affirms the “extraordinariness of divine strength” rather than the power of nature.<sup>295</sup>

A third argument refuted by Prokopovich is that the bodies of the Kievan monks had not decomposed because they had been embalmed with balsams and other aromatic fragrances.<sup>296</sup> Indeed, Prokopovich states that “they are confident in the fact that they were embalmed with the same degree of mastery as the ancient Egyptians” had embalmed their mummies.<sup>297</sup> Prokopovich then quotes at length from Herodotus on the Egyptian art of embalming mummies. This long quote is consequently followed by expounding the work of Servius, a fourth century Latin commentator on Virgil, who commented upon the Egyptian belief in preserving bodies in order to lengthen the continued existence of the soul. Yet, whilst the Ukrainian considers it entirely possible that Kievans did at one time possess the knowledge to embalm bodies, he questions why the bodies of great princes and dignitaries were not treated:

<sup>293</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 404. Also see Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 71.

<sup>294</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2., 404. Also see Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 72.

<sup>295</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2., 405; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 71–3.

<sup>296</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2., 405; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 74–5.

<sup>297</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2., 405–6; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 75–6.

Why did these masters not apply their labours first and foremost to embalming the bodies of princes and known people, instead of wasting it on embalming the bodies of the poorest people?<sup>298</sup>

After the lengthy treatment of Herodotus and Egyptian embalming, Prokopovich moves on to considering the preservation treatments recommended in della Porta's *Natural Magic*. It is noted that della Porta considers the body not to be eternal, but that it can be preserved for a long time. To achieve prolonged preservation of a body, Prokopovich quotes at length from della Porta's method of "how a dead Carcase may be preserved" using fragrant substances, such as myrtle, laurel, rosemary, burnt alome, flaming crocus, myrrh, aloe and tree aloe, oil, folk balsam and dried saffron, as well as antimony, the ashes of wine leaves and musk.<sup>299</sup> Prokopovich does not deny the general worth of della Porta's methods, but simply counters that "the bodies of the Kiev Fathers were preserved uncorrupted up until now not thanks to people, but by divine force."<sup>300</sup>

Fifthly, Prokopovich also renounces the proposition that the bodies in Kiev did not decompose because they were extremely withered due to the monks being constantly malnourished and emaciated. The basis of this theory can be found, as Prokopovich notes, in Laurentius Beyerlinck's *Magnum Theatrum Vitae Humanae* (1628) and in the work of the Roman historian Marcellin Amian (330–400). Prokopovich responds by arguing that although emaciated bodies remain uncorrupted for longer than more corpulent specimens, they cannot remain uncorrupted for a considerable length of time.<sup>301</sup>

Remarkably, Prokopovich also feels the need to dismiss Plutarch's theory regarding the fact that bodies can remain undamaged when struck by lightning. He writes that his holy forefathers perished in various periods and due to multifarious reasons and that no one died as a result of being struck by lightning. He cites a number of "convincing factors" that bear witness to Plutarch's erroneous views including the fact that wise sages have borrowed much from popular sayings about how lightning does not strike bay trees, hyacinth, precious stones, coral, seals and eagles.<sup>302</sup> Thus, most peasants sought refuge near these things during an electrical storm.

<sup>298</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2., 410; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 80.

<sup>299</sup> For the full recipe, see Giambattista della Porta, *Natural Magick* (London, 1658), 140–1.

<sup>300</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2., 410; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 80.

<sup>301</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2., 411; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 82.

<sup>302</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2., 414; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 86–8.

Prokopovich also recites a legend narrated about the Emperor Augustus, who always wore the skin of a seal to allay his fear of being struck by lightning. Indeed, he also writes about how Emperor Tiberius also wore the corolla of a bay tree to ward off lightning.<sup>303</sup>

According to Prokopovich, the actual reason for bodies not rotting after being struck by lightning is due to the fact that the strong fire destroys dampness and leaves bodies dry and lifeless. A body also becomes filled with sulphate and evaporated nitre after being struck by lightning, which promotes preservation. It is stated that this chemical knowledge was utilized by the Egyptians when embalming bodies.<sup>304</sup>

The final section of Prokopovich's examination of the holy relics at the Kiev Caves Monastery is devoted to renouncing the theories espoused by Johannes Herbinus in *Religiosae Kijovienses Cryptae* (1675), which are described as nothing more than "reckless slander and worthy of laughter."<sup>305</sup> Herbinus was an Evangelical Lutheran of the Saxon church in Vilnius and in the above-cited work he sought to demonstrate the natural and rational causes underlying the preservation of the relics.

Prokopovich begins his refutation of Herbinus's opinions by quoting a passage from *Religiosae Kijovienses*, in which the author describes how a fatty vapour comes from the bodies of the relics. This vapour condenses and finally appears as an oil or balsam. Herbinus remarks that there is nothing new in this process and it is not miraculous. The Lutheran pastor then proceeds to outline how this oil can heal the bodies of living people because it is created from the decomposed matter of sepulchral bodies. The occult rationale underlying this theory is then reinforced by Herbinus, who declares that mutual attraction or sympathy exists in nature and that oil from a human body can heal other bodies because it emanates from a similar source.<sup>306</sup> Prokopovich then states that Herbinus confirms his theory by several medical experiments, which, furthermore, demonstrate that fat can be used to treat the stomach and bowels and that an amulet prepared from human skin can expel infectious diseases.

Prokopovich responds by stating that it is not possible to acquire oil by natural means from a human skull. Indeed, he pours scorn on the suggestion that bodies lying in the ground for over seven hundred years have

<sup>303</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2., 414; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 88.

<sup>304</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2., 414; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 88.

Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2., 415; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 89.

<sup>305</sup> Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 91; Morozov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 151.

<sup>306</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 416; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 91–2.

some form of fattiness. Furthermore, he argues that fatty meat becomes dry and lean by the hour and oil completely disappears. Secondly, Prokopovich argues that this supposed oil is not a natural health remedy and cure for diseases.<sup>307</sup>

This is made evident by the fact that it would demand a demonstration for it to treat various diseases, which are for the most part hostile, and those parts of the body, which do not have with any similarity with it.<sup>308</sup>

Crucially, in this passage one does not detect a rejection of occult tendencies per se, but merely an objection to Herbinus's assertion that the oil extracted from the skulls of the relics has any sympathetic power to heal. In a similar manner, Prokopovich also states that the quantity of intestinal fat and the size of skin amulets must be extremely great in order for them to have any power.<sup>309</sup> Thus, his objection to Herbinus's occult theories in this regard is not categorical, but simply quantitative. Prokopovich's objections to the scientific methods of Herbinus are concluded by quoting Daniel Sennert:

Where he speaks about the method of investigating the strengths of great horned cattle, [he] often underlines, that in this action it is more necessary to lead by experience than by only demonstrating theory.<sup>310</sup>

Prokopovich is also highly critical of the "absurd" Lutheran foundations of Herbinus's argument, which simply accounts for the uncorrupted state of the Kiev relics by referring to the greatly changing air. According to Herbinus, this changing air results from factors, such as the fact that the relics are often openly exposed, from the walking to and fro of visitors, from falling torches and from the use of holy incense during funeral ceremonies.<sup>311</sup> Prokopovich counters the Lutheran arguments of Herbinus by drawing on his Orthodox faith. Thus, he states that miracles occur by merit or arise on account of holy services. Consequently, God pays respect to the holy and their bodies by providing a demonstration of their powers.<sup>312</sup> In doing so he seeks to use miraculous signs – embodied in holy role models – to stimulate people and to assure them of the firm reality of the divine presence.

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<sup>307</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 417; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 93–6.

<sup>308</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 418.

<sup>309</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 418; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 94–5.

<sup>310</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 419; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 95.

<sup>311</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 420; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 97.

<sup>312</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 421; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 98–9.

Scorn is also poured on Herbinus's sceptical attitude towards religious miracles by referring to examples drawn from the Old and New Testaments. Prokopovich writes: "I do not recall if Herbinus writes about the fact that God bestowed various wonderful things and gifts to various kings"<sup>313</sup> He then proceeds to cite the example of Moses, who was "chosen as the ruler and legislator of Israel," Enoch and Elijah, the wisdom of Solomon, the incredible strength of Samson and asks: "what first appeared to Magdalene after the resurrection of Christ?"<sup>314</sup>

In its entirety, Prokopovich's defence of the holy relics at the Kiev Caves Monastery provides a thorough articulation of the cleric's complex worldview. In short, his vitriolic attack on Herbinus's views demonstrates how the Ukrainian defended miracles (within the parameters of Christianity) and Orthodoxy, whilst showing a familiarity and acceptance of aspects of occult philosophy. Thus, Prokopovich proves himself to be adept at drawing on the likes of della Porta, Daniel Sennert and Johann Zahn in defence of his overall argument in defence of the miraculous nature of the Kievan relics.

*Prokopovich's Educational Vision: Pietism and the  
Petrine Instauration*

Prior to his arrival in St. Petersburg in 1716, Prokopovich had already displayed a passionate enthusiasm for the advancement of learning. Most notably, his innovative embrace of experimental science and mathematics transformed the scholastic curriculum of the Kiev Academy in the early years of the eighteenth century. However, it was only when the Ukrainian cleric arrived in the new capital that he was afforded the opportunity to draw up a visionary blueprint for the radical transformation of the Russian educational system. This opportunity arose in late 1718, when the tsar commissioned Prokopovich to begin work on what would become the *Ecclesiastical Regulation*. The final document was promulgated in 1721 and ushered in sweeping reform of the Russian ecclesiastical system. Educational reform formed an integral cornerstone of this endeavour. Indeed, much of the second part of the regulation – nearly a fifth of the whole document – is devoted to justifying the pursuit of knowledge on religious

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<sup>313</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 423; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 102–3.

<sup>314</sup> Prokopovich, *Filosofski tvory*, vol. 2, 423; Prokopovich, *Miscellanea Sacra*, 103.

grounds and outlining projected pedagogical institutions and models.<sup>315</sup> It was envisaged that the spiritual life of the whole nation could be beneficially advanced by far-reaching pedagogical reforms and indeed that the legacy of the entire Petrine programme could be enshrined in the minds of future generations.

In this section I will argue that much of the inspiration for the educational reforms stipulated in the *Ecclesiastical Regulation* was derived from the visionary pedagogical initiatives enacted at the turn of the eighteenth century by the German Pietist, August Hermann Francke. Francke's educational vision rested on the belief that a new reformation was needed to dramatically raise the level of knowledge in the world.<sup>316</sup> This fundamental belief was not founded on a humanist drive to improve the dignity of man, irrespective of creed or race, but was born from a profound evangelical sense of mission. This missionary zeal was driven by the belief that mankind was entering into the pivotal last days of history, and hence Pietists were spurred on to bring about two key prerequisites: (1) an increase in learning and (2) the spread of Christianity around the world.

The sense of mission embodied in Francke's Pietist model are epitomized by Anton Wilhelm Böhme (1673–1722), a former pupil at the University of Halle who migrated to England and became a leading member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and from 1705 the court chaplain at the Lutheran chapel at St. James's Palace.<sup>317</sup> In Böhme's opinion Francke's Pietist educational and missionary example offered hope "when the Common Enemy supposed Religion now to be at the last gasp."<sup>318</sup> Thus, due to Pietism religion had "reviv'd again, like a second Phenix."<sup>319</sup> According to Böhme this was a providential sign indicating that the long awaited millennium was close at hand:

Knowledge of Christ will at last cover the Face of the whole Earth, as the Waters do the Sea; and all the World will be full of the Majesty of his Glory, while Truth shall again flourish out of the Earth, and Justice and Peace embrace each other; nor they only, but all the divine Virtues and Graces

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<sup>315</sup> Cracraft, "Feofan Prokopovich," 101.

<sup>316</sup> Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, 23.

<sup>317</sup> For more on Anton Böhme, see D. L. Brunner, *Halle Pietists in England: Anthony William Boehm and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

<sup>318</sup> Bartholomaeus, Ziegenbalg, *Propagation of the Gospel in the East*, 1 (London, 1711), preface.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*

meet together, in a People that shall be born in these latter Days, whom the Lord shall have made, and not Man!<sup>320</sup>

This is a succinct expression of the millenarian hope behind Pietist pedagogical endeavours. Thus, it is essential to bear in mind that Francke's educational verve was driven by a fundamental belief in the need for instauration prior to the onset of the millennium. However, whilst his initiatives envisioned a transformation of both the church and the social order, he did not seek to create institutional bodies outside the established system.<sup>321</sup> In other words, Pietists actively sought to seek, rather than shun, royal favour in advancing their cause.

Initially, Francke opened an *Armenschule* (poor school) at Glaucha on the outskirts of Halle at Easter in 1695. This was followed in November 1695 by the founding of an orphanage, which initially housed nine children. By 1698 the number of orphans had risen to a hundred and Francke commissioned the building of a large stone building to house his rapidly expanding institution. He received large donations from wealthy patrons in Berlin, as well as official 'privileges' from the Prussian government. This enabled the ambitious and visionary Pietist to construct an entire pedagogical complex, replete with a printing press, bindery, bookstore, apothecary and a cabinet of rarities. The orphanage complex (*Anstalten*) was also officially affiliated to the University of Halle.

The new educational model enacted by Francke deliberately sought to insulate the pupils from the dangers and evils of the outside world. Three schools were established, each being governed by a strict sense of discipline. The so-called 'Poor' or 'German' school, as the first name implies, catered for the less well-off students, whilst the Latin school sought to instruct mainly middle-class pupils for university. Lastly, there was also a boarding school, or *Paedagogium*, for upper-class boys.<sup>322</sup>

In each school Francke adopted a systematic programme of Pietist religious instruction, in which pupils had to memorize and recite passages from the Catechism, verses from the Bible and long passages from the New Testament. The teacher would then instigate a class discussion of the recited passage and draw parallels with everyday life. In the 'Poor' school, an extra emphasis was placed on this religious instruction by the

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<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

<sup>321</sup> Richard L. Gawthrop, *Pietism and the Making of Eighteenth-Century Prussia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 150.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid., 155–6.



repetition of the previous day's lessons on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Extra teaching in theology, church history and Biblical history marked religious instruction in the *Paedagogium*. Furthermore, prayer times were stipulated to precede both morning and afternoon lessons and each school day ended with an hour of communal prayers, which included hymns, Bible readings and catechizations. Pupils were also instructed to go to two church services on Sundays.<sup>323</sup>

Besides religious instruction, the curriculum of all three schools was marked by its wide variety. This was particularly the case in the *Paedagogium*, in which pupils were taught Latin, Greek, Hebrew and French. They were also taught the principles of jurisprudence, medicine, history, geography, botany, anatomy, astronomy, music, drawing and public speaking.<sup>324</sup> The pupils also gained knowledge in the physical sciences, relating to herbs, metals, stones, minerals and animals as well as practical instruction in optics and carpentry.<sup>325</sup> Accordingly, one hour a day in the *Paedagogium* was devoted to "recreational exercises," whereby pupils went to the workshops of artisans. Once a week the pupils also visited the institute's own cabinet of rarities in order to observe the specimens and samples brought to Halle by Pietist missionaries from across the globe.<sup>326</sup> As Francke himself states:

The cabinet of rarities, which, for the benefit of our pupils, at first began to be erected upon some free gifts of certain benefactors, and is since increased to a pretty good number of fine and curious pieces of nature and art.<sup>327</sup>

Francke's pedagogical model became renowned throughout Europe during his lifetime. Thus, in order to illustrate the considerable influence of Francke's Pietist model in Russia, I will first outline the close ties that developed between Prokopovich and the Pietist movement, led by Francke, in the period between 1718 and 1721, that is, precisely when the *Ecclesiastical Regulation* was being formulated. I will then examine the *Ecclesiastical Regulation* itself in order to highlight the significant degree to which it was not only influenced by Pietism, but also by other Protestant educational visionaries, such as Francis Bacon and Jan Amos Comenius. Finally, I will outline the manner in which Prokopovich attempted to put his own

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<sup>323</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>324</sup> Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, 27; Gawthrop, *Pietism*, 161.

<sup>325</sup> Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, 27.

<sup>326</sup> Gawthrop, *Pietism*, 162.

<sup>327</sup> August Hermann Francke, *The Foothills of Divine Providence, or, The Bountiful Hand of Heaven* (London, 1787), 143.



Pietist-inspired regulations into practice in 1721 by founding an orphanage and attempting to establish a seminary.

*Prokopovich's Burgeoning Links with Halle Pietism (1718–1721)*

In 1953 the East German historian Eduard Winter published his seminal monograph *Halle als Ausgangspunkt der Deutschen Russlandkune im 18. Jahrhundert*, charting the influence of Pietists in Russia in the eighteenth century. Arguably one of the most significant aspects of this tome centres on the evidence linking Feofan Prokopovich directly with Halle Pietism. In many ways the fostering of links between Prokopovich and German Pietists in Halle suited both parties. The former was seeking to bring about an increase in knowledge in Russia, whilst the latter viewed the country as pivotal in its missionary drive to spread the 'true light' of Christianity to the East.

According to Eduard Winter, Prokopovich established personal connection with Halle as early as 1711.<sup>328</sup> This link was facilitated by the cleric's friendship with a Saxon couple – General Ludwig Nicolaus Hallart and Magdalene Hallart – who were enthusiastic friends of the Halle Pietists.<sup>329</sup> General Hallart became closely acquainted with Prokopovich in Kiev, during a period when he was stationed in the Ukraine after the Battle of Poltava (1709). It seems the general considered this friendship significant enough to inform his spiritual mentors in Halle, as evidence exists in the Francke Foundation archives testifying to this relationship.<sup>330</sup> In 1715, Prokopovich also corresponded with Justus Samuel Scharschmid (1664–1724). It is likely that they became acquainted in 1713, when Scharschmid was in Kiev as house tutor to General Adam Weyde. According to Winter, Scharschmid was personally chosen by Spener and Francke to be their representative in Russia and was "one of the main pillars of the Pietist movement."<sup>331</sup>

Whilst it is clear that links between Prokopovich and Pietist sympathizers were established as early as 1711, it was only when the Ukrainian arrived in St. Petersburg that this relationship took on a more noteworthy hue. Indeed, it is highly significant that the strengthening of ties between

<sup>328</sup> Winter, *Halle Als Ausgangspunkt*, 126.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, 127. General Hallart was a Saxon engineer, whose services had been offered to Peter the Great by Augustus, the King of Saxony. See Massie, *Peter the Great*, 324.

<sup>330</sup> Winter, *Halle Als Ausgangspunkt*, 127.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

Prokopovich and Halle Pietism occurred around 1718; precisely at the time when the cleric was commissioned to begin work on formulating the *Ecclesiastical Regulation*.

These links flourished thanks in no small measure to Peter Müller, the son of an ironworks factory owner in Ugodka near Moscow.<sup>332</sup> Müller had been sent to study theology at the University of Halle in 1700 and only returned to Russia in 1704, by which time he had become a fully-fledged Pietist.<sup>333</sup> On his return to Russia Müller became the joint owner of his father's important ironworks. He also maintained regular contact with Francke in Halle and zealously endeavoured to send Russian books to his mentor. In January 1716, for example, Müller wrote to Francke informing him that he had collected a Russian library for his orphanage.<sup>334</sup> Several months after this letter, Müller sent a box of books to Halle, which included an edition of the long-awaited *Biblia Slavonica*.<sup>335</sup> At the end of 1717, Müller wrote again to Francke, informing him that he had purchased rare Russian books, such as *Historiam Moscoviticam Specialismam in der Slaveno-Russischen Sprache*.<sup>336</sup>

Müller also enjoyed direct contact with Peter the Great. According to Stählin, the monarch frequently visited Müller's iron forges near Moscow, where, on one occasion he stayed for an entire month. During this time the monarch took the chalybeate waters as well as enthusiastically forging a number of iron bars, which he stamped with his own mark.<sup>337</sup> Thus, Müller was in a perfect position to facilitate links between members of Peter the Great's entourage and the Pietist movement in Halle, led by Francke. It seems Müller drew closest to Prokopovich and by 1719 had already managed to ensconce himself as the Archbishop's personal book collector. Prokopovich entrusted Müller with the important task of providing him with 'good' books: principally important theological and political tracts from Germany.<sup>338</sup> In a letter to an unnamed recipient, dated July

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<sup>332</sup> Michail Fundaminskii, *Die Russica-Sammlung der Frankeschen Stiftungen zu Halle aus der Geschichte der deutsch-russischen kulturellen beziehungen im 18. Jahrhundert: katalog Michail Fundaminski* (Tübingen: Hallesche Repertorien und Quellenpublikationen, 1997), 33. It is interesting to note that Scharschmid worked in Müller's ironworks in Ugodka. See Winter, *Halle Als Ausgangspunkt*, 79.

<sup>333</sup> Fundaminskii, *Die Russica-Sammlung*, 33.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

<sup>337</sup> Jakob von Staehlin, *Original Anecdotes of Peter the Great* (London, 1788), 24.

<sup>338</sup> Winter, *Halle Als Ausgangspunkt*, 128–9.

18, 1719, Müller writes that he was systematically providing the Russian Archbishop with works, particularly of Lutheran theology.<sup>339</sup>

When one examines Prokopovich's personal library, the clear Lutheran orientation of his theological collection soon becomes apparent. Furthermore, it is intriguing to note the plethora of theological tracts by Pietists. Most notably, one finds works by the movements two founding fathers: Philipp Jakob Spener (3 works) and August Hermann Francke (7 works).<sup>340</sup> In addition, Prokopovich also owned theological works by a number of other prominent Halle Pietists, such as three tracts by the millenarian Professor of Divinity, Joachim Lange (1670–1744) and a commentary on the Psalms by Johann Heinrich Michaelis (1668–1738), the chief director of Francke's Collegium Orientale Ideologicum.<sup>341</sup> Prokopovich also owned an exegetical work on the Book of Daniel by Michaelis's nephew and assistant at Halle, Christian Benedikt Michaelis (1680–1764).<sup>342</sup> What is more, Prokopovich owned fifteen volumes, comprising twelve separate works, by the Professor of Theology at the University of Jena, Johann Franz Buddeus (1667–1729), a well-known Pietist sympathizer.<sup>343</sup> One can also find in Prokopovich's library a considerable amount of theological literature by seventeenth-century figures considered to be followers of the proto-Pietist Johann Arndt (1555–1621). In the Ukrainian's library, for example, one can find works by such figures as Balthasar Meisner (1587–1626), Solomon Glass (1593–1656) and Martin Geier (1614–1680).<sup>344</sup>

Significantly, Müller also acted as a direct intermediary between the Russian archbishop and Pietists, or Pietist minded theologians, in Germany. Most notably, he facilitated contact on Prokopovich's behalf with J. F. Buddeus and A. H. Francke. On January 28, 1720, for example, Müller wrote a letter to Buddeus informing him of Prokopovich's veneration

<sup>339</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>340</sup> See Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 15, 19–20; Nos. 482, 733 and 858 (Spener); 11, 16, 18, 21, 25, 33 and 45; Nos. 242, 539, 666, 888, 893, 1196, 1667 and 2447 (Francke). Prokopovich owned two volumes of *Manuductio ad lectionem Scripturae Sacrae*. See 21 and 45; Nos. 893 and 2447.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., 12 and 19; Nos. 251, 727 and 728. These three works by Lange are entitled, *Mysterium Christi*; *Medicina Mentis* and *Historia Ecclesiaca Epitome* respectively. For the work by J. H. Michaelis, see 13; No. 332.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid. 12; No. 246.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid., 12, 16, 19, 26 and 38; Nos. 250, 253–259, 306, 556, 557, 747, 1203 and 2044. Between 1705 and his death, in 1729, Buddeus enjoyed a very close relationship with Halle Pietists, largely as a result of his twelve year tenure as Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Halle between 1693–1705.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid., 12, 16, 21 and 32; Nos. 260, 541–549, 882, 883, 1593–1608 (Meisner); 15; Nos. 495–497 (Glass); 11 and 15; Nos. 163, 456 and 490 (Geier).

for his works and of the Russian archbishop's wish to translate them into Russian for the tsar.<sup>345</sup> Attached to this letter was Prokopovich's reply to the theological faculty at the Sorbonne in Paris, who had proposed the unification of the western and eastern Christian churches to the Russian tsar, whilst he was visiting Paris in 1717.<sup>346</sup> This inaugurated a lengthy correspondence between Prokopovich and Buddeus, which only ceased with the latter's death in 1729.<sup>347</sup>

Whereas Prokopovich's correspondence with Buddeus largely centred on theological matters – principally the possibility of unifying the Protestant and Russian Orthodox Churches – the Russian archbishop's personal contact with Francke focused on pedagogical matters. It is not precisely clear how and when contact between Prokopovich and Francke was initiated, but by March 4, 1720 the pair were in direct correspondence. On this date Prokopovich wrote to Francke regarding the establishment of an orphanage and school in 1717, regarded as the 'Estonian Halle' in the village of Alp, near Reval (Tallinn).<sup>348</sup>

The Pietist inspired institution in Alp had been the brainchild of Baron Magnus Wilhelm von Nieroth (1663–1740), an influential Baltic German. This wealthy landowner had pursued a successful government career in Russia. Indeed, in 1718 he was nominated for the prestigious role of Vice-President of the newly formed Financial College in St. Petersburg.<sup>349</sup> This elevated position within the Russian hierarchy undoubtedly gave the Pietist access to the Russian court and the opportunity to promote his pedagogical endeavour.

It is clear from Prokopovich's letter to Francke that Nieroth informed the archbishop and the tsar of his educational establishment at some point in 1719. As Prokopovich writes: "So, it made us too very cheerful when Master Baron Nierot last year told us of his excellent plan... [to] establish in his own estate a learned orphanage."<sup>350</sup> The enthusiasm sparked by Nieroth's description of his establishment in Prokopovich and the tsar must have been sufficiently strong, as they soon undertook to personally inspect the orphanage. Prokopovich vividly describes to Francke his excite-

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<sup>345</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 215.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, 215, 39–40.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>348</sup> Winter, *Halle Als Ausgangspunkt*, 267.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, 437.

ment at seeing the school at first-hand and at hearing about its growing reputation:

We were even happier when we saw the beginnings of it with our own eyes. But we saw, as they say, only first drawn lines. When we heard and it came well known that the orphanage was day by day being completed and growing and young men were flooding in and that soon the invited professors were expected to come, and when they finally came, how unbelievably excited we were!<sup>351</sup>

He then proceeds to reflect on how the establishment of such an institution in Livonia will lead “by the Providence of God” to a brighter dawn for the Russian nation.<sup>352</sup> A remarkable passage then ensues, in which Prokopovich compares Peter the Great’s efforts to educate Russian men to the skills of a metallurgist:

Russia is, believe me, full of excellent men, but as with precious metals, they have laid buried deep under ground until today. A long time there was no one who could dig them up, burn and polish them. This was first the result of our most venerable autocrat Peter’s wisdom and indefatigable efforts.<sup>353</sup>

Consequently, Prokopovich informs Francke that “when we see the domicile at Alp is arousing indefatigable efforts like a beehive of the Muses” it is possible to see that God has given his assent to “the Venerable Majesty’s and all the best men’s prayers.”<sup>354</sup> The main part of the letter then concludes with a prayer, in which Prokopovich praises the role of Francke and the Pietists in promoting Nieroth’s enterprise, which, according to Prokopovich, strengthens the hopes of Russia.<sup>355</sup>

A postscript is added, however, in which Prokopovich informs Francke that he is sending three students to study at Halle. Prokopovich describes the first student, Basilius (Vasilii), as “quite talented” and notes that he has a basic training in rhetoric. Further training in this subject is requested alongside the study of history, chronology, geography, Latin, Greek, Hebrew and the essentials of arithmetic. The second student, Johannes the Younger (Ivan Men’shoi), is described as possessing high mental abilities and Prokopovich hopes that he can learn Greek, Latin and eventually

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, 438.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.* The old realm of Livonia is an area split between present-day Estonia and Latvia.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*

German. He also suggests that this student can learn the basics of geography and a little geometry. As regards the ability of the third student, Johannes the Elder (Ivan Bol'shoi), Prokopovich confesses that he has no idea. Thus, he recommends that "if his brain seems to be made of inferior material at least he can be trained in organ music."<sup>356</sup> Hence, Prokopovich was actively sending theological students to Halle in order to receive an education shaped by Pietist ideals.

It seems that Francke was much encouraged by Prokopovich's obvious enthusiasm and attraction to Pietist ideals, for in 1721 he personally sent him a Latin edition of Johann Arndt's *True Christianity* and a three-volume edition of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>357</sup> Francke dedicated the books to "Reverendissimo Domino Dr. Theophani episcopo Plescoviensi" and prayed to God that Christianity would be planted in both Russia and throughout the whole world.<sup>358</sup> The timing of Francke's gift and dedication to Prokopovich coincided almost exactly with the publication of the *Ecclesiastical Regulation*; the contents of which must have greatly encouraged the German Pietist in his missionary zeal.

### *The Ecclesiastical Regulation*

The section of the *Ecclesiastical Regulation* dedicated to education begins with a spirited defence of the compatibility of Christianity and the advancement of learning. First and foremost Prokopovich stresses how Church Fathers, such as Augustine, Irenaeus, Epiphanius and Thloedoretus, utilized learning to combat the "presumption and folly" of heretics.<sup>359</sup> These learned theologians, argues Prokopovich, renounced the "shallow understanding" of "Arch-Hereticks," such as Arius and Nestor, by learned recourse to the Holy Scriptures. Likewise, Prokopovich argues one must expose the erroneous claims of "our *Russian Roskolsticks*," or schismatics,

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid., 128. In 1735, it seems highly likely that Prokopovich authorised Simon Todorskii (1701–1754) to translate Arndt's work into Russian. See Chistovich, *Prokopovich i ego vremia*, 589. Todorskii was a Ukrainian cleric, writer and philologist who attended the Kiev Academy before studying at Halle. For more information on Todorskii, see P. Todorskii, *Ieromonakh Simon Todorskii i ego chetyre neizdannyykh slova* (St. Petersburg, 1909); D. Vishnevskii *Kievskaiia Akademiia v pervoi polovine XVIII stoletiiia* (Kiev, 1903), 331.

<sup>358</sup> Winter, *Halle Als Ausgangspunkt*, 128.

<sup>359</sup> Thomas Consett, *For God and Peter the Great: The Works of Thomas Consett, 1723–1729*, ed. James Cracraft (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1982), 61.

who were “undoubtedly so hardily diabolical through their Ignorance and Simplicity.”<sup>360</sup>

Furthermore, Prokopovich advances that “learning flourished” in the first ages of the Christian era specifically because early Church Fathers, such as St. Basil and St. Chrysostom, actively studied “the philosophy of the Gentiles, and besides many others.”<sup>361</sup> However, from the fifth century up until the fourteenth century, that is during the so-called Middle Ages, Prokopovich remarks that “all kind of Learning was at a very low Ebb.”<sup>362</sup> Whilst certain authors displayed a “smartness of wit” during this period, Prokopovich argues that they “do not affect us with a strong light.”<sup>363</sup> What is more, even after the growth of universities across Europe, Prokopovich denounces the superficial learning espoused by scholastics:

Men indeed that have only a Taste for such an Imaginary, and as we may call it drowsy Learning as this, are of all the unlearned the greatest Idiots; for whilst they are wholly involv'd in Darkness, and grosly ignorant, they fancy themselves complete, and possess'd with a Conceit of knowing all that is possible to be known, are not to be persuaded to have a value for Books or Improvement in them.<sup>364</sup>

Prokopovich's utter repudiation of scholasticism and his defence of the worthy learning of early Church Fathers is strongly redolent of arguments expressed a century earlier by Francis Bacon. In *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), for example, Bacon lists the vital role played by the Church Fathers in disseminating ancient knowledge as a divine proof of the dignity of learning:

We find that many of the ancient Bishops and Fathers of the Church were excellently read and studied in all the learning of the heathen... It was the Christian Church, which, amidst the inundations of the Scythians on the one side from the north-west, and the Saracens from the east, did preserve the sacred lap and bosom thereof the precious relics even of heathen learning.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

<sup>365</sup> Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, 42.



This sentiment is thoroughly endorsed by Prokopovich, who argues that all “learning is good and fundamental, and as it were the Root, the Seed, and first Principle of all that is good and useful in Church and State.”<sup>366</sup>

After this initial defence of the merits to be attained by the advancement of learning, Prokopovich embarks upon outlining plans for an academy. The proposed curriculum and rules follow in the tradition of Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540), Francis Bacon, Jan Amos Comenius and August Francke, whereby a broad range of subjects are advocated for study to compliment Christian learning. Prokopovich owned a whole raft of works by these pivotal thinkers, including Vives’s principal pedagogical treatise *De Tradendis Disciplinis* (1531), which emphasized the importance of visiting practical workshops and studying nature.<sup>367</sup> He also owned an extensive collection of works by both Bacon and Comenius. As regards the works of the former, Prokopovich possessed a collected works, as well as separate editions *The Advancement of Learning* and *Novum Organum*.<sup>368</sup> Arguably of even greater significance to Prokopovich were his large collection of pedagogical works by Comenius, the pioneering Moravian educational reformer. This collection included linguistic textbooks, such as six editions of *Janua Linguarum* (1631), two editions of *Lexicon Januale* (1650) and an edition of the visually rich *Orbis Pictus* (1658).<sup>369</sup> One also finds a copy of Comenius’s *Pansophia Prodromus*, in Prokopovich’s library, which outlined his project of educating humanity to universal wisdom, or *pansophia*.<sup>370</sup>

Significantly, the educational visions of both Bacon and Comenius were saturated with millenarian anticipation. This was principally based on a belief that the revival of learning that had taken place since the Renaissance marked the onset of the last days, as prophesized by Daniel (12:4). Bacon cited this prophetic passage in numerous works in order to demonstrate the divinely sanctioned increase in contemporary knowledge. If anything the millenarian expectancy in the works of Comenius is even stronger. As Charles Webster notes, “the Comenian philosophical programme for the regenerate age was framed with explicit reference to

<sup>366</sup> Consett, *For God and Peter the Great*, 63.

<sup>367</sup> Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 52; No. 2961; Murphy, “Doktor Robert Erskin,” 69–70.

<sup>368</sup> See Prokopovich, *Filosofskii tvory*, vol. 3, 392; Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 34–5; Nos. 1783, 1820.

<sup>369</sup> See Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 45–6, 48 and 51; Nos. 2470, 2480, 2500, 2641, 2921 and 2925 for the first cited work; 45 and 51; Nos. 2471 and 2925 for the second work cited; 48; No. 2654 for the third work cited.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 35, No. 1797.



the millennial goal.<sup>371</sup> Thus, for Comenius the appearance of the printing press and improvements in navigation indicate that the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy is imminent: "For this end God permits, nay, even compels so many men to run to and fro, in order that knowledge may be increased."<sup>372</sup> Hence, Comenius's expressed goal was to facilitate "an easie way of teaching all men" in these things in order usher in the long-awaited golden age of knowledge.<sup>373</sup> The millenarian expectancy discernable in the educational visions of both Bacon and Comenius would have been attractive to Prokopovich, a cleric well read in chiliastic literature.

Whilst the *Ecclesiastical Regulation* spells out the broad framework for prospective academies and seminaries, it is relatively short on fine detail. Only six pages, for example, are devoted to outlining the regulations pertaining to seminaries.<sup>374</sup> However, much more detail about Prokopovich's educational vision can be gleaned from his own practical efforts to realise his Pietist-inspired blueprint.

### *Enacting the Vision*

Prokopovich endeavoured to establish a seminary in St. Petersburg almost immediately after the enactment of the *Ecclesiastical Regulation*. Hence, on March 15, 1721, he wrote to the tsar regarding this matter and outlined the essential details of his plan attached with a drawing of the proposed seminary.<sup>375</sup> He began by proposing a number of suitable locations for the seminary. His suggestions included a little island in the sea opposite the Ekaterinhof Palace.<sup>376</sup> Prokopovich also earmarked the seminary for the Apothecary Garden on the Little Neva and on the south banks of the river facing the country residence of Petr Matveevich Apraksin and in the grounds of the country residence of the late tsarevich. His last choice was the former palace of Aleksandr Vasilievich Kikin, whose property had been confiscated by the State in 1718. In 1721, this palace was temporarily home to the *kunstkamera* and according to Prokopovich was favoured by healthy air and dry soil.

It was Prokopovich's opinion that the seminary should only admit children aged ten and under, as at such an age they had still not learnt "evil

<sup>371</sup> Webster, *Great Instauration*, 31.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, 25–6.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>374</sup> Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie*, 59–65.

<sup>375</sup> Chistovich, *Prokopovich i ego vremena*, 135.

<sup>376</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 561.

morals." If, however, they had already learnt such ways, then Prokopovich states that it is still not too late to remedy the matter.<sup>377</sup> Teachers were to be sought from foreign academies and had to have experience and knowledge in school and state matters. Lastly, Prokopovich proposes that the seminary be named Peter's Garden (*Sad Petrov* or *Peter-Garten*) in honour of the tsar.<sup>378</sup>

Ultimately, Prokopovich was to prove unsuccessful in his project to establish a seminary in St. Petersburg. Initially, it seemed as though the Synod was happy to sanction the establishment of such an institution. In December 1721, for example, they authorized two thousand roubles to be allocated to the building of a seminary in St. Petersburg. By February 28, 1722 the Synod set aside the former palace of Prince Gagarin. However, this building was to remain derelict for many years and finally, in 1743, it was given over to the Police-Master's Chancellery.<sup>379</sup>

Prokopovich was to be frustrated in his efforts to establish a seminary in St. Petersburg, but in 1721 he was successful in founding a school for orphans and poor children at his wooden home on Apothecary Island, on the banks of the River Karpovka. According to Chistovich this was the "best school of its day" in Russia.<sup>380</sup> During the fifteen years of its existence, the school educated 160 pupils, whose curriculum involved the study of theology, Slavic studies, Russian, Latin, Greek, grammar, rhetoric, logic, Roman antiquity, arithmetic, geometry, geography, history and drawing.<sup>381</sup> Much to the consternation of his ecclesiastical enemies, Prokopovich also facilitated the study of vocal and instrumental music and allegedly even participated in school theatrical performances.<sup>382</sup>

The Pietistic spirit of Prokopovich's school is arguably most evident in the series of instructions he wrote to regulate the behaviour of students. Twenty-five rules were written down in total, which convey an atmosphere of religious devotion and strict discipline mixed with recreational activities and a wide curricular. These instructions were to be read aloud in an assembly on the first of every month and were necessary to "know and to do" on an hourly and daily basis.<sup>383</sup>

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*, 562.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, 563.

<sup>379</sup> Chistovich, *Prokopovich i ego vremia*, 136–7.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, 631.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, 631–3.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, 632.

<sup>383</sup> See Smirnov, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 197–200. The Russian title of the regulations is: "Reguly seminarii preosviashchennogo Feofana, arkhiepiskopa velikonovgorodskogo i velikolutskogo."

A clear emphasis was placed on the Holy Scriptures, which were to be read aloud at the dining table every day, according to a three-day rotational sequence. Thus, on Sundays a reading should be made from the Acts of the Apostles, whereas on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays historical books were to be read – beginning with Genesis. On Fridays and Saturdays, the Proverbs of Solomon were to be read. It is stressed that pupils must remain silent whilst listening to the Biblical readings at lunchtime and that anything perplexing should be noted down in order to consult the teachers at a later time.<sup>384</sup> Various instructions are also given for the recital of precepts before liturgies on Sundays and short theological tales on days of the Lord.<sup>385</sup>

The school had three main teachers: Adam Burchardt Sellius (c. 1694–1745), Theodor Siegfried Bayer (1694–1738) and Georg Friedrich Fedorovich. Little is known of the third figure apart from the fact that he was a Prussian subject.<sup>386</sup> Both Sellius and Bayer, however, had strong links to Halle Pietism. Sellius, a Holsteiner, was the Latin teacher at Karpovka between 1722–1725. Eduard Winter states that it is probable that Sellius came to Russia because of his Pietist views.<sup>387</sup> The links between Sellius and the Pietists in Halle were certainly strong, as is testified by a letter he wrote to G. A. Francke in 1737, in which he discusses the Russian version of Arndt's *True Christianity*.<sup>388</sup> Bayer was the Professor of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences between 1726–1737 and according to Winter was strongly influenced by A. H. Francke. It is likely that Bayer's Pietistic sympathies stemmed from his father, a priest, who had been forced to flee Hungary because of his Lutheran beliefs. Bayer also matriculated from the Collegium Friedericianum in his hometown of Königsberg, which was run according to Pietistic principles.<sup>389</sup> Thus, not only did Prokopovich base the theoretical and practical structure of his school on the model laid down by Francke, he also ensured that the teachers he selected were fully immersed in Pietist doctrine.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

<sup>386</sup> Chistovich, *Prokopovich i ego vremia*, 631.

<sup>387</sup> Winter, *Halle Als Ausgangspunkt*, 235. For more on Sellius, see C. L. Drage and J. Sullivan, "Adam Burchardt Sellius and *Zertsalo istoricheskoe gosudarei rossiiskikh*," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 70:4 (Oct. 1992): 601–46.

<sup>388</sup> See Winter, *Halle Als Ausgangspunkt*, 412–15.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid., 191.

*Conclusion*

Whilst Feofan Prokopovich's enormous contribution to the Petrine reform programme – in both theological and pedagogical terms – has been widely recognized, this chapter has endeavoured to broaden our understanding of the wide philosophical foundation upon which this was developed. It has not been my intention to simply reject the modern and progressive aspects of Prokopovich's worldview, but rather to cast fresh light on areas hitherto neglected. In other words, I have attempted to reveal how the Ukrainian's distinct and marked form of Orthodoxy, which was open to a myriad of intellectual currents, enabled Prokopovich to prosper during the reign of Peter the Great. Thus, I would argue that the progressive sense of dynamism at the heart of Prokopovich's outlook was not wholly the product of a rational and secular intellect. As with many other contemporary European scholars, scientists and theologians, Prokopovich embraced a heady mix of beliefs in order to mould his own form of Russian Orthodoxy. This vision sought to banish obscurantism in favour of an inquisitive theological doctrine that looked to build a brighter future in which the whole of Russia would be pulled out of its state of ignorance. Ultimately, I would argue that this was not education for education's sake, but was premised on a profound and zealous understanding of what I believe Prokopovich saw as his Christian mission.

PART THREE

PETER THE GREAT



## INTRODUCTION

It is still customary to limit the role religion played in the life of Peter the Great. It is commonly reduced to a “narrow and above all practical” influence, which was akin to “a simple soldier’s faith.”<sup>1</sup> His secular and empirical outlook is seen to be typical of “a child of the age of rationalism.”<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the tsar’s renowned passion for western science is routinely portrayed as being devoid of a religious foundation and is highlighted as a clear example of his enlightened, eighteenth-century sense of practicality.<sup>3</sup> A distinct dichotomy exists, whereby the individual faith of the tsar is confined to the periphery, where it does not encroach upon important matters of state.

Thus, the copious evidence one can find of Peter the Great’s profound and intense Christian faith is restricted to the private sphere, whereas in the public arena one views a secular crusader attacking all vestiges of religious superstition and magical nonsense.<sup>4</sup> In this manner the conflation of religion and science is avoided and consequently a clearer (and

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson, *Peter the Great*, 120; Cracraft, *Peter the Great Transforms Russia*, 233.

<sup>2</sup> Hughes, *Age of Peter the Great*, 377.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Ryan, *Bathhouse at Midnight*, 23.

<sup>4</sup> The tsar’s personal library was certainly replete with Biblical works, which amounted to 457 editions, or 28.2% of his total collection of 1621 tomes. The majority of the theological works owned by the Peter the Great were in Russian and encompassed a wide variety of ecclesiastical literature. One finds, for example, a significant collection of various editions of the Gospels and Psalters. One also finds a large collection of hagiographical works, as well as numerous contemporary sermons. A sizeable volume of works by Church Fathers is also present in Peter the Great’s library, including tomes by Dionysius the Areopagite, Augustine, Origen, Tertullian, John of Damascus and John Chrysostom. In addition, it is notable that the tsar owned three editions by Josephus Flavius, including two volumes on the destruction of Jerusalem, published in Moscow in 1713 and in St. Petersburg in 1716. Significantly, one also finds Russian translations of works by the Catholic ecclesiastical historian, Cesare Baronius, as well as volumes by the Protestant divines Martin Luther and Johann Gerhard. Intriguingly, one also finds a number of works on the antichrist and on the apocalypse, such as a 1712 edition of Andrei Kesariiskii’s *Interpretation of the Apocalypse of John the Theologian* and a short tract by Metropolitan Job of Novgorod entitled “About the birth in this time of the Antichrist,” published in Moscow in 1707. His religious collection included foreign editions, such as complete Latin and German editions of the Bible and a German edition of the New Testament by Martin Luther. The tsar also owned a German edition of the New Testament published in Hamburg in 1710, as well as contemporary Dutch (1717), French (1698) and Latin (1712) versions. For a catalogue of Peter the Great’s personal library, see Bobrova, *Biblioteka Petra I*.

more one-dimensional) image of Peter the Great as a rational, secular and enlightened modernizer can be established.

In the third part of this work I argue that religion and science were intrinsically bound in Peter the Great's worldview. Hence, religion comes to play a pivotal role in shaping the nature of the entire Petrine reform project. It will be argued that religion – in harmony with science – formed part of an overarching worldview for Peter the Great, in which Biblical paradigms served to symbolize and direct his reforming zeal, which was encapsulated in the foundation of St. Petersburg.

Indeed, it will be argued that motifs associated with the idea of insaturation, or in other words a restoration of Adamic knowledge in the imminent run up to the onset of the millennium, helped to shape the Petrine reform project. The concluding sections of Chapter 6 will also seek to illustrate how Peter the Great's inquisitive and open-minded attitude towards scientific inquiry was imbued with distinct traces of esoteric thought – particularly in regard to astrology and the search for perpetual motion.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### PETER THE GREAT'S DIVINE MISSION

Northward, departing Muse, extend thy Flight –  
There, a *New Sun* inflames the Land of *Night*.  
There, Arts and Arms the Worlds *Fifth Empire* raise:  
There, dateless Times shall hail my *Prophet* praise.  
Thy *Line*, Great Czar! shall stretch that shorten'd Name.  
To more than Caesar's Power: and All his Fame.  
Taught, by thy *Plans*, to reign, victorious, still,  
And length'ning down, through *Time*, thy deathless  
Skill.  
Legions, of *Kings*, shall wait *their* doomful Nod:  
As Hosts, from *Moses*, watch'd th'inspiring God!

– *The Northern Star: a poem* (1718) by Aaron Hill.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Peter the Great's Divine Mission*

Among the numerous practical skills Peter the Great sought to learn during his Grand Embassy to Western Europe in 1697–1698 was etching under the tutorship of the Dutchman Adriaan Schoonebeek (1661–1714). Significantly, the fruits of Peter the Great's labour under the guidance of Schoonebeek are embodied in an etching entitled *An Allegory of the Victory of Christianity over Islam* (see Fig. 36 below).<sup>2</sup>

Crucially, the theme chosen by Peter the Great not only reveals his pride at defeating the Ottoman Turks at Azov in 1696, but also illustrates the way in which he consciously sought to frame his exploits within the realms of the unfolding apocalyptic drama. Indeed, the full meaning of

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<sup>1</sup> Aaron Hill, *The Northern Star: a poem* (London, 1739), 5. Aaron Hill (1685–1750) was an English poet, playwright and theatre manager (he became Master of Drury Lane Theatre in 1709 and in the following year undertook the management of the Opera House in the Haymarket). For a biography of Hill see *British Biography: or, an accurate and impartial account of the lives and writings of eminent persons in Great Britain and Ireland from Wickliff*, vol. 10 (Sherborne, 1778–80), 339–48. According to the *Life of Aaron Hill* in the *British Biography*, the author was “complimented with a gold medal from the Empress Catherine, according to the Czar's desire before his death.” See *British Biography*, 342.

<sup>2</sup> Two copies of this etching can be found in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and in St. Petersburg Public Library.



Fig. 36. *An Allegory of the Victory of Christianity over Islam* (1698).  
By Peter the Great and Adriaan Schoonebeek.

the allegory only becomes clear if one refers to Revelation 12:1 and 12:14, which state respectively: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet" and "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle." Hence, Peter the Great's etching powerfully illustrates the extent to which the monarch was familiar with the Book of Revelation *and* how he viewed his own actions as having a direct bearing on the grand advance of Christianity. Tellingly, the apocalyptic theme of Revelation 12:1 and 12:14 was also utilized by Stefan Iavorskii in his *Welcome* sermon in Moscow in 1702 (see Chapter 3), in front of Peter the Great. In other words, it is entirely possible that Iavorskii was playing to his primary audience – the monarch – when drawing on this particular passage, which was evidently familiar to the tsar.

Peter the Great's belief in his own divine providential role may have never hitherto been expressed in such a confident and open manner, but it was not a new phenomenon. As early as 1694 the young monarch was purposely symbolizing critical events in his life as examples of his divine grace. This is epitomized by how the monarch responded to events that began to unfold on the evening of June 10, 1694, when he and a number of close associates set sail from Arkhangel'sk in his yacht, the St. Peter. The intended destination was the renowned Solovetskii Monastery situated on a remote archipelago in the White Sea. During the voyage a storm set in which threatened to completely ravage the relatively tiny yacht. For more than twenty-four hours the storm raged and the Archbishop resorted to giving the Last Sacrament. On the morning of June 12 the crew were able to steer the vessel into the calmer waters of Unskaia Bay and were able to moor by the Pertominsk Monastery.<sup>3</sup>

As Ernest Zitser has noted, the monastery's chronicler made it abundantly clear that the young monarch had been aided by the miraculous intercession of Vassian and Iona, two unofficial local saints and monks of the Solovetskii Monastery who had drowned at sea in the sixteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Peter the Great wholeheartedly accepted the miraculous nature of his 'salvation' and even consented to recognizing the holiness of

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<sup>3</sup> For a description of this incident see "Skazanie o poiavlenii i obretenii i o chudesekh prepodobnykh otets nashikh Vasiona i Iony, izhe na Primorii studenago moria, Velikago Okiana, v Zatotse, vo Unskikh, naritsdemykh Rogakh Pertominskikh chudotvortsev," in *Solovetskoe sobranie (Sbornik zhitiï russkikh sviatykh)*, Manuscript Division, f. 181/82. Russian National Library, St. Petersburg.

<sup>4</sup> Zitser, *Transfigured Kingdom*, 85.

Vassian and Iona's relics in the Pertominsk Monastery after commanding Archbishop Afanasii of Kholmogory to inspect the remains.<sup>5</sup>

In commemoration of his deliverance from the storm the tsar also made a wooden cross, over ten feet tall and inscribed in Dutch: "This cross was made by Captain Peter anno domini 1694." In addition, Peter the Great chose to personally carry the cross on his back – in clear imitation of Jesus's procession to Golgotha – to the shore and erected it on the spot where he and his crew had come ashore.<sup>6</sup> This ad hoc ceremony was a clear – if albeit small and private – illustration of the monarch's divine election and "a reaffirmation of faith in the coming of a new political dispensation."<sup>7</sup>

Thus, by 1698 (in the wake of the victorious Azov campaign of 1696), Peter the Great felt sufficiently confident to extend his own belief in his providential role beyond his intimate coterie of associates. This new sense of mission was clearly expressed in the etching he produced in Amsterdam. It is possibly no coincidence that Peter the Great came to embody his own divine role so boldly whilst in Western Europe. One must bear in mind, as stated in the beginning of this work, that the sight of a Russian monarch in Western Europe aroused much religious excitement, coming as it did hot on the heels of Russia's victory over the Muslim Turks. Learned men, such as Gottfried Leibniz and Francis Lee sensed something extraordinary and providential in the timing of Peter's Grand Embassy, and they were far from alone. Being at the centre of this expectant attention, it is wholly understandable that Peter the Great felt emboldened in his own sense of his divine role.

However, whilst various historians have noted that Peter the Great's personal faith included a firm acceptance of the role of divine providence, one will struggle to find an examination of how this fundamental belief affected the course of Petrine history. Lindsey Hughes, for example, acknowledges, that the tsar never questioned that divine providence "played a part in determining human fate."<sup>8</sup> Military victories are primarily cited as examples whereby the Russian tsar believed God had intervened

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 84; Eve Levin, "False Miracles and unattested dead bodies: Investigations into Popular Cults in early modern Russia," in *Religion and the Early Modern State: Views from China, Russia, and the West*, ed. James D. Tracy and Marguerite Ragnow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 259–60.

<sup>6</sup> Ian Grey, *Peter the Great: Emperor of All Russia* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1969), 80; Zitser, *Transfigured Kingdom*, 85.

<sup>7</sup> Zitser, *Transfigured Kingdom*, 86.

<sup>8</sup> Hughes, *Age of Peter the Great*, 376.

on his behalf. Thus, after the victory at Poltava in 1709, Hughes comments that Peter wrote to thank the British merchant, Andrew Styles, for his congratulations and stated: "to God alone belong the glory and honour (for this is a divine deed)."<sup>9</sup>

Yet if one broadens one's gaze beyond the battlefields upon which Peter the Great fought, it is possible to observe the myriad ways in which the tsar expressed his wonder and admiration for the divine signs and creations bestowed upon man for the benefit and advancement of humanity. Moreover, one can observe how Peter the Great's programme of reforms were consciously promoted as a fulfilment of Christian visions of improvement and enlightenment, thereby drawing on seventeenth-century notions of instauration.

Panegyric literature played a vital role in Russia during the Petrine era. As V. P. Grebeniuk notes, this literature "acquired the quality of a new meaning," whereby its socio-political and patriotic direction became the active tools of the propaganda and aspirations of Petrine reform.<sup>10</sup> In this manner, the Petrine era witnessed the culmination of the ideals of Simeon Polotskii, who not only wanted to broaden the strength of Russia by the sword but also by "fast flowing type."<sup>11</sup>

According to the pioneering semioticians Iurii Lotman and Boris Uspenskii, the theoreticians of the Petrine era turned to classical antiquity as the ideal ancestor of their epoch. In support of this thesis Lotman and Uspenskii highlight the way in which the appellations 'Emperor,' 'Father of the Fatherland' and 'Great,' which were adopted in 1721, all derived from Roman traditions.<sup>12</sup> They also point out the way in which a commemorative medal to celebrate Catherine's coronation in 1724 portrayed Peter in Roman garb standing under a canopy.<sup>13</sup> A similar perspective is displayed by V. M. Zhivov, who writes that "the triumphs of Peter were consciously built according to the form of the triumphs of Imperial Rome."<sup>14</sup> Indeed, one can note many symbolic allusions to classical antiquity, which were

<sup>9</sup> *PiB*, vol. 9, 331.

<sup>10</sup> Grebeniuk, *Panegiricheskaia literatura*, 10.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> I. Lotman and B. Uspenskii, *The Semiotics of Russian Culture* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1984), 53. These titles derive from the Latin 'Imperator, Pater Patriae, Maximus.' On Roman imagery also see Richard S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy from Peter the Great to the Abdication of Nicholas II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 21–39.

<sup>13</sup> Lotman and Uspenskii, *Semiotics of Russian Culture*, 53.

<sup>14</sup> V. M. Zhivov, *Razyskaniia v oblasti istorii i predystorii russkoi kul'tury* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2002), 395.

used to extol the Russian monarch during the Petrine era. For example, at various times he is portrayed as Hercules, Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar.<sup>15</sup>

*Peter the Great as King David*

Yet, whilst not denying that classical personages and mythology often did figure in portraits of the Russian monarch, it would be a mistake to assume that they assumed a predominant place in the hierarchy of symbolic reference points. Indeed, Uspenskii later wrote that the sacralization of the monarch was actually strengthened during the reign of Peter the Great. According to Uspenskii this was because the tsar came to represent the head of the Orthodox Church and therefore was perceived to have a direct link to God.<sup>16</sup> In fact, a cursory glance at the sermons of Stefan Iavorskii (see Chapter 3) is sufficient to discern the pre-eminence of Christian paragons, such as Noah and Moses. Moreover, if one extends one's gaze to other panegyric writers of the Petrine era, it is extraordinary to note the abundant and consistent allusions to one particular Old Testament figure: King David.

It is highly significant that symbolic references to King David became increasingly frequent after 1703. In other words, they emerged immediately after the foundation of St. Petersburg and continued to be utilized throughout the course of the Great Northern War and the expansion of the new capital city. In this regard it is worth recalling that David consolidated his position as King of the Israelites by conquering the northern Jebusite city of Jerusalem. As a result of this victory he proclaimed Jerusalem the new capital of his kingdom, transferring the seat of power from the southern city of Hebron.<sup>17</sup>

As will be described below, a conscious and concerted effort was made by Russian panegyrists to evoke this sense of divine Biblical mission embodied in the personage of Peter the Great. By means of war, Peter the Great was represented as liberating his people from hostile foes and establishing a new seat of power in the north. Thus, the transformation of the old Swedish fortress of Nyenshans into a mighty and splendid

<sup>15</sup> Hughes, *Age of Peter the Great*, 207–8.

<sup>16</sup> B. A. Uspenskii, *Tsar' i patriarch: kharizma vlasti v Rossii (Vizantiiskaia model' i ee russkoe pereosmyslenie* (Moscow: Shkola "Iazyki russkoi kul'tury", 1998), 257–8.

<sup>17</sup> See 2 Samuel 5 and 1 Chronicles 11.



capital city is depicted as echoing David's divinely sanctioned endeavour in Jerusalem.

The Biblical account of David slaying Goliath is undoubtedly the most frequent motif employed by panegyrists, when portraying Peter the Great's epic military confrontation with Charles XII's Sweden during the course of the Great Northern War. Unsurprisingly, the Swedish monarch is always portrayed in the guise of the Philistine. One of the earliest uses of this motif dates back to December 1704, when Iosef Turoboiskii, the Prefect and Professor of Rhetoric at the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy in Moscow, wrote a panegyric to celebrate the Russian victory in Livonia.<sup>18</sup> In the introduction, dedicated to the tsar, Turoboiskii writes of how the "second Goliath" is still seeking to annihilate and offend the "Russian kingdom of New Israel."<sup>19</sup> Turoboiskii writes that it is fortunate for Russia that God has now selected a "most elegant, courageous and most brave" new David to dethrone the "pride of the great Goliath" and to return lands to their rightful ruler.<sup>20</sup>

The most prominent Russian panegyrists subsequently developed this theme. Thus, as previously mentioned, Stefan Iavorskii drew symbolic meaning into the height of Goliath and the amount of enemies Russia had faced in a sermon written after the Battle of Poltava. Prokopovich also used the Russian victory at Poltava to write a sermon describing how Peter was striking at the head of the new Goliath and was carrying the Russian nation – God's living regiment – towards a New Israel.<sup>21</sup>

Indeed, it is extremely significant that Peter the Great himself also suggested the inclusion of the David and Goliath motif at the official Poltava victory celebrations. In particular, he asked for "the speech of proud Goliath to David and from David entrusting in God."<sup>22</sup> In other words, Peter the Great was specifically requesting 1 Samuel 17, in which Goliath "stood and cried unto the armies of Israel" stating that he would "defy the armies of Israel this day" (1 Samuel 17: 8–10). David then comes before Saul and stakes his claim for fighting Goliath (1 Samuel 17: 34–37):

<sup>18</sup> The panegyric is entitled "Preslavnoe torzhestvo svoboditel'ia Livonii." See Grebeniuk, *Panegiricheskaia literatura*, 150–180.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Feofan Prokopovich, *Socheneniia*, ed. I. P. Eremin (Moscow-Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1961), 34.

<sup>22</sup> Morozov, "Metafora," 200.

Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock . . . Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing that he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.

In pinpointing this Biblical passage, Peter the Great shows himself to be extremely adept at finding appropriate Davidic parallels.

What is more, in 1710, the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy performed a series of plays in which a central place was occupied by the theme of Peter/David slaying Charles/Goliath. In December 1710, the Archbishop of Chernigov, Ioann Maksimovich, also published a tract entitled *Sinaksar*, in which he utilizes the theme of David defeating Goliath.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, on October 11, 1720, Gavriil Buzhinskii (1680–1731), the Chaplain of the Fleet, delivered a sermon, which employed the motif of David and Goliath. This speech was written to commemorate the seizure of the Swedish fortress of Schlüsselberg in 1702. Buzhinskii wrote that just as David toppled Goliath with a stone, so too had the Russian stone, that is Peter, smashed the Swedish castle and opened the doors to the treasures inside. In other words, Russia had opened a gateway to the lands of Karelia, Ingria, Livonia, Estonia and Finland.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, it was not merely in official sermons and plays that the David and Goliath motif was used to symbolize the struggle between Peter the Great and Charles XII. In October 1708, for example, Nikita Moiseevich Zotov (d. 1717), the former tutor to Peter the Great and *kniaz-papa* (Prince-Pope) in the so-called 'Most Comical and Drunken Council,' wrote a letter to the tsar in which he offered congratulations on the recent "God-given victory" at the Battle of Lesnaia (September 28, 1708):

Having received the news . . . from your courier, Mr. Ozerov, we began to rejoice, body and soul, in ineffable gladness. In everything, every rank and all ages have perceived as if a renewal in ourselves. Before your many God-given labours in that victory, our merry feet leap playfully, like David in front of the ark. We also pray that God mercifully bestow his munificence upon you, as he did to David over Goliath, by [allowing you] to defeat and overcome that second Goliath, the most haughty Swede.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Grebeniuk, *Panegiricheskaia literatura*, 68.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>25</sup> N. M. Zotov to Peter the Great, October 6, 1708. F. 9, otd. 2, op. 3, kn. 7 (1707), l. 934 r–v. RGADA, Moscow. Also see, Zitser, *Transfigured Kingdom*, 137–8. Translation adapted from Zitser.



Thus, even within the private sphere of the select 'Most Comical and Drunken Council,' the parallels between Peter the Great and David were upheld. This clearly indicates the extent to which the Russian monarch actively chose to promote his reign in Davidic terms. In other words, this association was not merely projected to the outside world to glorify his reign, but was also championed among intimates. This highlights an all-encompassing dimension to the Davidic symbolism that goes to the core of Peter the Great's perception of his own divine role.

Personalities at the centre of the Petrine drama are also directly compared to figures associated with King David. In December 1709, for example, Prokopovich delivered a sermon in praise of Aleksandr Menshikov, in which his friendship to the Russian monarch is compared to Jonathan's love of David.<sup>26</sup> Evidently this was a theme cherished by Peter the Great as he purchased Rembrandt's "The Parting of David and Jonathan" (1642), whilst in Holland in 1716.<sup>27</sup> When the painting arrived in Russia, Peter the Great hung it in his favourite summer residence: the Monplaisir Pavilion at Peterhof.<sup>28</sup>

In 1710 the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy also performed a play, in which the betrayal of the Cossack Hetman, Ivan Mazepa (1639–1709), prior to the Battle of Poltava, is compared to Absalom's conspiracy against David, his father.<sup>29</sup> In the play, Absalom is excited by pride and vanity and conceives the idea of becoming King of Hebron. Consequently he asks his father if he can go and pray in the city, where he appears on a chrome lion.<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, this passage closely mirrors the events described in 2 Samuel 15, except for one important addition: the chrome lion. To the on-looking audience, this extra detail would have been a clear reminder of Mazepa's treacherous alliance with the Swedish lion.<sup>31</sup>

However, the motif of Absalom's betrayal of his father, David, was more frequently used to symbolize the perceived betrayal of Tsarevich

<sup>26</sup> Feofan Prokopovich, *Slovo i rechi*, 1 (St. Petersburg, 1760), 51–73; Grebeniuk, *Panegiricheskaiia literatura*, 63.

<sup>27</sup> Iozin Drissen, *Tsar Petr i ego gollandskie druž'ia* (St. Petersburg: Obrazovanie – kul'tura, 1996), 103–4.

<sup>28</sup> I. A. Sokolova, "Rembrandt i russkaia khudozhestvennaia kul'tura," in *Rossiiia-Gollandiia: knizhnye sviazi XV–XX vv.*, ed. N. P. Kopaneva (St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii dom, 2000), 7.

<sup>29</sup> See 2 Samuel 13–19.

<sup>30</sup> Grebeniuk, *Panegiricheskaiia literatura*, 68.

<sup>31</sup> In 1717 Prokopovich delivered a sermon on the eighth anniversary of the Battle of Poltava in which he called Mazepa a 'new Judas'. See "Slovo pokhvalnoe o batalii poltavskoi," in Grebeniuk, *Panegiricheskaiia literatura*, 214.

Aleksei (1690–1718) against Peter the Great. Prior to Aleksei fleeing to Italy in August 1716, Peter the Great had already cited David in a letter to his son, dated January 19, 1716. He questions whether “one can rely on your oaths” and then cites David’s words in Psalm 116:11: “David said: *All Men are Liars*.”<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, the potent theme of Absalom betraying David was cited by a commission of clerics as one of the examples Peter the Great could follow in his treatment of the Tsarevich Aleksei in 1718. Reporting to the tsar, they wrote:

He has the example of David, who is solicitous for the safety of Absalom his son, though an open rebel, recommending him to the commanders of his army, who insisted on giving him battle; *spare my son Absalom*: the father was shewing him mercy, but divine justice did not spare him.<sup>33</sup>

This Davidic example offered to Peter the Great was powerfully incorporated into the funeral service of Tsarevich Aleksei held in the Trinity Cathedral on June 30, 1718. Friedrich Christian Weber describes how the Priest chose the words of David in 2 Samuel 18:33: “O my Son Absalom, my Son, my Son Absalom.”<sup>34</sup> Moreover, it is highly significant to note the behaviour of the tsar during the service, which Weber describes in the following manner: “the Czar was bathed in Tears during the Procession and the Service at Church.”<sup>35</sup> I would argue that this show of emotion was deliberately meant to evoke David’s anguish at Absalom’s betrayal, as described in 2 Samuel 18:33: “And the King was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept.” Thus, the entire funeral service of the tsar’s son can be seen as a deliberately choreographed exercise promoting Peter the Great as King David and the tsarevich as the treacherous Absalom.<sup>36</sup>

Amid the acrimonious atmosphere prevailing in Russia in 1718, Prokopovich also used his Easter sermon, entitled *Slovo o vlasti i chesti tsarskoi* (Sermon on Royal Authority and Honour), to harness Davidic imagery

<sup>32</sup> Weber, *Present State of Russia*, vol. 2, 104.

<sup>33</sup> Voltaire, *The History of the Russian Empire Under Peter the Great*, vol. 2 (London, 1769), 180–1.

<sup>34</sup> Weber, *Present State of Russia*, vol. 1, 230.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> For an overview of the use of the David-Absalom motif in the trial of Tsarevich Aleksei, see M. V. Nikolaeva, “‘Testament’ Petra I tsarevichu Alekseiu,” *XVIII vek* 9 (1974): 93–111.

in order to stress his loyalty to the cause of royal absolutism.<sup>37</sup> In the sermon Prokopovich vehemently defends the Davidic principle inherent in Peter the Great's reign. In other words, Peter the Great is presented as "the divinely anointed 'King of Israel,'" whereas his detractors are portrayed as 'Judaizers,' 'arch-hierarchs,' 'scribes' and 'holy Pharisees.'<sup>38</sup>

Lastly, one can cite the curious spectacle of Prince Fedor Iur'evich Romodanovskii (1640–1717), the *kniaz'-kesar* (Prince-Caesar), at the masquerade held in St. Petersburg on January 27–28, 1715 to celebrate the marriage of the 84 year-old Zotov to "a buxom widow of thirty four."<sup>39</sup> The carnivalesque scene is described by Weber:

The *Mock-Czar of Moscow*, who represented King *David* in his Dress, instead of a Harp had a Lyre covered with a Bearskin, to play upon. He being the Chief of the Company, was carried on a sort of Pageant placed on a Sled, to the four Corners of which were tied as many Bears, which being prickt with Goads by Fellows purposely appointed for it, made such a frightful roaring as well suited the confused and horrible Dinn raised by the disagreeing Instruments of the rest of the Company. The *Czar* himself was dressed like a Boor of *Frizeland*, and skilfully beat a Drum in Company with three Generals. In this manner, Bells ringing everywhere, the ill-matched Couple were attended by the Masks to the Altar.<sup>40</sup>

This riotously carnivalesque spectacle was choreographed according to a Biblical story found in II Samuel 6:5 and I Chronicles 15:28 respectively.<sup>41</sup> Thus in II Samuel, it states "David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals," whilst in I Chronicles it is written that "all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting."

Thus, Romodanovskii's King David, accompanied by the "Dinn" of "disagreeing Instruments" consciously mimicked the scenes of unabandoned jubilation when David and the Israelities brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. In symbolic terms, therefore, the re-enactment of this pivotal moment in the Bible sought to bestow Peter's new capital city with

<sup>37</sup> Prokopovich, *Sochineniia*, 76–93.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 90, 76–77; Zitser, *Transfigured Kingdom*, 150.

<sup>39</sup> Weber, *Present State of Russia*, vol. 1, 89.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 90. Peter Henry Bruce also describes this scene, adding that Jacob Bruce was one of the three generals dressed as a Friesland Boor banging a drum. See Bruce, *Memoirs*, 150. For a detailed description of Romodanovskii's Davidic costume, see f. 156, op. 1, ed. Khr. 129, l. 93v. RGADA, Moscow.

<sup>41</sup> Zitser, *Transfigured Kingdom*, 135–7.

Davidic status as a 'New Jerusalem.' The timing of such a consecration ceremony was certainly in keeping with the Davidic model, as Peter the Great eyed the rising city around him.

Bearing in mind the wealth of Davidic imagery utilized by Peter the Great and his servitors it is intriguing to study the personal seal adopted by the monarch in 1710 or 1711.<sup>42</sup> It was certainly in use by January 14, 1714 when the tsar affixed this stamp to a document "according to the matter of Gospodin Kornilus Kreis."<sup>43</sup> On the print, the tsar is portrayed with a hammer and chisel in his hands and a crown on his head. A robe is on the shoulders of the statue of 'Russia' with a sceptre and orb in her hands and a crown on her head.<sup>44</sup> On its own this image merely symbolizes the Pygmalion story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which a Cypriot sculptor carves an image of perfect feminine beauty. The sculptor then becomes enamoured of his own creation and asks the gods to enable him to wed his 'ivory maiden.' They acquiesce and the statue is brought to life after Pygmalion kisses it.<sup>45</sup>

Yet, the seal is far more than simply an allusion to the Pygmalion story told by Ovid. To the right, for example, are clearly visible two classical columns compassed at the top by a stone lintel. If one adopts a Davidic interpretation of these columns, it is possible to view them as the pillars of Jachin and Boaz, as described in 1 Kings 7:15–22, that stood at the entrance to the first Temple in Jerusalem constructed by Solomon, the son of David. It has been argued that these pillars were of crucial significance for the covenant and coronation ceremonies of ancient Israelite kings, as the only two times they are mentioned afterwards in the Old Testament is in relation to royalty.<sup>46</sup> This theory is strengthened by the meaning commonly attached to the Jachin pillar: "He (Yahweh) will establish the throne of

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<sup>42</sup> See V. Iu Matveev, "K istorii vozniknoveniia i razvitiia siuzheta 'Petr I, vysekaiushchii statuii Rossii,'" in *Kul'tura i iskusstvo Rossii XVIII veka*, ed. B. V. Sapunov and I. N. Ukhanova (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1981), 26–43.

<sup>43</sup> Matveev, "Petr I, vysekaiushchii statuii Rossii," 28. Cornelius Cruys (1655–1727) was half Norwegian and half Dutch and entered Russian service in 1698. He rose to become a Vice-Admiral and from 1705 commanded the Baltic Fleet, as well as masterminding the construction of the Kronstadt Fortress.

<sup>44</sup> The statue can also be interpreted as Catherine, the monarch's second wife. The pair officially married on February 19, 1712, and thus the adoption of the "Pygmalion" seal only predates this event by one or two years at most.

<sup>45</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 394–6.

<sup>46</sup> R. B. Y. Scott, "The Pillars Joan and Boaz," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 58:2 (June 1939): 146.



Fig. 37. Personal stamp of Peter I, F.Kh. Bekker, 1711–1712 (?), The Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

David, and his kingdom to his seed for ever."<sup>47</sup> Thus the Pygmalion-like sculptor can be interpreted as a new King David preparing his kingdom to take its place as the chosen nation in the New Jerusalem.

Such an interpretation is re-enforced by the triangular 'all-seeing-eye' clearly visible in the sky, which contains the Hebrew name of God, and the Latin inscription 'Adiuvante' above it. The two words in combination

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 148.

read “with God’s help” and signify the divinely sanctioned nature of the tsar’s mission as an artisan sculpting his country into a perfected form.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the symbolic representation of Peter hewing, or sculpting, the statue of Russia has Masonic resonances. Indeed, Douglas Smith entitled his study on Russian Freemasonry *Working the Rough Stone* in reference to the general aim of late eighteenth-century Russian Freemasons, which was to reshape a rough stone so that its original state became unrecognisable.<sup>48</sup> No longer covered with unhewn and jagged surfaces, it was to be “scoured, planed . . . and smoothed out.”<sup>49</sup> No mention was made by Smith to Peter the Great in this regard, yet the parallels are striking, especially when one takes into account the Masonic veneration of King David and the Temple in Jerusalem.<sup>50</sup>

Peter used this personal stamp consistently up until at least 1720 and in all likelihood up until his death in 1725. His personal emblem certainly continued to be widely utilized by eminent state-sponsored sculptors and artists throughout the 1720s. For example, the sculptor and architect Carlo Bartolomeo Rastrelli (1675?–1744) crafted a famous bronze bust of Peter the Great between 1723 and 1729, in which a monarch in the guise of Pygmalion is sculpting a female statue. To his right can be seen the outline of the two columns of a triumphal arch (see Fig. 38 below).<sup>51</sup>

It is probable that during this period Rastrelli also sculpted a similar relief, in which the two columns and triangular sun (as well as a ship) are clearly visible (see Fig. 39 below). In this image, however, it is significant that a sculptor is actually carving a statue of a monarch, that is, Peter the Great.

Finally, the power of the Pygmalion motif is illustrated by Feofan Prokovich’s incorporation of it in the sermon he delivered at Peter the Great’s funeral in February 1725. As he stated: “All of Russia is your statue, from you it is recast . . . and in your emblem it is not falsely portrayed.”<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> See Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, 3–17.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of the Masonic veneration of King David and the Temple at Jerusalem, see Stevenson, *Origins of Freemasonry*, 21.

<sup>51</sup> Rastrelli entered Russian service in 1716. His son, Bartolomeo Francesco Rastrelli (1700–1771) went on to design classics of Russian Baroque architecture, such as the Winter Palace and Smolny Cathedral.

<sup>52</sup> Grebeniuk, *Panegiricheskaia literatura*, 298.



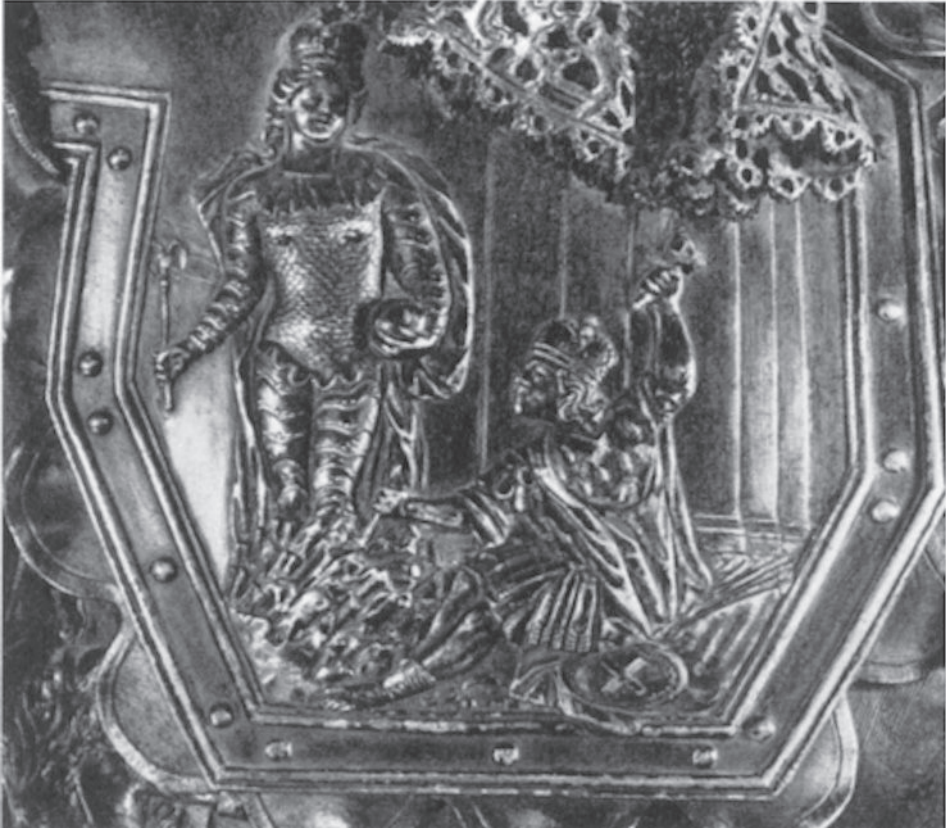


Fig. 38. Bronze bust of Peter the Great by Carlo Bartolomeo Rastrelli (1723–1729).

*The Prophetic Significance of the Nystad Peace of 1721*

This intriguing reversal also played an important role in the celebrations held in the wake of the Nystad Peace of August 30, 1721. This can be seen from a circular relief commemorating the celebrations (see Fig. 40 below). At the top one can see Peter's personal motto – 'Adiuvante' – and a triangle. Importantly, however, this triangle does not contain the name of God but three '7's,' a highly symbolic reference to the fact that the Great Northern War spanned twenty-one years and was divided into three significant periods. This was seen as divinely preordained by Russian officials, such as Feofilakt Lopatinskii, Prokopovich and Peter himself.



Fig. 39. Relief of a stonemason sculpting a statue of Peter the Great, reputedly by B. C. Rastrelli (c. 1720s).





Fig. 40. Circular Relief, B. C. Rastrelli and A. K. Nartov (?), 1723–1729 (?),  
The Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

The prophetic significance of the victorious Nystad Peace was powerfully expressed in a sermon delivered by Feofilakt Lopatinskii, the archimandrite of the Moscow Chudov Monastery, on January 1, 1722. The sermon draws its central theme – recited at the beginning of the speech – from Psalm 147:12–14, which states: “Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders.”

In this speech Lopatinskii claims that God favours odd numbers. In support of his argument, he refers to the trinity and the creation of the world in seven days. God’s munificence towards Russia is then illustrated by noting how the victory at Poltava was achieved in the ninth year of the century and how the Great Northern War lasted for a period

of twenty-one years, laying particular emphasis on three periods of seven years.<sup>53</sup> The manner in which God favours odd numbers (particularly seven) when orchestrating earthly affairs (and especially the divine outcome of the Great Northern War) is also stressed by drawing attention to Genesis 41. This chapter describes how Joseph, the son of Jacob, interpreted the Egyptian Pharaoh's dream to mean that God would bring seven years of plenty to Egypt followed by seven years of famine.<sup>54</sup>

The victorious outcome of the Nystad Peace is also portrayed by Lopatinskii as the fulfilment of God's will in regard to his new chosen people – the Russians – who can finally enjoy the fruits of their New Israel and New Jerusalem. Various Old Testament passages are cited to reinforce this point. Lopatinskii once again draws on Psalm 147:14–20, for example, which states: “He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat . . . He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.” This is closely followed by a citation from Psalm 122:6–7: “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.” Lastly, the cleric chose to read from Zechariah 12:8 in order to convey his meaning, which states: “For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.”

Four weeks after Lopatinskii's New Year speech Feofan Prokopovich delivered a sermon along very similar lines at the Uspenskii Cathedral in Moscow on January 28, 1722. Explicit reference is made to the prophetic calculations of Ezekiel, Daniel and John as regards the division of the Great Northern War into three periods of seven years. Prokopovich then elaborates on this theme by stating:

Did we not receive Divine reward in the Trinity in the preceding war, since the Trinity was formed by the rewards of triumph? . . . But since the number of the Trinity – as in Holy Scripture, so also in the actions of people – often tends to use considerable prime numbers (about which there is not space now to converse), and we complete the triple monarchical decree and the rewards of the council of triumph thanks to this . . . we recognise, from this, that daily and incessantly and eternally we are obliged for thanks from up

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<sup>53</sup> The sermon is entitled “Slovo o bogodarovannom mire.” See Grebeniuk, *Panegiricheskaia literatura*, 256.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

high, ... the preceding war in question and the peace were established by blessing from the all generous right hands of his adopted children.<sup>55</sup>

Peter the Great also went to great lengths to orchestrate celebrations of the Nystad Peace based on the symbolic length of the war in relation to the Holy Trinity. He ensured that the Peace was announced from the Trinity Cathedral in St. Petersburg on September 4, 1721, whilst three cannon shots resounded from the nearby St. Peter and Paul Fortress. The tsar also stated: "Given the thrice seven length of the war; it is necessary to give thanks to the Lord God thrice everywhere in the Russian realm as in St. Petersburg." This required all municipalities to organize three celebrations: (1) as soon as the news reaches them, (2) on October 22, 1721 and (3) on January 28, 1722, which coincided with the *Maslenitsa* (Shrovetide) festival.<sup>56</sup> Hence, Peter the Great and his servitors, such as Lopatinskii and Prokopovich, were deliberately attaching mystical and prophetic significance to the length of the Great Northern War.

Thus, the Great Northern War had been part of God's divine scheme, in which just as King David eventually triumphed over his enemies, so too had Peter the Great secured a victorious peace for his new Israel in Russia. In this sense the entire drama of the Great Northern War was portrayed as a grand Biblical drama. Accordingly, whilst Peter the Great was cast as King David, Menshikov fulfilled the role of Jonathan and his enemies and traitors were variously portrayed as Goliath (King Charles XII) and Absalom (Ivan Mazepa and Tsarevich Aleksei).

The celebrations marking the Nystad Peace of 1721 were also particularly notable for their use of Christian emblematics in order to stress God's help in securing victory for Russia. Emblems displayed during the firework display held on January 22, 1722 in Moscow, for example, made it expressly clear that the Russian military had vanquished their foe with divine help. This sentiment is evident in the illustrated panel below (see Fig. 41), in which a radiant, triangular sun containing the Hebrew name of God can be seen above two Russian naval vessels. The wording below the illustration expands upon the inscription visible either side of the triangular sun. Thus, it explains that the name of God inside the triangle signifies the trinity and that the inscription 'ot cero' ('from this'), since it was with divine help that Russia was able to conclude such a glorious and profitable peace after such a fierce war. The second part of the inscription refers

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 265–66.

<sup>56</sup> *Zhurnal*, vol. 2, 175.



to the Russian naval vessels, which were crucial in securing a victory for Peter the Great's forces.

A second (attached) panel at this firework display drew on the Biblical motif of Noah's Ark finding sanctuary atop Mount Ararat (see Fig. 42 below).<sup>57</sup> The inscription above the representation of Noah's Ark reads "to take shelter from the agitation" and the wording at the bottom makes it clear that the Biblical vessel symbolizes Russia after securing peace with Sweden after the 'deluge' of war.

The theme of Noah's Ark was also used in a special medal commissioned by Peter the Great to mark the Nystad Peace (see Fig. 43 below). Stockholm and St. Petersburg are represented on the medal (to the right and left respectively) and are linked by a rainbow, which contains the inscription: "connected by the union of peace." Significantly, both Noah's Ark and the dove with the olive branch are heading towards St. Petersburg. The wording at the bottom of the medal states: "In Nystad on account of the deluge of the Northern War." The message being that St. Petersburg has finally gained its rightful place in God's new covenant with the Russian nation, with its leader as a new Noah.

#### *Peter as a New Noah*

The central place of motifs linked to Noah's Ark in the celebrations to mark the Peace of Nystad marked the culmination of a concerted campaign to portray Peter the Great as a new Noah. In order to stress the personal parallels between Peter and Noah during the celebrations the tsar's *botik* (little boat) – the so-called 'grandfather of the Russian fleet' – in which he first learned to sail in the early 1680s, was placed in front of the Uspenskii Cathedral in the Moscow Kremlin in January 1722 (see Fig. 44 below).<sup>58</sup>

Note that Peter's *botik* was placed on a plinth illustrated with the same depiction of a dove, with an olive branch, flying above Noah's Ark, which is at sea and under a rainbow that spans between two fortified

<sup>57</sup> The upper part of the illustration depicts Mercury flying from north to south, carrying a sack of money. The inscription reads "fruits of the peace" and the wording at the bottom adds that the favourable peace enjoyed by Russia will bring trade and riches to Russia, with the help of God.

<sup>58</sup> The young Peter found the English sailing boat in an outhouse on the royal Ismailovo country estate. He was then instructed in sailing by the Dutchman Franz Timmermann. For an account of this story see Prokopovich's preface to the Naval Statute (*Morskoi Ustav*) of 1720, in Consett, *For God and Peter the Great*, 204–53.







Fig. 43. Medal struck in commemoration of the Nystad Peace (1721).

settlements. Thus, the intention of this visual monument was to stress that Peter was a 'Russian Noah' who had succeeded in establishing a Russian navy and in bringing peace to his land after the deluge of war. It is highly significant, therefore, that Peter arranged for his *botik* to be sent to stand on its plinth in the Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg, where on its arrival a special regatta was arranged on his birthday, May 30, to mark the occasion. In symbolic terms, the 'Russian Ark' had arrived in its final resting place – a new Mount Ararat – from where it would not be dislodged by an inundation again.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Stefan Iavorskii had portrayed Peter as Noah as early as 1708, when delivering his *Three Tabernacles* sermon at the laying of the cornerstone of the Trubetskoi Bastion of the Peter and

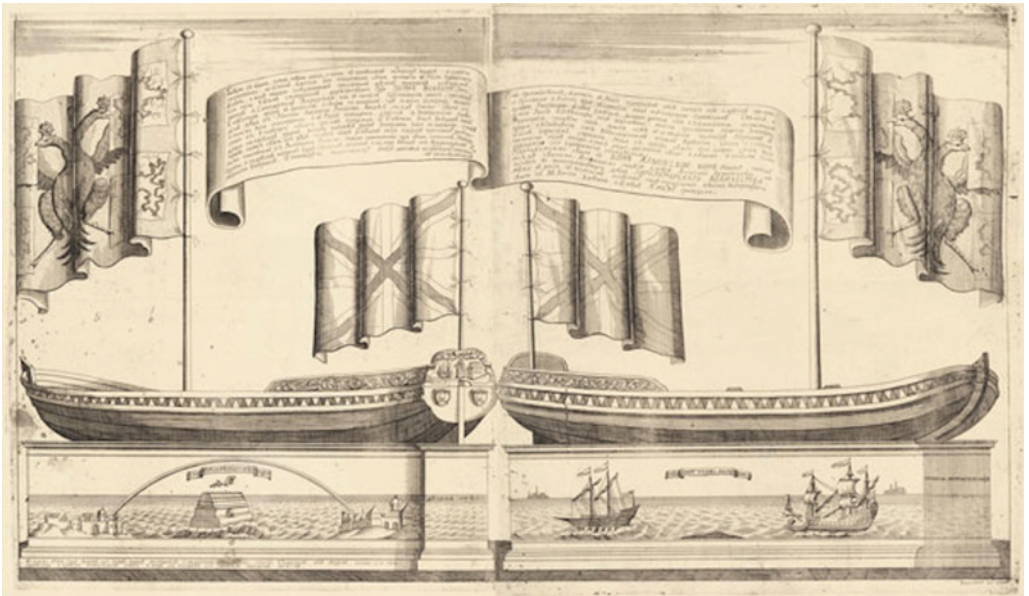


Fig. 44. *The Little Boat of Peter I* by I. F. Zubov (1722).

Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg.<sup>59</sup> Peter is championed as a ‘New Noah’ and ‘Russian Noah’ who God had provided with an opportunity to establish a gateway to the world, from where the tsar can build a naval fleet worthy of Russia’s divine destiny.<sup>60</sup>

Crucially, Peter the Great is also known to have compared himself to Noah. On New Year’s Day, 1719, for example, the Hanoverian resident, C. F. Weber, described how whilst celebrating at the Senate Peter the Great “compared himself to Noah, who with indignation gazed from this time at the old Russian world.” According to Weber, Peter now “conceived hope, with the aid of the newly founded colleges, of leading his realm to a new, better condition.”<sup>61</sup> Significantly, Peter makes no mention here of the Russian Fleet; rather he is thinking in terms of a more profound instaura-

<sup>59</sup> Iavorskii, “Slova Stefana,” vol. 1 (1875), 122.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 122–3. As also mentioned, Iavorskii also links Peter to Moses, with the “ark of bulrushes” described in Exodus 2:3 being referred to as a “little ship” (*korabl'ik*), thereby making a clear association with Peter’s *botik*.

<sup>61</sup> Weber, “Zapiski Vebera,” 1664. An almost identical account of this incident is provided by Henri Lavie, the French consul in St. Petersburg. See “Doneseniia frantsuzskikh poslannikov i poverennykh v delakh russkom poslov i otchetny o prebyvanii russkikh poslov, poslannikov i diplomaticheskikh agentov vo Frantsii, s 1681 po 1718 g., *Sbornik imperator-*



tion of knowledge in which God would bestow a new covenant upon the Russian people.

The association of Peter's *botik* with Noah's Ark was stressed by Prokopovich as early as September 1720, when he delivered a sermon in praise of the Russian Fleet. In a key passage, Prokopovich described how "from that seed," or in other words the *botik*, "grew this great, wondrous, winged, weapon-bearing tree. O *botik*, worthy of being clad in gold. Some seek the planks of Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat; my advice would be to keep this boat and preserve it as an unforgettable memorial."<sup>62</sup>

Interestingly, Prokopovich also portrayed Peter the Great's naval achievement in a Solomonic light in the preface he wrote to the *Morskoi ukaz* (Naval Statute) of 1720.

And here indeed we see a Divine Providence, as was observable in the Building of the first Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. David had purposed with great Zeal to build a Temple; but God forbid him that Undertaking and devolv'd it on his Son, Solomon: And so with us, Ship-building design'd and begun by Tsar Alexie, the incomprehensible Counsel of God did not permit to be perfected by him: but determin'd that his Son Peter the First should be Author of this work.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, Peter the Great's efforts to establish a powerful Russian Fleet were repeatedly viewed in a Biblical light. Whilst the most common allusion was to Noah, the above passage also illustrates how the tsar's endeavours could be interpreted in a Solomonic hue.

Bearing in mind Peter's association with Noah – with the attendant symbolism of being granted a new covenant by God – it is not surprising to observe how the repeated floods that inundated St. Petersburg in its early years (eleven in all) were viewed in apocalyptic terms. Thus, it was imperative for the tsar to preserve the potent message of his *botik* standing proud in the very heart of the capital as a symbol of his dominion over nature.

Indeed, as early as August 1703 a flood inundated the Neva delta, rising to a height of two metres. This inundation was perceived as a mystical

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*skogo rossiiskogo istoricheskogo obshchestva* 34 (1884), 8. For further discussion of these descriptions, see Pogosian, *Petr I*, 92–3.

<sup>62</sup> Grebeniuk, *Panegiricheskaja literatura*, 236. The sermon was entitled "Slovo Pokhval'noe o Flote Rossiiskom."

<sup>63</sup> Consett, *For God and Peter the Great*, 207–8. Tsar Aleksei commissioned Dutchmen to build a three-masted ship, *The Eagle*, in 1666–1667, but it was destroyed in 1670 by Stenka Razin, the Cossack rebel, in Astrakhan, before it ever set sail. See Hughes, *Peter the Great*, 22–3.

warning by sections of the population hostile to the Petrine project.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, many prophecies quickly emerged purporting to predict the destruction of the new city by floodwater. This was viewed as divine justice and a fitting fate for the new Babylonian city created by the Russian Antichrist. The most famous of these prophecies centred on Peter's first wife, Evdokiia Lopukhina (1669–1731), whom the tsar had banished to a nunnery in 1699. She allegedly predicted that Petersburg would be emptied by a cataclysmic flood. This drew on the prophecy uttered in the Book of Jeremiah (51:62–64) regarding the destruction of Babylon, which states:

O Lord, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever . . . Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her.

Against this backdrop, the tsar worked tirelessly to defend his city from the floodwaters that beset it. Riverbanks were strengthened and canals were dug, whilst flood protection measures were vigorously enforced. These efforts were not only promoted on practical grounds, but also served as weapons in the hugely symbolic propaganda battle waged over the apocalyptic vision of the city. To his enemies continual floods served as prophetic signs of the imminent demise of Peter's satanic city. To Peter and his supporters, the successful defence of the city proved St. Petersburg's dominion over nature and therefore justified its sacred status and divine destiny.

One legend epitomizes the way in which Peter combated those who predicted the doom of Petersburg. It centres on a strange, grey-bearded old man – reminiscent of a *iurodivyi* (holy fool) – who appeared at a willow tree in the city and predicted that in the near future the Lord would sink Petersburg. Rain would apparently pour down from heaven, the Neva would flow backwards and the sea would swallow up the city of the Antichrist. The prophet even signalled the specific day and time that this flood would occur. Accordingly the tsar chained the old man to the willow tree at this time. After the flood failed to materialize, the old man was flogged and banished from the city.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> See N. A. Sindalovskii, *Legendy i mify Sankt-Peterburga* (St. Petersburg: Norint, 1994), 128.

<sup>65</sup> Sindalovskii, *Legendy*, 15.

*St. Petersburg as 'New Jerusalem'*

The Biblical undercurrent inherent in the efforts to stave off a catastrophic inundation of St. Petersburg in the Petrine era is redolent of a far more concerted campaign to portray Peter's city as a sacred space. More specifically, it is possible to observe how the new city on the Neva was imagined as New Jerusalem. In light of the Davidic parallels attached to the person of Peter the Great, it is, therefore, entirely consistent and logical to portray the city he founded as the heir to the city of David, or in other words, the prophesised holy city of New Jerusalem described by St. John the Divine in the Book of Revelation (21:2), which will "come down from God out of heaven" at the end of time.

In a sense, the association of sacred spaces with New Jerusalem was so engrained in seventeenth-century Russian consciousness that the erection of a new capital city would have automatically brought to mind two Biblical models: either Peter's city was a genuinely sacred space, and therefore a New Jerusalem; or it was an imposter, or in other words a false city in the guise of Babylon. As outlined in the introduction, Moscow (the Third Rome) had long been imagined in both symbolic and spatial terms as a New Jerusalem. Thus, Patriarch Nikon's erection of his New Jerusalem Monastery outside Moscow constituted more than the eccentric whim of a delusional cleric; it represented a political and religious challenge to the established status quo in the capital. Peter's new city, founded only half a century later, embodied a far grander attempt to deprive Moscow of its providential role. Thus, in actively seeking to portray himself in the light of King David, Peter the Great was justifying his god-given right to transfer his capital to the north. In effect, Peter was imitating the transference of the seat of power of David from Hebron to Jerusalem.

Within a wider European context, the millenarian vision of New Jerusalem as the ideal city still figured large in the imagination of many seventeenth and early eighteenth century philosophers, scientists and architects. Far from being an anachronistic model, New Jerusalem was envisaged as a geometric, planned city in which science and learning would flourish. This Christian utopia drew on Revelation 21:15–16, which provides the following description of the city: "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city... and the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed." What is more, Revelation 22:2 describes how the tree of life in the city brings about "the healing of the nations." In other words, the city embodied the scientific goal of banishing illness and want.

It was precisely such a vision that inspired Johan Valentin Andreae's utopian community of *Christianopolis*, outlined in 1619, and Francis Bacon's description of New Atlantis on the island of Bensalem in 1626. Furthermore, the notion of New Jerusalem served as an ideal that spurred on both John Evelyn and Christopher Wren in their blueprints for the restoration of London after the Great Fire of 1666.<sup>66</sup>

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the vision of New Jerusalem also acted as the architectural ideal for Leonhard Christoph Sturm (1669–1719), one of the leading German architects of his age, who was a Professor of Mathematics in Wolfenbüttel and was elected to the Prussian Academy of Sciences. Sturm's architectural work was profoundly affected by his radical, chiliastic Pietist beliefs, and he devoted considerable attention over many years to contemplating Solomon's Temple. Drawing substantially on the theories of Juan Villalpando (1552–1608) and Nikolaus Goldmann (1611–1665) and Ezekiel's description (Ezekiel 40–45), whilst also utilizing Cabbalistic methods to calculate number proportions, Sturm published a series of detailed plans of the Jerusalem Temple.

Furthermore, Sturm designed an evangelical mission church in India, named 'New Jerusalem,' which embodied his millenarian desire to spread his Pietist beliefs.<sup>67</sup>

Significantly, Sturm maintained that God revealed architectural knowledge directly to King David, who then transmitted precise plans to his son, Solomon, as described in 1 Chronicles 28: "And all this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern." Thus, Sturm essentially held up David as the ultimate human architect: a monarch who fulfilled the direct wish of God to construct a city befitting his divine majesty.<sup>68</sup>

Given Sturm's obsession with the Jerusalem Temple, his belief in the Davidic origins of architecture and his millenarian views, it is intriguing to note Peter the Great's particular liking for the German Pietist's architectural works. In the monarch's personal library, for example, one finds thirteen different German editions of Sturm's work: a figure not surpassed

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<sup>66</sup> For a discussion of the influence of Jerusalem as a model for Evelyn and Wren, see Adrian Gilbert, *The New Jerusalem* (London: Corgi Books, 2003), 300–53.

<sup>67</sup> Claus Bernet, "Leonhard Christoph Sturm," *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, [http://www.kirchenlexikon.de/s/s4/sturm\\_1\\_c.shtml](http://www.kirchenlexikon.de/s/s4/sturm_1_c.shtml) (Feb. 24, 2011).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

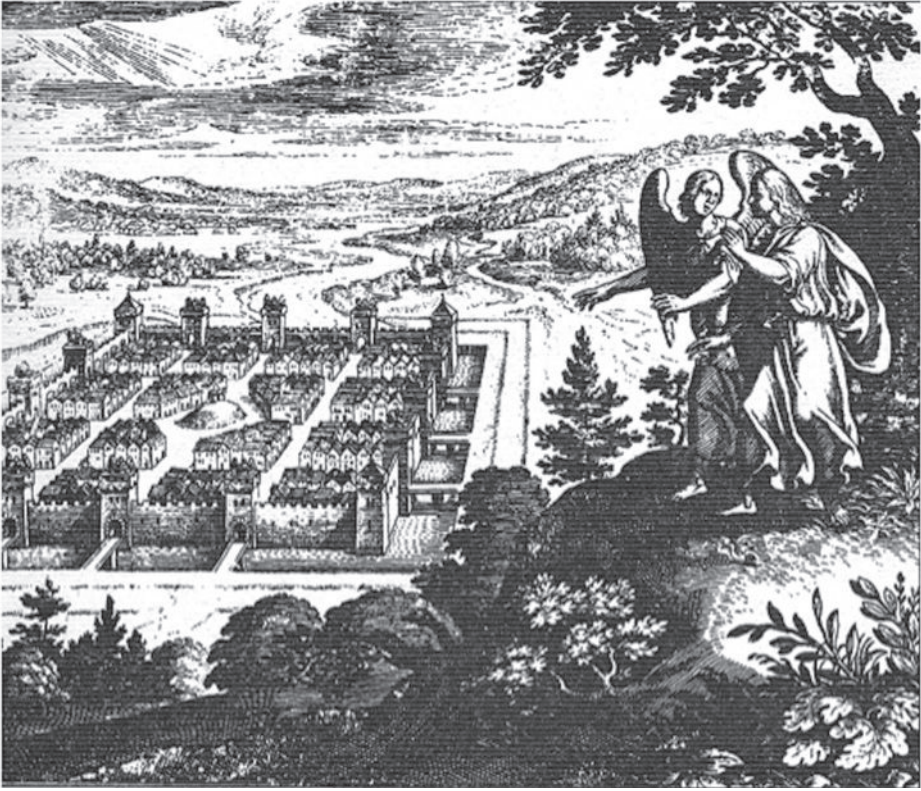


Fig. 45. An angel showing St. John the Divine New Jerusalem from Mattheus Merian, *Iconum Bibliacrum* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1630).

by any other architect in his collection.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, among the works owned by Peter the Great is Sturm's publication of Nikolaus Goldmann's *Civil-Bau-Kunst*. According to Goldmann (and Sturm), town planning should aim towards re-creating the divinely sanctioned architecture of the Temple in Jerusalem and should strive towards realising the New Jerusalem described in Revelation 21:22.<sup>70</sup>

Yet, despite a historical and architectural context in which the vision of New Jerusalem served as an ideal in both Russian and in Europe as a

<sup>69</sup> See Bobrova, *Biblioteka Petr I*, 153–4, Nos. 1534–1546. Peter the Great also commissioned a Russian edition of Sturm's *Architettura Militaris* (1702), which was translated by A. G. Golovkin in 1709. See *PiB*, vol. 11 (ii), 308, 604–5.

<sup>70</sup> Claus Bernet, "Nikolaus (auch Nikolaus) Goldmann," *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexicon*, [http://www.kirchenlexikon.de/g/goldmann\\_n.shtml](http://www.kirchenlexikon.de/g/goldmann_n.shtml) (Feb. 24, 2011).



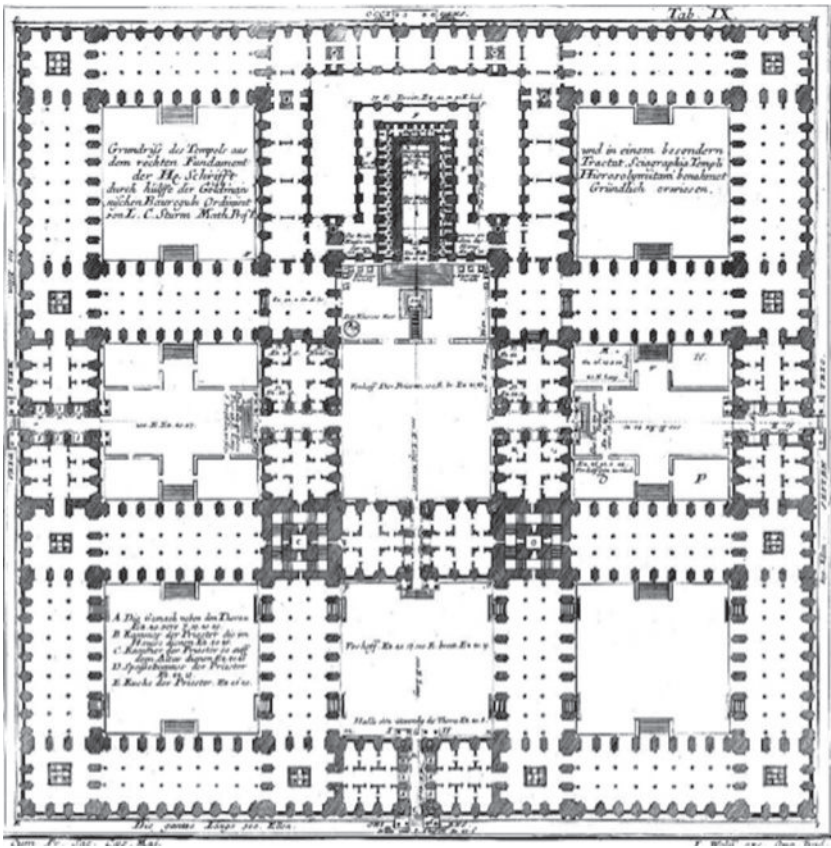


Fig. 46. Plan of the Jerusalem Temple from L. C. Sturm, *Die unentbährliche Regel Der Symmetrie Oder: Des Ebenmaasses* (Augsburg, 1720).

whole, one very seldom finds any reference to Peter the Great's religious legacy to St. Petersburg.<sup>71</sup> In this regard, Dostoevskii's famous remark in *Notes from the Underground* (1864) that St. Petersburg is "the most premeditated and abstract city on the whole earth" epitomizes the common repudiation of a spiritual dimension to Peter's city. For this profoundly religious writer, St. Petersburg embodied the coldness and artificiality redolent of modern Western urban civilization. Thus, in Dostoevskii's eyes it

<sup>71</sup> For a notable exception, see Grigory Kaganov, "Jerusalem on the Neva," *Rossica International Review of Russian Culture* (Spring/Summer 2003): 38–51. Kaganov highlights how Empress Elizabeth and Emperor Paul both sought to portray the Russian capital as Jerusalem.

was a city that projected the core values of the 'Age of Reason,' with Peter the Great ruthlessly banishing all elements of Orthodox spirituality from his new capital – an example that was to be continued by his Romanov successors.

Whereas Dostoevskii detested St. Petersburg for its cold rationality, many other writers and thinkers marvelled at its classical beauty. In the early nineteenth century, for example, the esteemed poet, Petr Viazemskii wrote in 'Peterburg' of the "wondrous and majestic" quality of the city's Grecian arts and Roman marvels.<sup>72</sup> During the so-called *Silver Age* of Russian literature at the turn of the twentieth century, the same dichotomy still reigned supreme. Symbolist writers, such as I. F. Annenskii, for example, wrote the following stinging anti-Peterburgian line in his poem 'Peterburg' (1909): "no kremlins, no miracles, no shrines, no miracles, no tears and no smiles . . . Only stones from frozen empty spaces."<sup>73</sup> In contrast, the classicists of the *Mir iskusstva* (World of Art) movement and Acemist group venerated Petersburg for its austerity and the purity of its harmonious ensembles.

In recent years, the semiotic historians Iurii Lotman and Boris Uspenskii have done much to broaden our perceptions of Peter the Great the man and the Petrine era as a whole. However, in their opinion Peter the Great chose to completely reject any religious inheritance when laying down the semiotic landscape of his new city on the Neva. According to Lotman and Uspenskii, Peter the Great had two choices when conveying symbolic meaning to St. Petersburg: "the capital could be the focus of holiness or it could follow the tradition of imperial Rome. Peter chose the latter."<sup>74</sup> This blanket rejection of St. Petersburg as a holy city rests on a pair of simplistic binary oppositions: Roman vs holy and new vs old.

However, whilst not denying that Peter the Great looked back to imperial Rome for symbolic inspiration, I believe that a wealth of evidence exists testifying to the profound manner in which St. Petersburg was consciously associated with Jerusalem. Thus, Peter the Great's beloved city was not simply an imitation of Western models, such as Rome, Venice and Amsterdam, as this entirely (and wrongly) deprives St. Petersburg of the sacred symbolism necessary for its legitimation in early modern Russia.

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<sup>72</sup> See Julie A. Buckler, *Mapping St. Petersburg: Imperial Text and Cityscape* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 70.

<sup>73</sup> See Vladimir Markov and Merrill Sparks, eds., *Modern Russian Poetry: An Anthology* (Alva: MacGibbon & Kee, 1966), 126.

<sup>74</sup> Lotman and Uspenskii, *Semiotics of Russian Culture*, 56.

Right up until Peter the Great's death in 1725 the tsar and his senior officials never ceased imagining and portraying the city as a divine realm, or New Jerusalem; created thanks to the colossal efforts of a new King David, who was bringing his people to the Promised Land. It is fascinating to note, for example, how the Russian monarch privately perceived the city as the embodiment of the Biblical ideal. In letters to Menshikov from as early as April 1706, for example, Peter the Great explicitly perceived his new city as a divine paradise. At this time he wrote:

I cannot omit to write to you from this Paradise where, with the help of the Almighty, everything is fine . . . We may be living in Heaven here; only we must never forget, as you know yourself, to place our hope not in man but in the will and grace of God.<sup>75</sup>

Furthermore, in a letter sent in 1707, whilst abroad, Peter the Great informed Menshikov that he had arrived from "paradise."<sup>76</sup> In November 1709, he referred to Petersburg as "this holy land"<sup>77</sup> and in February 1710 he once again wrote to Menshikov about his Petersburg paradise:

I only wish that the Lord God might sort out your affairs as quickly as possible and that we could see you here, so that you too could see the beauty of this Paradise in reward for the labours in which you participated together with us, which I wish with all my heart, for this place really is thriving like a fine infant.<sup>78</sup>

In May 1711, whilst in Poland, Peter also sent greetings to Menshikov on the day marking the Feast of the Trinity and expressed his wish to return as quickly as possible to their Eden.<sup>79</sup> Petersburg had been founded on this feast day and it is easy to believe that the Russian tsar would have been sorely disappointed not to be able to mark the anniversary in his beloved paradise. The tsar was not the only one who imagined Petersburg as being a divine realm, as Menshikov also called Petersburg the "promised land."<sup>80</sup>

In the public realm, the theme of Peter as a new King David went hand in hand with his city being portrayed as a divinely ordained heaven on earth, or in other words the long awaited New Jerusalem. One of the most

<sup>75</sup> *PiB*, vol. 4, 209.

<sup>76</sup> *PiB*, vol. 6, 92.

<sup>77</sup> *PiB*, vol. 8, 469.

<sup>78</sup> *PiB*, vol. 10, 57.

<sup>79</sup> *PiB*, vol. 11, 242.

<sup>80</sup> Baehr, *Paradise Myth*, 69.



striking motifs propounding this theme actually began *before* the foundation of the city in May 1703, thereby making it possible to view the rise of the city as a fulfilment of Biblical prophecy. On January 1, 1703 Iavorskii delivered a sermon in front of the tsar, which, as previously mentioned, stressed the pivotal significance of the capture of the Swedish fortress of Nöteborg on Lake Ladoga in October 1702, which was subsequently renamed Schlüsselberg, that is, 'key city.' Iavorskii cited Matthew 16:19, in which Jesus states to St. Peter that "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven" in order to stress that Christ had now given Peter the Great the keys to heaven on earth. Prophetically Iavorskii then asks: "Thus, observe now if the most glorious promise of Christ will be fulfilled."<sup>81</sup>

Only months later, on May 1, 1703, Russian forces seized the Swedish fortress settlement of Nyenshans at the mouth of the River Neva, only for Peter to immediately remain it 'Slotburg' – that is 'lock city.'<sup>82</sup> In symbolic terms Peter the Great was now in possession of both the keys and lock to heaven and earth and was now in a position to build his New Jerusalem. A little more than two weeks later, on May 16, 1703, this task was set in motion, when Peter the Great laid the foundations of St. Petersburg on *Zaiachii ostrov* (Hare Island).

From the outset religious symbolism played an absolutely pivotal role in legitimizing the new city that was to emerge on the Baltic coast. In fact, one can discern layer upon layer of Christian symbolism attached to Peter the Great's relatively simple act of digging the foundations for the Peter and Paul Fortress. First, the date itself was imbued with deep Christian significance, as the founding ceremony took place on Pentecost, or Whit Sunday. This holy day commemorated the occasion when the Holy Spirit appeared before the Apostles and inspired them to spread the Gospel. Thus, the founding of St. Petersburg on this holy day stressed its sacredness.

Secondly, an anonymous work published in 1720, entitled *O zatchatii i zdanii tsarstvuiushchego grada Sanktpeterburga* (About the Conception and buildings of the royal city of St. Petersburg) attests that two days prior to this event Peter the Great saw an eagle, with outstretched wings, in the sky overhead, as he walked to the centre of Hare Island. On seeing the bird the tsar immediately grabbed a soldier's bayonet and cut out two strips of

<sup>81</sup> Samarin, *Stefan Iavorskii i Feofan Prokopovich*, 112.

<sup>82</sup> M. I. Pyliaev, *Staryi Peterburg: razskazy iz byloi zhizni stolitsy* (St. Petersburg: Paritet, 2003), 24.

turf, which he then placed in the form of a cross before uttering: "In the name of Christ Jesus on this place shall be a church in the names of the apostles Peter and Paul."<sup>83</sup> A number of scholars have recently attributed the personal involvement of Peter the Great in the editing and publication of this work, suggesting the importance the monarch placed in creating a providential foundation myth for his new city.<sup>84</sup>

When one takes into account the prophetic symbolism of Iavorskii's *Welcome* sermon of 1702 and the fact that the founding of St. Petersburg occurred immediately after two of Russia's early victories against the Swedes – at Schlüsselburg in October 1702 and Nyenshans in April 1703 – the subtext of Peter's act becomes laden with symbolic meaning. Thus Peter's dramatic reaction to observing an eagle becomes understandable if one interprets this bird as signifying the long-awaited divine sign of Russia's imminent triumph over its enemies. With this in mind, it is clear that the tsar's supposed sighting of an eagle and his subsequent actions are meant to symbolize the imminent fulfilment of Russia's divine destiny.

The anonymous text also describes how two days later, Peter the Great carried out a formal founding ceremony on Hare Island. During this event, an eagle is said to have landed on two birch-tree trunks, which had been erected to symbolize gates, and then hopped onto the tsar's arm. Subsequently, the tsar walked through the symbolic gateway, with the eagle still on his arm. The narrator of this legend makes it clear that this occurrence mirrored how a divine eagle had helped Constantine the Great, the first Christian Roman Emperor, to choose Constantinople as the site of his new Christian capital.

The founding myth of St. Petersburg also sought to legitimize the city in Christian terms by utilizing a legend describing how St. Andrew had been to the banks of the River Neva and had foreseen the erection of a Royal City.<sup>85</sup> According to the legend the tsar went to a recently dug hole on Hare Island and placed in it a four-sided chest, carved with stone, which contained a golden ark containing the relics of the Apostle Andrew. On the lid of this box were inscribed the words: "By the incarnation of Jesus Christ 1703 May 16th was founded the Royal City of Sankt-Peterburg by

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<sup>83</sup> Iu. N. Bespiatykh, ed., *Peterburg Petra I v inostrannykh opisaniiaakh* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1991), 258–9.

<sup>84</sup> See P. A. Krotov, "Rozhdenie baltiiskogo voenno-morskogo flota," *Voprosy istorii* 11 (1991): 211; Pogosian, *Petr I*, 232.

<sup>85</sup> Bespiatykh, *Peterburg Petra I*, 258–62.

his Great Lord the Tsar and the Grand Prince Petr Aleksei Sovereign of All Russia.”<sup>86</sup> In this light, St. Petersburg was again the realization of divine destiny and it was entirely fitting that Peter the Great should symbolically lay to rest the relics of St. Andrew in land he had once blessed.

Lastly, the name of the city itself – St. Petersburg – is invested with deep religious meaning. In symbolic terms, Peter the Great was in possession of both the lock and keys to heaven by May 1703. Thus, the adoption of the tsar’s name-saint for the city consciously incorporates the idea that the Peter the Great is the rightful heir to St. Peter. Such an understanding of the divine role of the city helps to explain the prominent bas-relief above the main gateway into the Peter and Paul Fortress, which was designed by Domenico Trezzini in 1708. This depicts St. Peter holding the keys to heaven whilst casting down Simon the Magus. Thus, this gate was not simply a functional entrance to a fortress and cathedral; rather it was also envisaged as a symbolic gateway to heaven, with St. Peter keeping majestic watch over unwelcome intruders.

The map below (see Fig. 48), dating from 1716, also illustrates the potency of this meaning extremely well. In addition to geographical features one can clearly see personifications of Tsar Peter and St. Peter. The latter is shown with keys in hand at the Gates of Heaven, whilst the tsar names the city in his honour. A beam of light is also clearly discernible radiating down from the saint to the monarch.

Hence, after seizing Schlüsselburg – the key to the Baltic – and unlocking the gate – Slotburg – the Russian tsar was able to build St. Petersburg: his heaven on earth. This would be a city of stone befitting the Biblical meaning of Peter as ‘rock.’ Such a notion was also actively promoted by Stefan Iavorskii in his state sermons (see Chapter 3).

A distinctly Davidic slant to the capture of Nöteborg was also presented by Gavriil Buzhinskii, which powerfully outline Peter the Great’s divinely ordained mission to build a ‘House of Israel.’ In a speech delivered in July 1719 in honour of a Russian naval victory, for example, Buzhinskii used the occasion to quote extensively from Chapter 28 of 1 Chronicles.<sup>87</sup> Significantly, in this passage David stands before his people and declares how: “I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 258–9.

<sup>87</sup> Gavriil Buzhinskii, *Propovedi Gavriila Buzhinskago (1717–1727)*, ed. Evgenii Petukhov (Iur’ev: K. Mattisen, 1901), 337–54. Also see Grebeniuk, *Panegiricheskaia literatura*, 225.

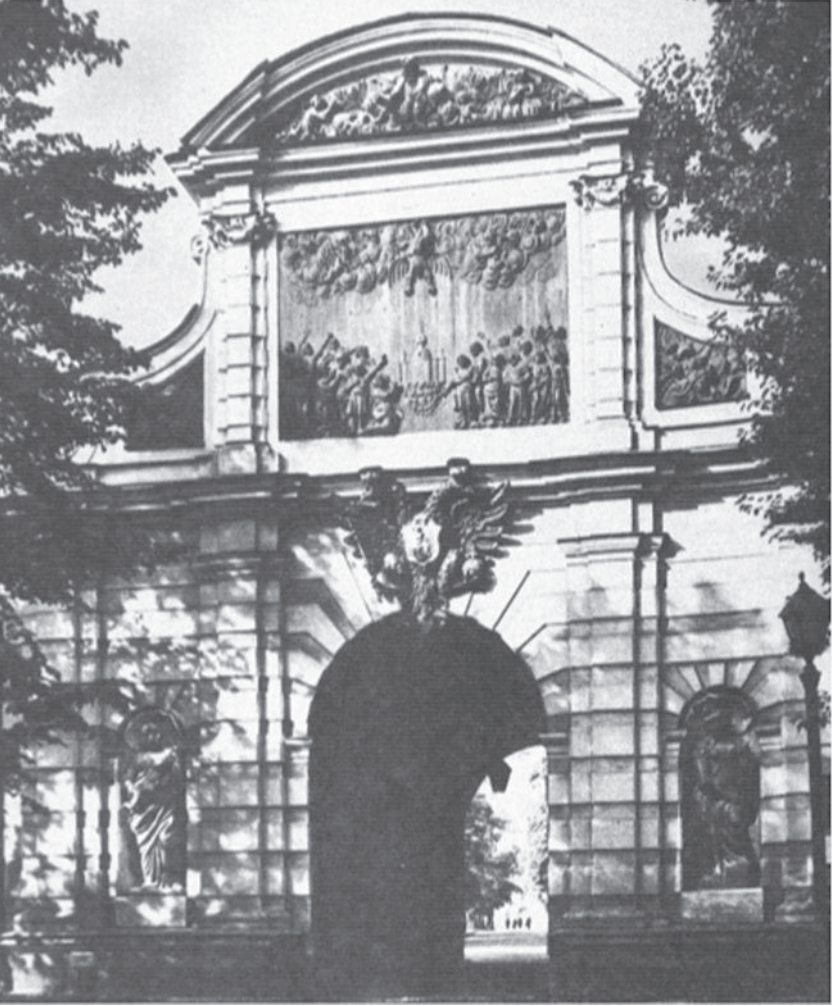


Fig. 47. The Peter Gate of the Peter and Paul Fortress (1717–1718)  
designed by D. Trezzini.

of the Lord and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building.”

Furthermore, in October 1719, to mark the seventeenth anniversary of the taking of the Swedish fortress of Schlüsselberg, Buzhinskii delivered a sermon entitled: “Key to the House of David.”<sup>88</sup> In this speech, he describes

<sup>88</sup> Buzhinskii, *Propovedi*, 355–71. Also see, Grebeniuk, *Panegiricheskaia literatura* 91–2.



Fig. 48. German Map, *St. Peter in his cloud, outside the Gates of Heaven, watching as the other Peter, Tsar and Majesty, names the city he has founded*, 1716.

how the Swedish fortress of Schlüsselberg was considered impregnable, but that the key and the sacristan were given to the Russian “House of David” and that “the pious monarch” Peter I had unlocked the castle. He then quotes from Isaiah 22:22: “the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.”<sup>89</sup>

Two years prior to this sermon, Buzhinskii delivered another important sermon at a ceremony the banks of the Neva in front of Peter the Great. The sermon accompanied the presentation of Aleksei Zubov’s *Panorama of St. Petersburg* (1716) to the tsar. This was undoubtedly the finest engraving produced of St. Petersburg in its early years, and critically it inspired Buzhinskii to write a masterful sermon, entitled “A Sermon in Praise of St. Petersburg and its Founder.”

In the second half of the sermon Buzhinskii proudly proclaims Peter to be a “Russian David” and St. Petersburg to be the “sole second Jerusalem,” which has the strength to repel its enemies. The Peter and Paul Fortress is compared to the “pillar of David” (*Stolp . . . Davidov*) and is proclaimed to be strong enough to repel all slanders. Buzhinskii then cites Psalm

<sup>89</sup> Buzhinskii, *Propovedi*, 355. Also see, *Panegiricheskaia literatura*, 92.



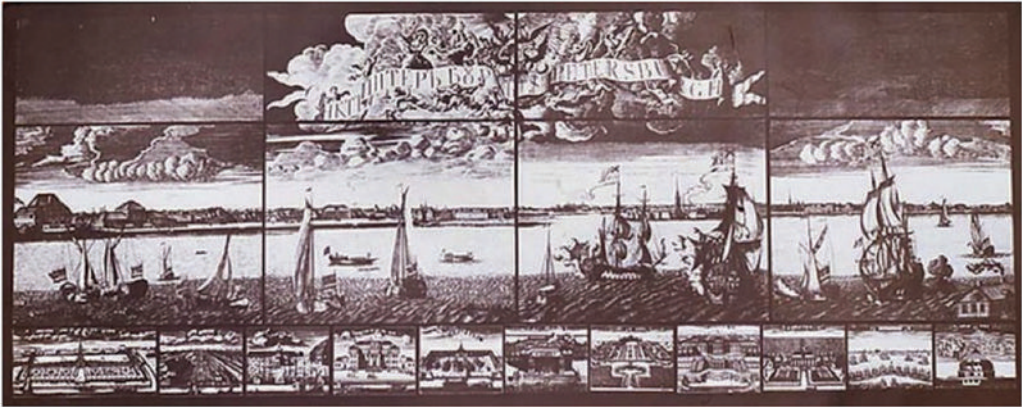


Fig. 49. *Panorama of St. Petersburg* by Aleksei Zubov (1716).

75:3, which states that “I bear up the pillars of it” to further reinforce the Davidic motifs.<sup>90</sup>

A clever passage then ensues in which the cleric begins by describing how “the walls of this city have been erected on a place where dwellings have never been.” This is immediately followed by a citation from Isaiah 62:2–4:

And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate.

Thus, Buzhinskii is proclaiming St. Petersburg to be the realization of Isaiah’s prophecy: a shining oasis in the desolate northern landscape. This impression is strengthened still further by a citation from Isaiah 58:12:

And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

Modern readers are familiar with the motif of St. Petersburg rising “out of the gloom of forests and the mud of marshes,” to quote Pushkin’s *Mednyi vsadnik* (The Bronze Horseman), but Buzhinskii’s proclamation

<sup>90</sup> Gavriil Buzhinskii, “Opisatel’naia pokhvala tsarstvuiushchemu gradu Sanktpeterburgu i pritomu gosudariu Imperatoru Petru Velikomu,” MS. N6819. Otdel rukopisei, Russian National Library, St. Petersburg.

of St. Petersburg as a fulfilment of Isaiah's prophetic words is far less well known.<sup>91</sup> The cleric then quickly proceeds to draw on Isaiah 40: 4 to reinforce his striking imagery of St. Petersburg as *the* chosen city: "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain."

The exultant language of Buzhinskii's sermon is driven by the potency of Isaiah's Old Testament prophecy, which is in accord with St. John the Divine's description of New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 and 22. Whilst Buzhinskii was delivering this sermon his audience would have been looking out at the panorama of St. Petersburg and equating the geometric and regular cityscape with the prophecies of both Isaiah and St. John the Divine. Indeed, Buzhinskii goes on to make an explicit connection by proclaiming: "Shine, shine New Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!"<sup>92</sup> Significantly the cleric drew on Isaiah 60:1, which states; "Shine [Jerusalem], for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." However, it is highly significant that the orator added "new" to the original passage in Isaiah. The addition may have been only one word, but it was of critical importance as it pronounced St. Petersburg to be the long awaited successor to King David's original Jerusalem.

In the concluding section of the sermon Buzhinskii continued to draw on Isaiah for inspiration when praising St. Petersburg. Thus, he cites Isaiah 37:35, which states "I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake." In other words, Buzhinskii proclaims St. Petersburg to be under God's protection for the Lord's own benefit and for his servant: the Russian David. Buzhinskii also cites Isaiah 1:26: "thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the mother of cities, the faithful Zion."<sup>93</sup> The climatic final lines of Buzhinskii's sermon proclaims that St. Petersburg will always be a Royal city until the end of time and that it will always advance "unvanquished" from glory to glory. Furthermore, its residents will play a part in creating what Buzhinskii refers to as the *nebesnaia tsarstviia* (heavenly kingdom).<sup>94</sup>

In October 1717 Feofan Prokopovich also delivered a powerful sermon on the return of Peter the Great to St. Petersburg after his second Grand

<sup>91</sup> Alexander Pushkin, *The Bronze Horseman: Selected Poems of Alexander Pushkin*, trans. D. M. Thomas (London: Penguin, 1982), 247.

<sup>92</sup> Buzhinskii, "Opisatel'naia pokhvala."

<sup>93</sup> The Russian Bible differs slightly in translation from the King James Bible. In the latter Isaiah 1:26 reads: 'thou shalt be called, the city of righteousness, the faithful city.'

<sup>94</sup> Buzhinskii, "Opisatel'naia pokhvala."

Embassy to Western Europe. Whilst the theme of the sermon is not directly connected to St. Petersburg, Prokopovich's citation of Old Testament passages makes it abundantly clear that he views Peter as King David returning to Jerusalem. The cleric draws on Pslam 76:1–2, for example, which states: "In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel. In Jerusalem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion."<sup>95</sup> This is directly followed by a quotation from Psalm 114:2: "Judah was his sanctuary and Israel is his dominion."<sup>96</sup> Thus, the regal wanderer has returned to his fold in the holy land of 'New Israel.' Prokopovich also cites Isaiah 2:3 in order to stress that in leaving St. Petersburg to undertake his Grand Embassy, Peter the Great had left New Jerusalem: "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."<sup>97</sup>

When exclaiming his joy at the return of Peter the Great, Prokopovich draws on Psalm 149: 2: "children of Zion be joyful in your king!" What is more, he utilizes the notion of St. Peter's ship of salvation when expressing how "in this Petrine city, as in the ship of Peter, may Thy blessed presence remain."<sup>98</sup> Prokopovich then switches back to Davidic imagery, suggesting that Peter the Great has ensured a legacy akin to that expounded in Psalm 127:3: "lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward."<sup>99</sup>

### *Garden of Eden*

One can also discern official glorification of St. Petersburg as an Edenic city, in addition to Peter the Great's private extolment of his 'paradise' and 'Eden.' Mention has already been made in Chapter 3 to the speech delivered by Stefan Iavorskii in 1708 at the laying of the cornerstone of the Trubetskoi Bastion of the Peter and Paul Fortress. In this speech the links to the Biblical tabernacle and Eden culminated in Peter being compared to a new Adam whose endeavours in creating St. Petersburg had resulted in a restored and 'splendid' paradise.

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<sup>95</sup> Prokopovich, *Sochineniia*, 61. The sermon is entitled "Slovo v nedeliu osmuinadesiat', skazannoe v sanktpiterburkhe, v tserkvi zhivonachal'nyiia troitsy vo vremia prisutstviia ego tsarskago velichestva, po dolgom stranstvii vozvrativogosia, chrez rektora, chestneishago ottsa prokopovicha."

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 67. For a discussion of this theme, see Kaganov, "Ship of Peter," 755–67.

<sup>99</sup> Prokopovich, *Sochineniia*, 67.



The motif of St. Petersburg as a restored Garden of Eden can also be seen in a sermon delivered by Iavorskii on June 29, 1719, the name day of the city's patron saints – Peter and Paul. In the sermon Iavorskii praises the city as a *vertograd tsarskii* (royal garden) and describes the “ineffable beauty” of its “various trees” which are “arranged in a row and in perspective, and the ornamental fountains.” The cleric also eulogizes the sweetness of the city's flowers before stating that St. Petersburg is an *ogorod* (kitchen garden) and repeating that it is a “royal city.”<sup>100</sup>

Furthermore, in Buzhinskii's “A Sermon in Praise of St. Petersburg and its Founder,” it is also possible to note how the cleric views the new capital as a restored Eden. Thus, in place of the forsaken and wasted ground upon which the city was erected, Buzhinskii now looked out upon a cityscape that he described as “a garden” that had been laid out to embody the most amazing beauty.<sup>101</sup> He then extols the irrigated water fountains, the foreign trees and exotic fruits and plants and the pillars made from precious stones as evidence of the Edenic quality of the city.<sup>102</sup>

In describing St. Petersburg as a beautiful garden, Buzhinskii was also effectively stating that the city was the embodiment of New Jerusalem as the restored Adamic garden found in Revelation 22:2:

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The challenge of transforming the ‘forsaken’ and ‘wasted’ landscape that Peter the Great chose to become his new capital into a New Jerusalem, replete with a restored Garden of Eden, was something the monarch took up with enthusiasm and zeal. As early as 1704, for example, the tsar devoted great energy to planning this Summer Garden. In March of that year he had already sent a request for various scented plants.<sup>103</sup> On receiving these plants, he enthusiastically wrote:

<sup>100</sup> *Vedomosti vremeni Petra Velikago*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1906), 258.

<sup>101</sup> Buzhinskii, “Opisatel'naia pokhvala.”

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.* It is arguably no coincidence that Iavorskii and Buzhinskii provide the most florid descriptions of St. Petersburg as a new Garden of Eden. Both were schooled in Kiev under the mentorship of Polotskii, who excelled in the poetic use of garden imagery, in works such as *The Many-Flowered Garden* (*Vertograd mnogotsvetnyi*). Indeed, in 1698 Iavorskii wrote “The Vine of Christ” (*Vinograd Khristov*) for the wedding of Ivan Obedovskii, a Royal Chamberlain (*tsarskii stol'nik*), in Kiev. For more on the motif of the garden in the literature of Polotskii, see Sazonova, *Poeziia russkogo barokko*, 163–221.

<sup>103</sup> *PiB*, vol. 3, 42.

The flowers, six peony bushes, have been brought here intact; I'm amazed that they weren't shaken to pieces, but there are plenty of blooms. Only it's a great pity that the camphor, mint and other perfumed plants haven't been sent. If peonies got here, the latter should be much easier to deal with. Have some sent.<sup>104</sup>

When in Kiev in 1706 the tsar also ordered white lily bulbs to be sent to Petersburg, where he instructed the gardeners to plant them with care.<sup>105</sup> A vast amount of fertile soil had to be imported and huge varieties of exotic and native trees were planted. European oaks were a particular favourite of Peter the Great and he personally initiated the Oak Grove adjacent to the Summer Palace. Orange and lemon trees from Persia were imported in August 1708 via the Volga, whilst B. I. Kurakin was ordered to buy two thousand lime-trees whilst in Holland.<sup>106</sup> Lime and linden trees were favoured for the bosquets and alleys, as they could be trimmed into geometric forms. Peter even gave orders for heated huts to be made in order to protect the exotic trees from the harsh winter frost.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, the geometric patterns of the alleyways also formed a symbolic cross of St. Andrew, as can be clearly seen in the engraving by Zubov (see Fig. 50 below).

In addition to the tsar's main Summer Palace, the garden also had a summer cottage, which was surrounded on all sides by water. This area was home to a large number of rare ducks and geese, which sheltered at night in a specially built birdhouse.<sup>108</sup> The Summer Garden also had a caged aviary full of all kinds of small birds.<sup>109</sup> The garden was also adorned with a collection of statues based on Aesop's Fables, as well as containing a grotto and a number of waterworks. The tsar invested much time in creating the Summer Garden's grotto, which was completed in 1721 after five years of work.<sup>110</sup> The walls and columns of the grotto were adorned with a multitude of natural rarities, such as shells, multicoloured stones and corals.<sup>111</sup>

Judging by the description given by Friedrich Christian Weber, the Summer Garden was favourably looked upon by contemporary Europeans.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>105</sup> Pavlenko, *Petr Velikii*, 526.

<sup>106</sup> See Hughes, *Age of Peter the Great*, 211; Pavlenko, *Petr Velikii*, 526.

<sup>107</sup> Hughes, *Age of Peter the Great*, 211.

<sup>108</sup> O. N. Kuznetsova, *Letnii sad i letnii dvorets Petra I* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1973), 17.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>110</sup> Pavlenko, *Petr Velikii*, 527.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

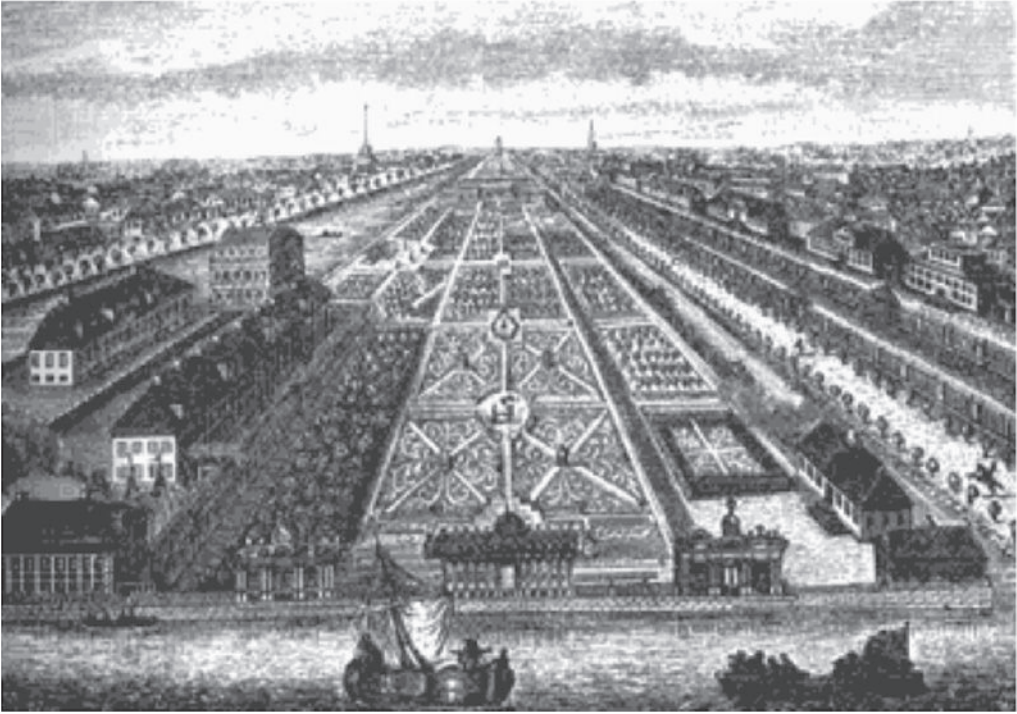


Fig. 50. The Summer Garden. An engraving by Aleksei Zubov, 1716.

In the year 1716 a Canal was dug round the Garden, and fine Statues of white Marble placed in them. In this Garden is a Plantation or Nursery of Oaks, which thrive according to Wish, a thing so much the more remarkable because not only the neighbouring Country, but all the Northern Russia does not produce that sort of Trees, whence it appears how far things may be carried by Industry. There are also in this Garden a Green-house, Water-works... and particularly a Grotto, which when finished, will yield to no other whatsoever.<sup>112</sup>

However, Peter the Great did not simply restrict his paradise to the Summer Garden. Indeed, the greening of the whole of the tsar's new city was a matter that he took extremely seriously. As early as 1703, for example, the monarch introduced a ten-rouble fine for felling trees over fifty-three centimetres in diameter and the death penalty for the crime of cutting

<sup>112</sup> Weber, *Present State of Russia*, vol. 1, 308.

down an oak tree.<sup>113</sup> The tsar also published an edict on August 17, 1721, which ordered residents to plant trees and to maintain their upkeep:

All St. Petersburg residents who were required by edict to plant maples on the streets and have already planted some are ordered by the end of this month, in order to protect them from passers-by and to guard them from cattle, to fence them off with boxes of the type which has been made on Admiralty Island. Anyone contravening this order will be fined.<sup>114</sup>

One should bear in mind that at the same time as Peter the Great was setting out his Summer Garden in St. Petersburg, he was also planning the elaborate garden that came to grace Peterhof, his palace just outside the city, on the Gulf of Finland. This garden is most famous for its Grand Cascade, below which can be seen the renowned statue of the Biblical Samson prising open the mouth of a lion. It is significant, however, that two of the other principal statues in the garden are of Adam and Eve. These statues were commissioned by Peter the Great to the Italian sculptor Giovanni Bonazza (c. 1654–c. 1736) in 1717 and were designed by another Italian Niccolo Michetti (c. 1675–1758), who entered Russian service in 1718. They occupy pride of place in the lower garden, where they can be found to the east and west of the ship canal leading to the Gulf of Finland. Sixteen spurting jets of water surround each fountain and each have eight octagonal paths leading away from them. As the two key focal points of the lower garden, it seems apparent that Peter the Great wanted to boldly express his belief that through his will he was succeeding in creating a northern Eden on the banks of the Gulf of Finland.

This sentiment also helps to explain the presence of a golden apple atop the splendid spire of the Admiralty, St. Petersburg's first shipping wharf, located on the banks of the River Neva in the heart of the city. Alongside the famed three-masted ship, the golden apple was set in place in 1719, under the stewardship of the Dutch architect Herman van Bosel (d. 1764).<sup>115</sup> A golden *iabloko* (apple) held particular significance to Muscovite rulers, who adopted the symbol as part of their monarchical regalia. This was included, as Stephen Baehr has noted, in order to symbolize the efforts of a Christ-like tsar "to reverse the consequences of the

<sup>113</sup> Hughes, *Age of Peter the Great*, 131.

<sup>114</sup> A. F. Bychkov, ed., *Bumagi imperatora Petra I* (St. Petersburg, 1873), 427.

<sup>115</sup> S. S. Perli and B. S. Perli, *O blistatel'nyi Peterburg na urokakh matematiki* (St. Petersburg: ID Knizhnyi Mir, 2002), 115.

apple-caused Fall of man and restore the world to the Edenic state of its beginnings."<sup>16</sup> Thus, placing a golden apple atop the splendid golden spire of The Admiralty was a powerful statement, suggesting that Petersburg had not only deprived Moscow of its royal status, but also that the city was a restored Eden.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Baehr, *Paradise Myth*, 20.

<sup>17</sup> St. Petersburg's transcendence of Moscow as a "New Israel" can also be seen in the annual blessing of the waters ceremony held on Epiphany (January 6). In the Muscovite era the Moskva River was imagined as the Jordan. However, after St. Petersburg became capital the Neva took over this symbolic role. The extent to which the Neva was imagined as the Jordan can be seen if one quotes the official court records describing the ceremony in 1724, which states: 'after mass there was a procession of the Cross to the Jordan. When the divine service at the Jordan was over the standards of all the battalions were taken to the Jordan and sprinkled with [holy] water'. See *Pokhodnye zhurnaly Petra I 1695-1726* (St. Petersburg, 1853-5), 1; Hughes, *Age of Peter the Great*, 274.



## CHAPTER SIX

### THE ROLE OF RELIGION AND ESOTERICISM IN SHAPING PETER THE GREAT'S VISION OF SCIENTIFIC REFORM

#### *Introduction*

It is no coincidence that the first two comprehensive plans for scientific reform in Russia were formulated in a six-month period between the autumn of 1697 and the spring of 1698. This period marks the time Peter the Great was resident in Amsterdam and in London during his first Grand Embassy to Western Europe. Whilst many of Europe's leading scientists eagerly kept informed of the latest news regarding the tsar's travels, only Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Dr. Francis Lee were sufficiently excited to draw up specific plans intended for the benefit of the Russian monarch.

As outlined in the introduction, both Leibniz and Lee were spurred on to devise their respective schemes because of the vital providential role they assigned to Peter the Great. In both cases this involved the spread of Christianity throughout the world and in overcoming the Islamic threat posed by the Ottoman Turks. Lastly, both Leibniz and Lee shared a belief that Peter the Great possessed the necessary will and intelligence to foster an instauration in his own kingdom, based on their plans, which would restore man's dominion over nature.

Thus, in outlining the respective schemes drawn up by both Lee and Leibniz it is essential to bear in mind their debt to the seventeenth-century Christian-utopian tradition of universal reform. Most notably, one can discern the influence of Bacon, Andreae, Comenius and the Hartlib circle, who were all fuelled by the notion of an imminent instauration of knowledge based on Biblical prophecy – most notably Daniel 12:4 – and the promise of increased knowledge prior to the onset of the millennium. One can also note contemporary parallels with the Pietist pedagogical goal embodied in the foundation of the University of Halle in 1694 and the subsequent charity schools founded by August Hermann Francke.

*Francis Lee's Vision of Scientific Reform in Russia*

The arrival of Peter the Great on English shores in January 1698 came at a time when the Philadelphian Society, inspired by the prophecies and writings of Jane Lead (1623–1704) and led by Francis Lee, was at the peak of its activity in London.<sup>1</sup> In essence the Philadelphian Society believed in the imminence of the millennium, in which all differences among Christians would cease and there would be a “final restoration of all intelligent beings to perfection and happiness.”<sup>2</sup> Significantly, the millenarian hopes of Francis Lee and the Philadelphian Society were saturated with elements of esoteric thought derived from the profound influence of Jakob Böhme and Christian Cabbala. Furthermore, these hopes were couched in Davidic terms, whereby a select member – namely a monarch – would set in motion the restoration of knowledge prior to the beginning of the millennium imagined as a Solomonic era. Both Lee and Lead expressed this belief in the months preceding Peter the Great’s arrival in London. In the preface to the first volume of Lead’s *A Fountain of Gardens* (1697), for example, Lee writes:

There are but few found, who have so much as an Ear to hear what the Spirit saith to this Church of Philadelphia, the First-fruits of the Lamb: or even but to receive the Promises of the Holy and True One, who is now at this instant with the Key of DAVID, Opening gradually this blessed State in a few chosen Names; so that none shall ever shut it more. And he is shutting up in such the Dark Abyss, and wrathful depraved Nature; so that it can never be again Opened. But still fewer are they, who have not only an Ear to hear, but also an Heart and Hands to Act whatever the Spirit saith: and who dare to adventure on, to the laying hold of such a weighty Crown, as in that of the First-born.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, in setting forth his millenarian vision Lee draws on Isaiah 22:22: “the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.” As mentioned, this passage formed the crux of an entire sermon by Gavriil Buzhinskii in 1719, in which Peter the Great is envisaged as the Davidic

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<sup>1</sup> Lee and Lead became acquainted and began to work together in 1694. Subsequently, Lee married Lead’s daughter, Barbara Walton. See Christopher Walton, *Notes and Materials for an Adequate Biography of the Celebrated Divine and Theosopher, William Law* (London, 1854), 226.

<sup>2</sup> Johann Lorenz Mosheim, *An Ecclesiastical History, antient and modern*, trans. Archibald Maclaine, vol. 4 (Dublin, 1767), 363–4.

<sup>3</sup> Lead, *Fountain of Gardens*, vol. 1, 13.



monarch opening the gate to the house of David. A similar sentiment is expressed by Lead in the April 1697 edition of *Theosophical Transactions*, which was edited by Lee and Richard Roach:

Therefore the Spirit of David shall most eminently revive in this church, and more especially in some or other selected member of it, as the blossoming root is to precede the day of Solomon in the millennium. These will have might given them to overcome the dragon and his angels, even as David overcame Goliath and the Philistines.<sup>4</sup>

In this extract one can see the particular potency of Davidic imagery in the millenarian drama. As with the above citation from Lee, the “spirit of David” overcoming Goliath on the way to the “day of Solomon in the millennium,” expressed by Lead, bears striking resemblance to the Davidic motifs used to portray Peter the Great in the first quarter of the eighteenth century.

It is also illuminating to provide Lee’s vision of the “expected Kingdom of the Messiah in Restored Nature,” which is of a city redolent of Buzhinskii’s portrayal of St. Petersburg in his “A Sermon in Praise of St. Petersburg and its Founder”:

Whence the expected Kingdom of the Messiah in Restored Nature, which is called the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of Heaven, is according to the Spirits Mystical Dialect, compared to a Vineyard, to a Garden of Lilies, and to a Corn-field; and is expressed by the various figurations of a New Eden; of a New Canaan; of New Heavens and new Earth; of Fountains and Trees, and Plants of all sorts; of Canals, Aqueducts, and Rivers of Pleasure; of Tents, Palaces, and Temples; of a Mountain, of a Rock, and of a City; of Sion, Lebanon, and the Hills of Spices; of new found Countries descended out of the Heavens, or by the Creating Word in the Divine Magia made to appear, as a new Sharon, and a new Havila, and a Beulah; of Jerusalem, of Bethel, and of the Southland of Eternity; of the Pleasures and Grandeur of a Rich, Powerful and Wise Prince, such as Solomon, and of all the Badges of Royalty, and Scenes of Magnificent Glory, that do, as in a shadow, precede, attend, or follow the Marriage and Reception of a Royal Bride.<sup>5</sup>

In Lee’s imagination the “Kingdom of the Messiah,” as he terms it, will be a “New Eden,” “of Sion” and “of Jerusalem,” which will be furnished with all manner of plants, fountains, trees, palaces, canals, aqueducts, and rivers. It could well be Buzhinskii uttering these words looking out at the St. Petersburg panorama in 1717.

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<sup>4</sup> *Theosophical Transactions by the Philadelphian Society* (April 1697).

<sup>5</sup> Lead, *Fountain of Gardens*, vol. 1, 10–11.

Given Lee's faith in a Davidic path to the millennium, it is easy to understand his enthusiasm at the arrival of Peter the Great in England. Here was a monarch who had just defeated the Ottoman Turks at Azov; a Christian monarch whose dominions stretched between Europe and Asia, and a man perceived to be open to the advances of reformed branches of Protestantism. Moreover, in Lee's "Proposals given to Peter the Great, Czar of Muscovy" (1698), the author categorically states that they were drawn up at the specific behest of the Russian monarch himself.

Thus, when reading these proposals it is vital to bear in mind that Lee is actually envisaging Peter the Great as one of the "few found" who have been chosen "to receive the Promises of the Holy and True One, who is now at this instant with the Key of DAVID."<sup>6</sup> This explains Lee's introductory remarks regarding Peter the Great as "an extraordinary Genius" who "may effect extraordinary things" in what "is an extraordinary Age."<sup>7</sup> Indeed, in his concluding remarks Lee makes it clear that his practical proposals are aimed to help the Russian monarch in the goal of establishing the re-union of the divided branches of the Church, "the universal Spreading of the Light of the Holy Gospel" and "for the Restauration of Israel."<sup>8</sup>

As mentioned in the introduction, Lee proposed the foundation of seven colleges "of the most select and able men that can be found."<sup>9</sup> In regard to the first college – dedicated to the advancement of learning – Lee emphasizes the need to study mathematics, experimental and mechanical philosophy, history (both civil and ecclesiastical) and new inventions. In the second college – for the improvement of nature – the author highlights the model of the Royal Society in England and the French Academy of Sciences, which should be accompanied by the establishment of a royal press. In his section on the third college, for the encouragement of the arts, Lee emphasizes the need to assess and reward new inventions. Lee recommends that the remaining colleges should be devoted to merchandize, manners and laws, with the final college being dedicated to the propagation of Christianity.<sup>10</sup>

The brief proposals expounded by Francis Lee in 1698 were transmitted to Peter the Great at a time when the Russian monarch was about to

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 13, 10–11.

<sup>7</sup> Lee, *Apoleipomena*, 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 3–10.

embark on his series of reforms. Whilst Lee was not consulted again on the direction of Russian reforms, his practical proposals – fused as they were by a millenarianism couched in Davidic expectations – provided a potent blueprint that bears striking parallels to what actually transpired in the proceeding twenty-seven years.

*Gottfried Leibniz's Vision of Scientific Reform in Russia*

Francis Lee was evidently sufficiently inspired by the Russian monarch's residence in England to pen his proposals, yet one cannot trace any prior or subsequent interest in the affairs of faraway Russia in his published output.<sup>11</sup> This is not the case with Leibniz, as from the beginning of the 1690s the eminent German philosopher began to devote considerable attention to the development of Russia. Indeed, he purposely initiated correspondence with a plethora of travellers, diplomats, clergymen and scholars, who had come into contact the Muscovite realm, such as the philologists Hiob Ludolf (1624–1704) and Johan Gabriel Sparwenfeld (1655–1727) and the Amsterdam burgomaster Nicolaes Witsen, in order to gather as much information as possible about the kingdom.

This was undoubtedly due to the growing reputation of the young Peter the Great, who Leibniz began to view as a ruler who “wants to lead his country from the condition of ignorance.”<sup>12</sup> This prospect greatly excited Leibniz, who came to believe that the monarch had been assigned a providential role to civilize his country. In a letter written in 1696, to Ludolf, for example Leibniz wrote:

If only the wide Muscovite kingdom gave in to the enlightened customs of Europe, then Christianity would receive great fruits. There is, however hope, that the Muscovites are leaving their slumber. It is not doubted that Tsar Peter realizes the inadequacies of his subjects and wishes, little by little, to eradicate their ignorance. They say he has a lively intellect, but is somewhat fiery.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Only limited biographical information is available regarding Francis Lee, while no correspondence is seemingly extant to the knowledge of the author. For biographical information on Lee, see Lee, *Apoleipomena*, v–xxviii; Walton, *Notes and Materials*, 230, 359, 685.

<sup>12</sup> Guerrier, *Otnosheniia Leibnitsa k Rossii*, 10.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

In Leibniz's eyes, God had ordained a special role for Peter the Great at a crucial period in the history of Christianity. He was to be the special agent charged at a critical epoch with the task of advancing the course of Russian society and human progress along a blessed and pious path towards a unified and pure form of civilized Christianity. In the personage of Peter the Great, Leibniz effectively saw a sovereign who could once and for all defeat the menace of Islam, in the form of the Ottoman Empire, which had long threatened Christendom. What is more, he saw Russia as a pivotal bridge in the spread of Christianity to the East, particularly to China, where Jesuit missionaries had already set up outposts. Leibniz also believed that Russia was a *tabula rasa*, which had not been blemished by the mistakes suffered in Western Europe. Thus, Peter the Great had the perfect opportunity to instigate scientific and educational reforms, which would not only lead to a civilized and pious populace, but could also serve as an example to the rest of the East.

Whilst Leibniz was not an overt millenarian, as in the manner of Lee, it has been demonstrated in recent years that the philosopher did display a profound interest in the doctrine. As Hotson and Antognazza note, for example, it is possible to note a rich vein of references to the Apocalypse and millenarianism in Leibniz's published works. Indeed, in 1671–1672 he wrote a tract entitled *Justa Dissertatio*, which was directed towards Louis XIV, in which he sets out a case for the French monarch leading a Christian crusade against the Ottoman Turks in Egypt

Happy age, and worthy of the envy of all ages; happy us if we should happen to live in these times . . . The golden age of Christianity will return and we will move into the primitive Church. And we will begin the most true millennium, without all the folly of the Fifth-Monarchists. And now we will at last consider how to increase human power with machines, how to subjugate the nature of things, and how to improve at last a more effective medicine . . . The rising sun of justice strips off the clouds of uncertainty and reveals all the tricks of the pettifogging profession. Perfection in moral affairs and a certain image of heavenly life and of the desire of philosophers is transferred into human life. We express the precepts of Christ not only in name, and faith restored to its native beauty shows itself living in charity spread throughout all things.<sup>14</sup>

In many ways one can discern transference of Leibniz's decidedly millenarian expectations of Louis XIV in 1671–1672 to the young figure of

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<sup>14</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe* vol. 4 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1983), 379–80. Also see Hotson and Antognazza, *Alsted and Leibniz*, 202.

Peter the Great in the 1690s – especially after the Russian victory over the Ottoman Turks at Azov in 1696. This becomes apparent if one considers the principal aspirations of late seventeenth-century millenarians, as outlined by Howard Hotson: (1) the conversion of all the peoples of the earth to Christianity; (2) the spread of Christ's kingdom throughout the whole world; (3) the restoration of a golden age of apostolic piety; (4) the instauration of man's dominion over nature; (5) the radical improvement of the art of medicine and of human health as a result and (6) the perfection of law, justice and politics.<sup>15</sup> All of these millenarian ambitions are evident in Leibniz's vision of reform for the Russian realm.

Thus, in light of the lofty role Leibniz had begun to bestow upon Peter the Great by the mid-1690s, it is hardly surprising to note the excitement generated in the esteemed academic by the news that the Russian monarch had embarked upon a Grand Embassy of Western Europe in the spring of 1697. This sense of excitement led Leibniz to time the publication of *Novissima Sinica* (1697) to coincide with the tsar's Grand Embassy. In the preface to this work, which recounted the latest news from China, Leibniz made public his providential hopes for Russia under the rule of Peter the Great:

I do not think it an accident that the Muscovites whose vast realm connects Europe with China and who hold sway over the deep barbarian lands of the North by the shore of the frozen ocean, should be led to the emulation of our ways through the strenuous efforts of their present ruler.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, Leibniz enthusiastically attempted to gather as much news about the Embassy as possible, as it made its way westwards from Königsberg. On hearing from Sophia-Charlotte of Hanover (1668–1705) that the Russian Embassy would be passing through Hanoverian territory, Leibniz unsuccessfully endeavoured to gain an audience with the tsar and Franz Lefort, the First Ambassador of the Russian party, in Copenbrugge and Minden.<sup>17</sup> However, he did manage to become acquainted with Peter Lefort, the nephew of Franz Lefort.<sup>18</sup> It would seem that in anticipation of meeting either the tsar or Franz Lefort, Leibniz wrote a series of notes outlining his vision of reform in Russia, which crystallizes the

<sup>15</sup> See Antognazza and Hotson, *Alsted and Leibniz*, 202.

<sup>16</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, *Writings on China*, trans. Daniel J. Cook and Henry Rosemont, Jr. (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1994), 44–5.

<sup>17</sup> Guerrier, *Otnosheniia Leibnitsa k Rossii*, 11.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Lefort had been invited into Russian service by his uncle in 1694. *Ibid.*, 13.

providential role he believed the country and its young ruler were to play in the imminent future.<sup>19</sup>

The first draft begins by exhorting Peter the Great to not stop “cultivating until completion the plantation entrusted to him by God.”<sup>20</sup> Leibniz then refers to the Turkish threat and the Russian tsar’s crucial providential role in defending Christendom, stating “we must pray to God in order for him to preserve this great sovereign, who is still preserved in the best state of life.”<sup>21</sup> The letter concludes with a brief, but fascinating, summary of what it is necessary to undertake in order for the Russian monarch to acquire Western European levels of education in his realm. In all seven instructions are listed: (1) to found a central institution specifically for science and the arts (2) to attract able foreigners (3) to send for artefacts from abroad that support the foreigners in their work (4) to send subjects abroad (5) to enlighten your people (6) to compile a precise description of your country in order to ascertain its needs (7) [and to] provide that which is not provided.<sup>22</sup> In a further explanatory draft Leibniz highlights the need to provide a library, printing press, botanical garden, menagerie, magazine depots, craft workshops and a cabinet of rarities. In particular, Leibniz stresses the last institution and the need to collect both natural and artificial rarities.<sup>23</sup>

It was precisely at this time that Leibniz wrote in a letter to Sparwenfeld that Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont would be the ideal tutor to the young monarch, if he were not so old.<sup>24</sup> The choice of such a figure, who was arguably the leading Christian Cabbalist of his day, a noted alchemist and a millenarian, points to Leibniz’s willingness to embrace esoteric branches of knowledge. Leibniz had known van Helmont since 1671, and, as Stuart Brown notes, had “been profoundly influenced by occult traditions.”<sup>25</sup> In 1666, for example, he published *De Arte Combinatoria*, a

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<sup>19</sup> Whilst the letter is undated, Guerrier calculates that it must have been written whilst Peter the Great was in Hanover in 1697, as it refers to contemporary events in Poland regarding the election of Augustus of Saxony to the throne. *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> For an in-depth study of the life and works of F. M. van Helmont, see Allison P. Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century: The Life and Thought of Francis Mercury von Helmont (1614–1698)* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

<sup>25</sup> Stuart Brown, “Some Occult Influences on Leibniz’s Monadology,” in *Leibniz, Mysticism and Religion*, eds. Allison P. Coudert, Richard H. Popkin and Gordon M. Weiner (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1998), 1.

work inspired by Ramon Lull's *Ars Magna*, which Frances Yates ranked as the most remarkable example of Lullism in the mind of a seventeenth-century figure.<sup>26</sup> Although his youthful enthusiasm in occult practices waned in later decades, the maintenance of his close friendship with van Helmont and Leibniz's veneration for his learning is testament to its lasting legacy. Indeed, in the months prior to Peter the Great arriving in Holland, Leibniz collaborated with van Helmont on a Cabbalistic work on the Book of Genesis, which was published in Amsterdam.<sup>27</sup> In recent years, it has even been argued that Cabbala significantly influenced Leibniz's philosophy – particularly his monadology.<sup>28</sup>

Whilst Leibniz was thwarted in his attempts to secure an audience with either Franz Lefort or Peter the Great in Hanoverian territory, he continued to track the progress of the Grand Embassy with the utmost interest. He wrote to Witsen in Amsterdam and Gilbert Burnet, when the tsar moved on to England. At this time Leibniz also wrote a letter to August Hermann Francke, the Pietist leader, describing the importance of his preoccupation with Russia and Peter the Great. According to Leibniz, the Muscovite tsar was one of only two sovereigns in the world (alongside the Chinese emperor) who “aspires with amazing zeal to become acquainted with and to transport” European science to his land.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, such ambitions, Leibniz writes, will lead to the conveyance and spread of “truth and piety,” underlining the intrinsic importance of his Christian vision.<sup>30</sup> Leibniz's correspondence with Francke was based on a shared providential hope in Peter the Great as a monarch able (and seemingly sympathetic) to their millenarian tinged vision.

In the decade following Peter the Great's return to Russia in 1698, Leibniz continued to seek out contact with individuals close to the Russian court or with extensive knowledge of the eastern land. From October 1703, for example, Leibniz resumed correspondence with Heinrich van

<sup>26</sup> Yates, *Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, 379.

<sup>27</sup> Brown, “Some Occult Influences,” 3. The work is entitled *Quadedam praemeditatae et consideratae cogitationes super quattuor priori capita libri primi Moysis* (Amsterdam, 1697).

<sup>28</sup> Allison P. Coudert, “Leibniz and the Kabbalah,” in *Leibniz, Mysticism and Religion*, eds. Allison P. Coudert, Richard H. Popkin and Gordon M. Weiner (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1998), 50. Also see, Allison P. Coudert, *Leibniz and the Kabbalah* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1995); Brown, “Some Occult Influences,” 1–21.

<sup>29</sup> Guerrier, 26. The letter to Francke is dated September 30, 1697.

<sup>30</sup> Guerrier, 1871, *Otnosheniia Leibnitsa k Rossii*, 26.



Huyssen (1666–1739), who had recently entered Russian service as the tutor to Tsarevich Aleksei.<sup>31</sup>

Arguably of greater consequence was the appointment of the experienced diplomat Baron Johann Christoph von Urbich to be a special envoy of the Russian government at the Viennese court in 1707. Leibniz had known Urbich since 1688 and on hearing of his old acquaintance's new role he immediately saw a chance to further his goals vis-à-vis Russia and Peter the Great. Indeed, in a letter dating from January 1708, Leibniz made it explicitly clear that he wished to use Urbich as a means to enter into closer contact with the Russian government in regard to the spread of science to the vast realm.<sup>32</sup> This ambition was the principal reason for Leibniz travelling incognito to Vienna in October 1708. On arrival in the Hapsburg capital, Leibniz engaged in lengthy conversation with Urbich on the matter of introducing science to Russia and by December had formulated a relatively detailed theoretical plan to realize his vision, which the latter translated into Dutch.<sup>33</sup>

This plan laid special stress on the means by which Peter the Great would be able to introduce science and the arts to his country. In particular, Leibniz emphasized the need to establish “a library, a museum dedicated to natural history and the arts, zoological and botanical gardens, an observatory and a laboratory.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, Leibniz was recommending the establishment of a royal *kunstkammer*. Leibniz then proceeds to expand upon the significance of each institution, thereby revealing the great extent to which he still embraced Renaissance concept of the natural world. One of the three principal sections of the state library, for example, should be devoted to the natural sciences, according to the traditional three kingdoms of nature.<sup>35</sup> Leibniz also declares that whilst one should not expect to extract gold in a chemical laboratory, one should seek to investigate the qualities of bodies and to perfect their powers. Indeed,

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 52. Huyssen received his university education at Duisburg, Cologne, Halle and Leipzig and was offered a Professorship at Strasbourg. It seems Pietism influenced Huyssen, although the exact extent remains unclear. It is known that he heard lectures by Christian Thomasius and August Hermann Francke at Halle and mentions in his autobiography that Spener was his teacher. Huyssen also corresponded with Francke in the 1720s. See Peter Petschauer, “In Search of Competent Aides: Heinrich van Huyssen and Peter the Great,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 26 (1978): 483–84; Winter, *Halle Als Ausgangspunkt*, 59–60.

<sup>32</sup> Guerrier, *Otmosheniia Leibnitsa k Rossii*, 65.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.



he states that “fire represents the main key to explaining the powers of nature.”<sup>36</sup>

In regard to the museum, which Leibniz explicitly connects to “cabinets, *kunstkammern*, arsenals, galleries of antiquity, sculptures and paintings, zoological and botanical gardens, places for models and weapons and armouries etc.,” he states that much can be said in regard to how it should not only serve as a place of general curiosity, but also as a means to perfect the arts and sciences.<sup>37</sup> On this note, however, Leibniz simply limits himself to writing that “in this matter it is necessary to have as much zeal as possible.”<sup>38</sup>

Leibniz’s long-held ambition to gain a private audience with Peter the Great was finally realized at the end of October 1711, when he managed to secure a meeting at Torgau in Germany.<sup>39</sup> The Russian tsar was there to attend the marriage of his son Aleksei to Charlotte (1694–1715) the daughter of Duke Anton-Ulrich of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1666–1714). After this private meeting, Leibniz was encouraged to write directly to the tsar in January 1712 outlining his vision for the development of science and the arts in Russia.

The letter begins by Leibniz explaining how he prefers to study science and the arts rather than engaging in politics or jurisprudence as it “constantly promotes the glory of the Lord and the well-being of all of humankind.”<sup>40</sup> Leibniz continues in an effusive manner, stating that it is “in the sciences and with a knowledge of nature and art that one uncovers all the more miracles of the Lord, his might, wisdom and gentleness.”<sup>41</sup> The German academic also elaborates on his oft-cited belief in the providential role of Peter the Great. In a highly flattering passage, Leibniz compares Peter the Great to a series of great rulers who have advanced the cause of science in their lands, including Hermes Trismegistus in Egypt, Zoroaster in Central Asia, Irmin in Saxony, Odin among the northern Germans and Almanzor (Ibn Ab-Amir Al-Mansur) among the Saracens.

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>39</sup> Interestingly, Leibniz sought favour with Peter the Great by proposing to Duke Anton-Ulrich that he perform an opera dedicated to Tsarevich Alexei on the theme of Solomon. This opera would include representations of the temple at Jerusalem and the actors would be dressed in Jewish costumes. Furthermore, Leibniz also proposed an emblematic display in honour of the Russian tsar, which would have included images of Atlas and Hercules. *Ibid.*, 114–15.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

Leibniz then clearly spells out what he perceives to be Peter the Great's preordained mission:

Providence, apparently, wants science to go round the entire earthly sphere and is now transferred to Scythia, and that is why your Majesty has been chosen as the instrument, as you can – from one side Europe and from the other Asia – take the necessary measures to better and perfect that which has been produced on both sides of the world.<sup>42</sup>

In order for Peter the Great to accomplish his providential role in God's divine plan, Leibniz then advises that a "new and great building" should be erected.<sup>43</sup> In this building, it will be necessary to have "a library, a museum or *kunstkammer*, a workshop for models and works, a chemistry laboratory and an astronomical observatory."<sup>44</sup> In other words, Leibniz is advocating the foundation of an academy dedicated to the advancement of science and the arts, centred around the Renaissance concept of the *kunstkammer* and the learned institutions espoused by the likes of Andreae and Bacon. As the German himself spelled out to Peter the Great, such institutions were envisioned as being inextricably linked to fulfilling a deeply religious mission.

Peter the Great was surely flattered by the lofty role he assumed in Leibniz's grand religious and scientific plan. Indeed, the pair met privately again in the autumn of 1712 in the town of Carlsbad, where the tsar was taking the town's renowned spa waters. It was at this meeting on November 1 that Peter the Great signed an official decree that sanctioned Leibniz's entry into Russian service as a Privy Councillor. For the remainder of his life, Leibniz continued to be committed to promoting science and the arts in Russia and to investigating the intriguing religious heritage of the Orthodox land.<sup>45</sup>

Only months prior to his death, in November 1716, Leibniz wrote to Petr Shafirov, once again outlining his key criteria for developing the sciences in Russia.<sup>46</sup> In addition to championing the spread of Christianity

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> After officially becoming a Privy Councillor, Leibniz wrote to Jacob Bruce outlining a series of points he wished to be informed about. Many of Leibniz's points of interest related to religion. He requested different versions of the Lord's Prayer, for example, as well as the symbols of faith and the Ten Commandments. He also requested the so-called *Paterikom* and all available manuscripts of the divine liturgy and catechism in Russian. *Ibid.*, 161–62.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 188–89.

through missionary work, Leibniz also repeated the need to procure necessary equipment, training and the discovery of new knowledge as the three key factors necessary for the improvement of the arts and sciences. In particular, Leibniz emphasizes the critical importance that should be attached to the establishment of a worthy encyclopaedic library, museum and “*theatrum naturae et artis*,” or in other words a cabinet of rarities or *kunstkammer*.<sup>47</sup>

According to Leibniz, the collection of curiosities should include ancient and modern medals, classical and oriental antiquities and rarities from the three kingdoms of nature. In other words, all manner of curious plants, animals, insects, minerals and stones. Leibniz also outlines the need for astronomical, navigational, agricultural and mechanical inventions, along with worthy collections of artwork (both paintings and sculptures).<sup>48</sup> The development of such collections, therefore, formed a central part of Leibniz’s vision to reform Russian society.

Leibniz never set foot on Russian soil and played no part in the practical day-to-day assemblage of the tsar’s cabinet of rarities and later the Petersburg *Kunstkamera*. Yet, the German academic exerted an enormous influence on Peter the Great through his passionate promotion of the development of science and the arts in Russia. In this regard, it is vital to understand the important role a *kunstkammer* still assumed in the mind of the great German thinker. For Leibniz, such an institution was still the best means of studying and honouring the works of God. Furthermore, in Leibniz’s eyes, the potential to establish a *kunstkammer* and an academy of sciences in Russia was fully in accord with the millenarian goals that were widely prevalent in Protestant circles in Western Europe at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

*Collecting and Marvelling at the Curious: Peter the Great  
and the Development of the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera*

The extent to which the tsar was fascinated by curiosities first became truly evident during his first Grand Embassy in 1697 and 1698. It was during this groundbreaking trip that Peter the Great took every available opportunity to sample the plethora of cabinets of rarities, or *kunstkammer*s, that had emerged in Northern Europe since the second half of the

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

sixteenth century. Indeed, whilst Peter the Great's father, Tsar Aleksei, had established a modest cabinet of rarities during his reign, it was his son's trip to Western Europe that undoubtedly provided the chance to undertake the first concrete steps towards creating Russia's own bona fide *kunstammer*.<sup>49</sup>

In this section, I will document the development of Peter the Great's deep interest in curiosities and marvels between 1697 and his death in 1725. In doing this I will also reveal how the Russian tsar can be viewed as the last great European monarch to extol the Renaissance ideals that underpinned the establishment of the *kunstammer*. In other words, I believe that Peter the Great's zeal to establish a *kunstkamera*, as it was known in Russia, marks the culmination of a lofty encyclopaedic endeavour to encompass and study the wonders of God's creation (the macrocosm). Thus, a cabinet of rarities formed a microcosm, which acted as both a repository and laboratory. Moreover, it will be demonstrated that the establishment of the St. Petersburg *Kunstkamera* was envisaged as a vital step in reforming Russia, not only acting as a repository of knowledge but also a laboratory in which the goal of the advancement of knowledge could be actively achieved.<sup>50</sup>

These ideals came to the fore in the second half of the sixteenth century, and were most fully expressed in Samuel Quiccheberg's *Inscriptiones vel Tituli Theatri Amplissimi* (1565). This work stipulated Quiccheberg's ideal vision of a princely collection, which should be a "theatre of the broadest scope, containing authentic materials and precise reproductions of the whole of the universe."<sup>51</sup> According to Quiccheberg, such a collection ought to comprise five classes: (1) religious art and history, the genealogy of the founder and portraits of the ruling house, topographical representations of the country, architecture and models of machinery; (2) sculptures and numismatica; (3) natural specimens, natural history collections, ethnographia and art objects; (4) scientific and mechanical instruments and

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<sup>49</sup> Tsar Alexei reputedly paid a large sum for Byzantine antiquities, for example, and is also reported to have paid 100 gold ducats to a Dutchman for a 'sea-unicorn's horn.' See Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 10; Neverov, "His Majesty's Cabinet," 71.

<sup>50</sup> For a recent article on the notion of the St. Petersburg *Kunstkamera* as a microcosm of St. Petersburg and the Petrine epoch as a whole, see Riccardo Nicolosi, "Mikrokosm novogo: *Kunstkamera*, Peterburg i simvolicheskii poriadok petrovskoi epoki," in *Petr Velikii*, ed. Evgenii V. Anisimov (Moscow: O. G. I., 2007), 156–74.

<sup>51</sup> Patrick Mauries, *Cabinets of Curiosities* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002), 23.

(5) paintings and graphic works, precious stones, heraldry, local textiles and objects and amusements.<sup>52</sup>

This pivotal treatise was written precisely at the time when Quiccheberg's patron, Albrecht V, the Duke of Bavaria (1550–79), was developing his ambitious *kunstkammer* in Munich. By this time, the Hapsburg monarch, Ferdinand I (1521–64) and Elector August of Saxony (1553–86) had already established *kunstkammern* in Vienna and Dresden respectively. The last quarter of the sixteenth century also witnessed the rise of Schloss Ambras *Kunstkammer* near Innsbruck, which had been founded by Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol, as well as the legendary *kunstkammer* of Rudolf II (1576–1612) in Prague. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann refers to the “carefully organized content” of Rudolf's collection at the beginning of the seventeenth century, which accorded with Quiccheberg's principles. Thus, the Prague *Kunstkammer* was “based on the system of correspondences” and was a symbolic expression, in microcosmic form, of Rudolf's mastery of the greater world.<sup>53</sup>

The sense in which a collector used his cabinet of rarities to establish or emphasize the affinities that existed between things is stressed by Patrick Mauries. He writes that cabinets were “perpetually susceptible to the passion for finding analogies,” which he argues belong equally as much to the realm of magic as to aesthetics and “which haunts the history of the cult of curiosities from its beginnings.”<sup>54</sup> Mauries adds that a collector was similar to a sorcerer or alchemist, in that they became “the master or manipulator of the pulsing forces that ebbed and flowed silently across the real world.”<sup>55</sup> Accordingly, collectors grouped together objects in an apparently unsystematic fashion, which were far removed in terms of both history and geography, in order that onlookers could glean essential truths and otherwise hidden qualities about God's interrelated chain of universal being. These traits can be observed among many of the great collectors of the seventeenth century – from Bernhard Paludanus (1550–1633) in the Low Countries and Ole Worm (1588–1654) in Denmark to Athanasius Kircher in Rome and John Tradescant (1577–1638) and Elias Ashmole in England.

<sup>52</sup> Bente Gundestrup, *Renaissance Collections*, [http://www.kunstkammer.dk/H\\_R/H\\_R\\_UK/GBideen/shtml](http://www.kunstkammer.dk/H_R/H_R_UK/GBideen/shtml) (Feb. 24, 2011).

<sup>53</sup> Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, “Remarks on the Collections of Rudolf II: The *Kunstkammer* as a Form of Representatio,” *Art Journal* 38:1 (Autumn, 1978), 27.

<sup>54</sup> Mauries, *Cabinets of Curiosities*, 34.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

One also notes a similar outlook among writers, such as Johann Valentin Andreae and Francis Bacon, who advocated the establishment of cabinets of rarities as integral parts of their wider educational, scientific and religious visions. In his Christian-utopian tract *Christianopolis*, for example, Andreae stressed the importance of a museum of natural history, in combination with other institutions (he describes a chemical laboratory, anatomical theatre, pharmacy and astronomical observatory), in revealing divine truths. Thus, he writes that “the most wonderful things can be said” about the museum of natural history:

The whole of natural history is to be seen depicted upon the walls with the utmost skill – the phenomena of the heavens, the face of the earth in different climatic zones, the races of mankind, the appearance of animals, the forms of growing things and the varieties of stones and gems. These are not only on display and named, but they are interpreted to reveal their essences and qualities.<sup>56</sup>

As early as 1594 Francis Bacon had also extolled the benefits of establishing a cabinet of rarities in *Gesta Grayorum*. In this work Bacon outlines four ways in which the study of philosophy can be advanced: by establishing a good library, by founding a botanical and zoological garden and by amassing “a goodly huge cabinet, wherein whatsoever the hand of man by exquisite art or engine hat made rare in stuff, form, or motion.”<sup>57</sup> The description of Saloman’s House in Bacon’s *New Atlantis* also makes clear the pivotal role cabinets of rarities played in facilitating the study and observation of “the true nature of all things, whereby God might have the more glory in the workmanship of them, and men the more fruit in their use of them.”<sup>58</sup>

Many scholars, however, view the turn of the eighteenth century as heralding something of a paradigm shift in regard to cabinets of rarities, whereby they began to lose their intrinsic microcosmic and divine meaning.<sup>59</sup> In some quarters in Europe this was undoubtedly the case, but it

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<sup>56</sup> Andreae, *Christianopolis*, 212–13.

<sup>57</sup> Gerard I. E. Turner, “The Cabinet of Experimental Philosophy,” in *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (London: House of Stratus, 2001), 302.

<sup>58</sup> Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, 230.

<sup>59</sup> Patrick Mauries, for example, writes of the fall of Cabinets of Curiosities by the late seventeenth century, whilst Horst Bredekamp states that “the eighteenth century changed the frame of reference.” See Mauries, *Cabinets of Curiosities*, 126; Horst Bredekamp, *The Lure of Antiquity and the Cult of the Modern: The Kunstkammer and the Evolution of Nature, Art and Technology*, trans. Allison Brown (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1995), 81.

should also be stressed that many prominent and respected collectors and theorists still adhered to the Renaissance ideals underpinning their cabinets. This is most clearly seen in an influential two-volume theoretical and descriptive work on cabinets of rarities published in Frankfurt by Michael Bernhard Valentini (1657–1729) between 1704 and 1714.<sup>60</sup>

Valentini was a respected man of medicine and science in early eighteenth-century Germany, acting as the royal physician in Hesse and as the Professor of Medicine at Giessen University. Much of Valentini's philosophy, vis-à-vis cabinets of rarities, follows in the tradition of Samuel Quiccheberg. Thus, Valentini essentially repeats Quiccheberg's belief that the Old Testament kings Hezekiah and Solomon amassed wondrous collections that were effectively prototypes of Renaissance *kunstkammern*.<sup>61</sup> Valentini adds that the collections of Hezekiah and Solomon epitomized the best way that man could recognize God's omnipotence.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, Valentini states no cabinet of rarities can ever compare to the immeasurable collection created by God, although each has something unique to offer to the "curious mind."<sup>63</sup> It is also significant that Valentini accepts Quiccheberg's division of nature into three realms, which dates back to Pliny's *Natural History*. In other words, Valentini divides collections into animal, vegetable and mineral categories and is not immune to describing the magical properties of some phenomena, such as trees.<sup>64</sup>

Interestingly, one notes little variation from Valentini's stance in the views espoused by C. F. Neikelius in his *Museographia* of 1727, a work respected among his contemporary European peers.<sup>65</sup> At the beginning of his text, Neikelius devotes a section to outlining the origins of what he calls "art and nature collections."<sup>66</sup> He begins by extolling Noah's Ark,

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<sup>60</sup> The first volume, published in 1704, was a theoretical work entitled *Oost-Indianische Send-Schreiben, von allerhand raren Gewächsen, Bäumen. Jubelen auch andern zu der Natur-Kündigung und Artzney-Kunst gehörigen Raritäten durch die Gelehrteste und Berühmteste Europäer*. The second volume, published in 1714 and entitled *Museum Museorum*, described various significant European cabinets of rarities.

<sup>61</sup> This belief was also expressed in Johann Daniel Major's influential treatise on cabinets of rarities, *Unvorgreifliches Bedencken von Kunst- und Naturalien-Kammern insgemein*, which was originally published in 1674. The entire tract was reprinted by Valentini in 1704.

<sup>62</sup> See Eva Schulz, "Notes on the History of Collecting and of Museums," in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994), 182–3.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>65</sup> Neikelius was a pseudonym used by a certain Einckel, of which little is known apart from the fact that he was the son of a Hamburg merchant.

<sup>66</sup> Neickel, "Museographia," 8.



which was “the loveliest, rarest, most numerous and most complete Collection of Nature that there has ever been.”<sup>67</sup> Neikelius then continues by describing God’s role in amassing Noah’s Ark:

This was indeed a special Creation that was directed from “on high” – and could not have occurred without supernatural help: (I say supernatural – God led the thoughts and natures of the animals, birds and worms so that through his all-powerful workings they all found their way to the Ark so that their species would be preserved.)<sup>68</sup>

After praising Noah’s Ark, Neikelius also proceeds to repeat Quiccheberg’s esteem for the wonderful collections of Solomon and Hezekiah. In regard to Solomon, Neikelius wrote that “we have the detailed reassurance that Solomon had a treasure house with expensive and precious items including many rarities. It is also suspected that he had a splendid library.”<sup>69</sup> Thereafter, *Museographia* also adheres to Pliny’s division of the natural world into three kingdoms.

Thus, in the opening decades of the eighteenth century it was still commonplace in Europe to read learned theoretical tracts espousing the positive role of cabinet of rarities in promoting learning through the study and worship of God’s creation. These tracts continued to draw more on Renaissance notions of the divine, microcosmic functions of collections in being able to embody God’s greater creation, than on rational and secular ideas of amassing and preserving empirical knowledge. This spirit certainly fuelled the German Pietist leader, August Hermann Francke, to found his own cabinet of artefacts and curiosities in 1698 at his pedagogical foundation in Halle.<sup>70</sup> This collection formed a central role in Francke’s educational vision and was used extensively for teaching purposes. Indeed, Francke succeeded so well in exhorting his wide network of contacts to send rarities to his collection in Halle, that in 1701 his cabinet was relocated to the orphanage building in order to accommodate the large quantity of items.<sup>71</sup>

It is precisely the same spirit of microcosmic reverence that I feel inspired Peter the Great to substantially expand upon the small cabinet of rarities he inherited from his father, Tsar Aleksei. In many ways, Peter the

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 9–10.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 10–11.

<sup>70</sup> Thomas Müller-Bahlke, *The Cabinet of Artefacts and Curiosities in the Francke Foundations in Halle* (Halle: The Franke Foundation, 2004), 2.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 1.



Great encapsulated the quintessential characteristics of the great Renaissance and early modern collectors. In fact, Patrick Mauries's outline of the make-up of collectors could very well be a personal description of the renowned Russian monarch:

An enquiring mind; a penchant for secrecy; a propensity for rationalization; a passion for the process of acquisition; a fascination for the transmutation of forms and hybrids; and an inexhaustible ability to question the boundaries between life and death, the nature of being and the evanescence of life.<sup>72</sup>

### *The Grand Embassy 1697–1698*

The importance Peter the Great attached to building up his own personal cabinet of rarities, known as 'His Majesty's Cabinet,' became immediately evident once he set out on his first Grand Embassy to Western Europe in the spring of 1697. As early as April 1697, for example, whilst the tsar was in Libau in the Duchy of Courland (now Liepāja in Latvia), he inquisitively sought out the cabinet of rarities of a well-known local apothecary. His thoughts on the visit are recorded in a letter he wrote on April 24 to Andrei Vinus in Moscow:

Here I have seen a great marvel which at home they used to say was a lie: a man here has in his apothecary's shop in a jar of spirits a salamander which I took out and held in my own hands: this is word for word exactly as has been written.<sup>73</sup>

It is also known that on June 8, 1697 "various mathematical instruments and many artefacts made of all types of things" were sent to Narva from Königsberg, where the royal party has stopped en route to Western Europe.<sup>74</sup>

By the time Peter the Great arrived in Amsterdam, in August 1697, his appetite for curious and rare artefacts had been whetted by his experiences in Libau and Königsberg. It was in the famous Dutch city, however, where most collectors were imbued with a profound veneration of the divinity of God's universe, that the Russian tsar truly began to nourish and cultivate his passion for collecting curious and marvellous artefacts.

<sup>72</sup> Mauries, *Cabinets of Curiosities*, 182–3.

<sup>73</sup> *PiB*, vol. 1, 149.

<sup>74</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 17.

A pivotal figure in encouraging and facilitating this development was Nicolaes Witsen, who at the time was the Burgomaster of Amsterdam, an influential board member of the famed Dutch East Indies Company and a well-known man of science, who had been a Fellow of the Royal Society in London since 1688. Witsen had been fascinated by Russia and central Asia since he undertook a diplomatic mission for the Dutch Republic to Moscow between 1664–1665. In 1687 Witsen published what at the time was by far the most accurate map of Siberia ever to have been printed and in 1692 he published *Noord-en Oost Tartarije*, which described the landscape and indigenous peoples of much of central Asia. The Dutchman's links with Russia were maintained through the years by his close friendship with Andrei Vinius (whose own father was Dutch), whom he had met in Moscow.<sup>75</sup> The two regularly corresponded prior to Peter the Great's Grand Embassy and it would seem that Vinius played a crucial intermediary role in bringing Witsen and the tsar together in Amsterdam.<sup>76</sup>

It has been well documented how Witsen used his privileged position in Amsterdam society to ensure Peter the Great was allowed to work and study at the wharf of the Dutch East Indies Company.<sup>77</sup> However, the manner in which Witsen introduced Peter the Great to the world of Amsterdam's cabinets of rarities has not been highlighted to anywhere near the same degree. Witsen himself owned a considerable cabinet of rarities, which he began collecting in 1675 and which at his death contained over two thousand books, manuscripts, engravings and maps.<sup>78</sup> It also contained a fine collection of *artificialia*, which included coins, antique sculptures, paintings, ethnographic artefacts, weapons and mathematical instruments. What is more, Witsen had amassed a considerable cabinet of *naturalia*, in which one could see "dried plants, minerals, fossils, shells, corals and other marine vegetation."<sup>79</sup> It was in this cabinet that Witsen also kept his *animalia* in embalming spirits, which he had gathered from both the East and West Indies. The extensive collection

<sup>75</sup> E. A. Savel'eva, "Andrei Andreevich Vinius, ego al'bom i biblioteka," in *Rossii-Gollandiia: knizhnie sviazy XV–XX vv*, ed. N. P. Kopaneva (St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii dom, 2000), 105. According to the Dutch historian Jozien Drissen, Vinius was actually Witsen's nephew. See Drissen, *Tsar Petr*, 42.

<sup>76</sup> Vinius also ordered a ship – *The Holy Prophecy* – for Peter the Great from Witsen in the early 1690s. See Bogoslovskii, *Petr I*, vol. 2, 146.

<sup>77</sup> See, for example, Massie, *Peter the Great*, 185.

<sup>78</sup> Drissen, *Tsar Petr*, 45; Marion Peters, "From the Study of Nicolaes Witsen (1641–1717). His Life with Books and Manuscripts," *Lias: Sources and Documents relating to the Early Modern History of Ideas* 21:1 (1994), 2.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

included the foetus of a hippopotamus, a young bear, a tiny Surinamese child, fish, birds and snakes.<sup>80</sup>

It should be added that Witsen's cabinet also contained a fine collection of curiosities from Russia and the East, which he managed to amass through his numerous contacts. Moreover, it appears Witsen not only played a pivotal role in the collection of curiosities and rarities from Russia and the East, but also shared his acquisitions with various learned societies. On January 1, 1694, for example, he sent a letter to the Royal Society in London in which he promises to send "cockles of the Caspian Sea, and from the Mouth of Wolga."<sup>81</sup> The letter was also accompanied with "some Snail Shells, taken out of the Rivar Jaute, not far from the city of Moscou."<sup>82</sup> According to Witsen, his Dutch apothecaries "make use of them powdered, and probably for the same purpose as Crabs-Eyes."<sup>83</sup>

Witsen's impressive cabinet of rarities was located in the study of his Amsterdam home and was his preferred room for welcoming guests. Thus, one of Peter the Great's first experiences in Amsterdam, when officially received by Witsen in August 1697, would have been to see the burgomaster's extensive and exotic cabinet of rarities. Indeed, Voltaire states that Peter the Great actually "went through a course of natural philosophy, in the house of the Burgomaster Witsen."<sup>84</sup>

The Amsterdam burgomaster's pride in his impressive cabinet of rarities was not simply based on the whims of fashion, but was grounded in a passionate desire to honour and study God's creation. He was a deeply religious man, who built up his cabinet of rarities and undertook all his scientific research in a spirit of reverence for the divine wonders of the world around him. Each chapter of his *Noord- en Oost Tartarije*, for example, ended with the phrase "honour only to God" in heavy type.<sup>85</sup> As Marion Peters writes, "Witsen's world was a miracle wrought by God" and in his correspondence one finds plentiful examples of how his scientific curiosity was framed within an outlook of absolute credulity in the Holy Scriptures.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> *Philosophical Transactions (1683-1775)*, vol. 18 (1694), 118.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. The river in question is the Lauza.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. In the *Pharmacopoeia Extemporanea* (1710) by Thomas Fuller (1654-1734), it states that the compounded powder of crabs eyes "restoreth the ferment of the Viscera and the Blood, when almost lost and gone." See Thomas Fuller, *Pharmacopoeia Extemporanea* (London, 1710), 378.

<sup>84</sup> Voltaire, *History of the Russian Empire*, vol. 1, 118.

<sup>85</sup> Peters, "The Study of Nicolaes Witsen," 3.

In reply to a correspondent from Jamaica, for example, who had informed Witsen of how the “the burnt subterranean dust changes into lice,” the Amsterdam burgomaster wrote: “O depth of the mystery and of the miracles of God, whereof the reason is unknown to us.”<sup>86</sup> What is more, in a letter to Joan van Hoorn, the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, Witsen addressed the issue of the dispersal of the nations and speculated “how the people inhabiting the distant Southern Isles and continent have come to be there.”<sup>87</sup> He then proceeds to state that “according to God’s word, all humanity in Asia descends from Adam . . . since navigation in ancient times was not much developed.”<sup>88</sup> In his long correspondence with Gijsbert Cuper (1644–1716), a Professor of Classics and Burgomaster of Deventer in the Dutch Republic, Witsen often pondered Biblical questions, such as the location of the ten lost tribes and King Solomon’s gold mines, the origins of language and on evidence proving the reality of the Flood.<sup>89</sup>

It is also interesting to note that Gerard Croese dedicated his *Historia Quakeriana* (1695) to Witsen, which presented an extremely sympathetic historical account of the Society of Friends. In his dedicatory epistle to Witsen, Croese beseeches God to offer his benefactor protection while he rules in his name and submits to and obeys “the Divine Majesty.”<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, Croese proclaims his wish that God heap upon Witsen “more and more all manner of Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly things in Christ Jesus.”<sup>91</sup> The praise bestowed upon Witsen by Croese is not only based on his Christian faith, but also on the charity, modesty and toleration displayed by the burgomaster towards heterodox opinion.<sup>92</sup> Significantly, such virtues accorded with the Quaker worldview.<sup>93</sup>

The strong religious dimension inherent in Witsen’s passion for collecting curiosities and rarities surely cannot have escaped the attention of Peter the Great, who was greatly in awe of the Dutch polymath. Furthermore, Witsen ensured that Peter the Great was able to meet most of

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<sup>86</sup> Marion Peters, “Nicolaes Witsen and Gijsbert Cuper: Two Seventeenth-Century Dutch Burgomaster and their Gordian Knot,” *Lias: Sources and Documents Relating to the Early Modern History of Ideas* 16:1 (1989): 134.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Gerard Croese, *The General History of the Quakers* (London, 1696), 6–7.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>93</sup> It is possible that Witsen played a formative role in fostering Peter the Great’s favourable attitude towards the Quakers.

the principal collectors of cabinets of rarities in Amsterdam. Almost all of these figures shared the burgomaster's veneration of the divine composition of the natural world. As Bert Van der Roemer notes, according to these Dutch collectors, "the *naturalia* inside their houses proved to the attentive observer the necessity of a wise being who created everything with divine wisdom and continued to govern everything as a divine sovereign."<sup>94</sup> Consequently, man could draw nearer to an understanding of the divine by actively collecting and studying God's creation.

This was certainly a belief embraced by the architect and city bailiff Simon Schijnvoet (1652–1727), who owned a sizeable cabinet of rarities. It is known that Peter the Great visited Schijnvoet's collection in order to "study natural history" at some point during his residence in Amsterdam.<sup>95</sup> Schijnvoet arranged his cabinet so that it would mimic "the original beauty of God's creation."<sup>96</sup> Thus, he arranged symmetrical compositions "according to the systematic that God himself had laid down in his Creation."<sup>97</sup> The powerful impression Schijnvoet's cabinet made on visitors is testified by Jan Baptista Wellekens (1658–1726), a pastoral poet, who after seeing his countryman's collection exclaimed how God "traces back his steps, and how he founded all; and wisely arranged it by measure, number and weight; Thus is the Creator praised through his wonders."<sup>98</sup>

The Russian monarch also visited the notable cabinet of rarities of the merchant Levinus Vincent (1658–1727) during his first residence in Amsterdam. In the preface to the catalogue of his collection, Vincent clearly underlined the religious importance of his cabinet and as Van der Roeme notes, he enthusiastically declares how the objects "had a positive effect on the heart of his visitors, while they gave the 'irrational and godless' reason to honour and recognize the Creator."<sup>99</sup> The battle against atheism – particularly in its Spinozian form – was at the crux of many of the Dutch collectors zeal to reveal the divine nature of their cabinets.

In addition to visiting the notable collections of Schijnvoet and Vincent, Peter the Great also surveyed a host of Amsterdam's other finest cabinets of rarities. On September 17, 1697, for example, he and Witsen paid a visit

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<sup>94</sup> Bert Van der Roemer, "Neat Nature: The Relation Between Nature and Art in a Dutch Cabinet of Curiosities from the Early Eighteenth Century," *History of Science* 42 (2004): 75.

<sup>95</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 10.

<sup>96</sup> Van der Roemer, "Neat Nature," 78.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

to the well-known cabinet of the anatomist Frederick Ruysch. The collection was renowned for its more than six hundred specimens, which featured a variety of embalmed skeletons and foeti bottled in specially prepared jars. More than a third of Ruysch's collection was comprised of various parts of infants' bodies.<sup>100</sup> According to an anecdote describing Peter the Great's visit to Ruysch's cabinet, the Russian monarch was so touched by the sight of an infant corpse in a coffin that he proceeded to remove it from the shelf and kiss it.<sup>101</sup>

The manner in which Ruysch imbued his anatomical specimens with *vanitas* symbolism was also a particularly striking feature of his Cabinet.<sup>102</sup> A good example of the use of this symbolism can be seen in the tableaux assemblage below (see Fig. 51), which could be found on the top of one of Ruysch's anatomical cabinets.

The assemblage comprised piled-up gallstones, vascular trees, a stuffed bird and three human foetal skeletons.<sup>103</sup> The skeleton to the left is holding a sickle, whilst the skeleton to the right is raising a handkerchief, produced from lung tissue, to its left eye-socket. The assemblage was also accompanied by a text, which stated: "Why should I long for the things of this world?" and "Death spares no man, not even the defenceless child."<sup>104</sup> The emblematic and moralistic persuasion of Ruysch's anatomical specimens made a lasting impression on Peter the Great. Indeed, the Russian tsar visited Ruysch's cabinet again in 1717 and as has been mentioned, subsequently instructed Robert Erskine to negotiate the purchase of the entire collection. The important role of the Ruysch collection in the new St. Petersburg Kunstkamera will be discussed in more detail later on in this chapter.

On December 13, 1697, Peter the Great also visited the cabinet of rarities of Jacob de Wilde, who occupied a prominent position at the Dutch Admiralty. De Wilde's collection was particularly renowned for its variety of ancient coins and medals, as well as a fine array of gems, mathematical instruments, sculptures, paintings and an extensive library. Interestingly,

<sup>100</sup> Julie V. Hansen, "Resurrecting Death: Anatomical Art in the Cabinet of Dr. Frederik Ruysch," *Art Bulletin* 78:4 (Dec. 1996): 672.

<sup>101</sup> Drissen, *Tsar Petr*, 51.

<sup>102</sup> *Vanitas* symbolism was prevalent among many seventeenth-century Dutch artists, who wished to comment on the temporary nature of life. They drew on the passage in *Ecclesiastes* 1:2, which states: "Vanity of vanities . . . all is vanity."

<sup>103</sup> Hansen, "Resurrecting Death," 671.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*





Fig. 51. Anatomical Composition by Frederick Ruysch. Engraving by Cornelius Huybert.

De Wilde's daughter, Maria, subsequently recorded the tsar's visit for posterity. She portrayed her father and Peter the Great sitting in the middle of an impressive looking room, replete with books, scientific instruments, statuettes and an imposing cabinet/altar to the rear (see Fig. 52 below).

During his residence in Amsterdam, the tsar also inspected the cabinet of rarities assembled by Nicolas Chevalier (1661–1720), a French Huguenot and book publisher. Lastly, when visiting the University of Leiden, Peter the Great took time to visit the celebrated cabinet of rarities housed in the anatomy theatre. The collection had been created by Pieter Paaw (1564–1617), a professor of medicine, and was greatly expanded by his



Fig. 52. Peter the Great in the cabinet of rarities of Jacob de Wilde, December 13, 1697. Engraving by Maria de Wilde c. 1700.

successor, Otto van Heurn (1577–1652).<sup>105</sup> Visitors to the cabinet of rarities, such as Peter the Great, were treated to a unique collection, in which exhibits could be found all over the anatomy theatre: on balustrades, in wall cabinets and hanging from the ceiling.<sup>106</sup>

Thanks to Nicolaes Witsen, Peter the Great sampled the cream of the Dutch Republic's cabinets of rarities and was able to observe at first-hand the way in which their owners perceived their collections as microcosmic expressions of the greater divine universe. In fact, Peter the Great not only sampled the curiosities and wonders on offer in Dutch cabinets of rarities, but also actively sought to take some of the artefacts back to Russia with him. Thus, on April 9, 1698 one of the three official heads of the Embassy, F. A. Golovin (1650–1706), wrote to inform the tsar that he had purchased for him a crocodile and a swordfish, as well as chinaware, shells and fruits

<sup>105</sup> William Schupbach, "Some Cabinets of Curiosities in European Academic Institutions," in *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (London: House of Stratus, 2001), 232.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.



of the sea, from a merchant by the name of Vorhagen.<sup>107</sup> It is also known that various living animals, such as monkeys and parrots, were bought for Peter the Great, as well as various “glass vessels in which were found various things brought from the East Indies yard.”<sup>108</sup> According to a later catalogue of the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera, these glass vessels contained a sizeable collection of “fish, birds and reptiles.”<sup>109</sup> In order to transport the items back to Russia special ‘wooden arks’ were constructed.<sup>110</sup> It has been rightly stated by V. F. Levinson-Lessing that these purchases mark the creation of “a not insubstantial zoological collection,” which in effect herald the formative genesis of the future kunstkamera.<sup>111</sup>

However, it should be noted that Peter the Great was not simply enamoured with Dutch cabinets of rarities during his Grand Embassy in 1697 and 1698. In England, for example, he visited the substantial collection of the Royal Society, as well as undertaking a tour of the Tower of London, which at that time housed the Royal Mint and a fine collection of historical arms and armoury. It is also documented that the Russian tsar made a very brief visit to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, although inquisitive crowds apparently forced him to rapidly abandon his trip to the city.<sup>112</sup>

What is more, on the return leg of his journey, Peter the Great was particularly keen on visiting the renowned Dresden Kunstkammer, which is believed to have been founded in 1560 by the Elector Augustus (1526–1586).<sup>113</sup> The tsar arrived in Dresden on June 1, 1698 and after an evening meal he asked his host Prince Fürstenberg, the representative of Elector Augustus II (1670–1733), to guide him around the royal kunstkammer. Thus, at midnight Peter the Great and Fürstenberg began their visit to the kunstkammer, as the latter later described:

He demanded of me that I guide him round the Kunstkammer. I did everything necessary for this instruction, I ordered the way to be free from people and at midnight we set out for there, where he remained until dawn. He expressed great pleasure when seeing various rarities, especially on seeing

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<sup>107</sup> V. F. Levinson-Lessing, “Pervoe puteshestvie Petra I za granitsu,” in *Kul'tura i iskusstvo petrovskogo vremeni*, ed. G. N. Komelova (Leningrad: Ermitazh, 1977), 12.

<sup>108</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 16–17.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Levinson-Lessing, “Pervoe puteshestvie Petra I,” 12.

<sup>112</sup> Arthur MacGregor, “Peter the Great's Visit to London in 1698,” *The Seventeenth Century* 19:1 (Spring 2004): 123.

<sup>113</sup> Joachim Menzhausen, “Elector Augustus' *Kunstkammer*: An Analysis of the Inventory of 1587,” in *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (London: House of Stratus, 2001), 91.

mathematical instruments and other craft tools, where there are a large quantity here.<sup>114</sup>

During this visit the tsar was also honoured by being allowed to look at the so-called Green Vault, which contained a famed collection of jewels and precious objects amassed by the Saxon royal dynasty.<sup>115</sup>

Prince Fürstenberg also recorded that Peter the Great demanded a second visit to the city's *kunstkammer* on June 2 after he had seen the Royal Arsenal and had enjoyed a brief meeting with the Queen Mother.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, on his final day in Dresden, Fürstenberg once again notes that Peter the Great made a trip to see the *kunstkammer*. Thus, over the course of only three days the Russian monarch managed to fit in three separate visits to the second oldest cabinet of rarities north of the Alps.

#### *Developing 'His Majesty's Cabinet,' 1698–1714*

On his return to Russia, Peter the Great was immediately faced with the aftermath of the Strel'tsy Revolt, the repercussions of which stretched well into 1699. What is more, in 1700 the Russian monarch was faced with the daunting challenge of waging a major military campaign – the Great Northern War – against the powerful Swedes. Yet, despite these troubling preoccupations, Peter the Great continued to devote a considerable amount of time to developing his cabinet of rarities. Up until 1714, the tsar's cabinet was housed in the Royal Armoury in the Kremlin and was home to the tsar's collections of arms and ethnographic and artistic rarities. Besides this collection the Apothecary Department also housed the tsar's natural history artefacts, which from 1706 were overseen by Robert Erskine.

One of the principal ways in which Peter the Great managed to expand his cabinet of rarities was by maintaining direct personal links with Nicolaes Witsen and Frederick Ruysch in the Dutch Republic. As early as October 1, 1698, Witsen wrote to Peter the Great in order to inform him that he had fulfilled the task of transmitting two notes to the King of England (William III) and to another extremely powerful individual.<sup>117</sup> Witsen wrote to the Russian tsar again in July 1699 stating that "I pray to the heavenly God that he blesses with good success the glorious inten-

<sup>114</sup> Levinson-Lessing, "Pervoe puteshestvie Petra I," 28.

<sup>115</sup> Massie, 1980, 217–8.

<sup>116</sup> Levinson-Lessing, "Pervoe puteshestvie Petra I," 28.

<sup>117</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 517–18.

tions of your Royal Highness for the benefit of the Christian name."<sup>118</sup> The letter ends with Witsen hoping that God preserves the Russian monarch and gives to him the wisdom of Solomon, the years of Methuselah and the ability to overcome like David.<sup>119</sup> Whilst Witsen clearly intended to flatter the Russian monarch, it is also possible that the Dutchman *did* view Peter the Great as something of a Christian saviour, as with Leibniz and Lee, who was a monarch in the spirit of Solomon and David.

It is evident that Peter the Great also valued Witsen's knowledge and connections, as at some point in early 1700 he found time to send a precious piece of material taken from clothes to the Dutchman.<sup>120</sup> A year later the tsar also sent a number of vials containing lizards and worms to Witsen, on condition that he give half of them to Ruysch.<sup>121</sup> The tsar's gift was evidently greatly appreciated by Ruysch as on July 16, 1701 he wrote to personally thank Peter and in recompense he promised to send "amazing things from the East and West Indies."<sup>122</sup> In the letter he catalogued what these amazing things would be: (1) a truly amazing lizard with sharp scales; (2) a small *ligvan* (?) with a green belly from the West Indies; (3) fish from the island of Caracuas, which have spots on their tails; (4) a two-headed snake from the same island; (5) an East Indies cricket; (6) an unborn *Gai* (?) fish from Caracuas Island; (7) a golden wood-engraver (beetle) from the Spanish West Indies; (8) a truly amazing bird from the East Indies; (9) a most wonderful lizard from the East Indies; (10) another lizard and (11) two snakes from the East Indies.<sup>123</sup>

In return Ruysch requests his great desire to obtain the skins of two people and "worm(s) with yellow spots" that turned into butterflies.<sup>124</sup> The anatomist even informs the tsar of the need to feed the worms with fresh leaves whilst they are being transported in boxes. In addition, Ruysch writes of his wish to be sent "any wood-engravers, *pruzii* (?), giant flies, gadflies, marvellous frogs, snakes, rats, flying squirrels and other creatures in vodka."<sup>125</sup> Lastly, Ruysch asks if the tsar can send various creatures and small fish from around the Azov area.

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<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 518.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 519. Witsen wrote to thank Peter the Great for the gift on April 7, 1700.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 520.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 520–21.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 521.

Besides personally corresponding with Witsen and Ruysch, Peter the Great also managed to acquire natural wonders from a Dutch merchant, Jan Woutter de Jong, who traded in Arkhangel'sk. In a letter from de Jong to Peter the Great from June 21, 1703, for example, the Dutchman informed the tsar that he had sent him "several East and West Indies wonders."<sup>126</sup> As Levinson-Lessing points out, this letter "completely and definitely states the fact that Jan Woutter de Jong over the course of several years systematically supplied Peter with rare examples of animals from the East Indies."<sup>127</sup>

In the years following his return from the Grand Embassy, Peter the Great also increased his knowledge regarding cabinets of rarities by acquiring a series of key descriptive texts on the subject. In his personal library collection, for example, two Latin manuscripts by Frederik Ruysch can be found, entitled *Animalia – Thesaurus avium sicco a Ruyschio conservatum – Ruyschiana* and *Thesaurus Anatomicus Descriptus á Ruyschio – Thesaurus Extraordinarius – Thesaurus magnus anatomicus*.<sup>128</sup> The Russian monarch also owned a Dutch manuscript by Albert Seba, entitled *Notitiae van versckeyde uytnumtende Cabinette, met elle bedenkyke sorten van Rareyten*.<sup>129</sup> In addition to these unpublished works, Peter the Great also amassed a sizeable collection of printed material, particularly relating to the cabinets he had viewed in Amsterdam. Thus, he owned three works by Jacob de Wilde, which variously described the numismatics, general antiquities and gems in his museum, as well as Levinus Vincent's *Wondertonel de nature* (1706).<sup>130</sup> Moreover, the tsar owned a 1655 Amsterdam edition of Olaus Worm's influential account of his own cabinet, entitled *Museum Wormianum*.<sup>131</sup>

### *The Rise of the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera*

Although the tsar devoted considerable attention to expanding his cabinet of rarities in the period between 1698–1714, two factors undoubtedly curbed his passion for studying and collecting curious, rare and wondrous

<sup>126</sup> Levinson-Lessing, "Pervoe puteshestvie Petra I," 12.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 12–13.

<sup>128</sup> Bobrova, *Biblioteka Petra I*, 99, Nos. 827–828.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 100, No. 835.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 160, Nos. 1640–42 for works by de Wilde; 158, No. 1607 for the work by Vincent. The three works by de Wilde were *Gemmae Selectae antiquae e museo Jacobi de Wilde* (Amsterdam, 1703), *Selecta Numismata antiqua ex museo Jacobi de Wilde* (Amsterdam, 1692) and *Signa antiquae e museo Jacobi de Wilde* (Amsterdam, 1700) respectively.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 161, No. 1653.

specimens during this time. First, the demands of the Great Northern War prior to 1714 had absorbed a large part of the tsar's attention. Secondly, one must bear in mind that his Cabinet was located in Moscow, a city he despised and felt uncomfortable residing in. However, after the transfer of authority to St. Petersburg, which began shortly after the Battle of Poltava in 1709, Peter the Great's new capital provided the opportunity to transform and develop his institutions and bodies, including his own cabinet of rarities. Furthermore, the security of St. Petersburg was greatly increased after the Russian Navy successfully defeated the Swedes off the coast of Hangö, a strategically important cape located on the south coast of Finland.

Thus, it was during 1714, with St. Petersburg secure, that Peter the Great ordered his personal cabinet of rarities and library, as well as the collection stored at the Apothecary Department, to be moved to his new capital, where they were to be located under one roof in his new Summer Palace on the banks of the River Neva. As has been mentioned, he appointed Robert Erskine as the "librarian and director of rarities and *naturalia*" of his newly united cabinet. In 1714 the tsar's cabinet of rarities was still private and was not officially known as the *kunstkamera*, yet the year undoubtedly marked a decisive turning point in the development of what was to become a truly astounding collection. Henceforth, the tsar energetically went about acquiring some of the most wondrous curiosities and rarities known to mankind at the time and endeavoured to house them in his own microcosmic world, which was designed to both honour and study the works of the greater Creator.

Undoubtedly one of the most remarkable additions to the new cabinet of rarities in St. Petersburg took place in 1715, when Akinfii Nikitich Demidov (1678–1748), the owner of the Tagil'skii metal factory, presented "a rich golden mound of Siberian artefacts" to Peter the Great in honour of the birth of his son, Peter Petrovich.<sup>132</sup> This collection of golden artefacts was supplemented on January 10, 1716 by Prince M. P. Gagarin, who was one of two Siberian governors. Gagarin sent Peter the Great two large name plates, adorned with lion casts, four small items with moulds of wild animals, two ear-rings with chains and two human teeth set in gold. Furthermore, on December 12, 1716 Gagarin sent another fifty-six golden

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<sup>132</sup> Golikov, *Deianiia Petra Velikogo*, vol. 9, 443; Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 12. Demidov was the owner of a number of factories in the Urals and in Tula and also owned a considerable cabinet of rarities, which contained a notable mineral collection that he had established whilst studying in Western Europe.

pieces from Tobol'sk. Prince A. N. Cherkasskii, who was also a governor of Siberia, embellished the collection still further in 1720. By 1726, it is recorded that Peter the Great had amassed two hundred and fifty golden artefacts from Siberian burial mounds, which consisted of buckles, clasps, clothe decorations, necklaces (so-called jugular pendants), bracelets, finger rings, ear rings and other fine pieces of jewellery.<sup>133</sup>

The gold ornaments, which are now housed in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, represent a unique collection of animalist-style art and date from between 1000–500 BC. The images on the ornaments mainly depict mythological zoomorphic monsters and were worn or simply kept because of their supposed magical powers. It is easy to imagine Peter the Great's delight at this gift to his collection. After all, he displayed a keen interest in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as well as embracing an emblematic worldview, in which images were able to convey profound secret meanings.

Another remarkable early addition to the tsar's cabinet of rarities in St. Petersburg was the renowned Great Gottorp Globe, which was presented to Peter the Great in 1713 by Karl Friedrich, the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp (1700–1739). The globe was constructed between 1654–1664 by Andreas Busch, under the supervision of Adam Olearius (1603–1671), the director of the Gottorp Kunstkammer, as well as being a famed mathematician, geographer, librarian and writer.<sup>134</sup> Apparently, Olearius planned the globe on plans found among the papers of Tycho Brahe.<sup>135</sup> Well into the eighteenth century this celebrated globe was admired by travellers to Russia, such as William Coxe, who described it in the following manner:

It is a large concave sphere, eleven feet in diameter, containing a table and seats for twelve persons. The inside represents the visible surface of the heavens: the stars and constellations are distinguished, according to their respective magnitudes by gilded nails. It is set to the meridian of Petersburg; and, being turned by means of a curious piece of mechanism, exhibits the true position of the stars, their rising and setting. The outside is a terrestrial

<sup>133</sup> S. I. Rudenko, *Sibirskaiia kolleksiia Petra I* (Moscow-Leningrad: Nauka, 1962), 11–12.

<sup>134</sup> Olearius wrote a well-known travel account of his journeys through Muscovy, Tary and Persia in the 1630s and 1640s. See Adam Olearius, *Voyages and Travells of the Ambassadors Sent by Frederick Duke of Holstein to the Great Duke of Muscovy and the King of Persia . . . Containing a Complete History of Muscovy, Tartary, Persia, and Other Adjacent Countries* (London, 1669). Reprinted in Basil Dmytryshyn, ed., *Medieval Russia: A Source Book, 850–1700* (Gulf Breeze, Florida: Academic International Press, 2000).

<sup>135</sup> Chantreau, *Philosophical, political, and literary travels in Russia, during the years 1788 & 1789*, vol. 1 (Perth, 1794), 311.

globe. This machine is called the Globe of Gottorp, from the original one of the name; which, at the expence of Frederic III, duke of Holstein, was erected at Gottorp, by Andrew Bush, under the direction of Adam Olearius. It was planned after a design found among the papers of the celebrated Tycho Brahe, and was presented by Frederic IV, king of Denmark to Peter the Great, who saw it in 1713 and expressed much satisfaction at its curious structure and mechanism.<sup>136</sup>

The globe was one of the earliest precursors of the modern-day planetariums and measured 3.36 metres in length.<sup>137</sup> Originally the sphere was rotated on its axis once every twenty-four hours by the use of an ingenious water motor.<sup>138</sup> Twelve people were also able to sit on a circular bench inside the globe and could look up towards a mythological depiction of the heavenly constellations, replete with astrological star signs.<sup>139</sup> What is more, a circular pillar was located in the centre of the globe, which could be used to place refreshments.<sup>140</sup> The globe only arrived in St. Petersburg in 1717, after a painfully slow journey, and was housed in a specially constructed wooden pavilion situated in a meadow lying in front of the Summer Palace.<sup>141</sup>

Whilst the globe was en route to St. Petersburg, Peter the Great was actually journeying in the opposite direction, as in February 1716 the Russian monarch set out on his second Grand Embassy, which was to last until October 1717. As with his first Grand Embassy, the chance to tour Western Europe provided Peter with the perfect opportunity to once again survey the great *kunstkammers* and cabinets of rarities of the continent and to purchase curiosities and rarities for his own collection. Significantly, Peter the Great was accompanied on the entire tour by Robert Erskine, who not only acted as his personal physician but was also his chief advisor in regard to acquiring artefacts for the St. Petersburg cabinet of rarities.

The tsar's first port of call was Danzig (Gdansk), where he attended the wedding of his niece Anna Ivanovna to Duke Karl Leopold of Mecklenburg on April 8, 1716. In addition to cementing military and strategic alliances whilst residing in Danzig, the tsar also succeeded in purchasing

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<sup>136</sup> William Coxe, *Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden and Denmark, interspersed with historical relations and political inquiries*, vol. 2 (Dublin, 1784, 381–2).

<sup>137</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 56.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*; Naumov, *Neistovyi reformator*, 207.



the substantial mineral cabinet of Dr. M. D. Gottwald, which amounted to 1195 specimens.<sup>142</sup> In May 1716, shortly after the wedding of Anna Ivanovna, Peter the Great met the King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm I (1688–1740) at Stettin (Szczecin). It was at this time that the King of Prussia bestowed a fabulous gift upon Peter the Great: the renowned Amber Cabinet (or Amber Room), which had been planned by Andreas Schlüter in 1701 but remained incomplete. In Peter's mind, the Amber Cabinet was to be the jewel in the crown of his burgeoning collection of curiosities. Yet, on its arrival in St. Petersburg in 1717 many of the amber panels were in dire need of repair and the entire work of art was resigned to a storeroom in the tsar's Summer Palace.

The Amber Cabinet was justifiably famed for its beauty and exquisite craftsmanship, but one must also bear in mind that its special aura was enhanced by the mythical magical and medicinal qualities associated with the fossil resin. The special healing powers of the substance were still stressed as relatively late as 1677, for example, in Philipp Jacob Hartmann's *Succini Prussici*. Thus, amber was believed to ease ailments such as rheumatism, gout, toothache, stomachache and sore throats, as well as acting as a remedy against snakebites.<sup>143</sup> According to Vitalii Rapoport, Peter the Great was familiar with Hartmann's work and believed in the curative powers of amber.<sup>144</sup> This belief seems to be borne out by the fact that Johann Daniel Schumacher visited Hartmann's son in Königsberg in 1721 during which time the tsar's envoy viewed the Amber Cabinet created by Hartmann senior, as well as familiarizing himself with many articles on amber in order to "accurately see the providence" of the substance.<sup>145</sup> In regard to the alleged healing qualities of amber, it is interesting to note that Friedrich Wilhelm's present was given at a time when Peter the Great was suffering from ill health. Indeed, immediately after their meeting on the Baltic coast, the Russian monarch departed for the spa resort of Pyrmont in Lower Saxony, where he spent three weeks taking cures and drinking the waters to ease his health problems.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>142</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 36.

<sup>143</sup> Fathi Habashi, "History of Amber," *Bulletin of the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum (CIM Bulletin)* 96:1072 (2003): 168.

<sup>144</sup> Vitalii Rapoport, "Podarok prusskogo korolia," *Sovremennaia literatura*, [http://lit/lib/ru/w/witalij\\_r/text\\_0160.shtml](http://lit/lib/ru/w/witalij_r/text_0160.shtml) (Feb. 25, 2011).

<sup>145</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 546.

<sup>146</sup> Massie, *Peter the Great*, 628.



After this period of recuperation, the tsar continued his Grand Embassy and in July 1716 he arrived in Copenhagen. In spite of pressing military matters concerned with initiating a joint Danish-British-Russian naval campaign against Sweden, the Russian monarch still found time to enhance his cabinet of rarities. A dispatch to the tsar from Johann Schumacher, dated September 4, 1716 survives, for example, which describes the passage of a boat from Copenhagen laden with chemical materials and “all sorts of rarities for the Cabinet of His Majesty.”<sup>147</sup>

By the time Peter the Great and his entourage arrived in Amsterdam in December 1716, Robert Erskine had already secured the purchase of Albert Seba’s renowned Dutch zoological cabinet, the previous June, for a sum of 1,500 guilders.<sup>148</sup> Whilst this collection was certainly envisaged as being one of the cornerstones of Peter the Great’s future *kunstkamera* in St. Petersburg, a real coup de grâce was achieved during the tsar’s second residence in Amsterdam, when with the energetic help of Erskine he successfully managed to buy Fredrick Ruysch’s entire anatomical collection, containing 2045 anatomical items alone, for the extraordinarily high sum of 30,000 guilders, as described previously (see Chapter 2).

In addition to 105 anatomical preparations of embryos and foeti and the same amount of ‘monsters,’ the anatomical collection included 150 skin preparations, 82 muscle preparations, 191 cerebral specimens and 173 specimens of parts belonging to the senses. The huge anatomical collection purchased from Ruysch also included 129 heart and pulmonary preparations, 225 stomach and intestinal preparations, 121 liver, spleen and pancreas specimens, 79 kidney and bladder preparations, 98 specimens of male genitalia and 66 specimens of female genitalia, 154 bone specimens, 179 specimens of “sorrowful parts of the human body” and 93 specimens related to foeti.<sup>149</sup> Ruysch’s collection also contained 1179 small animals (mammals, reptiles and insects), 259 birds, two herbarium cabinets and a large variety of butterflies, marine life and shells.<sup>150</sup>

In the months following Peter the Great’s return to St. Petersburg, in October 1717, it quickly became apparent to the Russian monarch that his private cabinet of curiosities in the Summer Palace was woefully inadequate for the enormous collection he had now amassed. Apart from spatial limitations, it was also becoming blatantly obvious that Peter the

<sup>147</sup> *Materialy dlia istorii imperatorskoi akademii nauk*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1885), 1.

<sup>148</sup> See Chapter Two for more details.

<sup>149</sup> Beliaev, *Kabinet Petra Velikago*, vol. 2, 35.

<sup>150</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 39.

Great envisioned his private cabinet as forming the basis of a new public *kunstkamera* modelled on the institutions he had seen on his travels in Western Europe. Spurred on by his able lieutenant Erskine and by the grandiose plans of Leibniz, Peter the Great set out his ambitious plans in early 1718 for a grand edifice to house his *kunstkamera*, as well as an extensive library, an anatomy theatre, a laboratory and an observatory.

It is widely believed that the site of the present-day *kunstkamera* – located on the banks of the River Neva on Vasilievskii Island opposite the Admiralty – was chosen in 1718 after Peter the Great’s attention was drawn to a remarkable wild pine tree growing on that particular spot. The branches of this pine tree were apparently intertwined in a fantastical manner at its trunk; a phenomenon the Russian tsar found extremely remarkable (see Fig. 53 below).<sup>151</sup> Indeed, he is purported to have exclaimed: “Oh monstrous tree, miraculous tree! On the spot where I found this curious tree, shall be built the *kunstkamera*.”<sup>152</sup> The veracity of this anecdotal story would appear to be borne out by the presence of a part of the extraordinary pine tree among the *kunstkamera*’s exhibits. No doubt the tsar’s choice of spot for the new *kunstkamera* was also helped by its position in the heart of his new capital city, symbolizing the intrinsic importance he attached to his new institution.

The design for the planned *kunstkamera* on the banks of the River Neva was drawn up by the German architect Georg Johann Mattarnovi (d. 1719). The grand edifice was to be 97.2m in length and 15m wide and in its centre was to be an impressive tower.

On the lower level of the central tower was to be an anatomy theatre, above which was to be situated the Great Gottorp Globe and a laboratory. The upper sections of the tower were to be devoted to an observatory. The flanking wings of the *kunstkamera* were to be home to a library (in the east wing) and the tsar’s burgeoning cabinet of curiosities (in the west wing). According to notes made in 1724, the *kunstkamera*’s cabinet of curiosities was to be divided into three sections. The first cabinet was earmarked for expositions devoted to minerals, shellfish and “various kinds of butterfly.”<sup>153</sup> The second cabinet was allocated for nuministics, whilst the third cabinet for “anatomical and natural things, preserved in spirits.”<sup>154</sup>

<sup>151</sup> Beliaev, *Kabinet Petra Velikago*, vol. 1, 189–90; Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 50.

<sup>152</sup> Beliaev, *Kabinet Petra Velikago*, vol. 1, 190.

<sup>153</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 52.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*



Fig. 53. Part of the trunk of the pine tree preserved in the St. Petersburg Kunstakmera, which according to legend grew at the very spot where the building was constructed.

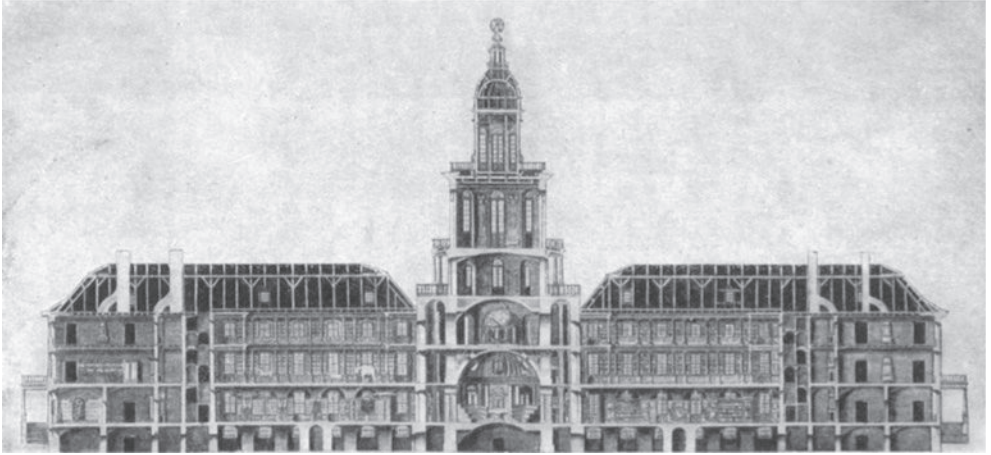


Fig. 54. Cross-section of the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera. Drawing by G. Kachalov (1741).

Thus, the planned *kunstkamera* was to be the most spectacular of its kind in Europe – a concrete testament to Peter the Great’s vision of bringing science and learning to his country. Envisaged as a resplendent edifice on the banks of the River Neva, the building was to be St. Petersburg’s cathedral of learning in which experimental scientists could honour and seek to reveal the glory of God’s creation. In other words, a fitting monument to the tsar’s providential role in bringing an instauration of knowledge to his realm. Yet, the sheer grandness of the new building ensured that its completion would not take place in the foreseeable future. Indeed, Peter the Great did not live to see the fulfilment of one of his most spectacular architectural and scientific projects, with the majority of his collection of curiosities only being moved to the new building in August 1727.<sup>155</sup>

In the intervening period Peter the Great decided to house his new *kunstkamera* in the confiscated palace of Aleksandr Kikin, who had been implicated in the scandal surrounding the Tsarevich Aleksei. Thus, on July 30, 1718, Johann Schumacher received an official order from the tsar requiring the transfer of the Dutch specimens found at the house of Dr. Erskine to the *Kunst Kamor*, where they were to be placed for preservation. However, on inspection of the Kikin Palace, it was soon discovered

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 53–4.

that urgent repairs were needed, and thus the *kunstkamera* was not officially opened until late 1718 or early 1719.<sup>156</sup>

The importance and value Peter the Great attached to his new *kunstkamera* housed in the Kikin Palace, once it opened, is revealed in an anecdote recited by Jakob Stählin, who wrote:

It was his custom to go thither two or three times a week, and there study the orders of the system, at an early hour, before he went to the admiralty. He enjoyed himself so much in the midst of these precious collections of natural history, that he resolved one day to give at this place the first audience to an ambassador from the court of Vienna . . . The audience was really given in the cabinet of natural history at five o'clock in the morning.<sup>157</sup>

Moreover, in addition to holding value for his own benefit and for the admiration of diplomats, the tsar envisaged the collection as being of arguably still greater value to the general public. Peter the Great's attitude in this regard is epitomized in another incident described by Stählin, when the tsar and his attorney general, Pavel Ivanovich Iaguzhinskii were visiting the *kunstkamera*:

He (the tsar) intimated his orders, that the admission should in future be free to all persons who might apply . . . The attorney general bestowed just praise on the wise and benevolent views of His Majesty; but an ill-directed spirit of oeconomy made him observe, that, as the preservation of so many curiosities required a certain annual expence, it would be adviseable to make all those who might wish to see the cabinet pay a rouble or two by way of establishing a fund for its support . . . The Czar, whose intention it was to allure his subjects to the study of nature, interrupted the attorney general: 'Paul Ivanovitch,' said he, 'you do not know what you say. Your proposal would produce an effect exactly contrary to my views. Who would care for my exotic collections if I only showed them for money? On the contrary, it is my will and intention not only that every body enter gratis, but also, when ever a company comes to see the cabinet, that they be offered, in my name, and at my expence, a dish of coffee, a glass of wine, or some other refreshment, in this repository of curiosities.'<sup>158</sup>

The Kikin Palace offered considerably more space for artefacts than the tsar's Summer Palace. Indeed, the two-storied stone building – located between the present-day Tauride Palace and Smol'nyi Cathedral on the southern banks of the River Neva – was regarded by contemporaries as

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<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>157</sup> Stählin, *Original Anecdotes*, 94.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 95–6.

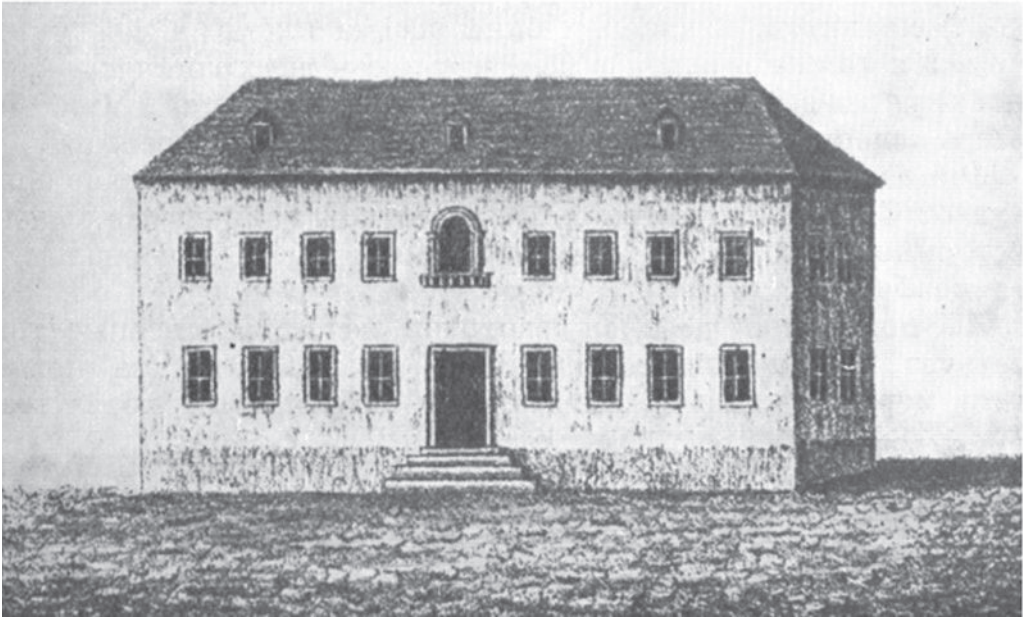


Fig. 55. The Kikin Palace according to a late eighteenth-century drawing by A. Bogdanov.

an enormous building. According to an internal description of the palace made in 1728, the second floor of the building had one large hall lit by eleven lights, twelve rooms and a vestibule.<sup>159</sup> The first floor consisted of eleven rooms.

A contemporary description of the Kikin Palace *Kunstkamera*, contained within Neickelius's *Museographia*, lists eight rooms as being given over to the cabinet of curiosities.<sup>160</sup> Three of these rooms were devoted to the *kunstkamera*'s considerable library collection, which in 1720 already amounted to over 15,000 tomes.<sup>161</sup> Of the five remaining rooms allocated for the *kunstkamera*'s collection of curiosities, contemporary accounts describe the first room as being devoted to Ruysch's "anatomical preparations preserved in glass vessels," which contained the heads of children that were "so well preserved in spirit that they appeared to be living."<sup>162</sup> One could also see "arms and legs, on which can be seen veins through the

<sup>159</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 24.

<sup>160</sup> See Neickel, *Museographia*, 330–3.

<sup>161</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 36.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.



skin, as if alive."<sup>163</sup> A similar description of Ruysch's collection in this room is provided by the Holstein envoy Friedrich von Bergholz, who visited the *kunstkamera* at the Kikin Palace in August 1721. Bergholz was particularly struck by a head, which he describes as being "superbly made from the coloured wax of all the arteries, representing the complex arrangement of the brain."<sup>164</sup>

The second room of the *kunstkamera* in the Kikin Palace was apparently also home to part of Ruysch's collection, as it housed glass vessels containing the forms of development of the human foetus from "first conception until fully mature." This room also contained a large collection of other naturalia, which included "various monsters, stuffed elephants, lizards, fish and dried fish with astonishing mouths," as well as "several reeds and a large number of elephant bones."<sup>165</sup> In the remaining three rooms of the *kunstkamera*, a visitor could find various animal artefacts, including "not a small number of birds of various kinds and colours," along with "strange mice," the muzzles of dogs, butterflies, amber, and a considerable medal cabinet.<sup>166</sup> However, one observer visiting the *kunstkamera* at the Kikin Palace in the early 1720s noted the extraordinary amount of curiosities amassed by Peter the Great that were simply lying on a large table and had not been put into order. Apparently, the amount of artefacts "demand still another 30 or more rooms in order that they can be arranged."<sup>167</sup>

In spite of the sheer surplus of artefacts piled up in the Kikin Palace, Peter the Great enthusiastically sought to increase his collection still further in the years between 1718 and 1725. On November 15, 1718, for example, the tsar commissioned Dr. Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt (1685–1735), a physician from Danzig, to undertake a seven-year expedition to Siberia.<sup>168</sup> The stated purpose of the mission was "to find various rare and

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>164</sup> Naumov, *Neistovyi reformator*, 202.

<sup>165</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 40.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 32. Peter the Great met Messerschmidt whilst he was in Danzig in 1716, after being recommended to the tsar by the natural scientist Johann Philipp Breyne (1680–1764). It is interesting to note that Messerschmidt studied medicine at Jena and Halle between 1713 and 1718 – two hotbeds of German Pietism. See *Siberia-Terra Incognita: The Role of German Scholars in the Early Exploration of Siberia in the 18th Century* (Halle: Francke Foundation, 1999), 18. For more on Messerschmidt's expedition to Siberia, see "Nachricht von D. A. Messerschmidts sieben jähriger Reise in Sibirien," *Neue Nordische Beyträge*, Vol. 3 (St. Petersburg and Leipzig, 1782), 97–158; D. G. Messerschmidt, *Forschungsreise durch Sibirien 1720-1727*, 5 vols, eds. Eduard Winter and N. A. Figurovskij (Berlin: Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte Osteuropas, 1962–1977).



Fig. 56. Drawing of a foetus with embryonic scalp from the Ruysch collection made in the 1730s.



pharmaceutical herbs, flowers, roots and seeds,” as well as other natural curiosities and Siberian antiquities.<sup>169</sup> In April 1721, Messerschmidt sent a report to the tsar regarding what he had found during his time in Siberia. The list includes “all manner of woodland birds, field birds, water birds and male and female songbirds,” as well as “all manner of large and small animals . . . all manner of fish . . . all manner of earth and clay flowers and stones . . . and all manner of ores . . . and salt . . . and lizards and frogs, also the relics of all manner of ancient things.”<sup>170</sup>

Furthermore, one of the principal reasons for ordering Schumacher to Western Europe in February 1721 was to visit the main European cabinets of curiosities and to seek to purchase artefacts for the *kunstkamera*. Indeed, the eleventh instruction (out of a total of thirteen) given to Schumacher by the tsar clearly states the importance of this mission:

To visit both the private and public collections of learned people; and from this to observe in what way your Imperial Majesty’s Museum differs from them; and if something in the museum of your Majesty is not found, then to endeavour to fill the above-mentioned deficiencies, or at least to advise how the above-mentioned deficiencies can be filled.<sup>171</sup>

Schumacher fulfilled this mission with some aplomb, visiting both private cabinets and royal *kunstkamern* across the continent.<sup>172</sup>

Thus, by the early 1720s the artefacts gathered at the St. Petersburg *Kunstkamera* had morphed from a relatively small private collection in the early years of the century into a truly spectacular display of the wonderful and curious nature of the world. This is aptly reflected in the sense of awe experienced by F. C. Weber when viewing the exhibits at this time:

The Czar has a Collection of Pictures that is inestimable. Only the presents which he and his Predecessors received from all Parts of Asia, and which are now at Petersbourg, would make a complete Cabinet of Curiosities . . . There are likewise at Petersbourg so many Chymical and other Natural Curiosities, monstrous Productions, Mathematical Instruments, the famous Globe of Gottorp representing the Copernican System, and abundance of other Rarities; (the Care of all which was committed to M. Areskin, the Czar’s first Physician) that it is to be wondered, how such a Collection could be made in so few Years.<sup>173</sup>

<sup>169</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 32.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 534.

<sup>172</sup> For a full itinerary of Schumacher’s visits to cabinets of rarities and royal *kunstkamern*, see Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 546–555.

<sup>173</sup> Weber, *Present State of Russia*, vol. 1, 185–6.

The key role played by the Ruysch collection in the burgeoning St. Petersburg *Kunstkamera* indicates Peter the Great's intense – and some might say morbid – curiosity in monstrous deformities and hybrid births. After all, at the beginning of the eighteenth century the Ruysch collection represented the most impressive and intriguing sample of what many – including Ruysch himself – saw as the myriad possibilities inherent in God's creation.

Yet, as spectacular as the Ruysch collection undoubtedly was, Peter the Great's fascination with 'monsters' and 'freaks of nature' far surpassed a mere curiosity in the Dutchman's anatomical preparations. Indeed, in many ways it is fascinating to note that Peter the Great's profound sense of curiosity in monstrous humans and animals was very much akin to that of many inquisitive sixteenth-century monarchs who initially promoted the courtly ethos of collecting weird and wonderful artefacts (both animate and inanimate). This spirit was epitomized by Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol in the 1570s, who playfully revelled in his collection of human 'monsters' at Schloss Ambras. The Archduke also enthusiastically commissioned portraits of a series of human 'monsters' intended to adorn the walls of his collection. In the seventeenth century, monarchs such as the Archduke sought to exaggerate the effect of their human monsters by portraying them in juxtaposition to each other and to their surroundings.<sup>174</sup>

Peter the Great had already begun to display a decided interest in 'monsters' and 'freaks of nature' in the first decade of the eighteenth century and he had long been accustomed to having dwarfs at his royal court. Indeed, as a young child two dwarf brothers – Petrushka and Nikita Komar – were included in his retinue and dwarfs are also known to have followed Peter's sleigh on horseback.<sup>175</sup> Dwarfs continued to play a distinctive carnivalesque role at the court of the young adult Peter the Great. Prior to the Korzhukhovo military manoeuvres in 1694, for example, a group of twenty-five dwarfs dressed in cloaks and plumed hats were made to march in parade.<sup>176</sup> In fact, dwarfs were to consistently remain a notable

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<sup>174</sup> See Lorraine J. Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 194. The portrait is believed to depict the giant Giovanni Bona and the dwarf Thomerle, who belonged to Archduke Ferdinand II.

<sup>175</sup> Hughes, *Age of Peter the Great*, 258.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*



Fig. 57. An illustration from the 1730s entitled “Janus” of Siamese twins that formed part of the Ruysch collection.

feature throughout the Petrine era, retaining their carnivalesque potential to mock and invert rituals and hierarchy.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> For a brief description of some of the elaborate mock weddings involving dwarfs that were a prominent feature of court life during the reign of Peter the Great, see Hughes, *Age of Peter the Great*, 257–59.

Yet, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Peter the Great's fascination in both human and animal 'freaks of nature' began to significantly transcend the bounds of traditional carnivalesque ritual and amusement. Having seen at firsthand many of the weird and wonderful 'monsters' on display in Europe's *kunstkammers*, it seems that Peter the Great became fascinated by the marvellous and wondrous qualities of 'monsters,' rather than simply flinching and turning away at the repugnance of their aesthetic form. A good example of Peter the Great's sense of positive wonder at 'freaks of nature' during his Grand Embassy occurred in March 1698, when he was residing at Deptford near London. On one day during this month, a female giant visited the tsar and "stretched out her arm" and "without bending down . . . the tsar . . . walked under the arm."<sup>178</sup>

On his return to Russia, Peter the Great soon began to display a distinct curiosity in human monstrosities and was more than happy to exhibit these unfortunate individuals in front of esteemed guests. In 1702, for example, the Dutch traveller Cornelius Le Bruyn described "an extraordinary case" shown to him by the Russian tsar:

This Prince perceiving me, called me to him, and went again into the palace. Well, says he, *you have seen many strange things, and yet I will venture to say you never saw any thing like what you are going to see.* He then ordered a poor *Russian*, who had been brought on purpose, to open his cloaths. I trembled at the sight; he had an excrescence beneath the navel, of about the length of a hand, and four inches in substance, from whence went out all the food he eat; and the poor wretch had been nine years in this condition . . . I frankly confessed I had never seen any thing like it. . . He then ordered this poor man's excrescence to be squeezed, that I might be the more sensible of the nature of his case, and every thing came out half digested.<sup>179</sup>

The search for other monstrous human specimens soon took on an official character when on January 28, 1704 the monarch issued a *ukaz* on the following subject:

About the burial of the dead on the third day and about the confirmation by a midwife, under punishment of death, that they will not kill the infants born as monsters and not conceal them, but inform about them to parish clerics.<sup>180</sup>

<sup>178</sup> Dixon, *Britain and Russia*, 22.

<sup>179</sup> Le Bruyn, *Travels into Muscovy*, vol. 1, 28.

<sup>180</sup> *Polnoe sobranie zakonov rossijskoi imperii*, vol. 4 (St. Petersburg, 1830), No.1964, 243.

A second *ukaz* issued on May 30, 1705 was addressed to parish priests and instructed them to immediately conduct such babies to Ivan Alekseevich Musin-Pushkin (1661–1729), the head of the Department of Monasteries. After being anatomically examined, the bodies of the monstrous infants and mothers were chemically prepared and sent to the main apothecary in Moscow, which was also home to the various natural artefacts the tsar had collected in the Dutch Republic and from other places.<sup>181</sup> Thus, Peter the Great's initial interest in adding 'monsters' and 'freaks of nature' to his cabinet of rarities can be traced to the early years of the eighteenth century. However, as it will be shown below, 'monsters' and 'freaks of nature' only began to assume a central role in the tsar's conception of a cabinet of rarities when his collection transferred to St. Petersburg in 1714 and evolved into the much more ambitious *kunstkamera*.

The tsar's second Grand Embassy to Western Europe between 1716–1717 gave him ample opportunity to marvel at monstrous freaks of nature contained within the confines of the abundant amount of cabinets of rarities. The Russian monarch also had the chance to observe the large amount of giants and dwarfs on public display at popular fairs and during carnival periods. One giant, in particular, attracted the intense curiosity of Peter the Great during the spring carnival held in Calais in 1717. This was Nicolas Bourgeois, a man standing 2m 17cms tall and whose mother was a dwarf. Peter's fascination with this unusually tall man was so great that he immediately approached the giant and his mother and requested that the man enter Russian service.<sup>182</sup> According to Beliaev (writing in 1800), Peter the Great offered Bourgeois the enormous sum of 600 roubles a year in salary, as well as financially compensating the mother for losing her son (and no doubt principal source of income).<sup>183</sup> However, the contemporary diplomat Bergholz, wrote that Bourgeois only received a salary of 300 roubles a year in addition to rent-free living quarters.<sup>184</sup> Yet even this latter sum was a significant amount of money at the time, especially if one considers that the role of State Librarian only afforded a salary of 400 roubles a year.<sup>185</sup> Bourgeois was officially designated as Peter the Great's servant, although

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 308. Also see, Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 21.

<sup>182</sup> Beliaev, *Kabinet Petra Velikago*, vol. 1, 191; Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 42; Anthony Anemone, "The Monsters of Peter the Great: The Culture of the St. Petersburg *Kunstkamera* in the Eighteenth Century," *The Slavonic and East European Journal* 44:4 (Winter 2000): 583.

<sup>183</sup> Beliaev, *Kabinet Petra Velikago*, vol. 1, 191.

<sup>184</sup> Naumov, *Neistovyi reformator*, 136.

<sup>185</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 42.

in reality the Frenchman was little more than a public spectacle. As with Renaissance monarchs, such as Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol, Peter the Great still looked upon monsters as “manifestations of the playfulness of nature, or at worst, the vagaries of chance.”<sup>186</sup>

This attitude is borne out by Bergholz, who describes how Bourgeois had absolutely no responsibilities, owing to his enormous weight.<sup>187</sup> Indeed, it appears that Bourgeois’s primary task was to spawn more monstrous offspring as on February 22, 1720 the tsar sanctioned the Frenchman’s marriage to his pregnant mistress – a Finnish giantess – where he was guest of honour.<sup>188</sup> Whilst the couple apparently succeeded in having three children – a son and two daughters – it appears that none of them satisfied the tsar’s desire for them to engender further generations of giants.<sup>189</sup>

The giant’s contract also stipulated that his body was to be preserved on his death. This event came to pass on May 10, 1724, according to official documents, as a result of a sudden apoplectic stroke. The following day three doctors – Atsariti, Nebelius and Richter – undertook the task of dissecting and preserving the giant’s body and began by removing the skin from the corpse, which was then placed in preserving spirits. The *hypogastrium* was also opened at night and a spirit was poured over the kidneys.<sup>190</sup> On May 12 the kidneys and other parts of the interior were removed and cleaned. Work on dissecting and preserving Bourgeois’s body continued for a number of days. The giant’s heart was considered particularly worthy of note, being “so big that it would have been the biggest [thing] in our cabinet.”<sup>191</sup> All of the giant’s preserved organs, his stuffed body and his skeleton were then transferred to the *kunstkamera*, where they were soon on display.<sup>192</sup>

Whilst the giant figure of Nicolas Bourgeois loomed large at the Petrine Court after his arrival in St. Petersburg at the close of 1717, he was far from the only ‘freak of nature’ brought to the new capital on the orders

<sup>186</sup> Daston and Park, *Wonders*, 192.

<sup>187</sup> Naumov, *Neistovyi reformator*, 136.

<sup>188</sup> Hughes, *Peter the Great*, 141; Beliaev, *Kabinet Petra Velikago*, vol. 1, 191. Beliaev describes how the tsar married Bourgeois to a *Chukhonka* (Finn) of “excessively great height.”

<sup>189</sup> Beliaev, *Kabinet Petra Velikago*, vol. 1, 191.

<sup>190</sup> *Materialy*, vol. 1, 42.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>192</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 42. It would seem that preparations to display Bourgeois’s skeleton were well under way by June 22, 1724, as a document describes how a metal worker came to the *kunstkamera* in order to fit a hinge to its head. See *Materialy*, vol. 1, 46.



of the Russian monarch. Indeed, it is fair to say that Bourgeois's arrival in St. Petersburg coincided with a concerted effort by Peter the Great to amass an extensive collection of both living and dead 'freaks.' This notion came to full fruition in an official decree, entitled *About the bringing of living monsters and unusual objects*, which was published on February 13, 1718.<sup>193</sup> The fascinating contents of this *ukaz* warrants extensive citation. It begins by Peter the Great outlining a general notion regarding the presence of monsters within the Russian realm, before he begins to espouse his views on the reasons underpinning monstrous births:

Since it is known that as in the human species, so in animals and birds, it occurs that monsters are born, that is *urody* which always in all states have been gathered as marvels, for which an *ukaz* was made several years ago, in order that such (monsters) be brought, promising payment for those several which had already been brought, and namely: two infants, each of which had two heads, two which were joined by the body. However, in such a great state it is possible that there are more. Ignoramuses think that such monsters are born from the action of the devil, which is, however, impossible for there is only one Creator of all creatures – God, and not the Devil, to whom has no power over any living creatures at all; but from internal damage, also from fear and the thoughts of the mother in the time of her pregnancy, of which there are many examples: when a mother is frightened, such marks are present on children; also there will be (such signs) when (the mother) is hurt or ill etc.<sup>194</sup>

First, it is striking to note Peter the Great's strong belief in God as the "Creator of all creatures." The tsar does not speculate on why God would permit monsters to be born, but it would seem that he shares Prokopovich's stance (see Chapter 4). In other words, God does not actively assist monstrous births, but also does not intervene to prevent a mother from giving birth to a deformed child. Such theological justifications were commonplace in seventeenth-century Europe and are exemplified by René de Ceriziers, the Chaplain to the Duke of Orelans, who wrote in 1643 that "if [monsters] run counter to Nature's ways, they do not shock in any way those of God, who suffers their presence in the world in order to give luster to its beauties."<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> *Polnoe sobranie zakonov rossiiskoi imperii*, vol. 5 (St. Petersburg, 1830), No. 3159, 441–2. Also see, Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 54; Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 29–30; Anemone, "The Monsters of Peter the Great," 592.

<sup>194</sup> *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. 5, 541–2; Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 54.

<sup>195</sup> Huet, *Monstrous Imagination*, 56.

The views Peter the Great then expresses on the power of maternal imagination were in accord with the opinions of many contemporary physicians and scientists and harked back to antiquity. As Marie-Hélène Huet notes.

Since antiquity, even the most innocuous deformities, birthmarks, had been thought to be caused by the mother's imagination and her capacity to imprint on her child's body the mark of a cherished or desired object.<sup>196</sup>

This theory continued to hold sway into the Renaissance and was espoused by many leading thinkers and physicians, such as Paracelsus, who wrote that the principal causes of blemishes on a man's body "resulted from his mother's imagination when she either craved something, or was afraid or had a fright."<sup>197</sup> At the beginning of the eighteenth century the belief in the power of the maternal imagination still held sway among many leading figures studying generation, such as Nicolas Malebranche. Thus, the Russian tsar's remarks were wholly in keeping with a long tradition regarding the power of maternal imagination, which retained a hold on the imagination of male scientists at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Less pervasive in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, however, was the manner in which the tsar actively sought out all manner of 'monsters' throughout his realm and beyond. This curious desire was clearly expressed in the *ukaz* of February 1718, which outlined a scale of financial rewards for those who brought both dead and living monsters to their local authorities. In terms of dead specimens, the *ukaz* promised to pay three roubles to anyone bringing a monstrous bird, five roubles for monstrous wild animals and beasts and ten roubles for a human monster. Far greater inducements were offered for living monsters: 7 roubles for birds, 15 roubles for wild animals and beasts and the considerable sum of one hundred roubles for human monsters. What is more, the *ukaz* also added that if the monsters were "very miraculous then more will be given."<sup>198</sup>

On the basis of this reward system the *kunstkamera* quickly began to be inundated with all manner of curious expositions from all corners of the vast country.<sup>199</sup> Thus, a monstrous sheep was sent to the *kunstkamera* from Vyborg, "which on its sides had two mouths with tongues and two eyes that saw," whilst a young ram with eight legs and one with three

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<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>198</sup> *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. 5, 542; Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 54.

<sup>199</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 30.



eyes, two torsos and six legs were sent from Tobol'sk and a calf from Ufa with "two monstrous front legs."<sup>200</sup> Prince Mikhail Golitsyn also sent two dogs from Artyrok, which had apparently been born from "a sixty year old wench."<sup>201</sup>

The call for monstrous humans was also met, with "a child with two heads" being sent from Ufa, in addition to a child from Nezhin with "an eye under his nose and arms under his neck" and a "child with three legs from Nizhny-Novgorod province."<sup>202</sup> What is more, Prince Mikhail Golitsyn also sent two children from Artyrok, whose chests and stomachs were joined together, whilst a certain Commandant Bakhmetev sent a child from Ufa with two heads, four arms and three legs.<sup>203</sup>

It is known that by 1722 three 'monsters' known as Foma, Iakov and Stepan, were residing in the *kunstkamera*.<sup>204</sup> The most well known of these 'living monsters' was Foma Ignatiev, a native of Irkutsk province in Siberia, who was sent to the St. Petersburg *Kunstkamera* by G. Blumentrost on August 9, 1720. Foma is described as only being 126 centimetres tall and who "on his hands and legs had two 'monstrous' fingers and toes, which were similar to crab claws."<sup>205</sup> Apparently Foma's unfortunate afflictions "did not prevent him walking, lifting and taking money and completing other activities for the amusement of the public."<sup>206</sup>

Little is known about Iakov Vasiliev, apart from the fact that he was a hermaphrodite and that in addition to his duties as a resident of the *kunstkamera* he was paid an annual salary of six roubles for work as a blacksmith.<sup>207</sup> Hermaphrodites seem to have attracted particular curiosity among those connected to the *kunstkamera*. In April 1724, for example, Dr. Van der Gulst sent the heart and kidneys of a woman considered to be a hermaphrodite, who had died of small pox at the Royal court, to the cabinet of the *kunstkamera*.<sup>208</sup> The fascination in hermaphrodites displayed by Peter the Great and members of his court was wholly in keeping

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 30. *Materialy*, vol. 1, 99.

<sup>201</sup> *Materialy*, vol. 1, 99.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*; Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 57.

<sup>203</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 30; *Materialy*, vol. 1, 99.

<sup>204</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 41; Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 57.

<sup>205</sup> Beliaev, *Kabinet Petra Velikago*, vol. 1, 192; Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 42.

<sup>206</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 42. Foma spent fourteen years at the *kunstkamera* until his death in 1736, when he was then dissected. See Anemone, "The Monsters of Peter the Great," 593.

<sup>207</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 42.

<sup>208</sup> *Materialy*, vol. 1, 38–9.

with the sense of wonder felt by many Renaissance collectors in all hybrid forms.

Even less is known about Stepan, although a description of a 'living monster' witnessed by the diplomat Bergholtz at the *kunstkamera* would suggest that he suffered from a horrendous genital deformity:

There, incidentally, is to be found a living person without sexual organs, instead of which he has a mushroom-shaped outgrowth, similar to a cow's udder and having in the middle a meaty piece as great as a thaler, from which constantly seeps a thick urine. To the outgrowth, for preserving the cleanliness of his undergarments, has been attached a bladder, into which the urine flows. All of this is so disgusting that many people are simply not able to look at the poor devil. Therefore, it is easy to imagine what life is like for him. However, he is fresh and healthy, he chops firewood and does various other tasks; but he must live in a special room, because he gives off an unbearable stench. This person, it is said, is from Siberia, and his parents are prosperous common folk.<sup>209</sup>

A sum of fifty roubles was allocated by the State Treasury for the upkeep of each 'monster,' with the three individuals each receiving a salary of twenty roubles for their duties at the *kunstkamera*. In addition, every three months the 'monsters' were given a new *mundir*, a caftan, a *camisole* and *breeches*.<sup>210</sup> Evidently, the tsar deemed it important to keep up the appearance of his display 'monsters.'

The manner in which Peter the Great displayed and even employed his 'living monsters' at the St. Petersburg *Kunstkamera* is very much redolent of earlier Renaissance collectors. Rudolf II, for example, used dwarves in his Prague *Kunstammer* in order to provide an added stimulus to his gallery of contrasts, whilst Manfredo Settala employed dwarves as guides in his renowned museum.<sup>211</sup> In each case the 'freaks of nature' formed part of the collection, yet at the same time their animated humanness and the tasks they performed stressed their separation from the surrounding inanimate objects. This ambiguous relationship and interaction enhanced the liminal essence of the experience for the observer and was in keeping with a questioning spirit of inquiry regarding the nature of reality. Thus, in this sense Peter the Great's use of 'living monsters' was much closer in spirit to Renaissance collections, rather than the systematic and logical

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<sup>209</sup> Naumov, *Neistovyi reformator*, 201–2.

<sup>210</sup> Staniukovich, *Kunstkamera*, 42.

<sup>211</sup> Mauries, *Cabinets of Curiosities*, 109.



Fig. 58. Illustration of Foma Ignatiev dating from the 1730s.

collections that came to increasingly typify collections from the second half of the eighteenth century.

*Towards an Academy of Sciences*

In May 1714 Peter the Great delivered a speech in St. Petersburg to mark the launching of a new English-made man-of-war ship. The monarch used the occasion to proclaim that the time was now ripe for Russia to take its turn as “the seat of all Sciences.”<sup>212</sup> Displaying a knowledge and passion for history and science far surpassing the still commonplace stereotype of the ruler as a ‘practical’ and ‘utilitarian’ serviceman, the tsar is reported to have said:

The historians place the ancient Seat of all Sciences in Greece, from whence being expelled by the Fatality of the Times, they spread in Italy, and afterwards dispersed themselves all over Europe, but by the perverseness of our Ancestors were hindered from penetrating any farther than into Poland. It is now our turn . . . I can compare this Transmigration of Sciences with nothing better than the Circulation of the Blood in the human Body, and my Mind almost gives me they will some time or other quit their Abode in England, France, Germany and come to settle for some Centuries among us . . . In the mean time I earnestly recommend to your Practice the Latin saying, *Ora & labora*, pray and work, in that case be persuaded, you may happen even in our Lifetime to put other civilized Nations to the blush, and to carry the Glory of the Russian Name to the highest Pitch.<sup>213</sup>

At the time of this speech the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera was on the cusp of becoming one of the greatest institutions of its kind in the world. Moreover, Peter the Great had succeeded in establishing the mathematical school in Moscow in 1701 and the opening of the Naval Academy in the new capital was to occur in 1715. However, despite the zeal displayed by Peter the Great in the above speech, which contains distinct providential undertones, it was to take another twelve years before the official foundation of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, in August 1726. By this time Peter the Great had been dead for over one and a half years.

In a very real sense circumstances dictated this delay. Most strikingly, Peter the Great was undoubtedly distracted by the almost constant din of warfare; with the Great Northern War against Sweden not concluding

<sup>212</sup> Weber, *Present State of Russia*, vol. 1, 15.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 15–6.

until August 1721 only to be quickly followed by the Persian campaign of 1722–23. Yet, despite his many other preoccupations, the Russian monarch began to prepare the ground for an academy as early as 1720. It was in this year that he contacted Christian Wolff in Halle requesting help on the establishment of such an institution.<sup>214</sup> What is more, in February 1721 he sent Johann Schumacher abroad in order to recruit individuals “for the creation of a society of sciences, similar to the ones in Paris, London, Berlin and other places.”<sup>215</sup> By January 22, 1724 Peter the Great evidently felt that enough preparations had been undertaken and thus he issued an official proclamation, announcing the imminent opening of an academy for the arts and sciences in St. Petersburg. The proclamation contained a lengthy nine-point outline of how the academy would be structured.

Critically, foreign scholars would not only undertake research at the academy but would also have to teach young students. What is more, it was envisaged that they would bring two or three foreign students with them, who would not only study at the academy but would also teach at Russian secondary schools. The educational framework was divided into three categories: (1) the mathematical sciences; (2) physics and (3) the humanities, history and jurisprudence. Under the rubric of the first class were counted arithmetic, algebra, geometry, astronomy, geography, navigation, mechanics and military and civil architecture. The second class was divided into experimental and theoretical physics, anatomy, chemistry, botany and natural history. Lastly, the third class consisted of the study of antiques, ancient and modern history, natural and public jurisprudence, alongside politics and ethics.<sup>216</sup> The proclamation also highlights the importance of the *kunstkamera* – with its library and collection of rare and natural artefacts – by stating that it is necessary for it to be open. Furthermore, the directive states that the head of the *kunstkamera* has it in his power to acquire any books or instruments necessary for the academy.<sup>217</sup>

Thus, whilst the formal establishment of the academy only took place in August 1726, that is after the death of Peter the Great, it was an institution steeped in the legacy of the Petrine era. The unique character of the

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<sup>214</sup> Alexander Lipski, “The Foundation of the Russian Academy of Sciences,” *Isis* 44:4 (Dec. 1953): 350.

<sup>215</sup> P. P. Pekarskii, *Istoriia imperatorskoi akademii nauk v Peterburge*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1870), xxviii–xxix.

<sup>216</sup> *Materialy*, vol. 1, 17–23.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

planned Russian academy is stressed by Peter the Great in the opening remarks to his proclamation:

Inasmuch as there is now to be founded an institution for the advancement of arts and sciences in Russia, it is not possible to follow the pattern of other countries. One has to consider the conditions of this country in regard to instructors and students, and it is essential that an institution will be established which will not only spread the fame of this country at the present time through the advancement of sciences but which will benefit people in future through instruction in science and through the dissemination of scientific knowledge.<sup>218</sup>

Thus, it was of critical importance to Peter the Great that the new Russian academy should promote the advancement of learning among students. This stood in stark contrast to other existing learned societies, such as those in Paris, London and Berlin, which were restricted to the scientific elite. Such a philosophy was wholly in accord with the proposals set out by Leibniz over numerous years and by Francis Lee in 1698. Indeed, A. J. Rieber has correctly noted that the educational vision of the proposed new academy was devised in harmony with the religious seminaries advocated by Prokopovich in the Ecclesiastical Regulation. What is more, he incisively describes this pedagogical strategy as “the political marriage of religion and science.”<sup>219</sup>

Yet, this marriage of religion and science, which had long been the vision of both Lee and Leibniz, was not merely grounded in the pragmatic politics of the day. Inherent in Peter the Great’s vision of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, I would argue, was the providential legacy bequeathed by Lee and Leibniz (and their seventeenth-century predecessors). In other words, the religious notion of instauration merged with the political reality of competent governance.

### *The Esoteric Interests of Peter the Great*

It remains uncommon to link Peter the Great, the so-called ‘Tsar Reformer,’ with astrological interests. Even W. F. Ryan in his invaluable monograph on magic and divination in Russia, reflects that “Peter’s practicality belonged

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<sup>218</sup> *Materialy*, vol. 1, 15; Lipski, “Foundation,” 351.

<sup>219</sup> A. J. Rieber, “Politics and Technology in Eighteenth-Century Russia,” *Science in Context* 8 (1995): 351.

more to the Enlightenment than to the seventeenth century."<sup>220</sup> According to Ryan something of a paradigm shift occurred in Peter the Great's reign, which precluded all aspects of the occult that had been prevalent at the courts of his father Tsar Aleksei (1629–1676) and his half-sister, Sophia (1657–1704), who was regent between 1682–1689.

I would argue, however, that such a categorical negation of astrological beliefs did not occur during Peter the Great's reign. Indeed, if anything, one can discern a strong sense of continuity vis-à-vis the role of astrology at the royal court. This stance echoes the pioneering research of R. A. Simonov, who in 1986 stated that Peter the Great "was not an opponent of astrology."<sup>221</sup> Thus, Simonov made tentative steps in directly linking Peter the Great with a policy that positively encouraged calendars and almanacs that included astrological predictions.

This active endorsement of astrologically tinged almanacs and calendars can be divided into two distinct periods. First, from the early 1690s up until 1708 one can note an active policy, endorsed by Peter the Great, which sought to translate foreign astrological almanacs and calendars. In particular, one can discern a distinct penchant for a group of Hamburg astronomers/astrologers, which included Paul Halcke (1662–1731) and Wolfgang Heinrich Adelungk (1649–1710). The group was greatly influenced by Johann Heinrich Voigt (1613–1691), who was employed by the Swedish royal court. One can also identify a number of Polish calendars with strong astrological leanings. Secondly, the period from 1708 up until Peter the Great's death in 1725, saw the publication of a series of almanacs in Moscow and St. Petersburg. These were directly inspired by (and quoted from) the German almanacs of Voigt and Halcke and with the exception of one year (1713) continued to display a marked astrological outlook.

The manner in which Peter the Great authorized the translation of almanacs and astrological calendars closely mirrored the policy of his father, Tsar Aleksei, who sanctioned the same procedure from at least as early as 1660. In fact, it has been noted that the general increase in interest in Russia towards astrology in the 1660s and 1670s was directly linked to the unprecedented access to translated editions of German and Polish astrological calendars.<sup>222</sup> Thus, in effect, Tsar Aleksei largely facilitated the

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<sup>220</sup> Ryan, *Bathhouse at Midnight*, 23.

<sup>221</sup> Simonov, "Rossiiskie pridvornye 'matematiki'," 83.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.



availability of astrological calendars. In addition to the increased availability of foreign calendars, one should also bear in mind the heightened tensions in Russian society, with the church schism of 1666–67 and the Cossack revolt in the south led by Sten'ka Razin (1630–1671) between 1667–71.

The extent to which Tsar Aleksei was under the sway of astrological portents is demonstrated most clearly in his relationship to Andreas Engelhardt, a German physician in Moscow. In December 1664, Engelhardt sent Tsar Aleksei two letters, in which he interpreted the recent appearance of a comet as a consequence of the “unpropitious position of Saturn in relation to Mars, and the recent damp summers.”<sup>223</sup> Engelhardt also predicted a peace between Russia and Poland, the imminent death of the Polish king and an “awful loss of life” to come in 1665.<sup>224</sup> The first two events subsequently transpired and when rumours of an outbreak of the plague in Amsterdam reached Tsar Aleksei in late 1664 he immediately ordered Engelhardt to draw up a horoscope.<sup>225</sup> Engelhardt responded with the comforting prediction that although many parts of Europe would suffer from the plague in the autumn, Russia would not be especially threatened.<sup>226</sup> The Russian tsar also requested Engelhardt to explain the significance of comets and their affect on earthly affairs.<sup>227</sup>

Astrological concerns were also on the agenda at a rare meeting of the tsar's Council on December 13, 1672. At this meeting it would seem that military strategy was directly influenced by an astrological forecast that had arrived in Moscow. Thus, Varlaam Iasinskii (1627–1707), the rector of the Kiev Mohyla College, drew up an elaborate interpretation for Tsar Aleksei of a comet that had recently appeared over the skies of Kosice (in modern-day Slovakia).<sup>228</sup> Iasinskii describes how many wondrous things were seen in the sky at this time, including three suns, which he interpreted as signifying the Muscovite, Polish and Hapsburg sovereigns. What is more, these three suns were united by three rainbows, which presaged peace and agreement between the monarchs. The Ukrainian cleric then

<sup>223</sup> Philip Longworth, *Alexis Tsar of All the Russias* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1984), 172.

<sup>224</sup> Bogdanov and Simonov, “Prognosticheskie pis'ma,” 157.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>226</sup> K. G. Vasil'ev and A. E. Segal, *Istoriia epidemii v Rossii* (Moscow, 1960), 69–73.

<sup>227</sup> Bogdanov and Simonov, “Prognosticheskie pis'ma,” 175.

<sup>228</sup> A. I. Sobolevskii, ‘Neizdannoe proizvedenie Varlaama Iasinskago’, *Chtenia v istoricheskom obshchestve Nestora letopistsa*, 14, 2 (1900), 26–28; I. Ia. Gurliand (ed.), *Prikaz velikago gosudaria tainykh del* (Iaroslavl, 1902), 380–2. For a brief overview of Iasinskii's prediction in English, see Longworth, *Alexis*, 212.



proceeded to describe various images signifying the Ottoman Empire, such as a half-crescent flag, a sabre and predicted a war between the Porte and the Christian monarchs. Iasinskii also described seeing a canon in the sky, which had fired four times in 24 hours at the Turkish flag and sabre. According to the cleric, the canon represented Russia and its pounding of the Turkish symbols signified that “the all-seeing eye of divine Providence, which was looking at the flags with all its rays,” was protecting and defending the tsar’s forces.<sup>229</sup>

Iasinskii’s extraordinary interpretation of the recent comet should be understood within the context of contemporary political and military events. More particularly, Iasinskii wrote his interpretation soon after the outbreak of the Polish-Ottoman War (1672–1676), with Right Bank Ukraine being the main theatre of battle.<sup>230</sup> Hence, Iasinskii’s (unfulfilled) vision of a united Christian front against the Ottoman threat was a very down-to-earth, strategic objective.

One can also discern the use of astrological motifs in a poem dedicated to the memory of the recently deceased Tsar Fedor Alekseevich, who died in 1682. The work has been attributed to the so-called ‘New Jerusalem poets’ centred around Nikon’s monastery outside Moscow.<sup>231</sup> The poet writes of an “all-evil comet” arriving, for example, which severely shook the tsar in his grave.<sup>232</sup> This attitude towards the ominous omens portended by the appearance of comets is redolent of a more general sense of fear and fascination that in equal measure characterized the attitude of the Russian authorities towards comets and their interpretation in foreign almanacs. This is epitomized by the complex reception of the annual calendars of the German astronomer Johann-Henrich Voigt (1613–1691). In his calendar for 1682, the German predicted that “neither will Moscow escape her ill fortune.”<sup>233</sup> A contemporary German resident in Moscow,

<sup>229</sup> Sobolevskii, “Neizdannoe,” 27.

<sup>230</sup> Viorel Panaite, “On Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations,” *International Journal for Asian Studies* 2 (2001): 189–97.

<sup>231</sup> A. M. Panchenko, *Russkaia stikhotvornaia kul’tura XVII veka* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1973), 114–5.

<sup>232</sup> F. 181, No. 250/455, l. 276 (356) – 276 ob. (356 ob.). RGADA, Moscow. Also see Panchenko, *Russkaia stikhotvornaia kul’tura*, 115.

<sup>233</sup> Cited in Georg Adam Schleusing, *Neu-entdecktes Sibirien oder Siewerien* (Jena, 1688), 152. Voigt’s prediction of ill-fortune for Muscovy in 1682 exacerbated fears stemming from the appearance of a comet over Moscow, which was visible from the beginning of November 1680 until the end of January 1681. An account of the comet in a contemporary chronicle (*Kniga, glagolemaia Letopisets velikiia zemli Rosiiskii, velikogo kniazia slovenskago, ot kole i v koi leta nachasha kniazhiti*) describes how “wise people interpret” bad omens,

Georg Adam Schleusing, noted that the Russian authorities had translated this text and interpreted Voigt's warning as a premonition of the Strel'tsy Guards Revolt that broke out in May 1682. Schleusing adds that Voigt's calendars were subsequently banned in Russia.<sup>234</sup> Significantly, this ruling appears to have remained in place until at least 1699, when Johann-Georg Korb, the Austrian Secretary of Legation in Moscow, wrote that "it is criminal to introduce the calendar of Vogt the astronomer into Muscovy because [...] he presaged rebellion to the Muscovites."<sup>235</sup> Korb suggests that the prohibition of the calendar stemmed from a belief among Muscovites that "evil spirits" must have helped Voigt "in this black art."<sup>236</sup> Here Korb echoes Schleusing's earlier sentiment that "Russians still consider astronomy [...] to be witchcraft (*heren werck*)."<sup>237</sup>

However, the condescending tone adopted by both Schleusing and Korb masks the real fear of the Russian authorities: that a learned astronomer was able to predict political misfortune and social unrest in their realm. In this sense it is important to bear in mind that Voigt was Astronomer Royal and Mathematician to King Charles XI of Sweden (1655–1697), from whom he received an annual pension, and thus his printed almanacs offered a platform to promote the political and military interests of his paymaster.<sup>238</sup>

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including bloodshed and war, from the fact that the tail of the star was over Muscovite territory. See, M. N. Tikhomirov, "Zapiski prikaznykh liudei kontsa XVII veka," *Trudy otdela drevnerusskoi literatury*, 12 (1956), 448. On contemporary Russian reactions of foreboding at the comet of 1680–1681, see S. I. Nikolaev, "Komety v perevodnoi literature XVII v.," *Trudy otdela drevnerusskoi literatury*, 50 (1996): 684–88. Also see D. O. Sviatskii, "Kometa 1680 g. v Rossii," *Mirovedenie* (1929): 350–3. Voigt viewed comets as signs of God's wrath and argued that anyone who treated the celestial phenomena as anything less than prodigies was an atheist. For a discussion of Voigt's views on comets, see Sara J. Schechner, *Comets, Popular Culture and the Birth of Modern Cosmogony* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 119. Also see James Howard Robinson, *The Great Comet of 1680: A Study in the History of Rationalism* (Northfield, Minn: Press of the Northfield News, 1916), 40–3.

<sup>234</sup> Schleusing, *Neu-entdecktes*, pp. 151–2.

<sup>235</sup> Johann-Georg Korb, *Diary of an Austrian Secretary of Legation at the Court of Czar Peter the Great*, translated and edited by The Count Mac Donnell, vol. 2 (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1863), 196–7.

<sup>236</sup> Korb, *Diary*, 197.

<sup>237</sup> Schleusing, *Neu-entdecktes*, 151.

<sup>238</sup> Voigt was held in great esteem by the Swedish king. In 1686 he travelled to Stockholm, from his home town of Stade in Lower Saxony (which was under Swedish control between 1645–1712), where he received a royal audience. At this meeting the Swedish king confirmed a pension for Voigt and his family until 1700, as well as granting the astronomer a carriage and two horses for his journey home. Moreover, David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl was commissioned to paint Voigt's portrait, which is now housed in the National Museum, Stockholm. For a biography of Voigt, see Franz Wolpmann, *Die in ihrer Unruhe gestillete*

A significant degree of general interest in astrology was also present at the Russian court during the regency of Sophia (1682–1689). In 1689, for example, Sil'vestr Medvedev and Prince Vasili Golitsyn, the chief advisor of Sophia, asked a Polish sorcerer to draw up their horoscopes in order to prophesize the result of the conspiracy against Peter the Great and, apparently, whether Goltisyn would marry Sophia.<sup>239</sup> Remarkably, one also finds the pronounced use of astrological motifs by Karion Istomin (c. 1640s–c. 1720) in the emblematic poem *Kniga liubvi znak v chesten brak* (The Book of Love of the Symbol in Honour of Marriage) he wrote to officially honour the wedding of Peter I to Evdokiia Lopukhina on January 30, 1690.<sup>240</sup> In this rich and colourful work Istomin draws on astrology in order to predict a long and happy marriage for the royal couple. First, Istomin justifies his use of astrology by citing Isaiah 51:6 “Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath.” The poet then proceeds to write “Astronomers look with cunning at the heavens, [in order to] find out about their needs in the world.”<sup>241</sup> Moreover, Istomin goes on to proclaim the wedding to have been predetermined by the heavenly stars and that the young couple will “live for a century in united love.”<sup>242</sup> This must rank as one of the most misjudged predictions of any age, as only nine years later Evdokiia was confined to a nunnery!

Istomin's words on the astrological significance of the union between Peter and Evdokiia are also accompanied by an illustration depicting two individuals observing the sun and moon, adorned with human faces, through telescopes. In the next part of the poem Istomin explains that these solar and lunar depictions represent the tsar and tsarina respectively.<sup>243</sup>

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See *Lee Davids* (Stade, 1691), 33–44. For Voigt's visit to Stockholm in particular, see Wolpmann, *Die in ihrer*, 39–40. Also see Hans Schröder (ed.), *Lexicon der Hamburgischen Schriftsteller bis zur Gegenwart*, VII (Hamburg, 1879), 516–7. For more on Ehrenstrahl's portrait of the German astronomer, see Inga Elmqvist Söderlund, *Taking Possession of Astronomy: Frontispieces and Illustrated Title Pages in 17th-Century Books On Astronomy* (Stockholm: Center for History of Science, 2010), 65–6.

<sup>239</sup> See *Rozysknye dela of Fedore Shaklovitom i ego soobshchnikakh*, vol. 3 (St. Petersburg, 1891), cols 1235–71; Ryan, *Bathhouse at Midnight*, 416.

<sup>240</sup> Istomin was a protégé of Sil'vestr Medvedev and thus was a proponent of the so-called Russian Baroque style of poetical sermons. For more on the Russian Baroque, see Sazonova, *Poeziia russkogo barokko*.

<sup>241</sup> Karion Istomin, *Kniga liubvi znak v chesten brak*, ed. L. I. Sazonova (Moscow: Kniga, 1989), 77.

<sup>242</sup> Istomin, *Kniga liubvi*, 77.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 77–8.

The extent to which the astrological interests of Tsar Aleksei directly influenced Peter the Great is testified by notes the latter wrote at the side of a Polish almanac dating from 1670.<sup>244</sup> This was dedicated to Tsar Aleksei and contained a series of extremely mystical prognostications. Whilst the date that Peter the Great wrote these notes is not specified, it seems that they were a serious attempt to interpret the predictions in light of events that subsequently transpired. Thus, he interprets the prognostication for the end of January, which predicts of “great concern before feet,” as an indication that “nobody will find happiness.”<sup>245</sup> The mystical reference to many weaknesses beginning in May, when seeds begin to turn green, is interpreted by Peter the Great as a sign that “illness will appear great on the earth.”<sup>246</sup> What is more, the tsar notes the malevolent influence of Virgo (the virgin) on June 8, which he directly relates to the affairs of states.<sup>247</sup> On the following day, the calendar states that “Mars (the warlike god) wants to visit a monastery and examine the holy relics.”<sup>248</sup> Peter the Great interprets this prediction as a sign that Catholics will be in an advantageous position.

Jumping to the prediction for August 10 the tsar states that “there will be a battle at sea” and interprets the statement that “foxes will fight and take possession” as a reference to the Dutch.<sup>249</sup> By the side of the prediction for October 12, which mystically refers to how the rider of a crimson horse will give up possessions to the rider of a black horse, the tsar notes that “war is imminent” and will yield “hunger and wholesale death.”<sup>250</sup> The prognostication for October 12 also indicates that “a lion will grow bold,” which is directly linked to Sweden.<sup>251</sup> Indeed, the remaining predictions for November and December are interpreted solely in terms of military affairs, with Peter the Great referring to the Turks, Brandenburg, Saxony and the Dutch.<sup>252</sup> Whilst the above-cited notes provide a fascinating insight into the manner in which Peter the Great interpreted prognostications, they are not sufficient to warrant the claim that the Russian monarch consistently espoused policies favourably inclined towards astrology.

<sup>244</sup> See Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 283–6.

<sup>245</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 284.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.* This could refer to a Dutch victory during the Dutch War of 1672–1678.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

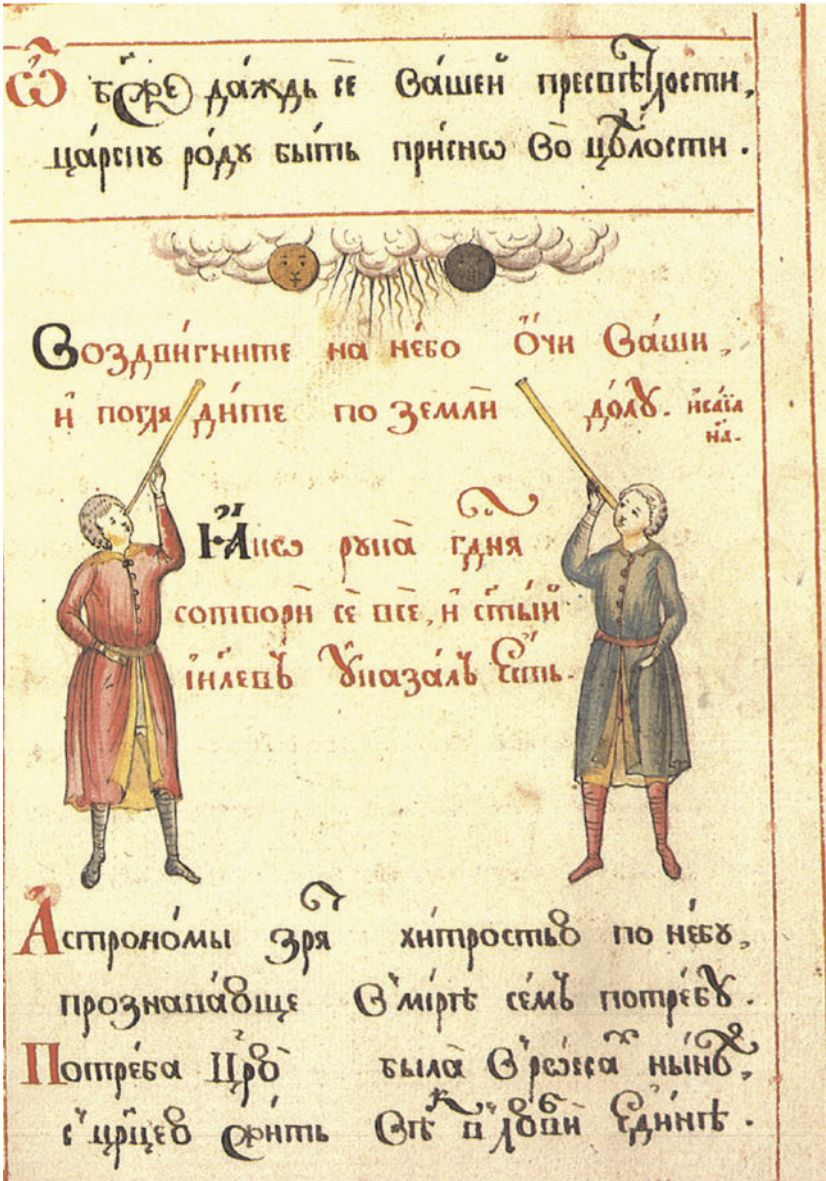


Fig. 59. Illustrated plate from Karion Istomin's *The Book of Love of the Symbol in honour of marriage* (1690), plate 9.



A much firmer basis for such claims, however, is provided by the series of both foreign and domestic almanacs and calendars published in Russia, with the direct approval of the tsar, during the Petrine era.

In the 1690s alone, for example, the young tsar ordered the talented linguist Petr Pavlovich Shafirov, who worked in *Posol'skii Prikaz*, to translate a number of almanacs with prognostications.<sup>253</sup> These included a series of astrological calendars published in 1691, 1695 and 1696 by Johann Heinrich Voigt.<sup>254</sup> These almanacs included predictions about the weather and political events according to the months and time of the year. Indeed, considering the political prognostications contained within Voigt's almanacs it is interesting to note that the three annual editions possessed by Peter the Great all coincided with important foreign expeditions: Arkhangel'sk in 1691, Azov in 1695–96 and the Grand Embassy in 1697.

Voigt also included predictions about health and ailments and favourable times to let blood.<sup>255</sup> Voigt's almanacs and prognostications had been popular in the Baltic region since the early 1670s and were consistently marked by a mix of learned astronomical knowledge and astrological prognostication. Voigt also continued to attach great significance to comets and wrote a tract – *Cometa Matutinus Vespertinus* – in 1680–1 in which he described the portentous appearance of such celestial signs in 1618, 1664, 1665 and above the skies of Hamburg in 1677. He noted that the comet of 1618 was a herald of the disastrous Thirty Years' War, whilst the later comets of 1664 and 1665 had signalled the onset of the plague in Hamburg.

The serious and credulous manner in which Voigt's prognostications continued to be interpreted by Peter the Great and his servitors is illustrated by Johann-Georg Korb's above-mentioned account of 1699. Whereas Voigt's original prediction referred to 1682, the prohibition in 1699 was evidently a reaction to the Strel'tsy Rebellion that took place in the autumn of 1698. Despite the temporary ban in 1699, the strong interest of Peter the Great in these publications is indicated by their inclusion in his personal library. Thus, one not only finds the translated Russian editions of 1691, 1695 and 1696, but also two German editions from the corresponding

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<sup>253</sup> Simonov, "Rossiiskie pridvornye 'matematiki'," 83. P. P. Shafirov rose to become a Baron and Vice-Chancellor during the reign of Peter the Great.

<sup>254</sup> Bogdanov and Simonov, "Prognosticheskie pis'ma," 152.

<sup>255</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 286.

years.<sup>256</sup> The tsar also owned a Russian edition of an astrological calendar by Paul Halcke, which had been translated by Shafirov in 1697.<sup>257</sup> What is more, Peter the Great owned three German astrological calendars by Halcke covering a twenty-year period between 1696–1716.<sup>258</sup>

In addition, the tsar instructed Shafirov to translate an astrological calendar by Stanislav Slovakovich (1634–1702), an eminent professor of medicine at Cracow Academy, which was published in 1696.<sup>259</sup> The second part of this Polish calendar was dedicated to monthly predictions about political events, in which the Russian state occupied a prominent position. Thus, the calendar ends with “predictions about the behaviour of certain foreign states,” that is, about the actions of Muscovy, Sweden, Denmark, the Tartars and others.<sup>260</sup> Indeed, Slovakovich seems to aim a prediction for April directly towards Russia: “Think strong eagle in order not to lose that which your great bravery has taken.”<sup>261</sup> Moreover, in 1696, the Foreign Office also translated a calendar by Tomasz Franciszek Orminski (d. 1735), a professor of medicine and physics at the Zamosc Academy.<sup>262</sup>

Thus, the predilection of Peter the Great for astrological calendars in the 1690s was wholly in keeping with the cultural milieu in which he had grown up during the 1670s and 1680s. These calendars fused a healthy dose of esotericism with real political concerns, thereby ensuring that they were viewed with particular care and consideration by those affected. What is more, one should bear in mind that the tsar’s ever increasing fascination with the West opened up a world in which astrological almanacs were still commonplace.

In the opening eight years of the eighteenth century, Peter the Great continued to endorse the translation of a series of foreign astrological calendars. In 1702, for example, the *Posol’skii Prikaz* translated an astrological calendar by Stanislaw Pecherzynski (fl. 1695–1707), who was a professor

<sup>256</sup> See Bobrova, *Biblioteka Petra I*, 50–1, Nos. 271–273 (Russian translations) and 124, Nos. 1121 and 1122 (German editions).

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 23, No. 36.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 127, Nos. 1166–1168.

<sup>259</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 287; Bogdanov and Simonov, “Prognosticheskie pis’ma,” 152. For more on Slowakowicz, see see Karol Józef Teofil Estericher (ed.), *Bibliografia Polska*, vol. 9 (Cracow, 1888), 10.

<sup>260</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 287.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>262</sup> For more on Orminski, see J. A. Wadowski, *Anacephaleosis Professorum Academiae Zamoscensis* (Warsaw, 1899–1900), 166–8. For Peter the Great’s personal collection of Russian translations of Orminski’s almanacs, see Bobrova, ed., *Biblioteka*, 29 (No. 141).

of mathematics at the Cracow Academy.<sup>263</sup> The calendar was entitled “A Roman and Russian Calendar” and was divided into two parts, with the first being “on the conduct of various orders.” This included sections on (1) war and peace; (2) on the four seasons; (3) on sickness and outbreaks of severe frost; (4) on the fruits of the earth; (5) on fires and floods; (6) on the female sex and (8) on ores. The second part simply dealt with “every-day occurrences.”<sup>264</sup>

What is more, Peter the Great was given a series of almanacs in 1703, when the Dutchman Adriaan Schoonebeek entered into Russian service.<sup>265</sup> The Russian monarch also ordered (and owned) a translation to be made of William Hanemann’s *Verwunderlich-Englischer Wahrsager, oder ausführliches Prognosticon* for 1704. This almanac was published in Augspurg and contained a lengthy series of mystical prognostications concentrating on the machinations of European monarchs.<sup>266</sup> In 1706 an astrological calendar by Wolfgang Heinrich Adelungk was also translated into Russian.<sup>267</sup> This began with a chronology of the number of years that had passed since a series of notable events, including the creation of the world, the Flood, the beginning of the four great monarchies (Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman), the exodus of the Israelites, the resurrection and ascension of Christ, the coronation of Peter the Great and the number of years since the last great comet.<sup>268</sup> This chronology was followed by prognostications in a similar vein to those of Voigt and Halcke, whereby Adelungk predicts the weather, favourable times to let blood, give birth, to take medicine and informs his readers about matters of war and peace in the following year.<sup>269</sup> Translations of calendars by Voigt and Halcke were also published in 1707 and 1708 respectively.

<sup>263</sup> On Pecherzynski, see Karol Józef Teofil Estericher (ed.), *Bibliografia Polska*, vol. 24 (Cracow, 1912), 174–76.

<sup>264</sup> I. N. Lebedeva, ed., *Biblioteka Petra I: opisanie rukopisnykh knig* (St. Petersburg: BAN, 2003), 177. A manuscript edition of this Russian translation is listed in Peter the Great’s personal library. See Bobrova, *Biblioteka Petra I*, 38, No. 167.

<sup>265</sup> A. Viktorov, *Opisanie zapisnykh knig i bumag starinykh dvortsovykh prikazov 1613–1725 g.*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1883), 477; Pokrovskii, “Kalendari i sviatysy,” xxv.

<sup>266</sup> See Bobrova, ed., *Biblioteka*, 24 (No. 37).

<sup>267</sup> For more on Adelungk, see Hans Schröder, ed., *Lexicon der Hamburgischen Schriftsteller bis zur Gegenwart*, I (Hamburg, 1849), 10–11. Also see Susanne Rau and Sarah D. Ullmann, eds., *Das Memorial oder Gedächtnisbüchlein des Wolfgang Heinrich Adelungk* (Munster: LIT Verlag, 2009).

<sup>268</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 288.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 288–9.



In addition to the continuing publication of foreign calendars, the first Russian calendar, entitled *Sviat'sy ili Kalendar'* (Feast Days of the Saints, or Calendar) was printed in 1702 by Jan Tessing and Il'ia Kopievskii in Amsterdam.<sup>270</sup> In addition to the feast days of the saints, the calendar also specified two lunar eclipses that would occur in the coming year, although it is stated that they would not be visible in Moscow. Furthermore, in 1705 the first so-called *stennoi kalendar'* (wall calendar) was published in Russia, going by the name of the *vsegdashnii kalendar' Fosbeina* (Everyday calendar of Fosbein) and based on the work of Johan Fosbein, a Dutch inventor. The calendar provided data in Dutch regarding religious saints' days, alongside information regarding the course of the Sun and Moon between 1710 and 1785 and seven emblematic representations of the planets.<sup>271</sup>

Thus, Peter the Great's concern with acquiring and reading foreign calendars was essentially a continuation and extension of a trend begun by his father, Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, who became increasingly interested in Polish and German almanacs and astrological tracts from around 1664. A number of key features characterize the works singled out for scrutiny by the tsarist authorities up until 1708. First, they were all produced by eminent natural philosophers that held prestigious academic or court positions. Secondly, the almanacs shared a largely consistent structure, in which accurate astronomical data relating to notable celestial events, such as solar and lunar eclipses and comets that were observable at specific geographic locations was mixed with a liberal lacing of general astrological information and more specific prognostications. The predictions typically addressed natural catastrophes (floods and fires), meteorological forecasts for the four seasons, epidemics, sickness and astral medicine. Crucially, the prognostications also contained an underlying political agenda, elaborated in sections devoted to war and peace and the fate of royal courts. In this regard the almanac writers all displayed a loyalty to their respective patrons and countries, which regularly expressed itself in anti-Russian rhetoric.

However, whilst milestones in the development of Russian calendars took place in 1702 and 1705, a more significant landmark occurred in December 1708, with the commencement of the publication of annual

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<sup>270</sup> Pekarskii, I, 1862, 289.

<sup>271</sup> For a lengthy description of the Fosbein Calendar, see Rovinskii, *Rus'skiiia narodnyiia kartinki*, vol. 2, 357–60. Also see Pokrovskii, "Kalendari i sviat'sy," xxv.

Russian calendars.<sup>272</sup> The initial calendar – entitled *kalendar' ili mesiatseslov* – was slender in size (16 unnumbered sheets), but followed a pattern that was to remain largely unchanged until the 1730s.<sup>273</sup> Namely, to publish an almanac firmly in the Voigtian mould emanating from Hamburg, but wholly geared towards the promotion of a Petrine agenda. The essential template was to print a Russian translation of the annual calendars published from the printing house of Conrad Neumann in Hamburg, minus any allusions to the tsar and his realm. In 1692, Neumann secured the rights to print Voigt's almanacs for thirty years, after the death of the renowned astronomer-astrologer the previous year. Moreover, in addition to almanacs published in the name of Voigt, Neumann also printed calendars by the likes of Paul Halcke and Wolfgang Adelungk, as well as the collaborative *Hamburgischer Verbessertes Schreib-Calender*.<sup>274</sup> Thus, between 1708 and 1725 the annual *Kalendar' ili mesiatseslov*, which from 1713 was also printed in St. Petersburg, was directly inspired by what can be called a Voigtian approach to almanac production.<sup>275</sup> Indeed, the Moscow calendars for 1714, 1721, 1722 and 1723 openly proclaim that they are based on Voigt's Hamburg almanac, whilst those of 1717 and 1718 also acknowledge that they are derived from the work of Halcke.<sup>276</sup>

The overall structure of the Voigtian almanac served as a vehicle to inculcate the emerging Petrine reality among courtiers and military officials. Thus, the opening section of each calendar contained a chronology

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<sup>272</sup> The so-called *Bruce Calendars* printed between 1709–1715 were separate publications not under the auspices of Musin-Pushkin.

<sup>273</sup> V. V. Bobynin, *Russkaia fiziko-matematicheskaiia bibliografiia*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1885), 27.

<sup>274</sup> See Hans Schröder, ed., *Lexicon der Hamburgischen Schriftsteller bis zur Gegenwart*, vol. 7 (Hamburg, 1879), 516–7.

<sup>275</sup> Between 1709 and 1728 the Foreign Office translated almanacs by Voigt in 1709, 1711, 1712, 1719, 1721, 1722, 1723, 1724 and 1727. Almanacs by Halcke were translated in 1717 and 1722. Moreover, almanacs by Nicolaus Rohlfs (1695–1750), who hailed from Buxtehude, were translated in 1719 and 1722. Rohlfs also worked on the *Schleswig-Holsteinischer Haus- und Garten-Allmanach* and the *Schleswig-Holsteinischer Türken-Allmanach* and the *Schleswig-Holsteinischer Natur-Allmanach*. See C. V. Bruun, ed., *Bibliotheca Danica*, vol. 2 (Copenhagen, 1886), 94. Rohlfs was also a member of the Hamburg Mathematical Society, along with Halcke. See Bubendey, 'Geschichte', 91. An almanac by Hermann Wahn (1678–1747) was also translated in 1728. Wahn published almanacs in Schleswig-Holstein in collaboration with Halcke, which also utilised Voigt's predictions. See Bruun, ed., *Bibliotheca Danica*, vol. 2, 94.

<sup>276</sup> For the calendars based on Voigt, see Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 331 (1715), Bobynin, *Russkaia fiziko-matematicheskaiia*, 71 (1721), and Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 310 (1722 and 1723). For the calendars based on Halcke, see Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 369 (1717), 394 (1718). For a list of almanacs based on Voigt and Halcke that were produced for use in Schleswig-Holstein, see Bruun, ed., *Bibliotheca Danica*, vol. 2, 93–4.

that placed the achievements of Peter's Russia at the forefront of a grand historical and religious narrative. The *Kalendar'* for 1710, for example, included a chronological timeline that led from the creation of the world to the Deluge, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the establishment of the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman empires, the exodus of the Israelites and the invention of printing and gunpowder. The historical narrative culminated with the coronation of Peter the Great, the birth of Tsarevich Aleksei and, finally, with the recent victory over the Swedes at the Battle of Poltava.<sup>277</sup> The calendars also served as an important means of entrenching the Julian Calendar, which had been introduced in 1700, as the timeframe that structured the Petrine year. Indeed, the Moscow calendar for 1713 was used as a form to explicitly defend the adoption of the Julian Calendar, by reference to Numa's reforms and that Jesus had been born at this time of year.<sup>278</sup>

In addition to serving as a means of asserting a Petrine interpretation of Russia's pre-eminent place in the providential narrative and of reinforcing the new conception of time, the annual calendars also acted as a means of projecting authority via the embrace of an all-prevailing astrological worldview that functioned according to God's will. In this regard, the Russian calendars followed the Voigtian system, in which accurate astronomical predictions of solar and lunar eclipses and comets were followed by a related interpretation of signs (*znamenovanie*) and astrological predictions. It is also noteworthy that Voigt framed these prognostications within an apocalyptic narrative, whereby the celestial signs were heralds of the imminent end of the world. Hence, according to Voigt, celestial signs, such as comets, had been used by God since he created the Earth in order to proclaim strange, wonderful and critical changes.<sup>279</sup>

With this in mind, it is significant that the St. Petersburg calendar for 1715 (published in December 1714) placed particular emphasis on the many "memorably worthy things" that would occur in May as a result of a solar eclipse. This prediction is reinforced by reference to the many wondrous events that had transpired after the last notable solar eclipse

<sup>277</sup> See Bobyinin, *Russkaia fiziko-matematicheskaiia*, 33–4.

<sup>278</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 281–2; Bobyinin, *Russkaia fiziko-matematicheskaiia*, 44–5.

<sup>279</sup> For a commentary on Voigt's attitudes towards comets, see James Howard Robinson, *The Great Comet of 1680: A Study in the History of Rationalism* (Northfield, MN: Press of the Northfield News, 1916), 40–2. Robinson refers to Voigt as a writer on comets who "can be classed as grossly credulous". See Robinson, *The Great Comet*, 40.

in 1706, including the abandonment of the Siege of Barcelona and the defeat of the French at Ramillies in South Brabant.<sup>280</sup> The eclipse in 1706 took place on May 12. In fact, it is possible to know the exact time of the event in Russia as on April 10, 1706 the *Vedomosti* newspaper printed (for the first time) an announcement of the eclipses that would occur in the remainder of that year.<sup>281</sup> Thus we know that the eclipse began at 8.33 in the morning and ended at 10.40. The newspaper informed its readers in advance that the sun would be obscured for the greater part of this time and that this will cause “great surprise and fear” for over two hours.<sup>282</sup>

Alongside favourable predictions relating to celestial phenomena, the calendars also contained prognostications relating to the weather and to prospects for a bountiful harvest. Thus, the rare admission of a poor crop forecast for 1713 is countered by referring to how Jesus managed to feed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread.<sup>283</sup> Moreover, the calendars contained general prognostications regarding health. The Moscow calendar for 1711, for example, warns that the aspects of the planets indicate that illness will increase in this year. In preparation it urges readers to administer strong antidotes according to the advice of skilled doctors and to cleanse their bodies, whilst also adding that it would be best to entrust oneself to a “heavenly doctor” (*nebesnyi vrach*).<sup>284</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter 2, readers are also presented with specific astrological information regarding the best times to administer medicine and remedies and to let blood, based on *melothesia* – the ancient practice associated with Marcus Manilius’s *Astronomicom* – that assigned zodiacal significance to different parts of the body. As Katharina Volk notes, Manilius envisaged the human body as a microcosm of the cosmos, and thus the doctrine of *melothesia* designated zodiacal importance to specific internal and external parts of the body.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> *Kalendar ili mesiatseslov* (St. Petersburg, 1714). Unnumbered page. Also see Bobynin, *Russkaia fiziko-matematicheskaiia*, 49–50; Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 350. In 1915, M. A. Vil’ev calculated that a solar eclipse did indeed occur over Russia on May 3, 1715. See the table of calculations in an appendix to Daniil Sviatskii, *Astronomicheskie iavleniia v Russkikh letopisiakh s nauchno-kriticheskoi tochki zreniia* (Petrograd: Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1915).

<sup>281</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 282.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>283</sup> Bobynin, *Russkaia fiziko-matematicheskaiia*, 44.

<sup>284</sup> *Kalendar ili mesiatseslov* (Moscow, 1710), unnumbered page. Also see, Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 248.

<sup>285</sup> Katharina Volk, *Manilius and his Intellectual Background* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 111.

Significantly, the almanacs also contained prognostications related to military matters and, more rarely, overt predictions related to court politics. The Moscow calendar for 1712, for example, issued a cautionary warning regarding the on-going war with Sweden, noting that the positions of the planets Jupiter and Saturn indicated that it would continue unabated.<sup>286</sup> A more optimistic prognostication was offered the following year, as the alignment of the planets apparently portended peace for 1713.<sup>287</sup> The impact such prognostications had on the Petrine court is epitomized by Tsarevna Natal'ia Alekseevna (1673–1716), who wrote the following to Musin-Pushkin on January 3, 1713: “Greetings Ivan Alekseevich! Thank you for your letter and for sending the calendars, from which I understood about the disposition for peace, which we wish will be accomplished.”<sup>288</sup>

The St. Petersburg calendar for 1716 also promised an end to the war with Sweden, although it concedes that there will still be “some sparks underneath the smouldering ash.” However, this largely positive prognostication regarding military affairs is tempered by a stark political warning in regard to the actions of certain “evil people when they form a union” and offer advice. The author of the ominous omen adds that these schemers only “seek to be satiated by foreign purses.” As a result, it is predicted that “it will be possible to hear about theft and about robbers and other cunning acts, since sly mercurialists think up many rare things to acquire.” What is more, the prognosticator adds that “great lords and senators will also not get everything that they want, as many opposing factors can appear.”<sup>289</sup> At the time when this thinly-veiled threat was published Aleksandr Menshikov, the favourite of Peter the Great, and many other prominent officials were being investigated for corruption. Consequently, it would seem that the tsar’s supporters sought to utilize the influential medium of the annual calendar in order to indicate that fate was conspiring against corrupt officials.

The value Peter the Great attached to prognostications in the annual calendars is testified by his reaction to their absence in the St. Petersburg edition for 1714. This unprecedented modification was met with

<sup>286</sup> *Kalendar ili mesiatseslov*, (Moscow, 1711), unnumbered page. Also see, Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 265.

<sup>287</sup> *Kalendar ili mesiatseslov* (Moscow, 1712), unnumbered page. Also see, Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 282. *Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, 282, fn. 1.

<sup>289</sup> *Kalendar ili mesiatseslov* (St. Petersburg, 1715), unnumbered page. Also see, Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 311.

disapproval by the monarch, who wrote to Musin-Pushkin on November 23, 1714 in order to instruct Polikarpov-Orlov to include prognostications in the calendars for the following year.<sup>290</sup> In accordance with this instruction Musin-Pushkin wrote to Polikarpov-Orlov, asking that “prognostications should be printed in the calendars and they should arrive here before Christmas.”<sup>291</sup>

The monarch’s insistence on prognostications in the annual calendars published in Moscow and St. Petersburg was entirely in keeping with the astrological worldview that was still prevalent in the Hamburg almanacs being printed at the time. Astrological predictions and advice regarding the weather and health also occupied a pivotal place in the series of six so-called *Bruce Calendars*.

Despite being overseen by Musin-Pushkin at the Monastery Office, the Moscow and St. Petersburg calendars were not driven by theological concerns. This is not to say that the publications were devoid of religious content, or did not cater for an ecclesiastical audience. Orthodox holy days (*sviaty*) were listed, for example, and the calendars also contain many references to divine will and providence, especially in regard to the fulfillment of various prognostications. Thus, the discussion in the St. Petersburg calendar for 1715 concerning predictions related to fertility stresses the role of providence in “the matter of nourishing people.”<sup>292</sup> It is also noteworthy that the Moscow calendar for 1711 was printed in both civil script and in Church Slavonic.<sup>293</sup> This practice was dropped the following year, which may be taken as a sign of a lack of interest, or even opposition, among the Orthodox clerical community. However, the founding of an annual calendar printed at the Kiev Caves Monastery, from at least as early the end of 1712, suggests a more complex picture.<sup>294</sup>

<sup>290</sup> I. I. Golikov, *Deianiia Petra Velikago, mudrago preobrazitelia Rossii*, vol. 5 (Moscow, 1838), 591.

<sup>291</sup> Pokrovskii, “Kalendari,” XLI.

<sup>292</sup> *Kalendar ili mesiatseslov* (St. Petersburg, 1714), unnumbered page. Also see, Bobynin, *Russkaia fiziko-matematicheskaiia*, 51.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>294</sup> The Kievan *Kalendar’ ili mesiatsoslov* printed in December 1713 refers to the previous year’s publication, strongly suggesting that the almanac dates to at least 1712. See Bobynin, *Russkaia fiziko-matematicheskaiia*, 47. It is also noteworthy that a calendar, entitled *Grecheskii rimskii i evreiskii kalendar’*, was published in 1719 at Chernigov College. The calendar was produced by Vasilii Korvin-Kvasovskii. See, Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 447–50. For a full description of a calendar produced by Korvin-Kvasovskii in 1730, see Rovinskii, *Russkiiia narodnyiia kartinki*, vol. 2, 434–54. Chernigov College was founded in 1700 and was modelled on the Kiev Mohyla College. For more on Chernigov College, see

The earliest extant calendar produced by monks of the Kiev Caves Monastery dates from December 1713, and each surviving publication provides remarkable evidence of a clerical community that embraced the astrological and divinatory dimensions of the European almanac tradition.<sup>295</sup> The timing of the Kievan venture suggests a coordinated undertaking that was sanctioned by the tsar and designed to broaden the reach of printed calendars. Indeed, a Ukrainian outlet for propaganda disseminated via almanacs was timely, coming in the wake of the tumultuous events of 1709. Not only had the area been at the frontline of the Great Northern War for months up to the decisive Battle of Poltava in the summer of 1709, but the change of allegiance of the Cossack Hetman Ivan Mazepa (1639–1709) to Charles XII of Sweden also created bitter discord, recrimination and a heated propaganda war.<sup>296</sup> Crucially, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church stayed loyal to the Russian monarch, and thus provided a priceless weapon against disaffected elements within Cossack society and the wider Left Bank community.<sup>297</sup>

It is astonishing to note that the astrological prognostications contained in the Kiev calendars are decidedly more mystical and political in nature than the similar publications printed in Moscow and St. Petersburg. In this regard, the Kiev calendars are more reminiscent of contemporary Polish almanacs, which adopted emblematic language that needed to be decyphered, rather than the Voigtian equivalents favoured in the Greater Russian cities.

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A. F. Shafonskii, *Chernigovskogo namestnichestva topograficheskoe opisanie s kratkim geograficheskim i opisaniem Malyia Rossii. Sochenennoe v 1786 godu* (Kiev, 1851).

<sup>295</sup> The Department of Rare Books (otdel redkikh knig) of the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg possesses copies of the Kievan calendar printed in 1713 and 1717.

<sup>296</sup> See B. Kentschynskyj, "Propagandakriget i Ukraina, 1708–1709," *Karolinska Förbundets Årsbok* (Stockholm, 1958): 81–124. For an English-language summary of this article see "The Political Struggle of Mazepa and Charles XII for Ukrainian Independence," *Ukrainian Quarterly*, 15 (1959): 241–59. On the defamation rituals enacted against Mazepa, see Ernest A. Zitser, "Apostles and Apostates: The Court of Peter the Great as a Chivalrous Religious Order," in *Culture and Authority in the Baroque*, edited by Massimo Ciavolella and Patrick Coleman (Los Angeles: UCLA Clark Library Memorial Series, 2005), 159–92.

<sup>297</sup> On the church condemnation of Mazepa and for a general account of the relationship between Peter the Great and the Cossack Hetman, see Orest Subtelny, "Mazepa, Peter I, and the Question of Treason," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1978): 158–83. On the immediate legacy of Mazepa in the Ukraine and in Russia, see Gary Marker, "Casting Mazepa's Legacy: Pylyp Orlyk and Feofan Prokopovich," in *Personality and Place in Russian Culture: Essays in Honour of Lindsey Hughes* (London: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 2010): 110–33.



The Kiev calendar for 1717, for example, contains almost weekly political predictions enveloped in cryptic language. It is stated that in the fourth week of January, for example, “the Lion (that is the Swede), whilst being submissive is using various councils.” Furthermore, it is predicted that in the fourth week of March “enemies will want to sack three towers with open gates (that is Torun).”<sup>298</sup> Domestic issues are also addressed, such as the prediction that “in Russia something is opposed to Mars, and then will soon be pacified’. It is also foreseen that “death by poison is being prepared” in March “for a certain eminent spiritual person.”<sup>299</sup>

The abundance of astrological predictions found in the Kiev calendars is entirely consistent with the approach to astrology that had held sway at the Kiev College since the tenureship of Innokentii Gizel (c. 1600–1683) in the mid-seventeenth century. As part of the course on natural philosophy, students were introduced to a religious worldview that embraced an occult philosophy vis-à-vis natural magic, alchemy and astrology. The natural philosophy course taught by Khristofor Charnutskii (d. 1726) between 1704 and 1706, for example, which was entirely in line with the teaching of his predecessors, posits that the stars are able to influence human will and that it is possible to predict the future by astrological means. What is more, the cleric implicitly links human physiology and psychology to zodiacal influences, in line with many occult philosophers. In short, Charnutskii argues that knowledge of the stars can help to understand an individual’s temperament and dreams.<sup>300</sup>

In addition to describing a myriad of astrological prognostications based on the conjunction of the planets, the Kievan calendars are also marked by lengthy discussions regarding celestial phenomena, such as eclipses and comets, as signs portending earthly strife below.<sup>301</sup> Thus, the

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<sup>298</sup> Torun is a city located in Poland. The city’s coat-of-arms still depicts three towers with an open gate. The use of the coat-of-arms of towns and countries (including Russia) was typical of Polish prognostications. In accordance with this tradition, a manual (*Klucz prognostykarski*) providing a key to the symbolism was published in various editions in Gdansk between at least 1658 and 1781. A Russian translation of this work was produced in 1681. See Sobolevskii, *Perevodnaia literatura*, 144.

<sup>299</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 2, 357.

<sup>300</sup> D. Vishnevskii, *Kievskaiia Akademiia v pervoi polovine XVIII stoletia* (Kiev, 1903), 179–82. For a general description of Charnutskii’s course on natural philosophy, see I. M. Stratii, V. D. Litvinov and V. A. Andrushko (eds.), *Opisanie kursov filosofii i ritoriki professorov kievo-mogilianskoi akademii* (Kiev, 1982), pp. 196–207. This work also provides short descriptions of other courses on natural philosophy taught at the Kiev College in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Note that the college officially became the Kiev Academy in 1701.

<sup>301</sup> For a general discussion of comets in relation to prophecy and politics, see Schechner, *Comets*, pp. 66–88.

author begins by stating that “when unusual large heavenly lights appear in the sky, these are solar and lunar eclipses, [and] when we look at the skies, not without fear, we are not hopeful of good signs.” This validation of celestial divination is then justified by a verse extolling astronomy as a wholly Christian pursuit, in which an astronomer is not a person who simply looks at the planets, but is someone who observes the heavens as a realm of signs. What is more, a good astronomer is a person who “yearns for the sky,” but who according to the “words of wise people” lives a Christian life.<sup>302</sup>

This poetic defence of the merits of stargazing is subsequently reinforced by citing Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite’s description and interpretation of a solar eclipse that occurred at the time of Christ’s crucifixion.<sup>303</sup> Consequently, having provided evidence of the compatibility of celestial divination and Christianity, the calendar proceeds to inform its readers that no such heavenly phenomena will be visible above the Kievan (and wider Russian) horizon in the coming year. Hence, it is proclaimed that “there is no reason to fear them greatly, but on the contrary, in this year [the readers] should expect trouble free and goodly behaviour in the Russian country.”<sup>304</sup>

The Kievan calendar for 1717 provides further proof of both the precise astronomical skills of the Ukrainian clergymen, and of their firm belief in being able to divine future events from celestial signs. Furthermore, it reveals the extent to which the monks of the Kiev Caves Monastery associated heavenly phenomena, such as eclipses and comets, with political machinations involving Russian courtiers and church officials. Thus, the calendar predicts that “the first lunar eclipse will occur on March 16, beginning at 2 hours and 44 minutes.” This precise calculation is then followed by a prediction that this event will be followed by “animosity between monarchical persons and between ministers of the great sovereigns.” According to the calendar, this will lead to the ministers concerned damaging the good will they enjoy from their lords. What is more, the calendar predicts that a church official will do something improper and that a known bishop (*arkhierei*) will meet his end.<sup>305</sup>

<sup>302</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 312.

<sup>303</sup> Bobynin, *Ruskaia fiziko-matematicheskaia*, 46. The description is contained in a letter from Pseudo-Dionysius to Polycarp. See Pseudo-Dionysius, the Areopagite, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, translated by Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press), 268.

<sup>304</sup> Bobynin, *Ruskaia fiziko-matematicheskaia*, 47.

<sup>305</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 312.

The calendar also calculates that a second lunar eclipse will occur on September 9, beginning at 6 hours and 10 minutes after midday, with the moon continuing to be eclipsed for 2 hours and 55 minutes. Once again this precise prediction is interpreted as a herald of ominous events:

This eclipse signals a war and disagreements between sovereigns and animosity between the East and the West; some burden on the spiritual estate; a disease in fish; a multiplication in the number of water reptiles and worms; murders; pillage; the destruction of ships in war; and the threat of death to a certain great lord.<sup>306</sup>

These stark warnings – issued in the midst of the dynastic crisis resulting from the flight of Tsarevich Aleksei Petrovich (1690–1718) to Vienna – reveal the extent of upheaval raging both at the tsarist court and among ecclesiastic factions. In terms of the clerical turmoil mentioned in the calendar, it is possible, although far from certain, that the author was hinting at the close links of Ioasif Krovovskii (d. 1718), the Metropolitan of Kiev to the disgraced tsarevich.<sup>307</sup>

In sum, the annual calendars provided the Kievan clerics (and the Petrine authorities) with a new and potent printed medium to expound upon to the significance of celestial signs on terrestrial affairs. However, the attitudes expressed in the almanacs by the monks of the Kiev Caves Monastery were redolent of a much older tradition. Belief in the prophetic significance of comets was entrenched, for example, in the teaching of natural philosophy at the Kiev Mohyla College, which was affiliated with the Caves Monastery.

By the second decade of the eighteenth century, calendars had become the customary (and officially controlled) channel through which Ukrainian clerics expressed celestial divinations. The repercussions faced by any monk bold enough to voice independent prophetic interpretations of heavenly signs could be dire – especially if the message was not to the liking of the tsarist authorities. This is strikingly illustrated by the case of Porfirii, a hieromonk and icon painter from the Novgorod-Sverskii Monastery in the Chernigov region of Ukraine. On the morning of January 27, 1720, Porfirii reported to his superiors that he had seen a comet in the

<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 313.

<sup>307</sup> In May 1718 Peter ordered Krovovskii to be sent to St. Petersburg for questioning regarding his support for Tsarevich Aleksei. For more on this affair, see Paul Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great: The Struggle for Power* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2001), 409–18.

sky, which had been visible for around four minutes.<sup>308</sup> He also professed to have seen the image of a head, to the left of which were a sabre, two crossed swords and drawn swords. Moreover, he added that two feet and two arms were to the right of the head. Above the hands were two moons and above these were two stars. What is more, Porfirii described how a letter 'P' was below the image of the head, with two moons either side and an additional separate cross further in the distance.

Lastly, the month noted that he witnessed golden colours in the sky.<sup>309</sup> The vision described by Porfirii to his fellow monks aroused considerable interest and consequently the icon painter complied with requests to draw a chalk impression of his prophecy on a cellar wall.<sup>310</sup> The resulting image depicted a head very much in the likeness of Peter the Great – an association compounded by the presence of the letter 'P' directly underneath. To compound matters, a noose was added to the 'P' in later depictions of Porfirii's vision, thereby suggesting a gallows.<sup>311</sup>



Fig. 60. Reproduction of Porfirii's vision.

<sup>308</sup> For an in-depth account of Porfirii's vision, see M. I. Semevskii, *Slovo i delo! 1700–1725* (St. Petersburg, 1884), 37–43.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>311</sup> Porfirii protested that he had not added this noose. *Ibid.*, 40.

Given the continued belief among Ukrainian clerics that comets were heralds of bloodshed and specifically portended the death of princes – a notion dating back to antiquity – it is unsurprising that Porfirii's vision provoked anxiety among his peers.<sup>312</sup> Thus, this unease was not based on a fear of popular superstitions or of heresy, but derived from a fear of the political repercussions emanating from such an ominous vision. Consequently, it is rather predictable that the head of the monastery, Archimandrite Gennadii Stefanovich, immediately reported Porfirii to Hetman Ivan Skoropadskii (1646–1722). The Cossack leader then arrested the monk as a criminal opposed to the tsarist regime and hauled him off to the nearby town of Nezhin, where Aleksandr Menshikov was then stationed. Menshikov personally interrogated Porfirii and in April 1720 a *ukaz* was issued by the tsar ordering the monk to be sent to St. Petersburg. In the capital P. A. Tolstoi, the head of the *Tainaia kantseliaria* (Secret Chancellery), undertook a further interrogation of Porfirii. In March 1721, after more than a year in various prisons, a verdict was passed on Porfirii, who was subsequently exiled for life to the Solovetskii Monastery. It is notable that the written verdict reveals that the account of his vision had spread throughout the Ukraine and was believed by a considerable number of people.<sup>313</sup>

Yet, despite the wealth of information regarding the use of astrology and celestial divination at the Petrine Court in order to promote the monarch and his country, it is unknown exactly what influence astrology played in the tsar's own life. As the above-cited letter to Musin-Pushkin shows, the tsar certainly approved of astrological prognostications. The tsar also had a strong general interest in astronomical matters. His personal library contains a complete series of the annual calendars, with the exception of 1712.<sup>314</sup> He also possessed a 1713 edition of the annual calendar printed for the following year by the Kiev Caves Monastery.<sup>315</sup> In addition, Peter the Great also owned various other Russian calendars, including one from 1701 and a calendar from 1670 dedicated to Tsar Aleksei in which he made

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<sup>312</sup> For a brief discussion of comets as harbingers of bloodshed and the death of princes in old Russian literature, see Ryan, *Bathhouse at Midnight*, 375. For a classical account of a comet as a herald of revolt and the death of a leader, see Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals & The Histories*, edited by Moses Hadas and translated by Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb (New York: Modern Library, 2003), Books 14:22 and 15:45–50, 286, 328. In this instance, the Roman author had in mind Emperor Nero.

<sup>313</sup> Semevskii, *Slovo i delo*, 42–3.

<sup>314</sup> See Bobrova, *Biblioteka Petra I*, 71–2, Nos. 485–497.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, 72, No. 498.

his own interpretations.<sup>316</sup> One also finds Russian and Polish editions in Peter's library of a calendar by Thomas Orminskii, originally published in Cracow and dating from 1696 and a work entitled *Curioser Geschichts-Calender* for the years 1697–1699 and published in Leipzig.<sup>317</sup> Moreover, the monarch owned numerous astronomical texts, including a number of practical tomes by Nicolas Bion (1652–1733) and a Russian text by Il'ia Kopievskii. Interestingly, the tsar also owned an astronomical work by the seventeenth-century polymath Athanasius Kircher entitled *Primitiae his gnomonicae catoptricae hic est Horologigraphie novae specularis* (1635).<sup>318</sup>

The impact celestial matters had on Peter the Great's everyday life is revealed in a contemporary description by John Perry, an English engineer in Russian service.

His Majesty has always his Lords about him, and is himself very curious in observing the Eclipses that happen, and in describing and discoursing of the natural cause of them to his Lords and People about him, and of the Motions of those other Heavenly Bodies within the System of the Sun, according as the great Sir Isaac Newton has indisputably demonstrated to the modern world. And wherever his Majesty is, or intends to be, whether in Poland, at Petersburg, at Veronize, or at Azoph, he always appoints an Order to be writ to the said Fergharson, to send him a Draught and Account how the Eclipses, particularly those of the sun, will happen in such place where he is, or intends to be at the Time.<sup>319</sup>

It is extremely curious to note Peter the Great's express wish to be informed of eclipses predicted to occur wherever he happened to be. It is known, for example, that he requested prior information regarding eclipses from Farquharson for the precise times and places when he was staying in Azov, Poland and St. Petersburg.<sup>320</sup>

An interest in eclipses per se does not necessarily imply an astrological subtext, but the tsar's desire to know of their occurrence at particular times and places relevant to his manoeuvres does suggest that they could have played a role in planning his actions. By this I do not mean that Peter the Great's free will was bound to the stars; rather he took account of propitious signs in the heavens when orchestrating significant events and planning important decisions.

<sup>316</sup> Bobrova, *Biblioteka Petra I*, 29, Nos. 84 and 85 respectively.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, 29, 141, 126, Nos. 86, 1366 and 1151 respectively.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 131, No. 1224.

<sup>319</sup> Perry, *State of Russia*, 211.

<sup>320</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 281–2.

Can it be, therefore, that Peter the Great and his entire court had stripped themselves of all vestiges of astrology – particularly of the reformed, mathematical variety? As my study has shown, this was certainly not the case among some of Peter the Great's closest advisors and statesmen, such as Erskine, Prokopovich, Iavorskii and Bruce. Indeed, if one bears in mind that the third sheet of the so-called *Bruce Calendars* included the best times to instigate battles, then it is certainly not beyond the realm of plausibility to suggest that the Russian tsar attached a degree of astrological significance to eclipses.

Peter the Great was not adverse, after all, to timing significant battles and other significant events to meaningful dates in the calendar. In particular, he was extremely keen to instigate battles around his name day, which fell on June 29. As Elena Pogosian has noted, the tsar deliberately timed his arrival at the front, during the first attack on Azov in 1695, to coincide with his name day.<sup>321</sup> What is more, during the second Azov campaign of the following year, Peter the Great hoped that the town would surrender on his name day.<sup>322</sup> The Russian monarch also planned the pivotal Battle of Poltava, which took place in 1709, to begin specifically on June 29. His plans were dashed somewhat by Charles XII, who began hostilities two days prior to the date envisioned by the Peter and the Russian army!<sup>323</sup> Not to be outmanoeuvred on the symbolic level, Peter infused meaning into the fact that the date of the battle – June 27 – was the name day of St. Samson the Welcomer of Wanderers (*Strannopriimets*), who was linked to the Biblical Sampson, who defeated a lion in Judges 14. As has been seen, Iavorskii milked this Biblical reference for all its worth, alluding to Charles XII as the lion and also adding an explicit astrological dimension.

In concluding this section, I would argue that it is necessary to reconsider preconceived notions regarding Peter the Great's dramatic turn away from the astrological beliefs of his immediate predecessors. As the above evidence has demonstrated, the Russian monarch did not merely tolerate astrological prognostications, but actively encouraged them. Furthermore, it is vital to stress that his astrological beliefs did not ostensibly derive from Russia, but drew on Western sources – principally from a group of Hamburg astronomers/astrologers and from Polish academics in Cracow

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<sup>321</sup> Pogosian, *Petr I*, 30.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 114–5.



and Zamosc – who were advocates of reformed astrology that utilized contemporary mathematical techniques in their work. Such an approach had not flourished in Russia in the seventeenth century, and thus Peter the Great had to initially rely upon foreign models. This fascinating dynamic perfectly illustrates the manner in which Peter the Great not only incorporated ‘modern’ Western ideals into his reform programme, but was also attracted to more esoteric outlooks.

### *Alchemy and Peter the Great*

According to A. Nartov, whilst visiting The Hague in 1717 Peter the Great made one of his frequent excursions to inspect the curious and spectacular claims of a resident mathematician and experimental scientist, who boasted that he had invented a method for accurately calculating longitude.<sup>324</sup> To the disappointment of the tsar, the claims of the scientist proved far-fetched and the demonstration evidently ended in complete failure. However, far from chastising the intrepid but unsuccessful experimenter, the tsar allegedly invited him into Russian service in order to carry out further investigations on the usefulness of his machine and promised handsome rewards. Furthermore, he purportedly uttered the following intriguing remark: “I neither belittle nor revile an alchemist, the search for converting metal into gold... such types of people should be encouraged in every way, and not despised.”<sup>325</sup> How should one view this apparently tolerant position on the practice of alchemy? Can it simply be regarded as an anecdotal anomaly, uncharacteristic of a man and autocrat who sought to embody the epitome of enlightened and rational thinking; or alternatively does it actually tally with an open attitude towards alchemical pursuits adopted by the tsar during his reign? In this section, I will argue that the latter approach is closer to the truth. Thus, I will demonstrate how the Russian monarch displayed an inquisitive and tolerant attitude towards all manner of chemical experimentation, including alchemical pursuits, throughout his reign.

During the Grand Embassy undertaken by Peter the Great in 1697–1698, for example, the Russian monarch availed himself of some of the most noted chemical experimenters in both Holland and England. In Holland he called upon the eminent natural scientist and chemist Herman Boerhaave

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<sup>324</sup> A. K. Nartov, *Rassказы Nartova o Petre Velikom*, edited by L. N. Maikov (St. Petersburg, 1891), 95.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

(1668–1738) of the University of Leiden. The extent to which the pair discussed the subject of chemistry or alchemy is unfortunately unknown as records only reveal that the tsar surveyed the Dutchman's anatomical theatre.<sup>326</sup> However, as one of Europe's leading chemists of the age it seems highly unlikely that the Russian monarch would have not seized the opportunity to avail himself of Boerhaave's expert knowledge of the subject. Hence it is interesting to note that Boerhaave remained a staunch supporter of the endeavours of alchemists throughout his long career. In his late work *Elementa Chemiae*, first published in 1732, for example, he wrote the following sympathetic words on alchemy:

To speak my mind freely, I have not met any writers on natural philosophy, who treat of the nature of bodies, and the manner of changing them, so profoundly, or explain'd them so clearly, as those called alchemists. To be convinced of this, read carefully their genuine writings: for instance, that piece of *Raymund Lully*, which he entitles *Experiments* . . . We are . . . exceedingly obliged to them for the immense pains they have been at, in discovering, and handing to us, so many difficult physical truths . . . Thus much I have long ago had a mind to say, concerning the knowledge of the true alchemists in physics; lest such skilful artists be condemn'd by incompetent judges.<sup>327</sup>

Boerhaave then concludes his discussion of the worth of alchemists by proclaiming that if "credulity is hurtful, so is incredulity." Hence, he argues that "the business therefore of a wise man is to try all things, hold fast what is approv'd, never limit the power of God, nor assign bounds to nature."<sup>328</sup> This sentiment, from one of the most learned scientists of his day, illustrates how alchemy continued to exert a powerful hold over the minds of European academics in the first half of the eighteenth century. What is more, Peter the Great's later reported remark in The Hague in 1717 is entirely in the spirit of Boerhaave's embrace of alchemy. This is a vital point, as it is necessary to stress that in adopting a tolerant approach towards alchemical issues Peter the Great was not isolating himself from the European scientific elite.

Whilst little documentation exists regarding the exact nature of Peter the Great's first visit to Boerhaave, the same is not true concerning the tsar's residence in England in 1698. Significantly, Peter arrived in London at a time of tumult in the medical sphere, marked by what Harold Cook

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<sup>326</sup> See Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1 10.

<sup>327</sup> Boerhaave, *New Method of Chemistry*, vol. 1, 200–3.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

refers to as the “collapse of a learned consensus about medical theory.”<sup>329</sup> In the 1690s the London College of Physicians had been denied regulatory powers by the new monarchy. Consequently iatrochemical practitioners espousing the alchemical doctrines of Paracelsus and Van Helmont, among others, enjoyed relative liberty to promote their remedies and theories.

One such iatrochemical practitioner was Moses Stringer, a “chymist and physitian” who in 1698 lived in York Buildings on The Strand and owned a laboratory at Hugh’s Court in Blackfriars, and who had previously also taught chemistry at Oxford University.<sup>330</sup> It is not known how the tsar became aware of the iatrochemist, but Peter the Great evidently became curious to meet Stringer and to witness his chemical expertise. Fortunately, a remarkably detailed record of the tsar’s encounter with Stringer was published in the *Protestant Mercury* on March 23, 1698, which provides a fascinating insight into not only Peter the Great’s curiosity in alchemical experimentation, but also the air of theatre that surrounded such displays of cures and remedies:

The Czar sent some days since for Mr. Stringer, an Oxford Chymist . . . to shew him some of the choicest secrets and experiments known to England; accordingly Mr Stringer drew up a class (or Number) of Experiments, viz. some in separating and refining of metals and minerals, some geometrical, some medicinal, others philosophical, to the number of 24 Experiments. When they were drawn up, the Czar elected one to be done first; as it were a probat of the artist’s skill; and it seems it was one of the most difficult operations, which shews that the Czar is skill’d in maturall philosophy: for, said Mr. Stringer, if your Majesty knows so well how to elect or refuse, in these abstruse matters, you need not send for me, nor any I know in England. However he desired to see that experiment done, which was performed to his satisfaction; it was to melt four metals, with a destroying mineral together, as gold, silver, copper, and iron, with antimony, into one lump, then to dissolve them all, and then to separate each metal distinct again, without destroying any one of them: It chanced the chemist, after he had made him some lead out of its ore, and silver out of that lead, and called the gold from the rest of the metals mixt, being transported into a merry vein, told the Czar, if his Majesty would wear that Gold in a ring for his sake, he would make him an artificial gem of what colour he pleased to name, to set in it, out of an old broom staff and a piece of flint, that lay by them. His Majesty being pleased with the fancy, ordered it to be done; he staying by

<sup>329</sup> Harold J. Cook, “Sir John Colbatch and Augustan Medicine: Experimentalism, Character and Entrepreneurialism,” *Annals of Science* 47 (1990): 502.

<sup>330</sup> See the frontispiece to Moses Stringer, *Variety of Experiments Made of Two Incomparable Medicines: Elixir Febrifugum Martis, and Salt of Lymons* (London, 1703). Also see, Appleby, “Moses Stringer,” 31–45.

himself part of the time, and his secretary the rest, till it was done, and then it proved so hard, that it cuts glass.<sup>331</sup>

This theatrical demonstration of the separation of metals and the creation of an artificial gem was carried out for the benefit of the Russian tsar by a chemist of a decidedly Paracelsian colouring. Stringer's debt to Paracelsian alchemy and medicine is revealed in three later letters to Dr. Woodrofe, the Master of Worcester College in Oxford, in which he states that his experiments for his *elixir renovans quia a fatiagatione renovat* was much affected by "what Paracelsus reports concerning the force of medicines in Recovering Old Age."<sup>332</sup>

Moreover, Stringer's quest to invent (and promote) the most cherished of all alchemical ideas – the philosophers' stone, or universal medicine – is illustrated in a tract published in 1703 to promote his *Elixir Febri-fugum Martis*. Therein, it states that "the peculiar secrets and acquisitions of...Mr. Stringer...bear the nearest affinity to *Universal Medicines*, being Generous, Amicable, and comprehensive expedients for the good of Mankind."<sup>333</sup>

The alchemical milieu in which Stringer mixed in London at the time of Peter the Great's residence in the city is further illustrated by a curious incident that occurred only days after the pair had met. According to an account written in May 1698 by John Colbatch (1670–1729), who was also an iatrochemical practitioner, "Mr. Stringer...was seeing a Collection of Rarities that were expos'd to publick view in Stocksmarket; among others there was a living Viper kept in a Glass of Bran."<sup>334</sup> Apparently after some coaxing, the owner of the collection – Thomas Philipson – removed the viper to show Stringer, whereupon the snake bit him on the tip of the finger. Colbatch then describes how Stringer enlisted the aid of a surgeon named Alexander Small, who was "a young Man of great Honesty and Industry and one whom I frequently employ" in order to help administer a life-saving dose of his master's *Elixir Vitrioli*.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> *Protestant Mercury Occurrences Foreign and Domestick*, March 23, 1698. Also see, James Peller Malcolm, *Anecdotes of the Manners and Customs of London from the Roman Invasion to the year 1700*, 2nd ed. vol. 3 (London, 1811), 58–9. A slightly shorter *Relation* of the event was also published in London March 28, 1698. The manuscript of this work can be found in the British Museum. See MS. C.20.F.2/208. British Museum, London.

<sup>332</sup> Appleby, "Moses Stringer," 36.

<sup>333</sup> Stringer, *Variety of Surprising Experiments*, 2.

<sup>334</sup> John Colbatch, *A Relation of a very sudden and extraordinary Cure of a Person by a Viper, by the means of Acids* (London, 1698), 1.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

However, Stringer later set out a different interpretation of events, in which it was stated that it was actually his *elixir febrifugum* that had cured Philipson of the viper bite. Indeed, Stringer garnered a testimony from Philipson himself in November 1699, whereby the victim stated that “I had no case or hope of Life till I was carryed to Mr. Stringers House in York buildings in the Strand, where by the use of his Elixir only I was cured.”<sup>336</sup>

In essence Stringer and Colbatch were rivals vying for a share of the iatrochemical market in London, which seemingly necessitated a large dose of self-publicity and bravado. Thus, whilst Stringer boasted of coming close to concocting the elusive universal medicine, Colbatch also trumpeted his alchemical pedigree:

The Alkaliest, that universal Dissolvent of Helmont and Paracelsus, is a thing that has made a great Noise in the World; and tho many have bin at vast charge in quest after it, yet I have scarce met with any (except one) in our time, who has bin Master of it. But on some late Experiments made upon the Pyrittis, I am perfectly satisfied that the said noble Menstruum is with little Trouble and Charge to be obtained from this so common, yet most valuable Subject . . . I have mentioned this for the sake of some honest Virtuosi, who will be very glad to be inform'd of the Subject from whence with great probability this noble Menstruum may be obtain'd; and if once it comes to be publicly known, it is impossible to imagine what great Service Mankind ay receive by it.<sup>337</sup>

The subsequent success of both alchemical practitioners in early eighteenth-century England is testament to the pivotal role Paracelsian iatrochemists could still enjoy within the highest echelons of English society. Indeed, Colbatch was knighted by George I in 1716,<sup>338</sup> whilst Stringer was appointed Mineral Master General in England between 1709–1710. The contemporary success of these individuals is important to remember, for by the end of the century the reputation of Stringer was being routinely pilloried. In a 1789 edition of *The Tatler*, for example, the satirical journal referred to the chemist as “the prince of the quacks” who undertook “experiments too ludicrous to mention.”<sup>339</sup> What is more, Nathaniel

<sup>336</sup> Stringer, *Variety of Surprising Experiments*.

<sup>337</sup> John Colbatch, “A Treatise of the Gout,” *A Collection of Tracts, Chirurgical and Medical* (London, 1704), 245–6.

<sup>338</sup> Cook, “Sir John Colbatch,” 502.

<sup>339</sup> *The Tatler*, vol. 4 (London, 1789), 370.

Wanley labelled Stringer an “alchymical quack” in his *The History of Man*, published in 1796.<sup>340</sup>

Peter the Great’s penchant for observing chemical knowledge and experiments was further demonstrated during his Second Embassy in Western Europe between 1716 and 1717. He once again visited Boerhaave in Leiden, who by this time was Professor of Chemistry.<sup>341</sup> Furthermore, on two consecutive days, whilst in Paris in June 1717 the tsar paid visits to two of France’s most acclaimed chemical experimenters. On June 18 he went to observe chemical experiments carried out by Etienne-François Geoffroy (1672–1731), the Professor of Chemistry at the Jardin du Roi and Professor of Pharmacy and Medicine at the College de France.<sup>342</sup> Whilst the exact nature of the chemical experiments demonstrated by Geoffroy is unknown, it is possible to gain a fascinating insight into the nature of the Frenchman’s scientific outlook by drawing on the *Mémoires* of the Academy of Sciences in Paris. Numerous contributions made by Geoffroy are recorded in this source, which reveal a surprising degree of credulity vis-à-vis natural wonders and distinct vestiges of a belief in occult correspondences.

A good example of Geoffroy’s acceptance of occult correspondences and qualities inherent in nature is provided by an article entitled *Of the tarantula, and the cure of its bite by musick*, which was published in 1702 in the *Mémoires* of the Academy of Sciences.<sup>343</sup> Having returned from Italy, Geoffroy informed his learned fellows about how music provides “a much surer and more efficacious remedy” against the bite of a tarantula than “the use of cordials and sudorifficks.”<sup>344</sup> The scientist then goes on describe his observations:

When the person bitten is left without sense and motion, a musician tries different tunes, till he meets with that whose notes and modulation suit the patient; upon which a slight motion or tremor appears in his body . . . at last he rises on his feet, and falls a dancing . . . Some will even dance six hours together without resting . . . This exercise holds several days, six or seven at most, till such time as the patient finds himself fatigued, and unable to

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<sup>340</sup> Nathaniel Wanley, *The Nature of Man: or, the wonders of human nature, in relation to the virtues, vices and defects of both sexes* (Perth, 1796), 120.

<sup>341</sup> G. A. Lindeboom, *Herman Boerhaave: The Man and his Work* (London: Methuen, 1968), 108.

<sup>342</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 39.

<sup>343</sup> *The Philosophical History and Memoirs of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris*, vol. 1 (London, 1742), 321–24.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.

dance any longer, which is the indication of his cure . . . Each patient has his peculiar and specifick tune; but all the airs or tunes in general are of very brisk nature.<sup>345</sup>

What is more the entry adds that it has been said that a “patient is only affected so long as the tarantula that bit him is alive; and that the tarantula itself dances to the same tune.” According to Geoffroy the explanation for such a remarkable cure is due to “the poison of the tarantula” occasioning “an extraordinary tension of the nerves.” This tension, he argues, corresponds “to that of some strings of an instrument,” which if played in harmony “puts the nerves in motion to a certain tone, and obliges them to vibrate when struck by the undulations peculiar to that tone.” Hence, a patient is cured by music, according to Geoffroy, as “the spirits are recalled.”<sup>346</sup>

Geoffroy’s debt to Paracelsus and van Helmont – his iatrochemical predecessors – is apparent in his claim to have successfully forged artificial iron, which he made to the French Academy of Sciences in 1704. According to an account in the *Mémoires*, Geoffroy’s artificial iron was “composed like common Sulphur, of a Sulphurious Principle or of an Inflammable Matter, of a Vitriolic Salt, and of a Terrestrial Substance.” Artificial iron can be found, Geoffroy states, from the ashes of burnt wood, which produces the mixture of the three substances cited above.<sup>347</sup>

As mentioned, we cannot be certain as to what Geoffroy demonstrated to the Russian tsar and the topics they discussed. However, it would be entirely in keeping with the Frenchman’s scientific outlook if curious matters touching on the occult and alchemical experimentation were raised. After all, it is evident that Geoffroy displayed a distinct attraction to such ideas during his long career. Furthermore, I would argue that Peter the Great sought out chemical experimenters able to reveal the curious and secret aspects of the natural world, rather than commonplace phenomena.

The day after Peter the Great spent the day in the company of Geoffroy he visited the French Academy of Sciences and was shown the effects of “two curious chemical concoctions” by Louis Lémery (1677–1743), a

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<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, 322. This observation draws on a popular medieval legend from Taranto in southern Italy, which told that the bite of the local deadly spider, the tarantula, could only be cured by frenzied dancing led by the playing of musical instruments.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>347</sup> *Memoirs of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris*, 2nd ed. (London, 1721), 322–23. Also Debus, *French Paracelsians*, 176.



physician at the Hotel Dieu and the son of the famed chemical experimenter Nicolas Lémery (1645–1715). Once again it is not known exactly what the “two curious chemical concoctions” were that Lémery showed Peter the Great. However, at the time Lémery was arguably most renowned for having discovered a method of creating what he called a “Tree of Mars,” whereby “iron is raised up into plants.”<sup>348</sup> The curious nature of this experiment intrigued his peers, and, what is more, would have fascinated the inquisitive spirit of the Russian monarch. It is described in the *Mémoires* of the Academy of Sciences:

Upon a dissolution of Filings of *Iron*, by the Spirit of Nitre contained in a Glass, he poured Oil of Tarter *per Deliquium*; the Liqueur swelled very much, tho’ with a moderate Fermentation, and a little while after it had rested, there arose kinds of Branches fastened to the Superficies of the Glass, which continuing still to spread and grow, cover’d it at last entirely, and then spread themselves even upon the External Superficies. The Figure of the Branches is so perfect, that one may discover in them even kinds of Leaves and Flowers, and this Vegetation of Iron may as justly be called *The Tree of Mars* as a Vegetation of Mercury . . . has been termed the *Tree of Diana*.<sup>349</sup>

Thus, Lémery’s experiment drew inspiration from the production of a so-called Tree of Diana, which could be formed by a mixture of silver, mercury and nitric acid that was fermented for a period of forty days.<sup>350</sup> As Allen Debus notes, this theory was used by chemical philosophers to offer proof of life in the mineral kingdom and Lémery himself argued that iron is present in plants due to a growth process through which it enters roots and is raised through a plant’s vessels by its life force.<sup>351</sup> Indeed, Nicolas Lémery states that “this Operation may be fitly compared with the Manner of Generation and Nourishment of Plants in the Earth.”<sup>352</sup> What is more, the period of forty days of fermentation could easily be invested with religious overtones, symbolizing the period of Lent. It is also interesting to note that Nicolas Lémery also names the Tree of Diana as the Philosophical Tree, thereby illustrating its alchemical legacy.<sup>353</sup> As Lyndy Abraham notes, the philosophical tree was used to represent the course of

<sup>348</sup> *Memoirs of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris*, 335.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*, 335.

<sup>350</sup> For a description of how to produce a Tree of Diana, see Nicolas Lémery, *A Course of Chymistry: containing an easie method for preparing those chymical medicines which are used in physick* (London, 1720), 80.

<sup>351</sup> Debus, *French Paracelsians*, 159–60.

<sup>352</sup> Lémery, *Course of Chymistry*, 80.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*

the opus alchymicum, the maturation of the philosophers' stone and the alchemical process itself.<sup>354</sup>

Peter the Great was also apparently interested in the (al)chemical theories of Nicolas Lémery as his private library collection contains both a 1697 French edition and a 1698 German edition of his principal work, *Cours de Chymie*, first published in 1675.<sup>355</sup> The majority of the work concentrated on describing the three natural kingdoms. Twenty-three chapters are given over to discussing minerals, twenty are devoted to the vegetable kingdom and four chapters to the animal kingdom. One also finds a glossary and definition of chemistry at the beginning with an account of furnaces, vessels and the degrees of fire.<sup>356</sup> Lémery's account reflects a deep interest in acids and alkalis and reveals the continued belief in an imperceptible universal spirit, which he describes as being "diffused through all the world" and that "produces different things, according to the different matrixes, or pores of the Earth, in which it settles."<sup>357</sup>

In addition to the two editions of the above work, Peter's private library also held a small, but significant, collection of other alchemical, chemical and metallurgical tracts. Undoubtedly the most striking inclusion is a two-volume collection of the key alchemical works of the mysterious Basil Valentine, which includes *The Twelve Keys* and *The Triumphal Chariot of Antimony*.<sup>358</sup> The former work was adorned with twelve highly symbolic illustrations and in the preface the author claimed that after many experiments he had come to understand the nature and properties imparted by God to minerals and metals and their secret potency. Arguably even more influential was *The Triumphal Chariot of Antimony*, which is often regarded as among the most important and resplendent alchemical works of all-time.<sup>359</sup> A further work of note in the tsar's library addressing alchemical questions is the *Theatrum Vitae Humanae* by Theodor Zwinger, which also included a vast array of material on all manner of occult themes.<sup>360</sup> In addition, Peter the Great had works on metallurgy and mineralogy by Michael Mercati and Johann Christian Lehmann (1675–1739).<sup>361</sup>

<sup>354</sup> Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, 150.

<sup>355</sup> Bobrova, *Biblioteka Petra I*, 134, Nos. 1263 and 1264.

<sup>356</sup> See Lémery, *Course of Chymistry*.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>358</sup> Bobrova, *Biblioteka Petra I*, 157; No. 1563.

<sup>359</sup> See, for example, Diana Fernando, *The Dictionary of Alchemy: History, People, Definitions* (London: Vega, 2002), 171.

<sup>360</sup> Bobrova, *Biblioteka Petra I*, 162, No. 1663.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, 134, 138; Nos. 1261, 1262 and No. 1318.

The tsar evidently also had something of a passion for Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, owning Latin, Russian, German and French editions, as well as Russian and German editions illustrating Ovidian figures.<sup>362</sup> The possibility of metamorphosis from one state to another not only fascinated alchemists on the level of the transmutation of base metals into silver or gold; it also reflected the possibility of the transformation of man on a far more mystical and spiritual plane. To many Renaissance adepts, Ovid's tale contained Hermetic wisdom that had survived from antiquity.<sup>363</sup> Evidently foreign experimental scientists also sent Peter the Great chemical secrets, as in the register listing various inventions and suggestions sent to the tsar one finds a letter explaining how to concoct phosphorus.<sup>364</sup>

Thus, I would argue that throughout his reign there is clear evidence suggesting the tsar was curious, at the very least, regarding all manner of chemical experimentation. Rather than practicing alchemy himself however, I would argue that the tsar was content to surround himself at court with curious scientific minds willing to embrace the esoteric. This is demonstrated by the influential presence of Bruce, Prokopovich and Erskine at the heart of the Petrine inner circle, who, as has been demonstrated, all appear to have been strongly attracted to alchemical matters.

#### *Peter the Great and Perpetual Motion*

That grand secret for the discovery of which, those Dictators of Philosophie, Democritus, Pythagoras, Plato, did travel unto the Gymnosophists, and Indian Priests. (John Wilkins, *Mathematicall Magick* (London, 1648), 229).

The quest to invent a perpetual motion machine – fuelled by the esoteric desire to discover the secret to one of God's and nature's greatest secrets – consumed many scientists and mechanics during the Early Modern period in Europe. Furthermore, as Otto Mayr and Simon Schaffer have noted, perpetual motion machines acted as emblems of the permanent workings of the divinely ordered world-machine amidst the baroque courts of Europe in the Early Modern period.<sup>365</sup> Peter the Great too was not immune to the

<sup>362</sup> Ibid., 35, 79, 141; Nos. 142, 605, 1368–71.

<sup>363</sup> See Abraham, *Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*, 128–9.

<sup>364</sup> M. H. Murzanova, E. I Bobrova and V. A. Petrov, eds., *Istoricheskii ocherk i obzor fondov rukopisnogo otdela biblioteki akademi nauk*, vol. 1 (Moscow-Leningrad, 1936), 279.

<sup>365</sup> See Simon Schaffer, "The Show That Never Ends: Perpetual Motion in the Early Eighteenth Century," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 28: 2 (June 1995), 161; Otto Mayr, *Authority, Liberty and Automatic Machinery in Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 67–81.

tantalizing allure of perpetual motion during his reign and its potential to promote his divinely ordained rule.

Indeed, the following section will illustrate how the search for perpetual motion became something of a preoccupation for the Russian monarch in the last two decades of his life. In this regard, it is pertinent to add that during the above-cited visit the tsar made to a mathematician in The Hague in 1717, he also reportedly stated that he did not belittle nor revile “mechanics trying to find perpetual motion.”<sup>366</sup> The coupling of alchemists and mechanics seeking perpetual motion is significant, as traditionally these two pursuits had been closely associated. The two quests do, after all, share a similar vision: to discover and reveal a key and mysterious secret of God’s creation. With this in mind, as Simon Schaffer has noted, the project of perpetual motion is normally pushed back to the very edge of traditional history of science, as it “allegedly defines the bounds of human credulity and vain ambition and marks, with the Philosopher’s Stone . . . the painful transition to rational understanding of the capacities of nature and art.”<sup>367</sup>

During the Renaissance many of the most (in)famous designs for *perpetuum mobile* were devised by renowned alchemists. One of the earliest Renaissance designs was advanced by Marco Antonio Zimara (c. 1460–c. 1532), a Professor of Philosophy and Medicine at the University of Padua. The most famous work attributed to Zimara is the occult text *Antrum Magico-Medicum*, which, it would seem, was first published posthumously in 1625. In addition to addressing many esoteric secrets, such as the names of God, chemical medicines and astral medicine, Zimara also provides “directions for the construction of a perpetual Motion Machine without the use of water or a weight.”<sup>368</sup>

Another (in)famous figure connected with the search for perpetual motion during the Renaissance was the Dutch natural philosopher and alchemist Cornelius Drebbel (1572–1633). After arriving in England in 1604, Drebbel tried to ingratiate himself with King James I by writing a letter to the monarch, in which he made boastful claims regarding his thaumaturgical abilities and his invention of a *perpetuum mobile*.<sup>369</sup> In the letter, Drebbel states that in beginning work on unlocking the secrets of

<sup>366</sup> Nartov, *Rassказы Nartova o Petre Velikom*, 95.

<sup>367</sup> Schaffer, “The Show That Never Ends,” 159.

<sup>368</sup> G. Karsten Tallmadge, “The Perpetual Motion Machine of Mark Antony Zimara,” *Isis* 1 (March 1941): 9.

<sup>369</sup> Thorndike, *History of Magic*, vol. 7, 492–4.

perpetual motion, he hoped to find the overall key to the mysteries of nature. After many failed attempts, Drebbel goes on to describe how he constructed a perpetual motion instrument after observing the tides flowing *in perpetuum*. Finally, he remarks that the instrument presented to King James I was “an offshoot from the tree of perpetual motion grafted on true knowledge of the elements.”<sup>370</sup>

The link between alchemists and the search for perpetual motion was used by a string of Renaissance scientists in order to vilify those who sought the latter. Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), for example, in an oft-cited passage wrote: “Oh, ye seekers after perpetual motion, how many vain chimeras have you pursued? Go and take your place with the alchemists.”<sup>371</sup> Marin Mersenne (1588–1648) also wrote scathingly about those attempting to construct perpetual motion machines in 1644 stating that their attempts were on a par with alchemists searching for the philosophers’ stone. Later on in the seventeenth century, the Dutch scientist Christian Huygens (1629–1692) disproved the possibility of perpetual motion, by experimenting on pendula and demonstrating that “the centre of gravity of a free body moving under the influence of the force of gravity cannot rise above its precedent attitude.”<sup>372</sup>

Yet, despite widespread repudiation, esoterically minded experimental scientists continued to search for the secret key to perpetual motion. Thus, in 1690 the eminent Swiss mathematician Johann Bernoulli (1667–1748) expounded a method of constructing a *perpetuum mobile* in a work entitled *Effervescentia & Fermentatione*.<sup>373</sup> Indeed, many respected European scientific journals continued to publish schemes purporting to have unlocked the secret of perpetual motion. In 1678, for example, the French *Journal des Sçavans* printed an illustration of a machine by the Polish Jesuit Stanislas Solski. Eight years later, the same journal dedicated three pages to outlining a method for achieving perpetual motion devised by an anonymous Italian, based on the equilibrium of liquors and on experiments involving a vacuum, in which mercury flowed back and forth.<sup>374</sup> Moreover, schemes for perpetual motion were also liberally sprinkled

<sup>370</sup> Ibid., 494–5.

<sup>371</sup> Leonardo Da Vinci, *The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci*, trans. Jean Paul Richter (London, 1888), 36.

<sup>372</sup> Tallmadge, “Perpetual Motion Machine,” 13.

<sup>373</sup> For Bernoulli’s method, see Johann Bernoulli, *Dissertations on the Mechanics of Effervescence and Fermentation and on the Mechanics of the Movement of the Muscles*, ed. and trans. Paul Maquet (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1997), 95–7.

<sup>374</sup> Thorndike, *History of Magic*, vol. 7, 575.

through the early volumes of *Acta Eruditorum*, which was published in Leipzig. In 1691, for example, the journal included a description of a perpetual motion machine devised by Johann Bernoulli.<sup>375</sup>

Throughout the seventeenth century works on artificial magic, or *physica curiosa*, continued to exert a fascination on the minds of many experimental scientists and mechanics of a more esoteric hue. A pioneering work in this genre was *Le Diverse et Artificiose Machine*, which was published in 1588 by Agostino Ramelli (c. 1531–1600), who served as a military engineer in France in the service of Henri of Anjou. This richly illustrated work included all manner of wondrous artificial and mechanical creations. Another influential work of the early seventeenth century was the *Dessin Artificiaux de toutes sortes*, which was edited by Octavio Strada and published in Frankfurt in 1617–1618. This work centred on the extraordinary hyrdotechnical designs of Jacobus Strada de Rosberg, the Director of the Imperial Art Gallery at Prague.<sup>376</sup>

In the latter half of the seventeenth century, arguably the leading exponent in this field was the German architect and engineer, Georg Andreas Böckler (?–1698). One of his principal works was *Theatrum Machinarum Novum* (1686), which Arthur Ord-Hume regards as a key text in the history of the quest for a perpetual motion machine.<sup>377</sup> Böckler's work concentrates on describing various ingenious blueprints for watermills, which drew on the ancient device of the Archimedean Screw.<sup>378</sup>

Significantly, many of the key sixteenth and seventeenth century texts on artificial magic and machines appeared in Peter the Great's personal library collection. One finds, for example, an original edition of Ramelli's seminal text, *Le Diverse et Artificiose Machine* as well as an original edition of Strada's *Dessins Artificiaux de Toutes Sortes* (1617–18).<sup>379</sup> The Russian monarch also owned eight works by Böckler, including a 1703 edition of *Theatrum Machinarum Novum* and two complete editions of *Architectura Curiosa Nova*.<sup>380</sup>

However, Peter the Great's interest in perpetual motion extended much beyond the pages of the above texts. The tsar's active curiosity in the

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid., 618.

<sup>377</sup> Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume, *Perpetual Motion: The History of an Obsession* (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1977), 48–52.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>379</sup> Bobrova, *Biblioteka Petra I*, 145, 152; Nos. 1420 and 1527 respectively.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid., 111; Nos. 948, 941 and 942 respectively.

creation of a genuine perpetual motion machine can be dated to at least as early as 1713 and centres on the activities of the German architect and sculptor Andreas Schlüter (1660–1714). It was in this year that Schlüter arrived in St. Petersburg, after being enlisted into Russian service by Jacob Bruce whilst in Berlin in May 1713.<sup>381</sup> Between 1694–1706 Schlüter had been Court sculptor and architect for Friedrich I (1657–1713) in Berlin and was responsible for designing the Royal Castle (now destroyed), the sculpted decoration for the Arsenal and, in 1701 he designed the Amber Room in the Schloss Charlottenburg.<sup>382</sup>

Schlüter spent one year in St. Petersburg, prior to his death, and in this time his architectural contribution to the new capital was modest. His greatest legacy was undoubtedly his work on the Summer Palace, where he designed the mythological bas-reliefs and adapted some of the original Dutch-style architectural features of Domenico Trezzini, which had been laid down in 1711. Apart from this, Schlüter oversaw the laying of the foundations of the grotto in the Summer Gardens, which were subsequently completed by his pupil Georg Johann Matarnovi.

The majority of Schlüter's yearlong residence in St. Petersburg, however, was devoted to designing a perpetual motion machine. This endeavour proved a major distraction for the ailing Schlüter, but was far from frowned upon by the tsar. In fact, Peter the Great positively encouraged Schlüter in his speculative endeavour and even permitted the German to lodge in the Summer Palace in order that he could keep abreast with his latest developments. This intriguing situation is described by Peter Henry Bruce, a distant relative of Jacob Bruce, who had entered Russian service in 1710 after accepting the invitation of his kinsman:

The emperor having engaged Mr. Slitter, a famous architect, with a number of good tradesmen in his service, he was lodged in the summer-palace to be near the czar. This gentleman had, at this time, a multiplicity of business on his hands in building palaces, houses, academies, manufactories, printing-houses, &c. and as he had but few hands for drawing his plans, I offered him my assistance in that way, provided he would instruct me in the rules of architecture which he gladly accepted of, and I attended him every day. The

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<sup>381</sup> I. E. Grabar, ed., *Peterburgskaia arkhitektura v XVIII i XIX vekakh* (St. Petersburg: LENIZDAT, 1994), 49.

<sup>382</sup> There is surprisingly little literature available in either English or German on Schlüter's influential role as Court sculptor and architect in Berlin at the turn of the eighteenth-century. For the best biographical work, see Heinz Ladendorf, *Andreas Schlüter: Beiträge zu Seiner Biographie und zur Berliner Kunstgeschichte Seiner Zeit* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein Für Kunstwissenschaft, 1935).



czar was frequently with him, and seeing my drawings, was so much pleased with them, that I was afterwards much employed in drawing his plans, both of civil and military architecture.<sup>383</sup>

As Bruce indicates, Peter the Great was frequently with Schlüter in his quarters in the Summer Palace. No doubt the pair discussed architectural matters, but the primary reason for the tsar's frequent visits to Schlüter's working quarters was to observe the progress the German had made on his perpetual motion machine. Once again, Bruce's description is extremely enlightening in this regard and is worth quoting in full:

Mr. Slitter was of a weak sickly constitution, and on being much fatigued with continual business, he sickened and died, when he had been but one year at Petersburg. He had spent much time in endeavouring to contrive a perpetuum mobile, the intense study of which had much impaired his health, and before he died he had brought it the length of being put in motion; the model of his machine was a circular brass frame, eighteen inches deep, and two yards diameter, with hollow plates of the same metal, four inches in length placed round on the inside, into which a cannon ball was put; the plates being moved by springs, forced the ball in a perpetual round; each of the plates directing several wheels which occasioned many different motions: but the springs and wheels frequently breaking, it took up much time in repairing them. Mr. Slitter always locked himself up when he was at work upon it, and nobody was suffered to enter the room except the czar, who was frequently shut up with him. After his death, his foreman was employed about it, but he also soon after sickened and died, and the machine was locked up; and I never could learn whether any person afterwards attempted to bring it to perfection. During my attendance on the architect, I only had twice an opportunity of seeing it.<sup>384</sup>

Bruce admits to only seeing the perpetual motion machine on two occasions. On the other hand, the tsar is described as being "frequently shut up" with Schlüter in his painstaking efforts to perfect his ambitious scheme. Commentators have been rather scathing of Schlüter's efforts to invent a perpetual motion machine. Christopher Marsden, for example, notes that Schlüter was already becoming sickly and therefore was "rather silly."<sup>385</sup> This dismissive attitude twists Bruce's original description, which states that it was actually Schlüter's continual effort to design a *perpetuum mobile* that was the cause of his deteriorating health. In other words,

<sup>383</sup> Bruce, *Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce*, 166–7.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, 167–8.

<sup>385</sup> Christopher Marsden, *Palmyra of the North: The First Days of St. Petersburg* (London: Faber & Faber, 1943), 55.

Schlüter's ill health was not the cause of his 'silly' obsession with creating a *perpetuum mobile*, but was a symptom of this passion.

The obvious fascination shown by Peter the Great in Schlüter's attempt to create a *perpetuum mobile* was ultimately frustrated by Schlüter's death in May 1714. From Bruce's account, it would seem that the tsar even authorized Schlüter's foreman to complete the project, only to be further frustrated by this man's death. Bruce concludes his description of Schlüter's perpetual motion machine by noting that it was locked up after the death of the German's foreman and he was unaware if any subsequent attempts were made to perfect the prototype. This raises the obvious question of where the machine was locked up, with the obvious answer being somewhere inside the Summer Palace. The close proximity of Schlüter's aborted effort no doubt proved extremely disappointing to the inquisitive Russian monarch.

With this in mind, it is easy to imagine the sense of excitement and curiosity felt by the tsar when he became aware of the furore developing in Germany in 1716 surrounding Johann Ernst Elias Bessler, otherwise known as Orffyreus, who had reputedly succeeded in inventing a *perpetuum mobile*. It seems highly likely that the Russian monarch became aware of the so-called *Orffyreus Wheel* whilst residing in Germany between February and June 1716. Of particular significance in this regard were the three weeks Peter spent at Pymont in May and June 1716, where he enjoyed a number of long interviews with Gottfried Leibniz, who had been appointed a Russian Privy Councillor by the tsar in Carlsbad on November 1, 1712.<sup>386</sup>

During their discussions it is easy to imagine Leibniz fanning the tsar's enthusiasm for the *Orffyreus Wheel*, as the renowned German scientist and thinker had himself become deeply intrigued by the machine since 1714 and believed it "could bring tremendous benefits."<sup>387</sup> The fame of Orffyreus's machine had been enhanced in January 1715 when it featured in an article by Christian Wolff (1679–1754), which appeared in the Leipzig scientific journal, *Acta Eruditorum*.

A perpetual motion has been built by Orffyreus, a man skilled in the art of Medicine, from which he derives a living; and in *Chymia* and Mechanics in which he is versatile . . . The perpetual motion which our Orffyreus built, has been seen by thousands of people, including experienced mathematicians and mechanics and they were all full of admiration.<sup>388</sup>

<sup>386</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 25.

<sup>387</sup> Collins, *Perpetual Motion*, 53.

<sup>388</sup> *Acta Eruditorum* (Leipzig, 1715), 46. The article by Wolff is entitled "Nova Literaria Mathematica de Perpetuomobili."

By the summer of 1715, Orffyreus had moved to Mersseberg, near Leipzig and Halle, and had constructed a new and larger wheel. In October 1715, the *Leipziger Post Zeitungen* newspaper published an announcement regarding an upcoming test to be carried out on Orffyreus's Merseberg wheel by "some renowned mathematicians and mechanics."<sup>389</sup>

Such a test took place on October 31 and was monitored by a specially appointed commission of twelve prominent academics, which included Christian Wolff; D. Johann Burkhard Mencke (1674–1732), the editor of *Acta Eruditorum* and Friedrich Hoffmann the Younger, the Professor of Medicine at the University of Halle.<sup>390</sup> The local District Magistrate Johann Weisse, made notes of the proceedings and stated that "all the mathematicians and other intellectually curious people present" were "filled with admiration." Moreover, he stated that "the entire machine received the highest praise from all, and the inventor was freed of all the false accusations, suspicions and doubts."<sup>391</sup> Thus, by the time Peter the Great arrived in Germany in February 1716, a tangible sense of excitement had been aroused in academic and scientific circles regarding Orffyreus's Merseberg Wheel.

This sense of excitement was undoubtedly helped by the actions of Orffyreus himself, who was adept at shrouding his perpetual motion machine in an aura of mystery and wonder. Bessler's medical training and interest in chemical experimentation fit the mould of many Renaissance figures who sought to construct perpetual motion machines, such as Zimara, Drebbel and Fludd. Moreover, one can also discern distinct elements of Cabbalism and alchemy in the life and writings of Bessler. In his biographical work *Apologia Poetica* (1716–17), for example, Bessler refers to how a Rabbi in Prague taught him "Hebrew hieroglyphics, the language of nature and the writings of Angels" in the early years of the eighteenth century.<sup>392</sup> Bessler's knowledge of Hebraic word transformations played a prominent role in the creation of his own self-image. Even the name 'Orffyreus' derives from applying the Hebraic Al-bam method of alphabetic transformation, whereby the alphabet is split into two rows (a–m and n–z). Using this technique, the name 'Bessler' is transformed into 'Orffyre,' which was then simply Latinized to form 'Orffyreus.'<sup>393</sup> It has

<sup>389</sup> Collins, *Perpetual Motion*, 63.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, 66–7.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>392</sup> Johann Ernst Elias Bessler, *Apologia Poetica*, trans. John Collins (Raleigh, NC: Lulu, 2006), 260.

<sup>393</sup> Collins, *Perpetual Motion*, 155–59.

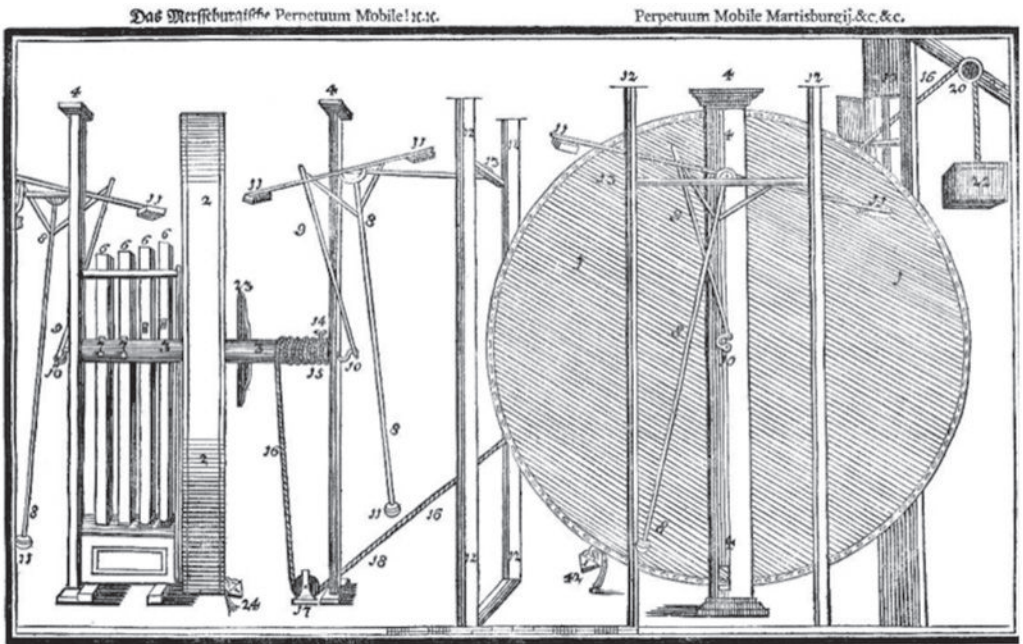


Fig. 61. An illustration of the Mersseburg Wheel from Johann Ernst Elias Bessler, *Triumphans Perpetuum Mobile Orffyreanum* (Cassel: 1719).

also been suggested that Bessler infused his works with coded instructions and hidden symbolism, which were steeped in Cabbalistic doctrines.<sup>394</sup> In addition, Bessler was not afraid to attach alchemical and astrological meaning to what he saw as his divine mission to create a perpetual motion machine. In his *Apologia Poetica*, for example, he wrote:

All things belong to one of the three kingdoms (animal, vegetable or matter) and you have the physical evidence before you. Without such things as sulphur, salt, and mercury all things will come to a standstill – the qualities of the elements are necessary to keep things going. Saturn, Mars and Jupiter are ready to join in any battle. Even the things we eat do not lose their elemental influence – for it spreads itself through every limb and sinue of our bodies. A crab crawls from side to side. It is sound for it is designed thus. Poltergeists wander freely through locked doors. But softly! – speak softly of all these marvels, lest the enemy grows wise! He will drench me with his

<sup>394</sup> Ibid., 156–8.

spittle so that I will lose my temper and in a sudden fit, cast aside the mantle that conceals my wheel. But he shall be thwarted in his desires.<sup>395</sup>

Thus, Bessler's quest to build a perpetual motion machine was underpinned with religious zeal and was cloaked in esoteric symbolism.<sup>396</sup> Indeed, he publicly rallied against certain "schools of mathematicians" who sought to banish him and alchemists far away from Anticyras, the mythical doctor who had cured Hercules of a nervous disorder:

From this it followed that schools of mathematicians mocked those, who had a burning desire to solve this problem, pronouncing that they must be cured by using hellebore or banished together with the multitude of blind alchemists far away from Anticyras and thought that those who are not ashamed to grasp boldly the undertakings which exceed even the powers of Hercules, are not suitable for being among the sane people.<sup>397</sup>

After meeting Leibniz in Pymont in May and June 1716, Peter the Great almost immediately set about tracking down the mysterious Orffyreus and his famed wheel. Peter the Great entrusted the mission of observing Orffyreus's machine to two of his most trusted officials: Vice-Chancellor Baron Shafirov and the rising diplomatic star Andrei Osterman. By the middle of July the pair had arrived in Halle and sought to enlist the help of Christian Wolff in their attempt to secure an appointment with Orffyreus. In addition, it is clear from a letter written by Wolff to Leibniz on July 22, 1716 that their mission also entailed purchasing the machine on behalf of Peter the Great. As Wolff writes:

Two men have arrived here in Halle and are intending to travel to Merseburg in order to buy Orffyreus's machine on behalf of the Tsar of Russia. They are aware that Orffyreus is about to move to be under the protection of the Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel. One of them spoke with me and asked to accompany them when they visit Orffyreus in order to assist in arranging an agreement with him.<sup>398</sup>

Furthermore, Osterman also wrote to the tsar on July 24, attaching an update by Shafirov on their progress in fulfilling their task: "The State Vice-Chancellor Baron Shafirov, your most humble servant, reports to

<sup>395</sup> Bessler, *Apologia*, 295–6.

<sup>396</sup> Bessler's *Apologia Poetica* contained 145 biblical citations. See Collins, *Perpetual Motion*, 196–8.

<sup>397</sup> Johann Ernst Elias Bessler, *Triumphans Perpetuum Mobile Orffyreanum* (Cassel, 1719), 5.

<sup>398</sup> Collins, *Perpetual Motion*, 110.

your Royal Highness the condition in which I here found the business about the *perpetuum mobile*.”<sup>399</sup>

More information is forthcoming from another letter written by Wolff to Leibniz, dated August 9, 1716, in which the Halle professor states: “the man who visited me and was sent to Merseburg by the Russian Monarch was a German.”<sup>400</sup> Wolff is here referring to Osterman, who was born in Germany. Wolff then adds that Osterman informed him that “another man,” that is Shafirov, “was already in Merseburg, and was also a German and Chancellor of the Exchequer.”<sup>401</sup> However, by the time Shafirov and Osterman arrived in Merseburg to inspect Orffyreus’s perpetual motion machine, its owner had dismantled it. Thus, the Russian dignitaries were unable to carry out their instructions and the tsar was thwarted in his efforts to purchase what was purportedly a genuine *perpetuum mobile*.

Evidence of Peter the Great’s fascination with Orffyreus’s perpetual motion machine also surfaces in the previously cited letter written by Leibniz to Robert Erskine, dated August 3, 1716.

Orffyreus is a friend of mine, and he allowed me, sometime ago, to carry out some experiments with his machine. It ran continuously for two hours in my presence and demonstrated considerable power. However, I could not remain there to observe it moving any longer because I was travelling in the coach and with a gentleman of the Duke of Zeitz. I advised him to arrange a test in which his machine would be run for several weeks with all possible precautions taken to exclude any suspicion of fraud. At the same time, data could be obtained about the machine’s performance and its power. Once this has been accomplished I am sure that several princes could combine their resources, as he requests, in order to pay him a worthy recompense for his invention. Even if this device is not a perpetual motion machine, about which there is much talk at the present time, it would be still of great use if it could pass this test of several weeks. He has promised me that he will arrange such a test.<sup>402</sup>

Significantly, Erskine was escorting Peter the Great around Europe, in his rank as the tsar’s personal physician. Hence, Erskine, who was effectively Peter the Great’s chief scientific advisor, could also keep the tsar informed of the latest opinions regarding the Orffyreus Wheel. It is also notable that three of the tsar’s chief diplomats and advisors spent much of the sum-

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<sup>399</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 34.

<sup>400</sup> Collins, *Perpetual Motion*, 110.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>402</sup> Guerrier, *Leibniz*, 361–4.



mer of 1716 involved in discussions or attempts to purchase the Orffyreus Wheel.

In addition to Orffyreus dismantling the Merseburg wheel, various other circumstances also conspired against the Russian attempt to purchase the machine. In August 1716, for example, Bessler was busy preparing to move to Kassel, in order to become the Commercial Councillor of Karl, the Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel. Illness also prevented Bessler from working on a new version of his perpetual motion machine. However, by the autumn of 1718 Bessler had constructed another version of his wheel and in November *Acta Eruditorum* published an article to mark the event, entitled “Relatio de perpetuo mobilii Joh. Ernesti Eliae Orfyrei.”<sup>403</sup> The article contains a description of the Kassel wheel and an account of its inspection by Karl, the Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel. The author of the article also states that Orffyreus had dealt satisfactorily with all the objections he has faced regarding his perpetual motion machine.<sup>404</sup>

The article promoting the new Orffyreus Wheel, which appeared in the November 1718 edition of *Acta Eruditorum*, soon came to the attention of Peter the Great. Consequently, in January 1719 the Russian monarch instructed Dr. Laurentius Blumentrost, Erskine’s protégé and replacement as Chief Physician and head of the *kunstkamera*, to write to Christian Wolff regarding the new machine:<sup>405</sup>

Following the recently published account of the Orffyrean Perpetual Motion in the *Acta Eruditorum* of November 1718, I have decided to approach Your Excellency, and would like to express my high regard for you which I have always had since first I profited from your lectures. There is no doubt that Orffyreus’s perpetual motion machine is self-moving because this has been established by the most experienced men of science, and especially you, who are the most expert in the subject and recognised as such. There is no one better than yourself qualified to judge whether that machine would be capable of exerting its effect when enlarged. I would deem it the greatest favour if you would give me your opinion in this matter, and I would accept your decision. Also I would be pleased to be informed as to whether the machine really is for sale or likely to be, in the future.<sup>406</sup>

<sup>403</sup> See Christian Wolff, “Relatio de perpetuo mobilii Joh. Ernesti Eliae Orfyrei,” *Acta Eruditorum* (Leipzig, 1718, 497–9).

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>405</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 34. Blumentrost was Erskine’s protégé and had succeeded the Scot as head of the St. Petersburg *Kunstkamera* upon his death in November 1718.

<sup>406</sup> Wolff, *Briefe von Christian Wolff*, 161–2.



Wolff replied over a year later, on January 20, 1720, and informed Blumentrost that “the invention could be further improved if it was put into the hands of an expert mathematician.”<sup>407</sup> The renowned German mathematician was clearly dangling bait for a prospective rich patron in the shape of Peter the Great. The rather obvious hint worked, as on November 25, 1720 Blumentrost wrote to Wolff, in the name of the tsar, with the following suggestion:

In your last letter, you mentioned that Orffyreus's invention could be of some benefit to the public if it were put into the hands of an expert mathematician to improve it, and this could only be done if the inventor was paid a certain amount of money. His Majesty, the Tsar, after due consideration, has graciously advised me that he will spare an unlimited amount of money provided that you, yourself undertake this task and enter into His service.<sup>408</sup>

Wolff replied to Blumentrost's letter on January 11, 1721 and stated his pleasure that the Russian monarch wished to take the German scholar into his service in order to further improve the Orffyrean perpetual motion machine.<sup>409</sup> Whilst not explicitly accepting the offer, Wolff makes it clear that he would be prepared to undertake an examination of the Orffyreus Wheel for the benefit of the Russian tsar.

Shortly after Wolff's reply, in February 1721, the tsar ordered Johann Daniel Schumacher, who at the time was the chief librarian of the *kunstkamera*, to undertake a mission to Germany, Holland, France and England.<sup>410</sup> On his return to St. Petersburg, Schumacher made a report of his trip and listed the thirteen key instructions given to him by Peter the Great. The sixth point specifically stressed the desire of Peter the Great for Schumacher to visit Germany in order to meet Professor Wolff, whilst the seventh point explicitly outlines the objective of speaking with Orffyreus about his perpetual motion machine and, if possible, to discuss its usefulness with Wolff.<sup>411</sup>

According to a letter written by Schumacher to Wolff whilst he was residing in Berlin, dated April 12, 1721, it is clear that Blumentrost had

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*, 1–2.

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.*, 162–3. Also see Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 34.

<sup>409</sup> Wolff, *Briefe von Christian Wolff*, 2–4.

<sup>410</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 533. Schumacher graduated from The University of Strasbourg in 1711 and arrived in St. Petersburg in 1714, where his mentor was Robert Erskine. See Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 49.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*, 534.

already informed the Halle professor about the imminent arrival of the tsar's scientific envoy:

You should by now have received a letter from His Majesty's personal physician, Herr Blumentrost, dated 26th February of this year, in which he informed you that I have been graciously ordered by His Majesty the Tsar to negotiate with you, not only about the Orffyrean perpetual motion machine but also His Majesty's further proposals.<sup>412</sup>

In his report, Schumacher describes meeting Wolff in Halle and their discussion concerning Orffyreus's perpetual motion machine, which the latter promised to perfect, if possible. Schumacher added that he had informed Wolff that the tsar was willing to part with a considerable amount of money for the perpetual motion machine.<sup>413</sup> He also includes some of Wolff's general remarks on the machine:

There is little to be said on this matter, for although Orffyreus had produced a wheel, which without outward power turns a wheel and pulls a heavy load towards itself, it is not possible to say whether this is in truth a *perpetuum mobile* and will bring great benefit to the people, as it is not possible to see its internal structure.<sup>414</sup>

Schumacher then proceeds to provide a detailed account of his trip to Kassel to inspect the Orffyreus Wheel and to meet Bessler in person.

Without any delay I went directly on the way to Cassel and Weissenstein Castle to find the opinion of *Gospodin* Orffeyreus, but I was informed that the *Gospodin* Landgrave had sent him, with the broken parts of his *perpetuum mobile*, to Karlshafen, previously named Sieburg, about five miles from Kassel. A special house had been allotted there in order that he could better follow his thoughts and reasoning and to rid himself of disagreeable persons.<sup>415</sup>

The tsar is then provided with a detailed description of the reasons lying behind why Orffyreus had broken his machine:

The above mentioned *Gospodin* Landgrave had invited *Gospodin* Professor 'sGravesande from Leiden, in order to demonstrate to him the physico-mathematical experiments which had been published in his book, and they fell into discourse about the *perpetuum mobile* – whether directly and in truth the Orffyreus Wheel was a *perpetuum mobile*? The *Gospodin* Landgrave

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<sup>412</sup> Wolff, *Briefe von Christian Wolff*, 163–4.

<sup>413</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 539.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*

claimed it to be so and ordered Orffyreus to show *Gospodin* 'sGravesande, however not announcing to him who 'sGravesande was. Orffyreus obeyed the order and showed his machine in the presence of *Gospodin* Landgrave, but 'sGravesande began to only ask questions so strongly wished to see the internal structure, that Orffyreus arrived at the opinion that they wanted to find out his *arcanum*, and for this reason he refused to show them any longer, and as soon as they had departed, he broke the machine in order that there would be nothing to fear.<sup>416</sup>

In this passage Schumacher is referring to the visit of Willem 'sGravesande (1688–1742), the eminent Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy at The University of Leiden. 'sGravesande arrived in Kassel in August 1721, after receiving an invitation from Karl, the Landgrave to inspect his collection of machines and inventions.<sup>417</sup>

A rather comical passage then follows, in which Schumacher describes how he spent several days with the inventor, pretending to be his “great friend,” before revealing the tsar’s plan.<sup>418</sup> Apparently, Bessler immediately asked whether or not Schumacher had money, to which the latter replied: “there is more money available than one could conceive to obtain.”<sup>419</sup> Schumacher then confirmed to Bessler that the Russian tsar desired to pay generously for his invention if it is proven to work. In reply, Bessler boasted that “of course it will pass the test, and I am ready to lose my head, if it is not correct.”<sup>420</sup> Subsequently, Schumacher made a suggestion regarding the manner in which the perpetual motion machine could be tested:

We shall take two renowned mathematicians, who will first take an oath not to reveal anything about it, and the inventor may even take a token of the agreed money in a deposit, and then we would be satisfied to examine your machine.<sup>421</sup>

However, Schumacher goes on to report that Bessler did not agree to this resolution, whilst remaining of the opinion that his machine was genuine. Instead, Bessler apparently proposed that Schumacher should

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*, 539–40.

<sup>417</sup> Collins, *Perpetual Motion*, 92. For more on 'sGravesande and the Orffyreus Wheel (including his correspondence on the matter with Isaac Newton), see Schaffer, “The Show That Never Ends,” 172–81.

<sup>418</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 540.

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*

“put down 100,000 thalers on one side, and on the other side I will place the machine!”<sup>422</sup>

At this point, Schumacher informed the tsar that he broke off negotiations with Bessler and returned to Professor Wolff in Halle. Schumacher then provides a summary of the uproar caused in Germany by Orffyreus’s Wheel and, significantly, of the expert opinion of Willem ‘sGravesande:

In truth it is impossible to believe what kind of disputes the *perpetuum mobile* has caused. *Gospodin* Professor ‘sGravesande thinks that the *perpetuum mobile*, according to the customs of mathematicians is not against the (first) principles of mathematics, and although it is impossible to truthfully claim that the Orffyreus Wheel will bring great benefit to the people, however with reasonable discourse, and if it were fell into the hands of skilled mathematicians, then it is possible in the future to bring it to perfection.<sup>423</sup>

Attention then turns away from Orffyreus, but Schumacher does not stray from the subject of perpetual motion machines, as he then proceeds to report on his meetings with other German inventors and their various schemes to develop such devices. Thus, Schumacher informs the tsar that a certain German mathematician, transcribed as Kashuber, was of the same opinion as ‘sGravesande as to the real possibility of perfecting a perpetual motion machine. Consequently, Schumacher purchased the mathematician’s concept and drawings.<sup>424</sup> The tsar’s envoy then writes of a certain *Gospodin* Mangolt, a physician from Rinteln, who according to Schumacher also believed he had discovered the secret to perpetual motion, but had published little on the matter.<sup>425</sup> Schumacher states that he “intentionally went to him in order to have the best information about this as he could.”<sup>426</sup> However, when he arrived in Rinteln, the physician had evidently nothing to show him and Schumacher remarks that “everything he had consisted in theories and projects,” but that “if a lofty personage wanted to carry the losses, then he would pledge himself to making many things.”<sup>427</sup>

Evidently unimpressed with these boasts, Schumacher moves on to describing his visit to Andreas Gärtner (1654–1727) in Dresden. Gärtner

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<sup>422</sup> Ibid.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid., 540–1.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid., 541.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid.

was the Master model-maker and inventor at the court of Augustus II (1670–1733), the King of Poland and Elector of Saxony. Whilst well known in his own right, Gärtner gained fame at the time for his vehement opposition to Orffyreus and his perpetual motion machine. This largely seems to have arisen out of jealousy, rather than based on sound scientific objections. Indeed, Schumacher notes that on his visit to Gärtner in Dresden, he was shown the inventor's own *perpetuum mobile*:

*Gospodin Gärtner's perpetuum mobile*, which I saw in Dresden, consists of a machine made of canvas filled with sand and in the shape of a grindstone, which moves back and forth by itself; but according to the words of the *Gospodin* inventor it is not possible to make it very large.<sup>428</sup>

Whereas it is evident that many Germans were still fascinated by the possibility of perpetual motion, Schumacher remarks that “French and English mathematicians do not esteem all these perpetual motion machines and they say that they are against the principles of mathematics.”<sup>429</sup>

In concluding his lengthy report on perpetual motion machines, Schumacher includes a comprehensive report written by Christian Wolff on July 5, 1721, on behalf of Peter the Great. The report was actually only sent to Schumacher on July 3, 1722, that is, almost a year after Wolff had written it.<sup>430</sup> In the letter accompanying the report, Wolff wrote:

I am obliged to you for all the trouble you have undertaken on my behalf. I am enclosing my comments about the Orffyrean perpetual motion machine as I promised. As soon as His Majesty the Tsar informs me as to what action he intends to take, I will have no hesitation in giving my opinion as to the conditions of Orffyreus's contract.<sup>431</sup>

The full report provides an impartial account of Wolff's scientific and mathematical opinions on the authenticity of the machine. In his own report to the tsar, Schumacher comments that “from this letter Your Imperial Highness can see that the *perpetuum mobile* is still not fully perfected.”<sup>432</sup> Schumacher concludes his section on perpetual motion machines by adding that Orffyreus wrote to him personally and stated:

<sup>428</sup> Ibid.

<sup>429</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 541. For more on the reactions of French and English mathematicians to perpetual motion machines, see Schaffer, “The Show That Never Ends,” 172–81.

<sup>430</sup> Wolff, *Briefe von Christian Wolff*, 4–5.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>432</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 543.

A certain Monarch wished to put up all the money asked for, so he intended to reveal his secret to the public once the contract was signed. Because of this, he humbly asked that Your Imperial Highness contribute some part of this recompense too.<sup>433</sup>

On July 10, 1722, Schumacher wrote to Wolff informing him of Peter the Great's desire to appoint the German scholar as the director of his planned Academic Society.<sup>434</sup> The tsar's envoy was understandably delighted to be able to report to the tsar that "nothing has given me as much satisfaction as the positive fulfilment of my commission to persuade the Court Councillor, Professor Wolff to enter into the services of His Imperial Highness."<sup>435</sup>

Yet, after Schumacher returned to St. Petersburg in the autumn of 1722, nothing was heard regarding either Wolff or Orffyreus until April 1723. At this point, Wolff wrote to Blumentrost regarding the destruction of Orffyreus's Kassel Wheel. In the letter, Wolff mentions that Orffyreus is intending to construct a larger machine and reminded the latter of "the noble intentions of His Majesty the Tsar," but confesses that he has not received a reply from "that strange man."<sup>436</sup> On June 1, 1723, Wolff wrote again to Blumentrost with more positive news, after hearing from the inventor:

At last I can send Orffyreus's answer concerning the perpetual motion machine, together with his first letter that was misdirected and am now awaiting His Majesty the Tsar's orders in this matter. I have suggested that nothing should be assigned to the bank at this time and that the agreed amount of money will be paid provided that, 1. The perpetual motion machine is found to me to be correct according to the principles of mathematics, and 2. It is found to be efficient for the use for which His Majesty the Tsar has designated it . . . I await your further orders.<sup>437</sup>

Attached to this letter was Orffyreus's own letter to Wolff, dated May 21, 1723, which expresses dismay at the fact that an initial letter had gone missing in the post. Orffyreus then reiterates the essentials of this first letter, outlining his desire for the Russian tsar to purchase his machine and stipulating the conditions of sale.

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<sup>433</sup> Ibid.

<sup>434</sup> Wolff, *Briefe von Christian Wolff*, 164–6.

<sup>435</sup> Pekarskii, *Nauka i literatura*, vol. 1, 538.

<sup>436</sup> Wolff, *Briefe von Christian Wolff*, 12–13.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid., 17.

Shortly after receiving Wolff's letter, Blumentrost replied to confirm arrangements regarding the German's entry into Russian service and outlining the conditions the tsar had decided upon vis-à-vis Orffyreus's perpetual motion machine:

Herr Schumacher has already reported both in writing and in person to His Majesty the Russian Tsar when he arrived here, your decision to enter into His service. Associated with this is the possibility of working to improve the perpetual motion machine if agreement can be reached with the inventor. . . . In point of the perpetual motion machine, His Majesty the Tsar has decided to put into escrow with the King of Prussia, that amount of money agreed with the inventor. It would then be left to your judgement whether the machine is a real *perpetuum mobile* and whether it would benefit the public. In accordance with this, I will negotiate with Orffyreus and inform you of contract or agreement.<sup>438</sup>

From the above letter it is clear that a crucial reason for Peter the Great wishing to invite Wolff into Russian service was because of his self-proclaimed ability to be able to perfect Orffyreus's perpetual motion machine. The arrangements between Wolff, the Russian authorities and Orffyreus unravelled, however, after Frederick Wilhelm I of Prussia suddenly dismissed the German Professor from his post at Halle on November 8, 1723, and ordered him to leave Prussia within forty-eight hours.<sup>439</sup> In response, Wolff fled to Hesse-Kassel, where Karl, the Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel became his patron and ensured his appointment at the University of Marburg. This was the same man, of course, who had been patron to Orffyreus. Without Wolff as a mediator, negotiations between the Russian monarch and Orffyreus shuddered to a halt.

Intriguingly, one last flurry of activity between Peter the Great and Orffyreus occurred in January 1725, barely a few days before the tsar's death. According to John Collins, a certain Detlev Klefeker (1675–1750) offered to go to Germany on behalf of the Russian tsar (and at his own expense) in order to purchase Orffyreus's perpetual motion machine.<sup>440</sup> Klefeker was officially the representative of Friedrich Wilhelm I at the Russian court. It is curious to note, however, that in addition to his official duties, Klefeker also took a great interest in esoteric pursuits. At the time, for example, he entered into a lengthy correspondence with

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<sup>438</sup> Ibid., 168–9.

<sup>439</sup> Collins, *Perpetual Motion*, 124.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid., 126.



Johann Friedrich Henckel (1678–1744) devoted to alchemical matters.<sup>441</sup> In 1736 he also published an overtly alchemical and Hermetic work, under the pseudonym of Pyrophilus, entitled *Das Fundament der Lehre vom Stein der Weisen, oder des Urältesten Philosophi Hermetis Trismegisti Tabula Smaragdina*.<sup>442</sup> Thus, Klefeker's willingness to ensure the purchase of Orffyreus's Wheel on behalf of the Russian monarch reflects his profound interest in wider esoteric pursuits. In this sense the secrets of God's universe were not limited to the search for perpetual motion. Likewise, Peter the Great's own fascination in perpetual motion machines reflects his own curiosity in being privy to esoteric knowledge.

Peter the Great's efforts to bring Orffyreus's Wheel to Russia ended in failure, yet this was certainly not for want of effort. Indeed, the tsar's decade-long interest in *perpetuum mobiles* reveals his deeply held sense of credulity in the possibility of achieving the long-cherished dream of infinite motion. The potential for utilizing such a machine for the benefit of the Russian State would have no doubt been uppermost in the monarch's mind. Moreover, Peter the Great was typical of absolutist monarchs in the baroque Court culture of Early Modern Europe, who sought to flaunt their divine role in their respective realms by patronizing attempts by projectors to harness the secrets of nature. At the same time, as with his curious interest in alchemical experimentation and in harnessing the power of astrological prognostications, Peter's interest in perpetual motion machines reflects his inquisitive character, which was fascinated in the mysterious, esoteric aspects of the natural world around him.

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<sup>441</sup> See *Mineralogische, Chemische und Alchymistische Briefe von reisenden und andern Gelehrten an den ehemaligen chursächsischen Bergrath J. F. Henkel*, vol. 2 (Dresden, 1794), 141–202.

<sup>442</sup> John Ferguson, ed., *Bibliotheca Chemica: A Catalogue of the Alchemical, Chemical and Pharmaceutical Books in the Collection of the Late James Young of Kelly and Durris*, vol. 1 (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1906), 472.



## CONCLUSION

At Peter the Great's funeral on February 25, 1725, Prokopovich performed a memorable oration that lamented the loss of his beloved leader and sought to crystallize his legacy. Peter had been Russia's Samson, whom "the world admir'd" and had made Russia "firm and durable as a Rock," once again playing on the meaning of the name Peter.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Prokopovich adds that Peter had also been Russia's first Japheth (the grandson of Noah), "who has effected and brought to Perfection what was never before known," that is shipbuilding and navigation.<sup>2</sup> What is more, Prokopovich extols Peter for being Russia's Moses, who was "famous for so many excellent institutions."<sup>3</sup> Next, the orator compared Peter with Solomon and stated: "whom God endow'd with extraordinary wisdom and prudence! Proofs of this are as many as the numerous philosophical experiments he himself made, and demonstrated by his own observations."<sup>4</sup> In other words, Peter the Great had been a philosopher-king, in the image of Solomon, who had endeavoured to reveal and utilize the secrets of God's creation. Lastly, Prokopovich likens Peter the Great to both King David and Constantine in terms of his wide-sweeping ecclesiastical reforms, which, of course, had been orchestrated by the orator himself.<sup>5</sup>

Prokopovich's numerous parallels with Biblical personages and the first Christian emperor were designed to solidify Peter the Great's legacy as a divinely appointed monarch. This image had already been forcefully propagated for a quarter of a century, whereby the transformations enacted by the monarch were cast in a prophetic sense. Vladimir I may have brought Christianity to Russia in 988, but it was Peter the Great who had pushed Russia onto the world stage, in order to carry out its providential role.

The allure of such a grandiose interpretation of Peter the Great's reign was not simply restricted to the likes of Prokopovich and Iavorskii, however, as many eminent Western Europeans, such as Kuhlmann, Lee, Leibniz and Witsen also viewed the Russian monarch within an eschatological

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<sup>1</sup> Consett, *For God and Peter the Great*, 281.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 282–3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

mindset, to varying degrees. Indeed, it is fascinating to note the profound sense of loss expressed by Aaron Hill, the well-known English poet, playwright and theatre manager, on hearing of the tsar's death:

He was truly God's VICEREGENT, and irradiated the *Human Nature*, with such lively Beamings of the *Divine*, that, as *He obey'd, He resembled*, the Deity! – He could not, indeed, *create Men*; But he *new-moulded*, and *inspir'd* them.<sup>6</sup>

Hill's image of Peter the Great being divinely sanctioned to mould, rather than create, new men, is a striking metaphor reminiscent of Prokopovich's gushing oratorical praise. As mentioned, Prokopovich compared Peter to a sculptor in 1726, for example, who had recast Russia into his own emblem.<sup>7</sup> Here the orator is not only alluding to Peter sculpting his realm into his own image, but also plays on the fact that the tsar's personal emblem was in fact a sculptor crafting a glorious statue.

Moreover, in the letter written in March 1720 to August Hermann Francke, already cited in Chapter 4, Prokopovich utilized the metaphor of Peter as a divinely sanctioned metallurgist, with his subjects portrayed as precious metals buried in the earth. Hence, the monarch's providential task was to extract these hidden precious metals in order to burn and polish them until they are utterly transformed.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, in both Hill's and Prokopovich's eyes Peter the Great is unambiguously portrayed as a monarch charged with a divine mission as a royal artisan. In other words, Peter the Great was not meant to spread the word of God through preaching, but through sheer will. His subjects are effectively portrayed as pliable materials transformed by an agent of God able to harness the divine powers and potential inherent in the cosmos, but only accessible to a chosen few.

This potent image of Peter the Great cleverly fused traditional Davidic representations associated with the Russian monarchy with notions of progressive millenarianism, which emerged as a powerful religious movement in Western Europe in the seventeenth century. In this work I have aimed to illustrate that Peter the Great actively drew on both reservoirs in order to fashion his monumental reform programme.

Thus, this entailed a combination of deeply religious and traditional conceptions of an ideal ruler and realm with progressive notions of reform,

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<sup>6</sup> *The Plain Dealer: being select essays on several curious subjects*, vol. 2 (London, 1730), 410.

<sup>7</sup> See Grebeniuk, *Panigiricheskaia literatura*, 298.

<sup>8</sup> See Winter, *Halle Als Ausgangspunkt*, 438.

which were still intrinsically linked to Biblical paradigms. In this manner it was entirely logical for Peter the Great to fashion himself as a new King David building a new House of Israel and New Jerusalem in Russia. Such an image harnessed a notion of kingship that perceived the monarch as the pivotal driving force leading his country on a providential mission to restore Adamic knowledge. In other words, Peter was fulfilling his Davidic destiny to build a New Jerusalem in which an instauration of knowledge was able to flourish amidst a setting of Edenic bliss.

This image accords with Viktor Zhivov's penetrative analysis of the speech delivered by G. I. Golovkin (1660–1734), the chancellor of Foreign Affairs, on October 22, 1721 in honour of Peter accepting the titles 'All-Russian Emperor' (*vserossiiskii imperator*), 'Father of the Fatherland' (*otets otechestviia*) and 'the Great' (*velikii*). Zhivov astutely notes a millenarian dimension to Golovkin's famed praise of Peter as a ruler who had brought Russia "from the darkness of ignorance into the theatre . . . of the whole world, so to speak, from nothingness into being, into the company of political peoples."<sup>9</sup> Thus, by drawing on the opening line of Genesis, which also served as the crux of an important liturgical prayer in the Orthodox Church, Zhivov states that Golovkin was portraying Peter as the creator of a new dispensation envisaged as the realization of the prophesized millennium.<sup>10</sup>

Viewed in this sense Peter the Great's enthusiastic promotion of the arts and sciences tapped into millenarian expectations, firstly in terms of Daniel's prophecy of an increase in knowledge immediately prior to the millennium. Secondly, in terms of the description of New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation, which St. John the Divine portrays as a city in which the "root and offspring of David" (Revelation 22:16) will ensure that "there shall be no more death" (Revelation 21:4). From a millenarian perspective this passage was crucial as it seemed to suggest that science and learning had a key role to play in restoring man's dominion over nature.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, far from banishing religion from his court, I have sought to show how it could be utilized as a driving force, rather than being perceived

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<sup>9</sup> "Rech, kotoraiia publichno v tserkvi Tsarskomu Presvetlomu Velichestvu ot Sunoda i Senata govorena *Opisanie dokumentov i del, khraniashchikhsia v arkhive Sviateishego*," in *Pravitel'stviuushchego Sinoda. Donskogo monastyria (1542–1721)*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1868), CCCCLVIII–CCCCLIX.

<sup>10</sup> Zhivov, *Razyskaniia v oblasti istorii*, 401.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the millenarian belief in the advancement of learning as a necessary prerequisite of the millennium, see Webster, *Great Instauration*.

as a hindrance, behind reform. Moreover, the millenarian emphasis on the need for an advancement in learning as a necessary prerequisite in the unfolding Biblical drama of the last days encouraged an inquisitive and open approach to revealing the secrets of God's creation. In other words, many millenarians in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century actively embraced esoteric pursuits as a means of advancing knowledge. This is particularly noticeable, for example, in the case of Francis Lee and also played a part in shaping Leibniz's approach towards science. One can also discern such an inquisitive and open approach to esoteric pursuits, I would argue, in Peter the Great's approach to learning and science.

In propagating the notion of himself as a Davidic monarch creating a New Jerusalem in Russia, it was necessary for Peter the Great to ensconce individuals in key positions of authority who were capable and willing to realise this grand vision. In this work I have focused on four key foreign servitors at the Petrine court, who in my opinion each displayed propensities towards religious thought and esotericism that helped to shape Petrine Russia.

In the first part of this book I concentrated on two members of the tsar's inner circle – Bruce and Erskine – who instilled a distinctive Scottish Jacobite flavour to the Petrine court. Indeed, it is remarkable that two such prominent servitors emanated from neighbouring Jacobite families from the Scottish county of Clackmannanshire. In the case of Bruce, we can observe a figure who remained close to Peter the Great for over forty years. Graduating through the ranks from Peter's *poteshnyi polk* (play regiment) in the 1680s, Bruce went on to occupy pivotal posts in the Petrine regime. What is more, he was a member of Peter's so-called 'unholy council' (*neosviashchennyi sobor*), which only included those utterly loyal to the monarch and was a knight of the Order of St. Andrew the First Called.

Thus, it is of no small consequence that this 'Russian Faust,' as Pushkin labelled him, displayed a strong attraction towards astrology, alchemy and the occult in general. What is more, this interest in the esoteric was combined with a religious worldview close to that espoused by German Pietists in Halle. Indeed, as Winter states, it was from Bruce's home that Pietists "took their first steps" in Russia.<sup>12</sup> Bruce was not only free to hold such esoteric and religious interests, but was actually placed in positions of authority by Peter, whereby these views were able to directly

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<sup>12</sup> Winter, *Halle Als Ausgangspunkt*, 84.

influence the course of Russian learning. Thus, as the first director of the Moscow Mathematical and Navigational School and the director of the Civil Typography, Bruce was able to impart his knowledge of astronomy and reformed astrology to a generation of students. In addition, as the head of the College of Manufacturing and of the St. Petersburg mint, Bruce could place his knowledge of experimental chemistry at the service of the state. Bruce also acted as one of Peter the Great's most trusted scientific advisers and was given the responsibility of hiring talented foreigners into Russian service, as well as entering into correspondence with the leading lights of the day, such as Leibniz.

Although dying at the relatively young age of forty-one, Robert Erskine also made a lasting contribution to the Petrine reform project. In medical terms, Erskine carried on the Romanov tradition of employing foreign physicians, such as Arthur Dee, steeped in knowledge of alchemy. His iatrochemical approach to medicine can be seen in his treatment of the tsar and in his enthusiastic endorsement of balneotherapy. Furthermore, as the first director of the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera and the head of its library, as well as the founder of the city's botanical garden, Erskine left an indelible mark on the cultural and scientific life of the capital and Russia as a whole. One also has to bear in mind Erskine's powerful advisory role as a State Councillor, as well as his active endeavours as a Jacobite agent with connections to Masonic circles.

In all, Erskine provides a fascinating illustration of the extremely complex and intricate world of early eighteenth-century medicine and science, in which religion and esotericism could still exert enormous influence. What is more, Erskine's breadth of learning ensured that his impact on Petrine life went far beyond the boundaries of medicine. Indeed, Erskine can be viewed as an encyclopaedist, who approached the study of nature in the same inquisitive spirit as the likes of Kircher and Ashmole. This was undoubtedly an approach much admired by Peter the Great and helps to explain why the monarch cherished Erskine's contribution to his reform project so highly.

The second part of this book focused on the remarkable contributions made by two Ukrainian clerics – Stefan Iavorskii and Feofan Prokopovich – to the Petrine programme of reforms. In many ways both figures illustrate the profound way in which they were influenced by their early training in Kiev. Drawing on the so-called Russian baroque tradition exemplified by Simeon Polotskii, which was saturated in mystical and esoteric imagery, Iavorskii and Prokopovich were able to adapt these themes to the Petrine era.



In the case of Iavorskii, his service to the Petrine cause manifested itself in a stream of incredible sermons extolling the Russian monarch and his innovations. Deliberately promoted to the post of Metropolitan of Riazan and Murom in 1700 and quickly installed as the de-facto head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Peter the Great saw in Iavorskii a cleric capable of expressing the visionary nature of his reign in the critically important sermons he delivered on significant occasions in the court calendar. In effect, Iavorskii's role was akin to a modern day press officer and spin-doctor, whereby he was charged with interpreting and extolling the actions of his monarch. In this sense, the rich and systematic utilization of eschatological and esoteric motifs reflects not only the legacy of the Russian baroque style of Polotskii, but also reveals much about how Peter the Great himself wished to be perceived.

Prokopovich was also extremely adept at incorporating eschatological and esoteric motifs into the official sermons he delivered for the benefit of the Russian monarch. However, I would argue that his role as the instigator of educational and ecclesiastical reform was of equal or even greater import. It was in this area that Prokopovich went beyond the scholastic training he received in Kiev and in Rome. By absorbing various strands of thought – particularly elements of the occult philosophy of Daniel Sennert and the Pietist educational model advanced by Francke – and fusing them with mystical elements of Russian Orthodox theology contained in the works of early Church Fathers, such as Dionysius the Areopagite and the Cappadocian Fathers, Prokopovich was able to form an intellectual worldview in harmony with the goals of the Petrine reform project.

Thus, in the first two parts I hope to have illustrated how Peter surrounded himself with “loyal disciples,” as Ernest Zitser fittingly describes his inner circle, who all embraced worldviews that were more complex than simply being manifestations of secularism and enlightenment.<sup>13</sup> In contributing to Peter the Great's grand endeavour to bring about what I refer to as an instauration, these servitors embody the kaleidoscopic spirit promoted by the monarch. This spirit undoubtedly included classical motifs and secular ideals. However, to overlook the crucial role played by religion (particularly in the form of Davidic providentialism) and esotericism denies the Petrine reform project its vital colouring and sense of mission.

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<sup>13</sup> Zitser, *Transfigured Kingdom*, 176.

In this regard it is worth returning to Golovkin's apt motif of Peter being a performer on the world stage. Using this metaphor it is possible to say that the Russian monarch assumed his role in 1697, after the victorious Azov campaign and upon embarking on his pivotal first Grand Embassy to Western Europe. On his travels the tsar's every move was eagerly reported and aroused considerable excitement among many learned figures. Of course much of this excitement stemmed from simple curiosity. After all this was the first time most people would have witnessed the exotic sight of the tsar of Muscovy. However, I would argue that many of Peter's audience imbued his role on the world stage in prophetic terms, belying the fact that Western Europe was far from being a uniformly secular and rational enclave in the early modern world. Such perceptions are clearly discernible, for example, in Francis Lee's pronouncement of Peter as an "extraordinary Genius" able "to effect extraordinary things" and Leibniz's declaration that the monarch was a divinely appointed gardener cultivating his plantation.<sup>14</sup> Fittingly the playwright Aaron Hill expressed the most dramatic interpretation of Peter's role on the world stage: "There, a *New Sun* inflames the Land of *Night*. There, Arts and Arms the Worlds *Fifth Empire* raise."<sup>15</sup> In other words, Hill perceives Peter's role on the world stage as the prophesized universal monarch leading his nation (and the whole world) towards the millennium.

I would argue that Peter cultivated this prophetic role, most commonly adopting the garb of King David, although also on occasions drawing on other Biblical paradigms, especially Moses, Noah and Solomon and on the potent image of the monarch as a new Constantine, the first Christian Emperor.<sup>16</sup> In assuming such a role Peter invested enormous symbolic importance to his actions. Consequently, if one believed in the role, the Russian monarch embodied a figure of Biblical magnitude forging a New Jerusalem on the banks of the Neva and a New Israel throughout his realm.<sup>17</sup> Thus, when his audience viewed Peter as a monarch leading

<sup>14</sup> Lee, *Apoleipomena*, vol. 1, 2; Guerrier, *Otnosheniia Leibnitsa k Rossii*, 15.

<sup>15</sup> Hill, *Northern Star*, 5.

<sup>16</sup> For more on Peter as a "New Constantine", see Zhivov, *Rzyskaniia v oblasti istorii*, 397–400.

<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, if one did not believe in the role and saw Peter as an artificial "imposter" on the stage, then the monarch assumed the guise of the false messiah. For more on Peter as a "false Tsar" and as the embodiment of the Antichrist, see Iurii Lotman and Boris Uspenskii Boris, "Binary Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture (to the End of the Eighteenth Century)," in *The Semiotics of Russian Cultural History*, ed. Alexander D. Nakhimovsky and Alice Stone Nakhimovsky (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 30–66.

his country out of darkness through the establishment of the arts and sciences in his realm, they were being encouraged to envisage him as a prophetic instaurator. This is an image, or ideological programme, Peter deliberately fostered and necessarily relied upon in order to be seen as a monarch capable of revealing the secrets of God's universe. In other words, it was an image that encouraged esoteric pursuits at court. Consequently, his supporting cast can also be seen to have played their parts with some aplomb.

## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX A

### ALCHEMICAL AUTHORS AND WORKS IN BRUCE'S LIBRARY

Key: The location of each book is indicated by number and a letter designating the specific collection.

- S= Elena I. Savelieva, *Biblioteka Ia. V. Briusa: Katalog* (Leningrad: BAN, 1989).  
H= Sirkka Havu and Irina Lebedeva, eds., *Collections donated by the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg to the Alexander University of Finland in 1829* (Helsinki: Helsinki University Library, 1997).  
M= *Materialy dlia istorii imperatorskoi akademii nauk (1742–1743)*, vol. 5 (St. Petersburg, 1889).

\* Publication place and date given when known.

1. Acxtelmeier, Stanislaus Reinhard, *Calendarium Perpetuum Universale* (Nuremberg, 1707), 409 (M).
2. Agricola, Georg, *De Re Metallica* (1580), 140 (M).
3. Agricola, Johann, *Philosophia et medica*, 368 (M).
4. Barba, Alvaro Alonso, *Eines Spanischen Priesters* (Hamburg, 1676), 61 (S).
5. Basilius, Valentinus, *Chymische Schrifften* (Hamburg, 1717), 63 (S), 659 (M).
- 6a. Becher, Johann Joachim, *Chymischer Glucks-Hafen oder Grosse Chymische Concordantz und Collection* (Frankfurt, 1682), 68 (S), 774 (M).
- 6b. —, *Chymischer Rosen-Garten* (Erben, 1717), 69 (S), 1292 (M).
- 6c. —, *Kluger Haus-Vater, verstandige Haus-Mutter* (Leipzig, 1721), 70 (S), 1186 (M).
7. Besson, Jacques, *Il teatro de gl'instrumenti et machine di m. Jacopo Bessoni . . . vincenti*, 1582, 77 (S), 55 (M).
8. Blancaerd, Steven, *Theatrum Chemicum* (Leipzig, 1700), 102 (S), 982 (M).
- 9a. Boerhaave, Hermann, *Dr. Boerhaave's Elements of Chymistry*, (London, 1732), 114 (S).
- 9b. —, *A New Method of Chemistry*, (London, 1727), 117 (S), 760 (M).
- 10a. Böhme, Jakob, *Eine Einfeltige Erklärung von Christi Testament der heyl*, (Amsterdam, 1658), 21 (H).
- 10b. —, *Von Christi Testamenten zwey Buchlein* (Amsterdam, 1624), 22 (H).
- 10c. —, *Von der Gnaden-Wahl, oder dem Willen Gottes über die Menschen* (Amsterdam, 1665), 23 (H).
- 10d. —, *Der Wegk zu Christo, verfasset in sechs Buchlein* (Amsterdam, 1658), 24 (H).
11. Boltz, Valentin, *Illuminirbuch. Kunstlich alle Farben Zumachen und Bereiten* (Erfurt, 1654), 587 (S).
12. Boyle, Robert, *The Philosophical Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle esq.* (London, 1725), 126 (S), 474 (M).
13. Bräner, Johann Jacob, *Thesaurus Sanitatis* (Frankfurt, 1712–1713), 131 (S), 809 (M).
14. Browne, Thomas, *A True and Full Coppy of that which was most imperfectly and surreptitiously printed before under the name of Religio Medici* (London, 1645), 137 (S).
15. Brummet, Christoph, *Das Blut der Natur* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1721), 139 (S).
16. Cardano, Girolamo, *Offenbarung der Natur unnd Natürlicher Dingen* (Basel, 1559), 149 (S).
- 17a. Cluverus Dethlevus, *Disquisitiones Philosophicae* (Hamburg, 1707–1711), 172 (S), 390 (M).

- 17b. —, *Nova Crisis Temporum oder Curiöser Philosophischer Welt-Mercurius* (1701–1702), 173 (S), 391 (M).
18. Democritus Abderyta, *De Rebus Sacris Naturalibus et Mysticis. Cum notis Synesii et Pelagii. Tumba Semiramidis Hermeticae Sigillatae* (Nuremberg, 1717), 205 (S).
19. Deodatus, Claudius, *De Vero et Legitimo aquae Cordialis Herculis Saxoniae* (Hanover, 1652), 206 (S).
20. Digby, Kenelm, *Eröffnung unterschiedlicher Heimlichkeiten der Natur* (Frankfurt, 1700), 219 (S).
21. Dippel, Johann Conrad (pseud. Christianus Democritus), *Christiani Democriti Eröfnete Muhtmassungen und Merckwürdige Gedancken über Herrn Jacobs von Melle* (Hamburg, 1725), 16 (manuscript) (M).
22. Dobrzensky, von Schwarzbruck Jacob Joannes Wenceslas, *Allgemeines Naturliches Praeservativ* (Nuremberg, 1680), 224 (S), 1193 (M).
- 23a. Ettner, Johann Christoph von, *Des Getreuen Eckharts Entlauffener Chymicus* (Erben, 1696), 236 (S).
- 23b. —, *Des Getreuen Eckharts Medicinischer* (Erben, 1720), 237 (S).
- 23c. —, *Dess Getreuen Eckarths Ungewissenhafter Apotecker* (Erben, 1700), 238 (S).
- 23d. —, *Dess Getreuen Eckharts unwürdiger Doctor* (Erben, 1697), 239 (S).
- 23e. —, *Des Getreuen Eckardts Verwegener Chirurgus* (Erben, 1698), 240 (S).
- 23f. —, *Rosetum Chymicum oder Chymischer Rosen-Garten* (Erben, 1724), 249 (S).
- 23g. —, *Vade et Occide Cain* (Erben, 1724), 250 (S).
24. Fachs, Modestin, *Probiar-Buchlein* (1669), 255 (S), 872 (M).
25. Fallopio, Gabriele, *Gabrielis Fallopii Hochberuhmten Medici zu Padua in Italien* (1690), 256 (S), 675 (M).
26. Fabre, Pierre Jean, *Des Scharffsinnigen, Welt-beruffenen un unvergleichlichen Philosophi Petri Johannis Fabri* (1713), 254 (S), 393 (M).
27. Faust, Johann Michael, *Lexicon Alchemiae*, (Leipzig, 1706), 259 (S), 1141 (M).
28. Friend John, *Chymical lectures* (London, 1712), 273 (S), 1379 (M).
29. Geber (Jabir ibn Haiyan al-Tarasusi), *Curieuse Vollständige Chymische Schriften, worinnen in dri vier Buchern das Quecksilber, Schwefel, Arsenicum, Gold, Silber* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1710), 1427 (M).
30. Glaser, Christophor, *Chymischer Wegewiser* (Jena, 1696,) 294 (S), 1109 (M).
- 31a. Glauber, Johann Georg and Glauber, Johann Rudolph, *Glauberus Concentratus* (Leipzig, 1715), 295 (S), 283 (M).
- 31b. Glauber, Johann Rudolph, *Furni Novi Philosophici* (Amsterdam, 1651), 296 (S).
- 32a. Gualdo, Friderico, *Communicatio in einer vortrefflichen chymischen Medicin*, 1700, 316 (S).
- 32b. —, *Der Entlarvte Gualdus* (1701), 317 (S).
- 33a. Haselmeyer, Adam, *Astronomia Olympi Nov Theophrastii* (Newstadt, 1618), 72 (H) Included in Paracelsus' *Philosophica Mystica*.
- 33b. —, *Theologia Cabalistica von dem vollkommenen Menschen* (Newstadt, 1618), 72 (H). Included in Paracelsus's *Philosophia Mystica*.
34. Headrich, John, *Arcana Philosophia or Chymical Secrets* (London, 1697), 333 (S), 1318 (M).
- 35a. Hellwig, Christoph von (pseud. Valentin Krautermann), *Curieuses Reise* (1711), 335 (S), 1224 (M).
- 35b. —, *Neu Eingerichtetes Lexicon Medico-Chymicum* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1711), 336 (S), 981 (M).
- 35c. —, *Praxis Medica* (1710), 337 (S), 989 (M).
- 35d. —, *Vollkommenes Teutsch* (Hanover, 1713), 338 (S), 389 (M).
- 35e. —, *Der Accurate Scheider und Kunstliche* (Arnstadt, 1717), 386 (S), 952 (M).
- 35f. —, *Curieuse und vernunftiger Urin-Artzt* (Arnstadt, 1725), 387 (S), 1144 (M).
36. Hellwig, Johann Otto von, *Arcana Maiora* (1712), 339 (S), 990 (M).
37. Hildebrand, Wolfgang, *Magia Naturalis, das ist, Kunst und Wunderbuch* (Leipzig, 1610), 772 (M).
- 38a. Hoffmann, Friedrich, *Weitberuhmten Medici* (1715–1721), 349 (S), 1381 (M).



- 38b. —, *Eines Beruhmten Medici* (1718–1721), 350 (S).  
 38c. —, *Welt-Beruhmten Königl* (1722), 351 (S), 1025 (M).  
 39. Hornung, Johann, *Cista Medica* (1626), 357 (S).  
 40. Jennis, Lucas, *Libellus Theosophiae de veris reliquiis seu semine Dei in nobis post lapsum relicto... Das ist: Ein buchlein der gottlichen Weissheit von dem wahren Heilgthumb oder von dem in vns nach dem Fall vberbliebenen Sahmen Gottes* (Newstadt, 1618), 55 (H).  
 41a. Jungken, Johann Helfrich, *Chirurgia Manualis* (1710), 366 (S), 883 (M).  
 41b. —, *Lexicon Chymico-Pharmaceuticum* (1709), 367 (S), 663 (M).  
 41c. —, *Nach den Heutigen* (1701–1703), 368 (S), 823 (M).  
 41d. —, *Corpus Pharmaceutico-Chymico-Medicum Universale* (Frankfurt, 1732), 92 (M).  
 42a. Kellner, David, *Ars Separatoria Curiosa ac Perutilis* (Leipzig, 1698), 372 (S), 1367 (M).  
 42b. —, *Officina Chymico-Metallica Curiosa* (1723), 373 (S), 842 (M).  
 42c. —, *Via Regia Naturae Simplicissimae* (1704), 374 (S).  
 43. Kerckring, Theodor, *Theodori Kerckringii Doctoris Medici Anmerkungen uber Basilii Valentini Triumph-Wagen des antimonii* (1724), 375 (S), 1407 (M).  
 44a. Kertzenmacher, Peter, *Alchimia* (Frankfurt, 1613), 377 (S), 1211 (M).  
 44b. —, *Des Beruhmten Alchimisten Petri Kertzenmachers* (1720), 378 (S).  
 45. Kessler, Thomas, *Keslerus Redivivus* (1713), 379 (S), 1187 (M).  
 46. Khunrath, Conrad, *Medullae Destillatoria et Medicae*, 380 (S), 383 (M).  
 47a. Kircher, Athanasius, *D'Onder-Aardse Weereld* (Amsterdam, 1682), 381 (S), 38 (M).  
 47b. —, *Arca Noae*, 77 (M).  
 48a. Kunckel, Johann Löwenstern von, *Schwedischen Berg-Raths* (Hamburg and Leipzig, 1716), 432 (S), 899 (M).  
 48b. —, *Königl. Schwedischen Berg-Raths* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1721), 433 (S), 1251 (M).  
 49. Le Febvre, Nicolas, *Neuvermehrter Chymischer Handleiter* (1685), 407 (S), 1277 (M).  
 50a. Lémery, Nicolas, *Cours de Chymie* (Dresden, 1698), 412 (S), 815 (M).  
 50b. —, *Nicolai Lemery Neue Curieuse Chymische Geheimnisse des Antimonii* (Dresden, 1709), 413 (S), 1020 (M).  
 50c. —, *Vollständiges Materialien-Lexicon* (Leipzig, 1721), 414 (S), 146 (M).  
 51. Ludovic, Daniel, *Opera Omnia* (Leipzig, 1712), 437 (S), 683 (M).  
 52. Lull, Ramon, *Lullius Redivivus* (Nuremberg, 1703), 439 (S), 1266 (M).  
 53. Meung, Jean de, *Nature's Remonstrances to the Alchemist* (Frankfurt, 1710), 362 (S).  
 54. Meurdrac, Maria, *Die Mitleidende und Leichte Chymie* (1712), 464 (S), 1127 (M).  
 55. Musitano, Carlo, *Waag-Schaale der Venus-Seuche* (1708), 480 (S), 1051 (M).  
 56. Mynsicht, Adrian von, *Thesaurus et armamentarium medico-chymicum* (Stuttgart, 1682), 481 (S), 1206 (M).  
 57. Neithold, Johann (Ehrd von Naxagoras), *Sancta Veritas Hermetica* (Wittenberg, 1712), 242 (S), 1128 (M).  
 58. Overkamp, Heidenreich, *Medici zu Amsterdam* (1705), 512 (S), 333 (M).  
 59a. Paracelsus, *Drey Vndersheydene Tractätlein Philippi Theophrasti Paracelsi ab Hohenheim* (Frankfurt, 1619), 70 (H).  
 59b. —, *Philosophia de limbo* (Magdeburg, 1618), 71 (H).  
 59c. —, *Philosophia Mystica* (Newstadt, 1618), 72 (H).  
 60. Paykull, Otto Arnold, *Problema Chymicum* (Berlin, 1719), 536 (S), 456 (M).  
 61. Piemontese, Alessio, *De Secretis Libri Septem* (Basel, 1568), 38 (S), 676 (M).  
 62. Renatus, Sincerus, *I.N.J. Goldene Quelle der Natur und Kunst* (1711), 648 (S), 1194 (M).  
 63. Retzel, Georg Friedrich, *Der Sechs Tage-Wercke Dieser Geheime Bedeutung im Spiegel der Uhralten und Mosaischen Philosophie entdeckt* (Blanckenburg, 1722), 31 (manuscript) (M).  
 64a. Rhumelius, Johann Pharamundus, *Medicina Spagyrica* (1694), 559 (S), 1007 (M).  
 64b. —, *Medicina Spagyrica* (1712), 560 (S), 1293 (M).  
 65a. Richter, Christian Friedrich, *Ausführlicher Bericht von der Essentia dulci* (1708), 562 (S) 1071 (M).

- 65b. —, *Die höchst-nöthige Erkenntniss des Menschen* (Leipzig, 1722), 563 (S), 976 (M).  
 66. Rosenstengel, Johann Jacob, *Institutiones Chymico-Pharmaceuticae* (Frankfurt, 1718), 583 (S), 362 (M).  
 67a. Roth, Gottfried, *Anhang zu seiner Chymie* (Leipzig, 1723), 585 (S).  
 67b. —, *Grundliche Anleitung zur Chymie* (Leipzig, 1721), 587, 1368 (M).  
 68a. Ryff Walther Hermann, *Confect Buch und Hauss Apoteck* (Frankfurt, 1558), 589 (S).  
 68b. —, *Der Funrembste* (Nuremberg, 1547), 590 (S).  
 69a. Salmon, William, *Pharmacopoeia Bateana* (London, 1713), 595 (S) 604 (M).  
 69b. —, *Pharmacopoeia Londonensis* (London, 1716), 596 (S), 1397 (M).  
 70c. —, *Pharmacopoeia Londonensis* (London, 1717), 597 (S), 860 (M).  
 69d. —, *Polygraphice* (London, 1701), 598 (S), 1423 (M).  
 69e. —, *Praxis Medica* (London, 1716), 599 (S), 603 (M).  
 70. Schindler, Christian Carl, *Der Geheimbde Muntz-Guardei und Berg-Probiierer* (Frankfurt, 1705), 612 (S), 1018 (M).  
 71. Schröder, Johann, *Johann Schröders Vollständige und nutz-reiche Apotheke* (Nuremberg, 1709), 619 (S), 141 (M).  
 72. Schultze, Gottfried, *Neu-Augirte und Continuirte Chronica* (Frankfurt, 1663), 621 (S), 1041 (M).  
 73. Siebmacher, Ambrosius, *Wasserstein der Weisen* (Frankfurt, 1710), 362 (S).  
 74. Sommerhoff, Johann Christoph, *Lexicon Pharmaceutico-Chymicum* (Nuremberg, 1701), 657 (S), 171 (M).  
 75a. Stahl, Georg Ernst, *Abhandling von der Goldenen Adler* (Leipzig, 1729), 667 (S) 1253 (M).  
 75b. —, *Ausführliche Abhandlung von den Zufallen* (Leipzig, 1724), 668 (S), 1032 (M).  
 75c. —, *Chymia Rationalis et Experimentalis* (Leipzig, 1720), 669 (S), 830 (M).  
 75d. —, *Grundliche Untersuchung der Kranckheiten* (Leipzig, 1730), 670 (S), 966 (M).  
 75e. —, *Kurtze Untersuchung der Kranckheiten* (Leipzig, 1730), 671 (S).  
 75f. —, *Materia Medica* (Dresden, 1728), 672 (S), 1066 (M).  
 75g. —, *Der Medicinische Eröffnung* (Leipzig, 1724), 673 (S), 874 (M).  
 75h. —, *Observationes Clinico-practicae* (Leipzig, 1718), 674 (S), 843 (M).  
 76. Staricius, Johannes, *New Reformirter Helden-Schatz* (1647), 675 (S).  
 77. Steeb, Johann Christoph, *Dulcedo de Forti* (Arnstedt, 1679), 676 (S) 1355 (M).  
 78. Sturm, Johann Christoph, *Der Natürlichen und Mathematischen Wissenschaften* (1713), 686 (S), 667 (M).  
 79. Tryon, Thomas, *Wisdom's Dictates* (London, 1696), 721 (S), 1227 (M).  
 80. Urbigerus, Baro, *Aphorismi Urbigerani* (Hamburg, 1705), 1001 (M).  
 81. Vielheuer, Christophor, *Grundliche Beschreibung* (Leipzig, 1676), 736 (S).  
 82. Vresswyk, van Goossen, *Het Cabinet de Mineralen* (1670), 664 (M).  
 83. Weigel, Valentin, *Philosophica Mystica* (Newstadt, 1618), 72 (H).  
 84a. Wilkins, John, *The Discovery of a New World* (London, 1707), 773 (S), 1401 (M).  
 84b. —, *Mercury: or the Secret and Swift Messenger* (London, 1707), 773 (S), 1401 (M).  
 85. Witgeest, Simon, *Het Verbetert en Vermeerdert Natuurlyk Tover-Boek* (Amsterdam, 1695), 780 (S), 1002 (M).  
 86. Woyt, Johann Jacob, *Gazophylacium Medico-Physicum* (Leipzig, 1709), 789 (S), 400 (M).  
 87. Zobeil, Friedrich, *Chymische Medicinische Perle* (Hamburg, 1708), 795 (S).  
 88. Zwinger, Johann, *Der Mitleidige Gewissenhafte Apothecker* (Nuremberg, 1699), 797 (S), 640 (M).

### General Collections:

1. *Collectanea Chymica Leidensia* (Jena, 1700), 185 (S), 668 (M).
2. *Der Wohlerfahrne Scheid-Kunstler* (Nuremberg, 1708), 781 (S), 1002 (M).
3. *Lexicon Medicinæ et Chymicum* (London, 1705), 421 (S), 576 (M).
4. *Thesaurus Secretorum Curiosorum* (Geneva, 1709), 365 (M).

## APPENDIX B

### NOTABLE ESOTERIC WORKS IN BRUCE'S LIBRARY

Key: The location of each book is indicated by number and a letter designating the specific collection.

- S= Elena I. Savelieva, *Biblioteka Ia. V. Briusa: Katalog*, Leningrad: BAN, 1989).  
 H= Sirkka Havu and Irina Lebedeva, eds., *Collections donated by the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg to the Alexander University of Finland in 1829* (Helsinki: Helsinki University Library, 1997).  
 M= *Materiały dla historii imperatorskiej akademii nauk (1742–1743)*, vol. 5 (St. Petersburg, 1889).

1. Abu Hali ben-Omar, *Abu Hali ben Omar des berühmten Araben Astrologia terrestris, oder Irrdische Stern-Kunde* (Freystadt, 1703), 32 (S).
2. Böhme, Jakob, *Eine Einfeltige Erklärung von Christi Testament der heyl*, (Amsterdam, 1658), 21 (H).
3. —, *Von Christi Testamenten zwey Buchlein* (Amsterdam, 1624), 22 (H).
4. —, *Von der Gnaden-Wahl, oder dem Willen Gottes über die Menschen*, (Amsterdam, 1665), 23 (H).
5. —, *Der Wegk zu Christo, verfasst in sechs Buchlein* (Amsterdam, 1658), 24 (H).
6. Cardano, Girolamo, *Offenbarung der Natur unnd Natürlicher dingen auch mancherley Subtiler würckungen* (Basel, 1559), 149 (S).
7. Catanus, Nicolas, *Nicol. Catani Geomantischer Schöpffen-Stul* (Freystadt, 1704), 154 (S).
8. Cluverus, Dethlev, *Nova Crisis Temporum oder Curiöser Philosophischer Welt-Mercurius* (Neustadt, 1701–1702), 173 (S).
9. —, *Nova Crisis Temporum oder Curiöser Philosophischer Welt-Mercurius* (Hamburg, 1703), 174 (S).
10. —, *Disquisitiones Philosophicae, oder Historische Anmerckungen über die nützlichsten Sachen der Welt* (Hamburg, 1707–1711), 172 (S).
11. Democritus, *Democritus Abderyta graecus De Rebus sacris naturalibus et mysticis. Cum Notis Synesii et Pelagii. Tumba Semiramidis hermeticae sigillatae* (Nuremberg, 1717), 205 (S).
12. Democritus Christianus (Dippel, Johann Conrad), *Christiani Democriti Eröffnete Muhtmassungen und Merck würdige Gedancken über Herrn Jacobs von Melle . . . Beschreibung von den Guldenen Bildergen* (Hamburg, 1725), 16 (manuscript section) (M).
13. Digby, Kenelm, *Eröffnung unterschiedlicher Heimlichkeiten der Natur* (Frankfurt, 1700), 219 (S).
14. Ehrd von Naxagaras, Johannes, *Sancta Veritas Hermetica* (Breslau, 1712), 242 (S).
15. Hildebrand, Wolfgang, *Magia Naturalis* (Leipzig, 1610), 772 (M).
16. Jennis, Lucas, *Libellus Theosophiae* (Newstadt, 1618), 55 (H).
17. —, *Wasserstein der Weisen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1710), 362 (S).
18. Kircher, Athanasius, *D'Onder-aardse Weereld in haar Goddelijk Maaksel en woderbare uitwerkselen aller Dingen* (Amsterdam, 1682), 381 (S).
19. Lull, Ramon, *Lullius Redivius Denudatus* (Nuremberg, 1703), 439 (S).
20. Magnus, Albertus, *Weiber Geheimniss* (Herffurt, 1652), 37 (S).
21. Paracelsus, *Philosophia Mystica* (Newstadt, 1618), 72 (H).
22. Piemontese, Alessio, *De Secretis* (Basel, 1568), 38 (S).

23. Porta della, Giambattista, *Magia Naturalis* (1680), 642 (M).
24. Renatus, Sincerus, *Goldene Quelle der Natur und Kunst* (Wittenberg and Erben, 1711), 648 (S).
25. Rhumelius, Johann Pharamundus, *Medicina Spagyrica* (Frankfurt, 1694 and 1712), 559 & 560 (S).
26. Ross, Alexander, *Pansebeia, or A View of all Religions in the World* (London, 1696), 584 (S).
27. Schott, Caspar, *Magia Universalis Naturae et Artis*, 375 (M).
28. —, *Cursus Mathematicus*, 675 (M).
29. —, *Technica Curiosa*, 376 (M).
30. Staricius, Johannes, *New Reformirter Helden-Schatz* (1647), 675 (S).
31. Steeb, Johann Christoph, *Dulcedo de Forti* (Arnstedt, 1679), 676 (S).
32. Vallemont, Pierre le Lorrain, *Curiositez de la Nature*, 79 and 1135 (M).

*Other Notable Works:*

1. *Geomantia* (Meyntz, 1534), 288 (S).
2. *Vollkommene Geomantia deren erster Theil die aufs neue revidirte* (Freystadt, 1703), 744 (S).
3. *Die Edelste Eitelkeit oder Abgenöthigte Vertheidigung nicht nur der Geomantia in genere* (Freystadt, 1704), 241 (S).

## APPENDIX C

### ALCHEMICAL AUTHORS AND WORKS IN ERSKINE'S LIBRARY

Katalog knig biblioteki Areskina R.K. 1719, Fond 158, Opis 1. d214a. Library of the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg.

1. Agricola, Georg, *De Metallica* (Basel, 1657), Areskine Libri Physiologici, Folio 10, No. 35.
- 2a. Agricola, Johann, *Anotationes in Popium, Vols I, II et III* (Nuremberg, 1697), 150b Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 177.
- 2b. —, *Feldschererbuch* (Dresden, 1701), Areskine Libri in Octavo et Duodecimo Medic. 26, No. 357.
3. Agrippa, Heinrich Cornelius, *Opera I et I*, (Leiden), Areskine Libri Philosophici Histor. Et Philolog, 8o et 12o, 46, No. 11.
4. Albertus Magnus, *Secretis Mulierum* (Amsterdam, 1669), 200b Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 12o, No. 115.
5. Aldrovandi, Ulisse, *Synopsis Musaei Metallici U. Aldrovandi* (Leipzig, 1701), 310b. Areskine Libri Medici in 8vo et 12o, No.
6. Andreae, Johann Valentin, *Chymische Hochzeit* (Strasbourg, 1616), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 27, No. 390.
7. Bachmann, Augustus Quirinus (Rivinus), *Ordo Plantarum Flore Irregul Vols I, II, III* (Leipzig, 1699), Areskine Libri Physiologici in Folio 10, No. 1.
- 8a. Barchusen, Johann Conrad, *Pyrosophia* (Leiden, 1698), Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto 15, No. 168.
- 8b. —, *Pyrosophia* (Leiden, 1695), Areskine Libri Medici et Physiologici in Quarto 16, No. 213.
- 8c. —, *Acroamata* (Utrecht, 1703), 26 ob Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 381.
- 8d. —, *Pharmacopeus Synopticus* (Utrecht, 1695), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 382.
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- 87c. —, *Chymia Medico-Physica* (Leiden, 1684), 270b. Areskine Libri in Octavo et Duodecimo Medici, No. 425.
- 88a. Libavius, Andreas, *Appendix Necessaria Syntagmatis Arcanorum Chymicorum* (Frankfurt, 1615), Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 9, No. 47.
- 88b. —, *D.O.M.A Examen Philosophiae Novae, quae veteri abrogandae opponitur: in quo agitur de modo discendi nouo: de veterum autoritate: de magia Paracelsi ex Crollio: de philosophia viuente ex Seuerino per Iohannem Hartmannum: de Philosophia harmonica magica Fraternalitatis de Rosea Cruce* (Frankfurt, 1615), Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 9, No. 48.
- 88c. —, *Alchymia Triumphans de injusta in se Collegii Galenici Spuri in Academia Parisiensi censura; et J. Riolani Maniographia, falsi convicta, et funditus eversa, Opus Hermeticum . . . de quinta essentia* (Frankfurt, 1607), 260b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 384.
89. Liceto, Fortunio, *De his qui diu vivunt sine alimentacione* (Padua, 1612), 80b. Areskine Libri Medici in Folio, No. 35.
90. Longinus, Caesar, *Trinum Magicum, sive Secretorum Naturalium* (Frankfurt, 1616), 310b. Areskine Libri Medici in 8vo et 12o, No. 583.
- 91a. Ludovici, Daniel, *Opera Omnia* (Frankfurt, 1712), 130b. Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 108.
- 91b. —, *De Pharmacia Moderno Seculo Applicanda* (Amsterdam, 1688), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 27, No. 387.
92. Lull, Ramon, *Lullius Redivivus Denudatus* (Nuremberg, 1703), 270b. Areskine Libri in Octavo et Duodecimo Medici, No. 418.
93. Marbodius, Bishop of Rennes, *De Lapidibus Pretiosis* (Cologne, 1531), Areskine, Libri Medici in Octavo et 12o 30, No. 531.
94. Marci, Johannes Marcus (of Kronland), *Philosophia Restituta* (Frankfurt, 1676), Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog in Quarto 38, No. 4.
95. Mattioli, Pietro Andrea, *Opusculum de Simplicium Medicamentorum Facultatibus* (Venice, 1569), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 446.
96. Mediolano, Joannis de (Salernitana Schola), *Schola Salernitana* (Rotterdam, 1657), 220b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 211.

- 97a. Meurdrac, Marie, *Die Mitleidende und leichte Chymie* (Frankfurt, 1676), Areskine Libri medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 436.
- 97b. —, *ibid.*, No. 454.
- 98a. Mizauld, Antoine, *Secretorum Agri Enchiridion Primum* (Paris, 1560), 310b. Areskine Libri Medici in 8vo et 120, No. 615.
- 98b. —, *ibid.*, Areskine Libri Philosophici, Histor. et Philolog in 8vo et 120 51, No. 217.
99. Moller, Juste, *Fasciculus Remediorum ex Dioscoride et Mathiolo Omnibus* (Basel, 1579), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 120 20, No. 18.
100. Morhof, Daniel Georg, *De Metallorum Transmutatione* (Hamburg, 1673), 230b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 255.
101. Moyse, Charas, *Pharmacopee Royale Galenique et Chymique* (Paris, 1676), 140b. Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 155.
102. Muller, Friedrich, *Lexicon Medico-Galenico-Chymico-Pharmaceuticum* (Frankfurt, 1669), Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 8, No. 9.
103. Naude, Gabriel, *Apologie pour tous les grands personages qui ont este fausement soupconnez de magie* (Amsterdam 1717), Areskine Libri Philosophici, Histor. et Philologici in 8vo et 120 58, No. 480.
104. Neri, Antonio, *De Arte Vitriaria* (Amsterdam, 1686), 310b. Areskine Libri Medici in 8vo et 120, No. 614.
- 105a. Nolle, Heinrich, *Systema Medicinae Hermeticae Generale* (Frankfurt, 1613), 180b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 120, No. 38.
- 105b. —, *The Chymist's Key* (London, 1657), Areskine Libri 2, No. 56.
106. Orta, Garcia da, *Aromatum et Simplicium aliquot medicamentorum apud Indos nascentium Historia* (Antwerp, 1593), 300b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 120, No. 552.
107. Palingenius, Marcellus, *Zodiacus Vitae*, 550b. Areskine Libri Philosophic. Histor. et Philologici in 8vo et 120, No. 385.
- 108a. Paracelsus, *Philosophy reformed & improved in four profound tractates. The I. discovering the great and deep mysteries of nature: by Osw: Crollius. The other III discovering the wonderfull mysteries of the Creation, by Paracelsus: being his Philosophy to the Athenians. Both made English by H. Pinnell, etc. [by] CROLLIUS, Oswaldus; BOMBAST VON HOHENHEIM, Philipp Aureol Theophrast, called Paracelsus*, 1657, Areskine Libri 5, No. 160.
- 108b. —, *The archidoxes of magic: Of the supreme mysteries of nature: Of the spirits of the planets: Of the secrets of alchemy: Of occult philosophy: The mysteries of the twelve signs of the zodiack: The magical cure of diseases: Of celestial medicines by Paracelsus*, 1656, Areskine Libri 7, No. 225.
- 108c. —, *Theophrasti Paracelsi Philosophiae et Medicinae Utriusque Universae, Compendium* (Basel, 1568), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 12mo 18, No. 12.
- 108d. —, *Theophrasti Germani, Paracelsi, Medicorum et Philosophorum Omnium, in Universum facile Principis. De Restituta Utriusque Medicinae vera Praxi* (Leiden, 1578), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 12mo 18, No. 7.
- 108e. —, *Onomasticon Theophrasti Paracelsi* (Basel, 1572), 200b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 120, No. 120.
- 108f. —, *Explicatio Aphorismorum Hippocratis*, Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 22, No. 190.
- 108g. —, *Opera Bucher und Schrifften* (Strasbourg, 1616), Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 8, No. 15.
- 108h. —, *Chirurgische Bucher und Schrifften* (Strasbourg, 1618), Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 8, No. 16.
109. Piemontese, Alessio (Girolamo Ruscelli), *De Secretis* (Colmar, 1583), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 22, No. 179.
110. Planis, David de Campy, *Les Oeuvres de David Planis Campii* (Paris, 1646), Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 9, No. 46.

111. Platt, Sir Hugh, *The Jewell House of Art and Nature* (London, 1653), 16ob. Areskine Libri Medici et Physiologici Quarto, No. 231.
112. Porta, Giambattista della, *De Humana Physiognomonia Ioannis Baptistae Portae Neapolitani, Libri IV* (Ursellius, 1601), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 469.
113. Potier, Pierre, *Petri Poterii Opera Omnia Practica et Chymica* (Leiden, 1645), Areskine Libri Physiologici in Folio, No. 4.
114. Rega, Henrik Jozef, *Fundamenta Medica* (Utrecht, 1647), Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto 13, No. 82.
115. Remmelin, Johann, *Kleiner Welt Spiegel* (Ulm, 1661), Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 9, No. 51.
116. Richter, Christian Friedrich, *Kurzer und Deutlicher Unterricht von dem Leibe und naturlichen Leben Des Menschen* (Halle, 1715), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 120 19, No. 61.
117. Rist, Johann, *J.R.H. Philosophischer Phoenix* (Nuremberg, 1668), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 27, No. 401.
- 118a. Rhazae, Abub Mahomet, *Opera Medica* (Basel, 1544), 8ob. Areskine Libri Medici in Folio, No. 26.
- 118b. —, *ibid.*, 120b. Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 48.
- 118c. —, *Sylani Paplensis in Almasonis nonu collections* (Padua, 1476), 8ob. Areskine Libri Medici in Folio, No. 32.
- 119a. Riveri, Lazare, *Opera Medici Omnia* (Leiden, 1698), Areskine Libri Physiologici in Folio, No. 49.
- 119b. —, *Praxis Medica* (The Hague, 1658), Areskine Libri medici in Octavo et 12mo 18, No. 3.
120. Rolfnck, Guerner, *Chymia in Artis Formam Redacta* (Geneva, 1671), Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto 15, No. 163.
- 121a. Ruland, Martin the Elder, *Lexicon Alchemiae sive dictionarium Alchemisticum, cum obscuriorum verborum et rerum Hermeticarum tum Theophrast-Paracelsicarum Phrasium* (Frankfurt, 1661), Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto 15, No. 169.
- 121b. —, *Thesaurus Rulandinus, hoc est Martini Rulandi... Curationes Empiricae... I De Phlebotomia. II De Scarificatione et Ventosatione III Oratio de Ortu Animae* (Badissae, 1679), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 21, No. 129.
- 121c. —, *ibid.*, Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 21, No. 130.
- 121d. —, *Progymnasmata Alchemiae, sive Problemata Chymica* (Frankfurt, 1607), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 27, No. 395.
- 121e. —, *Secreta Spagirica* (Jena, 1676), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 449.
122. Sachs, Philipp Jacob von Lowenheimb, *Oceanus Macra Microcosmus* (Bratislava, 1664), 24ob. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 299.
123. Sala, Angelo, *ternaries ternariorum Hemeticorum Bezoardicorum* (Erfurt, 1630), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 27, No. 397.
- 124a. Salmon, William, *Pharmacopoeia Bateana, or Bate's Dispensatory... containing his choice and select recipe's, their names, compositions, preparations, vertues, uses, and doses, as they are applicable to the whole practice of physick and chirurgery: the Arcana Goddardiana, and their recipe's interpos'd... completed with above five hundred chymical processes and their explications at large... as also several other preparations from the Collectanea Chymica* (London, 1694), 26ob. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 371.
- 124b. —, *Pharmacopoeia Bateana* (London, 1700), 26ob. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 373.
- 124c. —, *Pharmacopoeia Bateana*, Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 456.

- 124d. —, *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis* (London, 1691), 26ob. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 372.
- 125a. Schelhammer, Gunther Christoph, *De Genuina Febres Curandi Methodo dissertatio* (Jena, 1693), Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto 12, No. 34.
- 125b. —, *De Auditu Liber Unus* (Leiden, 1684), 30ob. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 120, No. 553.
126. Schröder, Baron Wilhelm von, *Fürstliche Schatz- und Rent-Kammer enbst seinem Tractat vom Goldmachen wie auch vom Ministrissimo oder Ober-Staats-Bedienten* (Leipzig, 1704), Areskine Libri Philosophici. Histor. et Philolog in 8vo et 120 51, No. 215.
127. Schuetz, Tobias, *Harmonia Macrocosmi cum Microcosmo* (Frankfurt, 1654), 250b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 322.
128. Schultz, Gottfried, *Dissertatio pharamaceutico-therapeutica de natura tinctur bezoardic D. Johannis Michaelis cum appendice collectanea ob naturam symbolicam & homogeneam*, 1678, 270b. Areskine Libri in Octavo et Duodecimo Medici, No. 411.
129. Seidel, Bruno, *Liber morborum incurabilium causas* (Leiden, 1662), 220b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 194.
- 130a. Sennert, Daniel, *Institutionum Medicinæ* (Wittenburg, 1620), 120b. Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 51.
- 130b. —, *Practicae Medicinæ* (Wittenburg, 1648), 120b. Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 52.
- 130c. —, *De Chymicorum cum Aristotelicis et Galenicis* (Wittenburg, 1619), 260b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 380.
- 130d. —, *Physica Hypomnemata* (Frankfurt, 1636), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 471.
131. Servius, Petrus, *Auszführliches Bedencken von der insgemein so genannten Waffensalben*, 250b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 329.
132. Siebmacher, Johann Ambrosius, *Wasserstein der Weysen, Oder Chymisches Tractälein . . . I Johann von Mesung. II. Via Veritatis; der einigen Warheit vormahlen durch Lucas Jennis Ausgeben* (Frankfurt, 1661), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 27, No. 392.
133. Sommerhoff, Johann Christoph, *Lexicon Pharmaceutico-Chymicum* (Nuremberg, 1701), Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 9, No. 39.
134. Stahl, Georg, *Fragmentorum Aetiologiae Physiologico-Chymicae*, Jena, 1683, Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 450.
135. Staricius, Johannes, *Geheimnisvoller Heldenschatz, oder der Vollständige Egyptische Magische Schild* (Nuremberg, 1706), 570b. Areskine Libri Philosophici, Histor. et Philologici in 8vo et 120, No. 478.
136. Steeb, Johann Christoph, *Dulcedo de forti Sive Elixir, Solis et vitae* (Frankfurt, 1673), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 448.
- 137a. Sylvius, Francois de la Boe, *Opera Medica* (Amsterdam, 1680), 120b. Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 50.
- 137b. —, *Praxeos Medicæ Idea Nova* (Leiden, 1672), 220b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 208.
- 138a. Tachenius, Otto, *Hippocrates Chymicus* (Nuremberg, 1675), Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 9, No. 43.
- 138b. —, *Hippocrates Chymicus* (Brunswick, 1668), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 440.
- 138c. —, *Antiquissimæ Hippocraticæ Medicinæ Clavis Manuali Experientia Naturæ Fontibus Elaborata* (Frankfurt, 1673), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 23, No. 228.
139. Tentzel, Andreas, *Medicina Diastatica* (Jena, 1629), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 24, No. 267.
140. Theophilus (pseud), *Mineralogia* (Frankfurt, 1706), 270b. Areskine Libri in Octavo et Duodecimo Medici, No. 419.

141. Thom, A.J.D., *Collectanea Chimica Curiosa* (Frankfurt, 1693), 140b. Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 153.
142. Thomson, George, *Epilogismi chymici observationes nec non remedia Hermetica longa in arte hiatrix exercitioe constabilita*, 270b. Areskine Libri in Octavo et Duodecimo Medici, No. 421.
143. Tileman, Johann, *Experimenta, circa veras et irreducibiles auri solutiones* (Hamburg, 1673), 230b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 254.
- 144a. Tilling, Mathias, *Anchora salutis sacra; seu De laudano opiato, medicamine isto divino ac coelitus demisso liber singularis* (Frankfurt, 1671), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 22, No. 178.
- 144b. —, *Anchora salutis sacra; seu De laudano opiato, medicamine isto divino ac coelitus demisso liber singularis* (Frankfurt, 1677), 270b. Areskine Libri in Octavo et Duodecimo Medici, No. 414.
- 144c. —, *Cinnabaris mineralis; seu minii naturalis, scrutinium physico-medico-chymicum* (Frankfurt, 1681), Areskine Libri in Octavo et Duodecimo Medici, No. 412.
- 145a. Turquet, Theodorus de Mayerne, *Praxis Medicae* (Augsburg, 1691), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 21, No. 135.
- 145b. —, *Pharmacopoea Londinensis* (London, 1651), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 444.
146. Valentine, Basil, *Geheime Bücher oder letztes Testament. Vom grossen Stein der uralten Weisen und andern verborgenen Geheimnissen der Natur* (Strasbourg, 1645), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 27, No. 388.
147. Valla, Arnold de, *Opera Medici* (Leiden, 1509), 80b. Areskine Libri Medici in Folio, No. 28.
148. Valsalva, Antonio Maria, *De Aure Humana* (Traject, 1707), 170b. Areskine Libri Medici et Physiologici in Quarto 17, No. 268.
149. Venette, Nicolas, *Traite des Pierres* (Amsterdam, 1701), 300b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 120, No. 537.
150. Viganì, John Francis, *Medula Chymica* (London, 1683), 270b. Areskine Libri in Octavo et duodecimo Medici, No. 420.
151. Wecker, Johann Jakob, *De Secretis* (Basel, 1662), 290b. Areskine Libri Medici et Physiologici in 8vo et 120, No. 500.
- 152a. Wedel, Georg Wolfgang, *Opera Omnia* (Jena, 1680), 110b. Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto No. 16.
- 152b. —, *Physiologia Medica*, Jena, 1680, 110b. Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 18.
- 152c. —, *Centuria Exercitationum medico-philologicarum sacrarum et profanarum varias lectiones, experimenta et commentaries curiosis exhibens* (Jena 1701), 110b. Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 20.
- 152d. —, *Experimentum Chymicum Novum de Sale Volatili Plantarum* (Jena, 1682), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 447.
153. Weidenfeld, Johann Serger von, *De Secretis Adeptorum* (Hamburg, 1688), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 435.
154. Wilkins, John, *Mercury, or, The Secret and Swift Messenger* (London, 1641), 40b. Areskine Libri, No. 142.
- 155a. Wirdig, Sebastian, *Nova Medicina Spirituum* (Hamburg, 1673), 230b. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 242.
- 155b. —, *ibid.*, 310b. Areskine Libri Medici in 8vo et 120, No. 589.
155. Zobell, Friedrich, *Tartarologia Spargirica* (Jena, 1676), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 439.
157. Zwelfer, Johann, *Pharmacopoeia Regia, seu Dispensatorium Novum Locupletatum et absolutum, annexa etiam Mantissa Spagyrica* (Nuremberg, 1693), Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 9, No. 42.

*General or Anonymous Works*

1. *Ars Tinctoria Fundamentalis* (Frankfurt, 1703), 560b Areskini Libri Philosophici, Histor et Philologici in 8vo et 12o, No. 441.
2. *De Alchimia Opuscula Complura Veterum Philosophorum 2 partes in 1...Rosarium Philosophorum. Secunda pars alchimiae de lapide philosophico vero modo praeparando* (Frankfurt, 1550), Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto 15, No. 167.
3. *Fama Fraternitatis* (Frankfurt, 1615), 260b Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 389.
4. G.A.P.S. *Acerra Medico-Chymica in qua inventiuntur non solum variae compositiones medicamentorum Hippocratico-Galenicorum sed etiam plurima arcane, praesertim chymica medicinae tyroni itidem ac practico imprimis utilissima* (Leipzig, 1713), 150b Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 179.
5. *Relationes Curiosae Medicae von dem Bishero sehr Verachteten signo Physico dem Urin* (Gotha, 1703), 180b Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 12o, No. 50.
6. *Theatrum Sympatheticum Auctum exhibens varios authores. De Pulvere Sympahtetico Quidem...* (edited by Johannes Andreas Endter) (Nuremberg, 1662), Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto 14, No. 58.



## APPENDIX D

### NOTABLE ESOTERIC TEXTS IN ERSKINE'S LIBRARY

Key: The location of each book is indicated by number and a letter designating the specific collection.

K= Katalog Knig biblioteki Areskina R.K. 1719, Fond 158, Opis 1. d214a

H= Sirkka Havu and Irina Lebedeva, eds., *Collections donated by the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg to the Alexander University of Finland in 1829* (Helsinki: Helsinki University Library, 1997).

1. Agrippa, Henricus Cornelius, *Opera, Erskine*, Areskine Libri Philosophici Histor. Et Philolog, 8o et 12o, 46, No. 11 (K).
2. Albertus Magnus, *De Secretis Mulierum* (Amsterdam, 1669), 2oob Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 12o, No. 115 (K).
3. Arnold, Gottfried, *Das Geheimniss der göttlichen Sophia oder Weissheit* (Leipzig, 1700), 14 (H).
4. Bodier, Thomas, *De Ratione et usu dierum criticorum opus recens natum in quo mensurum ipsius Ptolemaei tum aliorum astrologorum hac in parte dilucidatur, auctore Thoma Boderio Thotomagensis dioceses. Cui accessit Hermes Trismegistus De decubitu infirmorum numquam antea in lucem editus* (Paris, 1555), Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog in quarto 39, No. 54 (K).
5. Bruno, Giordano, *Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast* (London, 1713), 2 ob. Areskine Libri, No. 73 (K).
6. Campanella, Tomasso, *Astrologia* (Frankfurt, 1630), Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog in quarto 39, No. 53 (K).
7. Cardano, Girolamo, *De Subtilitate* (Basel, 1553), Areskine Libri Philosophici Histor. et Philolog in 8o et 12o 46, No. 13 (K).
8. Carion, Johann, *Chronica* (Frankfurt, 1543), 48 ob. Areskine Libri Philos. Histor et Philolog in 8vo et 12o, No. 120 (K).
9. Cluverus, Dethlevus, *Nova Crisis Temporum oder Philosophische Welt Mercurius* (Hamburg, 1701), Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog. in Quarto 38, No. 3 and No. 167, 189 (H).
10. Chambre, Marin Cureau de la, *Discours sur les principes de la chiromance* (1653), *Erskine*, 38ob. Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog in Quarto, No. 43 (K).
- 11a. Fludd, Robert, *Medicina Catholica, seu Mysticum artis medicandi sacrarium* (Frankfurt, 1629), Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 8, No. 20 (K).
- 11b. —, *Anatomiae Amphitheatrum Effigie Triplici* (Frankfurt, 1623), Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 8, No. 21 (K).
- 11c. —, *Philosophia Moysaica* (Gouda, 1638), Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 8, No. 22 (K).
- 11d. —, *Utriusque Cosmi Maioris* (Oppenheim, 1617), Areskine Libri Medici in Folio 8, No. 23 (K).
12. Franckenau, Georg von, *Palingenesia Francica* (Paris, 1716), *Erskine*, 32ob. Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo, No. 62o (K).
13. Gaffarel, Jacques, *Curiositez Inouyes, hoc est, curiositates inauditae de figures Persarum talismannicis, horoscopo patriarcharum et characteribus coelestibus* (Hamburg, 1676), 53ob. Areskine Libri Philosophici Histor. et Philologici in 8vo et 12o, No. 316 (K).

14. Gassman, Franz (pseudo. Pantaleon), *Tumulus Hermetis Apertus* (Nuremberg, 1676), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 12o 3o, No. 457 (K).
15. Goclenius, Rudolphus (the Younger), *Apologia pro Astromantia* (Marburg, 1611), 4oob Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog, in Quarto, No. 41 (K).
16. Grevin, Jacques, *Deux Livre des venins* (Antwerp, 1671), 15 ob. Areskine Libri Medici in Quarto, No. 183 (K).
17. Helvetius, Johann Friedrich, *Microscopium Physiognomiae Physiognomia* (Amsterdam, 1676), 3oob Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 12o, No. 542 (K).
- 18a. Hoogstraten, Jacobus van, *Acta Judiciorum inter f. Iacobum Hochstraten inquisitorem Coloniensium & Iohannem Reuchlin* (The Hague, 1518), 127 (H).
- 18b. —, *Destructio Cabale seu Cabalistiche Perfidie ab Ioanne Reuchlin* (Cologne, 1519), 128 (H).
19. Horlacher, Conrad, *Bibliotheca chemico-curiosa, D. Mangeti enucleata ac illustrata* (Frankfurt, 1707), 27ob Areskine Libri in Octavo et Duodecimo Medici, No. 409 (K).
20. Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis Aegyptorum Chaldaeorum* (Leiden, 1552,) Areskine Libri Philosophic. Histor et Philologici in 8vo et 12o. 55, No. 381 (K).
- 21a. Khunrath, Heinrich, *Magneisa Catholica Philosophorum* (Leipzig, 1599), 2oob Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 12o, No. 121 (K).
- 21b. —, *ibid.*, 27ob Areskine Libri in Octavo et Duodecimo Medici, No. 415 (K).
- 22a. Kircher, Athanasius, *Magnes sive de arte magnetica* (Cologne, 1643), 16ob Areskine Libri Medici et Physiologici Quarto, No. 238.
- 22b. —, *China Monumentis* (Amsterdam, 1667), Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog. In Folio 33, No. 7 (K).
- 22c. —, *Ars Magna Lucis et Umbra* (Amsterdam, 1671), Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog. In Folio 33, No. 8 (K).
- 22d. —, *Ars Magna Sciendi* (Amsterdam, 1671), Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog. In Folio 33, No. 9 (K).
- 22e. —, *Arca Noe* (Amsterdam, 1675), Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog. In Folio 33, No. 10 (K).
- 22f. —, *Turris Babel* (Amsterdam, 1675,) Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog. In Folio 33, No. 11 (K).
- 22g. —, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (Rome, 1652–54), Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog. In Folio 33, No. 12 (K).
- 22h. —, *Obeliscus Pamphilius* (Amsterdam, 1650), Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog. In Folio 33, No. 13 (K).
23. Longinus, Caesar, *Trinum Magicum, sive Secretorum Magicorum Opus*, 1616, *Erskine*, 31ob. Areskine Libri Medici in 8vo et 12o, No. 583 (K).
24. Lull, Ramon, *Lullius Redivivus Denudatus* (Nuremberg, 1703), 27 ob. Areskine Libri in Octavo et Duodecimo Medici, No. 418 (K).
25. Magirus, Johannes, *Physiologia Peripatetica* (Frankfurt, 1619), Areskine Libri Medici et Physiologica in Octavo et Duodecimo 29, No. 475 (K).
26. Maraviglia, Giuseppe, *Pseudomantia*, 1662, Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog. In Folio 33, No. 15 (K).
27. Mey, Phillipe, *La Chiromancie Medicinale* (La Haye, 1665), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo & 12o No 566 (K).
28. Naude, Gabriel, *Apologie pour tous les grands personages qui ont este fausement soupconnez de magie, Erskine*, Areskine Libri Philosophici, Histor. et Philologici in 8vo et 12o 58, No. 480 (K).
29. Palingenesis, Marcellus, *Zodiacus Vitae*, 55ob. Areskine Libri Philosophic. Histor. et Philologici in 8vo et 12o, No. 385 (K).
31. Piemontese, Alessio, *De Secretis* (Colmar, 1583), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 22, No. 179 (K).

- 32a. Porta, Giambattista della, *De Humana Physiognomonia Ioannis Baptistae Portae Neapolitani, Libri IV* (Ursellis, 1601), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 469 (K).
- 32b. —, *Phytogmonomica* (Frankfurt, 1601), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 468 (K).
- 33a. Praetorius, Johannes, *De Coscinomantia*, 1677, *Erskine*, Areskine Libri Philosoph. Historici et Philolog. In Quarto 44, No. 267 (K).
- 33b. —, *Collegium Curiosum, Erskine*, Areskine Libri Philosophici Histor. et Philolog in 8o et 12o 46, No. 19 (K).
34. Scaliger, Julius Caesar, *De Subtilitate* (Hanover, 1620), Areskine Libri Philosophici Histor et Philolog in 8o et 12o 46, No. 12 (K).
35. Schaltz, Christian, *Die Von Aberglauben, Vanitaeten und teuscherey gereinigte Chiro-mantia und physiognomia* (1703), Areskine Libri Philosophici Histor. et Philolog in 8o et 12o 46, No. 18 (K).
- 36a. Schott, Caspar, *Physico Curiosa sive mirabilia naturae et artis libris, Tom. 1 et 2* (Würzburg, 1662), Areskine Libri Medici et Physiologici in Quarto 17, No. 247 (K).
- 36b. —, *Magia Universalis Naturae et Artis*, I–IV, 1667, Areskine Libri Medici et Physiologici in Quarto 17, No. 248 (K).
37. Selenus, Gustavus, *Cryptomenytices Cryptographia* (1624), *Areskine*, 36ob. Areskine Philosoph. Historici et Philolog in Folio, No. 162 (K).
38. Staricius, Johann, *Geheimnisvoller Heldenschatz Egyptische Magische Schild* (Nuremberg, 1706), *Erskine*, 57ob. Areskine Libri Philosophici, Histor. et Philologici in 8vo et 12o, No. 478 (K).
39. Steeb, Johann Christoph, *Dulcedo de forti Sive Elixir, Solis et vitae* (Frankfurt, 1673), Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et Duodecimo 28, No. 448 (K).
40. Vallemont, Abbe de, *La Physique Occulte, ou Traite de la Baguette* (Paris, 1693), *Erskine*, Areskine Libri Medici in Octavo et 12o. 3o, No. 524 (K).
41. Zahn, Johann, *Oculus Artificialis Teledioptricus* (Nuremberg, 1702), 33 ob. Areskine Libri Philosoph Historici et Philolog in Folio, No. 36 (K).

APPENDIX E

ALCHEMICAL AUTHORS AND WORKS IN PROKOPOVICH'S LIBRARY

Source: P. V. Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie dukhovnoi kollegii i dukhovnyi reglament*, vol. 2, Part 5 (Rostov-on-the-Don, 1916), 9–71.

- 1a. Agrippa, Henricus Cornelius, *De Incertitudine et vanitate omnium scientiarum et atrium liber*... (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1693), Nos. 1401–1402.
- 1b. —, *Operum Pars Posterior*, No. 1659.
2. Blancaerd, Steven, *Lexicon Medicum*, 1702, No. 2468.
3. Boerhaave, Hermann, *Elementa Chemiae*, vol. 1, 1724, No. 1487.  
—, *Elementa Chemiae*, vol. 2, 1724, No. 1516.
4. Borch, Olaus, *Hermetis, Aegyptiorum et Chemicorum Sapeintia ab hermanni Conringii* (Heidelberg, 1674), No. 1553.
5. Boyle, Robert, *Experimenta et Considerationes de Coloribus*, No. 1565.  
—, *Opera Variia*, No. 1566.  
—, *Specimen de Gemmarum Origine*, No. 1768.
6. Cardano, Girolamo, *De Rerum Varietate*, No. 1661.
7. Conring, Hermann, *De calido innato; sive, igne animali liber unus Helmestadii* (1647), No. 1519.
8. Finck, Johann Vincent, *Encheiridion Dogmatico-Hermeticum morborum partium corporis humani praecipuorum curationes breves contents etc.* (1618), No. 925.
9. Gesner, Conrad, *Epitome Quatuor Librorum de Historia Animalium* (Leipzig, 1605), No. 985.
10. Gruelling, Philipp, *Florilegium chymicum* (1631), No. 1560.
11. Hartmann, Johann, *Officina Sanitatis sive Praxis Chymiatrica* (Leipzig, 1683), No. 1708.
12. Jungken, Johann Helfrich, *Corpus Pharmaceutico-Chymico-Medicum Universale* (Frankfurt, 1732), No. 1472.  
—, *Chymia Experimentalis Curiosa* (Frankfurt, 1681), No. 1537.
13. Kircher, Athanasius, *Ars Magna*, No. 1458.
14. Lange, Johannes, *Epistolarum Medicinalium* (Frankfurt, 1589), No. 2676.
15. Lemnius, Levinus, *De Miraculis Occultis Nature*, No. 1723.  
—, *Occulta Naturae Miracula* (Antwerp, 1567), No. 1808.  
—, *ibid.*, No. 2962.
16. Ludovici, Daniel, *De Pharmacia moderno seculo applicanda Dissertationes*, No. 1778.
17. Micelspacher, Stephan, *Pinax Microcosmographicus* (1615), No. 1579.
18. Moebius, Georg, *Tractatus Philogico-Theologicus* (Leipzig, 1685), No. 643.
19. Morhof, Daniel Georg, *Polyhistor*, No. 1110.
20. Mynsicht, Adrian, *Thesaurus et armamentarium medico-chymicum* (Frankfurt, 1658), No. 1518.
21. Palingenius, Marcellus, *Zodiacus Vitae, hoc est, de hominis life, study ac miribus optime instituendis Books XII*, No. 2678.
22. Porta, Della Giambattista, *Portae Neapolitani Magiae Naturalis*, No. 1144.
23. Rivieri, Lazarus, *Praxis medicina cum theoria Tom 2*, No. 1721.
24. Rolfinck, Guerner, *Chimia in Artis Formam Redacta*, No. 1509.
25. Salernitana Schola, *De Conservanda bona valetudine opusculum Scholae Salernitanae* (Frankfurt, 1545), No. 2495.
26. Schroder, Johann, *Pharmacopoeia Medico-Chymica* (Leiden, 1669), Nos. 1521, 1522, 1523.

27. Sennert, Daniel, *Institutionum Medicinae*, Nos. 1502, 1641.  
 ———, *Practicae Medicinae de liber tertius*, No. 1569.  
 ———, *Uratislaviensis Epitome Naturalis Scientia*, Nos. 1638, 1639, 1640, 1642.
28. Severinus, Petrus, *Idea Medicinae Philosophicae Fundamenta Continens Toitus Doctrinae Paracelsicae Hippocraticae et Galenicæ* (Basel, 1571), No. 1530.
29. Tachenius, Otto, *Hippocrates Chymicus*, No. 1814.
30. Thomson, George, *Vindeks Veritatis (A Vindication of Dr. Thomson's Stomach Essence . . . against the Slanders of the Galenists)* (London, 1672), No. 640.
31. Untzer, Matthias, *Antidotarium Pestilentielle*, No. 1551.
32. Wecker, Johannes Jakob, *Organum Logicum*, No. 2608.
33. Willich, Jodocus, *Urinarum Probationes: illustratae scholis medicis* (Basel, 1582), No. 1745.
34. Zwelfer, Johann, *Pharmacopoeia regia* (1667), No. 1470.

*General Works:*

1. *Theatrum Sympatheticum*, No. 2993.

## APPENDIX F

## NOTABLE ESOTERIC BOOKS IN PROKOPOVICH LIBRARY

Source: P. V. Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie dukhovnoi kollegii i dukhovnyi reglament*, vol. 2, Part 5 (Rostov-on-the-Don, 1916), 9–71.

No.	Author	Title	Cat. No.
1.	Agrippa, Henricus Cornelius	<i>Operum Pars Posterior</i>	1659
2.	Bodin, Jean	<i>De Republica</i>	1260, 1266, 2220
3.	—	<i>Methodus ad Facilem Historiarum Cognitionem</i>	2948
4.	Burgersdijck, Franco	<i>Idea Naturalis Philosophiae</i>	1767
5.	Cardano, Girolamo	<i>De Rerum Varietate</i>	1661
6.	Del Rio, Martin	<i>Disquisitionum Magicarum Libri Sex</i>	1728
7.	Gaffarel, Jacques	<i>Curiositez Inouyes</i>	1272
8.	Ganivet, Jean	<i>Amicus Medicorum</i>	1799
9.	Gesner, Conrad	<i>Historia de Animalibus</i>	985
10.	Godelmann, Johann Georg	<i>Tractatus de Magis Veneficis et Lamiis Recte Cognoscendis</i>	1122
11.	Grosse, Henning	<i>Magica seu Mirabilium Historiarum de Spectris et Apparitionibus Spirituum</i>	1173
12.	Hofmann, Johann Jacob	<i>Lexicon Universale I–III</i>	2345–2351
13.	Johnson, John	<i>Idea Universae Medicinae Practicae</i>	1716, 1800
14.	—	<i>Thaumatographia Naturalis</i>	1801
15.	Kircher, Athanasius	<i>Ars Magna Lucis et Umbrae</i>	1458
16.	—	<i>Ars Magnetica</i>	1459
17.	—	<i>Eiusdem Musurgia Universalis</i>	1460
18.	Lemnius, Levinus	<i>De Miraculis Occultis Naturae</i>	1723, 1808, 2962
19.	Magirus, Johannes	<i>Physiologiae Peripateticae</i>	1527, 2614, 2623, 2650
20.	Maiolus, Simone	<i>Dies Caniculares</i>	1571
21.	Martini, Valerio	<i>Magia Physica Foecunda Coelesti Divinoque</i>	1575
22.	Mey, Johannes de	<i>Sacra Physiologia</i>	413
23.	Michelspacher, Stephan	<i>Pinax Microcosmographicus</i>	1579
24.	Naldius, Matthias	<i>Seu de Mundi Universi amicitia</i>	1548
25.	Palingenius, Marcellus	<i>Zodiacus Vitae</i>	2678
26.	Peucer, Caspar	<i>Commentarius de Praecipuis Divinationum</i>	564–565
27.	Porta, Giambattista della	<i>Portae Neapolitani Magiae Naturalis</i>	1144
28.	Prevost, Jean	<i>Medicina Pauperum</i>	1795
29.	Scaliger, Julius Caesar	<i>Exotericarum Exercitationum de Subtilitate</i>	1281

Table (*cont.*)

No.	Author	Title	Cat. No.
30.	Sennert, Daniel	<i>Compendium Institutiones Medicinae</i>	1502, 1641
31.	—	<i>Practicae Medicinae de Intimi Ventricis Morbis</i>	1569
32.	—	<i>Uratislaviensis Epitome Naturalis Scientiae</i>	1638–1640, 1642
33.	Sperling, Johann	<i>Principia Corporis Naturalis</i>	1680
34.	—	<i>Zoologia Physica</i>	1682
35.	—	<i>Meditationes in J. C. Scaligeri "Exotericas Exercitationes de Subtilitate"</i>	1683
36.	—	<i>Synopsis Anthropologiae Physicae</i>	1688, 1790–3
37.	Vallesius, Franciscus	<i>De Sacra Philosophia</i>	2525
38.	Weickard, Arnold	<i>Thesaurus Pharmaceuticus sive Tractatus Practicus</i>	1457
39.	Zwinger, Theodorus	<i>Theatrum Vitae Humanae</i>	1480–82





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