

Penance and Punishment: Monastic Incarceration in Imperial Russia

by

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the practice of public penance as a way of thinking about the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state during the imperial period. Public penance has a long tradition in the history of the Eastern Church and often took the form of performing monastic labour while undergoing seclusion in a monastery. In imperial Russia, this religious practice became conflated with the state's incarceration of individuals in monastery prisons for the purpose of social control. The sources for this dissertation include imperial and canon law, the teachings on penance in the church journals and newspapers of the time, and the correspondence between the monastery abbot, the local bishop, the Holy Synod and the provincial and imperial state authorities. Focusing on the Nicolaevan era (1825-1855) as the period in which the practice peaked, a case study of the prison facility at Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery in Vladimir Diocese demonstrates the variety of circumstances to which public penance was applied. Religious dissidents from among the peasantry were confined at Spaso-Evfimiev in the hopes that they could be converted. Noblemen guilty of violent murders or crimes against the state were incarcerated there instead of being exiled to Siberia. Priests and monks who were considered insane were confined among the prisoners as well, along with those who had dishonoured their clerical position in some way. Monastic incarceration was a disciplinary measure applied to unusual incidents and the Russian Orthodox Church cooperated with the imperial state in the care and treatment of these individuals. By exploring the material conditions of life in a monastery prison, this dissertation reveals the extent to which authority over church affairs was worked

out in day-to-day negotiations. Sometimes the church served the state's goals, sometimes it acted in accordance with its own teachings and values, and much of the time the church and state had a shared understanding of the close relationship between sin and crime. Neither side consistently dominated the other, but rather, they cooperated in the process of imposing penance and punishment on the offending individuals.

## DEDICATION

For Jeremy

Thanks for making this possible.  
I am glad we walked this way together.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	ii
Dedication .....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents .....	vii
Tables .....	viii
Introduction .....	1
Chapter I: Church and State in Imperial Russia: Living the Relationship .....	17
Church and State.....	17
Methodology.....	32
Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery .....	47
Chapter II: To Heal or Punish: Prescribing Penance in Church and State Law .....	61
Monastic Authority in Russian History .....	63
Canon Law .....	74
State Law .....	85
Chapter III: Writing Penance: Negotiating Authority in the Confessional State .....	107
The History of Penance .....	109
The Pastoral Literature .....	116
Managing the Clergy .....	137
Chapter IV: State Criminals in the Monastery.....	162
Controlling Crime.....	163
Penance in the Army and Navy.....	177
Incarcerating Violent Criminals .....	179
Crimes Against the State .....	180
Chapter V: Cooperation between Church and State .....	190
Religious Dissent .....	192
Caring for the Insane .....	201
Confining Violence.....	212
Chapter VI: Complaints and Concerns in a Monastery Prison.....	221
Historiography .....	222
Material Goods .....	225
Food Consumption .....	236
Deprivations.....	247
Health and Illness .....	255
Religious Life .....	266
Conclusion.....	271
Bibliography.....	277

## TABLES

6.1	Costs of housing one prisoner .....	226
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## Introduction

In his final book, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Fedor Dostoevsky reflected on the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the state. Early in the story the Karamazov family visits the local monastery on the pretext of meeting with the elder, Father Zosima, in order to resolve a family dispute. While there, in the company of several monks, they engage in a discussion of the article that the middle and atheist brother, Ivan Fyodorovich, had recently published regarding church and state relations.<sup>1</sup> While giving consideration to the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, Ivan Fyodorovich turns on its head the traditional interpretation of the subject. Rather than the church seeking a position within the secular state, Ivan argues that over the long term, it should exert its influence to such an extent that the state would be completely transformed into the church, “rejecting every purpose incongruous with the aims of the Church.”<sup>2</sup>

Ivan’s audience immediately turned to the implications of such an idea on the fields of crime and punishment. If there were no civil or criminal courts, but only ecclesiastical ones to deal with crime, how would this affect the sentencing of the offenders? In Ivan’s view, the church would be forced “into completely and honestly adopting the idea of the regeneration of the man, of his reformation and salvation.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Though written between 1879 and 1880, the story of *The Brothers Karamazov* takes place during the tumultuous reforms of the 1860s. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, ed. Ralph E. Matlaw, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1976).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

At this point, Father Zosima enters the discussion by making the claim that even at present this is already the case. He says,

If it were not for the Church of Christ there would be nothing to restrain the criminal from evildoing, no real chastisement for it afterwards; none, that is, but the mechanical chastisement spoken of just now, which in the majority of cases only embitters the heart; and not the real chastisement, the only effectual one, the only deterrent and softening one, which lies in the recognition of sin by conscience.<sup>4</sup>

He goes on to explain that the flogging of earlier times and the present use of exile and hard labour do nothing to deter criminals and, in fact, the number of crimes is continually increasing rather than decreasing. For the elder Zosima, the preservation of society was not achieved through the work of the state courts. He continues,

If anything does preserve society, even in our time, and does regenerate and transform the criminal, it is only the law of Christ speaking in his conscience. It is only by recognizing his wrongdoing as a son of a Christian society – that is of the Church – that he recognizes his sin against society – that is, against the Church. So that it is only against the Church, and not against the State, that the criminal of today can recognize that he has sinned.<sup>5</sup>

Ivan's argument was with reference to a future ideal – what another character terms “a beautiful utopian dream,” but “infinitely remote.”<sup>6</sup> For Ivan, his article and the idea of the state becoming the church were conveyed with some scepticism and perhaps a little irony. He later admitted that he did not fully believe in the immortality of the soul or in his own writings, though he was discontented in his disbelief and his questions remained.<sup>7</sup> But for Father Zosima, the intimate connection between sin and crime gave the church an essential role to play in the restoration of

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<sup>4</sup> Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*, 55.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 54. Miusov was relieved to understand this as an ideal rather than a practical goal.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

offenders, or as he put it, “in restoring the excluded, in restraining those who plan evil, and in regenerating the fallen.”<sup>8</sup>

Though this entire exchange took place in Father Zosima’s monastic cell, Dostoevsky did not comment on the specific role of Orthodox monasteries in this process. Yet, the historical involvement of the monasteries in the practice of incarceration provides a poignant test case for Father Zosima’s ideas. The goal of this dissertation is to consider what we can learn about the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state during the reign of Nicholas I (1825-1855) from the experience of the monasteries in aiding the state with the disciplining and/or rehabilitation of individuals who were sentenced to serve time in monasteries on various pretexts.

The monastic confinement of disloyal subjects, often female and usually presenting some form of threat to the sovereign’s authority, was common practice in medieval and early modern Europe. In Russia, for example, Peter the Great consigned his half-sister, Sophia, to a convent in order to seize the throne in 1689. The disciplinary role of the monastery was not limited to the intrigues of court life, however, and during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many monasteries in Orthodox Russia were used by the church and state hierarchies as a means to administer public penance to those who had broken church or state law.

The incarceration of both Orthodox and non-Orthodox people in monasteries was a complex practice, involving a wide variety of individuals and issues. In his discussion of the forms of specialization among nineteenth-century Russian

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<sup>8</sup> Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*, 56f.

monasteries, P. N. Zyrianov briefly describes what official language expressed as the “correctional” role that some monasteries served, noting however that actual “correction” was rarely if ever achieved.<sup>9</sup> Among the prisoners in these monasteries could be found monks, members of the parish clergy (priests and deacons), religious sectarians, underage criminals, landowners, and others. The numbers were small and yet the practice was widespread. During the 1840s, for example, Gregory Freeze has noted that a maximum of one to two thousand people served public penance in any given year.<sup>10</sup> Yet each of the forty-six dioceses was required to submit reports to the Holy Synod twice a year, providing data on the individuals currently serving penance in the local monasteries. In 1851, for example, eleven dioceses reported between twenty and forty people serving penance, nine reported ten to twenty people, thirteen reported fewer than ten, and nine sent no report at all. Only four dioceses reported that they had no penitents that year, so although the bare numbers suggest an obscure practice, the widespread acceptability of public penance across the empire reveals a greater significance.<sup>11</sup>

The ecclesiastical courts sentenced many of these penitents, but there were also those who were sent at the behest of the regular courts or even by imperial order.

Monastic imprisonment was seen as a more lenient punishment so, for example,

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<sup>9</sup> P. N. Zyrianov, *Russkie monastyri i monashestvo v XIX i nachale XX veka* (Moscow: Verbum-M, 2002), 95f.

<sup>10</sup> Gregory L. Freeze, “The Wages of Sin: The Decline of Public Penance in Imperial Russia” in *Seeking God: The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia*, ed. Stephen K. Batalden (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993), 58. Cf. Zyrianov, 107. Zyrianov reports 1395 penitents (848 men and 547 women) in 1840. The records of the Holy Synod for the year 1850 list 984 people serving penance throughout the empire. Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (RGIA) f. 796, op. 132 (1851), d. 124, l. 281f.

<sup>11</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 132 (1851), d. 911, l. 1.

members of the privileged classes were sentenced to public penance for beating their serfs with undue hostility.<sup>12</sup> Also, children who had committed violent crimes were sometimes incarcerated in monasteries, rather than being sentenced to a state prison or banished to Siberia.<sup>13</sup> Though public penance had broad applications and was mostly under the purview of the church, the monasteries were also a convenient place to house unusual prisoners condemned as traitors to the state.

Public penance had a long history in Russia (and even longer in the Eastern Church) but in the second half of the nineteenth century the practice petered out,<sup>14</sup> as intelligentsia members such as A.S. Prugavin, indignant over the issue, began writing tracts urging its abolishment.<sup>15</sup> Gregory Freeze has suggested that this practice went into decline in the second half of the nineteenth century as a “necessary accommodation to the development of the modern state.”<sup>16</sup> Reference will be made to this longer history but the focus here is on the Nicolaevan era as the period in which the practice peaked. This dissertation will demonstrate that it is during this period, when the practice of public penance was still culturally acceptable and the Orthodox Church was being tied more closely to Russian identity, that the common ground between religion and social control is most evident.

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<sup>12</sup> Zyrianov, 98.

<sup>13</sup> Abby M. Schrader, *Languages of the Lash: Corporal Punishment and Identity in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002), 115f.

<sup>14</sup> Freeze, “Wages of Sin,” 74.

<sup>15</sup> A.S. Prugavin, *Monastyrskiiia tiurmy v borbie s sektantstvom: K voprosu o vieroterpimosti* (1904; repr., The Hague: Mouton, 1970).

<sup>16</sup> Freeze, “Wages of Sin,” 73.

Nicholas I ruled Russia from 1825 to 1855. The third son of Emperor Paul, Nicholas was not groomed for the throne, nor did he expect it from childhood. His grandmother, Catherine the Great, took great care that his brother Emperor Alexander I should receive the best in Enlightenment education. But Nicholas was “raised under the tough and unyielding supervision of officers from the Baltic provinces who instilled in him a German respect for discipline and authority.”<sup>17</sup> Coming to the throne in the midst of the Decembrist revolt, the first effort by Russian elites to acquire a constitution, Nicholas was scarred by this experience in a way that would give shape to his entire reign.<sup>18</sup>

Scholars have debated the validity of dividing the reign of Nicholas I into distinct periods. Some have characterized the period from 1825 to the 1830s as one of reform, while others have suggested that his entire reign was “a steady implementation of the conservative program.”<sup>19</sup> While the character of Nicholas himself is beyond the scope of this study and has been well-documented elsewhere,<sup>20</sup> it is nevertheless important to note that Nicholas, perhaps more than most rulers, was actively involved in the detailed management of the empire and sought to address many of its troubles. However, his besieged fortress mentality and authoritarian style

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<sup>17</sup> Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy from Peter the Great to the Abdication of Nicholas II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 124.

<sup>18</sup> After personally conducting interviews with many of the officers who participated in the revolt, Nicholas kept the evidence, compiled in a book, on the top of his desk throughout his entire reign. See W. Bruce Lincoln, *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 84.

<sup>19</sup> Irina Paert, “Regulating Old Believer Marriage: Ritual, Legality, and Conversion in Nicholas I’s Russia,” *Slavic Review* 63, No. 3 (Autumn 2004), 562, fn. 38.

<sup>20</sup> See the aforementioned biography by Lincoln, as well as Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959) and Ivan Golovine, *Russia under the Autocrat, Nicholas the First* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970).

of leadership gave him a propensity to rely on secret committees rather than publicly addressing the major societal issues of his day.<sup>21</sup> Public penance as a disciplinary measure was well suited to this situation. It was not uncommon for official reports to be labeled “secret” or for correspondence to pass from the Synod to the monastery with explicit instructions to avoid revealing the particulars to the local consistory,<sup>22</sup> and Nicholas himself sent political prisoners to be incarcerated in monasteries. Thus, the practice of public penance was a meeting point between church and state and the line between sin and crime was negotiable.

Also during Nicholas’ reign, the regions underwent administrative restructuring. Leonid Gorizontov has examined the government’s efforts to revise the administrative borders of the provinces during the 1830s and 1840s<sup>23</sup> and has suggested that economic factors, including “commercial interests, economic specialization, and the possibilities of transport routes” were the issues of primary concern.<sup>24</sup> Emphasizing the role of the governors in ruling the provinces, Gorizontov writes, “In 1837, an “Order to Governors” (*Nakaz gubernatoram*) declared the governors to be the “masters of their provinces,” divided districts into police subsections, founded provincial statistical committees, and allowed for the publishing

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<sup>21</sup> Lincoln, 94.

<sup>22</sup> See for example, Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov (RGADA) f. 1203, op. 1 v. 301, (1844) no. 19, l. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Leonid Gorizontov, “In Search of Internal Balance: Debate on Changes in the Territorial-Administrative Division of the Russian Empire in the 1830s and 1840s,” in *Imperiology: From Empirical Knowledge to Discussing the Russian Empire*, ed. Kimitaka Matsuzato (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2007), 180.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

of provincial newspapers called *Gubernskii vedomosti* (Provincial News).<sup>25</sup> These administrative changes form the backdrop for many of the issues that would arise between the provincial authorities and the local bishop with regard to monastic incarceration.

Russian Orthodox monasteries were deeply integrated into the fabric of Russian life. Although the men and women who took monastic vows typically claimed otherworldly motives,<sup>26</sup> the stories that make up the history of monasticism in Russia reveal a pattern of engagement that is very much rooted in the concerns of this world – in its politics, economy, and culture. Indeed, recent works in the historiography on monasticism in Russia place particular monasteries at the very heart of Russian history.<sup>27</sup> In a similar vein, this examination places monasteries at the centre of church and state relations during the imperial period. The incarceration of individuals in monastery prisons, as well as the broader practices of public penance, reveal the ways in which Russian monasticism was an active component in the ongoing engagements between the Russian Orthodox Church and its national and local environment during the imperial period.

The practices involved in sentences of penance provide a test case for how the relationship between the church and the state functioned on the ground within the monastic context. This dissertation will demonstrate that these practices were messy,

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<sup>25</sup> Gorizontov, 181.

<sup>26</sup> For example, in 1904, Archbishop Iuvenalii wrote, “To the question, ‘Why did you enter a monastery?’ many answer, ‘In order to save [my] soul.’” in *Monasheskaia zhizn’ po izrecheniiam sviatykh ottsov* (Sviato-Troitskaia Sergieva Lavra, 2007), 5.

<sup>27</sup> For example, see Scott Kenworthy, *The Heart of Russia: Trinity-Sergius, Monasticism, and Society after 1825* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) and Roy Robson, *Solovki: The Story of Russia Told Through its Most Remarkable Islands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).



the motives were mixed, and ultimately, neither the church nor the state ruled supreme. Directives sent from the central authorities in St. Petersburg – whether from the Holy Synod, the state authorities, or the tsar himself – had to be interpreted and worked out on the local level. At times the church authorities were able to act in the interests of the church and according to its own teachings and regulations. At other times, the state officials imposed upon the church for their own purposes. But in the vast majority of cases, church and state worked together from shared presuppositions about the intimate relationship between sin and crime.

These negotiations had varying results in the realm of crime and punishment. For prisoners who embraced the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church, a sentence of monastic confinement could be understood within the parameters of the church's teachings on penance. As in Father Zosima's explanation, these prisoners could confront their actions as sin before the church and restoration was theoretically possible, though admittedly rare in practice. By contrast, for prisoners who rejected the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church, the penitential aspect of monastic confinement was in fact a source of great distress and agony. It is in the confluence of these practices that the truly ambiguous nature of the relationship between the church and the state comes to light. The Russian Orthodox Church was not the "handmaiden" of the state in the imperial period,<sup>28</sup> but neither was it a free and independent institution. The history of monastic confinement in Russia exposes the

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<sup>28</sup> Gregory L. Freeze, "Handmaiden of the State? The Orthodox Church in Imperial Russia Reconsidered," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985): 82-102. The handmaiden question will be discussed below.

degree to which this relationship was based on a shared understanding of authority and yet an understanding of it that was constantly being negotiated.

The sources for this project are rich and diverse and draw from both the regional and imperial archives and libraries. The files of the Holy Synod at the *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv* (RGIA – Russian State Historical Archive) in St. Petersburg include regular reports from the monasteries throughout the empire as well as decrees on penance and correspondence regarding specific sentences of penance in various locations.<sup>29</sup> At the *Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Vladimirskoi oblasti* (GAVO – State Archive of Vladimir Province), I was able to examine the files of many of the monasteries in Vladimir province. Not all of the region's numerous monasteries have surviving collections of documents, but some do.<sup>30</sup> Among the largest and most significant for this project were the files from Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery. The empire's centralized monastery files are housed at the *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov* (RGADA – Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts) and a large collection of documents on Spaso-Evfimiev, one of the larger and historically important monasteries of the empire, is also included among them.<sup>31</sup> Both the collection at RGADA and the one in the regional archive in Vladimir contain the correspondence and reports that were sent between the monastery authorities, the Vladimir Spiritual Consistory, and the provincial governor. Whereas the reports to the Holy Synod provide a better sense of how the

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<sup>29</sup> Fonds 796 and 797.

<sup>30</sup> Fonds 90, 556, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 575, 578, 1094.

<sup>31</sup> Fonds 1186, 1188, 1196, 1203, 1449.

various regional experiences compare, the reports in the local archives tended to be rich in anecdote, particularly as concerns disciplinary issues and the material well-being of the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev. Although both men's and women's monasteries participated in the practice of public penance, in Vladimir Province, the accounts of women doing penance are sadly lacking in the archival record.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to the archival evidence for public penance, the imperial and church law codes also play an important role in this study. During the Nicolaevan era, the imperial law codes received long overdue attention. Nicholas commissioned the systematization and codification of the existing laws – an enterprise that had not been successfully undertaken since the *Sobornoe ulozhenie* of 1649.<sup>33</sup> By 1833, the Second Section of His Majesty's Own Chancellery, created for this very purpose, had finished work on a Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire (*Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii*),<sup>34</sup> containing all the legislation produced since 1649, and the Collected Laws of the Russian Empire (*Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii*),<sup>35</sup> which contained only the laws in effect.<sup>36</sup> The references to public penance in these collections have been examined. In addition, both *The Rudder*

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<sup>32</sup> This is countered in this project by evidence from the records of the Holy Synod both from Vladimir region as well as reports from other dioceses, but ultimately, a more nuanced interpretation of the gendered nature of public penance will require evidence from another province where records at women's monasteries were better kept.

<sup>33</sup> Tatiana Borisova, "Russian National Legal Tradition: Svod versus Ulozhenie in Nineteenth-century Russia," *Review of Central and East European Law* 33 (2008): 296f.

<sup>34</sup> *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii, vtoroe sobranie*, TT. 1-30 ([http://www.nlr.ru/res/law\\_r/content.html](http://www.nlr.ru/res/law_r/content.html)) Accessed: May 2012.

<sup>35</sup> *Svod Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*, TT. 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 (St. Petersburg, Russia: Tipografia Vtorago otdelenia Sobstvennogo, 1857).

<sup>36</sup> Borisova, 319.

(*Pedalion* – the compilation of canon law of the Eastern Christian Church)<sup>37</sup> and the instructions set out in *The Spiritual Regulation of Peter the Great*<sup>38</sup> have been studied in some detail. These church and state law codes and statutes provide an opportunity to explore the prescriptions made by both the church and the state with regard to public penance.

Further to the prescriptions in the law codes, the teachings of the nineteenth-century Russian church regarding penance and church discipline more broadly have also been examined. This includes published sermons, essays, and testimonials as well as books that were published on penance during this period.<sup>39</sup> Church newspapers and journals frequently reflected on penitential practices, as well as the earlier teachings of the Eastern Church fathers. In 1838, the provincial government began publishing a weekly newspaper<sup>40</sup> and in 1865, the Vladimir Spiritual Consistory launched one as well.<sup>41</sup> These newspapers contribute to our understanding of the broader context and, since Spaso-Evfimiev was such a famous monastery, they reported on events related to the monastery with some frequency. These sources are complemented by the rich intellectual discussions that took place in the periodical

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<sup>37</sup> Agapius, a hieromonach and Nicodemus, a monk. *The Rudder (Pedalion)*, trans. D. Cummings (Chicago, IL: The Orthodox Christian Educational Society, 1957).

<sup>38</sup> Alexander Muller, trans. and ed., *The Spiritual Regulation of Peter the Great* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972).

<sup>39</sup> See the discussion in chapter three regarding church teachings on penance.

<sup>40</sup> *Vladimirskie Gubernskie Vedomosti (VGV)*, 1838-1900.

<sup>41</sup> *Vladimirskie Eparkhialnye Vedomosti (VEV)*, 1865-1900.

press during the nineteenth century.<sup>42</sup> This includes debates over judicial legislation, exile, incarceration, and corporal punishment, as well as the role of the monastery in society. While the focus is on the publications of the Nicolaevan era, since censorship was rather severe and was substantially eased immediately after Nicholas died, I have also examined the debates in the thick journals from the latter half of the century.

The rest of this dissertation will explore the range of negotiations that took place between church and state as they sought to manage public penance and monastic incarceration – which were sometimes the same thing, but often not. Chapter one places this dissertation at the juncture of three fields of scholarship: the history of religion in Russia, the history of the Russian state, and that on crime and punishment. Applying the tools of practice theory, the history of Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery in Vladimir Diocese is used as a case study to draw these three fields of scholarship into dialogue with one another.

Chapter two focuses on the question of authority as it relates to the sentence of public penance, placing the long history of engagements between the church and the state in the monastic context within a penitential framework. Examining the prescriptions on penance in Eastern canon law and the *Ecclesiastical Regulation*, it then explores the presence of public penance in state law as it was being codified in the Nicolaevan era. This comparative analysis reveals the shared assumptions about the nature of sin and crime in the period, but differences also emerge. Where the

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<sup>42</sup> This includes articles from *Pravoslavnyi Sobesednik*, *Dushepoleznoe Chtenie*, *Dukhovnyi Vestnik*, *Rukovodstvo dlia sel'skikh pastyrei*, *Bogoslovskii Vestnik*, *Tserkovnye Vedomosti*, *Russkaia Starina*, and *Byloe*.

emphasis in canon law was on the healing of the sinner, state law embraced penance as a further disciplinary measure to ensure social control.

Chapter three looks at how the practice of penance was understood during the Nicolaevan era and how the church teachings of that period related to canon and imperial law. By examining church publications and sermons from that time, it becomes clear that healing and forgiveness were the central goals of the practice. Yet, the growing power of the emerging modern state also affected the way this sacrament was used. The tensions between private and public penance and whether it was voluntary or enforced are examined through the efforts of the church to regulate its clergy. The specific examples of individuals who were confined at Spaso-Evfimiev for reasons related to defiling the cloth demonstrate the efforts of the church hierarchy to walk a fine line between the rite's traditional goals of healing and its use to obtain a more professional clergy.

Chapter four examines how the church served the state in ways that had little to do with the church's own teachings and values – or in other words, the ways that the church functioned as the “handmaiden” of the state. The role of the church in providing supplementary space for incarceration at a time when perspectives were changing on corporal punishment but the prison facilities were still lacking is an important part of this story. The housing of political prisoners and some violent criminals was also done in service to the state.

Chapter five discusses the ways that the church and state had shared values and goals and worked together in the practices of monastic confinement. The incarcerations for madness and for sectarian belief demonstrate the cooperation that

took place between these institutions. The role of the monasteries in providing social services further demonstrates how deeply the church was integrated into the structure of community life.

The final chapter explores the treatment of prisoners in a further attempt to reveal the integration of Orthodox values in the practices involved in public penance. Drawing on the strategies of material history to examine what life was like in a monastery prison, it will be demonstrated that both the church and state authorities were concerned about the physical well-being of the prisoners in the monasteries. The interactions between the various layers of authority with each other and with the prisoners exposes the shared assumptions about these practices, but also the extent to which they were constantly being navigated with varying results.

The conflation of sin and crime in the nineteenth-century Russian mentality, as evidenced by Father Zosima's discussion, contributed to the expansive list of reasons for being incarcerated in a monastery. The influence of state ideology on the church also buffered the justifications that were used to incarcerate people. Because there existed a common belief in the intimate relationship between sin and crime, the church was understood to have an obvious disciplinary role to play. Public penance, therefore, was one more option on the list of possible punishments. But the church preserved its own assortment of motives and concerns in the process and this also influenced the local practices of penance in the monastery.

Working with shared assumptions about the nature of sin and crime, the church and state officials evolved a common understanding of the practice of monastic incarceration, in which each side had goals that were compatible, if not

completely overlapping. The result was a mixed bag of tricks. On the one hand, there was a sense in which the church was providing social services through the monastery prison. In an era when retirement homes were nonexistent and insane asylums were a very recent development, the monasteries provided housing and care for aging clerics and those who were considered mentally unstable. But the prison facilities were also a way to buttress the Orthodox Church's privileged position before the state and the incarceration of religious prisoners was a means whereby the church could combat its closest rivals. On the other hand, the state was able to make use of the monastery facilities to deal with exceptional cases involving crimes against the state and to complement an overcrowded prison system. These examples provide us with a glimpse of the ambiguity and constant negotiation that existed in the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state in the imperial period.



## Chapter 1

### Church and State in Imperial Russia: Living the Relationship

The subject of monastic incarceration in imperial Russia lies at the intersection of many fields of scholarship. In addition to the question of church/state relations, the history of monasticism and of “lived” religion, the history and sociology of crime and of penal systems, questions of social control, the rise of the modern state, and the history of madness all find a place in this story. The strategies used within these fields are also diverse, ranging over the methodologies of social, cultural, and material history. The goal of this chapter is to provide the historiographical and methodological framework for rethinking church and state in imperial Russia. Beginning with an examination of recent literature redefining church and state, this chapter will then assess Foucault’s oeuvre as it relates to this topic. The tools of practice theory will then be used to place a case study of the monastery prison at Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery in Vladimir Diocese at the heart of this discussion. In placing this example at the juncture of these various fields, it will be argued that framing the church/state relationship in terms of the handmaid question is problematic. By turning our attention to the practices involved in monastic incarceration, it becomes clear that living this relationship involved ongoing negotiation and cooperation regionally and across the empire.

### Church and State

The history of church and state relations, perceived as the interaction of two institutions, went out of vogue with the ascension of social and cultural history in the

second half of the twentieth century. But in the context of Russian history, where the reforms of Peter the Great changed the structure of the church and thereby the nature of its relationship to the state for over two hundred years, the subject has remained central to any discussion of religion during the imperial period and it has benefitted from the expanded approaches that social and cultural history have brought to questions that were growing stale. Yet the questions are as old as the institutions themselves.

In the Russian Orthodox context, traditional interpretations have centered on the question of whether or not the church was able to maintain its independence from the state during the synodal period? Or in other words, to what extent was the church functioning as a part of the network of state departments? In the conclusion of his 1940 *Church and State in Russia: The Last Years of the Empire, 1900-1917*, John Shelton Curtiss described the Russian Orthodox Church as a handmaid fettered to a collapsing state.<sup>43</sup> This image of the church as a pawn destined to share the fate of the state and the corresponding focus on the institutional history of the church was to have enduring influence on the subsequent historiography. In the late 1950s, A.V. Kartashev first published his two-volume *Ocherki po istorii russkoi tserkvi*, in which he also interpreted the church in institutional terms and detailed its political history in relation to the state. Kartashev celebrated the “symphonic” relationship between the church and the state and saw the implementation of the Holy Synod as a deviation from Russia’s Byzantine heritage, and one that he chronicled with an air of tragedy.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> John Shelton Curtiss, *Church and State in Russia: the Last Years of the Empire, 1900-1917* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 409.

<sup>44</sup> A.V. Kartashev, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi tserkvi, Vol. 2* (Moscow: Terra, 1992-93), 392.

In similar fashion, though with a tone of inevitability rather than tragedy, Richard Pipes declared in the 1970s that with the establishment of the Most Holy All-Ruling Synod, “the Russian church lost its distinct institutional existence and merged formally with the state apparatus.”<sup>45</sup> This perception persists in contemporary historical analysis across the disciplines. Historian Firuz Kazemzadeh described the church in the synodal period as “an arm of the State, teaching obedience to the government, glorifying absolutism, and serving as a spiritual police.”<sup>46</sup> Political scientist Lee Trepanier has suggested that the Petrine reforms “destroyed the symphonic arrangement between church and state, ushering in an era of Caesaropapism in Russia, where the Church no longer was an ordering principle for society.”<sup>47</sup>

In a challenge to earlier interpretations of Orthodox subjugation by the state, with particular attention paid to Pipes, Gregory L. Freeze wrote a seminal article in 1985 titled “Handmaiden of the State? The Church in Imperial Russia Reconsidered.”<sup>48</sup> In it, he argued that the reforms of Peter the Great were not successful in making the church a mere component of the state bureaucracy due to the fact that the ecclesiastical structure established by Peter allowed the Holy Synod to maintain its autonomy in the form of its own budget, ecclesiastical schools and

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<sup>45</sup> Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime* (New York: Scribner, 1974), 241.

<sup>46</sup> Firuz Kazemzadeh, “Reflections on Church and State in Russian History,” *Emory International Law Review* 12, no 1 (Winter 1998): 357.

<sup>47</sup> Lee Trepanier, *Political Symbols in Russian History: Church, State, and the Quest for Order and Justice* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 134.

<sup>48</sup> Gregory L. Freeze, “Handmaiden of the State? The Church in Imperial Russia Reconsidered,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36, no. 1 (January 1985): 78-103.

courts, its own censorship apparatus and its own lay bureaucracy.<sup>49</sup> This structural autonomy combined with the development of distinct and isolated clerical social groups resulted in the failure of the state to assimilate the church into its existing bureaucracy.<sup>50</sup>

In the thirty years following the publication of Freeze's article, the broader trends of social and cultural history have led historians away from the church and state question with its emphasis on the church as an institution. With the end of communism in Russia and the opening of previously inaccessible archival holdings, the history of religion in Russia has flourished. Topics on the cultural and material history of the laity and clergy, questions of religious identity among the non-Russians and non-Orthodox of the empire and various aspects of "lived religion" are prevalent in the historiography.<sup>51</sup>

While the binary question regarding whether or not the institutional church was the "handmaiden of the state" has not been the focus of this scholarship, the implications of this research on "lived religion" and "quotidian Orthodoxy" have had a significant impact on our understanding of both the church and the state in imperial Russia as well as the points of interaction between the two. In the past thirty years, many historians have examined the use of symbols and rhetoric in the process of mythmaking. In practices involving objects like church bells and icon vestments,

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<sup>49</sup> Freeze, "Handmaiden of the State," 89.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>51</sup> For an excellent review of recent scholarship in the field of religion in Russia see Paul W. Werth, "Lived Orthodoxy and Confessional Diversity: The Last Decade on Religion in Modern Russia," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 4 (Fall 2011): 849-866. Also William G. Wagner, "Religion in Modern Russia: Revival and Survival," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 15, no. 1 (Winter 2014): 151-168.

rituals like the sign of the cross, or the reverencing of the bodies of saints, scholars have emphasized the ways that people of various backgrounds participate in the communal process of making meaning.<sup>52</sup> Drawing on new kinds of evidence, recent historiography has expanded our understanding of the communal nature of these efforts. In doing so, the issues of power and agency have been brought into focus. It is no longer possible to imagine one group being acted upon by another without recognizing the ways that each participant makes choices and participates in the construction of the historical context. One group may impose limitations on the freedom of another, and as a result, the choices of the latter may be more restricted, but nevertheless, where there is life, there is agency.

Perhaps the greatest contribution made by this recent scholarship, at least for the purposes of this study, is the expansion it has brought to our conception of the church, and for that matter the state also. The simple juxtaposition of these two institutions as though they each constituted a uniform personality, character, or “nature” has been replaced by a sense of the complexity we find when we expand our definitions to include the people, the ideologies, and the infrastructure that belonged to these establishments. Vera Shevzov has suggested a three-pronged approach to the study of the Russian Orthodox Church including the history of the institution, its

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<sup>52</sup> See for example, Edward V. Williams, “Aural Icons of Orthodoxy: The Sonic Typology of Russian Bells,” in *Christianity and the Arts in Russia*, eds. William C. Brumfield and Milos M. Velimirovic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 3-13; Sophia Senyk, “For the Beauty of God’s House: Notes on Icon Vestments and Decorations in the Ruthenian Church,” in *Letters from Heaven: Popular Religion in Russia and Ukraine*, eds. John-Paul Himka and Andriy Zayarnyuk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 226; Roy R. Robson, *Old Believers in Modern Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995); Robert H. Greene, *Bodies Like Bright Stars: Saints and Relics in Orthodox Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).

theology, and the spiritual practices of its members.<sup>53</sup> Drawing on this pattern, the Orthodox Church, in this study at least, includes an institutional structure, administrators, and several codes of law and belief. But it also includes the rites and rituals – or the practices – of the Orthodox faith. In addition, the devout and not-so-devout monks and nuns, parish clergy and laypeople, all of whom identified themselves as Orthodox, must be incorporated into the discussion. And to a great extent, this did not necessarily involve personal choice. For many of these participants in this period, there was a sense that those who had been labeled heretics were still somehow a part of this larger body of the Orthodox Church and they needed to be brought back into communion through repentance and forgiveness. The extent to which these so-called heretics saw themselves as Orthodox believers, or indeed wanted to return to communion with the Orthodox Church, did not seem to matter. The other members asserted a right of responsibility with regard to the spiritual well-being of these dissidents. Until 1905, it was in fact illegal to leave the Orthodox Church for another confession. As the discussion below will demonstrate, for those who belonged, the Orthodox Church was integrated into the fabric of Russian life in a way that gave the church a role to play in state practices like the incarceration of criminals and the care of the insane. To most believers this was a logical alignment. But for many who were outside this particular Orthodox paradigm, the close alliance of church and state and their cooperation in practical matters meant

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<sup>53</sup> Vera Shevzov, *Russian Orthodoxy on the Eve of Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 8. See also her article “Letting the People into Church: Reflections on Orthodoxy and Community in Late Imperial Russia,” in *Orthodox Russia: Belief and Practice under the Tsars*, eds. Valerie A. Kivelson and Robert H. Greene (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 59-77.

a loss of freedom and dignity. This is without question a story of insiders and outsiders, though the lines between the two were not always clearly drawn.

A recent book by Paul Werth has examined the relationship between the imperial government and the foreign faiths of the empire.<sup>54</sup> In tracing the practices and legislation on religious tolerance that evolved in the late imperial period, Werth demonstrates the role that confessional institutions of various stripes played as mediators between the state and its subjects.<sup>55</sup> He argues that the particular practices that emerged in various parts of the empire were contingent upon local factors, but were shaped by an emphasis on utility to the state and its well-being.<sup>56</sup> The role of the Russian Orthodox Church in this narrative was unpredictable at best.<sup>57</sup> The present project will further illuminate our understanding of the contributions made by religious institutions within the empire and the special place of the Russian Orthodox Church within the imperial order. Its focus on the Orthodox heartland means that closer ties can be demonstrated between the institutions of church and state than was evident in the border regions.

The Russian Orthodox Church is not the only organization to need redefining in this process. In similar fashion, the Russian state did not exist as a “single, quasi-metaphysical entity,”<sup>58</sup> except perhaps in the minds of modern scholars. It is

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<sup>54</sup> Paul W. Werth, *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>58</sup> David Fergusson, *Church, State and Civil Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 45.

therefore necessary to consider what it is we are discussing when we refer to the Russian state. Much has been written about the Russian state, about its structure, its ideology, and even why it is that we have come to understand it as “an independent entity with a capacity for action.”<sup>59</sup> Oleg Kharkhordin has suggested that we speak about the state as acting because of “residues of mystical doctrines that underlie the process that institutes public authority.”<sup>60</sup> In other words, in embracing the myth of the common good, people allow the particular interests of a few to stand as universals. Martin van Creveld provides an explanation grounded in the history of the evolution of the modern state. He argues that, after separating itself from the person of the ruler and elevating itself high above civil society, “the bureaucracy itself *became* the state.”<sup>61</sup> Placing the rise of the first states in the three and a half centuries leading up to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, he argues that, as the state evolved in the Russian context, “Government failed to acquire a persona of its own, which is the essence of what took place elsewhere...”<sup>62</sup> Instead, the Russian state continued to be associated with the choices and personalities of its rulers into the modern period.

One scholar has suggested that as a result of the victory over Napoleon, “both Alexander I and Nicholas I maintained Russia as a garrison state.”<sup>63</sup> Others have

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<sup>59</sup> Oleg Kharkhordin, “What is the State? The Russian Concept of *Gosudarstvo* in the European Context,” *History and Theory* 40 (May 2001), 213.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.

<sup>61</sup> Martin van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 143.

<sup>62</sup> van Creveld, 265.

<sup>63</sup> Philip Pomper, “The Evolution of the Russian Tradition of State Power,” *History and Theory* 51 (December 2012), 83.



used the word “reactionary” to describe the state under Nicholas. For the purposes of this project, the preceding expansion of the definition of the church may be a useful comparison. The state, too, must be considered in terms of the people, ideologies and infrastructure that constituted its existence. Like the church, the state also had codes of laws, layers of public relationships, and its own sets of symbols, rites and rituals. When the state is examined in this broader light, the integration of Orthodox values becomes a central feature.

When Nicholas’ government sought to collect and standardize the laws, the Orthodox Church provided both a central component of the ideological framework for the laws of the state and a supplementary part of the disciplinary apparatus that was used to enforce them. This was certainly the case with sentences of penance, which were written into the law codes. This is one example of how the Orthodox Church was integrated into the fabric of life within the Russian state. As will become evident in this examination, there are many other examples of this integration.

Another important point to be made in expanding the definition of the Russian state is with regard to the people involved in it. The role of personality in history has been greatly debated and individuals with strong personalities seem to leave a more obvious mark. This is particularly true in cases like Nicholas I where personality and position were combined with a vision of absolute rule and the opportunities to institute it. Throughout the historiography on this period, Nicholas has been portrayed as the state’s primary actor. Yet, the actions of the state, even under the authoritarian leadership of Nicholas I, must be understood as the combined

efforts of the members of the state bureaucracy both in St. Petersburg and throughout the provinces. This study emphasizes the roles played by people at the local level.

When Nicholas I ascended the throne, the authority of the government was in disarray. In addition to the immediate problems posed by the Decembrist uprising, Bruce Lincoln points to a host of issues that needed to be addressed, including serfdom, the state's finances and the Empire's entire economic system, the underdeveloped industry, the court system, taxation, and much more. In particular he argues that the bureaucracy was "unwieldy..., corrupt, and notoriously incompetent..."<sup>64</sup> The bureaucrats themselves feared change<sup>65</sup> and "the entire fabric of Russian society was permeated with an arbitrariness which left subordinates at the mercy of their superiors."<sup>66</sup> S. Frederick Starr further elaborates on these problems outside the imperial capitals, noting "the decrepit system of provincial government..."<sup>67</sup> He cites Sergei Uvarov, Minister of Education under Nicholas I, who wrote in 1827, "There is nothing more strange than the entirety of the internal administration of any province of Russia."<sup>68</sup> Indeed, no anecdote better illustrates this strangeness than the episode in Alexander Herzen's memoirs in which he relates how, as a councillor in the provincial government in Novgorod, he had oversight of his own exile and regularly signed a report on himself "as a man under police

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<sup>64</sup> W. Bruce Lincoln, *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 76.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>67</sup> S. Frederick Starr, *Decentralization and Self-Government in Russia, 1830-1870* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), ix.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

supervision.”<sup>69</sup> In response to these problems, or perhaps in spite of them, Lincoln argues that Nicholas “sought to create a personal absolutism so pervasive in nature that he, and those who served as the direct extension of his power, would touch the lives of all in Russia.”<sup>70</sup>

It is these members of the bureaucracy who extended the tsar’s authority and ability to rule throughout the empire, and whose joint efforts generated the activities that we credit to the Russian state. In his examination of the Russian bureaucracy in the pre-reform period (1825-1861), Lincoln describes the emergence of “enlightened bureaucrats” in the 1830s and 1840s, who “demanded efficiency and innovation rather than time-honored custom in administration.”<sup>71</sup> Starr also sheds light on the Russian bureaucracy by exploring its rapid expansion in the countryside. In 1829, the civil governor of Vladimir had three assistants including a secretary, a titular councillor, and a collegiate assessor.<sup>72</sup> By 1849, those three positions had expanded to fourteen and two years later, he had a staff of twenty-one aides.<sup>73</sup>

It is imperative that as we are considering the relationship between the church and the state, we keep in mind these officials and the beliefs and creeds that informed their work. Not only were most of the state officials members of the Orthodox

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<sup>69</sup> Alexander Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts: The Memoirs of Alexander Herzen*, ed. Dwight Macdonald, trans. Constance Garnett (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 271.

<sup>70</sup> Lincoln, *Nicholas I*, 85.

<sup>71</sup> W. Bruce Lincoln, *The Vanguard of Reform: Russia’s Enlightened Bureaucrats, 1825-1861* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1982), xiv.

<sup>72</sup> Starr, 11, fn. 30.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. He also notes that the civil servants in the Provincial Directorate had grown to 114 in addition to “the army of clerks and scribes...” under them. Yet, in spite of this accelerated growth, the provinces remained severely under-governed. p. 349.

Church,<sup>74</sup> but during this period, as the clerical estate became saturated, more and more sons of clergymen made their way into secular professions, including state service. In examining this “Holy Exodus,” Laurie Manchester has noted that although state service was not their ideal career choice, the sons of clergymen “constituted over 17 percent of early nineteenth-century officials, and 20 percent of mid-nineteenth-century officials.”<sup>75</sup> Again, this points to the integration of Orthodox ideals and values within the broader social context. Not only were these future bureaucrats raised in clerical families, they were educated in clerical schools and seminaries where their identities were shaped by the nature of their education and, in fact, by their shared sufferings.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, Manchester has demonstrated that many of these *popovichi* who left the clerical estate remained deeply connected to and motivated by their Orthodox heritage.<sup>77</sup>

In addition to the people involved in government service, and the codification of the laws, a working definition of the state must also be expanded to include the rites, rituals and symbols that formed a central part of the daily functioning of the

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<sup>74</sup> One obvious exception to this statement is the presence of the Baltic Germans in state service, most of whom were Protestant. Ingeborg Fleischhauer notes that the Baltic Germans formed a group that had long been “highly conscious of its social (nobility and bourgeoisie), religious (protestant) and national (Northern German) distinctiveness and tradition.” Ingeborg Fleischhauer, “The Nationalities Policy of the Tsars Reconsidered – The Case of the Russian Germans,” *Journal of Modern History* 53, no. 1, On Demand Supplement (March 1981), D1073, fn. 25. A recent study exploring the astounding mass conversion of 100,000 Estonian and Latvian peasants to Orthodoxy suggests that religious affiliation provided a strategy for peasants to contest the authority of local, Lutheran elites. Daniel Cavender Ryan, “The Tsar’s Faith: Conversion, Religious Politics and Peasant Protest in Imperial Russia’s Baltic Periphery, 1845-1870s” (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2008), 3f. By contrast, the province of Vladimir was a bastion of Russian Orthodoxy.

<sup>75</sup> Laurie Manchester, *Holy Fathers, Secular Sons: Clergy, Intelligentsia, and the Modern Self in Revolutionary Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008), 175.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 154. On the nature of a bursa education, see chapter 5, “Martyrdom, Moral Superiority, and a Bursa Education,” 123-154.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 155-178.

government. Extensive work has been done to explore these aspects of court life. For example, in his seminal work, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy*, Richard Wortman drew from the ceremonies of court life, the symbolism displayed on the parade ground, and developments in national music to demonstrate the ways they were used to establish and reaffirm the political power and authority of the autocrat.<sup>78</sup> But the state administration also made use of myth and ceremony, and surely the symbols related to discipline and punishment are most noteworthy in this discussion. Prison facilities, the tools of corporal punishment, and perhaps above all the images of Siberian exile were intended to deter those who were contemplating a life of crime. David Garland ties together the instruments of punishment and the symbols of the penal system. He writes,

... one can never separate out the instruments of punishment on the one hand and the symbols on the other: in this sphere (as in every other) symbols have a practical effect – the signs and symbols of condemnation are ... central to and constitutive of punishment, while the instruments of penal practice have ... an inescapable cultural meaning.<sup>79</sup>

Yet, these symbols could be reinterpreted ad infinitum and the state certainly did not have the last word on how. In his last work, *The Four Horsemen: Riding to Liberty in Post-Napoleonic Europe*, Richard Stites has revealed an alternative interpretation of these symbols. Pointing to the significance of the prison as a symbol of oppression throughout Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century, he wrote, “Incarceration and executions in particular captured the imagination in news reports, iconography,

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<sup>78</sup> Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*, 130. See also, Ernst Zitser, *The Transfigured Kingdom: Sacred Parody and Charismatic Authority at the Court of Peter the Great* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

<sup>79</sup> David Garland, *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 199.

and opera, where ‘the prison came to serve as the principal image of political oppression’ and condensed and crystallized a radical critique of the state.”<sup>80</sup>

An expanded view of the state, as also the church, must incorporate people, theory, and practice; penal symbols played an important role in both of the latter two. However, while the state could appropriate these symbols for its own purposes, it by no means had the ability to prevent alternative interpretations. The Decembrists and their wives, many of whom voluntarily followed their husbands into exile, present a pronounced example. The state intended their exile to serve as a punishment for their betrayal of the autocracy and as a deterrent for those who might consider similar feats of rebellion. Yet, left to publish their stories and contribute to the development of Russian culture in the broad reaches of empire, they came to symbolize martyrdom in the face of oppression.<sup>81</sup> Over the course of the nineteenth century, the penal reforms and the establishment of a growing prison system added to the repertoire of penal symbols up for grabs. Monastic incarceration was a means by which the state addressed various issues of concern, including madness, sectarianism and crime; however, as the penal system evolved, this practice came to symbolize the backwardness of the empire.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Richard Stites, *The Four Horsemen: Riding to Liberty in Post-Napoleonic Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 23.

<sup>81</sup> See for example, Elena Katz, “‘I will empower him!’: Representations of Prisoners’ Wives in Russia,” *Slavonica* 19, no. 2 (October 2013): 128-146 and Sarah J. Young, “Knowing Russia’s Convicts: The Other in Narratives of Imprisonment and Exile of the Late Imperial Era,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 9 (November 2013): 1700-1715. Also Ludmilla A. Trigos, *The Decembrist Myth in Russia Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) and Glynn Barratt, *Voices in Exile: The Decembrist Memoirs* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1974).

<sup>82</sup> See for example, Gregory L. Freeze, “The Wages of Sin: The Decline of Public Penance in Imperial Russia” in *Seeking God: The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia*, ed. Stephen K. Batalden (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993), 74.

The story of imprisonment as a disciplinary tool in the hands of the state has been a major focus in the historiography of modern Europe and elsewhere. In the 1970s many scholars examined the emergence of incarceratory practices. Michel Foucault's influential work on the birth of the prison in France and his argument that the prison represented the rise of "the disciplinary society,"<sup>83</sup> marked by its systems of surveillance, was accompanied and followed by a veritable library of studies on the history of the prison around the globe.<sup>84</sup> Looking at the rise of the prison in England between 1775 and 1840, Michael Ignatieff tied it to the emergence of an industrial society, demonstrating the middle-class emphasis on good order and "deferential reconciliation."<sup>85</sup> Likewise, Patricia O'Brien has made the link between an emerging national community and "the new moral consensus of an industrial society," as they related to prison reform in nineteenth-century France.<sup>86</sup> Work by Pieter Spierenburg on the Dutch experience traces the process by which modes of repression became privatized. He argues that the emergence of the nation-state in Western Europe paved the way for the evolution of repression.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 209.

<sup>84</sup> For a recent review article, see Mary Gibson, "Review Essay: Global Perspectives on the Birth of the Prison," *American Historical Review* 116, no. 4 (October 2011): 1040-1063.

<sup>85</sup> Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 213ff.

<sup>86</sup> Patricia O'Brien, *The Promise of Punishment: Prisons in Nineteenth-Century France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 301.

<sup>87</sup> Pieter Spierenburg, *The Spectacle of Suffering: Executions and the Evolution of Repression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 201.

In the Russian context, Mikhail Gernet's five-volume tome traces the evolution of the Russian prison system from 1762 to 1917.<sup>88</sup> The third volume focuses on the period from 1825 to 1870 and places these developments within the context of broader economic and social changes to the estate structure, which ultimately took shape in the great reforms of the 1860s. In addition to tracing the changes to the law that framed prison development, Gernet also provides extensive analysis of the particular prisons that were constructed throughout this period – including the Petropavlovskii Fortress, Alekseevskii Ravelin, the Shlissel'burg Fortress, and in fact, the monastery prisons at Solovki and Spaso-Evfimiev – as well as the inmates housed in them.<sup>89</sup> In addition to these works on the evolution of the prison system, other historians have placed the Russian experience within a broader, comparative framework. In particular, Jonathan Daly has argued that, with regard to penal policy, the Russian government was largely in step with the states of Western Europe in the late imperial period.<sup>90</sup>

### Methodology

In addition to engaging these broader fields of historiography, this dissertation also benefits from a variety of methodological approaches, including the methodologies of social, cultural, and material history, practice theory, regional and micro histories, as well as the applicability of Foucault's questions and analyses to

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<sup>88</sup> M. N. Gernet, *Istoriia tsarskoi tiur'my* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo iuridicheskoi literatury, 1961).

<sup>89</sup> Gernet, *Istoriia tsarskoi tiur'my*, vol. III, 1825-1870, 570-582.

<sup>90</sup> Jonathan Daly, "Criminal Punishment and Europeanization in Late Imperial Russia," *Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas* 47 (2000): 342.



the Russian context. Public and private conversations about this project with scholars from a variety of fields inevitably led to the question of Foucault's relevance. As one scholar put the question, "Will you be making use of Foucault or merely tipping your hat to him?" At the risk of putting myself in a box, I admit I had originally thought it would be the latter – a mere tip of the hat to *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.<sup>91</sup> But the more prisoners I encountered in this story, the more it became obvious that this is a topic that meets Foucault around every corner. Not only is it about the history of incarceration, but also the treatment of the insane, the use of confession, power relations, questions of reform versus punishment, penance as a technology of the self, and the list goes on.<sup>92</sup> In addition to the particular relevance of Foucault to this topic, recent scholarship has also explored the application of his thought to the Russian context more generally.<sup>93</sup> Thus, while I would still argue that Foucault has influenced the kinds of questions I am asking more than the answers I have found, it is nevertheless necessary to discuss his relevance in greater detail than a "tip-of-the-hat" footnote.

Many scholars have examined the application of Foucault's writings to various contexts in a way that emphasizes both his periodization and his paradigm for

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<sup>91</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

<sup>92</sup> For example, Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1988); *The History of Sexuality, vols. 1, 2, and 3*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990); Jeremy R. Carrette, ed, *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose, eds, *The Essential Foucault: Selections from Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984* (New York: The New Press, 2003).

<sup>93</sup> For example, Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

the emergence of the “modern soul.”<sup>94</sup> In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, he examined the process whereby torture disappeared as a public spectacle in France, the body ceased to be the major target of penal repression, and the goal of punishment became the rehabilitation of the offending individual instead of a symbolic spectacle. In the Russian context, his trajectory for the process of penal reform and its relationship to the construction of the modern individual is not easily argued. Laura Engelstein has addressed the application of Foucault to Imperial and Soviet Russia, drawing attention to the peculiarities of the Russian context and connecting her discussion to the broader question of the nascent middling groups. She argues that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Foucault’s receding “reign of law” had “not yet arrived” in the Russian context and that “the regime of ‘power/knowledge’ never came into its own.”<sup>95</sup> Situating these issues in reference to the concerns of nineteenth-century liberal intellectuals and professionals, she notes that the rule of law and bourgeois discipline remained hypothetical in Russia, and she concludes that during the Soviet period the scientific expertise of professionals was absorbed by the state and the absence of a legal framework resulted in a state that offered “discipline without rights.”<sup>96</sup>

In the historiography of penal reform in Russia, Abby Schrader and Bruce Adams, among others, have further addressed Foucault’s applicability in relation to

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<sup>94</sup> For example, see the articles in Jan Goldstein, *Foucault and the Writing of History* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1994). Also, Ann Goldberg, *Sex, Religion, and the Meaning of Modern Madness: The Eberbach Asylum and German Society, 1815-1849* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>95</sup> Laura Engelstein, “AHR Forum. Combined Underdevelopment: Discipline and the Law in Imperial and Soviet Russia,” *American Historical Review* 98, no. 2 (April 1993): 343.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 353.

various aspects of crime and the development of criminal justice.<sup>97</sup> Adams focuses on the efforts to restructure prison administration during the Great Reforms of the second half of the nineteenth century. After working to abolish corporal punishment, the reformers sought to improve the prison system so that it could be used for corrective purposes. Adams argues that they were influenced by Western ideas and were working toward a “modern” penal system in which prisoners could be rehabilitated and returned to society.<sup>98</sup> By contrast, Schrader has criticized this Foucauldian analysis. In her examination of the earlier Nicolaevan era, she has concluded that the penal reforms were conservative in nature and involved neither an indiscriminate adoption of European attitudes and procedures, nor the reverse wholesale acceptance of the traditional methods of the Russian penal system. Rather, she argues that the process of penal reform was greatly influenced by the importance of status (in terms of estate, gender, religion, ethnicity, and geography), and it was the relationship between these diverse elements within individual cases that shaped the gradual development of penal reform in Russia.<sup>99</sup> Both of these authors have contributed to a growing literature on criminal justice in Russia, placing the Russian experience within the broader European context.<sup>100</sup> Their arguments with regard to

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<sup>97</sup> Schrader, *Languages of the Lash*; Bruce F. Adams, *The Politics of Punishment: Prison Reform in Russia, 1863-1917* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996). See also, Stephen Frank, *Crime, Cultural Conflict, and Justice in Rural Russia, 1856-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) and Steven L. Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia: Petrovskoe, a Village in Tambov* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

<sup>98</sup> Adams, 198.

<sup>99</sup> Schrader, 185f.

<sup>100</sup> See also the work of Jonathan Daly, including “Criminal Punishment,” and “Russian Punishments in the European Mirror,” in *Russia in the European Context, 1789-1914: A Member of the Family*, eds. Susan P. McCaffray and Michael Melancon (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 161-188.

Foucault are shaped by their periods of focus – pre-reform for Schrader, leading to an emphasis on conservative values, and post-reform for Adams – with results more sympathetic to Foucault’s narrative and its usefulness for describing the history of penal reform in Russia.

The present examination of monastic prisons in nineteenth-century Russia provides an opportunity to explore this debate from another angle. While Foucault has received mixed reviews in regard to historical accuracy and the application of his ideas to the broader European context, there can be no doubt that he has fundamentally altered the way we think of power relations in the modern world. It is impossible to pursue research on law and discipline without reference to Foucault’s thought, and yet, it is not the paradigm he offers for how modern souls were constituted that is useful here. Rather, the questions he asked and to some extent the methods he used will be applied in this analysis.

Foucault argued that power is not acquired or held; rather it is exercised “in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations.”<sup>101</sup> The incarceration of individuals in monasteries involved people of many different backgrounds engaging in relationship with each other. In a context where punishment was being imposed, power relations were of central importance. Of particular significance to this project is the relationship between the prisoners and the authorities both within the monastery and beyond it, as well as the relationships between various authoritative groups, such as the local Spiritual Consistory and the provincial governor, but also the centralized authorities in St. Petersburg including members of the Synod as well

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<sup>101</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol. I, 94.

as the Senate and at times even the tsar. For Foucault, power relations come into play whenever there is asymmetry involved in a social relationship, yet there has to be “the possibility of resistance.”<sup>102</sup> He suggests, “In a great many cases, power relations are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom.”<sup>103</sup> This is certainly the case in the practices involved in monastic incarceration, but as will become clear in the evidence examined in chapter six, it is frequently the moments of resistance that exist in that limited margin that produce the most fruitful avenues for understanding the nature of these practices.

Foucault also argued that the soul – meaning “the psyche, subjectivity, personality, consciousness, etc.” – was “born out of methods of punishment, supervision and constraint.”<sup>104</sup> Both Foucault and the bishops of Vladimir province were interested in the souls of prisoners, albeit with very different definitions of the soul. Where Foucault saw the soul as the subjective part of the human constituted by emerging disciplinary practices, the Orthodox Christian interpretation would categorize it as the eternal part of the person. As will be further examined in subsequent chapters, the goal of penance in the Orthodox Church was related to the health of the soul. Not only was penance understood to have medicinal qualities, but it was also seen as training or preparation for righteousness.

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<sup>102</sup> Michel Foucault, “The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom,” in Rabinow and Rose, 34.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>104</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 29.

Foucault's work pushes us to examine the relationship between theory and practice. In this case, that relationship is complicated by the inclusion of other kinds of prisoners in the monastery besides penitent sinners. The questions must be asked: To what extent was the "correctional" goal of the monastery intended to rehabilitate prisoners and return them to society? And what was the relationship between private and public penance?

Emile Durkheim focused on the moral content and moralizing social effects of punishment.<sup>105</sup> Drawing on his work, David Garland has suggested that a significant limitation on the disciplinary process is related to "the individual's orientation and relationship to disciplinary power." Here he locates the monastery with the school and the factory in that "the individual co-operates in his training because, at least to some extent, he shares the goals of the disciplinary process (to overcome the flesh, to become educated, to earn a wage)." By contrast, the modern prison system – the subject of Garland's work – involves the prisoners in a process in which "they may have no inclination and no need to take an active part."<sup>106</sup> Of course, this may be a matter of degree. Not all children want to learn or cooperate in the training process, for example. However, if placed on a scale with internal motivation on one end and external discipline on the other, the monastic life would sit much closer to the first end and prison life to the latter. The monastery prisons in nineteenth-century Russia merged these two scenarios. Some prisoners were there serving penance as members of the Orthodox Church. Others were incarcerated for

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<sup>105</sup> Garland, 46.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 171f.

different reasons including madness, political dissent and violent crimes. The extent to which a prisoner embraced the sentence as penance dictated whether or not there was a possibility of rehabilitation. Other prisoners who were incarcerated for religious dissent against the Orthodox Church were far more likely to see their sentences as wrongful imprisonment rather than a pastoral effort with which they could cooperate in order to restore their souls to good health. Ultimately the goals of monastic incarceration – different goals for different kinds of prisoners – and the extent to which the prisoners bought in to those goals, reflect the fluid nature of the relationship between the church and the state in Russia during the Nicolaevan era. Some prisoners were being pastored by the church, some were being disciplined by the state, and in many cases, both realities were at play.

In addition to shaping these questions, the work of Foucault also promotes methodological attention to “the way discourses function within a given culture.”<sup>107</sup> According to Foucault, both monastic life and pastoral work were, from the beginning, tied up in the exercise of power. Seeing the pastor as one who oversees and disciplines his flock, he locates the birth of modern subjectivity in the development of confessional practices in the monastic culture that arose in the early Christian era.<sup>108</sup> With the rise of pastoral power came a variety of “techniques and procedures concerned with the truth and the production of truth” particularly as it relates to “knowledge of the interior of individuals.” In reference to confession, he

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<sup>107</sup> Michel Foucault, “Who are you, Professor Foucault? (1967),” in *Religion and Culture*, ed. Jeremy R. Carrette (New York: Routledge, 1999), 91.

<sup>108</sup> Michel Foucault, “About the beginning of the hermeneutics of the self (1980),” in Carrette, 163.

writes, “Truth, the production of interior truth, the production of subjective truth, is a fundamental element in the practice of the pastor.”<sup>109</sup>

In the Russian context, Nadieszda Kizenko has explored the theological and devotional literature on the topic of confession, the literary examples produced by the educated laity, and the broader practices of the rite from the late imperial period.<sup>110</sup> The sources that Kizenko has drawn on provide a rare glimpse into the kinds of discourse used by Russian people of diverse backgrounds (in terms of estate, economic status, and gender) as they sought forgiveness for their sins through written correspondence with a confessor.<sup>111</sup> Although the present study does not permit access to written confessions per se, it will attend to the religious discourse of the prisoners incarcerated in monastic prisons. Foucault wrote, “... discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy.”<sup>112</sup> Indeed it is in the episodes of resistance to the authorities that we have greatest access to the thoughts and ideas expressed by the prisoners rather than written about them, since they were able to send letters of complaint to the authorities and problems in the system could

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<sup>109</sup> Michel Foucault, “Sexuality and Power(1978),” in Carrette, 125.

<sup>110</sup> Nadieszda Kizenko, “Written Confession and Religious Thought in Early Nineteenth-Century Russia,” in *Thinking Orthodox in Modern Russia: Culture, History, Context*, eds. Patrick Lally Michelson and Judith Deutsch Kornblatt (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014), 181.

<sup>111</sup> See also her chapters, “Written Confessions and the Construction of Sacred Narrative,” in *Sacred Stories: Religion and Spirituality in Modern Russia*, eds. Mark D. Steinberg and Heather J. Coleman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 93-118 and “Written Confessions to Father John of Kronstadt, 1898-1908,” in *Orthodox Christianity in Imperial Russia: A Source Book on Lived Religion*, ed. Heather J. Coleman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 152-171.

<sup>112</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Volume I*, 101.



result in closer examination of the prisoners themselves and in paper trails tracking the issues at hand.

While Foucault's attention to discourse and his emphasis on relationships of power are strategies that shape this project, there are also deficiencies in his agenda that must be overcome. In particular, his tendency to highlight the political aspects of those relationships has raised questions. It was Foucault, for example, who said, "... the moral is the political."<sup>113</sup>

Criticizing Foucault for this overemphasis on the political nature of power and the ways that it shapes punishment, David Garland points to the works of Norbert Elias<sup>114</sup> and Pieter Spierenburg<sup>115</sup> to show that "cultural and psychic forces" also "place clear limits upon the types and extent of punishment which will be acceptable."<sup>116</sup> Garland contemplates how the broader culture shapes penalty, observing that,

... penal practices exist within a specific penal culture which is itself supported and made meaningful by wider cultural forms, these, in turn, being grounded in society's patterns of material life and social action. It hardly needs to be said that the major cultural themes which appear in penalty – conceptions of justice, of crime, religious forms, attitudes towards age, race, class, gender, and so on – did not develop independently there, nor do they stand on their own as isolated beliefs. Like all cultural elements they are enmeshed with wider belief-systems and mentalities, deriving their sense and credibility from their ability to resonate with established ways of thinking and understanding.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Foucault, "Who are you, Professor Foucault?" in Carrette, 100.

<sup>114</sup> See for example, Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process, Volume I: The History of Manners* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978) and *The Civilizing Process, Volume II: State Formation and Civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982).

<sup>115</sup> Spierenburg, *Spectacle of Suffering*.

<sup>116</sup> Garland, 229.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

This leads us to two conclusions regarding the examination of monastic incarceration in imperial Russia. The first is that monastic incarceration must be understood in relation to practices of penance as taught by the church during this period and within the broader framework of the history of monasticism and indeed, of religion, in Russia. As will become evident in chapter two, the long history of monasticism in Russia reveals an ongoing interaction between the powers of the church and the powers of the state as they relate to questions of authority and leadership within Russian society and culture. Penance in the Eastern Church also involves a unique discussion about the relationship between crime before the state and sin before the church. The wider context of Russian religious life and the assumptions people carried with regard to status gave shape to the practices of public penance and monastic incarceration.

The second conclusion is that the discourse employed by the prisoners and the authorities over them is not, on its own, an adequate source for understanding monastic incarceration in imperial Russia. The recent “practice turn” in the social sciences provides useful tools for overcoming this limitation. Drawing on the work of Anthony Giddens<sup>118</sup> and Pierre Bourdieu<sup>119</sup> among others,<sup>120</sup> practice theory is based

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<sup>118</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (London: Macmillan, 1979).

<sup>119</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). See also *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990) and *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

<sup>120</sup> Gabrielle M. Spiegel, ed., *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing After the Linguistic Turn* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

on the assumption that practices are “meaning-making, identity-forming, and order-producing activities,”<sup>121</sup> and they are the foundational components of social life.

Emerging from the field of cultural studies and responding to the so-called “linguistic turn,” practice theorists point to the recursive nature of human social activities.<sup>122</sup> On the one hand, human activity produces meaning, or as Gareth Stedman Jones would have it, “a myriad of meanings,”<sup>123</sup> and on the other it is itself reproduced, regenerated and recreated by those meanings. In an effort to understand how norms are formed and sustained, these authors redefine the relationship between structures and the practices that shape and are shaped by them.<sup>124</sup>

Central to this endeavour is an effort to rethink the broader concept of culture as a category for analysis. William Sewell Jr. traces the history of this concept and describes culture as contradictory, loosely integrated, subject to constant change and weakly bounded.<sup>125</sup> As such, he suggests that the task facing the cultural analyst is “to discern what the shapes and consistencies of local meanings actually are and to determine how, why, and to what extent they hang together.”<sup>126</sup>

At the heart of these questions is the issue of agency. Giddens distinguishes between intent and capacity, arguing that agency requires only the ability to act, not a

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<sup>121</sup> Davide Nicolini, *Practice Theory, Work, & Organization: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7.

<sup>122</sup> Anthony Giddens, “The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration: Elements of the theory of structuration,” in Spiegel, 123.

<sup>123</sup> Gareth Stedman Jones, “The Determinist Fix: Some obstacles to the further development of the linguistic approach to history in the 1990s,” in Spiegel, 68.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>125</sup> William H. Sewell, Jr. “The Concept(s) of Culture,” in Spiegel, 89f.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

particular intent. He writes, “Agency concerns events of which an individual is the perpetrator, in the sense that the individual could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently.”<sup>127</sup> Putting an essentialist twist on the subject, Sewell argues that, “a capacity for agency... is inherent in all humans.” He compares it with the ability to breathe and, perhaps more appropriately, with the capacity for language – present at birth but shaped in and by a particular cultural context.<sup>128</sup>

Elizabeth Ermarth elaborates most eloquently on the relationship between individual agency and the boundaries imposed by the community. On the one side, she writes,

Postmodernity provides for an assertion of personal uniqueness that is far more complex and creative than what Cartesian philosophy once asserted: a personal uniqueness not given, but constructed; a uniqueness I create as I go from day to day, specifying in particular ways my multiple shared potentials. From that aura of possibility, and with all my limitations upon me, I construct – you construct, he and she and they construct – the unique and unrepeatably poetry of an individual life...<sup>129</sup>

And yet, the individual can only act in relation to the community. Ermarth explains,

In the discursive condition, however, it is impossible *not* to act under collective obligation because the bases of all practice are the discursive systems or “languages,” including the language we call History; these systems have been collectively created, revised, and sustained. The “individual” specification of those available languages (the poetry of a life) can be original, or conventional, or a bit of both; it can reconfirm familiar usage or attempt new ones; open new solutions or keep repeating old ones. The one thing the individual contribution cannot be is detached from collective enterprise.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Giddens, “Constitution of Society,” 127.

<sup>128</sup> William H. Sewell, Jr. “A Theory of Structure: Duality, agency and transformation,” in Spiegel, 158.

<sup>129</sup> Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, “Agency in the Discursive Condition,” in Spiegel, 105.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

This combination of individual freedom set within and shaped by the cultural community imposes on the historian the dual task of explaining the significance of individual human activities while also identifying their relationship to the wider cultural context.

In addition to paying attention to the discourse of the participants (discourse, of course, also being a practice), and to the relationship between individual and community, this project will take advantage of other practice theory tools as well. In particular, the bodies and activities of the penitents and prisoners as well as the material realities of their existence will be examined in some detail. Sewell argues, “The typical cultural strategy of dominant actors and institutions is not so much to establish uniformity as it is to organize difference.”<sup>131</sup> This was certainly the case with regard to monastic incarceration. Monasteries provided a means to cope with the extraordinary cases that did not fit within the typical methods that the Russian state used to organize difference. A focus on these practices reveals the role the Russian Orthodox Church played in that process.

Davide Nicolini has suggested a methodological approach to practice theory that involves what he calls “zooming in” and “zooming out.”<sup>132</sup> By zooming in, he recommends focusing on “the mundane practical concerns which ostensibly orient the daily work of the practitioners.” For Nicolini, this involves asking the following questions: “What matters to them? What do they care about? What is their main practical concern when they go to work? What do they worry about in practice?”

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<sup>131</sup> Sewell, “Concept(s) of Culture,” 91.

<sup>132</sup> Nicolini, 213.

What do they see as their main object of activity? Where do they direct their efforts?”<sup>133</sup>

For the purposes of this dissertation, “zooming in” will entail the use of a case study to examine the practice of penance on the local level. This will include a regional focus on the Vladimir Diocese with particular attention paid to the inmates at Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery. Nicolini’s questions will provide a framework for an analysis of the practice of monastic incarceration as it relates to penance and broader disciplinary issues.

Regional history is a branch of Russian historiography that has its own extended past. As V.A. Berdinskikh discusses in his study of Russian provincial historiography in the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth,<sup>134</sup> with the development of the provincial statistical committees in European Russia during the reign of Nicholas I, the Russian state sought to collect information about the history, geography, ethnography, and so on, of each province. Likewise, the Russian Geographical Society and other such organizations contributed to the accumulation of regional knowledge.<sup>135</sup>

Recently, Susan Smith-Peters has emphasized the need to build on this tradition, adding to it a broader theoretical perspective, one that brings the specificity

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<sup>133</sup> Nicolini, 224.

<sup>134</sup> Viktor Berdinskikh, *Uezdnye istoriki: russkaia provintsial’naia istoriografiia* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2003).

<sup>135</sup> Joseph Bradley, *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia: Science, Patriotism, and Civil Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 97. Joseph Bradley has demonstrated how the gathering of this regional knowledge contributed to Russian national identity as well. Cf. Nathaniel Knight, “Science, Empire, and Nationality: Ethnography in the Russian Geographical Society, 1845-1855,” in *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire*, eds. Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 108-141.

of the local into sharper focus, but keeps in mind “the ways in which the concept and lived experience of the local influenced other ideas such as nation and nationality.”<sup>136</sup> In relation to monastic prisons, working on a regional case study will bring into focus the perspectives of the inhabitants of both the monasteries and the towns in which they were located, while also noting the ways in which they influenced ideas of religion and social control.

This brings us back to Nicolini’s method of “zooming out,” by which he means an effort “to appreciate how the local activity is affected by other practices; how other practices are affected or constrained or enabled by the practice under consideration; and what are the material consequences of such relationships.”<sup>137</sup> By comparing the regional evidence with the ways that penance and monastic incarceration were practised across the Russian empire, this study will reveal the variety of tensions over authority that existed between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state. In doing so, it will be argued that, in practice, the question of authority was constantly being negotiated.

### Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery

The case study element of this research focuses on the province of Vladimir. Located less than 200 kilometres east of Moscow, the region had its heyday prior to the Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century and was rich in historical significance and monastery holdings. In 1215, the Grand Prince, Iurii Vsevolodovich, established

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<sup>136</sup> Susan Smith-Peters, “How to Write a Region: Local and Regional Historiography,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 536.

<sup>137</sup> Nicolini, 229.

the diocese of Vladimir and Suzdal,<sup>138</sup> but in 1354, it was placed under the authority of the Metropolitan of Moscow. For nearly four hundred years there was no bishop in the province. In 1744, Empress Elizabeth ordered the creation of four new dioceses, one of which was Vladimir, and the bishop lived at Rozhdestvenskii Monastery. Between 1788 and 1798, the bishop was transferred to Suzdal, but he returned to Rozhdestvenskii Monastery in Vladimir after the reign of Paul I.<sup>139</sup> Thus the seats of power for both the province and diocese were located in the city of Vladimir, as became typical for provincial capitals.

By the time of Nicholas' reign, there were thirty religious communities in Vladimir diocese, including twenty-four men's monasteries and hermitages and eight women's monasteries.<sup>140</sup> However, of the 1,192,516 people in Vladimir province in 1854, there were only 304 men and 310 women among the monastic ranks.<sup>141</sup> Despite the relatively small number of monastics, the monasteries themselves were intimately connected to the historical significance of the region. During this period when national identity was being emphasized in new ways, the local, religious past gave shape to the regional conception of the Russian nation.

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<sup>138</sup> M. Oesterby, ed., *Istoriia Rossiiskoi Ierarkhii, Vol. 1* (1807; repr. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1979), 174.

<sup>139</sup> *Pribavlenie k VGV*, 1838, No. 21, p. 102.

<sup>140</sup> L. I. Denisov, *Pravoslavnye monastyri Rossiiskoi imperiii* (Moscow: Izdanie A. D. Stupina, 1908), 73-117.

<sup>141</sup> *VGV*, 1855, No. 20, p. 154. The breakdown of the population statistics by *soslovie* are listed here as well.



In 1840, for example, the provincial newspaper featured a series of sketches about ancient Suzdal,<sup>142</sup> a town twenty-six kilometres from the administrative centre and home of Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery. These sketches covered a range of topics, but each one touched on some aspect of Suzdal's history that had left material evidence of that past. Some looked at specific neighborhoods of Suzdal, such as Teremki, which had been the location of the *terem* in ancient times.<sup>143</sup> Others examined the pagan remnants of Suzdal's history, such as street names like Iarunovka, which the author of the sketches believed to be a variation on the name of the god Perun.<sup>144</sup> The newspapers also covered the history and contemporary situation of the local monasteries. For example, in 1843, an article in the Vladimir Gazette gave an account of all the monasteries in the city of Vladimir and the surrounding areas.<sup>145</sup>

Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery was among the most important monasteries in the region. Built by Prince Boris Konstantinovich of Suzdal in the fourteenth century, it was the first male monastery to be constructed in the area, although there were already many women's monasteries.<sup>146</sup> An article in the provincial *Gazette* proudly noted that the first abbot of the monastery, Evfimii, was a friend of Sergei of

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<sup>142</sup> "Zametki o drevnostiakh Suzdal'skikh," in *Pribavlenie k VGV*, 1840, Nos. 9-16.

<sup>143</sup> Elite women in the Muscovite period lived in separate quarters called a *terem*. See Christine D. Worobec, "Accommodation and Resistance," in *Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, eds. Barbara Evans Clements, et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 18f.

<sup>144</sup> *Pribavlenie k VGV*, 1840, No. 13, p. 51.

<sup>145</sup> *Pribavlenie k VGV*, 1843, No. 32, p. 129.

<sup>146</sup> *Pribavlenie k VGV*, 1840, No. 14, p. 55. See also Marlyn L. Miller, "Under the Protection of the Virgin: The Feminization of Monasticism in Imperial Russia, 1700-1923" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 2009), 1.

Radonezh.<sup>147</sup> A compendium of saints published in St. Petersburg in 1836 briefly outlined his life. A disciple of the bishop of Suzdal, he was tonsured in the Nizhny Novgorod Caves Monastery and in 1352 he went to Suzdal to oversee the work on the Church of the Transfiguration of the Lord, which was consecrated in 1357. He gradually built up a monastery at that location and when he died in 1404 at the age of 88, he was buried there. On July 4, 1507, his uncorrupted remains were discovered as a result of the digging of a foundation for a new church. And in 1511, the monastery was renamed after this saint and his remains were moved into the Cathedral of the Holy Transfiguration.<sup>148</sup>

Throughout its history, Spaso-Evfimiev played a central role in the community of Suzdal and in the region as well. In the nineteenth century, religious processions were among the regular events that helped to incorporate people into the religious life of the monastery. For example, on the ninth Sunday after Easter, the relics of St. Evfimii were carried around the monastery walls at Suzdal Spaso-Evfimiev. According to Zyrianov, up to five thousand people would attend this annual procession.<sup>149</sup>

In an article published in the provincial newspaper in 1838, N. Gersevanov described Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery as “perhaps, the most remarkable building in

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<sup>147</sup> *VGV*, 1877, No. 12, p. 1.

<sup>148</sup> Slovar' istoricheskii o sviatykh, proslavlennykh v Rossiiskoi tserkvi, i o nekotorykh podvizhnikakh blagochestii, mestno chtimykh (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia II Otdeleniia Sobstvennoi Ego Imperatorskago Velichestva Kantseliarii, 1836), 107.

<sup>149</sup> Pavel Zyrianov, *Russkie monastyri i monashestvo v XIX i nachale XX veka* (Moscow: Verbum-M, 2001), 73.

Vladimir province.”<sup>150</sup> Noting the high walls and towers, Gersevanov saw the largest tower as “a monument to our ancient architecture.” It was threatening to collapse and some wanted to tear it down, but he thought perhaps some structural improvements would allow it to remain standing. In his view, these walls had stood as silent witnesses of the monastery’s history. Drawing on various episodes from the past, from the invasion of the Tatars in the fifteenth century to the incursions by the Polish Colonel Alexander Lisovski at the beginning of the seventeenth, Gersevanov was particularly concerned about the lack of a monument to honour the memory of Prince Dmitri Pozharskii, who had led the militia during the time of troubles and along with Kuzma Minin and Prince Dmitri Trubetskoi, was largely responsible for summoning the *zemskii sobor* that would elect Mikhail Romanov in 1613. The Pozharskii family cemetery was at Spaso-Evfimiev and Pozharskii’s remains were also buried there but the precise location was unknown. According to Gersevanov, the first question asked by visitors to Suzdal was “Where is the monument to Pozharskii?” He saw it as a shameful oversight that there was no such monument.<sup>151</sup>

Newspaper articles, such as these, sought to locate the regional history of Vladimir within the broader history of the Russian empire. As early as 1818, a statue honouring Pozharskii and Minin was constructed in Red Square. Nurit Schleifman has suggested that the defeat of Napoleon in 1812 and the defeat of the Poles in 1613 developed a historical connection regarding “Russia’s heroism in the face of foreign

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<sup>150</sup> *Pribavlenie k VGV*, 1838, No. 37, p. 167. Not everyone agreed, however. When Metropolitan of Moscow, Platon, traveled through Iaroslavl, Kostroma and Vladimir, his travel notes were published in the Vladimir Provincial Gazette. He summed up his visit to Spaso-Evfimiev with the following conclusion: “There is nothing remarkable in the monastery.” (*Pribavlenie k VGV*, 1842, No. 3, p. 10).

<sup>151</sup> *Pribavlenie k VGV*, 1838, No. 37, p. 168.

invaders aiming for its heart – holy Moscow.”<sup>152</sup> It is likely that the national monument made the absence of a local one more noticeable in the imagination of pilgrims to Spaso-Evfimiev. Eventually, the gravesite became an issue of national concern and Count Sergei Uvarov, Minister of Education from 1833 to 1849 and head of the Academy of Sciences from 1818 to 1855, initiated a survey and had the area excavated to discover the precise location of Prince Pozharskii’s grave. By 1852 a special commission opened the tomb and determined that it was indeed the Russian hero.<sup>153</sup> A monument to Pozharskii was erected over his grave at Spaso-Evfimiev in 1862<sup>154</sup> and in 1868, an inscription was added to the tombstone.<sup>155</sup> Both events were noted in the local press.

In addition to its ties to national and imperial history, Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery also became notorious for its involvement in the practices of monastic incarceration. Scott Seregny and Rex Wade have noted that life in the province mirrors the broader processes of change at play throughout the empire.<sup>156</sup> This was certainly true of the growing preference for confinement over corporal punishment or exile. Providing supplementary space for incarceration as an alternative to the overcrowded state prisons was a way that the church served the state through the

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<sup>152</sup> Nurit Schleifman, “The Uses of Memory: The Russian Province in Search of its Past,” in *Russia at a Crossroads: History, Memory and Political Practice*, ed. Nurit Schleifman (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 11.

<sup>153</sup> *VGV*, 1877, No. 12, p. 2.

<sup>154</sup> *VGV*, 1862, No. 36, p. 131.

<sup>155</sup> *VGV*, 1868, No. 42.

<sup>156</sup> Scott J. Seregny and Rex A. Wade, “Saratov as Russian History,” in *Politics and Society in Provincial Russia: Saratov, 1590-1917*, eds. Rex A. Wade and Scott J. Seregny (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), 9.

practice of monastic incarceration. Spaso-Evfimiev provides a window onto these developments.<sup>157</sup> Though not the first monastery in the region to incarcerate someone,<sup>158</sup> it did become the most infamous, rivaled only by Solovetskii Monastery in the north.

The prison facility at Spaso-Evfimiev developed gradually. In 1766, Catherine II had the insane convicts from Moscow Province sent to Suzdal to be housed at Spaso-Evfimiev. There was to be one guard for every six prisoners, who were to be kept two or three to a cell. They were not shackled and the guards were unarmed. The prisoners were to be kept from harming others and were not allowed to converse with outsiders or to leave the monastery. They were to be kept calm and to be given access to the Divine Liturgy. The confinement was not meant to be overly strict and the original mandate was presented more in terms of care for the insane, rather than incarceration of dangerous criminals. According to a local newspaper article in 1900, as time passed, the nature of confinement at Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery changed and expanded. Eventually, the prisoners came to include “members of the clergy and religious criminals, dangerous members of secular society, officers of the army and civil servants.” The guard also increased to the point

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<sup>157</sup> Scicluna and Knepper identify Malta’s prison as “not a model, but rather a window” onto the spread of Anglo-American theories of prison science. This is a useful distinction at Spaso-Evfimiev as well. Though not “a model” for broader practices, it does provide insight into them. Scicluna and Knepper, 503.

<sup>158</sup> The Pokrovskii Monastery, which was reconstructed during the reign of the grand prince Vasiliï Ioannovich (1505-1533), was immediately used as a place of confinement for the grand prince’s first wife, Solomoniia. *Pribavlenie k VGV*, 1840, No. 13, p. 51. Regarding the Pokrovskii Monastery see Marlyn Miller, “Social Revolution in Russian Female Monasticism: The Case of the Convent of the Intercession, 1700-1917,” *Russian History* 40 (2013): 166-182.

where it included a non-commissioned officer, a lance-corporal, and three shifts of eight for a total of twenty-four soldiers of the guard.<sup>159</sup>

In spite of this growth in the practice of monastic incarceration, the rooms used to house the prisoners were not expanded until the overcrowding in the facility resulted in scandal. In 1821, the chairman of the local Palace of Criminal Justice, Zuzin, toured the province inspecting its overall management. He wrote,

On my journey through the town of Suzdal, while making a revue of Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery, I observed that the prisoners' rooms were very narrow for the number of occupants and the air in them always felt heavy, which is why many were sick. Moreover, all the rooms were generally dilapidated and required improvements and they were not properly fortified.<sup>160</sup>

During the 1820s, this situation was rectified, as the monastery authorities took measures to improve the material conditions of the inmates.<sup>161</sup> However, as will be further demonstrated below, the question of the material well-being of prisoners remained an issue throughout the Nicolaevan era.

During the period under examination here, Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery was one of eighteen monasteries (seven women's and eleven men's) in the region that hosted individuals who had been sentenced to perform public penance. There were at least 237 penitents in Vladimir diocese from 1825 to 1855,<sup>162</sup> including ninety-one prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev. The latter will be the focus of this project, but the broader practices in the region as well as across the empire will also be considered.

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<sup>159</sup> *VGV*, 1900, No. 11, p. 23.

<sup>160</sup> *VGV*, 1900, No. 11, p. 23.

<sup>161</sup> *VGV*, 1900, No. 11, p. 24.

<sup>162</sup> This is based on the number of actual personalities that I have gathered from the documents. It may have been higher.

Two bishops presided in Vladimir diocese during the reign of Nicholas I. Parfenii (Chertkov) served as bishop from 1821 to 1833 and as archbishop from 1833 to 1850, and Iustin (Mikhailov) served as bishop from 1850 to 1863.<sup>163</sup> Both of these men played an active role in the management of the prison at Spaso-Evfimiev. The reports, petitions, and general correspondence they received covered a wide array of issues, from the orders for the transfer of prisoners between monasteries and even regions, to both orders and petitions regarding the material well-being of the prisoners, and of course disciplinary issues as well. The bishop was required to report to the Synod at least twice a year on the health and behaviour of the prisoners. These reports took the form of a chart and included a list of the prisoners along with details on their social background, their crimes, sentences, and their current health and behaviour. Of the ninety-one different individuals listed on these charts throughout this period, we have fairly complete information for sixty-five of them.<sup>164</sup> The prison usually housed between twenty and thirty-five prisoners at any one time.<sup>165</sup>

Turning now to the reasons for being incarcerated at Spaso-Evfimiev, it must be emphasized that there was no obvious division of the crimes into categories. The charts used by the bishops to report to the Holy Synod did include a section that asked “for what crime” the individual had been incarcerated, and the answers to this

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<sup>163</sup> I.K. Smolich, *Istoriia Russkoi tserkvi, 1700-1917, chast' pervaiia* (Moscow, 1996), 679.

<sup>164</sup> “Fairly complete” meaning the archival record indicates the age, rank, region, crime, sentence, and by whose authority they were incarcerated, with the exception of one of these categories at most. The most frequent information to be missing was that of region, followed by age. There are records missing two of these categories for an additional sixteen prisoners. The remaining ten left limited evidence of their time at Spaso-Evfimiev. For an example, see A.J. Demoskoff, “Monastic Incarceration in Imperial Russia,” in *Orthodox Christianity in Imperial Russia*, 43-57.

<sup>165</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 282 (1825), no. 34 (32 prisoners); viaz. 292 (1835), no. 1 (24 prisoners); viaz. 297 (1840), no. 1 (24 prisoners).

question were very telling. While the reports from across the empire tended to involve brief answers (for violence, for adultery, for not attending confession, etc.),<sup>166</sup> at Spaso-Evfimiev, the answers were more descriptive and varied in word choice. So seemingly similar crimes would be described in one instance as “spreading the schism,”<sup>167</sup> on another occasion as “starting a sect...,”<sup>168</sup> and in yet a third case, as “the creation of a secret union, and the establishment of its manner of praying, contrary to the spirit of our True Christian Church and imperial laws.”<sup>169</sup> And such was the case for varieties of non-religious crimes, as well.<sup>170</sup> It is clear from the archival record that the bishop in Vladimir province was dealing with prisoners on an individual basis and not separating them into groups based on the kind of crime committed. The implications of this fact will be noteworthy as we seek to understand the differences between penance and punishment and sin and crime in the mind of nineteenth-century Russians. In considering why individuals were sent to Spaso-Evfimiev, the bishop’s reports provide no straightforward evidence that certain crimes led to monastic incarceration over exile, incarceration in a state prison, or other forms of punishment. And yet, an analysis of the prisoners from the Nicolaevan era does suggest some obvious groupings. So although it is important to keep in mind that these are my divisions and not historical categories, in order to

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<sup>166</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 132(1851), d. 124, l. 281.

<sup>167</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 282 (1825), no. 34, l. 1. Ignatii Zinov’ev Bobretsov.

<sup>168</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 292 (1835), no. 1, l. 35. Dosifei.

<sup>169</sup> Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Vladimirskoi oblasti (GAVO) f.578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165, l. 14.

<sup>170</sup> For example, crimes of violence were often described in specific detail rather than under general categories like murder, assault, and attempted murder.



discuss ninety-one cases with varying particulars, it is necessary to impose some organizational framework, artificial though it may be. I have divided the crimes into five broad categories – defiling the cloth; crimes against the state; crimes of a violent nature; madness; and religious dissent. These divisions were by no means mutually exclusive. In reality, nearly twenty percent of the prisoners were confined for some combination of these categories. There were also a few prisoners whose records were spotty and the reasons for their incarceration were unclear.

Research on public penance in the modern period is not extensive. The main work in English on the Russian experience is a chapter by Gregory Freeze in a book on religious identity.<sup>171</sup> His examination of the Synod files on the penitents of 1850 does much to illuminate our understanding of the people throughout the empire who were sentenced to penance and the reasons why. He demonstrates that the 844 penitents of 1850 consisted of a disproportionate number (as compared with the broader population) of lay females, clergy, elderly people, and sexual or criminal offenders. In exploring the topic from this angle, he is able to consider the decline of the practice in the second half of the nineteenth century, and he links the privatization of penance with the “clerical elite’s effort to ‘re-Christianize’ the common people.”<sup>172</sup> However, by focusing on the big picture, Freeze misses the distinction between public penance and monastic incarceration. They were intimately intertwined, but not always identical. Some of the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev, for example, did not see themselves as performing penance.

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<sup>171</sup> Freeze, “Wages of Sin,” 53-82.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

A Russian dissertation by Tat'iana Kokoreva further explores the church's use of monastic incarceration to combat Old Belief and religious dissent more broadly.<sup>173</sup> Identifying the reign of Alexander I as a period of greater tolerance, she argues that the reign of Nicholas I marked a high-water point for the practice, as more "religious free-thinkers" were incarcerated in monasteries each year.<sup>174</sup> Focusing on the prison facilities at Solovki and at Spaso-Evfimiev, she argues that there was no single, unified prison system during this period, and monastery prisons served as an alternative primarily "for offences of a moral nature."<sup>175</sup> Kokoreva's emphasis on the experience of religious dissenters in the monastery prisons leads her to overlook the relationship between monastic incarceration and the broader practice of penance.

By focusing on both practices of penance and monastic incarceration at Spaso-Evfimiev and at the other monasteries in Vladimir Diocese, this dissertation will further contribute to our understanding of how these two matters related to one another. During the Nicolaevan era, imprisonment in a monastery facility was one of the means by which the Russian state sought to regulate its people. This investigation into the practice of public penance offers an exciting opportunity to explore the crucial juncture between the history of religion, the emergence of the modern state, and the history of crime and punishment.

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<sup>173</sup> Tat'iana Kokoreva, "Monastyrskie tiur'my kak mesto zatocheniia staroobriadtsev v XIX veke" (Ph.D. diss., Moscow State University, 2001).

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

The evidence for how public penance was practised in nineteenth-century Russia as gleaned from the archival record suggests that there were many people in various positions of authority, on both regional and imperial levels, who were concerned about the prisoners and penitents in Vladimir. In St. Petersburg, the members of the Holy Synod were joined by the Minister of the Interior in giving orders with regard to the treatment of these inmates. And on the local level, the governor and the bishop shared responsibility in working those orders out and providing for the upkeep of the individuals serving time in the monastery. This cooperation in the work of public penance complicates previous arguments that have been made about the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state during this period.

Over the past several decades, historians have sought to understand the past in a more inclusive manner. What did daily life look like for the majority of people? One of the results of these approaches has been to expand our understanding of the process of myth-making and the ways that people find meaning communally. The limitations of institutional history have been revealed and a focus on “lived religion” has drawn our attention elsewhere. In light of these developments and the broader definitions of church and state discussed here, it is time to re-evaluate earlier conclusions about the nature of church and state relations. A focus on the practices of monastic incarceration forces us to reject the simplicity of framing this relationship in terms of whether or not the church was the handmaiden of the state. Instead, it must be recognized that, at times, the church stood in defence of the legitimacy of the ruling state, and in other cases, it stood opposed to the state in defence of the faith.

Likewise, the state could be a guardian and patron of the faith or a manipulator of its usefulness and a persecutor of its uncooperative elements. More often than not this was not a question of either/or. Both the church and the state consisted of a complex amalgamation of people, ideology, and infrastructure, and it is a mistake to attempt to apply to either one a unified personality, character, or nature. In reality, the people within the church and the state held mixed motives and values and applied a variety of tactics. At any given moment, the internal (and external) personalities and the historical circumstances were also influencing the character of the relations between the two. In fact, the relationship between the church and the state in Nicolaevan Russia was remarkably ambiguous and was marked by constant negotiation.

## Chapter 2

### To Heal or Punish: Prescribing Penance in Church and State Law

In 1816, the Vladimir Spiritual Consistory sent Gavriil Lektorskii, an archpriest from Muromsk Diocese, to Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery because of a “fit of melancholy.” His time at the monastery involved the “further examination of his downcast mind” and his “keeping for special care.”<sup>176</sup> Periodic reports suggested that his behaviour was not bad and his mind was rarely out of sorts.<sup>177</sup> After fifteen years (one wonders why so long given the relatively positive behavioural reports), he was released, when the Vladimir provincial governor intervened on his behalf. A year later, following a brief stay at the St. Petersburg Petropavlovskii Fortress, he was returned to the monastery for deeds “disgraceful to his rank and dangerous to himself and others.” This time, he was sent by command of the emperor under the recommendation of the Over-Procurator of the Synod, Prince Petr Sergeevich Meshcherskii.<sup>178</sup>

Lektorskii’s experience demonstrates the involvement of both the secular and the church authorities in the assigning of sentences of confinement in monastery prisons. It also reveals the ongoing exchanges between the local and national bodies of authority. Over the course of his two confinements, the tsar, the Synod, the local governor and the local consistory all had their role in deciding Lektorskii’s fate. His

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<sup>176</sup> A. S. Prugavin, *V kazematakh. Ocherki i materialy po istorii russkikh tiurem. Shlissel'burg, Suzdal'skaia tiur'ma, Petropavlovskaia krepost'. S risunkami* (St. Petersburg: tip. 1 Spb. trud. arteli, 1909), 215.

<sup>177</sup> Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Drevnikh Aktov (RGADA), f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 282, no. 34.

<sup>178</sup> RGADA, f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 292, no. 1.

case also reveals the mixture of issues that could be present in any given sentence. Sent initially because of the state of his mind, eventually his crimes included defiling the cloth and possibly even violence.<sup>179</sup>

Lektorskii's example is by no means unique. Of the ninety-two prisoners confined at Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery for various intervals between 1825 and 1855, the secular authorities sent twenty-four of them and the church thirteen. Of the remaining fifty-five cases of public penance, forty-one involved the cooperation of both the church and state authorities, as seen in the above example. In all of these cases, there is no simple correlation between the religious or secular nature of the crime and whether it was the religious or secular authorities involved in sending these people to be incarcerated in a monastery. The goal of this chapter is to consider questions of authority as they relate to the practice of monastic incarceration. Who had the authority to send prisoners for incarceration in monasteries? Was this a function of church or state law? And what was the rationale given?

Beginning with a brief discussion of various episodes of conflict and cooperation between the church and the state that took place within Russian monasteries, I will argue that issues of authority were usually at the heart of these encounters and were often worked out within a penitential framework. The chapter will then turn to the prescriptions on penance that are found in the various law codes that were in use during the reign of Nicholas I, including both the compilations of Orthodox canon law and the collections of imperial laws that were published during

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<sup>179</sup> The language of "danger" was frequently applied regarding both violent crimes and crimes of a sectarian nature. In Lektorskii's files, it was not specified whether "dangerous to himself and others" was referring to violence or issues of moral influence. However, given the absence of references to the schism or heresy, it seems likely that the danger was of a physical nature.

this era. A detailed analysis and comparison of these codes will reveal the extent to which the church and the state shared assumptions about the nature of sin and crime. Both sets of codes emphasized the authority of the church to oversee the practice of penance. Both church and state law invested bishops with the authority to direct it on the local level. They also shared the goal of bringing offenders to repentance. However, a careful reading of these codes reveals a significant difference in emphasis with regard to this goal. Where the church was applying a medical analogy and working toward the healing of the sinner and his or her community, the state placed the emphasis on morality and sought to control behaviour through the administration of penance.

### Monastic Authority in Russian History

The long history of monasticism in Russia reveals the central role occupied by the monasteries in the ongoing engagements between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state. The examples are too numerous to survey but a few cases will serve to point to the penitential role played by the monasteries within the negotiations between these two institutions. The support of a monastery that had a reputation for holiness was a source of legitimacy for the ruler, but crime and punishment were also common themes in the transactions between church and state authorities. And sometimes the issue of legitimacy and the need for discipline overlapped in the monastic context.

From the earliest days of monastic life in Kievan Rus' the holy men of the monasteries engaged in dialogue with the princely families and called them to

account. It was said that Prince Isiaslav sought out St. Theodosius for advice and guidance and according to the monk, Nestor, he “did all that our father Theodosius commanded.”<sup>180</sup> His brother Sviatoslav, having usurped the throne in 1073, sought the approval of this holy man. When invited to join the victory celebration, Theodosius responded, “I will not come to the table of Beelzebub and eat food soaked with blood and murder.”<sup>181</sup> Though rebuked by the renowned monk, Sviatoslav continued to visit him and take his counsel, although he did not repent of his treatment of Isiaslav.<sup>182</sup> This is an early example of the ongoing role that monastics would play in guiding and critiquing those in power. Of course, the nature of that power would change drastically over time and the degree to which the church accomplished its goals in these engagements also varied. Given the absence of “the secular” in these earlier periods, Maureen Miller’s suggestion that we think in terms of the relationship between “power and the holy,” rather than church and state, is helpful.<sup>183</sup> The monasteries of Kievan Rus’ served as focal points where power and the holy met and mingled.

In the fourteenth century, as the Muscovite state was emerging, the famed monk, Sergius of Radonezh, was credited with giving counsel to princes and even

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<sup>180</sup> Nestor, “A Life of St. Theodosius,” in *The Way of a Pilgrim and Other Classics of Russian Spirituality*, ed. G. P. Fedotov (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2003), 32.

<sup>181</sup> Paul Bushkovitch, *A Concise History of Russia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 17.

<sup>182</sup> Nestor, “A Life of St. Theodosius,” 43.

<sup>183</sup> Maureen Miller, *Power and the Holy in the Age of the Investiture Conflict: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2005), 6.



affecting the outcome of battle.<sup>184</sup> The Muscovite princes aligned themselves with the popular cult that developed after his death, thereby strengthening their own Orthodox image and importance.<sup>185</sup> Indeed, from Ivan III on, the heirs to the throne were baptized at Trinity-Sergius Monastery and from the time of Ivan IV, the archimandrite of this monastery was included in all significant civil and ecclesiastical events.<sup>186</sup>

In the sixteenth century, monasteries were at the centre of a number of controversies over the question of authority in the church. Patriarch Nikon exiled Pavel, bishop of Kolomna, to the Paleostrov Monastery on Lake Onega for his opposition to the liturgical reforms. Pavel was later transferred to the Khutynskii Monastery near Novgorod where he may have been murdered.<sup>187</sup> Solovetskii Monastery was the centre of the fiercest single resistance to Nikon's reforms. The

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<sup>184</sup> Epiphanius, "The Life, Acts and Miracles of our Revered and Holy Father Abbot Sergius," in *The Way of a Pilgrim*, 70. The engagements between Metropolitan Filipp and Ivan the Terrible are yet another example from the Muscovite period. Filipp was sentenced to monastic incarceration for his boldness in admonishing the tsar. See George P. Fedotov, *St. Filipp Metropolitan of Moscow: Encounter with Ivan the Terrible*, trans. Richard Haugh and Nickolas Lupinin (Belmont, Massachusetts: Nordland Publishing Company, 1978), 130.

<sup>185</sup> David B. Miller, *Saint Sergius of Radonezh, His Trinity Monastery, and the Formation of the Russian Identity* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 76-104. This would not be the last effort by a tsar to buffer support for his reign by aligning himself with a popular saint. See, for example, Gary Marker, *Imperial Saint: The Cult of St. Catherine and the Dawn of Female Rule in Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011) as well as Gregory L. Freeze, "Subversive Piety: Religion and the Political Crisis in Late Imperial Russia," *Journal of Modern History* 68 (June 1996): 308-350.

<sup>186</sup> Boris M. Kloss, "Monasticism During the Formation of a Centralized State: Sergius of Radonezh and the Trinity Monastery," *Russian Studies in History* 52, no. 1 (Summer 2013): 31. Recent work by G. G. Weickhardt also notes the various tasks that monasteries took on during this period, on behalf of the local prince, including "serving as prisons, local fortifications, and retreats." He emphasizes the "intense involvement of monasteries in the outside world." G. G. Weickhardt, "Muscovite Law on Monasteries," *Russian History* 39 (2012): 17 and 22. For more on monastery prisons in Muscovy, see Nancy Shields Kollmann, *Crime and Punishment in Early Modern Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 83.

<sup>187</sup> Paul Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society in Russia: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 60.

monks there held out against the state from 1668 to 1676 before the *streltsy*, the tsar's armed guards, finally overcame the fortress walls. Georg Michels has pointed to the importance of the local context, placing the revolt at Solovki at the centre "of a long-standing history of tension between the monastery and the Muscovite Church."<sup>188</sup>

In addition to the struggle over church reform, Nikon also came into conflict with the tsar over the nature of the authority of the patriarch as it related to the authority of the tsar. In his struggle for power with Tsar Alexei, Nikon stepped down and retired to the Resurrection Monastery west of Moscow, apparently hoping that Alexei would invite him back.<sup>189</sup> He did not and in 1666-67, Alexei presided over a council that both affirmed Nikon's reforms and deposed Nikon himself. He was banished to a monastery in Northern Russia.<sup>190</sup> In an ironic twist of fate, and yet also within the broader patterns of monastic involvement in state affairs, Nikon himself fell victim to the punishment he had given to the bishop of Kolomna – that of monastic confinement.

This use of monastery facilities for the purpose of incarceration would become a mainstay of the imperial repertoire, as will be seen in the following

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<sup>188</sup> Georg Michels, "The Solovki Uprising: Religion and Revolt in Northern Russia," *Russian Review* 51, no. 1 (January 1992): 3.

<sup>189</sup> Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society*, 64.

<sup>190</sup> Ioann Shusherin, *From Peasant to Patriarch: Account of the Birth, Uprising, and Life of His Holiness Nikon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia*, trans. Kevin Kain and Katia Levintova (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 88. Recent work by Kevin M. Kain suggests that Nikon's efforts to found new monasteries were also a part of his broader reforms. Rather than a grab for power, Kain argues that the founding of new monasteries was part of a carefully designed plan "to (re)establish Russia's claimed inheritance of the Byzantine legacy and fulfill its potential as "New Jerusalem," while simultaneously enhancing [Nikon's] own, the tsar's, and the Romanov dynasty's image and legitimacy in Muscovite state and the world beyond." See Kevin M. Kain, "Before New Jerusalem: Patriarch Nikon's Iverskii and Krestnyi Monasteries," *Russian History* 39 (2012): 179.

chapters. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the most famous example is that of the regent Sophia. In the concluding struggle between the Naryshkin and the Miloslavskii clans, Peter the Great had her confined in the Novodevichy women's monastery so that he could finally take the throne.<sup>191</sup>

Catherine the Great's engagements with the monastic world were somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, she too depended on the monasteries to support her reign. In an examination of the engagements between Catherine II and the Little Russian clergy, G. V. Ibneeva has demonstrated the significance of her visits to the holy places of Orthodox Russia, such as the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev. Elaborate preparations preceded these events and Catherine herself recognized the importance of her adopted Orthodox identity as a marker of legitimacy.<sup>192</sup> Indeed, Gary Marker has demonstrated how the cult of St. Catherine was used to establish the legitimacy of female rule in the eighteenth century, starting with Catherine I. Monasteries dedicated to the saint played an important part of that process.<sup>193</sup>

On the other hand, Catherine also successfully concluded the state's efforts to bring monastic landholdings under secular control. She issued a decree in 1764 that transferred approximately 9 million hectares of land and 910,866 peasants from the ecclesiastical estates to be administered by the secular authorities. Smaller monasteries were combined or shut down and others were left to their own initiative

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<sup>191</sup> Lindsey Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 11.

<sup>192</sup> G. V. Ibneeva, "Ekaterina II i Malorossiiskoe Pravoslavnoe Dukhovenstvo v 1787 godu," *Slavianovedenie* 2 (2008): 70.

<sup>193</sup> Gary Marker, *Imperial Saint: The Cult of St. Catherine and the Dawn of Female Rule in Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), especially chapter 4.

and the support of the faithful. In compensation, the larger monasteries were designated as *shtatnye* (state-funded) and given a sum of money and the rights to the labour of a number of state peasants for terms of twenty-five years. The effects on the monasteries were profound. Scott Kenworthy points to the devastating drop in numbers (from 1052 monasteries to 479 and a fifty percent drop in the number of monastic clergy), but he also highlights the movements of spiritual renewal that emerged in the late eighteenth century.<sup>194</sup>

Olga Tsapina places the secularization of monastic lands in the broader context of Catherine's efforts to redefine church-state relations "in accordance with the *raison d'état* of enlightened absolutism."<sup>195</sup> The usefulness of monasteries was increasingly emphasized. Tsapina writes, "The government intended to utilize monasteries as fully as possible as asylums and mental hospitals, barracks, and veteran soldiers nursing homes. The Spaso-Evfimiev convent was turned into a prison. The ancient Simonov Monastery was to be transformed into a military hospital."<sup>196</sup> The punitive potential of the monasteries was one way the monasteries could demonstrate their usefulness to the state. In one example, following the rebellion led by Pugachev, Grigorii Potemkin broke up the Zaporozhian Host, even

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<sup>194</sup> Scott Kenworthy, *The Heart of Russia: Trinity-Sergius, Monasticism, and Society after 1825* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 16-18.

<sup>195</sup> Olga A. Tsapina, "Secularization and Opposition in the Time of Catherine the Great" in *Religion and Politics in Enlightenment Europe*, eds. James E. Bradley and Dale K. Van Kley (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2001), 334.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 343.

though they were not actually involved in the revolt. The *hetman* and senior officers were incarcerated in the prison in Solovetskii Monastery in the far north.<sup>197</sup>

As demonstrated by these examples, the dynamic history of relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state was frequently played out within the context of Orthodox monasteries. Historically significant monasteries and influential monks provided the autocrat with an air of legitimacy that could be found in few other ways. The location and manner of life within these institutions also made them a viable punitive alternative for the reigning monarch.<sup>198</sup> This long history of engagement forms the backdrop for the present study. In particular, the examples of public penance that permeate this project demonstrate that the authority and disciplinary measures available to the Russian state were closely linked with the monastic world.

Though intimately connected, penance and monastic incarceration were not always synonymous. The law codes, however, frequently presented them as such. The task at hand is to understand the use of penance in the imperial law codes as it compared with the canons of the church. Private penance was typically fulfilled within one's home parish under the guidance of the local priest. It often included

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<sup>197</sup> Isabel De Madariaga, *Catherine the Great: A Short History*, Rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 65. For another analysis of a case of public penance during Catherine's reign, see Nikolaos A. Chrissidis, "Crying Their Hearts Out: A Case of Public Penance in the Era of Catherine the Great," in *Religion and Identity in Russia and the Soviet Union: A Festschrift for Paul Bushkovitch*, eds. Nikolaos A. Chrissidis, et al. (Bloomington: Slavica, 2011), 107-125.

<sup>198</sup> In some countries, the punitive function of the monastery persists to this day. Overcrowding in Georgian prisons has led the government to offer this alternative. Tom Esslemont, "Monasteries to take in prisoners," *BBC News*, March 13, 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/8565544.stm> (accessed June 4, 2015). And recently a prisoner in an Italian monastery requested to be returned to the state prison facility; life in the monastery was too severe! Nick Pisa, "Criminal serving his sentence with monks pleads to be sent back to prison... because monastery life is too hard," *MailOnline*, January 3, 2012, [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2081757](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2081757) (accessed June 4, 2015).

saying certain prayers, fulfilling a designated number of prostrations, or making donations to the poor. By contrast, a sentence of public penance involved performing monastic labour while undergoing seclusion in a monastery.<sup>199</sup> Public penance developed as a practice early in the history of Christianity and came to Russia in the Eastern Orthodox codes of canon law. As the modern Russian state emerged, these practices were adapted and codified into state law.<sup>200</sup> How public penance was practised in the Nicolaevan era will be the subject of the remaining chapters of this project, but in order to understand how it functioned at the intersection of secular and religious domains, it is first necessary to examine the various law codes that were in use during this period and to compare their prescriptions on penance.

During the Nicolaevan era, the laws were one of the many areas badly in need of reform. Under the leadership of the statesman Mikhail Speranskii, the laws were codified and published in two forms. The *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii* (*Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire*) included all the laws that had been enacted since the *Ulozhenie* of 1649, and the *Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii* (*The Collected Laws of the Russian Empire*) included all the laws that were currently in use at the time of publication in 1833.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Gregory L. Freeze, "The Wages of Sin: The Decline of Public Penance in Imperial Russia," in *Seeking God: The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia*, ed. Stephen K. Batalden (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993), 53.

<sup>200</sup> For an assessment of public penance in Kievan Rus' see George Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1946), 237. And for public penance in Muscovy, see S. Smirnov, *Drevne-Russkii dukhovnik: izsledovanie po istorii tserkovnago byta* (Moscow: Sinodal'naia tipografiia, 1914), 161-164.

<sup>201</sup> Tatiana Borisova, "Russian National Legal Tradition: *Svod versus Ulozhenie* in Nineteenth-century Russia," *Review of Central and East European Law* 33 (2008): 319.

At the same time, the Russian Orthodox Church experienced a similar flourishing of its legal culture. The *Kormchaia kniga* (*Pilot Book*) was a term originally applied to a variety of manuscripts containing Orthodox canon law as passed down primarily from the Seven Ecumenical and local synods, along with interpretations and commentaries from the Church Fathers.<sup>202</sup> They cover the breadth of issues that were addressed by the councils and they came to Russia with Christianity in the tenth century.<sup>203</sup> The *Kormchaia* identifies itself as the rudder in the metaphor of the Christian Church as a ship. In this image in which the laity were the passengers, the clergy the crew, and Jesus Christ the captain, the canons of the church were seen as the necessary mechanism for the proper and safe guidance and direction of the whole ship.<sup>204</sup>

P. Ivan Žužek has provided a detailed analysis of the evolution of these manuscripts, demonstrating that after 1653, the term was identified with the *Kormchaia of the Patriarch Nikon*, which underwent a sixth and final official

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<sup>202</sup> Hieromonach Agapius and Nicodemus, *The Rudder (Pedalion) of the Metaphorical Ship of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of the Orthodox Christians*, trans. D. Cummings (Chicago: The Orthodox Christian Educational Society, 1957), xxvi, [http://orthodoxbahamas.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/THE\\_RUDDER\\_Copyright\\_Ralph\\_J\\_Masterjohn\\_2006.pdf](http://orthodoxbahamas.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/THE_RUDDER_Copyright_Ralph_J_Masterjohn_2006.pdf) (accessed Feb. 23, 2015). Since I do not read Church Slavonic, I was not able to make use of the version of the *Kormchaia* that was being used during the Nicolaevan era; however, P. Ivan Žužek provides an outline of its contents. I used Cummings' English translation of the Greek *Pedalion* to examine the parts that were included in the *Kormchaia*. Žužek notes that the commentaries and interpretations in the *Kormchaia* have some variance from the Greek, so I have limited myself to speaking only about the canons that were included in the 1834 edition, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>203</sup> P. Ivan Žužek, *Kormčaja kniga: Studies on the Chief Code of Russian Canon Law* (Rome: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1964), 20. Cf. Ia. N. Shchapov, *Vizantiiskoe i iuznoslavianskoe pravovoe naslednie na Rusi v XI – XIII vv* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978), 10-11; 255-275 and I. I. Sreznevskii, *Obozrenie drevnikh Russkikh spisikov Kormchei knigi* (Saint Petersburg: tipografiiia imperatorskoi akademii nauk, 1897), 12-13.

<sup>204</sup> Agapius, xxvf, [http://orthodoxbahamas.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/THE\\_RUDDER\\_Copyright\\_Ralph\\_J\\_Masterjohn\\_2006.pdf](http://orthodoxbahamas.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/THE_RUDDER_Copyright_Ralph_J_Masterjohn_2006.pdf) (accessed Feb. 23, 2015).

printing in Moscow in 1834.<sup>205</sup> In 1839, a new collection of canon law, the *Kniga pravil sviatykh apostol, sviatykh soborov vselenskikh i pomestnykh i sviatykh otets* (*Book of Canons of the Holy Apostles, of the Holy Ecumenical and Local Councils and of the Holy Fathers*), was published by the Synod as a replacement for the *Kormchaia*.<sup>206</sup> Also, the first edition of the *Ustav dukhovnykh konsistorii* (*Statutes for Ecclesiastical Consistories*) was published in 1841.<sup>207</sup>

*The Spiritual Regulation of Peter the Great* also played an important role in governing church life throughout the imperial period and it stands as a bridge between church and state law.<sup>208</sup> *The Spiritual Regulation* was written by Feofan Prokopovich, the bishop of Pskov and later archbishop of Novgorod during the reign of Peter I. Although written by a member of the clergy, most scholars have questioned the extent to which this can be seen as a church text, since it established and sustained Peter's church reform whereby he abolished the Patriarchate and instituted the Spiritual College (which soon became the Most Holy All-Ruling Synod) as the governing body of the Russian Orthodox Church. In his introduction to the English translation of the text, Alexander Muller identifies it as "the basis for a new relationship between the spiritual and secular powers in Russia."<sup>209</sup> Likewise,

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<sup>205</sup> Žužek, 63.

<sup>206</sup> *Kniga pravil sviatykh apostol, sviatykh soborov vselenskikh i pomestnykh, i sviatykh otets* (Moscow: V sinodal'noi tipografii, 1893). For a discussion of the synod's intent with regard to the replacement of the *Kormchaia* by the *Kniga pravil*, see Žužek, 268f.

<sup>207</sup> Žužek, 267.

<sup>208</sup> James Cracraft, *The Church Reform of Peter the Great* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971), 307.

<sup>209</sup> Alexander V. Muller (trans. and ed.), *The Spiritual Regulation of Peter the Great* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), ix.



James Cracraft has placed the text in the broader European context where various rulers were establishing state churches within their realms during this period.<sup>210</sup> He makes the argument that the *Regulation* shaped the administration of the Russian Orthodox Church throughout the imperial period. He writes, "... the *Ecclesiastical Regulation* and related documents embodied the fundamental principles according to which the Russian church was governed until 1918."<sup>211</sup>

In addition to these dynamic publishing efforts with regard to church and state law, scholarly interest was also on the rise. The study of Russian canon law increased within the theological academies<sup>212</sup> and the University Statute of 1835 gave the universities the responsibility for teaching law through the newly created law faculties.<sup>213</sup> A School of Jurisprudence also opened its doors in 1835.<sup>214</sup> Given these developments, the period of Nicholas' rule, particularly the 1830s and early 1840s, stands as a significant era in the legal history of both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state.<sup>215</sup> This examination of these legal codes focuses on penance as a meeting point between the two.

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<sup>210</sup> Cracraft, *Church Reform*, viii.

<sup>211</sup> Cracraft, *Church Reform*, 307.

<sup>212</sup> Žužek, 267. Cf. John D. Basil, "Imperial Russia's Canonists and the Issue of Church and State," in *New Perspectives in Modern Russian History: Selected Papers from the Fourth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies*, ed. Robert B. McKean (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 65-79.

<sup>213</sup> Richard S. Wortman, *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 45.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>215</sup> In her examination of the administration of justice in the second half of the nineteenth century, E. A. Praviłova notes the significance of the legal developments in the Nicolaevan era and especially of the publication of the *Svod Zakonov* for the later reforms to the justice system. E. A. Praviłova, *Zakonnost' i prava lichnosti: administrativnaia iustitsiia v Rossii, vtoraiia polovina XIX v. – oktiabr' 1917 g.* (St. Petersburg: SZAGS and Obrazovanie-Kul'tura, 2000), 47.

## Canon Law

Discipline and penance featured in the *Kormchaia kniga* in a variety of ways. The bishop had ultimate oversight of the practice of penance so, for example, he could increase or decrease the length or severity of the penance depending on the degree of repentance demonstrated by the penitent.<sup>216</sup> An emphasis on respect for the clergy and submission to their authority is seen throughout the canons. A member of the clergy who stood accused of a crime was to be allowed a year to defend himself if he so desired. During that year, the cleric in question was excluded from communion but received no punishment until his case was decided.<sup>217</sup> Emphasis was also placed on the local nature of clerical authority so, for example, clergy who were “attached to poorhouses or monasteries or martyries... [were to] remain under the bishop of the city in question, and not disrespectfully desert their own Bishop.”<sup>218</sup>

The goal of penance, according to the *Kormchaia*, was to restore the sinner to good spiritual health. This medical analogy was applied in a variety of ways. The confessor was a doctor of the soul and his task was to assess what particular penance would be the best cure in light of the specific details of the sin and the sinner’s condition. Canon CII of the Holy and Ecumenical Sixth Council is illuminating:

Those who have received from God authority to bind and to loose must take into consideration the quality of the sins, and the willingness and readiness of the sinner to return, and thus offer a *treatment* suited to the sin in question, lest by employing an immoderate adjustment in one direction or the other, they fail in compassing the salvation of *the one ailing*. For, the *diseases* called sin are

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<sup>216</sup> Agapius, 411, [http://s3.amazonaws.com/orthodox/The\\_Rudder.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/orthodox/The_Rudder.pdf) (accessed May 27, 2015).

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 655.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 252. A martyr was a shrine or church dedicated to a martyr.

not simple affairs, but, on the contrary, various and complex, and they produce many offshoots of the *injury*, as a result hereof, the evil becomes widely diffused, and it progresses until it is checked by the power of *the one treating* it. So that a person who is professing the science of *treating ailments* as a *spiritual physician* ought first to examine the disposition of the sinner, and ascertain whether he tends to *health* or on the contrary provokes the *malady* to attack him by his own actions; at the same time bearing in mind that he must provide against any reversion, and considering whether the *patient* is struggling against the *physician*, and whether the *ulcer* of the soul is being aggravated by the application of the *remedy*; and accordingly to mete out mercy in due proportion to the merits of the case.<sup>219</sup>

The language here is rich in medical analogy: sin was presented as disease or ulcer; the sinner was a patient; the confessor, a spiritual physician; and penance was a treatment or remedy necessary for the healing of the soul. The overarching assumption throughout the articles of canon law was that repentance and reconciliation were the goals of the disciplinary measures recommended and if properly guided by a wise confessor, healing for both the sinner and the community would be the result. The discernment of the confessor was therefore a high priority. Great emphasis was given to examining the “kind of repentance.”<sup>220</sup> For this reason, a voluntary confession was seen as “proof that the cure of the disease has already begun, and since [the penitent] has shown a sign of improvement, he is entitled to kinder treatment.” By contrast, a confession from someone who was caught in a sinful act would result in a heavier penance since it was determined that involuntary confession was not likely to be as genuine.<sup>221</sup> In all cases, the punishment was supposed to correspond to the sin. So, for instance, a thief should be sentenced to

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<sup>219</sup> Agapios, 409, [http://s3.amazonaws.com/orthodox/The\\_Rudder.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/orthodox/The_Rudder.pdf) (accessed May 27, 2015). Emphases are mine.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 872.

give away his material wealth “in order that by disposing of what he visibly owns he may cleanse himself of the disease of greediness.”<sup>222</sup> The particulars of the situation were to dictate the terms of the penance.

The *Kormchaia* also addressed the role of the secular authorities with regard to penance. One canon suggested that sometimes the civil authorities ought to be appealed to if repentance was not forthcoming. It stated,

If, however, there should be some men who are utterly insubordinate and refuse to yield to correction because of censures, no one is prohibited from correcting these persons by hauling them before the local magistrates. In fact, c. V of the Synod in Antioch has canonically decreed, that persons causing disturbances and revolts to the Church shall be converted and brought to their senses again by recourse to the civil authority.<sup>223</sup>

This was a point of contention among the early church fathers and there is room for varying interpretations of the canons. In cases where the involvement of the civil authorities could result in corporal punishment, the fathers were more inclined to avoid engaging them.<sup>224</sup>

One final point with regard to the instructions in the *Kormchaia kniga* relates to the relationship between penance and the monastic life. A person was not to be denied the right to choose the monastic vocation because of prior sin. Canon XLIII of the Sixth Council stated, “As therefore monastic life represents to us a state of repentance as though engraved upon a pillar, we join in sympathizing with anyone

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<sup>222</sup> Agapios, 877, [http://s3.amazonaws.com/orthodox/The\\_Rudder.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/orthodox/The_Rudder.pdf) (accessed May 27, 2015).

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 466.

<sup>224</sup> The footnotes in the Greek Pedalion suggest that in the case where a member of the clergy hands over a sinner to the civil authorities, if, instead of punishing him in order to discipline him, they put him to death, then the cleric is guilty of involuntary homicide. Ibid., 40. John Chrysostom argued against the involvement of the civil authorities in cases of penance. Cf. Oscar Watkins, *A History of Penance: Being a Study of the Authorities, Vol. I and II* (New York: B. Franklin, 1961), 328.

that genuinely adopts it, and no manner of means shall prevent him from accomplishing his aim.”<sup>225</sup> However, those who entered the monastic life were not to be released from it. In fact, this was the one case where an example of outright monastic confinement was clearly mandated in the *Kormchaia*. It states, “If perchance any Monk discard the holy habit, and eat meat, and take a wife, such a Monk ought to be anathematized. If he refuses to return, he ought to be forced to don the habit, and to be shut up in a monastery.”<sup>226</sup>

The *Kniga pravil* was published by the Synod in 1839 as a replacement for the *Kormchaia*.<sup>227</sup> In addition to these same canons, the *Kniga pravil* also included *The Canons of the Holy Apostles*, of which there were eighty-five. Great attention was given throughout these canons to the behaviour and responsibilities of the clergy – especially the bishops, but also the priests and deacons. Various forms of discipline undergirded the specific canons, but primary place was given to deposing the offender from his clerical position. For example, a cleric was to be deposed for fornication, perjury, or theft.<sup>228</sup> Insulting the bishop and engaging in worldly affairs were also reasons to receive this punishment.<sup>229</sup> In some cases, like that of playing dice or getting drunk, being deposed was presented as a last resort, to be used only if the cleric refused to repent of his wrongful behaviour.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Agapios, 341, [http://s3.amazonaws.com/orthodox/The\\_Rudder.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/orthodox/The_Rudder.pdf) (accessed May 27, 2015).

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 969.

<sup>227</sup> Žužek, 268.

<sup>228</sup> Agapius, 35, [http://s3.amazonaws.com/orthodox/The\\_Rudder.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/orthodox/The_Rudder.pdf) (accessed May 27, 2015).

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 98 and 9.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 63.

Excommunication was a more extreme and much rarer form of discipline. Members of the clergy were ordered not to refuse communion unless it was for a good reason, in which case it had to be clearly stated. The objective here was to avoid casting aspersion on the officiating cleric. A fellow clergyman refusing to receive communion at another's hands could imply to observers the unworthiness of the presiding official. Protecting the authority of the clergy was of such high priority that if a member of the clergy refused to receive the sacraments without reason, excommunication was the prescribed response.<sup>231</sup>

As in the *Kormchaia kniga*, the goal of penance in the *Kniga pravil* was also redemptive. In fact, any cleric who refused a penitent sinner forgiveness was to be deposed. Canon LII of the Canons of the Holy Apostles states, "If any Bishop or Presbyter shall refuse to welcome back anyone returning from sin, but, on the contrary, rejects him, let him be deposed from office, since he grieves Christ, who said: 'There is joy in heaven over a single sinner who repenteth.'"<sup>232</sup>

Like the involvement of the civil authorities, the use of corporal punishment also received contradictory treatment from the early church fathers. In Canon XXVII, a member of the clergy was to be deposed for striking a sinner. It states:

As for a Bishop, or Presbyter, or Deacon that strikes believers for sinning, or unbelievers for wrong-doing, with the idea of making them afraid, we command that he be deposed from office. For the Lord has nowhere taught that: on the contrary, He Himself when struck did not strike back; when reviled, He did not revile His revilers; when suffering, He did not threaten.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Agapius, 20, [http://s3.amazonaws.com/orthodox/The\\_Rudder.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/orthodox/The_Rudder.pdf) (accessed May 27, 2015).

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 38.

In other places, the example of Jesus using a whip to evict the moneylenders from the temple is given to make the opposite argument, though some suggest that the whip was not used on people but merely to overturn the tables and frighten the offenders. Likewise, some monastic elders struck their disciples in order to instruct and discipline them. Conflicting interpretations about the use of corporal punishment existed even in the fourth century.<sup>234</sup>

As seen here, the *Kormchaia* and the *Kniga pravil* consistently emphasized the restorative role given to practices of penance. Repentance, healing and redemption were the goals. The confessor was to be a spiritual father, grieving over the sin and carefully directing the penitent in such a way as to restore her to good spiritual health. The authority of the bishop in overseeing these matters was also a prominent theme throughout these collections of canon law.

In addition to the influence of the *Kormchaia kniga* and the *Kniga pravil*, the *Statutes of the Spiritual Consistories (Ustav dukhovnykh konsistorii)* was published for the first time in 1841, laying out the rules by which the local diocesan authorities were to function. The *Statutes* stated two brief regulations concerning the assigning of public penance. The first statement gave the right to assign penance to the diocesan authorities, but it recognized that this could be either the result of crimes or offences detected by the work of the Spiritual Consistory or as a result of verdicts given by the secular government. The second regulation stated that the period and manner of fulfilling the penance were to be determined by the nature of the offence

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<sup>234</sup> Cf. the interpretation of this canon in the Greek *Pedalion*. Ibid., 40.

on the basis of canon law.<sup>235</sup> Thus, the instructions for the local diocesan consistories suggested that while both the church and the state courts dealt with cases that could result in a sentence of penance, the responsibility for assigning and overseeing the details rested with the local church authorities.

In many respects, the *Spiritual Regulation of Peter the Great* is at the heart of the debate over the handmaid question. Alexander Muller writes, "... through the enactment of the *Spiritual Regulation*, the state institutionalized, within a secular frame of reference, the subordination of the church."<sup>236</sup> The prescriptions on penance within the *Regulation*, when compared with both the canons of the church and the state laws of the Nicolaevan era, lend further support to the idea of shared values and ongoing negotiations between these two institutions, but there are also ways that the *Regulations* and the imperial laws have different emphases than the church canons, as will be seen below.

The *Regulation* provided guidelines for each of the various members of the church, placing them under the authority of the Spiritual College. As in the compilations of canon law, the issue of penance came under the jurisdiction of the bishops. The *Regulation* empowered them to assign penance in an effort to "restrain" offenders. The bishop was free even to use excommunication in order to bring about public repentance, provided that he was acting with due care, "not through passion, but through diligent investigation." The accused could appeal to the College and the

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<sup>235</sup> *Ustav dukhovnykh konsistorii* (St. Petersburg: Sinodal'noi Tipografiia, 1843), 103, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/nnc1.cu56808259> (accessed May 19, 2015).

<sup>236</sup> Muller, xxxviii.



bishop himself could be punished if he “excommunicate[d] someone innocent.”<sup>237</sup>

All bishops were under the authority of the Spiritual College<sup>238</sup> and they were required to submit reports to it twice a year, detailing the conditions of their dioceses.<sup>239</sup>

*The Supplement to the Spiritual Regulation*<sup>240</sup> dealt more directly with penance and confession, as well as with regulating clerical conduct. In it, confession features prominently in the duties ascribed to priests. The *Supplement* notes:

Priests must especially know these things: in confession, if they encounter someone who is cold and without emotion, how to terrify with God’s judgment him who is confessing; if they see someone who is sceptical and inclined to despair, how to restore such a one, and how to strengthen him with the hope of God’s mercy and kindness; how to instruct one in the breaking of a sinful habit...<sup>241</sup>

The *Spiritual Regulation* and its *Supplement* emphasize the priest’s duty to “restrain” offenders. The goal of penance presented here is significantly different from that found in the canons of the church. Though the language affirms the need “to strengthen” and “restore” the sinner, the emphasis is not on the medical analogy presented by the church fathers. Rather, these tasks are paired with those of terrifying and instructing, all serving the state’s need for social control.

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<sup>237</sup> Muller, 27.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>240</sup> The *Supplement* was written before the initial publication of the *Spiritual Regulation* in September 1721, but was not published together with it until September 1722. For the details of its tortuous path to publication, see P. V. Verkhovskoi, *Uchrezhdenie Dukhovnoi kollegii i Dukhovnyi reglament. K voprosu ob otnoshenii Tserkvi i gosudarstva v Rossii*, vol. 1 (Rostov-on-the-Don, 1916), 195-221 and Muller, 87-89 fn. 3.

<sup>241</sup> Muller, 59.

Church involvement in the task of social control is the issue at the heart of this project. However, rather than framing the church/state relationship in terms of whether the church served the state – i.e. the handmaid question – the contention here, is that a more fruitful approach involves examining the relationship between theory and practice. Did the church betray its own teachings in service to the state? Or did the church and state have a shared value system? For example, much has been made of the fact that the *Supplement* instructed confessors to betray the secrecy of the confessional should someone admit to the intent to commit a crime, especially treason or harming the person of the emperor or a member of his family.<sup>242</sup> However, the attitude of the *Supplement* toward the secrecy of confession was more nuanced than this might suggest. In all other contexts, the confessor was liable to severe punishment and the loss of his clerical rank should he betray the secrecy of the confessional. In addition, he was urged not even to quarrel with his spiritual son lest others assume that his accusations were founded on his knowledge as confessor.<sup>243</sup>

Further light is shed on the issue of secrecy by the very nature of the Orthodox confessional. During the nineteenth century in Russia, confession was practised in such a way that secrecy was by no means guaranteed. The faithful lined up for confession and the person at the front of the line stood face to face with the

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<sup>242</sup> Muller, 60f; Cracraft writes of “...its radical nature and subsequent notoriety...”, *Church Reform*, 238f. Richard Pipes describes the “denunciation of political dissidents” as “a regular part of a priest’s obligations” during the nineteenth century in *Russia Under the Old Regime* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1974), 242. And Andreas E. Buss interprets this lack of secrecy as evidence that “...the organisational form of the Orthodox Church excluded any possibility that it could set itself up as an advocate of civil rights and liberties against the power of the patrimonial state.” Andreas E. Buss, *The Russian-Orthodox Tradition and Modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 46. Cf. Gregory L. Freeze, *The Russian Levites: Parish Clergy in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 29.

<sup>243</sup> Muller, 60.

priest under the shelter of his prayer shawl and made confession.<sup>244</sup> In these circumstances, secrecy could hardly be assured. Furthermore, Žužek has noted that even the *Kormchaia* “nowhere clearly imposes the secrecy of confession.”<sup>245</sup> Therefore, the *Supplement*’s command to betray the secrecy of the confessional is not the evidence that it has been made out to be for the subservience of the church to the state.

The *Supplement* had other similarities with canon law as well. It also gave the bishop the authority to increase, reduce, or even commute the terms of the penance, depending on the disposition of the sinner. Drawing on the writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. John Chrysostom and others, Prokopovich identified this freedom as a significant difference between the spiritual and the secular authorities, the latter of whom could “neither diminish nor augment the punishment established by law without the emperor’s will...”<sup>246</sup>

Like the *Kormchaia* and the *Kniga pravil*, the *Supplement* also spoke extensively to the roles of monks and nuns. The communal life of the monastery was emphasized<sup>247</sup> and as has been noted elsewhere, it urged monasteries to incorporate a higher degree of usefulness into the religious life. Article 18 of the *Supplement* states: “Priors, always designating for them some task, shall most emphatically not

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<sup>244</sup> Nadieszda Kizenko, “Confession in Russian Visual Imagery,” (paper, Association for Slavic, East European, & Eurasian Studies 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention, Los Angeles, California, November 18, 2010). Regarding confessional practices later in the nineteenth century, Gregory Freeze has noted that some priests resorted to hearing two or three confessions at a time in order “to handle their immense workload.” Gregory L. Freeze, *The Parish Clergy in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Crisis, Reform, Counter-Reform* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 65.

<sup>245</sup> Žužek, 224.

<sup>246</sup> Muller, 64.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

allow monks to be idle. But it would be better to initiate in the monasteries arts and crafts: for example, joinery, iconography, etc., whatever is not contrary to monasticism; and for nuns, spinning, sewing, making lace, etc.”<sup>248</sup> Elsewhere, the *Supplement* also calls on wealthier monasteries to construct hospitals to care for “those who are in exceedingly poor health, those who are unable to subsist by themselves, and those who have no one to care for them.”<sup>249</sup>

Like the *Kormchaia*, the *Supplement* also responded harshly to those who would flee from their monastic profession. Article 52 stated: “Escaped monks shall be kept at monasterial toils in fetters until death.”<sup>250</sup> Indeed, the similarity with the *Kormchaia* is striking on this front, though Žužek has argued that Prokopovich was not in favour of the *Kormchaia* and did not make use of it as a source while he was preparing the *Regulation*.<sup>251</sup>

Finally, the *Supplement* places the rites of confession and the Eucharist at the centre of the monastic life, insisting that monastics attend at least four times a year during the holy fasts, and preferably even more frequently.<sup>252</sup> More broadly, the Eucharist was understood to be an important marker of Orthodoxy in the battle against the schism. The *Supplement* paid particular attention to the problem of the schism as it related to penitential practices. Confessors were urged not to exclude sinners from receiving the Eucharist, because some schismatics were seeking such

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<sup>248</sup> Muller, 76.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>251</sup> Žužek, 209.

<sup>252</sup> Muller, 75.

sentences in order to have an excuse for not participating in the rite.<sup>253</sup> This emphasis was unique to the Russian context and it ties the *Regulation* and its *Supplement* to the imperial law codes rather than to the canons of the Orthodox Church.

### State Law

Turning to the imperial laws, the fifteen volumes of *The Collected Laws of the Russian Empire* assigned a very limited role to public penance (*epitimiia*). However, the broader category of church discipline played a significant part in certain contexts of the overall administration of justice within the Russian Empire. The following discussion will consider three aspects of church discipline as they appeared in the law codes: public penance (*epitimiia*) usually involving confinement in a monastery, a more general form of penance (*pokaianie*) that may or may not have included confinement, and finally the involvement of the spiritual authorities in the administration of discipline, usually in the form of admonishment and teaching.

*Epitimiia* itself, the public form of penance, is mentioned but rarely in the law codes, and not always in reference to the Russian Orthodox Church. In the few cases where it does appear, the focus is on the role of the clergy in persuading those who had deviated from the faith to return to the church and especially to attend confession and receive the Eucharist. For example, in the part of the law code that dealt with the prevention and suppression of crime, there was a section addressing the prevention and suppression of deviation from the fulfillment of the laws of the Orthodox Church. The code of laws mandated that all Orthodox people over the age of seven

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<sup>253</sup> Muller, 67.

attend confession and the rite of communion on a yearly basis.<sup>254</sup> According to the law, those who avoided confession and the Eucharist for two or three years were to be denounced to the diocesan bishop. The bishop was then responsible to oversee efforts to return that person to his Christian duty through the use of public penance (*epitimiia*), to be assigned at the bishop's discretion and in accordance with canon law. In this law, emphasis was placed on the bishop's knowledge of the circumstances and his ability to determine the suitability of public penance within the local context. Penance was to be performed publicly in the parish church or in a monastery, but it did not necessarily have to mean suspension from one's post or removal from one's home. Those who refused to repent and to fulfill their "Christian duty," meaning confession and the Eucharist, were to be reported to the civil authorities for their consideration.<sup>255</sup>

In addition to placing the oversight of public penance in the hands of the church authorities, these laws also provided a stated goal with regard to the outcome of this practice. In statute 725, the preacher was urged to use the occasion of a sentence of public penance as an opportunity to teach his entire congregation about the goal of public penance, which according to this law was "to impel [the sinner] to sincere repentance, but also to console him, as the holy Gospel teaches."<sup>256</sup> While the goal of penance was not generally the focus of the statutes in the code of laws, this example does demonstrate that the imperial laws were engaging both the church

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<sup>254</sup> *Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii (The Collected Laws of the Russian Empire)*, vol. 14 (1857), 23 and 24. [Hereafter *SZRI*].

<sup>255</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 14 (1857): 27.

<sup>256</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 11 (1857): 725.

canons and the *Spiritual Regulation of Peter the Great*, as noted above. Like the church canons, the focus was on the sincerity of the repentance, but like the *Spiritual Regulation*, the medical analogy of the canons was conspicuously absent.

While public penance (*epitimiia*) was rarely mentioned in *The Collected Laws*, church penance (*tserkovnoe pokaianie*), often discussed in conjunction with confinement in a monastery, was a subject dealt with in greater depth. However, before looking specifically at the crimes that drew this punishment, it will be helpful to note a few overarching principles that were applied to the practice of church penance as dictated in the laws. First, it should be noted that penance, according to *The Collected Laws*, was most often assigned in addition to other secular punishments. For Orthodox Church members, being sentenced to a prison term, exile, or the lash often called for the additional assignment of church penance.<sup>257</sup> There were some crimes that called for church penance as the primary or even exclusive punishment, as will be noted below, but the majority of references to it were inserted as an additional sentence. For example, the primary sentence of imprisonment or exile was often followed by this injunction, or something like it: “Moreover, those who confess the Christian faith will commit themselves to church penance according to the direction of their ecclesiastical authority.”<sup>258</sup>

While this addition of penance was most common, there were also cases presented in the law codes where confinement in a monastery was recommended as a

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<sup>257</sup> It should be emphasized that this was prescriptive and not necessarily put into practice in most cases. The limited numbers of people serving penance in comparison with the number of sentences for these other punishments suggests that in most cases where church penance was prescribed by the law, the fulfillment of the penance was either ignored or left to the conscience of the convict.

<sup>258</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 2166.

way to soften the originally prescribed punishment. For example, in the volume of the code dealing with punishments, in the section addressing “Crimes, misdemeanours and general punishments,” it was noted that sentences including the deprivation of all rights, corporal punishment and deportation could be commuted to confinement in a monastery, provided one was accessible, for five to eight years. Lesser crimes that received a punishment of deportation, time serving in a “work company” under a civil department, or time in a workhouse could also be commuted to two months to one year in a monastery.<sup>259</sup> The reasons for softening a sentence in this way were not given, but other laws suggest that the “degree of guilt,” the state of intoxication, and the question of premeditated intent were all factors to be considered in determining the extent of the punishment. In practice, this feature of lightening a sentence to confinement in a monastery was usually applied to those of a higher rank.<sup>260</sup>

This brings us to a final overarching feature about the sentence of church penance in *The Collected Laws* and one that is central to the purpose of this chapter: the question of authority in the prescription and oversight of church penance. It is clear throughout *The Collected Laws* that the church authorities held the reins in the supervision of church penance. In cases that involved monastic confinement, this meant that the abbot of the monastery was in charge of the penitents and the guards or the monks who lived in the monastery supervised their care.<sup>261</sup> But in all cases of

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<sup>259</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 150. This was specifically noted for those who were between ten and forty years of age.

<sup>260</sup> Gregory L. Freeze, “Wages of Sin,” 68f.

<sup>261</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 565.



penance, the ultimate authority rested in the hands of the Holy Synod and in practice was exercised by the local Consistory and the bishop of the diocese. The Consistory could add penance to criminal or correctional punishments that had been assigned by the secular courts, it could determine the length and kind of penance to be assigned, and for those sentenced to deportation to Siberia, penance was to be served under the local diocesan authorities for a length of time determined by them.<sup>262</sup> In addition, when a secular court gave a sentence of church penance, the local consistory had the right to examine the files of the case.<sup>263</sup> Should there be any conflict between the local consistory and the secular authorities over the assignment of church penance, particularly when the defendant was a member of the Orthodox clergy, the Holy Synod was to give the final verdict.<sup>264</sup> In cases where the convict was relieved of all other punishments under a general pardon, the church penance was to cease or continue at the discretion of the ecclesiastical authorities.<sup>265</sup> What is striking about these conditions is the degree to which the church had the freedom to oversee these practices as well as the practical emphasis on local consistory authority.<sup>266</sup> As in the

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<sup>262</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 62.

<sup>263</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 11 (1857): 60.

<sup>264</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 406. Cf. Marianna Muravyeva, "Russian Early Modern Criminal Procedure and Culture of Appeal," *Review of Central and East European Law* 38 (2013): 311. It should be noted, though, that the Russian monarch was the ultimate authority in all legal matters and could be petitioned over and above the Holy Synod. One scholar has recently noted, "Prior to the creation of an elected Duma in 1906, the Russian monarch remained the sole source of formal legislative authority and the final source of earthly justice." Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, "Russian Legal Culture and the Rule of Law," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 7, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 64.

<sup>265</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 182.

<sup>266</sup> Regarding the early modern period, Nancy Kollmann notes, "Russia's practices of local adjudication resemble European courts' willingness to shape verdicts to local circumstances." *Crime and Punishment in Early Modern Russia*, 13.

*Kormchaia kniga*, the *Kniga pravil*, and the *Spiritual Regulation*, the imperial laws also placed the oversight of this practice firmly in the hands of the bishops.

In addition to the specific references in *The Collected Laws* to public penance (*epitimiia*), church penance (*tserkovnoe pokoianie*), and confinement in monasteries, it was also common to see the involvement of the local diocesan authorities or of a spiritual father in the oversight of certain aspects of punishment and sometimes in the court process and sentencing itself. It is therefore crucial to understand these practices of penance within the law codes as a part of the wider involvement of ecclesiastical authorities in the care and correction of prisoners. This was true both for members of the clergy and for the laity, though in different ways.

In the case of ecclesiastical persons, as long as the crime or misdemeanour itself was not categorized as a criminal offence, and as long as the deprivation of clerical status was not part of the sentence, then priests, church workers and monks were judged by the ecclesiastical authorities and their sentences were supervised by the local Consistory.<sup>267</sup> Criminal offences committed by members of the clergy were tried in the criminal courts but even in these cases a deputy from the ecclesiastical side (presumably from the Consistory) was required to be in attendance.<sup>268</sup> Also, as noted above, the final say regarding the sentencing of clergy rested with the Holy Synod in cases where disputes arose between the secular courts and the Ecclesiastical Consistory.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 97.

<sup>268</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 14 (1857): 282.

<sup>269</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 406.

The local ecclesiastical authorities also had responsibilities toward secular persons who committed crimes. This was particularly evident in the section of the law codes that dealt with “Supervision over the correction of prisoners.”<sup>270</sup> In this section, several statutes reveal the kind of involvement required of a spiritual father in the day-to-day running of a prison facility. For example, the law required that morning and evening prayers be read daily before a gathering of all the prisoners. This could be accomplished by one of the literate prisoners, but the spiritual father was required to appoint the reader and oversee the fulfillment of this obligation.<sup>271</sup> On holidays, sermons or additional readings from the scriptures or from other “edifying books” were to be read to the prisoners under the same parameters as the daily readings.<sup>272</sup> Orthodox prisoners were also expected to attend confession and the Eucharist and for those who had been sentenced to penal servitude, time was to be set aside from labour so that they could prepare for these rites.<sup>273</sup>

The provision of these services for prisoners fell within the broader framework of the moral correction of prisoners. Within each local context, the company commander was responsible for keeping an alphabetical list of prisoners on which he noted the particular penalty that each one was subject to as well as any general observations about prisoner behaviour and obedience. This list was to be examined by both the warden of the prison and by the spiritual father. These two persons were responsible to verify the information with their own observations and to

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<sup>270</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 14 (1857): 1045-1057.

<sup>271</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 14 (1857): 1052.

<sup>272</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 14 (1857): 1055.

<sup>273</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 14 (1857): 567.

“give further consideration to the methods for improving the moral condition of the company.”<sup>274</sup>

In the section of the code detailing “Decrees about those who are kept under guard,” the purpose of imprisonment and the role of the spiritual father with regard to it were made explicit. Whatever the realities may have been in the imperial Russian prison system, the stated goals according to *The Collected Laws* were such that confinement “would lead prisoners to moral correction and not to bitterness.”<sup>275</sup> Prison life was to be ordered in a way that would promote these ends. Statute 54 provides a list of requirements that were intended to support this overarching goal. The “correct accommodation” of prisoners by rank, gender, age, and kind of crime was the first issue in the oversight of prisoner morality. This was accompanied by demands that the prisoners receive edification in the rules of Christian piety, and that the liturgy be performed at appropriate times in prison churches, or in the absence of a church, that prayer services be held in the prison. Prisoners were also required to fast during Lent, the Holy Scriptures and other books of a “spiritual-moral content” were to be readily available to prisoners, and they were to have the individual attention of a spiritual father who was to oversee their edification and preparation for the holy sacraments.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 14 (1857): 1056. In the practice of monastic confinement, this responsibility fell to the abbot of the monastery and it is these records that form an important depository of information on the prisoners themselves.

<sup>275</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 14 (1857): 53.

<sup>276</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 14 (1857): 54.

Throughout the imperial laws, the role of the clergy in the administration of justice was primarily focused on the admonition and edification of prisoners.<sup>277</sup> The spiritual father of a given company of prisoners was responsible for the Christian morality of the convicts and particular emphasis was placed on his task of correcting and persuading the prisoners toward the Orthodox faith. This admonition and edification had broad applications within the law code and it was given to the clergy to explain the moral implications of sentences. For example, in the decrees about exile, if a secular court lightened a sentence, the local ecclesiastical authorities were mandated to explain the importance of a lightened sentence and the prisoner's duty to deserve the reprieve through good behaviour.<sup>278</sup>

Thus far in our examination of the imperial law codes, we have seen the use of penance as a form of discipline that existed within the broader framework of ecclesiastical responsibility for prisoner morality. The emphasis has been on the role of the local ecclesiastical authorities in relation to prisoners within the diocese and how public penance was one of the tools in their arsenal for the correction of these individuals. Before returning to questions of authority with regard to the specific case study at Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery in Vladimir Province, it will be helpful to note the main crimes that called for a sentence of penance and/or monastic incarceration, as detailed in *The Collected Laws*.

The crimes that resulted in penance as a disciplinary measure fall into three major categories: crimes committed by Russian Orthodox clergy, crimes committed

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<sup>277</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 97 and 216; *SZRI*, vol. 14 (1857): 1055 and 54.

<sup>278</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 14 (1857): 571.

against the Russian Orthodox Church, and finally, other crimes that may or may not have been committed by Orthodox believers. The instances where members of the Russian Orthodox clergy committed crimes or misdemeanours were, of course, the cases that gave by far the greatest prerogative to the ecclesiastical authorities. Provided the crimes were not accompanied by a criminal offence, members of the clergy were sent to the ecclesiastical courts for a wide array of misdemeanours including property damage,<sup>279</sup> breach of contract,<sup>280</sup> incorrect performance of a marriage ceremony<sup>281</sup> or amending other religious rites among schismatics.<sup>282</sup> Clerics who committed other crimes that resulted in a sentence of confinement were also to be sent to the diocesan authority for correction and reproof.<sup>283</sup> Those guilty of misdemeanours and crimes against their posts were also subject to the ecclesiastical courts.<sup>284</sup> Because of the estate structure of the legal system, the compilers of *The Collected Laws* felt it necessary to specify when a member of the clergy was to be sentenced by the secular courts. Apparently, violating state decrees by concealing fugitives, illegally cutting down forests or failing to fulfill quarantine and customs decrees, not to mention “terrible criminal offences” were reasons for members of the

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<sup>279</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 10 (1857): 8, primechanie.

<sup>280</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 10 (1857): 19, primechanie.

<sup>281</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 10 (1857): 797.

<sup>282</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 14 (1857): 69.

<sup>283</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 97.

<sup>284</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 15.

clergy to be sentenced by the secular courts.<sup>285</sup> Otherwise they were sentenced by the ecclesiastical authorities.

The second major category of crime that fell to the ecclesiastical courts and included a punishment of penance consisted of crimes against the Orthodox Church. The broadest and most common application within this category was that of “deviation from Orthodoxy.”<sup>286</sup> This was found in multiple forms including “deviation from Orthodoxy to another Christian confession” or “seduction from Orthodoxy to heresy,”<sup>287</sup> but it also included new converts who strayed from the practices of the Orthodox faith,<sup>288</sup> as well as those who failed to take responsibility for their subordinates who were deviating from the faith.<sup>289</sup> Most importantly from a practical standpoint, deviation from Orthodoxy was demonstrated in the neglect of the rites of Confession and the Eucharist,<sup>290</sup> and this also applied to parents who failed to bring their children to these rites starting at the age of seven.<sup>291</sup>

Other crimes against the Orthodox Church included interrupting church services, violence against a priest,<sup>292</sup> and disrespecting or damaging public crosses or

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<sup>285</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 15.

<sup>286</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 231 and *SZRI*, vol. 10 (1857): 791. Until 1905 it was illegal to convert from Orthodoxy to another confession. See Paul Werth, “Arbiters of the Free Conscience: State, Religion, and the Problem of Confessional Transfer after 1905,” in *Sacred Stories: Religion and Spirituality in Modern Russia*, eds. Mark D. Steinberg and Heather J. Coleman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 179.

<sup>287</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 10 (1857): 791.

<sup>288</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 230.

<sup>289</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 210.

<sup>290</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 10 (1857): 791.

<sup>291</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 232.

<sup>292</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 236.

images of the Saviour, of the Mother of God, and of the saints and angels.<sup>293</sup> These offences all received a sentence of penance in addition to other forms of punishment. The degree of punishment in these cases depended on intent and state of mind. The punishments ranged from a six-month confinement to exile in Siberia, corporal punishment and the deprivation of rights. Church penance under the local ecclesiastical authorities was merely the tip of the iceberg in the severest of these cases and was only applied when the defendant was a member of the Orthodox confession.

In addition to crimes against the Church and crimes committed by members of the clergy, the Church also had the right to assign penance as additional punishment for any infraction of the criminal law. In practice, this was usually only applied to crimes related to issues of marriage and sexuality. For example, penance was issued for adultery<sup>294</sup> and illegal cohabitation,<sup>295</sup> incest,<sup>296</sup> and polygamy.<sup>297</sup> It was also assigned to landowners who forced their children or their serfs to marry or to take monastic vows against their will.<sup>298</sup> Inter-religious marriage and the use of forgery in marriage<sup>299</sup> were also met with a sentence of penance. In all these cases,

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<sup>293</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 242.

<sup>294</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 2156 and *SZRI*, vol. 10 (1857): 791 and 796.

<sup>295</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 10 (1857): 791.

<sup>296</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 2166, 2167 and *SZRI*, vol. 10 (1857): 791.

<sup>297</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 10 (1857): 796.

<sup>298</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 10 (1857): 791 and 796.

<sup>299</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 10 (1857): 796. The use of forgery to enter into marriage was a way to overcome restrictions based on an unacceptable degree of relationship or for members of the clergy who were not permitted to marry.



the ecclesiastical courts were required to inform the Senate after giving sentences of penance so that criminal charges could also be applied.<sup>300</sup> Thus, the legal process could function in both directions: the state could send convicts to the church for the additional assignment of penance, but also the church could send penitents to the state if criminal charges were applicable.

One final note on the imperial law codes remains: penance was at times mandated for the non-Orthodox as well. By far the most common assignments of church penance were indeed to Orthodox believers. However, there were also laws that dictated a form of penance for Muslims and Evangelical Lutherans. In these cases, penance did not include confinement in a monastery but rather the oversight of the sentence was given to their own religious authorities.<sup>301</sup> So, for example, in a law sentencing adulterers to confinement in a monastery for six months to a year, it was noted that “Muslims who commit adultery are also assigned spiritual penance and correction.”<sup>302</sup> This was most common in the realm of marriage and sexuality. Evangelical-Lutherans who married Jews, Muslims or pagans in contradiction to the prescribed rules of their Church Charter were also assigned penance within the law codes,<sup>303</sup> to be served under the supervision of the church authorities of their own confession.<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 10 (1857): 796.

<sup>301</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 11 (1857): 444.

<sup>302</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 2156.

<sup>303</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 10 (1857): 796.

<sup>304</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 11 (1857): 444.

Paul Werth has demonstrated the process by which the Russian state enlisted the non-Orthodox confessions “in the exercise of imperial rule and the projection of imperial power.”<sup>305</sup> In the establishment of a multi-confessional empire, the Russian state was able to profit from the pre-existing organizational structures in newly acquired territories by incorporating the religious elites into the task of governing the empire. This process both benefited and limited these confessions. Werth writes, “For all religions in Russia, establishment secured recognition and confirmed certain rights, but also authorized limitations on religious life and disciplining in the spirit of the *Polizeistaat*.”<sup>306</sup> Penance fits into this latter category. When Muslims or Evangelical Lutherans were sentenced to penance, the oversight went to the authorities of their own religions.<sup>307</sup> In these cases, the authority over practices of penance rested in local clerical hands rather than with the secular powers. And like the Orthodox clergy, preachers of the Evangelical-Lutheran confession were also ordered to use public penance as a means by which to exhort their parishioners to sincere repentance.<sup>308</sup> How these laws were put into practice is outside the scope of this project, since the focus here is on penance in Orthodox monasteries. Also, the establishment of the non-Orthodox confessions was primarily located on the borders of the empire. However, it is necessary to recognize that the privileged position of

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<sup>305</sup> Paul Werth, *The Tsar’s Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3. On the *Polizeistaat*, see Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

<sup>306</sup> Werth, *Foreign Faiths*, 73.

<sup>307</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 11 (1857): 444.

<sup>308</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 11 (1857): 725 and 726.

the Orthodox Church and its influence in state policy existed in this broader framework and was held in tension with the multi-confessional nature of the empire. In the imperial law codes, penance was one of the ways that the structures and practices of the Orthodox Church were imposed on these other confessions.

Having examined the ways that penance was prescribed in the various church and imperial law codes of the Nicolaevan era, it is now possible to consider how these various sets of prescriptions related to one another and how they were applied in practice. All of the laws examined here were in agreement that the responsibility to oversee practices of penance belonged to the church authorities. Both church and state law allowed room for the state to require a sentence of penance, but the specific details as to the length and kind of penance required were consistently left in the hands of the local bishops. In the imperial Russian context, conflicts between church and state authorities over issues related to penance were to be resolved by the Holy Synod. Penance was clearly a church matter.

The goals of penance, as laid out in these various codes, reveal the nuances in the relationship between church and state law. Both sets of codes emphasized bringing the offender to repentance and in some respects they both intended to reconcile the individual with the community. However, their interpretations of what that looked like varied in important ways. State law was ultimately concerned with the morality of its subjects and penance was another means by which it could restrain behaviour and bring about moral correction.<sup>309</sup> From that perspective, penance and the broader role of the ecclesiastical authorities in providing admonition and the

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<sup>309</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 14 (1857): 53.

edification of prisoners were intended to contribute to the moral improvement of those who committed crimes. By contrast, in the canons of the church, penance was a healing remedy for the sick soul and the spiritual health and wholeness of the individual and the community were the main goals.

Local ecclesiastical authorities were central to each of these approaches. For the state, the local consistories provided additional administrative and organizational support to meet these ends. And for the church, the local knowledge of the bishop allowed him to diagnose each situation on a case-by-case basis.

In theory, the goals that underlay the decrees on penance in each of these sets of laws were not incompatible. The authority of the church in overseeing these practices and the importance of confession and communion received similar emphasis in both church and state law. But this begs the question: to what extent did these prescriptions from the law codes and the canons of the church play out in actual practice? Returning to the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev as well as the other monastery records regarding penance and monastic incarceration provides us with a viewpoint from which to survey how these legal and religious ideas functioned on the ground. Were the reasons for penance given in the codes of laws the same as the reasons for which people were incarcerated at Spaso-Evfimiev? Were the prisoners sentenced by ecclesiastical authorities or by the secular authorities? And did these practices follow the church canons and state laws?

The reasons for assigning penance according to the imperial laws, as noted above, fell into three categories: crimes committed by members of the Orthodox clergy, crimes directed against the Orthodox Church, and other crimes consisting

primarily of issues related to marriage and sexuality. In some ways, the practice of penance at Spaso-Evfimiev exemplified these categories. Many of the prisoners there were active or former clergymen and the monastery prison was an important tool for the regulating of clerical behaviour in the region. Crimes against the Orthodox Church, including heresy and blasphemy, but especially sectarianism were also reasons to be incarcerated there. In fact, Spaso-Evfimiev and Solovki became infamous for the incarceration of sectarians.

The third category was less of an issue at Spaso-Evfimiev, but there were reasons for this difference. In the wider imperial practices, the vast majority of penance cases were the result of sexual deviance. This category was highly gendered; it was not uncommon for unmarried mothers to be sent to monasteries to serve penance, whereas proving fatherhood was very difficult unless the couple was caught in the act. It was rare for the male counterparts to be sentenced, although Gregory Freeze notes that when it was possible to determine paternity, penance was assigned “with no discrimination as to gender.”<sup>310</sup> Since women usually served their penance at women’s monasteries and men at men’s, this aspect of penance was not reflected to the same degree in the records at Spaso-Evfimiev as it was in empire-wide practice. There was only one man explicitly incarcerated for incest in Vladimir Diocese.<sup>311</sup> There were also a few prisoners whose crimes were not specified in the archival record as well as a few whose crimes of “debauched behavior” remains

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<sup>310</sup> Gregory L. Freeze, “Wages of Sin,” 66.

<sup>311</sup> Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 229.

somewhat vague. It may well be that sexual deviance was more highly represented at Spaso-Evfimiev than it appears.

There were also other reasons why people were confined at Spaso-Evfimiev, and here we come to the major differences between *The Collected Laws* and the practice of penance in Vladimir Diocese. When violent and political crimes were committed by members of the clergy, *The Collected Laws* mandated penance and the discipline of the church authorities. By contrast, cases of violent and political crime by the laity were not specifically sentenced to penance in *The Collected Laws*, although, broadly speaking the church did have the right to assign penance as an additional punishment.<sup>312</sup> In practice, the penitents at Spaso-Evfimiev who had committed violent and political crimes included both members of the clergy and of the laity.

The other major issue that stands out in this comparison of prescriptions on penance and the historical practice of it was the incarceration of the insane in the monastery prison. Although it was not mandated in any of the law codes, the insane were sent to Spaso-Evfimiev by the church authorities, by the secular authorities, and by the two working together. Clearly there was a common cultural understanding regarding the role of the monasteries in caring for the insane even though the laws did not associate this practice with penance. Of course, the care of the insane did fit with the *Spiritual Regulation*'s instructions for the monasteries to provide care for those who could not help themselves. But that was in no way tied to penitential practices, whereas, at Spaso-Evfimiev the insane were kept with the prisoners and

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<sup>312</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 62.

included in the reports about the prisoners' section of the monastery that were sent to the Holy Synod twice a year. This important aspect of confinement at Spaso-Evfimiev will be examined in detail in chapter five.

Given these differences between the practice of penance at Spaso-Evfimiev and the prescriptions on it in *The Collected Laws*, the question of authority as it was practised comes to the fore. Who was sending these various groups to the monastery for penance and was there a correspondence between the religious nature of the crime and the authority of the church? Or did penance fall under the authority of the secular powers in practice? The record is not easily divided between the two.

Of the ninety-one prisoners confined in the prison at Spaso-Evfimiev for varying durations between 1825 and 1855, twenty-one of them left limited details regarding either the nature of the crime committed, the authority that sentenced them, or in some cases both. Of the seventy remaining cases, thirty-three involved people of ecclesiastical rank. As noted above, according to *The Collected Laws*, people of ecclesiastical rank were to be sentenced by the ecclesiastical courts unless their situation involved a criminal offence or the deprivation of ecclesiastical status,<sup>313</sup> and even in those cases a representative from the ecclesiastical side was to be present at the hearing.<sup>314</sup>

At Spaso-Evfimiev, only two of the thirty-three prisoners of ecclesiastical rank were sent by the secular authorities without the participation of the ecclesiastical powers. One of these exceptions was the former priest Aleksandr Chernyshev who

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<sup>313</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 15 (1857): 97.

<sup>314</sup> *SZRI*, vol. 14 (1857): 282, primechanie.

had been removed from the priesthood at his own request and with the permission of the Holy Synod.<sup>315</sup> The other exception was a priest who participated in (and perhaps had his hand in the organization of) a public riot. He was sentenced to Spaso-Evfimiev by the provincial governor of Vladimir, Count Apraksin, in 1824 and in 1834 he was transferred to Filipoiranskii Hermitage in Novgorod diocese.<sup>316</sup> Regarding the authority accorded to the church to oversee the sentencing of its clergy, the evidence at Spaso-Evfimiev suggests that the reality corresponded to the prescription in this case. Even the exceptions support this conclusion since one had been deprived of clerical rank and the other was guilty of a criminal offence.

In the case of the thirteen clerics who were sentenced by the ecclesiastical authorities without the input of the secular powers, seven of them were sent to Spaso-Evfimiev for madness, but for the rest there is no clear pattern between the nature of the crime and the predominance of the ecclesiastical authorities. Some were Old Believers, some were violent, and others committed deeds inconsistent with their clerical rank or became involved in crimes against the state. Likewise, in the other thirty-seven cases against the laity, the relationship between the nature of the crime and the authority responsible for assigning penance is not so clearly drawn.

Twenty-five of the seventy cases under examination here were sentenced by the secular authorities alone. The particular powers involved varied greatly. Most frequently, the prisoners were sent by imperial command under the recommendation of the Vladimir Provincial Governor or occasionally the governor of another

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<sup>315</sup> Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Vladimirskoi oblasti (GAVO), f. 578, op. 1 (1835), d. 155, l. 27.

<sup>316</sup> Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 221. Cf. RGADA, f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 282, no. 34.



province. The secular authorities assigned monastic incarceration to those who committed violent acts and crimes against the state, those who participated in the schism and other sects, as well as those who were considered insane. There were also cases in each of these categories where the ecclesiastical and secular authorities were both involved in the sentencing process. So, with the exception of crimes committed by the clergy, there were no clear patterns that emerged between the religious or non-religious nature of the crime and the authority of the church or the secular courts in the sentencing process. Penance was a disciplinary measure that belonged to the canon of church discipline, but it could be applied by the secular powers.

The other question that is raised by the comparison of the church canons on penance, the imperial law codes and the actual practice of penance and of monastic incarceration in Vladimir diocese is about the goals of these practices and the perception of penance as a healing process. In practice, was the goal of penance that of moral improvement and the restraining of behaviour as defined in the imperial laws or was it the healing of the soul and training for righteousness as defined in the canons of the church? Further examination of the different groups of prisoners and the material conditions of life in a monastery prison will illuminate the goals of penance and monastic incarceration. It will also further our understanding regarding how authority was exercised in these practices and the relationship between the secular and ecclesiastical powers in the administration of prison life within the monastery context.

On the one hand, incarceration at Spaso-Evfimiev flowed out of the traditional understanding of penance in the Orthodox Church – those in confinement

were encouraged to attend church services, to confess their sins and to receive the Eucharist. Repentance and restoration were the goals. On the other hand, the reality of incarceration here went beyond the traditional practice of public penance. In fact, many prisoners resided in cells for decades and some were denied their freedom in spite of good behaviour and penitent attitudes. The stories of the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev reveal the ways in which monastic incarceration in Vladimir diocese was a complex phenomenon that defies simple categorization or generalization. The Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state held overlapping but not identical goals. How they collaborated and, at times, negotiated their way through the entanglements of this practice will be explored in the following chapters.

## Chapter 3

### Writing Penance: Negotiating Authority in the Confessional State

Stefan Markhil was a Russian Orthodox priest who had been deprived of his clerical rank. He was sent to the prison at Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery in 1834 at the age of thirty-one. The monastery report to the Synod provided a detailed list of reasons for his confinement. The long list of crimes included: “lack of sobriety, failure to perform his duties, ... the occasional amendments he would make to the religious rites he performed for his parishioners while in a state of drunkenness, and finally ... violent acts.”<sup>317</sup> Markhil typifies a significant number of fellow prisoners who shared his clerical background and had committed some form of misdeed that could be broadly categorized as defiling the cloth.

Public penance was a way for the church to regulate the clergy in imperial Russia. In using this practice for that purpose, the church acted in accordance with its own principles and teachings. In this sense, the church was not serving the state; rather, it was pursuing its own agenda. In chapter two, Eastern canon law on penance was compared with the imperial laws of the Nicolaevan era. In addition to these prescriptions on penance, the church also had a rich heritage of theological and pastoral reflection on this significant sacrament. These writings on penance reveal the church’s own agenda with regard to the practice of penance. The church’s efforts to manage its clergy through the use of penance demonstrate how these priorities were implemented in imperial Russia. Beginning with an examination of traditions of

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<sup>317</sup> Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Drevnikh Aktov (RGADA) f. 1203, op. 1 (1835), v. 292, no. 1, l. 1. Though not necessarily technically crimes, the reasons for confinement were reported on the charts sent to the Synod under the heading of “crimes.”

penance as both a communal and individual rite, the present chapter will then explore the pastoral literature in order to better understand the impact of this practice on the Russian Orthodox clergy in the nineteenth century.

Relationships between clergy and laity were at the heart of this sacrament in Russian practice, as they were also in the historical traditions of the Eastern Church and in the wider European context. As will be demonstrated here, the writings on penance, confession, and church discipline that were published in Russia during the reign of Nicholas I consistently emphasized themes of healing and forgiveness as the intended results of the sacrament of penance.<sup>318</sup> The role of the confessor as a spiritual physician was central to these outcomes. And yet, the goals of penance were also affected by the rising power of states as they became increasingly centralized in the early modern world.

The intrusive nature of the Russian state brought the penitential goals of healing and forgiveness into conflict with the growing need for social order and discipline. Debates over the voluntary or enforced nature of penance had existed since its inception, but state involvement further complicated the practice in imperial Russia. Comparing the traditions and teachings of the church on penance with its efforts to regulate the clergy reveals that penance was applied to the Russian Orthodox clergy in ways that reflected the traditional purposes of the rite. Nevertheless, the pressure to produce a more professional clergy exposed the tensions between the private and public varieties of penance as well as its potential to be applied in either voluntary or enforced ways. Although clergy were most

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<sup>318</sup> As the censors were very strict during this period and the publications were so limited, I will also comment on the explosion of commentary on these topics in the post-Nicolaevan press.

frequently on the assigning end of penance, in the nineteenth century, disorderly Russian clerics also experienced the practice from the other side.

The primary focus here is on questions of authority – especially with regard to the relationship between the secular and ecclesiastical domains. With that in mind, the first task is to understand the place of penance in the Christian Church and especially its Eastern branch. This is not meant to be a history of penance; that project has been accomplished elsewhere.<sup>319</sup> Rather, the purpose here is to note the elements in the history of penance that shed light on how nineteenth-century Russians perceived and practised the rite. This is not to suggest that the practice of public penance in nineteenth-century Russia can be traced back in a linear fashion to early Christian teachings or the practices of the medieval Christian Church. It is only to say that certain trends and teachings from earlier periods were available as sources to be drawn on, to be transformed, reincorporated, or rejected, and so they were. Recent historical analyses have demonstrated that the way penance was interpreted and incorporated into church practice varied greatly by period and locality, and yet common themes also emerge across time and space.

### The History of Penance

In earlier historical writing, the purpose of penance has been interpreted in multiple ways. As a point of interaction between clergy and laity, penance has served

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<sup>319</sup> See for example, Oscar D. Watkins, *A History of Penance: Being a Study of the Authorities, Vol I and II* (New York: B. Franklin, 1961).

as a window into the habits, customs and attitudes of these two groups.<sup>320</sup> It has also been portrayed as a weapon of social control or more sympathetically as an educational tool in the process of Christianisation.<sup>321</sup> One common factor throughout its history is that the purpose of penance in the Christian Church has been tied to the forgiveness of sins.

Although similarities existed, penance in the Eastern Church developed along different lines than the Western variety. Where Catholic theology regarded penance as a prerequisite to forgiveness, by contrast the Eastern Church took a didactic view. Margaret Hebblethwaite explains, "...in canonical practice a penance was a preparation for righteousness rather than a condition for forgiveness."<sup>322</sup> From this perspective, the confessor is not a judge but rather a spiritual director.<sup>323</sup>

St. John Chrysostom, the bishop of Constantinople from 398 to 407, was very influential in the development of this theology. Called "the golden-mouthed" for his oratorical skills, having studied rhetoric under the pagan orator Libanius, his works have permeated the Eastern Church both in Russia and elsewhere and to this day it is his version of the Divine Liturgy that reigns throughout the Orthodox world.<sup>324</sup> In his own time, his views on penance were at odds with the broader church. Oscar Watkins writes, "...Chrysostom was a foremost modernizer of his day. His teaching as to

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<sup>320</sup> Sarah Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance, 900-1015* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Royal Historical Society : Boydell Press, 2001), 20.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>322</sup> Margaret Hebblethwaite, *The Theology of Penance* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1979), 64.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>324</sup> John Anthony McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 294.

Penance was revolutionary.”<sup>325</sup> In an era when penance was publicly enforced, of long duration and burdensome beyond human endurance, Chrysostom emphasized the voluntary nature of penance and the importance of inward attitudes. He wrote, “Penitence is judged not by the length of time but by the temper of the mind,” and he gave examples of the Ninevites, the penitent thief, and the martyrs.<sup>326</sup>

In Chrysostom’s time and in his writings we find debates about the public and/or private nature of penance as well as its voluntary or enforced character. The practice of public penance as opposed to private was an issue of contention in this period as it would be in many other times and places. Indeed, scholars of penance have described the ambiguous nature of this public/private divide in various contexts. With regard to the Western medieval period, Mary Mansfield has noted that “Every medieval penance was public in some degree, even secret confession, since the purpose of that confession was undoubtedly self-disclosure, if only to one person or to a very few.”<sup>327</sup>

In spite of this ambiguity, however, it is clear that the public nature of public penance came under criticism with some frequency. Chrysostom himself “stigmatize[d] the publicity of penance as an intolerable burden.”<sup>328</sup> He wrote that confession was necessary for the forgiveness of sins but he argued that it was “not a public exhibition, or an accusation of yourself to others, but a confession to God the

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<sup>325</sup> Watkins, 360.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, 300.

<sup>327</sup> Mary C. Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners: Public Penance in Thirteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 289.

<sup>328</sup> Watkins, 319.

Judge.”<sup>329</sup> The burden of public penance was the main reason Chrysostom rejected the practice, but it is not the only one. He was also concerned about the legal ramifications under secular law that could result from public confession. For example, a repentant adulteress who confessed publicly could be sentenced to death by the secular authorities. On these grounds such women were exempted from public confession.<sup>330</sup>

The debates over the public and private nature of penance were intimately connected with the question of whether it should be voluntary or enforced. In her examination of public penance in thirteenth-century France, Mary Mansfield has argued that since the work of penance was both the reconciliation of the sinner to God as well as the reconciliation of the sinner to the institutional church, it was (by this very fact) both a deeply individual and a deeply communal sacrament. She writes, “It was normally only half voluntary, as much a punishment imposed as a sacrifice assumed, as much a lesson to the populace as redemption for the individual, as much reconciliation with church and neighbour as reconciliation with God.” She interprets this as “a utopian dream.” She says, “It [public penance] declares the hope that God’s justice can be visible on earth.”<sup>331</sup>

These two pairs of concepts (private/public and voluntary/enforced) were deeply significant in the practice of penance in the imperial Russian context and elsewhere. They point to two central features that have been widely debated in the

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<sup>329</sup> Watkins, 309.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, 328.

<sup>331</sup> Mansfield, 17.



historiography – namely, the relationship between the community and the individual and the cooperative nature of penance, particularly as regards the roles of penitent and confessor. These features shaped the use of public penance as a means to regulate the clergy in imperial Russia and, indeed, in the broader European context.

Much of the historiography on penance in early modern Europe has focused on how this practice shaped the relationship between the community and the individual. The traditional interpretation of confession and penance in this period suggested that a process of internalization or privatization of religious belief was underway. For example, in a 1975 article, John Bossy argued that the social history of confession changed from a focus on social relations to one of “interiorized discipline for the individual,” or put another way, “a shift from the social to the personal.”<sup>332</sup> W. David Myers concurs with the individualizing effects of the confessional but places them on a later timeline, suggesting that this process took effect in the eighteenth century at the earliest.<sup>333</sup>

More recent analyses have brought this argument under debate. For instance, Wietse de Boer emphasizes the social orientation of Borromeo’s vision for reform. “In his [Borromeo’s] view, sin was to be feared particularly for its contagious qualities, which turned ordinary settings of social life – the military and the judiciary, the theater and the pub, business practices and dance – into permanent ‘occasions’ of

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<sup>332</sup> John Bossy, “The Social History of Confession in the Age of the Reformation,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (1975), 21.

<sup>333</sup> W. David Myers, “From Confession to Reconciliation and Back: Sacramental Penance,” in *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*, eds. Frederick J. Parrella and Raymond F. Bulman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 250.

moral transgression.”<sup>334</sup> The social element remained an important aspect of confession and penance into the early modern period.

Piotr Stolarski has examined Dominican piety in post-Tridentine Poland. His analysis brings further nuance to the relationship between the personal and communal aspects of the faith in early modern Europe. Emphasizing continuity over change in the Dominican Order of this period, he suggests that the use of the Rosary and the practices of Marian culture and Dominican spirituality (including penance) played an ongoing role in the integration of the individual and the collective.<sup>335</sup>

A recent volume covering penance in different periods goes a long way toward rejecting “the narrative of an emerging interiority, or an historically constructed individualism.” In her introduction, Abigail Firey explains, “Those writing about late antiquity and the early Middle Ages see all sorts of evidence for curiosity and solicitude about the inner life of the penitent, and those writing about the later Middle Ages and the early modern period are intrigued by the external postures and conformity to prescribed norms.”<sup>336</sup> Gretchen Starr-Lebeau’s contribution to this volume further demonstrates the ongoing importance of both the private and public functions of penance. Noting the frequency of penance among

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<sup>334</sup> Wietse de Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul: Confession, Discipline, and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 325. Of particular importance to early modern Catholicism was the work of Carlo Borromeo (1564-84), the archbishop of Milan, who sought to combat the religious crisis of the period by reforming penitential practices and providing the Catholic Church with a powerful tool for social discipline – the confessional. See also deBoer’s “At Heresy’s Door: Borromeo, Penance, and Confessional Boundaries in Early Modern Europe,” in *A New History of Penance*, ed. Abigail Firey (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 343.

<sup>335</sup> Piotr Stolarski, *Friars on the Frontier: Catholic Renewal and the Dominican Order in Southeastern Poland, 1594-1648* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 146 and 168.

<sup>336</sup> Abigail Firey, “Introduction,” in *A New History of Penance*, 7.

Catholic parishioners in early modern Europe,<sup>337</sup> she emphasizes the role that it played in preserving peace among the locals.<sup>338</sup> She also affirms that, “For Catholics, and to a somewhat lesser extent Protestants, penance was an important element of individual salvation and collective harmony.”<sup>339</sup> The two were not mutually exclusive; rather, penance continued to address both the individual and communal aspects of sin and forgiveness into the modern period. As demonstrated here, the common themes in the historiography on penance in Europe – including the relationship between the individual and society, the cooperation of the laity and clergy, and the significance of the expanding reach of emerging early modern states – were present in the imperial Russian context as well. But, the primary point to be made by the broader historiography – on penance specifically, and on religion and cultural change more generally – is the importance of variation between regions and the influence of the local.<sup>340</sup> Abigail Firey’s recent collection has demonstrated that “the variety and complexity of penance – described, prescribed, experienced, conserved, renewed, altered, resisted, embraced – cannot be neatly contained in a single narrative, no matter how magisterial and detailed.”<sup>341</sup> Each local context had its own peculiarities and its own stories to disclose. It is, therefore, to the teachings

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<sup>337</sup> Gretchen Starr-Lebeau, “Lay Piety and Community Identity in the Early Modern World,” in Firey, 396.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, 400.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, 417.

<sup>340</sup> Hamilton, 208.

<sup>341</sup> Firey, “Introduction,” 1.

and customs of church discipline in the Nicolaevan era that we must turn to further understand how penance was understood and practised in nineteenth-century Russia.

### The Pastoral Literature

The place of penance in monastic life in early modern Russia is perhaps best understood through the work of Iosif Volotskii (1439/40-1515). He served as a confessor and spiritual director to the elites of his era as well as to the monks under his care.<sup>342</sup> Volotskii wrote a Rule, which became the most influential such document for Russian monastic life, setting the stage for penitential practices in the early modern period and beyond.

The ties between individual and community form the backdrop for Volotskii's work and penance sits at the point of intersection. Drawing on the eastern church fathers – especially Basil the Great, Theodore the Studite and John Chrysostom<sup>343</sup> – Iosif gave monastery officials (in addition to priests) the right to assign penance.<sup>344</sup> He recommended nightly confession to the abbot<sup>345</sup> and he did not shy away from physical force as a means to instil discipline.<sup>346</sup> Goldfrank suggests that Iosif's typically medieval worldview included “the devil and his army of demons with their tricks (*kovarstvo*),” who “lurked behind sinful urges and

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<sup>342</sup> David M. Goldfrank, trans. *The Monastic Rule of Iosif Volotsky* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 2000), 31f.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

enticements into not only dissident thinking, but also deviant practices. Accordingly, parallel vigilance, control systems and outright scare tactics were necessary to protect monks from infractions of the Rule and to guard society from heresy.”<sup>347</sup> Iosif called on the monastery abbot to provide ongoing “treatment” for offenders in the hopes that they might come to salvation.<sup>348</sup>

The varieties of penance that Iosif recommended normally included an assigned number of prostrations; xerophagia<sup>349</sup> for a set number of days; banishment from the church, which meant that the individual was not allowed to participate in any services; being shackled in iron fetters; or being expelled from the monastery.<sup>350</sup> The most frequently assigned penances, according to Iosif, demanded fifty or a hundred prostrations, or a day of bread and water. This was the response to being late for a service or leaving early, as well as for talking during the service or moving about during it.<sup>351</sup> Leaving the monastery without a blessing, selling or giving away the belongings of the monastery, failure to attend to community work, and allowing women or young boys into a cell were further reasons to receive a penance.<sup>352</sup>

The particulars of the situation affected the severity of the penance. Repeat offences were treated more harshly and could result in banishment from the

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<sup>347</sup> Goldfrank, 100.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>349</sup> Xerophagia is the strictest fast in the Orthodox tradition, allowing only bread and water.

<sup>350</sup> Goldfrank, 301.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, 302.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, 304-306.

monastery for a few days and eventually in being expelled or bound in irons.<sup>353</sup> On the other hand, mercy was extended to those who missed work or services because of sickness.<sup>354</sup>

The responsibility of the individual to the community is demonstrated in multiple ways throughout the Rule. The kinds of offences that resulted in penance were frequently offences against the community, such as various ways of disturbing others during the liturgy. Likewise, the penance itself often involved a loss of time spent with the community, as seen in the banishment from church or even from the monastery in severe cases. The severity of the punishment that was ordained for those who failed to report on the disobedience of another further emphasizes the ties between the individual monk and his brothers in the monastery. Iosif writes, “If someone finds out and does not report to the superior or the cellarer that a brother has left the monastery without a blessing or plans to do or has done another improper thing, he shall not partake of any sacred thing until he is forgiven, for Basil the Great calls such a person a fratricide.” A first such offence was to be met with xerophagia for a week, but if it happened a second time, Iosif ordered “then drive him from the cloister.”<sup>355</sup>

These were the disciplinary instructions that Iosif Volotskii gave for the monastic life in late medieval and early modern Russia, but according to David Goldfrank, “Iosif’s works continued to be read and copied in monasteries into the

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<sup>353</sup> Goldfrank, 304.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid., 302 and 305.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid., 306f.

nineteenth century...”<sup>356</sup> A recently published volume of pre-Petrine monastic rules, first assembled for publication in the nineteenth century, demonstrates this fact. Iosif’s Rule is the lengthiest portion of the collection, which brings to publication the work of Amvrosii (1778-1827), bishop of Penza and Saratov from 1819 to 1825.<sup>357</sup> The collection was intended to be a part of his six volume *Istoriia rossiiskoi ierarkhii* but was not published until the post-Soviet period.<sup>358</sup> Goldfrank also notes the influence that Iosif’s rule had on other monastic rules written in the sixteenth century, including those of Kornilii Komel’sky, Metropolitan Daniil, and Archbishop and Metropolitan Makarii. These texts were also copied and studied well into the nineteenth century.<sup>359</sup>

While Nicholas I ruled Russia, public penance was practised throughout the empire and the importance of confession and the role of penance in the life of a Christian were points of interest in the church literature of the day. The demands of professionalization produced more intense conflict between the bishops and the parish clergy, but the use of public penance for regulating the clergy was not in and of itself contradictory to the teachings and traditions of the Orthodox Church. The

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<sup>356</sup> Goldfrank, 46-48.

<sup>357</sup> Bishop Amvrosii (Ornatskii), *Drevnerusskie inocheskie ustavy: Ustavy rossiiskikh monastyrenachal’nikov*, ed. T. V. Suzdal’tseva (Moscow: Severnyi palomnik, 2001), 17. See also the review article on both Goldfrank and Amvrosii’s texts by Jennifer Spock, *Kritika Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 582-586.

<sup>358</sup> Bishop Amvrosii (Ornatskii), *Istoriia rossiiskoi ierarkhii, sobrannaia byvshim Novgorodskoi seminarii prefektom, filosofii uchitelem, sobornym ieromonakhom Amvroziem, chto nyne episkop Penzenskii i Saratovskii, 6 vols.* (1807-15; repr. Moscow: Sinodal’naia tipografia, 1822). For a later reprint, see Amvrosii A. Ornatskii, *Istoriia rossiiskoi ierarkhii, 2 vols.*, repr. ed. Mads Oesterby (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1979).

<sup>359</sup> David Goldfrank, “Old and New Perspectives on Iosif Volotsky’s Monastic Rules,” *Slavic Review* 34, no. 2 (June 1975): 279, fn. 3.

authority of the bishop to oversee these matters and the importance of his role in disciplining his flock were emphasized in the canons and the teachings of the church, even into the Nicolaevan era. Efforts to defend Orthodox Christianity against other branches of the faith also brought teachings on penance to the fore.

The resulting publications on this rite included articles in the religious periodicals such as Sunday Reading (*Voskresnoe chtenie*) and Christian Reading (*Khristianskoe chtenie*) but also collections of homilies focused on confession as well as essays on public penance, church discipline, and the monastic life. Throughout these writings on penance, there are a surprising number of common examples and analogies that the authors employed. Of particular importance were the examples of the prodigal son and the Ninevites as well as the medical analogy for penance. After discussing the ways that these writers defined penance, the following examination will then explore these themes as they were developed in the literature.

In defining penance and explaining its role in the process of salvation, there are points of similarity but also issues of difference that emerge from these texts. Most of the authors agree that penance is a part of the process of correcting the sinner but that it is not punishment for sin. An essay by Gerasim Nikitnikov, published by the Synodal press in 1838 in Moscow, draws on the writings of the apostles to argue that in every instance where they assigned public penance, the apostles “had in view the correction of sinners or their salvation.”<sup>360</sup> Likewise, an anonymous article “On Public Penance and So-Called Indulgences,” published in *Khristianskoe chtenie* in 1852, suggested that the purpose of public penance was not for the satisfaction of

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<sup>360</sup> Gerasim Nikitnikov, *Razsuzhdenie ob epitimiakh* (Moscow: Sinodal’noi Tipografii, 1838), 49.



God's justice, but rather for the healing of sinners and their protection from sin in the future.<sup>361</sup> This article sought to clarify the purpose of public penance by distinguishing it from Roman Catholic practices with regard to indulgences in the medieval period. Thus, the issue of satisfaction was central to this discussion on penance. Many other authors agreed that satisfaction for sin before God was achieved through the work of Christ on the cross and not through the work of penance.<sup>362</sup> However, beyond this initial consensus, there were still those who saw penance as having a role to play in the sinner's preparation for the judgement of God.<sup>363</sup> Others pointed out an additional side to the question of satisfaction in demonstrating that penance played a role in reconciling the sinner not only to God, but also to the church, and in the latter context it was providing a measure of satisfaction in human relations.<sup>364</sup>

In a series of homilies on penance published in St. Petersburg in 1847, Ignatii, Archbishop of the Don Region and Novocherkassk, stressed the need for humility in approaching God.<sup>365</sup> By contrast, in a published sermon dealing with the place of penance in the "economy of salvation,"<sup>366</sup> Gavriil, Archbishop of Ekaterinoslav,

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<sup>361</sup> "Ob epitimiiakh i tak nazyvaemykh indul'gentsiakh," *Khristianskoe Chtenie* 2 (1852): 410.

<sup>362</sup> Nikitnikov, 28; "Ob epitimiiakh i tak nazyvaemykh indul'gentsiakh," 410; 418-419.

<sup>363</sup> Archbishop Ignatii, *O pokaianii. Besedy pred velikim postom i v post, po voskresnym dniam* (St. Petersburg: Tipografii departamenta vneshnei trgovli, 1847), 1.

<sup>364</sup> Nikitnikov, 28; "Ob epitimiiakh i tak nazyvaemykh indul'gentsiakh," 427.

<sup>365</sup> Ignatii, 14. These homilies were primarily given during the season of Lent, but also during other weeks in the Church calendar that connected with the themes of penance, fasting, and confession, such as the week of the Prodigal.

<sup>366</sup> Archbishop Gavriil, *Slovo o tainstve pokaianii ili ispovedi tserkovnoi, sochinennoe i govorennoe v Ekaterinoslavskom Kafedral'nom Uspenskom Sobor v prodolzhenie sviatago velikago posta 1832 goda* (Moscow: Sinodal'noi Tipografii, 1833), 6.

Kherson and Tavriia, discussed the idea of penance as a joint effort between man and God. In the anonymous article, the focus was on distinguishing what was and was not necessary in the practice of penance.

Other differences between publications were a matter of subtler nuance. For example, Archbishop Ignatii argued that penance was inclusive by nature and should apply to everyone. During the first week of Lent he urged his congregation that each Christian should confess and receive the Eucharist at least once a year, particularly during Lent.<sup>367</sup> He went on to demonstrate that repentance (*pokaianie*) was “necessary, important, and effective”<sup>368</sup> and penance was a part of this process. By contrast, the author of the article “On Public Penance and So-Called Indulgences,” suggested that public penance (*epitimiia*) was neither for everyone, nor for every sin. Rather, he believed that only some who confessed their sins were in need of the healing influence of public penance, depending on the severity and quality of the sin committed as well as the individual conscience of the sinner.<sup>369</sup> The focus in this latter article was on public penance and this argument should therefore not be seen as contradictory to Archbishop Ignatii’s homily, but rather as a more specific example. It must be understood that the author was looking explicitly at the *public* form of penance and concluding that *it* was not necessary for every sin.

While these differences allow us to ponder the issues that were inspiring each individual text, it is the surprising number of common examples and analogies that

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<sup>367</sup> Ignatii, 150.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>369</sup> “Ob epitimiiakh i tak nazyvaemykh indul’gentsiakh,” 406.

these authors employed that provide us with a greater sense of the collective understanding that they held with regard to both the purpose of penance and the practices involved in it. Each author presented numerous examples of confessing sinners doing penance, but there were two scriptural examples that appeared more frequently. The first was the case of the prodigal son. In Luke 15, Jesus told the well-known parable of the younger son who demanded his inheritance of his father and then went to a distant land where he squandered his wealth. Impoverished, he returned to his father to beg forgiveness and employment, only to be met joyously and offered full forgiveness. The prodigal's speech, "Father, I have sinned before heaven and before you,"<sup>370</sup> was used by these authors as an example of a penitent attitude. In many cases, the focus of these writers was on the response of the father as a representation of the grace that God extends to repentant sinners. Archbishop Ignatii wrote, "... how great the grace of the Lord to all people without exception and his mercy to confessing sinners."<sup>371</sup> In similar fashion, the anonymous author of the article "On Penance and So-Called Indulgences" points to the representation of God in this parable as a father and not as a judge.<sup>372</sup> In both cases, attention was drawn to the correspondence between the attitude of the son and that of the penitent sinner as well as the reaction of the father and God's response.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> As quoted in Ignatii. The NASB reads, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son..."

<sup>371</sup> Ignatii, 39.

<sup>372</sup> "Ob epitimiiakh i tak nazyvaemykh indul'gentsiakh," 422.

<sup>373</sup> For a later example see, "Ispoved' kaiushchagosa greshnika," *Rukovodstvo dlia sel'skikh pastyrei* 10 (1866): 322. Also, in other cases where the story of the prodigal son was not specifically referenced, the emphasis was still on God as loving, heavenly Father. Cf. Gavriil, 62.

The second biblical illustration that was frequently used by these authors was the case of the Ninevites.<sup>374</sup> When Jonah finally went to the Ninevites to proclaim their coming destruction, they responded with penitent hearts, albeit to Jonah's chagrin. According to the text, the people of Nineveh believed Jonah's message and called for a public fast. Even the king covered himself in sackcloth and ashes and decreed that neither man nor beast should eat or drink, but that all should call on God. He concluded, "Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish." The text goes on to say that when God saw that they turned away from their wickedness he relented and did not bring upon them the foretold doom.<sup>375</sup>

As in the case of the prodigal son, the penitent attitude of the Ninevites was emphasized and their response to Jonah's proclamation was seen as a model of appropriate behaviour for penitent sinners. For example, Nikitnikov noted their responses of prayer and fasting as the very activities that sinners should pursue in their repentance.<sup>376</sup> In the article "On Penance and So-Called Indulgences," the author's efforts were focused on debunking the Roman Catholic understanding of penance as a part of the required satisfaction for sin. The penance of the Ninevites, along with that of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4,<sup>377</sup> was presented as a demonstration

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<sup>374</sup> Other biblical examples, such as the case of Nebuchadnezzar, were given by individual authors but not with such frequency. See, for example, "Ob epitimiiakh i tak nazyvaemykh indul'gentsiakh," 417.

<sup>375</sup> Jonah 3

<sup>376</sup> Nikitnikov, 47.

<sup>377</sup> In Daniel 4, King Nebuchadnezzar looked out at his kingdom of Babylon and congratulated himself for his own power and glory in building such a kingdom. He then heard a voice from heaven prophesying that he would lose his sovereignty and be driven to live among the beasts of the field until he recognized the authority of the Most High. He then lost his reason and the prophecy was fulfilled.

of their sincere repentance before God and as the evidence of the fruit of their turning toward him. The author goes to great lengths to clarify that these acts of fasting, prayer and tears could in no way provide the satisfaction for sin demanded by God's justice. Rather he argues that it is only the grace of God that can save. For he writes, how could things of "such trifling worth" satisfy eternal justice for all the sins of the Ninevites and of Nebuchadnezzar?<sup>378</sup>

In addition to these scriptural examples, the authors of these texts drew on numerous other analogies in their attempts to elucidate the subject of penance. In their efforts to induce Christians to the fruits of penance, they found many ways to portray the good effects of these practices. These included the picture of penance as a tree of life<sup>379</sup> or a door,<sup>380</sup> as well as the idea of penance as a spiritual bath or a cleansing experience.<sup>381</sup>

There is one analogy that stands out in the literature in a pronounced way – the analogy of penance as a medicinal or healing treatment. Indeed this analogy was shared not only by the authors of the four texts discussed thus far, but also by the authors of many other shorter texts on penance in the ecclesiastical writings of the day, not to mention its historical longevity dating back to Chrysostom himself and

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The author of "Ob epitimiiakh i tak nazyvaemykh indul'gentsiiakh" interpreted this as a form of penance. "Ob epitimiiakh i tak nazyvaemykh indul'gentsiiakh," 417.

<sup>378</sup> "Ob epitimiiakh i tak nazyvaemykh indul'gentsiiakh," 418.

<sup>379</sup> Gavriil, 5.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid., 1; Ignatii, 1.

<sup>381</sup> Gavriil, 8. Ignatii, 24.

even to the canons of the church, as was demonstrated in chapter two.<sup>382</sup> The frequency with which medicinal references were made is enough to make this a subject for further reflection and the entanglement of public penance with the treatment of the insane provides an additional impetus for further examination of these references.

As described in the church canons, these authors also interpreted sin as an illness of the spirit and penance as the treatment that would bring healing to the diseased soul. While many authors drew on this comparison, they did so in a wide variety of ways. In the texts discussed here, each author used this medical analogy to emphasize different aspects of penance. The diverse approaches they used demonstrate the malleability of the analogy.

Nikitnikov, for one, focused on the aspect of infection or contagion. He referenced the Old Testament laws regarding skin disease and specifically cited the passage in Leviticus 13:46 where lepers were instructed to remain outside of the Israelite camp. Nikitnikov explained that the lepers were excommunicated from the assembly of Israel “in order to protect the healthy from infection.”<sup>383</sup> He then drew out the comparison with penance in order to argue that separating the sinner from the community was like a doctor isolating an infected patient. He wrote, “In order to keep the church in her proper purity and holiness, spiritual punishment for violation

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<sup>382</sup> See, for example: “My znaem i sami, chto delat’ nam protiv grekha: dlia chego eshche ispovedyvat’ grekh pred dukhovnym ottsem?” *Voskresnoe Chtenie* 49 (1842): 409-410; Nil Podvizhnik, “O pokaianii,” *Voskresnoe Chtenie* 32 (1843): 285-288; “Slovo o pokaianii,” *Voskresnoe Chtenie*, 47 (1843): 411-414 and 48 (1843): 416-420. Cf. Hieromonach Agapius and Nicodemus, *The Rudder (Pedalion) of the Metaphorical Ship of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of the Orthodox Christians*, trans. D. Cummings (Chicago: The Orthodox Christian Educational Society, 1957), 409, [http://s3.amazonaws.com/orthodox/The\\_Rudder.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/orthodox/The_Rudder.pdf) (accessed May 27, 2015).

<sup>383</sup> Nikitnikov, 51.

of the law of Christ is necessary; any spiritual punishment is a means for keeping others in the bounds of obedience to faith and law...<sup>384</sup> So, on the one hand penance would serve as an example to inhibit other people from sinning. But, Nikitnikov also noted the benefit of church discipline to the sinner himself. He argued that public penance would force the sinner to confront his indifference and that it would enable him to begin a holy feat. He wrote, “Public penance compels him [the sick sinner] to turn to meditation about the sickly state of his soul...”<sup>385</sup> The point of the analogy for Nikitnikov was a defence of public penance. From his perspective, the sinner was like a sick person and the penance was the treatment for the illness.

Archbishop Ignatii, by contrast, used the analogy of illness in order to inspire the sinner to seek healing. He noted to what great extremes a person would go when touched by physical illness. He said that when we feel sick we are not only willing to seek a doctor, but that we will go to all extremes to demolish the barriers to our healing.<sup>386</sup> For him, this was how a sinner should feel about his sin. As in physical illness, the sick person should vigorously pursue any means of healing possible. The assumption embedded in this argument is that penance is a voluntary endeavour. Ignatii does not address the question of public penance as an involuntary sentence.

Archbishop Gavriil also drew on this medical analogy to explain confession and penance. He saw the role of doctor as belonging to the ministers of the church, for he wrote, “...as a sick body calls for a doctor... so [the sinner] should seek the

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<sup>384</sup> Nikitnikov, 52.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>386</sup> Ignatii, 181f.

church elders...”<sup>387</sup> In describing penance, he spoke of it as a confession of spiritual illnesses and a request for “healing, forgiveness and absolution.”<sup>388</sup> But for him it was not the public nature of the penance that was so important. He cited the passage in Matthew 6:6 where Jesus instructed his followers to withdraw to a private place for prayer rather than making an exhibition of it. For Gavriil, this indicated that the essential aspect of penance was not that a minister of the Church hear the confession, but that the sinner have a private conversation with God.<sup>389</sup>

The anonymous text, “On Penance and So-Called Indulgences,” made extensive use of the comparison of sin with illness and penance with healing. For the author of this text, this analogy was right at the heart of how penance should be defined. He wrote, “...penance is not punishment imposed on sinners for the satisfaction of God’s justice, but it is the curative means for the healing of their spiritual illness...”<sup>390</sup> For this author, the priest was a spiritual doctor who assigned penance to some repentant Christians “for the healing of their moral illness.”<sup>391</sup> In his view, it was very important that the penitent sinner be seeking healing of his own volition. He argued that enforced treatment would be the cause of even greater illness than that which was being treated in the first place.

As demonstrated here, this analogy of sin as illness and penance as healing was prevalent throughout the church literature during the reign of Nicholas I. In other

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<sup>387</sup> Gavriil, 29.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid.

<sup>390</sup> “Ob epitimiiakh i tak nazyvaemykh indul’gentsiakh,” 434.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid., 407.



publications this was also the case. One author described Jesus as the “heavenly doctor.” He wrote, “There is no illness [of the soul] that the philanthropic Christ could not heal.”<sup>392</sup>

In addition to the prevalence of this idea of penance as the healing of souls, there were other points raised in these documents that these authors clearly held in common. The authority of the priest in the practice of confession and assigning penance was of paramount importance. That the authority of the apostles had been passed down to the bishops by the laying on of hands was noticed and affirmed by these authors.<sup>393</sup> Likewise, the importance of having a wise confessor and the responsibility laid on that person was also discussed – at times in some detail. The author of the anonymous article noted the fine line that the confessor must walk. If he assigned too severe a penance, then the penitent sinner might come “to bitterness and despair in [his] salvation because [he] cannot endure the severe treatment.”<sup>394</sup> But on the other hand, those who were not punished enough might come “to sin with greater boldness.”<sup>395</sup> So, like the canons, the author urged the priest not to leave anything unexamined, but by faithful investigation to know the state of the soul of the one confessing that he might assign penance that would produce fruit.

Likewise, Nikitnikov emphasized the need for wisdom on the part of the pastor and he pointed out that the penance must take into account both the state of the

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<sup>392</sup> Podvizhnik, 288. See also, *Voskresnoe Chtenie* 49 (March 1, 1842): 410.

<sup>393</sup> Nikitnikov, 8; Gavriil, 16; “Ob epitimiiakh i tak nazyvaemykh indul’gentsiakh,” 407.

<sup>394</sup> “Ob epitimiiakh i tak nazyvaemykh indul’gentsiakh,” 425.

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*, 425. The author was quoting from the text, Ioann Zlatoust, *Slovo o sviashchenstve* (St. Petersburg: Tip. B. Krylovskogo, 1836), 33-36.

sinner's soul and the physical conditions of his life. So, for instance, a priest should not command a poor man to give charity beyond his means or burden a busy man with requirements that would cause him to omit his own duties. Rather he should match the penance, not only to the sin, but also to the sinner and in such a way he would "lead sinners to salvation."<sup>396</sup>

The final point that should be made with regard to these texts on penance from the Nicolaevan era is that they all made extensive reference not only to the biblical texts mentioned, but also to the writings of the early church fathers. For example, in his efforts to condemn the Catholic concept of indulgences, the author of "On Public Penance and So-Called Indulgences" drew on the writings of St. John Chrysostom to argue that God absolves the sins of repentant Christians without any punishment – noting specifically that this is in reference to the sins committed after baptism.<sup>397</sup> This author used even the writings of the western church fathers in order to clarify their views on satisfaction and to correct the views on indulgences that had evolved in the Catholic Church.

More commonly, these authors called on the early Church literature to provide examples of kinds of penance. For example, one author described several classes of penitent sinners in the ancient church and the corresponding forms of public penance assigned to them – from those who were forbidden to attend the liturgy to those who were allowed to attend but forbidden to receive the Eucharist, and still others who were instructed to weep, pray, and perform a given number of

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<sup>396</sup> Nikitnikov, 67.

<sup>397</sup> "Ob epitimiiakh i tak nazyvaemykh indul'gentsiakh," 421.

prostrations.<sup>398</sup> Others drew more broadly on the fathers as they sought to define and explain the purpose and practice of penance.<sup>399</sup> In addition to these common references to the fathers, translations of their writings were also reprinted in the ecclesiastical literature of the Nicolaevan period. For example, a translation of a short text by St. John Chrysostom, called “Regarding Penance and the Confession of Sins,” was published in *Voskresnoe Chtenie* in 1855.<sup>400</sup>

Before turning away from the church teachings on penance, it should be noted that the censorship of the Nicolaevan era was very limiting. It is worthwhile considering the expansion of publications on this subject in the period following Nicholas’ death and leading up to the Great Reforms under Alexander II. During this later period, and indeed, throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the ecclesiastical writers continued to be concerned about practices of penance in the Orthodox tradition. Later, they were joined by intellectuals such as A.S. Prugavin who were appalled by the use of these traditions in the incarceration of Old Believers.<sup>401</sup> But prior to the addition of these dissenting voices, the expansion of the literature on penance and church discipline after Nicholas’ death generally revealed a high degree of consistency with the writings on penance during his reign.

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<sup>398</sup> “Ob epitimiiakh i tak nazyvaemykh indul’gentsiiakh,” 407f.

<sup>399</sup> Nikitnikov, 3f and 26.

<sup>400</sup> Ioann Zlatoust, “O pokaianii i ispovedanii grekhov,” *Voskresnoe Chtenie* 46 (Feb. 8, 1855): 441-444.

<sup>401</sup> A. S. Prugavin, *Monastyrskiiia tiur’mi v bor’be s sektantstvom: K voprosu o veroterpimosti* (1904; repr., Paris: The Hague, 1970).

Many of the same examples and analogies were used in similar ways to describe and illustrate the practice of penance. The Ninevites<sup>402</sup> and the parable of the prodigal son<sup>403</sup> were frequently mentioned as was the passing down of the authority to absolve sins from the Apostles to the pastors of the church. The early church fathers continued to be referenced<sup>404</sup> and their teachings on penance were reprinted in the church journals.<sup>405</sup> Forgiveness was dependent on God's mercy and penance was understood as a means by which the sinner could "better know his guilt and appease his conscience" rather than as a way to satisfy God's wrath.<sup>406</sup> And the medical analogy was reiterated time and again.<sup>407</sup>

These common traits were present not only in the larger church journals published by the ecclesiastical academies, the seminaries, or even the Holy Synod itself, but also in the regional diocesan newspapers. For example, one author writing in the *Vladimir Diocesan Gazette* described sin as "a sickness of the soul." Like other writers, he used this analogy to give local congregants a "lesson about penance." He wrote, "Remember that sin is a grave spiritual illness, and with a feeling of heavy

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<sup>402</sup> Ioann Zlatoust, "O pokaianii," *Voskresnoe Chtenie* 46 (1857): 445.

<sup>403</sup> "Ispoved' kaiushchagosa greshnika," *Rukovodstvo dlia sel'skikh pastyrei* 10 (1866): 322.

<sup>404</sup> M. Bogdanov, "Prigotovlenie prikhozhan k ispovedi," *Rukovodstvo dlia sel'skikh pastyrei* 13 (1862): 399 and 401.

<sup>405</sup> Zlatoust, "O pokaianii," 445-447.

<sup>406</sup> "O pokaianii," *Vladimirskiiia eparkhial'nyia vedomosti* 4 (1865): 226.

<sup>407</sup> "Ispoved' kaiushchagosa greshnika," *Rukovodstvo dlia sel'skikh pastyrei* 10 (1866): 335; "Pravila otositel'no nalozheniia tserkovnoi epitimii," *Rukovodstvo dlia sel'skikh pastyrei* 43 (1869): 249 and 44 (1869): 297, 301. See also, sections 29 ("Tribulations are the saints' healing") and 33 ("Is there healing from sin?") in Evstratii Golovanskii, *Tysiacha dvesti voprosov sel'skikh prikhozhan o raznykh dushepoleznykh predmetakh, s otvetami na onye* (Kiev: v tipografii I. i A. Davidenko, 1869), 20-22. Though these works by Golovanskii were published in the post-Nicolaevan era, it is commonly thought that they were written before 1855, lending further support to the argument for continuity between the two periods.

sorrow confess it as a dangerously ill [person] reveals his illness. Remember that sin is death for our souls...”<sup>408</sup>

Also in the post-Nicolaevan era, the revival of monasticism that had begun in the late eighteenth century, under the leadership of Paisii Velichkovskii, was bearing fruit in the works of St. Theophan the Recluse and Ignatii Brianchaninov, who wrote extensively on the spiritual life. In *The Path to Salvation: A Manual of Spiritual Transformation*, published in 1869, St. Theophan the Recluse provided an in-depth analysis of the process that a person goes through when he turns toward God. As in the Nicolaevan literature, St. Theophan drew heavily on the writings of the holy fathers, including St. John Chrysostom.<sup>409</sup>

Public penance was not the focus in *The Path to Salvation*, but the author did give consideration to the process of repentance and he used many of the same analogies and examples discussed above. For example, the case of the prodigal son was woven throughout his treatise. He used the stages of the prodigal’s repentance to shed light on the steps of repentance that he saw as being necessary for his contemporaries. He summed it up in this way:

A sinner who turns to God and repents *is roused* from the lullaby of sinfulness, reaches a decision *to change* (he gets up), and, at last, *puts on strength* for his new life in the Mysteries of Repentance and Holy Communion (preparation for work). These moments are described in the parable of the Prodigal Son in this way: *When he came to himself* means he has come to his senses; *I will arise and go* indicates he has decided to cease his former life; *I have sinned* is repentance, and his father clothes him (forgiveness and absolution from sins) and prepares him a meal (Holy Communion) (cf. Lk. 15:11-32).<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>408</sup> A. Svirelin, “Pouchenie ob ispovedi,” *Vladimirskiiia eparkhial’nyia vedomosti* 4 (1871): 85.

<sup>409</sup> St. Theophan the Recluse, *The Path to Salvation: A Manual of Spiritual Transformation*, trans. Fr. Seraphim Rose (Platina, California: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood and St. Paisius Abbey, 1996), 134. Also chapter nine, “Lessons by Our Holy Father John Chrysostom on Education,” 326-352.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

For St. Theophan the Recluse, the love of the father, which overflowed for the prodigal son in the giving of gifts and the throwing of a feast upon his return, was representative of God's love in bringing the repentant sinner to the Lord's Supper.<sup>411</sup> The Mysteries were the final step in the process of reconciliation with God. The role of penance in this process was to establish this new path and to offer protection from sin. He wrote, "If the spiritual father gives you a penance, accept it with joy. If the spiritual father does not give you one, then ask him to. This will be not only a send-off to you as you depart on your good path, but also a shield and protection from outside enemy attacks on your new way of life."<sup>412</sup>

But penance was not at the forefront of St. Theophan's discussion. He claimed that, "God's grace chooses well-known means" and listed off the ways that a sinner should seek out that grace. These included attending church services, reading the word of God, engaging in discussions with pious people, and seeking the prayers of the poor by giving alms.<sup>413</sup> Penance of the public variety was noticeably absent from Theophan's text. As in much of the literature on penance during this period, the teachings were rooted in a conception of this practice as a voluntary endeavour. So the only time that Theophan mentioned spending time in a monastery was in a discussion of the Lenten fast and it was in regard to those whose lifestyle would serve as a barrier to their salvation. He wrote, "If anyone who has had the salvific thought outside of the Fast to change his life, and whose lifestyle hinders him from

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<sup>411</sup> St. Theophan the Recluse, 183.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*, 144f.

carrying it out, it would be better for him to retreat for a time to a monastery. There it will be easier for him to master himself.”<sup>414</sup> Clearly Theophan was not advocating monastic incarceration as an inflicted punishment but rather as a voluntary retreat into seclusion.

Bishop Ignatii Brianchaninov was another elderly monk who contributed to the spiritual literature of the post-Nicolaevan period. An aristocrat by birth and a personal friend of the autocrat, he actively engaged in promoting Orthodox culture as a means of ministering to Russian educated society. Irina Paert describes his work as “a bridge between the traditional monastic piety and the educated public.”<sup>415</sup> In *An Offering to Contemporary Monasticism*, published in 1867, the year of his death, he provided a treatise on the monastic life based on his forty years of experience as a monk, including over twenty years as a superior.<sup>416</sup> While the book contains a rule for the outward conduct of novices, the bulk of the book is directed at the inner life.<sup>417</sup> It is aimed primarily at those in the monastic vocation but much of it applies to the lives of Christians more generally. In a chapter “Concerning Repentance and Mourning,” he argues in favour of the central place of repentance in the life of a monk. Stated simply, he says, “A monk’s life is nothing less than active and constant repentance.”<sup>418</sup> Using the holy Fathers to demonstrate the centrality of repentance to

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<sup>414</sup> St. Theophan the Recluse, 131f.

<sup>415</sup> Irina Paert, “‘The Unmercenary Bishop’: St. Ignatii (Brianchaninov) (1807-1867) and the Making of Modern Russian Orthodoxy,” *Slavonica* 9, no. 2 (November 2003): 109.

<sup>416</sup> Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, *The Arena: An Offering to Contemporary Monasticism*, trans. Archimandrite Lazarus (Jordanville, New York: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983), iii.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

the lives of the monks,<sup>419</sup> Brianchaninov also emphasized the need for confession to a spiritual father.<sup>420</sup> Like St. Theophan, however, Brianchaninov was more interested in the spirit of repentance and the importance of confession and the sacrament of communion rather than the practice of penance – public or voluntary.

The literature on penance as examined here demonstrates what the church authorities taught on the subject and how they understood its purpose and practice. In contrast with the Catholic teachings on penance, the Orthodox Church did not hold it to be a part of the requirements for salvation. Rather it was intended to aid the sinner in coming to repentance, to bring healing to the soul, and to strengthen the sinner to be able to stand firm in the face of future temptation. The role of a wise confessor and the authority of the bishops as handed down from the apostles were central points in the Orthodox teachings on these practices. The state, though at times affirmed as a God-given authority, was not usually considered of relevance in the church teachings on penance.<sup>421</sup>

The consistency between the texts published during the heavily-censored Nicolaevan era and the ones from the years of reduced censorship after his death, suggests the ongoing acceptability of the practice. If alternative views on penance had been repressed under Nicholas I, they surely would have come out in the press once the possibility emerged, if not in the church publications than at least, in the

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<sup>419</sup> Brianchaninov, 234.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>421</sup> Archbishop Gavriil sometimes meandered off topic and discussed questions of war, authority, and culture. He spoke to broad cultural trends of his day and affirmed Tsar Nicholas I as one of a long line of God-ordained leaders including Moses, Joshua, and King David. Gavriil, 51-53.



literary thick journals or the provincial newspapers. As it was, public penance did not become publicly problematic until later in the nineteenth and early in the twentieth century.<sup>422</sup>

The consistency between the teachings of the Nicolaevan era and the canons of the Eastern Church is also striking, particularly as regards the purpose of penance. The members of the church hierarchy in the second quarter of the nineteenth century did not see penance as a disciplinary measure of the state. Rather it was a means by which the church could bring healing to its own people and train them for righteousness. How the practices of monastic incarceration related to these teachings is the subject of the rest of this dissertation. The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate that, *in some respects*, the Russian Orthodox Church did practise penance in accordance with its canons and teachings. As a way for the church to regulate its clergy, public penance fit within the broader traditions and teachings of the Christian Church.

### Managing the Clergy

Clerical behaviour was a point of contention for the Russian church in the nineteenth century and the connection between the individual and the community in the rite of penance was evident in the practices of incarceration at Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery in Vladimir Diocese. Archimandrite Ioil, of the Vilenskii Second-Class Holy Spirit Monastery is a case in point. After being stripped of his archimandrite

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<sup>422</sup> Cf. Prugavin, *Monastyrskiiia tiurny*; and Gregory L. Freeze, "The Wages of Sin: The Decline of Public Penance in Imperial Russia," in *Seeking God: the Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia*, ed. Stephen K. Batalden (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993), 53-82.

status and the priesthood, in 1831 he was sent under recommendation from the Minsk Spiritual Consistory to be kept at Spaso-Evfimiev among the prisoners. His “extremely reprehensible deeds” were not suitable to his rank.<sup>423</sup> A seminary graduate and then teacher, he became a priest in 1803, was tonsured a monk in 1806, and became the abbot of the Vilenskii Holy Spirit Monastery in 1813. The early history of his career appears to be one of ambition and relative success.

In August 1829, he traveled from Vilna to Mogilev (in modern-day Belarus) because of the death of his parents, and his story took a dramatic turn. On his journey, he visited his brothers in their respective communities, and he caused plenty of trouble along the way. A variety of individuals gave testimony regarding his antics. The neighbours of one brother reported that during his visit he drank several glasses of vodka and then made a great deal of noise, abusing his host over his insufficient hospitality. His behaviour was generally offensive and frequently violent, breaking windows and throwing food on the ground. Sometimes he paid for the mess he made, as in the case of his brother’s broken window, but in his travels from tavern to tavern, he sometimes left without paying for the damage he had done. The stories that followed him included excessive amounts of vodka and a tendency to pick quarrels and break things.<sup>424</sup>

Ioil’s grief over the loss of his parents must surely have been a part of the cause for his erratic behaviour, but it was not mentioned as such in the monastery reports. The reports did include an acknowledgement of illness as at least part of the

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<sup>423</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1 (1835), v. 292, no. 1, l. 1.

<sup>424</sup> Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Vladimirskoi oblasti (GAVO) f. 578, op. 1(1830), d. 143, ll. 1-4.

cause. He was treated at the Bobrinskii War Hospital for a serious injury to his left leg. It was also observed that he was a hypochondriac and had some kind of mental illness, which was described as “some obscured mental ability.” He was deprived of his clerical rank, prohibited from wearing the cassock and sent by the Synod to be kept in a remote monastery “under the strict supervision of the abbot.” He ended up among the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery, where he lived until 1841.<sup>425</sup>

Ioil’s story testifies to the responsibility of the individual toward the community and vice versa and his experience demonstrates the mixture of events that could feed into a sentence of public penance for a member of the clergy. His very public misbehaviour was a discredit to the cloth. He was unruly and even violent with both family and neighbours and yet he was also ill. Isolation from these social contexts was seen as a way to address these problems, and the monastery environment allowed him a new form of life in community.

Other clerical cases also testify to the significant relationship between the penitent and the broader community, and the importance of teaching correct doctrine was at the forefront of these issues. Spaso-Evfimiev was well known for incarcerating leaders of the schism. For example, Fedor Solov’ev was a priest who was confined for his “deviation from Orthodoxy to the Raskol.” He had already escaped from Iurievskii Archangelskii Monastery and had been performing marriages in private homes “according to the dissident rites.” Described as dangerous to the church because of his fanaticism, he was confined at Spaso-Evfimiev in 1848.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>425</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1(1830), d. 143, l. 42.

<sup>426</sup> RGIA f. 797, op. 22 (1852), II otd., I stol., d. 258, l. 1.

Orthodox priests who did not participate in explicitly dissident behaviour could also fall into trouble over doctrine. Evfimii was a hieromonk from the Borovskii Pafnutiev Monastery in Kaluga Diocese, who was confined over his “incorrect interpretation of doctrine.” The authorities were concerned that he would “spread his false ideas about the faith.”<sup>427</sup>

The clergy were also given a sentence of public penance for behaviour that was considered inappropriate to their station. Iakov Moroshkin was a priest, sentenced for his drunkenness and “extremely unseemly actions.”<sup>428</sup> Likewise, Fedor L’vov, a deacon from Tver diocese, was confined “for violence, impudence, unseemly actions in his family and a life of intoxication leading to insanity.”<sup>429</sup>

The clergy were seen as influential members of the community and their behaviour and, indeed, their very character, was a matter of concern to the authorities. Frequent reference was made to the personal character of clerical prisoners, particularly when explaining why the possibility of release was being denied. For example, the refusal to release the hieromonk Uvgraf made reference to his severe and secretive character.<sup>430</sup> Fedor L’vov’s character was described as insolent.<sup>431</sup> And the hieromonk Stoilov’s character was described as highly anxious

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<sup>427</sup> Both church and state authorities were involved in this case. RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 292 (1835), no. 1, l. 1.

<sup>428</sup> RGIA f. 797, op. 22 (1852), II otd., I stol., d. 258, l. 1.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid., 17.

and indomitably violent.<sup>432</sup> Some of these prisoners were seen as “dangerous to society” because of these issues of character.<sup>433</sup>

Public penance was seen as a way to protect the community from these dangerous influences. In many cases, the monastery was ordered to keep particular prisoners “under strict supervision,” and in severe cases, isolation was used to limit the influence one might have over others. For example, orders were given for Uvgraf to be kept in a separate room within the prisoners’ section of the monastery.<sup>434</sup> Likewise, the hieromonk Apollon was sent to Spaso-Evfimiev with instructions to keep him “under strict supervision and removed from any communication with outside individuals.” The surviving details are minimal in this case, but his sanity was under question.<sup>435</sup>

In addition to the central connection between the individual and the community in the rite of penance, recent historiography also highlights the role of the laity in shaping its practices. Tracing penitential practices around the globe, Gretchen Starr-Lebeau highlights the significant contributions the laity made to penitential practice in the early modern period. She argues that the clergy and the laity worked together under various local circumstances to give shape to this rite.<sup>436</sup> In another example, focusing on early modern Spain, Patrick O’Banion has suggested that the power dynamic between the clergy and the laity went in both directions when it came

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<sup>432</sup> RGIA f. 797, op. 22 (1852), II otd., I stol., d. 258, l. 1.

<sup>433</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 292 (1835), no. 1, l. 1.

<sup>434</sup> RGIA f. 797, op. 22 (1852), II otd., I stol., d. 258, l. 1.

<sup>435</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 282 (1825), no. 34, l. 1.

<sup>436</sup> Starr-Lebeau, 417.

to practices of penance. He writes, "... the sacrament was as much a system of inclusion as of exclusion, as much an affair of the laity as of the clergy, as much a means by which laypeople were empowered as a method by which the powerful remained in control. In confession, power was negotiated, not forfeited."<sup>437</sup> His work demonstrates the many ways that Spanish laypeople actively shaped these practices to meet their needs.<sup>438</sup> Myers also reminds us of the fundamentally cooperative nature of penance, suggesting that, "In the final analysis, the Church's ability to exercise discipline depends on lay complicity."<sup>439</sup>

In the Russian context, the desire for a more professional clergy provided a context in which the laity shaped the rite of penance not only as it was being applied to lay people themselves, but also in how it was used to discipline the clergy. A growing emphasis on professionalization both gave shape to and was shaped by practices of penance. The complaints of the laity with regard to the behaviour of their parish clergy contributed to this process.

The condition of the Orthodox clergy in nineteenth-century Russia has been well documented.<sup>440</sup> The memoir of I.S. Belliustin, first published in 1858, is perhaps the most famous account by a rural priest. In a treatise that was intended to be a private memoir for the tsar, Belliustin noted the problems of clerical poverty,

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<sup>437</sup> Patrick O'Banion, *The Sacrament of Penance and Religious Life in Golden Age Spain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 7.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.*, 177f.

<sup>439</sup> Myers, "From Confession to Reconciliation and Back," 261.

<sup>440</sup> See for example, Gregory L. Freeze, *The Parish Clergy in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Crisis, Reform, Counter-Reform* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) and Laurie Manchester, *Holy Fathers, Secular Sons: Clergy, Intelligentsia, and the Modern Self in Revolutionary Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008).

tensions between priests and parishioners, as well as conflicts within the church hierarchy, and many other evils that plagued the clergy in the pre-reform period.<sup>441</sup> Maria Gromyko and A.V. Buganov have suggested that the shared agricultural lifestyle was a bond between peasants and the priests who served as their spiritual mentors.<sup>442</sup> However, the reality in this period was somewhat less idyllic. Forced to rely on emoluments and agricultural production in order to support their families, the rural clergy were overburdened and underpaid.<sup>443</sup>

Gregory Freeze has made the argument for a “stunted anticlericalism” in imperial Russia. He contends that anticlerical sentiment did not coalesce into a movement as it had in Western Europe because of the absence of aggressive “clericalism” in Russia, which failed to emerge because of the lack of cohesion within the clerical estate.<sup>444</sup> However, the absence of a movement did not mean that the clergy received the love and respect that Buganov and Gromyko imply. Freeze notes that the peasants resented the emoluments collected by the clergy in payment for the performance of particular rites, including baptisms and funerals. Clerical engagement on behalf of the state was another source of tension; this included reporting schismatics, helping to bring peasant disorders to a peaceful resolution, and

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<sup>441</sup> I.S. Belliustin, *Description of the Clergy in Rural Russia: The Memoir of a Nineteenth-Century Parish Priest*, trans. Gregory L. Freeze (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985). Cf. Dmitrii Ivanovich Rostislavov, *Provincial Russia in the Age of Enlightenment: The Memoir of a Priest's Son*, trans. Alexander M. Martin (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2012).

<sup>442</sup> M. M. Gromyko and A. V. Buganov, “On the Outlook of the Russian People: Church Attendance and Attitudes Towards Churches and Priests,” *Russian Studies in History* 44, no. 4 (Spring 2006), 72.

<sup>443</sup> Freeze, *Parish Clergy*, 56-61.

<sup>444</sup> Gregory L. Freeze, “A Case of Stunted Anticlericalism: Clergy and Society in Imperial Russia,” *European Studies Review* 13 (1983): 193.

betraying the confessional in cases of treasonous intent.<sup>445</sup> Yet, according to Freeze, these issues resulted in distrust rather than hatred or anticlerical violence. And on the part of the nobility, anticlericalism took the form of social contempt rather than “fear or ideological enmity.”<sup>446</sup> Looking at the period following the Great Reforms, Chris Chulos has noted other points of tension between the clergy and its flock. Along with the denial of requests for permission to build new churches, the peasantry was disturbed by the immorality of the clergy as well as the problem of liturgical error.<sup>447</sup>

During the Nicolaevan era, the issues of liturgical error and the immorality of the clergy contributed to the incarceration of clerical inmates at Spaso-Evfimiev. The specific accounts of the crimes suggest that the bishop in Vladimir was taking each case one by one in all its messy details rather than lumping them together under broader categories. So, it may be useful to note the sorts of behaviour that are included here under the category I have labeled “defiling the cloth.”

The common reasons for members of the clergy who were considered to be in their right minds to be sent to Spaso-Evfimiev included a lack of sobriety (particularly during the liturgy), being absent from one’s post or failing to fulfill one’s duties in the correct manner (this includes amending the liturgy), and absconding funds. Most were guilty of some combination. For example, Archimandrite Arsenii of the Moscow compound (*podvor’e*) of the Jerusalem Monastery was sentenced for the “incongruity between his life and rank,” for

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<sup>445</sup> Freeze, “Stunted Anticlericalism,” 181.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>447</sup> Chris J. Chulos, *Converging Worlds: Religion and Community in Peasant Russia, 1861-1917* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003), 58-65.



squandering charity, reprehensible deeds, and for his unauthorized absence from Moscow.<sup>448</sup> Others were incarcerated for more general misbehaviour in combination with a particular incident of misconduct. The reasons included a variety of religious offences (heresy, blasphemy, promoting the schism, etc.), violence, insanity, and even crimes against the state. Among the more singular examples was the monk Feofil. In addition to “not fulfilling the responsibilities of his rank,” he was also incarcerated because he falsely denounced what he believed to be “a conspirator against the Russian throne.” According to the reports, he was very persistent in this denunciation!<sup>449</sup> Generally, public penance was a sentence for various combinations of clerical crime and illness, for repeat offenders, and for other extreme or unusual cases.

Members of the clerical estate formed a particularly sizeable group at Spaso-Evfimiev. During the Nicolaevan era, thirty-nine of the ninety-two prisoners (over 42 percent) were members of the clergy. By comparison, of the 984 people who served a term of public penance throughout the empire in 1850 alone, just over 13.5 percent were clergymen. This included sixteen who had performed illegal marriages, eighteen who took unauthorized absences or neglected their posts, and another hundred who were sentenced for drunkenness and other objectionable behaviour.<sup>450</sup>

It is unclear why the percentage of clergymen was so much higher at Spaso-Evfimiev as compared to the rest of the empire. Perhaps it was tied to the role this

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<sup>448</sup> Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (RGIA) f. 797, op. 5 (1837), d. 18172, l. 1, and RGADA f. 1203, v. 292, no. 1, l. 1.

<sup>449</sup> RGIA f. 797, op. 22 (1852), d. 258, l. 1.

<sup>450</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 132 (1851), d. 124, l. 281f.

monastery played in caring for the insane, or in combating the schism; both of these groups of prisoners included a significant number of clerics. In the absence of institutions to care for the elderly, the facilities that Spaso-Evfimiev maintained for the housing of prisoners, and for that matter for the housing of monks, must have been a convenient location to house members of the clergy who were no longer able to live on their own, (whether for issues of illness or aging) and who had no family to care for them.

These cases are also consistent with the church's efforts to provide a more professional clergy, for it was not only the laity that was disturbed by the behaviour of their priests. The church hierarchy also played a role. In examining this process in the eighteenth century, Gregory Freeze has noted that the bishops became full-time administrators and sought to raise the standards and service demands on the clergy, such that a priest was expected "to preach and to exercise more active spiritual control over his flock."<sup>451</sup> He also describes the "status anxiety" that became evident in the bishops' dealings with the parish clergy. He writes, "They repeatedly warned that misbehaving priests were "degrading the ecclesiastical rank," risking not only corruption of the commoners but also humiliation of all the clergy, hierarchs included."<sup>452</sup> As in the instances described above, the bishops expanded their authority and, in such serious cases, defrocked priests and sentenced them to monastic confinement.<sup>453</sup> Freeze also notes that the Synod stepped in and moderated

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<sup>451</sup> Gregory L. Freeze, *The Russian Levites: Parish Clergy in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 65.

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

sentences when diocesan justice appeared overly zealous.<sup>454</sup> Summing up the effects of the efforts to produce a more professional clergy, Freeze writes, “The Church improved judicial administration and moderated punishments, but it also threatened priests with a much broader scope of supervision. Although the clergy now received better justice, they also had to satisfy much higher standards of conduct and service – a requirement that many would find impossible to satisfy.”<sup>455</sup>

Organizational changes to the local church structure also contributed to this process. New consistories were established in each diocese and a similar ecclesiastical board was organized at the district level. Priests joined members of the church hierarchy in administering these bodies, enhancing the ability of the institutional church to provide oversight of its flock.<sup>456</sup> Freeze writes, “... the Church internalized the state’s model of bureaucratization. It acquired the features of a modern organization and expanded its administrative organs even at the local level.”<sup>457</sup>

In the administration of justice, Freeze also notes the influence of Enlightenment ideals in the second half of the century, particularly with regard to the treatment and punishment of the clergy. He identifies “a striking new moderation” and the desire of a new generation of hierarchs “to appear no less tolerant and merciful than their counterparts in the secular command.”<sup>458</sup> Peter Gay’s tome on the

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<sup>454</sup> Freeze, *Russian Levites*, 72.

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*, 53f and 77.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

Enlightenment points to the demands of the philosophes “for the toleration of religious minorities, philosophical dissenters, and sexual deviants.”<sup>459</sup> The Russian ecclesiastical hierarchy assumed a more limited variety of tolerance for the behaviour of its parish clergy, and government involvement in these cases certainly resulted in better treatment for the offenders.<sup>460</sup>

The ecclesiastical courts, both in Russia and in the broader European context, played an important role in ordering clerical conduct in the early modern period; however, the growing influence and authority of states also shaped the work of the church courts. Deutscher’s analysis of the tribunal at Novara demonstrates the important role it played in regulating the behaviour of the clergy independently of state authorities, though its influence declined over time. He also notes that the tribunal lacked the resources to have the same impact on the laity,<sup>461</sup> and he identifies it as more threat than reality.<sup>462</sup> Ultimately, he presents a picture of a church that was increasingly dominated by the state.<sup>463</sup> Kathleen Comerford has also contributed to this discussion. Her work demonstrates that although the bishops who sat on local synods in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Florence, Lucca, and

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<sup>459</sup> Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Science of Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969), 399.

<sup>460</sup> Freeze, *Russian Levites*, 69.

<sup>461</sup> Deutscher, *Punishment and Penance*, 11f. See also chapters 3 and 4 on the clergy and laity respectively.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

Arezzo wanted to create a more professional clergy, the outcomes were not as successful as they may have wished.<sup>464</sup>

In England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, similar processes were underway. Susan Doran and Christopher Durstan have traced the evolution of the ecclesiastical courts there, pointing again to the rising power of the state in the modern world. Noting the role these courts had played in regulating the moral behaviour of the laity, they suggest that by the end of this period, the secular magistracy had taken over this task. According to Doran and Durstan, although the courts “survived into the eighteenth century and beyond, they were left with the much more peripheral functions of disciplining the clergy, adjudicating tithe disputes, and maintaining the fabric of their local churches.”<sup>465</sup> It should be noted, however, that in this era of professionalization, the conduct of the clergy would cease to be a peripheral issue. Throughout Europe and beyond, the church sought to establish greater control over the behaviour of its ministers.

Recent work on the jurisdiction and procedures of the ecclesiastical courts in Russia during the first half of the nineteenth century points to the pervasive influence of the state. Evgeniia Matveeva argues that the church was a part of the mechanisms of the state during this period and that most church issues were subject to state law and under the authority of the secular officials. However, she also notes the efforts of the church hierarchy to avoid state interference in the regulation of clerical behaviour

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<sup>464</sup> Kathleen M. Comerford, “The Care of Souls is a Very Grave Burden for [the Pastor]”: Professionalization of Clergy in Early Modern Florence, Lucca, and Arezzo,” *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis/Dutch Review of Church History* 85 (2005): 368.

<sup>465</sup> Susan Doran and Christopher Durstan, *Princes, Pastors, and People: The Church and Religion in England, 1500-1700* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 197.

by imposing stricter standards on their conduct. According to Matveeva, the main punishments for behaviour that reflected poorly on the clerical estate included penance, removal from office, exclusion from the clerical estate, and monastic incarceration. She identifies this latter punishment as a supplementary penalty, assigned by the ecclesiastical courts in conjunction with other penalties, but not by itself.<sup>466</sup>

Returning to the example of Ioil, the end of his story provides an example of the best-case scenario. In 1841 he was transferred to live among the other monks at Sarovskii Obshchezhitel'nyi Pustyn in Tambov Diocese, as ordered by the Holy Synod. Released from prison life at Spaso-Evfimiev, he returned to the monastic life. In some cases, like this one, restoration was possible. Penitents served their time and found healing in the process. However, in many cases, the actual practice tended to depart from the ideals and the historical emphases on healing and restoration were not always at the centre of the resulting penitential practices.

Many times, even those who were released from Spaso-Evfimiev were not permitted to return to their homes. Instead, they were resettled in new communities where they faced the challenges of starting again. The extent to which healing and restoration were possible largely depended on the individual in charge. Some hierarchs were more conscientious than others on this front and the treatment of penitents was shaped by the attitudes of the local authorities.

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<sup>466</sup> E. S. Matveeva, "Pravila tserkovnogo sudoproizvodstva po delam o prestupleniakh v tserkvi, sovershaemykh dukhovnymi litsami v Rossii v I polovine XIX veka," *Iuridicheskie zapiski* 2 (2013): 15.

In a report to the local consistory from 1840, the abbot Lavrentii demonstrated the extent to which he cared about the spiritual condition of the inmates under his charge. It is clear that he was keeping track of and staying in touch with each one in order to ascertain their mental and spiritual well-being.<sup>467</sup> His analysis of each inmate reflected on that individual's attitude toward the liturgy and whether he had acquired a degree of repentance in his thought and behaviour. For example, while reporting on Simon Shvetsov, a member of the Molokan sect, Lavrentii highlighted the opinions that Shvetsov espoused about fasting and icons, quoting him as saying, "I can see God without images and bow to Him in my own soul." Lavrentii reported Shvetsov's way of life as being "extremely ordinary," but saw his deviations from Orthodox thought as problematic.<sup>468</sup> In the case of Ivan Poliakov, behaviour and theology were more intertwined. From Lavrentii's perspective, this prisoner was not only "fully occupied with his schismatic biases," but his conduct was also rude and lacking in humility.<sup>469</sup> The report demonstrated a high degree of contact between Lavrentii and the prisoners; his approach to them was pastoral in nature. He sought to engage and guide them on the path to salvation.

In relation to the state, the bishops walked a fine line in the administration of penance and, at times, they were called on to use their spiritual authority in defence of worldly peace. In her examination of penance in the Holy Roman Empire under the Ottonian and Salian Reich from 900-1050, Sarah Hamilton has suggested that the

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<sup>467</sup> GAVO, f. 578, op. 1, d. 165, g. 1840, ll. 14-20.

<sup>468</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

bishops were “important administrators of local authority, and penance with its accompanying penalties was one of the more useful weapons in their armoury.”<sup>470</sup> The freedom accorded to the local abbots and bishops to oversee these practices was not without limitations and an increasingly intrusive state also took advantage of the opportunities that monastic incarceration accorded.

Tensions over state involvement and the will of the penitent had a long history. Chrysostom argued for the voluntary nature of penance, writing, “The priests cannot, like civil officers, exercise coercive authority. The penitents are voluntary.” He went on to emphasize the “need of tact to induce them to subject themselves to the remedies of the priests and that they may feel grateful for their healing.”<sup>471</sup> Yet scholars agree that in most periods where public penance was accepted practice, there were a few exceptional (and sometimes notorious<sup>472</sup>) occasions where the secular authorities made use of public penance “in tricky cases fit neither for public justice nor private confession.”<sup>473</sup> Hamilton has argued that, “penitential practice was a reflection of the symbiotic relationship between the spiritual and secular worlds.”<sup>474</sup> Or as Mary Mansfield put it, “Public penances simultaneously promised salvation in the next world and public order in this.”<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> Hamilton, 1.

<sup>471</sup> Watkins, 301.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, 319.

<sup>473</sup> Mansfield, ix. See also Mansfield, 5; Watkins, 319; and Hamilton, 1.

<sup>474</sup> Mansfield, 1.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.



In early modern Europe, the history of penance was tied to the emergence of new forms of statehood. Many scholars have described this period as a time of confessionalization “in which church and state interacted with and supported one another in the fashioning of a new and dynamic Christian society, a society in which Christianity would no longer be limited to the elite but penetrate to the uneducated masses of not only the cities but also the countryside.”<sup>476</sup> Thomas Brian Deutscher describes the process of confessionalization, beginning with the adoption of a particular confession, the development of lay and clerical educational institutions to promote that confession’s codes of belief, and the emergence of lay confraternities and organizations for poor relief. He suggests that all of these developments played a role “in the refashioning of Christian societies.”<sup>477</sup> According to Kathleen Comerford, confessionalization was the process by which the Catholic Church sought “to reform, consolidate, and solidify its administration and clarify the faith it represented” in the seventeenth century. Comerford also points to the role of the clergy and the importance of clerical education in that process.<sup>478</sup> In his book on the Milanese Counter-Reformation, Wietse de Boer has tied the history of penance in

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<sup>476</sup> Thomas Brian Deutscher, *Punishment and Penance: Two Phases in the History of the Bishop’s Tribunal of Novara* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 6

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>478</sup> Kathleen M. Comerford, “Clerical Education, Catechesis, and Catholic Confessionalism: Teaching Religion in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honour of John W. O’Malley*, eds. Kathleen M. Comerford et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 249.

this period to this very process of confessionalization. In fact, he places “the ideal of penance... at the heart of the Reformation itself.”<sup>479</sup>

Of particular importance to the Catholic Reformation was the work of Carlo Borromeo (1564-84), the archbishop of Milan, who sought to combat the religious crisis of the period by reforming penitential practices and empowering the Catholic Church with an effective tool for social discipline.<sup>480</sup> W. David Myers suggests that Borromeo’s development of the confessional booth in the second half of the sixteenth century was a part of a broader attempt to develop distinctly Catholic practices. He writes, “The Catholic Church had to distinguish itself from competitors by adopting unmistakably Catholic rituals.”<sup>481</sup> Like Comerford, he subscribes to a later timeline for the extensive adoption of these practices, placing the widespread use of the confessional in the middle or end of the seventeenth century.<sup>482</sup>

Scholarship on the relationship between state-building, confessionalization and social control in this period has demonstrated common patterns of development across confessional lines. It was not only the Catholic Church that was establishing its own distinctive practices. In a work comparing Calvin’s Geneva with Borromeo’s Milan, de Boer argues that profound similarities existed in the disciplinary forms that were used in these two otherwise very different communities. He writes, “Underlying

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<sup>479</sup> Wietse de Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul: Confession, Discipline, and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan* (Brill, 2001), 324.

<sup>480</sup> Wietse de Boer, “At Heresy’s Door: Borromeo, Penance, and Confessional Boundaries in Early Modern Europe,” in *A New History of Penance*, ed. Abigail Firey (Brill, 2008), 343.

<sup>481</sup> W. David Myers, “From Confession to Reconciliation and Back: Sacramental Penance,” in *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*, eds. Frederick J. Parrella and Raymond F. Bulman (OUP Premium, 2006), 249.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

both systems of discipline was thus a similar distinction between private and public behaviour, along with the conviction that public misconduct required the most urgent correction.”<sup>483</sup> Both Calvin and Borromeo used access to communion and “the traditional function of Easter, the sacramental high point of the year,” as a way to combat moral and social disorder. Both emphasized the distinction between private and public sins and the greater need to discipline the latter.<sup>484</sup> R. Emmet McLaughlin also identifies the important relationship between penance, social discipline, and confessionalization as it relates to the largely accepted thesis of modernization whereby self-disciplined subjects were coming into being.<sup>485</sup> He points to the further need for local studies to get at this relationship.<sup>486</sup>

Paul Bushkovitch, Robert Crummey, and Nancy Kollmann, among others, have contributed to a growing discussion on the early modern Russian state, and the place of religious practice within it. Bushkovitch emphasizes the rapid pace of change in this period, including “demographic, economic, social, and political in the sense of state structures.”<sup>487</sup> He notes the development of local administration under the authority of governors beginning in the mid-sixteenth century as well as the efforts of the church to establish a parish network at about the same time.<sup>488</sup> This was

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<sup>483</sup> Wietse de Boer, “Calvin and Borromeo: A Comparative Approach to Social Discipline,” in *Early Modern Catholicism*, 88.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>485</sup> R. Emmet McLaughlin, “Truth, Tradition and History: The Historiography of High/Late Medieval and Early Modern Penance,” in *A New History of Penance*, 61f.

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>487</sup> Paul Bushkovitch, “Change and Culture in Early Modern Russia,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 16, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 314.

<sup>488</sup> *Ibid.*, 299 and 305.

also an era when the authority of the monasteries gave way to that of the bishops and efforts were made toward developing a more professional clergy.<sup>489</sup> In particular, he notes the rise of the sermon in the seventeenth century.<sup>490</sup> His conclusions about the Russian elite parallel the arguments for the gradual privatization of faith in early modern Europe, as discussed above.

Robert Crummey has also examined these developments; he places the advent of confessionalization in Russia about a century later than in Western Europe, identifying the Nikonian reforms as a part of this process. Detailing the efforts of reforming priests in Russia during the seventeenth century, he notes that violence often marked the exchanges between priests and parishioners, with the parish priests frequently on the receiving end.<sup>491</sup> He interprets this violence as evidence that both church and state policies were encroaching on tradition. He writes, “Increasingly, in the last decades of the seventeenth century, opposition to the Nikonian liturgical reforms became inextricably entangled with defense of corporate rights, local autonomy, or traditional practices against the incursions of the increasingly intrusive central bureaucratic structures of state and church.”<sup>492</sup> Both of these institutions were expanding their ability to reach out from the centre and effect change.

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<sup>489</sup> Paul Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society in Russia: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 10-21.

<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.*, 150-175.

<sup>491</sup> Robert O. Crummey, “Ecclesiastical Elites and Popular Belief and Practice in Seventeenth-Century Russia,” in *Religion and the Early Modern State: Views from China, Russia, and the West*, eds. James D. Tracy and Marguerite Ragnow (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 61f.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*, 72. See also, Georg Michels, *At War with the Church: Religious Dissent in Seventeenth-Century Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999) and Michael Cherniavsky, “Old Believers and the New Religion,” *Slavic Review* 25, no. 1 (March 1966): 1-39.

Nancy Kollmann's work, *Crime and Punishment in Early Modern Russia*, also notes "the pursuit of centralization," and places it within the broader European context of early modern state building.<sup>493</sup> This outstanding work of scholarship demonstrates the flexibility and nuanced character of the Muscovite legal system.<sup>494</sup> Kollmann identifies the place of monastic incarceration within this setting and suggests that it was used when correction was the desired outcome, as in the instances of religious dissent where both "church and state would have liked to preserve souls where possible."<sup>495</sup> It was also used in cases of political struggle where avoiding a sentence of execution could curb further violence. Otherwise, Muscovite prisons were typically used only for those awaiting trial and not as long-term places of punishment.<sup>496</sup>

In the eighteenth century, public penance in Russian monasteries came under the influence of an expanding state, though the church sought to return to a greater consistency with the earlier canons and practices of penance. In an 1877 book on church discipline comparing the Orthodox tradition with Catholic and Evangelical Lutheran practices, N. Suvorov described the restorative goal and the life-giving function of discipline that brings a sinner to repentance.<sup>497</sup> He emphasized the detrimental impact of Peter the Great's Military Statute (*Voinskii ustav*) because it

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<sup>493</sup> Nancy Shields Kollmann, *Crime and Punishment in Early Modern Russia* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 13.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.*, 416 and 426.

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>497</sup> N. Suvorov, *O tserkovnykh nakazaniiakh. Opyt izsledovaniia po tserkovnomu pravu* (St. Petersburg: Khromolitografiia A. Transhelii, 1876), 36.

brought the practice of penance into alignment with the civil and criminal punishments assigned by the secular courts. Under this statute, penance was to involve a higher degree of retribution and was to be assigned regardless of the contrition of the offender.<sup>498</sup>

Many scholars have noted the expansion of state interest and administrative capacity in the eighteenth century. Describing a process of secularization in which Peter's reforms established the Synod as the centralized body of authority over the church and the Senate as the corresponding body over the state, Gregory Freeze writes, "Political rulership in this enlightened age became consciously secular, sacrificing Church interests and unabashedly pursuing *raison d'etat*... the new confession was the state itself..."<sup>499</sup> According to Freeze, the person of the sovereign was the unifying factor, settling disputes between Synod and Senate, as needed.<sup>500</sup>

The monarchs of the eighteenth century also sought to apply a greater degree of tolerance to their judicial activities while still maintaining an image of authority. Public penance was one of the disciplinary measures that suited these objectives. In 1766, Catherine the Great issued a manifesto commuting two murder sentences to a series of public penances in Moscow followed by incarceration in separate monasteries for twenty years. In his analysis of this case, Nikolaos A. Chrissidis

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<sup>498</sup> Suvorov, 182-184. See also Nikolaos A. Chrissidis, "Crying Their Hearts Out: A Case of Public Penance in the Era of Catherine the Great," in *Religion and Identity in Russia and the Soviet Union: A Festschrift for Paul Bushkovitch*, eds. Nikolaos A. Chrissidis et al. (Bloomington: Slavica, 2011), 121, fn. 43.

<sup>499</sup> Freeze, *Russian Levites*, 13.

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

suggests that Catherine used it as “a public relations opportunity”<sup>501</sup> through which she could publicize her authority as a merciful and, more importantly, Orthodox ruler.<sup>502</sup> Noting the theatrical elements of the verdict, Chrissidis concludes that, “... the spectacle was a political operation through which Catherine emphasized that she wielded the sword of secular justice and could even mediate in the meting out of divine justice.”<sup>503</sup>

The boundaries between secular and ecclesiastical realms frequently remained blurred with regard to crime and punishment. Elena Smilianskaia has examined the Orthodox Christian background of those who were accused of witchcraft in the eighteenth century. In her analysis of the process by which cases of witchcraft were removed from the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authorities and handed over to the secular powers, she writes, “... by 1782... ‘*religious cases*,’ including cases of witchcraft or superstition, had been withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the religious courts, declared to be *criminal matters*, ‘reduced in rank’ and significance, and handed off to the secular judicial and investigative authorities in the regions.” Religious penance was one of the disciplinary measures assigned to these cases by the secular power structure.<sup>504</sup> In the work of penance, the state not only imposed itself on what was traditionally ecclesiastical territory; it also adopted what were traditionally ecclesiastical methods. The handmaiden analogy hardly

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<sup>501</sup> Chrissidis, “Crying Their Hearts Out,” 125.

<sup>502</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>504</sup> E. B. Smilianskaia, “Witches, Blasphemers, and Heretics: Popular Religiosity and “Spiritual Crimes” in Eighteenth-Century Russia,” *Russian Studies in History* 45, no. 4 (Spring 2007): 69. Italics in the original.

seems adequate to describe this relationship. Smilianskaia's "spiritual crimes" point to the overlapping fields of meaning that sin and crime denoted in imperial Russia.

As demonstrated here, the main themes that emerge from the historiography on earlier practices of penance – private versus public penance, its voluntary or enforced nature, the relationship between the individual and the community, and the roles of both the laity and the clergy – were also present in the practice of penance in early modern and modern Russia. These themes shed light on the tensions that existed over monastic incarceration between different power-holders in that context. When penance was understood as a private and voluntary rite to be worked out between the priest and his parishioner in relationship with the broader church community, then there was little room for the secular powers to make use of the sacrament for their own ends. It was only in a context where public penance was both accepted practice and involuntary that monastic incarceration could be coopted by the state. What complicates this in the Russian context is the mix of private and public, voluntary and enforced customs that persisted into the modern period.

In an essay examining cultural change as it relates to Russian Orthodoxy in the modern period, Laura Engelstein points to the complex nature of the engagements between religion and modernity. Focusing on the nineteenth century, she rejects the simple argument regarding the waning of traditional styles of religious belief and practice.<sup>505</sup> Instead she describes the ongoing mixture of the traditional and the modern in the institutional structure of the church, in Russian intellectual life, and

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<sup>505</sup> Laura Engelstein, "Holy Russia in Modern Times: An Essay on Orthodoxy and Cultural Change," *Past & Present* 173 (November 2001): 155.



also in popular religious expression.<sup>506</sup> She concludes, “If the secularization thesis cannot withstand scrutiny, perhaps the notion of modernity also needs to be revised.”<sup>507</sup>

During the reign of Nicholas I, it was possible to assign penance and oversee its practice in a way that carried on the traditions of the church and its historical concerns for the healing of both the individual and the community. However, the pathway between theory and practice was rocky and uneven. The church’s use of penance did not always promote healing, and when the state acquired public penance as an instrument in its own disciplinary arsenal, the involuntary nature of the practice would bring it into direct conflict with its historical and theological heritage. This is the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>506</sup> Engelstein, 155f.

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

## Chapter 4

### State Criminals in the Monastery

In 1822, a fifty-year-old private in the Russian army, Lev Vasil'ev Strelkov, was sent to Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery to be confined because of his drunken violence and “for the audacious defamation of the sacred name of his imperial majesty.”<sup>508</sup> Apparently he had also named himself “the second emperor.”<sup>509</sup> He was sent there by royal command, with a letter of recommendation from the Vladimir provincial governor, Count Petr Ivanovich Apraksin.<sup>510</sup> Strelkov represents a surprising number (11%) of inmates at Spaso-Evfimiev who had no religious component embedded in their sentences: they were not from the clerical estate, there was nothing particularly religious about the crimes they had committed, and the spiritual authorities were not involved in the sentencing process. Another 5% of prisoners were sentenced for crimes of no religious quality and were not members of the clergy themselves, but in these cases, the secular and spiritual authorities collaborated with one another in assigning the course of discipline. The details of these cases reveal the ways that monastic incarceration came to serve the state as an alternative form of punishment for unique situations where the usual measures did not quite fit.

By tracing the changing perceptions of crime and punishment in modern Europe and placing an analysis of these cases within the wider context of evolving

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<sup>508</sup> Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov (RGADA) f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 292 (1835), no. 1, l. 1.

<sup>509</sup> Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Vladimirskoi oblasti (GAVO) f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165, l. 20.

<sup>510</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 292 (1835), no. 1, l. 1.

penal practices, this chapter will focus on the state's response to violent crimes as well as crimes directed at the imperial authorities. The latter cases were sometimes aimed at the person of the emperor himself and other times at the broader state. Frequently, crimes against the state and crimes of violence went hand in hand. The chapter will then elaborate on the church's role in the resulting punitive practices. Its use of monastic incarceration as a response to these kinds of crime demonstrates the ways that the government could manipulate public penance for its own ends. These prisoners were not fulfilling a sentence of penance as Orthodox Christians, but rather, they were being incarcerated for crimes against the state. Thus, in a limited sense, it can in fact be argued that, in such uses of monastic incarceration, the Russian Orthodox Church was serving as the handmaiden of the state in imperial Russia.

### Controlling Crime

The history of crime and punishment is closely tied to the evolution of the modern state. Norbert Finzsch reminds us that, "government actually precedes discipline historically."<sup>511</sup> Until the emergence of a state bureaucracy that was capable of overseeing the practice of punishment, the community dealt with crime, usually through corporal punishment. In the early modern and modern periods, the development of the *Polizeistaat* expanded the influence of the state on the lives of the

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<sup>511</sup> Norbert Finzsch, "Elias, Foucault, Oestreich: On a Historical Theory of Confinement," in *Institutions of Confinement: Hospitals, Asylums, and Prisons in Western Europe and North America, 1500-1950*, eds. Norbert Finzsch and Robert Jütte (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5.

people within its boundaries.<sup>512</sup> The relationship between sin and crime was an important part of this story.

Marc Raeff has shown how the changes to the churches of the Reformation era opened up greater dominion for the princes. He describes the situation in Protestant lands: “Since the Church (i.e., the papacy) no longer offered religious guidance and moral control, the prince had to act so that the true Christian moral purpose of society be preserved and fostered.”<sup>513</sup> The theories of mercantilism and cameralism were used to justify the duty of the prince to oversee the spiritual as well as the material lives of his subjects.<sup>514</sup>

The rise of policing was a part of this process but, initially, it was as much about protecting the state as it was about controlling crime. In his study of the relationship between rates of crime in nineteenth-century France and the ability of the state to deter crime with policing, A. R. Gillis suggests that, “state surveillance expanded less from a specific intent to control crime than from a broader interest in repressing ‘dangerous classes,’ new repertoires of social protest, and political challenge to the state.”<sup>515</sup> Distinguishing between serious crime and minor offenses, he shows that the former declined while the latter increased over the second half of

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<sup>512</sup> On the *Polizeistaat*, see Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

<sup>513</sup> Marc Raeff, “The Well-Ordered Police State and the Development of Modernity in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Europe: An Attempt at a Comparative Approach,” *American Historical Review* 80, is. 5 (December 1975): 1223.

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*, 1224.

<sup>515</sup> A. R. Gillis, “Crime and State Surveillance in Nineteenth-Century France,” *American Journal of Sociology* 95, no. 2 (September 1989): 307.

the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries.<sup>516</sup> He suggests that the expansion of state policing may have resulted in a greater capacity to deter, and he concludes that the security of the state was a greater motivating factor in that expansion than was concern for crime control. He writes, "... in France, "surveillance" characterized the orientation of the police, and the basis for surveillance was frequently the maintenance of the social and political order more than crime control."<sup>517</sup>

Examining crime statistics in the British context in the same period, Howard Taylor argues that, "... when the new police forces were created in the period after 1829, there was political pressure for them to reduce the number and cost of prosecutions." It was believed that "... the police would shift the balance from 'the prosecution of crime to the prevention of crime'."<sup>518</sup> Using the example of murder, Taylor explains that the investigation and prosecution of a suspicious death could consume a significant portion of the policing budget, and therefore was most likely to be ignored. He writes: "... it was an open secret that most murders and suspicious deaths went uninvestigated." He sees this as further evidence of the influence of bureaucracy and social policy on crime statistics in the nineteenth century.<sup>519</sup>

The lens of empire also sheds light on the changes that took place in practices of crime control in this period. Taylor notes the declining use of transportation as

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<sup>516</sup> Gillis, 328.

<sup>517</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>518</sup> Howard Taylor, "Rationing Crime: The Political Economy of Criminal Statistics Since the 1850s," *Economic History Review* 51, no. 3 (1998): 578.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*, 571.

criminal punishment as criticism increased and so did the availability of alternative measures. By the mid-1850s, the British use of transportation had almost come to an end.<sup>520</sup> Sandra Scicluna and Paul Knepper have demonstrated how empire building influenced but also was shaped by theories of discipline and the drive for penal reform. They examine the British prison on Malta as a way to understand the role that empire played in spreading Anglo-American theories of prison science around the globe.<sup>521</sup>

It was during the nineteenth century that the well-known rise of the prison facility came to replace both corporal punishment and transportation as the most common forms of discipline in the European context and elsewhere. In a volume titled, *Institutions of Confinement*, the contributors examine “450 years of the history of confinement in Europe and America,” from approximately 1500 to 1950.<sup>522</sup> Surveying the essays, Finzsch notes the difficulty of generalizing about the history of confinement.<sup>523</sup> The details depend on the particularities of the local context.

Regarding the European experience, Pieter Spierenburg places the beginning of practices of imprisonment at around 1600<sup>524</sup> and ties this development to a growing sensitivity to the human body in the same period, as evidenced by changing

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<sup>520</sup> Taylor, 572.

<sup>521</sup> Sandra Scicluna and Paul Knepper, “Prisoners of the Sun: The British Empire and Imprisonment in Malta in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *British Journal of Criminology* 48, is. 4 (July 2008): 517.

<sup>522</sup> Finzsch, “Elias, Foucault, Oestreich,” 12.

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>524</sup> Pieter Spierenburg, “Four Centuries of Prison History: Punishment, Suffering, the Body, and Power,” in *Institutions of Confinement*, 17.

perspectives on violence, cleanliness, and sexuality, to name just a few.<sup>525</sup> He criticizes the earlier revisionist authors of the 1970s for their acceptance of “humanitarianism” as a scholarly category. Scholars like Foucault, Rothman and Ignatieff emphasized the aim of “social control” instead of “humanitarianism” as the major factor in the rise of prisons. Spierenburg suggests that the very category of “humanitarianism” should be reassessed as laden with ideological underpinnings,<sup>526</sup> which change from one historical context to another. For Spierenburg, in rejecting the humanitarian thesis for the rise of the prison, the revisionists merely “reversed the values,” rather than “reassessing the evidence.” He notes rather wryly the positive value judgment that twentieth-century writers gave to past practices of incarceration, concluding that, “Apparently the common practice in one’s own day determines what one applauds in the past.”<sup>527</sup> This criticism is a valid point and one difficult to overcome. The treatment of criminals in any society is a value-laden undertaking and assessing past practice within its own historical context is indeed the task. Disciplinary measures develop in close relationship with the broader cultural context.<sup>528</sup>

The practice of incarceration was expanding rapidly throughout Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and an enormous amount of scholarship has been

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<sup>525</sup> Spierenburg, “Four Centuries of Prison History,” 26.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, 19f.

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

poured into understanding its various manifestations.<sup>529</sup> A recent review article by Mary Gibson examines the historiography on incarceration from a global perspective.

Drawing on *Discipline and Punish*, she writes,

Foucault does more than offer an explanation for the birth and workings of the early-nineteenth-century French prison: his much more ambitious aim is to investigate how power is exercised and “truth” is established in modern society, typified by a “carceral continuum” of institutions – with the prison as the extreme example – employing scientific techniques to discipline and normalize the individual.<sup>530</sup>

She critiques his work for ignoring other kinds of punishment that “coexisted with the new penitentiaries” and for emphasizing the theories of reformers “rather than the everyday reality of prison life.”<sup>531</sup>

Gibson suggests that a focus on the global context shifts the periodization of the birth of the prison from the Enlightenment to the age of European imperialism. She also emphasizes the turn toward practice – the significance of “the practice of prison reform” as well as the realities of life within prison.<sup>532</sup> She concludes, “... the new works on prison history in Asia, Africa, and Latin America point the way toward

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<sup>529</sup> On the Dutch experience, see Pieter Spierenburg, *The Spectacle of Suffering: Executions and the Evolution of Repression: From a Preindustrial Metropolis to the European Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); on France, see Patricia O’Brien, *The Promise of Punishment: Prisons in Nineteenth-Century France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); on Italy, see Simona Fazio, “The Bourbon Monarchy and Prison Legislation in Sicily: Two Competing Plans for Reform (1826-1830),” *Modern Italy* 19, no. 4 (2014): 379; on Belgium, see Bert Vanhulle, “Dreaming about the Prison: Edouard Ducpetiaux and Prison Reform in Belgium (1830-1848),” *Crime, Histoire & Societes/Crime, History & Societies* 14, no. 2 (2010): 113; and on Romania, see Luminita Eleni Merei, “The Organization of Prisons in the Romanian Principalities (1831-1862),” *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice* 4, no. 2 (2012): 653-659.

<sup>530</sup> Mary Gibson, “Review Essay: Global Perspectives on the Birth of the Prison,” *American Historical Review* 116, is. 4 (October 2011): 1041.

<sup>531</sup> *Ibid.*, 1045.

<sup>532</sup> *Ibid.*, 1057ff.



a global history of punishment that emphasizes the circulation of discourses and practices among continents and within regions.”<sup>533</sup>

Russia, too, participated in this process. In fact, Alessandro Stanziani has demonstrated that the Panopticon itself grew out of time that the Bentham brothers spent in Russia trying to help Prince Grigorii Potemkin with the management of his estate at Krichev.<sup>534</sup> Emphasizing the “shared economic institutional, and social factors [that] generated a common interest in limiting worker and peasant mobility,”<sup>535</sup> he concludes that the prison project was “first of all a project for labor surveillance” in which the focus was on the skilled English foremen rather than the unskilled serfs.<sup>536</sup> This economic connection between the rise of the prison and the rise of modern capitalism has been further examined elsewhere.<sup>537</sup>

In addition to this engagement with the European discourse on prison reform, other aspects of punishment in Russia also developed in similar fashion to Western Europe. Jonathan Daly has compared the use of the death penalty, penal servitude, imprisonment, and punitive exile in Russia with European practices. He makes the

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<sup>533</sup> Gibson, 1062.

<sup>534</sup> On the Panopticon, see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), especially chapter 3.

<sup>535</sup> Alessandro Stanziani, “The Traveling Panopticon: Labor Institutions and Labor Practices in Russia and Britain in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 4 (2009): 718.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*, 720.

<sup>537</sup> See, for example, Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), especially chapter 7, “Prisons, the State, and the Labor Market, 1820-1842.” Also, Dario Melossi and Massimo Pavarini, *The Prison and the Factory: Origins of the Penitentiary System*, trans. Glynis Cousin (London: Macmillan, 1981).

argument that Russia's penal policies were largely comparable with European practices in the nineteenth century.<sup>538</sup>

The reign of Nicholas I was deeply affected by its opening act – the conspiracy of the elites to acquire a constitution, which came to a head in Senate Square on December 14, 1825.<sup>539</sup> Children of an enlightenment education, the Decembrists lacked a decisive plan and even a unity of thought regarding the nature of the state they were hoping to achieve.<sup>540</sup> Baron Vladimir Ivanovich Shteyngel', like most of the members of the Northern Society, was a constitutional monarch.<sup>541</sup> P. I. Pestel, by contrast, wanted a republic, believing that the state exists for the good of the people and not the other way around.<sup>542</sup> Ultimately, a desire for change and a constitution were unifying factors.<sup>543</sup>

Despite their failure on Senate Square, their efforts left a palpable feeling of the need for reform and this ominous beginning shaped Nicholas' entire rule.<sup>544</sup>

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<sup>538</sup> Jonathan W. Daly, "Criminal Punishment and Europeanization in Late Imperial Russia," *Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas* 47 (2000): 342.

<sup>539</sup> Ludmilla Trigos identifies it as "a central defining moment" for his reign, "in validating his claims as emperor and charting his course as a conservative and reformer..." Ludmilla A. Trigos, *The Decembrist Myth in Russian Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), xxiv.

<sup>540</sup> B. S. Osheroich, *Ocherki po istorii Russkoi ugolovno-pravovoi mysli (vtoraia polovina XVIII veka – pervaiia chetvert' XIX veka)* (Moscow: Iuridicheskoe izdatel'stvo ministerstva iustitsii SSSR, 1946), 237.

<sup>541</sup> Glynn Barratt, *Voices in Exile: The Decembrist Memoirs* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974), 33.

<sup>542</sup> N. Ia. Kuprits, *Iz istorii gosudarstvenno-pravovoi mysli dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii (XIX v.)* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1980), 34.

<sup>543</sup> For a recent review of Decembrist historiography, see Patrick O'Meara, "Recent Russian Historiography on the Decembrists," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 14, no. 4 (Fall 2013): 805-822.

<sup>544</sup> S. P. Pokrovskii, *Ministerskaia vlast' v Rossii* (Iaroslavl': Tipografiia Gubernskago Pravleniia, 1906), 290.

Indeed, this betrayal by his peers left him in a bind. Aware of the great need for and desirous of bringing about reform, he suffered from a constant fear for the security of his throne. W. Bruce Lincoln has described the impression given by the Russian bureaucracy in this period as that of “a colossus lumbering clumsily in the wrong direction.”<sup>545</sup> Nicholas’ response was to establish a number of secret committees and separate sections of His Majesty’s Own Chancery. The realm of justice was at the forefront of these efforts. Count Viktor Nikitich Panin was the Minister of Justice for 21 years, starting in December 1839,<sup>546</sup> and after a couple of scandals in his early tenure, the tsar sought to reform “the deep ulcers that the work of the administration of justice suffered in this period.”<sup>547</sup>

Nicholas was deeply concerned about these issues. Mark Galeotti has noted the historical difficulty of policing the Russian Empire because of the vast territory covering a variety of climates and including “some 200 different nationalities.”<sup>548</sup> Regarding Nicholas, he writes, “Nicholas’s military mindset left him saddened and impatient with the corruption, inefficiency and sheer lawlessness of Russia. Legend has it that he told his son ‘I believe you and I are the only people in Russia who don’t steal’.”<sup>549</sup> In addition to the codification of the laws, Nicholas also created the

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<sup>545</sup> Lincoln, “Genesis of an ‘Enlightened’ Bureaucracy,” 323.

<sup>546</sup> P. V. Krasheninnikova, *Ministerstvo iustitsii za sto let. 1802-1902* ([orig. St. Petersburg, 1902] Moscow: Spark, 2001), 96-101.

<sup>547</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>548</sup> Mark Galeotti, “The World of the Lower Depths: Crime and Punishment in Russian History,” *Global Crime* 9, nos. 1-2 (February – May, 2008): 85.

<sup>549</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

infamous Third Section in an effort to improve policing.<sup>550</sup> Galeotti notes the range of responsibilities the police in Russia (both urban and rural) had in the nineteenth century, ranging from “the supervision of church worship” to “organizing military recruitment.” Where other European police forces were able to reduce the scope of their activities over time, in Russia this was not the case and the ties between religious practice and law remained prominent.<sup>551</sup> Nicholas himself summed up this relationship, “The best theory of law is good morality, and it must be in the heart ... and have religion as its foundation.”<sup>552</sup>

This religious component was a feature of both monastic incarceration and other forms of confinement as they developed in the Russian Empire. In 1877 a new correctional facility was opened in Viaznikov (a town in the north-east part of Vladimir province). It housed 200 prisoners upon opening.<sup>553</sup> A newspaper article written two years later noted the efforts to provide the prisoners with opportunities to fulfill their Christian duties of attending confession and receiving the Eucharist. A local priest performed the liturgy every Thursday for Orthodox prisoners and Catholic prisoners were permitted access to a Catholic priest for confession and communion. Spiritual books were available to the prisoners and they were seen as

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<sup>550</sup> On the Third Section, see Sydney Monas, *The Third Section: Police and Society in Russia under Nicholas I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961).

<sup>551</sup> Galeotti, “World of the Lower Depths,” 87. Monas also gives an extensive list of the duties that belonged to the Third Section. Cf. Monas, 28. On the history of policing in modern Europe, see Clive Emsley, *Crime, Police, and Penal Policy: European Experiences, 1750-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>552</sup> Iu. A. Ivanov, *Uezdnaia Rossiia: mestnye vlasti, tserkov' i obshchestvo vo vtoroi polovine XIX – nachale XX v.* (Ivanovo: Izdatel'stvo Ivanovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2003), 80f.

<sup>553</sup> *Vladimirskie Gubernskie Vedomosti (VGV)*, no. 45 (1877): 2.

particularly important when a prolonged illness inhibited the attendance of the priest. A special prayer chapel at a nearby monastery was also set aside for the prisoners.<sup>554</sup>

In detaining prisoners for reasons that did not correspond with church teachings on public penance, the Russian Orthodox Church served the state's interests in the imperial period. It did this by providing supplementary space for incarceration at a time when perspectives on corporal punishment were changing but institutions of confinement were still in short supply. Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery provided a place of incarceration that the state used when it lacked other options.

Scholars agree that the American penitentiaries at Auburn (New York) and Walnut Street (Philadelphia) provided a model that was exported throughout the western world and beyond. Both of these prisons segregated prisoners into separate cells. In the Philadelphia prison, a complete system of segregation began in 1786. At Auburn, segregation at night was paired with communal work performed in silence during the day.<sup>555</sup>

The link between emerging practices of cellular confinement and the lives of monks, who were also housed in cells and did manual labour for much of the day, was not limited to the Russian experience. It was not uncommon in other parts of Europe to convert former monasteries into prison facilities.<sup>556</sup> What was unique in

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<sup>554</sup> *VGV*, no. 12 (1879): 2

<sup>555</sup> Fazio, "Bourbon Monarchy and Prison," 370.

<sup>556</sup> Vanhulle, "Dreaming about the Prison," 119. He writes: "A women's prison was founded in Namur in 1837, while from 1840 onwards young offenders were sent to a converted monastery at St. Hubert. ... The separation of the various groups of inmates according to age, gender and nature of conviction was intended to reduce the disorder that was rampant in the large prisons. This was to facilitate more effective inculcation of moral principles into prisoners."

the Russian context was the ongoing use of the wider facility as a monastery while one of its residence buildings was being used as a place of incarceration.

At Spaso-Evfimiev, this situation had consequences for the life of the monastery. The incorporation of a prison within the monastery facility meant that the work of oversight involved an extra burden for the abbot. Staffing was sometimes an issue. In 1825, the abbot at Spaso-Evfimiev was ordered by the bishop to have hieromonk Amvrosii, the “builder” from Zolotnikovskii Pustyn', brought to Spaso-Evfimiev to serve as the confessor and exhorter of the prisoners.<sup>557</sup> This work, apparently, was very labour intensive and required more oversight than what the abbot could manage by himself.

Further evidence regarding the strain of overseeing this prison facility is found in the discussions surrounding the abbot's retirement in 1835. At 58 years of age, abbot Parfenii was granted a transfer to another less difficult position due to his age and failing health. He had served in his position “with particular zeal and energy” for fifteen years and he had received various awards for his labours. However, the difficulties involved in managing the prisoners in the monastery were a great burden and his superiors saw fit to allow him to retire to a less onerous position in another monastery.<sup>558</sup> He himself had requested the transfer to Kursk so that he could be closer to his family.<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>557</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 282 (1825), no. 13, l. 1.

<sup>558</sup> Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (RGIA) f. 796, op. 116 (1835), d. 340, l. 1. He was sent to the Ryl'skii Nikolaevskii Monastery in Kursk Diocese. The abbot of the Nikolaevskii Antoniev Monastery in Tver Diocese took his place at Spaso-Evfimiev.

<sup>559</sup> RGIA f. 797, op. 5 (1835), d. 18060, l. 1.

Along with the need for additional oversight, the confinement of prisoners in the monastery also involved a burden of cost, which was a constant issue of negotiation between the monastery, the local administrative apparatus and the Holy Synod. In September 1840, the Synod responded to concerns raised by the bishops in various dioceses, who noted the financial pressure that was put on the monasteries by the presence of prisoners sent to do penance.<sup>560</sup> In stating the problem to the Committee of Ministers, the members of the Synod pursued three lines of argumentation. First, they noted that the monasteries did not have the obligation or the means to keep criminals (*prestupnikov*) sent by the officials (*otsylaemykh po prigovoram Prisutstvennykh mest*). Secondly, they argued that the monasteries did not benefit from the labour of these prisoners since they were obliged to attend every church service and the rest of their labour did not even cover their daily food needs. And thirdly, they pointed out that prisoners in secular prisons were kept at the expense of the treasury according to statute 37 of Volume 14 of the *Svod Zakonov*. The Committee of Ministers agreed that the funds for both male and female prisoners should come from the treasury on the basis of statutes 38 and 39 of said volume (*Svod uchrezhdenii i ustavov o soderzhashchikhsia pod strazheiu*). But for persons of noble rank, this money would only be given if they did not have the means to provide for their own upkeep. The diocesan authorities were informed that each time they received instructions about the detention of someone on penance or for edification in the faith, that they should request the money for provisions from the local treasury

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<sup>560</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 121 (1840), d. 1306, l. 4. The bishops of St. Petersburg, Nizhegorod and Kursk were noted in particular.

through correspondence with the diocesan consistory.<sup>561</sup> Thus, there was the ongoing burden of negotiating these funds that added to the abbot's workload.

In spite of the extra strain on the monastery, studies of the Russian state prison system in the pre-reform period suggest that, for the prisoners themselves, monastic incarceration was a kinder punishment. In the state prisons, those awaiting trial were incarcerated with convicted felons.<sup>562</sup> Overcrowding was the number one issue and the resulting problems for sanitation and hygiene were matters of great concern.<sup>563</sup> By contrast, the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev lived much like the monks themselves. They inhabited what were formerly monastic cells and it was claimed that they ate better than the monks.<sup>564</sup>

There is also evidence that the prisoners preferred a sentence in the monastery prison rather than one in a state facility.<sup>565</sup> For example, Nikolai Kireev was a navy lieutenant who was sent from a monastery to the Kazan civil prison. He then appealed to the authorities to be returned to a monastery. He was sent to Spaso-Evfimiev after a series of escapades in Valaam Monastery.<sup>566</sup> It seems Spaso-Evfimiev was better adapted to the task of social control than most other monasteries. In spite of the similarities with the monastic life, imprisonment required a much higher degree of supervision, not to mention the physical trappings of incarceration,

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<sup>561</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 121 (1840), d. 1306, ll. 10-11.

<sup>562</sup> Bruce F. Adams, *The Politics of Punishment: Prison Reform in Russia, 1863-1917* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 52.

<sup>563</sup> Adams, 46.

<sup>564</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 125 (1844), d. 682, l. 2. See also chapter 6.

<sup>565</sup> See, for example, the case of Nikolai Kireev in chapter 6.

<sup>566</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1845), d. 174, ll. 11 and 27.



including restraining devices such as shackles, bars on windows and locked doors. Spaso-Evfimiev and Solovki were both equipped for this work.

Nevertheless, Spaso-Evfimiev was a far cry from the Shlisselburg fortress, which was the final resting place of many political prisoners. With such epithets as “hopeless island,” “the island of death,” and “the Russian Bastille,”<sup>567</sup> Shlisselburg had almost no escapes in its 200-year history and its prisoners counted themselves lucky if their sentence was changed to hard labour in Siberia. They found relief on the long, harsh trek to Siberia. After all, as one prisoner described, the journey along the frozen autumnal road was jolting and his legs became numb in the shackles, “but how pleasant it was to breathe the fresh air, to move and talk freely.”<sup>568</sup> In contrast to the harsh conditions at Shlisselburg where even Siberian exile was seen as an improvement, confinement at Spaso-Evfimiev was relatively tame. As will be seen in chapter 6, the material well-being of the prisoners there was very similar to that of the monks, although the degree of deprivation varied and was certainly a tool in the hands of the authorities.

### Penance in the Army and Navy

There were three main groups of prisoners that were sentenced by the state alone. The first group included soldiers of the army and navy. It was not uncommon for soldiers and officers to be sentenced to public penance as a result of some crime or misdemeanor. The files of the Synod reveal many such circumstances. For

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<sup>567</sup> L.B. Dobrinskaia, *Uzniki Shlisselburgskoi kreposti* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1978), 3.

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

example, Ensign Mokritskii of the Regimental Artillery Brigade was assigned penance by his commanding officer. On his way home from the park, his horse took fright, threw him and trampled a four-year-old boy. The officer noted the accidental circumstances and handed Mokritskii over for five years of church penance “to cleanse the conscience [*dlia ochishcheniia sovesti*].” The terms of the penance were determined by the Over Priest of the Army and Navy in conjunction with the Holy Synod.<sup>569</sup> Another letter from the Over Priest of the Army and Navy, Prothierarch Vasilii Kutnevich, discusses a number of individuals who were sentenced to public penance. The sentences were long and many were released from their military duties in order to fulfill them. Usually, they were ordered to report to a spiritual father.<sup>570</sup>

At Spaso-Evfimiev, sentences given to soldiers and officers took penance to the more severe form of monastic incarceration and did not involve the church authorities. Seventeen of the ninety-two prisoners during the Nicolaevan era were members of the Army or Navy; they were sentenced for a variety of reasons. Many of them had committed some form of heresy or blasphemy. Others were found guilty of cruelty, debauchery, or some other form of sexual deviance. For example, Nikolai Frish was sentenced “to eternal penance” for committing adultery with his own sister. He was released from his confinement in 1835 and sent to join the Vladimir Garrison Battalion.<sup>571</sup> Another case, Afanasii Semenov Lisevich, was a retired lieutenant-colonel who spent thirteen years confined at Spaso-Evfimiev “for cruel deeds with

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<sup>569</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 116 (1835), d. 1056, ch. 1, l. 1.

<sup>570</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 126 (1845), d. 1948/1.

<sup>571</sup> A. S. Prugavin, *V kazematakh. Ocherki i materialy po istorii russkikh tiurem. slissel'burg, suzdal'skaia tiur'ma, petropavlovskaiia krepost'. S risunkami* (St. Petersburg, 1909), 229.

the peasant woman of the landowner, Kovalevskii, and other illegal activities.”<sup>572</sup>  
Presumably, he was guilty of rape.

### Incarcerating Violent Criminals

The second group of prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev that was confined by the state authorities included those who had committed some form of violent crime. These were often family affairs. Staff captain Kostromitinov was sent to Spaso-Evfimiev for reprehensible behaviour toward his father. He was also waiting there for a decision to be made in a case about the violent death of his elderly peasant Ivanov. Provided that no further punishment was assigned, he was to be kept there until he came to sincere repentance and until he received his father’s forgiveness.<sup>573</sup> In cases involving the nobility, monastic confinement provided the authorities with the option of a lighter sentence. Sometimes the authorities, including even the tsar himself, wanted to impose a lighter sentence than exile or confinement in a state prison.<sup>574</sup> One such example, Pavel Molchanov, was a titular councillor who made “an attempt on the life of his father.”<sup>575</sup> His plight was eased by a sentence of monastic confinement rather than incarceration in a state prison.<sup>576</sup>

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<sup>572</sup> Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 216 and RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 282 (1825), no. 34, l. 1.

<sup>573</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 106 (1825), d. 261.

<sup>574</sup> Pavel Zyrianov, *Russkie monastyri i monashestvo v XIX i nachale XX veka* (Moscow: Verbum-M., 2001), 98.

<sup>575</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 301 (1844), no. 26, l. 1.

<sup>576</sup> This was also seen as an alternative punishment for children who had committed violent crimes, but there are no examples of children being confined at Spaso-Evfimiev during the Nicolaevan era. Cf. Abby M. Schrader, *Languages of the Lash: Corporal Punishment and Identity in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002), 115f.

There were also two monks, Panteleimon and Feodorti, confined at Spaso-Evfimiev for “hostile activities” against ethnic Russians. These monks were from the Bystritsa Monastery in Little Wallachia.<sup>577</sup> Panteleimon was noted to be “of a quiet and religious disposition” and his behaviour was good. Yet, he would not confess to his crime. The reports on each of these monks declared: “Until complete discovery of his way of thoughts, actions and behaviour, [he] cannot be released.”<sup>578</sup>

### Crimes Against the State

The third group of prisoners that was sentenced by the state for varieties of non-religious crime included those who had committed an offense against the emperor or the state more broadly. The language around these crimes is worth considering. Jonathan Daly uses the label “political crime” in his comparison of Russian and European practices. For Daly, political crime encompassed perpetrators of *lèse-majesté*, which included “attacks against the person, honor, or power of the emperor, as well as of members of his family,”<sup>579</sup> not to mention attempts to overthrow the government. Crimes of this nature were subject to harsher punishment and even the death penalty. They also included “verbally insulting the honor of the sovereign or members of his family.”<sup>580</sup>

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<sup>577</sup> RGIA f. 797, op. 22 (1852), d. 258, l. 1.

<sup>578</sup> RGIA f. 797, op. 22 (1852), d. 258, l. 1.

<sup>579</sup> Jonathan Daly, “Political Crime in Late Imperial Russia,” *Journal of Modern History* 74 (March 2002): 69.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

Using “political” as a descriptor for this kind of crime in the Nicolaevan era is anachronistic, although by the end of the nineteenth century (the focus of Daly’s work) it became a more fitting category. The issue is not that these kinds of crime were non-existent, but rather that they were categorized differently. In broader writings about crime, the label “state crime” was more common. The law codes also did not refer to political crime in this period.<sup>581</sup>

At Spaso-Evfimiev, crimes were rarely divided into neat categories. The Decembrist, Fedor Shakhovskoi, became ill while in exile in Siberia and was returned to European Russia where he spent the last few months before his death in the prison at Spaso-Evfimiev. The reports to the Synod did not even list a crime as the reason for his incarceration. He was merely described as a “state criminal.”<sup>582</sup> He arrived at the monastery with six trunks of material goods and his wife was permitted oversight of his care during his final days.<sup>583</sup> The monastery prison, in this case, became a hospice and final resting place. In an ngram search for the Russian use of “state crime” and “state criminal,” a fascinating distinction arises in this period. State criminals were far more prevalent in the literature than was “state crime,” and “political crime” was rarely used until the twentieth century.<sup>584</sup> Ostroumov provides

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<sup>581</sup> However, it is interesting to note that, from the time of Empress Elizabeth until well into the nineteenth century, “political death” was a possible punishment for some crimes. See, Alan Wood, “Crime and Punishment in the House of the Dead,” in *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia*, eds. Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 216.

<sup>582</sup> GAVO, f. 578, op. 1 (1829), d. 137, l. 1.

<sup>583</sup> *Ibid.*, ll. 10-16.

<sup>584</sup> The ngram for “political crime” takes a drastic spike in the 1920s. Google ngram measures the frequency with which the word/phrase appears in relation to the whole vocabulary of the period as found in all the books that have been scanned into Google Books. The chart demonstrates the variations in the frequency of its use over time. It would be difficult to draw firm conclusions from

further evidence for the existence of “state crime” rather than political. In his statistics on Siberian exile between 1827 and 1846, 443 people (439 men and 4 women) were sent for “state crimes” and none for “political.”<sup>585</sup>

Others were incarcerated for lesser crimes against the state as in the case of Private Lev Strelkov, who was confined for his drunken violence and for his “audacious defamation of the sacred name of his imperial majesty,”<sup>586</sup> as noted in the introduction to this chapter. In some cases there was a reason for sending the person to a monastery – maybe it was a priest or a monk who committed the crime, such as the monk Antiokh who was guilty of disobedience to the state authorities.<sup>587</sup> At other times, the state crime was in conjunction with blasphemy or some other form of religious crime. For example, the peasant Vasilii Reshetnikov was charged for insulting both the spiritual authorities and the emperor, but he also was a member of the *pomorskoï* sect of Old Belief and as such was seen as a dangerous dissident.<sup>588</sup> Housing these “state criminals” was one way that the church served the state.

Crimes against the emperor ranged in severity. On the opposite end of the scale from the Decembrists’ attempted coup sat Fedor Utkin, a private in the Ufa infantry regiment, who was sent to Spaso-Evfimiev for the “defamation of his royal

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these charts, but they certainly raise interesting questions. In this case, perhaps the most interesting one is why “state criminals” were ubiquitous when “state crime” was not!

<sup>585</sup> S. S. Ostroumov, *Prestupnost’ i ee prichiny v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1980), 10.

<sup>586</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, v. 292 (1835), no. 1, l. 1.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid. The kind of authorities are not specified here, but given the involvement of the provincial governor, Sergei Stepanovich Lanskoï, and specific reference to the supervision of a Vladimir policeman, Peryshkin, it seems clear that he was in trouble with the state.

<sup>588</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1855), d. 201, l. 1.

imperial majesty's person," among other things.<sup>589</sup> There were others who bothered the emperor in inappropriate ways. Petitioning the emperor was a common practice with a long tradition that involved a well-defined etiquette. Nancy Shields Kollmann has examined petitioning practices in Russia in the pre-modern period, arguing that, "Individuals presented themselves as embedded in many networks – family, household, locality, social rank (Orthodox religion was perhaps implicit for most)."<sup>590</sup> The one commonality among the pre-modern petitions was that "the tsar [was] addressed as superior to the entire populace, which present[ed] itself as equal in personal dependency on him."<sup>591</sup> What we find in the Nicolaevan era, is that some people crossed clearly defined boundaries in the process of petitioning the tsar (or his family members) and they were at times incarcerated in monasteries as a result of such impudence. For example, the aforementioned monk Feofil was confined there because he was very persistent in "an unfounded denunciation about knowledge that came to him of a conspirator against the Russian throne."<sup>592</sup> In a similar fashion, Tikhon Sal'nikov, a state peasant from Perm province, was confined at Spaso-Evfimiev as a schismatic for not returning to Orthodoxy and for urging other dissidents to do the same, but "*mostly* because he bothered the heir-tsarevitch for permission to serve the liturgy in his own Old Believer way with a petition from

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<sup>589</sup> Utkin's long list of crimes also included flight from military service, concealing his rank in order to become a monk, deviation from the Orthodox faith, disobedience to the established authorities, and wrongful interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. See Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 219.

<sup>590</sup> Nancy Shields Kollmann, "Concepts of Society and Social Identity in Early Modern Russia," in *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Russia and Ukraine*, eds. Samuel H. Baron and Nancy Shields Kollmann (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997), 44.

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>592</sup> RGIA f. 797, op. 22 (1852), d. 258, l. 1. The statement on his crime continues, "as well as for not fulfilling the responsibilities of his rank."

10,000 people who did not have this in mind.”<sup>593</sup> Unfortunately, the back-story here is unknown. Did Sal’nikov deceive 10,000 largely illiterate peasants into signing a petition they did not actually agree with and if so, what did they think they were signing? Or, more likely, did he bear the punishment for the petition himself by claiming this deception to the authorities? One wishes for greater detail.

There were varying degrees of disobedience to the authorities that also constituted political crime.<sup>594</sup> Some of these cases were quite specific. For example, Vasilii Ivanov Gegorgadze was sentenced because he played a “great part in the latest riot in Imeretii.”<sup>595</sup> By contrast, many crimes were defined simply as “disobedience” or “insubordination” to the authorities,<sup>596</sup> and other descriptions were more vague. Dmitrii Andreev Konstantinov, a court councillor entered the prison in 1827 at the age of 51. His crimes were many. He was sentenced “for various illegal deeds and a very disturbing disposition.” He was “inclined to slander, intrigues, and underhanded plotting of all kinds.” And so he was sent by command of the emperor under the recommendation of the Vladimir Provincial Governor to be kept under strict supervision “in order that he should be deprived of any opportunity to cause harm, to divulge harmful tricks, and to have a fatal influence over others.”<sup>597</sup>

For a time Konstantinov was denied access to paper, ink and quill but once he had prevailed upon the bishop to rectify this situation, he began a letter-writing

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<sup>593</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165, ll. 14-20. Emphasis mine.

<sup>594</sup> Daly, “Political Crime,” 70.

<sup>595</sup> Vasilii Ivanov Gegorgadze, see Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 221.

<sup>596</sup> Antiokh, see RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, v. 292 (1835), no. 1, l. 1.

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



campaign in an attempt to achieve his liberation.<sup>598</sup> He sent letters through Bishop Parfenii to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Count Benkendorf. Continually acknowledging his dependence and maintaining his innocence, Konstantinov appealed for the sake of his and his children's deteriorating fortunes. In spite of his skilful flattery, his petitions seemed to produce few results. However, after a regular report in 1835 in which he was described as being in his right mind and well behaved,<sup>599</sup> notice was finally sent from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Governor of Vladimir stating that it was the will of the emperor that Konstantinov be released from Spaso-Evfimiev and allowed to return to Ekaterinoslav or to Kherson province where he had family properties. The choice was left up to him, provided he turn from his plotting and slandering. On July 31, 1835, Bishop Parfenii notified the governor that Court Counsellor Konstantinov had been released and sent to Kherson Province to the town of Odessa after giving his word that he would "refrain from telling tales and denunciations."<sup>600</sup>

Like the violent crimes, over 50% of the state crimes were committed in combination with another category such as insanity or violence. By social group the perpetrators were 50% clerical, 20% noble, 20% peasant, and 10% military, but the reliability of these figures is limited since in reality, there were only fourteen prisoners confined at Spaso-Evfimiev for crimes that were aimed at the state authorities during the whole thirty years of Nicholas' reign. Within the broader

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<sup>598</sup> GAVO, f. 578, op. 1 (1829), d. 139, l. 1-8. Cf. GAVO, f. 578, op. 1 (1828), d. 135, l. 1-10.

<sup>599</sup> RGADA, f. 1203, op. 1, v. 292 (1835), no. 1, l. 1.

<sup>600</sup> GAVO, f. 578, op. 1 (1835), d. 155, l. 28.

context of confinement at Spaso-Evfimiev, these cases shed light on the particular practices involved in monastic incarceration, but without a wider sample, they reveal little about the nature of state crime in the period.

That said, in his examination of the incarceration of political caricaturists in nineteenth-century Europe, Robert Justin Goldstein has suggested that the content that was being censored provides a window into the “hopes and fears of ruling elites.” He cites a French legislator, who told his colleagues the following in 1880:

Drawings which displease the government are always forbidden. Those which have gained official favor are displayed in the windows of all the bookstores, are sold in all the kiosks. This provides a valuable indicator for the attentive observer, curious for precise information on the tastes, preferences, sentiments, hates and intentions of those who have control and care over our destinies. In studying refused drawings and authorized drawings, we know exactly what the government fears and what it encourages, we have a clear revelation of its intimate thoughts.<sup>601</sup>

On some level, perhaps the same could be said of the use of monastic incarceration by the state. The state locked up that which it feared. However, conclusions should be drawn with care. At least with regard to these minor cases, Nicholas was also inclined to show mercy on some occasions. N. Evreinov tells the story of Nicholas’s response to a church deacon who, not wanting to sing his part in the service (“Lord, have mercy”), cried out against the tsar saying, “Nicholas is not an emperor, but just a prince.” He was put on trial and sentenced to be whipped by the magistrate, but Nicholas pardoned him. In a similar episode, a drunken peasant entered a tavern, refused to remove his hat and stood there shouting and swearing. The owner told him to stop shouting. He pointed at a portrait of the emperor and said, “Don’t you see

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<sup>601</sup> Robert Justin Goldstein, “The Persecution and Jailing of Political Caricaturists in Nineteenth-century Europe (1815-1914),” *Media History* 9, no. 1 (2003): 41f.

whose portrait is hanging here?” According to Evreinov, after looking at the portrait, the peasant spat on the ground and cried, “I spit on you, yes and on [your] portrait too.” The court sentenced him to the knout and hard labour, but when Nicholas heard of it, he canceled the punishment, saying: “Instead of the punishment, tell the *muzhik* that I spit on him, too.”<sup>602</sup>

In his introduction to a volume on social control in early modern Europe, Pieter Spierenburg distinguishes between formal and informal kinds of social control, placing church discipline in between the two.<sup>603</sup> He suggests that in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, “the three main forms of control – state justice, church discipline, and community supervision – all operated together.”<sup>604</sup> He emphasizes the role of informal social control because of the importance of popular engagement with governing institutions in the process of working out the details.<sup>605</sup> Indeed, other contributions to the same collection demonstrate the alternative sources of social control that supplemented state justice in the early modern period and the fact that it was a choice to appeal to state justice rather than these other forms.<sup>606</sup>

In supplementing the state prison system, the Russian Orthodox monasteries provided the state with extra space for incarceration as well as the option of a lighter

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<sup>602</sup> N. Evreinov, *Istoriia telesnykh nakazanii v Rossii* (Moscow: Knigovek, 2010), 178.

<sup>603</sup> Pieter Spierenburg, “Social Control and History: An Introduction,” in *Social Control in Europe, Volume 1, 1500-1800*, eds. Herman Roodenburg and Pieter Spierenburg (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004), 14.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>606</sup> Martin Dinges, “The Uses of Justice as a Form of Social Control in Early Modern Europe,” in *Social Control in Europe, Volume 1, 1500-1800*, eds. Herman Roodenburg and Pieter Spierenburg (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004), 173.

sentence, at least as far as material existence was concerned. The prisoners lost their freedom either way. Whether or not these services to the state justify the “handmaid” label may be debated, but in this involvement in secular justice, the monasteries were used by the state for issues that had little to do with Eastern Orthodox teachings on penance, and one that resulted in extra burdens on their own financial and staffing resources.

Galeotti notes an important distinction in the Russian language. He writes: “The Russian language contains two very distinct words for crime: *prestupnost’*, which is defined as breaking the law, and *zlodeyanie*, which is instead based upon a moral judgement of immorality, such that, as the peasant proverb had it, ‘God punishes sins, and the state punishes guilt’.”<sup>607</sup> The relationship between these words as they were used in the context of monastic incarceration reveals the link between penance and punishment in imperial Russia. The Russian peasants may have understood a clear distinction between sin and crime, and perhaps even the members of the state would have agreed, but the practice was muddled. In sending violent and state criminals to be incarcerated in a monastery where religious commitments were required of the prisoners, the state adapted the church’s practice of penance to serve its own ends. Yet, even in serving the state by receiving these criminals into the prison facility on the monastery grounds, the Church continued to address the question of morality and sought to bring sinners to repentance. Indeed, the state itself was concerned with governing the morality of its subjects. For those within the

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<sup>607</sup> Galeotti, “World of the Lower Depths,” 91.

Orthodox fold, this was no conflict of interest. The shared values between church and state will be examined further in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5

### Cooperation between Church and State

In 1829, twelve reports were sent to the Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod regarding one of the inmates confined in the prison at Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery in Suzdal.<sup>608</sup> His name was listed as “unknown,” even though it was in fact on record, for his confinement was cloaked in secrecy. It might seem strange at 110 years of age that this man could evoke the kind of paranoia that surrounded his imprisonment, and yet as a founder of the skoptsy sect, a fringe group known for their castration rituals and ecstatic worship practices,<sup>609</sup> it was feared that exposure of his imprisonment would result in opposition from his fellow skoptsy as well as increased “seductive” activity among them. So, he remained the unnamed prisoner who was not permitted to have any interaction with outsiders so that he could not “have secret dealings with like-minded people and spread his false doctrines.”<sup>610</sup>

In most cases of public penance, the church and state authorities cooperated with each other in giving oversight to the incarceration of the so-called penitents. Where chapter three examined the cases of public penance that were primarily in the hands of the church authorities and chapter four dealt with the ones that were instigated by the state, this chapter will explore the various issues that brought the two together in a joint effort to address their shared concerns for public order. The

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<sup>608</sup> Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov (RGADA) f. 1203, op. 1, v. 286 (1829), no. 2, ll. 1-12.

<sup>609</sup> Laura Engelstein, *Castration and the Heavenly Kingdom: A Russian Folktale* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), xi.

<sup>610</sup> A.S. Prugavin, *V kazematakh. Ocherki i materialy po istorii russkikh tiurem. Shlissel'burg, Suzdal'skaia tiur'ma, Petropavlovskaiia krepost'. S risunkami* (St. Petersburg, 1909), 216f.

skoptsy leader was one of many prisoners who were confined because of their sectarian beliefs, but caring for the insane and confining violent criminals were also priorities that united the church and state authorities in this practice.

The application of public penance and especially its most severe variant – monastic incarceration – to the many varieties of religious crime that existed within the Russian Empire and the involvement of both the church and state authorities in that process demonstrate that, in many respects, the state and the Russian Orthodox Church shared common values and priorities. In this work of confinement, the network of monasteries across the Russian Empire was providing social services which were supported by the historical teachings and doctrines of the church, and which also served the purposes and priorities of the state. Heresy, blasphemy, and especially sectarianism were not merely church concerns. The state, too, saw these issues as dangerous to the social order and it participated in the corresponding punishments.

In addition to religious crime, the care of the insane was another application of monastic incarceration that involved both the church and state authorities. Prior to the development of the modern welfare state, the work of the monasteries in this practice served the common goals of both bodies. Indeed, in this period in which pluralism was by no means valued, heresy and insanity were closely linked.

Certain cases of violent crime also resulted in joint efforts to punish and reconcile the offenders. This chapter will demonstrate the extent to which the church and state cooperated with each other and held shared assumptions about the role the

church ought to play in disciplining crime and caring for the insane. In these respects, the Orthodox Church was integrated into the fabric of life within the Russian state.

### Religious Dissent

By far the most frequent reason to spend time at Spaso-Evfimiev was for some variety of religious crime, usually heresy or sectarianism. Nearly forty-four percent of the prisoners during this period were sentenced for crimes of this nature.<sup>611</sup> It was also one of the most diverse categories in terms of social status and age. Roughly 20% of these prisoners belonged to the military or navy, 28% were from the peasantry, and 35% were clerical.<sup>612</sup> Their ages ranged from twenty-eight to one hundred and one with little commonality in other factors, save a very few exceptions. For example, five of the soldiers who were sentenced for being skoptsy were privates in the 34<sup>th</sup> Eger'skii Regiment.<sup>613</sup> It is probable that both the military service and the monastic confinement were two parts of one sentence.<sup>614</sup> Laura Engelstein has demonstrated the efforts that the imperial government took to “remove the Skoptsy from circulation” by exiling them to remote areas,<sup>615</sup> sentencing them to military service,<sup>616</sup> and at times, confining them.

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<sup>611</sup> Forty of the ninety-one prisoners.

<sup>612</sup> The remaining 17% were townsmen, merchants, petty bourgeois, and state servitors.

<sup>613</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, v. 282 (1825), no. 34.

<sup>614</sup> Engelstein, *Castration and the Heavenly Kingdom*, 55.

<sup>615</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>616</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.



In their applications of public penance to the problem of religious dissent, the church and the state in the Nicolaevan era supported each other's efforts. When Sergei Uvarov created the triad that came to be known as "Official Nationality," (Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality) its components were applied in various ways. Alexei Miller has suggested that the Russian Orthodox Church was not even in Uvarov's original conception, which focused on "traditional" and "national" religion.<sup>617</sup> Robert Crews has demonstrated how "orthodoxy" (small "o") could also be applied in the new Muslim territories of the empire.<sup>618</sup> "Orthodoxy" was given different meanings for various times and places, but in the context of monastic confinement, there was no question about its reference to the Russian Orthodox Church. Public penance merged with incarceration in the case of many Old Believers as well as members of other sects. The testimony they have left in the archival record is compelling.

Fedor Solov'ev was a priest who was incarcerated for his deviation from Orthodoxy to the *raskol*. His overseers saw little hope of converting him, as he was "a fanatic devoted to the schism."<sup>619</sup> Solov'ev, however, was deeply distressed by his incarceration and he wrote to the Minister of the Interior expressing his unhappiness and petitioning for release. Pointing to his innocence and pleading for the sake of his family, Solov'ev's petition reveals the true suffering of those so-called penitents who were, in effect, prisoners of conscience. He wrote of his desire to live among the Old

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<sup>617</sup> Alexei Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research* (New York: CEU Press, 2008), 141.

<sup>618</sup> Robert Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 93.

<sup>619</sup> Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (RGIA) f. 797, op. 2 (1852), d. 258.

Believers in Rzhev, “not arbitrarily and not in secret, but respecting the Civil Government.”<sup>620</sup> He “tearfully begged” to be released from his wrongful imprisonment.<sup>621</sup>

Mikhail Timofeev was a dissident peasant confined for his belief. A careful reading of his story points to the complex intermingling of dissent against the church and against the autocrat. He was confined for his misinterpretation of the Revelation of St. John and he saw Peter the Great as the first Antichrist and Nicholas I as the last.<sup>622</sup> Timofeev was convinced of the truth of his belief in contrast to the Orthodox Church and compared his confinement with the persecution of the early Christians in the Roman Empire. In an interview with the monastery abbot he complained about the misguided efforts of the Orthodox clergy and then turned his attention to the state authorities. He argued:

... all those who take measures to turn us to the Christian faith are justly called tyrants. Keeping to an allegedly true Christian faith they try to turn us from the True Faith to their untrue one, if they cannot make us voluntarily stray from our religion, then they subject us, or are prepared to subject us to the same punishments that Nero and Domitian, in their hard and steadfast opposition to Christianity, subjected true believers to in former times. It is exactly the same with us, or I should say, directly, the supreme authorities do precisely the same thing with me by keeping me here in such confinement for a long time. In truth times of cruelty for us true Christians have begun or have returned – the times of Nero and Domitian, tormentors of humanity, the times of the Antichrist.<sup>623</sup>

Timofeev’s knowledge of Roman history suggests that he was no ordinary peasant, and the intensity of his rhetoric is striking. The analogy between the Orthodox tsar

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<sup>620</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 116 (1835), d. 956, l. 38f.

<sup>621</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 116 (1835), d. 956, l. 38f.

<sup>622</sup> Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Vladimirskoi oblasti (GAVO) f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165.

<sup>623</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165.

and the pagan emperor, who lit his garden by burning Christians as torches, must have stung.

These examples provide us with a glimpse of the spiritual and psychological violence of incarceration. They also demonstrate that the values shared by the church and the state frequently benefited the church as much as the state, at least in its own perceptions of the situation. The “dangers” of sectarian belief were limited by the “protection” afforded by the state. For those who were Orthodox, the church and the state worked together to provide social services and to protect the special status of the Orthodox Church. For those who lived outside this official sponsorship, the alignment of church and state had devastating consequences.

The historiography on sectarianism in Russia incorporates a great variety of interpretations. It was, in fact, during the period under investigation here that the Russian schism first became a topic of historical investigation. During Nicholas’s reign, the Ministry of Internal Affairs began to study the Old Belief and after his death, it became a topic for scholarly examination.<sup>624</sup> The church, too, took an interest.

Beginning in this period and continuing throughout the nineteenth century, the church authorities believed the schism to be the result of popular and clerical ignorance.<sup>625</sup> Gregory Freeze has examined the church’s efforts to re-Christianize the Russian countryside in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by

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<sup>624</sup> Michael Cherniavsky, “The Old Believers and the New Religion,” *Slavic Review* 25, no.1 (March 1966): 1.

<sup>625</sup> Roy R. Robson, *Old Believers in Modern Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995), 4 and Cherniavsky, 2.

improving the quality of religious education at the parish level.<sup>626</sup> He notes the struggles this entailed: the parish clergy themselves lacked the necessary training to serve as educators; censorship made the production of catechetical literature difficult; and the vast territory of the rural parishes, the seasonal nature of church attendance, and the limitations of time on the parish priests, who had to cultivate their own plots of land, made the extra task of educating parishioners a real challenge.<sup>627</sup> Some success was noted in the urban centres, but the countryside was less receptive to the efforts of the church hierarchy.<sup>628</sup>

The western historiography of the twentieth century broadened the scope of examination. Michael Cherniavsky argued that the real crime of the Old Believers was their rejection of the salvation offered by the state and their refusal to participate in the new order.<sup>629</sup> Irina Paert has suggested that the schism was an umbrella for the discontented.<sup>630</sup> By contrast, Georg Michels has argued that there was not a “coordinated mass movement against the seventeenth-century Russian Orthodox Church” but merely “disparate acts of popular disobedience and defiance.”<sup>631</sup> He saw

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<sup>626</sup> Gregory L. Freeze, “The Rechristianization of Russia: The Church and Popular Religion, 1750-1850,” *Studia Slavica Finlandensia* 6/7 (1990): 108.

<sup>627</sup> *Ibid.*, 112f.

<sup>628</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>629</sup> Cherniavsky, 36.

<sup>630</sup> Irina Paert, *Old Believers, Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760-1850* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003), 25.

<sup>631</sup> Georg Michels, *At War with the Church: Religious Dissent in Seventeenth-Century Russia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 223.

dissent in that period as primarily the work of “independent-minded individuals and social outcasts who acted for their own reasons.”<sup>632</sup>

While the nature of seventeenth-century dissent is beyond the scope of this examination, nevertheless at the very least these theories raise an interesting question regarding the confinement of dissidents in monastery prisons in the nineteenth century. Namely, to what extent was religious dissent a unifying identity among this group of prisoners? The archival record reveals a distinct lack of unity among this group, certainly with regard to the prisoners themselves, but also in how the local authorities categorized them. Among the forty prisoners confined at Spaso-Evfimiev for some variety of religious dissent, there were seven skoptsy, four peasants who were incarcerated for being seduced to the Jewish heresy otherwise known as the Saturday sect, three clerics who were specifically labeled as members of the Priestly Old Believer sect, and thirteen more individuals of varying ranks who were sentenced for some form of religious dissent. Among them were those who refused to take a military oath,<sup>633</sup> those who were suspected of receiving ordination to the priesthood by a false bishop from abroad,<sup>634</sup> another who petitioned the tsarevich “for permission to serve the liturgy in his own, Old Believer way,”<sup>635</sup> and others who

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<sup>632</sup> Michels, *At War with the Church*, 218.

<sup>633</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165. Ivan Poliakov.

<sup>634</sup> RGIA f. 797, op. 22 (1852), d. 258. Osip Markov.

<sup>635</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165. Tikhon Sal'nikov.

promoted the schism in a variety of ways.<sup>636</sup> Clearly, there was no unified identity conferred on these prisoners by their overseers.

The prisoners, too, seem to have understood their cases in specific ideological terms and did not identify with each other as fellow inmates who shared a sentence of incarceration for reasons of religious dissent. In practice, the very fact that prisoners held to divergent views meant that they could be used as tools in their own “treatment.” For example, prisoners of varying heretical opinions were sometimes placed in the same quarters in what appears to have been the vain hope that in arguing with each other they might see the error of their ways and return to the true church.<sup>637</sup>

Robert Crummey has discussed the variations in Nicholas’ approach to the Old Believers. Early edicts forbidding the construction of new Old Believer chapels were juxtaposed with others that prohibited searches of their homes for books and private religious services, thereby protecting them from “the arbitrary interference of local officials.”<sup>638</sup> Crummey writes that Nicholas’ government “more frequently exhibited inflexibility, insensitivity, and heavy-handed good intentions than malice or

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<sup>636</sup> Also Solov’ev (RGIA f. 797, op. 22 (1852), d. 258), Kochuev (Ibid.), Piletskii-Urbanovich (GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165), Lampad (Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 232), Dosifei (RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 292, no. 1), Bobretsov (RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 282, no. 34), Usanov (RGIA f. 797, op. 22 (1852), d. 258), Zanegin (Ibid.).

<sup>637</sup> Zyrianov, 99. See also the case of Rafail and Shvetsov in Spaso-Evfimiev (RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 293, no. 9). For further discussion on the treatment of prisoners see chapter 6.

<sup>638</sup> Robert O. Crummey, *The Old Believers and the World of Antichrist: The Vyg Community and the Russian State, 1694-1855* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 208.

deliberate cruelty.”<sup>639</sup> Yet, Old Believers and other sectarians were predominant among the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev and Solovki during his reign.

The case of Kondratii Selivanov is illustrative. He was in fact the mysterious unnamed skopets introduced at the beginning of this chapter. He spent the last twelve years of his very long life at Spaso-Evfimiev. Apart from his extraordinary age and the reason for his imprisonment, it was also recorded that he was of peasant origin and that his sentence to the monastery prison was ordered by royal command through a secret letter from the Minister of Internal Affairs, Count Viktor Pavlovich Kochubei.<sup>640</sup>

The monastery was ordered to keep him under guard and to submit monthly reports to the Synod regarding his health and behaviour. These monthly reports, as opposed to the semi-annual reports requested for most other prisoners, are indicative of the degree to which the authorities were concerned about the influence Selivanov wielded among the skoptsy. Indeed, Engelstein has described how his various punishments (beatings, exile to Siberia, and finally monastic incarceration) formed the core stories of the text that came to be known as *The Passion of Selivanov*. His followers agreed with his own self-assessment in considering him to be “the reemodiment of the original redeemer.”<sup>641</sup> He must have been quite a charismatic figure, for even twelve years after his death, the Ministry of Internal Affairs continued to follow up on his file. In 1844, the abbot of the monastery received a

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<sup>639</sup> Crummey, 207.

<sup>640</sup> Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 216.

<sup>641</sup> Engelstein, *Castration*, 32 and 41.

request for information regarding when Selivanov died, where he was buried, if there was a gravestone, if other skoptsy had visited him before his death, and if so how many and from where. They also wanted to know whether any had come to say prayers for the dead, where they were from, and if there were any rumours circulating after Selivanov's death.<sup>642</sup> Evidently the authorities were worried about popular canonization for even in death this man was perceived as a threat.

In many respects, Selivanov was obviously exceptional. Certainly, he was unusually long-lived. But the secrecy surrounding his confinement was not as unique as we might suppose. Nicholas' reign was notorious for the secrecy with which all matters of work were pursued.<sup>643</sup> This was no less true in the realm of monastic confinement so there was nothing terribly unusual about the correspondence between the Synod and the local governor, Ivan Manuilovich Kuruta, being marked top secret, as was the case with regard to the prisoner Selivanov.<sup>644</sup> For this label to be applied in the case of a peasant, however, and for a crime that was not directed against the state, was perhaps more noteworthy. The involvement of the state in the minute details of cases such as this one, points to both the concern and the responsibility that the state assumed with regard to religious deviance and the schism in particular.

Dissent and sectarian activity were not the only forms of religious crimes that led to monastic confinement. There were also nine prisoners who were confined for blasphemy and/or heretical interpretations of Orthodox doctrine. In addition there

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<sup>642</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 301 (1844), nos. 14, 15, and 19.

<sup>643</sup> W. Bruce Lincoln, *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 170.

<sup>644</sup> RGADA f. 103, op. 1, viaz. 286 (1829), no. 2, l. 1f.



were a few individuals who were incarcerated for exhibiting abnormal religious behaviour. For example, Aleksandr Chernyshev was removed from the priesthood allegedly by his own request and with the approval of the Synod, and was confined among the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev for exhibiting the behaviour of a holy fool.<sup>645</sup> The sheer variety of religious crimes is perhaps the most pronounced point to be made about this group of prisoners. Their effect on the social order led to state involvement.

### Caring for the Insane

Recent studies have shown the involvement of Orthodox monasteries in works of charity and community service.<sup>646</sup> Monasteries involved in administering public penance also extended this practice to incorporate the care of elderly clerics and the insane. Orthodox monasteries had a long history of caring for the insane and over a quarter of the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev were reported as such.<sup>647</sup> In this sense, monasteries were integrated into the social fabric of Russian life. Scott Kenworthy has argued that in Russia, “monasticism represents a unique bridge

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<sup>645</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1835), d. 155.

<sup>646</sup> Scott M. Kenworthy, “Russian Monasticism and Social Engagement: The Case of the Trinity-Sergius Lavra in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Philanthropy and Social Compassion in Eastern Orthodox Tradition: Papers of the Sophia Institute Academic Conference*, ed. Matthew J. Pereira (New York: Theotokos Press, 2010) <https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/catalog/ac%3A138594> accessed: June 23, 2014; William G. Wagner, “Paradoxes of Piety: The Nizhegorod Convent of the Exaltation of the Cross, 1807-1935,” in *Orthodox Russia: Belief and Practice Under the Tsars*, eds. Valerie Kivelson and Robert Greene (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2003), 211-238; Brenda Meehan, “Popular Piety, Local Initiative, and the Founding of Women’s Religious Communities in Russia, 1764-1907,” in *Seeking God: The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia*, ed. Stephen K. Batalden (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993), 83-105.

<sup>647</sup> Kenneth Steven Dix, “Madness in Russia, 1775-1864: Official Attitudes and Institutions for its Care” (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1977).

between the institutional church and the religion of the common people” because it “drew its constituents from all social classes.”<sup>648</sup> The care of the insane provided yet another connecting point between the monastery and the needs of the broader society.

The treatment of madness in Russia, as in Europe and America, underwent dramatic changes during the last decades of the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth. Michel Foucault’s work, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, tied the experience of madness in the modern period to “the new meanings assigned to poverty, the importance given to the obligation to work, and all the ethical values that are linked to labor.”<sup>649</sup> Foucault gave the astounding statistic that one out of every hundred inhabitants of the city of Paris was detained in the newly created houses of confinement of the seventeenth century.<sup>650</sup> In Britain, too, madness was tied to broader categories of deviance. Thus, Andrew Scull reported that mad people “were assimilated into the much larger, more amorphous class of the morally disreputable, the poor, and the impotent, a group which also included vagrants, minor criminals, and the physically handicapped.”<sup>651</sup>

By contrast, in the Russian context, social perceptions of madness were more sympathetic. Drawing on the growing number of books and journals that emerged in the nineteenth century on the history and practice of psychiatry, Kenneth Dix has

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<sup>648</sup> Scott Kenworthy, *The Heart of Russia: Trinity-Sergius, Monasticism, and Society after 1825* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 6.

<sup>649</sup> Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), 64.

<sup>650</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>651</sup> Andrew T. Scull, *Museums of Madness: The Social Organization of Insanity in Nineteenth-Century England* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1979), 13.

suggested that “probably no more than ten percent of those who were thought mad” were actually incarcerated.<sup>652</sup> This included both governmental and monastic institutions.

In popular opinion, the mad themselves were met with greater toleration here than elsewhere in Europe, but for those who made up the ten percent – those who were institutionalized – their lot evoked much pity. It was during this period that the poet Alexander Pushkin wrote a poem describing the lot of the madman. He deemed it worse than that of a beggar or a hungry labourer toiling away. He wrote,

But here’s the rub: if you go mad,  
They’ll fear you worse than any plague  
And lock you up at once  
Putting you on a chain – an idiot  
Whom they’ll come to mock  
As they would a captured beast  
Through its prison bars.<sup>653</sup>

Foucault argued that the separation of the mad from the other categories of deviance resulted from the complaints of other prisoners. Thus, he wrote, “The presence [in houses of confinement] of the mad appears as an injustice; but for others.” Over time, the broad categories of deviance that had been dealt with as one problem were sifted into new classifications. At the end of the eighteenth century in France, crime and madness came to “symbolize what may be necessary about [confinement]; they alone are what henceforth deserves to be confined.”<sup>654</sup> In Britain, the separation of the insane from other categories of social deviance was not

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<sup>652</sup> Dix, 2. Cf. Christine Worobec, *Possessed: Women, Witches, and Demons in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001).

<sup>653</sup> As translated by Max Hayward in Zhores A. Medvedev and Roy A. Medvedev, *A Question of Madness*, trans. Ellen de Kadt (London: Macmillan, 1971), 182.

<sup>654</sup> Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 228.

accomplished until the nineteenth century. Andrew Scull has argued that it was not until the end of the 1840s that “a network of publicly financed and state-run asylums assume[d] a dominant position in the institutional management of the mad.”<sup>655</sup> In Russia, too, the asylum came into its own during this period.

In the late eighteenth and well into the nineteenth century, the rise of the asylum as the standard way to cope with the “mad” throughout Europe and America raises the question of origin and influence. In his discussion of “The Discovery of the Asylum” in Jacksonian America, David Rothman has suggested that there was more of “a parallel discovery of the asylum among western nations” rather “than a heavy debt of one country to another.”<sup>656</sup> He writes, “These institutions were not some sort of fruit that, once propagated in one country, was reflexively transplanted to another. The American asylum was essentially homegrown, whatever the resemblance to European counterparts.”<sup>657</sup>

And so, too, the Russian story of madness has its own peculiarities and eccentricities. Russian insane asylums emerged on a similar timeline as on the rest of the continent. However, unlike the western European experience, the history of madness in imperial Russia reveals the enduring connection between Orthodox monasteries and those who existed outside the boundaries of what society labeled sane. In tracing the professionalization of psychiatry in the Russian Empire, Julie Brown has indicated that prior to the development of the first madhouses in the late

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<sup>655</sup> Scull, *Museums of Madness*, 50.

<sup>656</sup> David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction, 2008), xlv.

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.*, xlv.

eighteenth century, the insane were cared for primarily by the family and the church.<sup>658</sup> As early as the eleventh century some monasteries played a role in this care.<sup>659</sup> Likewise, Dix divides the perception and treatment of madness in Russia into three periods, the first of which was the period of “monasterial care” which he places between the eleventh century and 1775.<sup>660</sup> During the period from 1775 to 1864 from the introduction of the Boards of Public Welfare to the formation of the zemstvos, which he explores more fully, Dix argues that through government legislation, the insane were brought under the secular care of newly formed asylums and psychiatric hospitals. He calls this period “the point at which the mad suddenly became subjects for confinement.”<sup>661</sup> But the reality of monasterial care for the mad suggests that incarceration was par for the course long before the first madhouse opened in 1779.<sup>662</sup> Soviet psychiatrist T.I. Iudin wrote that “As late as 1719 monasteries still sought special permission to employ prison-like techniques for subduing the dangerously mad.”<sup>663</sup> Clearly, the insane did not “suddenly” become subjects of incarceration, though perhaps incarceration was not foremost in the common perception of monasterial care for the mad.

The persistence of monastic incarceration into the nineteenth century indicates that the relationship between madness and religious concerns, rhetoric, and

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<sup>658</sup> Julie Vail Brown, “The Professionalization of Russian Psychiatry, 1857-1911” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1981), 43.

<sup>659</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>660</sup> Dix, Introduction.

<sup>661</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>662</sup> Brown, 90 fn. 35.

<sup>663</sup> T.I. Iudin, *Ocherki istorii otechestvennoi psikhiatrii* (Moscow, 1951), 9. Cited in Dix, 24.

methods remained significant into the later period. Dix himself demonstrates the close and complicated relationship between the church and the state when it came to coping with madness. As early as 1722, legislation relieved the monasteries of the burden of caring for the insane.<sup>664</sup> But this was only on paper and not even there for long. By 1725 a decree reversed this policy and in 1727 “the Synod was admonished to cease referring to the 1722 ukaz as a pretext for keeping madmen out of monasteries.”<sup>665</sup> These debates continued to the end of the eighteenth century when secular asylums finally began to grow in number. But even then, the church remained involved in ministering to the patients. As late as 1862, the staff at All-Sufferers Hospital, the St. Petersburg madhouse, included an Orthodox priest, a sacristan [*d’iachok*], as well as a Lutheran pastor.<sup>666</sup> The spiritual edification of patients, though not a treatment as such, was encouraged in the secular institutions. The asylums that introduced projects and practices addressing the spiritual care of the inmates received positive reviews from the government.<sup>667</sup>

The connection between madness and crime also served to perpetuate the role of the monasteries in the care of the insane. Dix writes that “the law did not explicitly say that madness was grounds for exoneration although Russians had always exonerated ‘the possessed’ for their ‘crimes.’”<sup>668</sup> In the 1776 case of a man who slaughtered his wife at the dinner table in a fit of “oblivion and madness,” the courts

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<sup>664</sup> Dix, 30.

<sup>665</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>666</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>667</sup> *Ibid.*, 95f; 160.

<sup>668</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

decided that he was not responsible for his act and sent him to a monastery in Smolensk, since no suitable confinement was available in the state prisons.<sup>669</sup> The evidence suggests that this practice persisted well into the nineteenth century.

In Vladimir province, though an asylum – or “madhouse” – had been built there in 1819,<sup>670</sup> twenty-two percent of the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev during the Nicolaevan era were reported as insane, although this was not necessarily the sole reason for their incarceration.<sup>671</sup> Often their “insanity” was accompanied by violent behaviour, heresy, or “reprehensible deeds” of one sort or another. Eighty percent of these prisoners were from the clerical estate – and the majority were from the black clergy. While some were evidently aging clerics with no family to care for them, this was by no means the only reason to be categorized as insane and sent to a monastery prison, nor was it the dominant scenario. In fact, the majority of the insane prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev were less than forty years old.

Roy Porter, arguing for “a story from below”<sup>672</sup> has used the writings of “mad” patients themselves, to illuminate the experience of madness and the madness of asylums. While personal accounts written by prisoners from Russian monasteries are few and far between – and especially so in the case of “mad” ones, nevertheless the reports from the prison to the local bishop give us some access to the behaviour

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<sup>669</sup> Dix, 127.

<sup>670</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>671</sup> The treatment of madness in the monastery will be examined further in Chapter 6.

<sup>672</sup> Roy Porter, *A Social History of Madness: Stories of the Insane* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), 231.

and at times the perceptions of the mad prisoners themselves, limited though it may be.

One of the insane prisoners at Spaso Evfimiev was hieromonk Filaret of Novgorod diocese. In 1835, Serafim, Metropolitan of Novgorod and St. Petersburg wrote to the Synod to request the removal of the 68-year-old Filaret from the Kirillobelozerskii monastery.<sup>673</sup> Serafim noted that he was not in his right mind and his list of infractions included being rude to the abbot, doing unpleasant things, throwing his headgear on the ground, and running the horsecart sixty kilometres down the road away from the monastery. Apparently there was no way to calm him down. Filaret's earlier history, however, suggests that this may have been more than just the mischievous escapades of an aging monk.

After studying theology at the seminary in Tver, Filaret entered a monastery in 1793 and was tonsured at Moscow Stavropegial Semenov monastery in 1795. From there, he had a series of transfers to eleven different monasteries before he was finally installed in the hospital at Iur'ev Monastery where he was forbidden to perform religious rites because of his illness. In 1822, at the request of the abbot he was once again moved to the Iverskii monastery to be housed among those who were ill. The abbot was instructed not to let him serve at liturgy or any other service. Yet again this abbot saw no hope for correction and Filaret was moved to Kirillobelozerskii monastery where he lived among the ill. The abbot there was instructed not to let him out and not to give him paper and ink. In response to Serafim's letter, Filaret was moved again to Spaso-Evfimiev monastery in Suzdal,

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<sup>673</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 116 (1835), d. 598, l. 1.



where he was admitted among the other prisoners in 1836 on the charge of having “a deranged mind” and “in prevention of the harmful actions of which a person in his condition is capable.”<sup>674</sup>

In 1840, Archimandrite Lavrentii, the abbot of Spaso-Evfimiev monastery, reported to the Synod as follows:

At present he... is found in a downcast state. His intellectual abilities are not functioning properly. Namely, he does not sufficiently know himself, nor can he exactly recognize others. He is often vexed and complains about himself and about everything around him. Even in casual dealings with people, especially those who have an influence on him, he is extremely angry. Such a disorder in his spirit is probably caused by a physical disorder, and to be precise, from an illness which is revealing itself in his legs. But he is zealous toward the liturgy and strict with himself.<sup>675</sup>

It appears from this report, that Filaret’s illness was not limited to mental derangement, and Lavrentii seems to see a connection between the prisoner’s physical condition and his mental health. A final report was sent from the Vladimir Spiritual Consistory in 1846, noting that Filaret was still attending the liturgy. The author suggested that “as he is in his old age and in a sickly condition and temporarily insane, however without causing harm, that he is worthy of compassion in his genuine penitence” and should be sent to live among the monks at Nikolaevskii Babaevskii cenobitic monastery in Kostroma diocese.<sup>676</sup> Perhaps Filaret finally calmed down, or maybe the local authorities realized that a sympathetic report was more likely to get Filaret off their hands. Whatever the case may be, arrangements were made for one final transfer.

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<sup>674</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165, l. 15.

<sup>675</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165, l. 15.

<sup>676</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, v. 303 (1846), no. 22.

While Filaret's age may lead us to view him as one of the elderly clerics who were in need of care as they grew increasingly senile and difficult to deal with, his long history of transfers from one monastery to another suggests that there may be more to this example than meets the eye. Perhaps Filaret was just as given to trouble-making in his younger years. This would fit well with the situations of some of the other inmates who were there for reasons of insanity. It seems that a sentence of insanity or mental derangement was one way to cope with troublesome clergymen. On the other hand, Filaret's example also demonstrates that once a troublemaker had repented and assumed a more acceptable demeanour, restoration was possible. Nonconformity and subversion were unacceptable, but not incurable. The sentence could be rescinded for good behaviour.

The prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev who were labeled insane ranged from peasants to nobles and deacons to archpriests and hieromonks. Hieromonk Mel'khisedek, for example, was sent to Spaso-Evfimiev to be kept under "vigilant and strict supervision" because his state of mind was such that he could no longer perform the duties of his rank.<sup>677</sup> Some insane prisoners were ferried back and forth between the monastery and the local insane asylum.<sup>678</sup> The step between religious deviance and insanity could become easily muddled in the monastic context and there were times when the inspector at the local insane asylum released his patients

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<sup>677</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 111 (1830), d. 180.

<sup>678</sup> See the cases of Chernyshev, Ofer'ev and Vishniakov discussed in chapter 4, p. 36f.

back to the monastery because their behaviour had improved and there remained “only a delusion of the mind concerning the faith.”<sup>679</sup>

The cases where insanity or madness were merely one of the reasons for sentencing reveal both the vagaries of the practice of monastic incarceration, and the multiple ways that the label of madness could be manipulated to suit a variety of purposes. As in the 1766 case cited above, madness was sometimes linked to crimes of extreme violence. At Spaso-Evfimiev, the 54-year-old petty bourgeois, Ivan Mazur, was sentenced to confinement in 1810 for the rest of his life for “killing [zarezanie] his father-in-law in [a state of] madness.”<sup>680</sup> A deacon from Tver diocese, Fedor L’vov, was sentenced to be confined in the monastery indefinitely and to be subject to “vigilant supervision over his behaviour and his way of thinking.” The reason for his imprisonment was described by the bishop as follows: “for violence, insolence, unseemly actions in his family and a life of intoxication leading to insanity.”<sup>681</sup> Apparently, for Bishop Iustin, the details were incidental – the broad categories of violence and madness were sufficient reasons for confinement. There is also an assumption in cases like this one, that there was a strong link between the morality of the prisoner and his mental state. Madness was the result of bad behaviour rather than the cause.

The relationship between insanity and political dissent has a long history in Russia and elsewhere. Perhaps the most famous example during the imperial period

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<sup>679</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1835), d. 155.

<sup>680</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 292 (1835), no. 1.

<sup>681</sup> RGIA f. 797, op. 22 (1852), d. 258.

was Peter Chaadaev. When *The First Philosophical Letter* was published in 1836, Nicholas I himself labeled Chaadaev insane and political and medical surveillance ensued.<sup>682</sup> Likewise, at Spaso-Evfimiev, the “state criminal” Shakhovskoi was imprisoned “on account of the insanity of his mind.”<sup>683</sup> As noted in the preceding chapter, the truth was that he had participated in the Decembrist uprising and was sent to Spaso-Evfimiev from Siberia due to his failing health. He died within three months of his arrival. Due to the paucity of records (unusual in the case of a Decembrist, but probably due to his physical illness and early death) it is difficult to determine his actual state of mind. Perhaps insanity was a useful euphemism for reporting purposes, but given Shakhovskoi’s speedily declining health, it is also possible that he was suffering from deliria.

### Confining Violence

Vasilii Alekseev Zhukov represents yet another category of prisoner confined on the orders of both church and state authorities – those incarcerated for violent deeds. In 1810, at the age of thirty-six, the peasant Zhukov was sent to Spaso-Evfimiev for killing a three-month-old baby in a state of insanity.<sup>684</sup> Sent by decree of the Holy Synod under the recommendation of the Vladimir Provincial Government, Zhukov’s sentence was specifically labeled church penance. He was to be confined among the other prisoners without a prescribed time limit and to be kept

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<sup>682</sup> Raymond T. McNally, *The Major Works of Peter Chaadaev* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 8.

<sup>683</sup> Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 214.

<sup>684</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

under observation so that he could not cause harm to anyone else.<sup>685</sup> In 1825 it was reported that he was behaving meekly and was seldom crazy.<sup>686</sup> He died in prison in 1832.<sup>687</sup>

The excessive violence of the Russian past has been a common conception in popular notions of Russian history, but recent studies, using comparative methods, have suggested that through much of its history, Russian culture was no more violent than many of its European counterparts.<sup>688</sup> In questioning traditional interpretations of the violent impact of the Mongol period, Charles Halperin has examined four categories in Muscovite society – attitudes toward capital punishment and torture, levels of crime, treatment of peasants, and the persecution of religious dissenters – as a way to analyze “the level of violence in domestic Russian society.”<sup>689</sup> As a small part of the social control apparatus, monastic confinement was connected with each of these categories. The treatment of peasants and other prisoners will be examined further in Chapter Six. Here we find that in addition to the battle against sectarianism, monastic incarceration was also used in some cases of violent crime, a few of which were brutal and atrocious.

Like Zhukov, many of the prisoners who committed violent deeds could also be cross-listed with one of the other categories of crime. The people who were

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<sup>685</sup> Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 211.

<sup>686</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, v. 282 (1825), no. 34.

<sup>687</sup> Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 210.

<sup>688</sup> Charles J. Halperin “The Scourge of God: The Mongols and Violence in Russian History,” in *Times of Trouble: Violence in Russian Literature and Culture*, eds. Marcus C. Levitt and Tatyana Novikov (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 28.

<sup>689</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

incarcerated for religious dissent or heresy were noticeably absent from this category of violence; but every other category of prisoners in the monastery included some who had committed violent deeds. In age, they ranged from eighteen to fifty-eight. In social status, they were the most diverse group in the prison – 25% clerical, 25% military, 25% state service, 17% peasant, and 8% petty bourgeois.

The degree of violence ranged from the extreme to the marginal. Fedor Petrov was imprisoned for cutting off the head of his daughter who was less than ten months old,<sup>690</sup> and two others were also imprisoned for killing in anger.<sup>691</sup> There were those who had committed assault with intent to kill<sup>692</sup> and, as noted in chapter four, a couple of monks from a monastery in Little Wallachia who had committed violence against ethnic Russians.<sup>693</sup>

Often, a more general description of a violent way of life was the reason and most frequently this general violence was paired with drunkenness.<sup>694</sup> Both David Christian and Boris Segal have noted the extent to which alcohol consumption permeated Russian culture. Christian cites Y. Georg's account from the nineteenth century: "Amongst the people, all local affairs [*mirskiya dela*] are decided after taking vodka. There can be no hospitality without vodka, no weddings, no baptisms,

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<sup>690</sup> Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 217.

<sup>691</sup> Ivan Mazur (RGADA, f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 292 (1835), no. 1) and Vasilii Zhukov (Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 210f).

<sup>692</sup> Fedor Karpov (RGADA, f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 282, no. 34).

<sup>693</sup> Feodorti and Panteleimon (RGIA, f. 797, op. 22 (1852), d. 258).

<sup>694</sup> Fedor L'vov (RGIA, f. 797, op. 22 (1852), d. 258); Markhil' (RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 292, no. 1); Aleksei Navrotskii (Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 226); Matvei Semenov (Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 240); Aleksei Solov'ev (Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 212); Lev Strelkov (RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 292, no. 1).

no burials, no farewells. Without it, friendship is no longer friendship, happiness is no longer happiness...”<sup>695</sup>

But it was not only friendship and happiness that were associated with the consumption of alcohol. Along with an awareness of the centrality of vodka to many Russian customs, the reality of its relationship to a darker side of life was also accepted. In 1846, Doctor G.A. Blos’feld described the appearance of good grain vodka and then wrote, “When drunk by healthy individuals such vodka should have no unpleasant side-effects. There should be no giddiness or headaches, no excessive acidity in the stomach, and no sense of lassitude, depression, anger, or rage.”<sup>696</sup> The implication here was clear: these were common side-effects to bad vodka. More to the point, another author, writing at the turn of the twentieth century, stated,

Fights, wounds, maiming and killing are the inseparable companions of all holidays. The greater the saint, the merrier the holiday, the more human blood is shed. ...While they increase on holidays, drinking and crime gradually abate until Friday and begin to increase again come Saturday.<sup>697</sup>

While the relationship between alcohol and crime was commonly accepted, the data regarding these societal trends was notoriously unreliable.<sup>698</sup> At Spaso-Evfimiev, forty percent of the individuals incarcerated for reasons of violence were also condemned for their drunkenness.

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<sup>695</sup> David Christian, *Living Water: Vodka and Russian Society on the Eve of Emancipation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 5.

<sup>696</sup> As cited in Christian, *Living Water*, 2.

<sup>697</sup> As cited in Boris M. Segal, *Russian Drinking: Use and Abuse of Alcohol in Pre-Revolutionary Russia* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies, 1987), 158.

<sup>698</sup> Segal, 160. Yet it seems clear that the rates were no worse than those of Western Europe or America in the same period.

Given the wide variety of kinds of violence as well as the reasons for them, the utter absence of religious violence is a profound silence. Certainly it was not the case that religious violence was unheard-of in nineteenth-century Russia. Chris Chulos has argued that peasants turned to violence later in the century in their frustration over tensions with the clergy regarding such issues as liturgical error, immorality among the clergy, and denied requests to build new churches.<sup>699</sup> This corresponds with the work of Natalie Zemon Davis, who has demonstrated how popular religious violence in early modern France had three primary motives – the defence of true doctrine, ridding the community of the pollution which would provoke God’s wrath, and rendering justice in imitation of the magistrate.<sup>700</sup> Likewise, in the realm of peasant justice, Stephen Frank has argued that violence was often reserved for those who committed property crime and witchcraft, “and those who transgressed against village norms of everyday conduct.”<sup>701</sup>

Given that sectarianism and religious dissent were reasons to be incarcerated in a monastery, why were the violent sectarians and religious dissidents conspicuously absent? There is no simple and obvious answer to this question. Monastic confinement was a lesser punishment – lesser, for example, than being sentenced to jail or to exile to Siberia, which were the most common alternatives.

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<sup>699</sup> Chulos, *Converging Worlds*, 64. Cf. Heather J. Coleman, “Tales of Violence against Religious Dissidents in the Orthodox Village,” in *Sacred Stories: Religion and Spirituality in Modern Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 200-221 and Jeffrey Burds, *Peasant Dreams & Market Politics: Labor Migration and the Russian Village, 1861-1905* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), chapters 6 and 7.

<sup>700</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Rites of Violence,” in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (London: Duckworth, 1965), 156-162.

<sup>701</sup> Stephen P. Frank, *Crime, Cultural Conflict, and Justice in Rural Russia, 1856-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 245.



That being the case, it would seem that although religious dissidents and sectarians as well as those who committed violent crimes could sometimes be given the lesser punishment of monastic incarceration, perhaps those sectarians and religious dissidents who committed acts of violence were ineligible for this small mercy in the minds of the Russian authorities. There is inadequate evidence for drawing firm conclusions. According to S. S. Ostroumov, in the twenty years between 1827 and 1846, 445 people were exiled to Siberia for crimes against the faith. Another 1493 were exiled for blasphemy and 200 for emasculation.<sup>702</sup> Apart from sentences of murder and the obvious violence of castration, the statistical evidence regarding these exiles does not indicate which crimes included acts of violence. Perhaps future research will demonstrate that violent religious dissent was given the more serious punishment of exile. Whatever the case may be, violent religious dissidents were not housed in the prison at Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery.

In addition to the cooperation between the church and state authorities in assigning public penance to cases of religious crime, insanity, and certain violent crimes, there were other prisoners incarcerated for less specific or even unclear reasons. The reports on these prisoners always included some reason for confinement, but it was rather vague – “a debauched life”, “cruel” or “reprehensible deeds”, or “illegal activities.”<sup>703</sup> It is possible that some of these prisoners belong under a heading of sexual crime, which was a fairly common application of public

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<sup>702</sup> S. S. Ostroumov, *Prestupnost' i ee prichiny v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1980), 10.

<sup>703</sup> Nikolai Kireev (GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1845), d. 174), Nikita Fedorov Spichinskii (Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 217), Afanasii Semenov Lisevich (Ibid., 216), Iakov Moroshkin (RGIA, f. 797, op. 22 (1852), d. 258), Nikolai Kostromitin (RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, v. 282, no. 34), Vladimir Nikolaev Bantyskh-Kamenskii (Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 230).

penance across the empire, or maybe their “reprehensible deeds” belong in one of the other categories such as violence or heresy. But the simple fact is that the record is incomplete and we cannot know for certain.

Another four prisoners were incarcerated at Spaso-Evfimiev without any stated crime. At least three of these were comparatively young – a thirty-seven year-old hierodeacon,<sup>704</sup> a thirty-eight year-old provincial clerk,<sup>705</sup> and a twenty-seven year-old retired collegiate secretary.<sup>706</sup> The fourth was a monk who left few other personal details.<sup>707</sup> The collegiate secretary, Ivan Antonov, was sent under very secretive circumstances. He was to be kept under strict supervision in his own room among the prisoners in the monastery. His file was labeled “secret and highly important” and he was moved to Spaso-Evfimiev from a Moscow prison. He was accused of impudence but the details of his crime are unclear.<sup>708</sup>

The record of these four individuals is generally sparse, and consisted for the most part in their inclusion in one isolated report on the prisoners. They were noted as sane and their behaviour was “not bad.” They leave a puzzle behind them for it seems clear that they were not imprisoned for minor infractions. Two of them were

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<sup>704</sup> Vitalii (RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 282 (1825), no. 34).

<sup>705</sup> Semen Mashanov (RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 282 (1825), no. 34).

<sup>706</sup> Ivan Antonov (RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 292, no. 1; GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1835), d. 155; RGIA f. 796, op. 116 (1835), d. 18).

<sup>707</sup> Nikolai Ivanovskii (RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 303, no. 20).

<sup>708</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 116 (1835), d. 18.

there for over twenty-five years.<sup>709</sup> What sort of vague misdemeanour could have led to such lengthy internment?

Alexander Herzen, in his memoirs, recounted the story of a Dukhobor in Novgorod Province who was the head of the post drivers in Zaitsevo. On meeting Emperor Paul, who was passing through on his way to Moscow for his coronation, the old man failed to remove his hat (as was Dukhobor custom) and the emperor flew into a rage, sentencing him to penal servitude and ordering that the village be burned and the inhabitants sent to Siberia. A wise courtier delayed these orders and begged the emperor to reconsider once he was calmer. The order was rescinded and the ‘merciful’ tsar sent the old man to be incarcerated for life at Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery. According to Herzen, the old man “acquired the reputation of a saint” among the Dukhobors. The mythical quality of this story is evident in Herzen’s description of how he learned of the incident. He wrote, “I heard all this partly from the governor of Vladimir, I.E. Kuruta, partly from the post-drivers at Novgorod, and partly from a church-attendant in the Spaso-Yefimyevsky Monastery.”<sup>710</sup> It is difficult to say to what extent this story was true. It seems likely to be a mixture patched together from the realities of several different prisoners. Yet there is an element of randomness about this story that resonates with the tales told by the other prisoners and it suggests a possible answer for the kind of arbitrary infraction that

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<sup>709</sup> Semen Mashanov was sentenced in 1795 and Vitalii was sentenced in 1798. They were both still listed among the prisoners in 1825 (RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, v. 282 (1825), no. 34).

<sup>710</sup> Alexander Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts: The Memoirs of Alexander Herzen*, trans. Constance Garnett, ed. Dwight Macdonald (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 274.

could lead to an extended period of incarceration for the four remaining prisoners who left a scant record of their rather lengthy time at Spaso-Evfimiev.

The degree of mutual cooperation between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian State in assigning public penance as a form of punishment for crime points to the broader societal assumptions in imperial Russia regarding the nature of crime and punishment. The church and state worked together to regulate behaviour and to secure their respective spheres of authority since those spheres overlapped in the realm of discipline. A final chapter examining the material evidence regarding the treatment of these “penitents” will further illuminate the extent and limitations of the cooperation between these two bodies of authority.

## Chapter 6

### Complaints and Concerns in a Monastery Prison

In 1844, former hieromonk Evfimii, confined in the prisoners' section of Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery since 1833 on a charge of heresy, wrote to the Moscow Military Governor General, Prince Dmitri Vladimirovich Golitsyn, General of the Cavalry, to complain about the "insufficient upkeep" of the inmates in the monastery prison.<sup>711</sup> This complaint resulted in a full-scale investigation of the treatment of prisoners. Every cell was inspected, the food stores were examined and prisoners were interviewed. The Holy Synod was informed of the results of the inspection and special emphasis was placed on food provisions and the diet of the inmates at Spaso-Evfimiev.

During the Nicolaevan period the correspondence of the bishop of Vladimir was peppered with complaints and concerns regarding the daily functioning of the monastery prison at Suzdal Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery. Evfimii's complaint about the food sheds light on one aspect of the material history of monastic incarceration in imperial Russia, but his concern was only one small drop in the bucket of issues that arose in the day-to-day running of things. The goal of this chapter is to consider the material existence and the treatment of prisoners in the monastery in order to understand the impact of the practice of monastic incarceration on individual human lives.

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<sup>711</sup> Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (RGIA) f.796, op. 125 (1844), d. 682, l. 1.

## Historiography

There are two main bodies of scholarship that come together in the examination of daily life in a monastery prison. The first involves the material culture of nineteenth-century Russia. Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood have argued that people use goods “to constitute an intelligible universe...”<sup>712</sup> Clothing, as one example, has been used to demonstrate the way that “beliefs are ... ‘encapsulated in the form of things,’ especially unself-conscious, utilitarian objects.”<sup>713</sup> Amy Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, for example, have brought new meaning to the saying “the clothes make the man.” Emphasizing “the animatedness of clothes,” they have suggested that material objects such as clothing “constitute subjects through their power as material memories.”<sup>714</sup> They go on to demonstrate that clothes serve as “bearers of identity, ritual, and social memory, even as they confuse social categories.”<sup>715</sup> In the Russian historiography, the findings of material history have also included examinations on clothing, books, tools, and much more.<sup>716</sup> In an earlier

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<sup>712</sup> Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption* (New York: Penguin, 1981), 5.

<sup>713</sup> Linda Baumgarten, “Myths and Meanings of Clothing,” in *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 56.

<sup>714</sup> Amy Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2.

<sup>715</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>716</sup> Recent works include: Christine Ruane, *The Empire’s New Clothes: A History of the Russian Fashion Industry, 1700-1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Willard Sunderland, “Shop Signs, Monuments, Souvenirs: Views of the Empire in Everyday Life,” in *Picturing Russia: Explorations in Visual Culture*, eds. Valerie A. Kivelson and Joan Neuberger (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 104-108; Stephen Lovell, *Summerfolk: A History of the Dacha, 1710-2000* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Jeffrey Burds, *Peasant Dreams & Market Politics: Labor Migration and the Russian Village, 1861-1905* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998); Jill Oakes and Rick Riewe, *Spirit of Siberia: Traditional Native Life, Clothing, and Footwear* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1998).

period, Richard Hellie's tome, *The Economy and Material Culture of Russia, 1600-1725*, is a treasure store of information regarding the kinds of things that the people of Muscovy had at their disposal.<sup>717</sup>

The complaints registered with the bishop in Vladimir with regard to life at Spaso-Evfimiev contribute to our understanding of the material existence of nineteenth-century Russians. The cost of maintaining prisoners (including primarily clothing, bedding, food and firewood) was one issue of concern. But also among the records are requests for paper and quills, books, icons, and other things, too. By exploring the kinds of issues that were raised with regard to goods in the monastery prison, we will get a better sense of how incarceration was experienced by these prisoners.

The second field of scholarship that is foundational to this exploration is the recent outpouring of work considering questions of "lived religion"<sup>718</sup> and the daily life of religious experience, also labeled "quotidian Orthodoxy"<sup>719</sup> in the Russian Orthodox context. This work has turned our attention to the ways people practise religion in daily life and the meaning they derive from those practices. Particular

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<sup>717</sup> Richard Hellie, *The Economy and Material Culture of Russia, 1600-1725* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).

<sup>718</sup> David Hall, *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Leonard Primano, "Vernacular Religion and the Search for Method in Religious Folk Life," *Western Folklore* 54, no. 1 (1995), 37-56; Meredith McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Nancy Ammerman, *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Mary Jo Neitz, "Lived Religion: Signposts of Where We Have Been and Where We Can Go From Here," in *Religion, Spirituality, and Everyday Practice*, eds. Giordan Giuseppe and William H. H. Swatos, Jr. (New York: Springer, 2011), 45-55.

<sup>719</sup> Valerie A. Kivelson and Robert H. Greene, *Orthodox Russia: Belief and Practice Under the Tsars* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

emphasis has been placed on narration and how people use stories to make sense of their experiences.<sup>720</sup>

In bringing the material history of these incarcerated individuals together with questions of “lived religion,” this chapter will further illuminate how public penance was practised in imperial Russia. The exchanges between the various people involved in these stories demonstrate the degree to which both authority and practice were constantly being negotiated. The most mundane of goods could be invested with multiple meanings and the very presence of goods in the monastery gave prisoners the means to exert their own agency.

The complaints and concerns raised in the correspondence of the bishop of Vladimir as they related to Suzdal Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery provide insight into many aspects of life in a monastery prison. The following will examine the material and physical well-being of the prisoners incarcerated there. Beginning with questions of material existence, the cost of maintaining prisoners and the facilities set apart for this purpose will be discussed, followed by an examination of the material improvements undertaken on behalf of the prisoners. The material belongings allotted to the prisoners and the food they ate will also be considered.

The chapter will then turn to questions of physical and mental well-being and the treatment of prisoners. This latter section will explore four different aspects of this treatment. The first part, looking at methods of deprivation, will deal with the loss of freedom, the denial of means of communication with the outside world and deprivations with regard to food, cleanliness and material goods. Secondly, the

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<sup>720</sup> Mark D. Steinberg and Heather J. Coleman, *Sacred Stories: Religion and Spirituality in Modern Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).



treatment of prisoners for physical and mental illnesses will be examined. The third part will discuss the ways of leaving a monastery prison that were available to the prisoners. This included release, transfer, escape and death. And a final section will consider the expectations on prisoners with respect to religious activities and some conclusions will be drawn with regard to the goals of incarceration in light of the practices involved in confinement.

### Material Goods

The care and up-keep of prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev was an on-going issue of concern throughout the Nicolaevan era. It was a discussion that involved the monastery abbot, the prison guards (a military detachment), the local governor, treasury, and bishop, the Holy Synod, and with varying degrees of freedom, the prisoners themselves and sometimes their families. The documents examined here reveal the multitude of issues that were addressed concerning the material well-being and comfort of the prisoners. At various points throughout the Nicolaevan era, the care of prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev was debated by the authorities.

Starting in 1826, the prisoners' quarters at Spaso-Evfimiev consisted of a converted monastery residence and the inmates lived in cells that were formerly inhabited by monks.<sup>721</sup> The cells were approximately 17.5 m<sup>2</sup> (5.13m x 3.42m).<sup>722</sup> While prisoners did at times share cells, many (and perhaps most) of them occupied a room of their own. Most cells had a barred window and the minimum furniture

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<sup>721</sup> S. Gordeyev, *The St. Euthymius Monastery of our Saviour* (St. Petersburg, 2001), 1-3.

<sup>722</sup> As a point of comparison, present-day Canadian prisoners in single-occupancy cells live in a space that ranges from 6.5 to 7 m<sup>2</sup>.

included a small table and bench in addition to the bed. In 1844, the Governor of Vladimir wrote of the prisoners, “each of them has a separate spacious and bright room, equipped with a bed, desk, chair, cabinet, or shelves.”<sup>723</sup> The cells were padlocked and their freedom was very restricted but in other respects the lifestyle was not unlike that of the monks who inhabited other sections of the monastery.<sup>724</sup>

The extra burden the monasteries bore in providing for the upkeep of prisoners was noted earlier, but the details of that burden provide insight into the material existence of life in a monastery prison. In 1830 a list was compiled with the details regarding the cost of housing one prisoner for a year.<sup>725</sup> The list was as follows:

Table 6.1. Costs of housing one prisoner

Item	Russian	Amount required	Price (if given)	Cost
Rye flour for bread and kvas	<i>rzhanoi muki na khleb i kvas</i>	16 <i>puds</i> <sup>726</sup>	1 rub. 50 ko.	24 rub.
Buckwheat	<i>krup grechnevykh</i>	4 <i>chetvertka</i> <sup>727</sup>	2 rub.	8 rub.
Vegetable oil	<i>masla postnogo</i>	1 <i>pud</i>		10 rub.
Butter	<i>masla korov'iago</i>	20 <i>funts</i> <sup>728</sup>		9 rub.
Beef	<i>goviadiny</i>	half a <i>funt</i> per day for 170 days =	4 rub. 80 ko. per pud	10 rub. 20 ko.

<sup>723</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 125 (1844), d. 682, l. 8.

<sup>724</sup> These quarters are standing to this day and have been converted into a museum of the prison. Half of it is presented as a representation of the prison in the imperial period and the other half as a representation of the prison in the Soviet period.

<sup>725</sup> Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov (RGADA) f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 287 (1830), no. 20, l. ll. 1-2. This list was probably compiled by the monastery abbot.

<sup>726</sup> 1 pud = 40 lbs

<sup>727</sup> 1 chetvertinka = 0.25 litre

<sup>728</sup> 1 funt = 1 lb

		<i>2 puds 5 funts</i>		
Dried fish	<i>sniatkov</i>	6 funts	50 ko.	3 rub.
Salt	<i>sol</i>	20 funts		1 rub. 10 ko.
Cabbage	<i>kapusta</i>	8 vedro <sup>729</sup>		2 rub. 40 ko.
Onions and potatoes	<i>luku i kartofeliu</i>	4 chetvertka 3 vedro		6 rub. 50 ko.
Linen for 3 shirts	<i>kholsta na 3 rubakhi</i>	20 arshin <sup>730</sup>	40 ko.	8 rub.
Linen for 3 pants	<i>kholsta na 3 portki</i>	11 arshin	30 ko.	3 rub. 30 ko.
Linen for 2 towels ? [utiral'nika]	<i>kholsta na 2 utiral'nika</i>	4 arshin	40 ko.	1 rub. 60 ko.
Linen for 2 mattresses	<i>kholsta na 2 tiufiaka</i>	20 arshin	25 ko.	5 rub.
Linen for 2 pillow-cases	<i>kholsta na 2 navolochki podush</i>	5 arshin	30 ko.	1 rub. 50 ko.
Linen for 2 bed-sheets	<i>kholsta na 2 prostyni</i>	15 arshin	30 ko.	4 rub. 50 ko.
A laundress to sew all the linens	<i>Prachke za shite vsevo bel'ia</i>			3 rub.
A laundress to wash the linens every two weeks	<i>Prachke za myti bel'ia chrez dve nedeli</i>			12 rub.
Hay in pillow and straw mattress	<i>Seno v podushku i solomyv tiufiak</i>			5 rub.
Summer blanket of "coarse motley cotton fabric [pestriadi]	<i>na odeialo letnee pestriadi</i>	8 arshin	50 ko.	4 rub.
Canvas lining	<i>na odeialo pod klad. Kholsta</i>	9 arshin	20 ko.	1 rub. 80 ko.
Winter blanket of simple broadcloth	<i>zimnee sukna prostogo</i>	8 arshin		8 rub.
Dressing gown of coarse motley cotton fabric	<i>na khalat pestriadi</i>	12 arshin	50 ko.	6 rub.
For the sewing of the dressing gown and blankets	<i>Za shite khalata i odeialy</i>			2 rub.
Shoes with back [or backcloth – c zadnikami]	<i>Tufli s zadnikami</i>			3 rub.
Valenki (a kind of felt boots) for winter	<i>Valenki sherstiany na zimu</i>			1 rub. 50 ko.
Woolen stockings	<i>Chulki sherstiany</i>			1 rub. 50 ko.

<sup>729</sup> bucket

<sup>730</sup> yard

Cotton stockings	<i>Chulki nitiany</i>			2 rub.
Subtotal:				144 rub. 40 ko.
Sheepskin coat for three years	<i>Tulup ovchinnoi na tri goda</i>			24 rub.
Total:				168 rub. 40 ko.

It seems safe to suppose that these figures were high estimates. After all, it is unlikely that all of these items were renewed year by year. Many of them must have been one-time costs per prisoner and things like beds, bedsheets, pillows, and pillowcases may even have been passed on when a prisoner was released.

In addition to these costs for clothing, bedding, and food, the statement also noted the amount of wood needed for firewood for a year. It included 3 sazhen<sup>731</sup> for the stove in each room, 4 sazhen for the two stoves in the church, 20 for the kitchen stove and 6 for heating the dining room, for a total of 33 sazhen of wood. Six puds of oil were also needed for lighting purposes. Finally, a list of items necessary for the preparation and serving of food was included, although their prices were not noted. Presumably these were items that the monastery had to have regardless of whether or not it was housing prisoners. This list consisted of a table, bench, cauldron, and (earthenware) pot, cast-iron oven fork, [...], axes, and steel knives, tubs [*chanov* and *ushatov*], barrel, bucket, [...], small and large ladles, bread bowl and table bowl, wooden spoons and plates, linen for tablecloths and dishtowels.<sup>732</sup>

These were the material goods needed for housing prisoners in the monastery as prescribed by the abbot. Getting a sense of the actual goods found in the prison

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<sup>731</sup> A sazhen equals 1.78 metres.

<sup>732</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 287 (1830), no. 20, l. 2.

cells is much more difficult since the sources are sparse. We do know that the kinds of material comforts available to the prisoners varied greatly according to personal wealth, behaviour, and other issues.<sup>733</sup> Lists of belongings were recorded in only a few cases. Many prisoners served their time and then left the monastery and those who died in the monastery most probably had little that was worth recording – much like the monks themselves. However, there were a few instances at Spaso-Evfimiev where an inventory was taken of the belongings of a prisoner who had died while in custody or who was being prepared for release or transfer.

The first case was that of the Decembrist Feodor Shakhovskoi who was ill when he arrived at Spaso-Evfimiev in 1829 and died in prison shortly thereafter. As a member of the elite and a political prisoner, Shakhovskoi was provided with a “decent room far removed from the other prisoners.”<sup>734</sup> The list of material goods that followed him from Siberia was extensive.<sup>735</sup> It came in six trunks full of all the comforts that civilization had to offer. Where the standard provisions for other prisoners included two towels, he had upwards of eighteen. Similar comparisons could be made for bed linens, indoor and outdoor clothing, and footwear as well. In addition, Shakhovskoi also had access to many things that were beyond the imagination of most prisoners. His bathing accoutrements included hairbrushes, toothbrushes, shaving gear, nail clippers, a mirror in a tortoiseshell frame, silver buckles, gold chains, crystal glasses, silver trays and much more. He had boxes of

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<sup>733</sup> For example those who could read often had access to books.

<sup>734</sup> Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Vladimirskoi oblasti (GAVO) f. 578, op. 1 (1829), d. 137, l. 1.

<sup>735</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1829), d. 137, ll. 10-12.

linens and clothing of various fabrics and colours, and a box of fifty-eight foreign books as well as many more Russian ones including Pushkin's poems, a New Testament, and books on flour and bread making. He had his own silverware, a guitar, scissors, pocketknives, a silver watch, pens, pencils and "a toothpick in a silver casing." Besides these belongings, he had left many dishes, cookware, and riding gear in Krasnoyarsk to be sold.<sup>736</sup> Additional clothing, towels, and blankets were left in storage.<sup>737</sup>

The other lists of prisoner's belongings involved two detainees who were about to leave the monastery. It is unclear why a list of belongings was recorded in these cases and not in so many others. Perhaps they were among the few who had belongings of their own as opposed to the material goods provided by the local treasury. In both cases the list is quite simple in comparison with the nobleman's possessions listed above. As discussed above, Stefan Markhil had been deprived of his clerical rank and imprisoned in Spaso-Evfimiev because of his failure to perform his priestly duties, his drunken life and violent deeds.<sup>738</sup> In 1835 he was handed over to the Suzdal Town Governor, Nikiforov, who was to send him on to Vladimir and from there to Vologda province for resettlement.<sup>739</sup> His list of belongings included clothing (a worn uncovered sheepskin coat, two cassocks of varying styles, a sweater, a pair of trousers, leather boots, woollen stockings, a pair of linen pants and two linen shirts, and a black sheepskin hat with long ears), books (including the New

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<sup>736</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1829), d. 137, l. 12.

<sup>737</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>738</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, v. 292 (1835), no. 1, l. 1.

<sup>739</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1835), d. 155, ll. 43 and 45.

Testament), bedding (two pillows with pillowcases and one second-hand checked white bedspread), and money (9 rubles 75 kopeks).<sup>740</sup> Another prisoner, Aleksandr Chernyshev, was released from Spaso-Evfimiev and sent to the home for the insane also in 1835.<sup>741</sup> His belongings were very similar to those of Markhil with the exception of books.<sup>742</sup> Chernyshev did not have any books in 1835, although later in 1846 he was listed as one who had books for reading and writing.<sup>743</sup>

In the British context, Amanda Vickery has noted the limitations of probate inventories as sources for social history. She wrote,

Social meaning cannot be read off the bare fact of ownership. Probate inventories offer little or no insight into motives for acquisition. They record property at death and thus say nothing of the nature of property-holding throughout the life-cycle, or of the material and social function of the goods acquired.<sup>744</sup>

The same could be said of the goods listed here, except that in the context of incarceration, the mere presence of these items does illuminate our understanding of the material comforts available to the prisoners. The social meaning derived from these items is still ambiguous, but the fact of ownership is significant in itself because of the restrictions on the freedom of the owners.

Apart from lists of items such as those discussed here, the archival record has also left evidence of the correspondence between the bishop of Vladimir and the

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<sup>740</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1835), d. 155, l. 46.

<sup>741</sup> He was returned to Spaso-Evfimiev shortly thereafter.

<sup>742</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1835), d. 155, l. 54.

<sup>743</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 303 (1846), no. 20, l. 1.

<sup>744</sup> Amanda Vickery, "Women and the World of Goods: A Lancashire Consumer and Her Possessions," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1993), 276.

Synod with regard to the upkeep of prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev. For example, under the direction of the Synod Over Procurator Count Nikolai Protasov, in 1843, a letter was sent to the abbot, Archimandrite Ioakim, with orders for improvements in the upkeep of prisoners.<sup>745</sup> Apparently information had been received by Count Protasov suggesting that the provisions for prisoners were inadequate. It is unclear how this information had reached him. As evidenced at the beginning of this chapter, it was possible for prisoners themselves to voice complaints about their upkeep, their treatment or even their imprisonment, so the complaint may have begun at Spaso-Evfimiev.<sup>746</sup> It is also possible that a visitor to the monastery disapproved of what he or she observed or even that Protasov was just following up on a rumour.<sup>747</sup> No doubt a simple inquiry directed to the overseer of the prison seemed like the best way to sort out the question of provisions, whether the source was a first-hand witness or a third-hand rumour.

The abbot's response to this inquiry revealed that there was in fact some need for adjustments in the arrangements for the care of prisoners. On 26 May 1843, he wrote that the "order was established in former years" and he recognized the necessity of addressing the question of upkeep again.<sup>748</sup> Of the thirteen inmates living in the prisoners' quarters at Spaso-Evfimiev at that time, varying amounts of money

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<sup>745</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, v. 300 (1843), no. 16, l. 1.

<sup>746</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 125 (1844), d. 682, l. 1.

<sup>747</sup> As noted earlier, Alexander Herzen's story of the Dukhobor sent to Spaso-Evfimiev by the Emperor Paul for not removing his hat and the explanation Herzen gave as to how he himself learned of it is evidence of how these stories were gathered. Alexander Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts: The Memoirs of Alexander Herzen*, trans. Constance Garnett, ed. Dwight Macdonald (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 274.

<sup>748</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, v. 300 (1843), no. 16, l. 2.



were received from the treasury for their upkeep. Unfortunately, Ioakim does not reveal which prisoner received which amount. The money ranged from 14 rubles 50 kopecks to 36 rubles, although there was one prisoner who received no upkeep from the treasury. Two prisoners brought in 36 rubles, three brought in 16 rubles 80 kopeks, and the remaining seven brought in 14 rubles 50 kopeks.<sup>749</sup> It is clear that prisoners of a higher social standing had a better prison life than did those of a lower position, but it is unlikely that this is the reason for the varying amounts from the treasury. Quite the contrary, as noted above, prisoners and their family members could supplement their upkeep and the higher amounts from the treasury were more likely to be for the prisoners who had no ability to provide for themselves.<sup>750</sup>

In this letter addressing the maintenance of prisoners, specific instructions were given regarding the changes that should be made in the on-going upkeep of the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev. The response to the Synod from Archimandrite Ioakim suggests that in spite of those instructions, the abbot of the monastery, as the head of the prisoner's section, had a great deal of freedom to determine what was appropriate in the day-to-day care of prisoners. In this instance, he agreed that the standards were from an earlier age and that prisoners should be permitted to bathe every week rather than every second week, and that changes of linen should also be doubled. These changes were justified by a linking of cleanliness with order. Ioakim thought that if

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<sup>749</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 300 (1843), no. 16, l. 2.

<sup>750</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 121 (1840), d. 1306, ll. 4-7.

prisoners were clean and kept in tidy rooms, then they themselves would not be “slovenly.”<sup>751</sup>

By contrast, when it came to the food, Ioakim demonstrated his independence. He explained that the prisoners were already well-fed and there was no need to increase their meat portions. He defended this position on three grounds. He argued first that the prisoners already received adequate amounts of meat and that it was always fresh and of good quality. Secondly, he pointed out that the prisoners themselves expressed satisfaction about their food. And finally, he noted that in addition to their regular food portions, the prisoners frequently received tea and sugar as well.<sup>752</sup> Ioakim’s confidence to disagree with the orders sent from the Synod suggests that he had a sense of freedom to manage the prison as he saw fit.

One other link in the care of prisoners that came out in this exchange of letters was the connection between the behaviour and “reform” of prisoners and their treatment. While Ioakim suggested that greater equality in the treatment of prisoners on holidays would be best for the sake of prisoner morale, he nevertheless maintained that in general, prisoners who were correcting their vices and living modestly before the others were more deserving of improvements in their upkeep.<sup>753</sup>

A similar string of letters was exchanged in 1850 when the Synod sought to gain a clearer picture of the situation at Spaso-Evfimiev by enlisting the help of Count Aleksei Orlov, the head of the infamous Third Section. He assigned

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<sup>751</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 300 (1843), no. 16, l. 2.

<sup>752</sup> Ibid.

<sup>753</sup> Ibid.

Lieutenant Colonel Despot-Zenovich to investigate and submit a report.<sup>754</sup> Despot-Zenovich was critical of the management of the prison and some of his criticisms reflected on the material culture of the prisoners and their experience of incarceration at Spaso-Evfimiev. His criticisms, however, were not with regard to a lack of comfort on the part of the prisoners, but rather he argued that the hand overseeing them had been too free. Three points in particular were raised. The first one involved the prisoners' access to cash. Despot-Zenovich pointed out the large amounts of cash that the prisoners had on their persons. He gave examples from among the prisoners: Solov'ev had 100 rubles, Timofeev had 350 rubles and Dosifei had 100 rubles. The abbot of the monastery explained that upon their arrival, the prisoners were permitted to keep whatever monies they had about them.<sup>755</sup>

In response to this criticism, the bishop sided with the Synod investigator. He noted the freedom with which prisoners could make use of their money “on the outside” and “especially with regard to the military guard” overseeing their confinement. He instructed the abbot to keep a book of accounts and to dole out the money to prisoners in smaller amounts as they had need of it. In defence of the abbot, however, Bishop Iustin also noted that there were no specific instructions with regard to cash in the 1766 orders.<sup>756</sup>

The second issue raised by Despot-Zenovich involved the sewing of garments. He accused the abbot of allowing the prisoners to sew priestly clothing and

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<sup>754</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 131 (1850), d. 1485, ll. 17-24.

<sup>755</sup> Ibid.

<sup>756</sup> Ibid.

he argued that defrocked priests were wearing priestly garments.<sup>757</sup> To this, the abbot explained that defrocked priests and monks had always sewn a simple robe, not priestly garments and they had no clothes other than a cassock. As a sidenote, the contrast between the aforementioned list of costs for housing prisoners and the reality of prison life is illuminated by this exchange. In the chart above, money was required for a seamstress to sew the clothing and bed linens. Evidently, in actuality, the prisoners themselves were performing this task.

The other point that Despot-Zenovich raised with regard to the material culture in the prison involved the presence of icons in the cells. Demonstrating his concern over religious dissent, he made the accusation that the prisoners had been permitted to triple the number of icons in their cells and thereby to make a kind of chapel with an iconostasis. To this accusation, the abbot replied that no one had a chapel in his cell. Only the dissident tradesman Kruglounov had placed a few icons together, but according to Ioakim, this was done “in a decent manner.”<sup>758</sup>

### Food Consumption

As evidenced here, the bishop’s correspondence with the Synod included negotiations with regard to the material conditions of the inmates. One other aspect of their material comfort that was particularly pronounced in this correspondence involved concerns related to food in the Suzdal monastery prison. It has already been

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<sup>757</sup> In similar fashion, he claimed that heretical inmates were not being called by their real surnames, but rather were going by the names of Father Fedor, Father Feodosii, Father Dosifei and so on, thereby affirming their heresy. RGIA f. 796, op. 131 (1850), d. 1485, ll. 17-24.

<sup>758</sup> Ibid.

noted that the abbot disagreed with Synod instructions in 1843 regarding food provisions for the prisoners, but that was only one of many interactions on the topic of food.<sup>759</sup>

The literature on food and culture has flourished in the last twenty years and a wide variety of approaches have been taken to explore “how... the universal need for food bind[s] individuals and groups together” as Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik have put it.<sup>760</sup> In the Russian context, most recently, Alison Smith has explored the relationship between agriculture and cuisine, and the ways in which authority over these fields was changing during the nineteenth century.<sup>761</sup> Emphasizing the tensions between the role of tradition and the influence of western culture, she has demonstrated how various figures sought to abrogate authority over production and consumption “with varying degrees of success.”<sup>762</sup>

The question in this context is how did the consumption of food and authority over food provisions play out in the monastic context and what do they tell us about daily life in a monastery prison and even the monastery at large? Evfimii’s complaint, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, is a prime example of how food was a source of dissent in the monastery prison at Spaso-Evfimiev. The issues raised in the bishop’s correspondence reveal some of the key areas of concern, and

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<sup>759</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 300 (1843), no. 16, l. 2.

<sup>760</sup> Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, “Introduction to the Second Edition,” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, Second Edition, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (New York: Routledge, 2008), 9.

<sup>761</sup> Alison K. Smith, *Recipes for Russia: Food and Nationhood Under the Tsars* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008), 7.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

perhaps the regular kinds of complaints and power struggles that would arise in the daily running of the prison and to some extent issues of daily life in the monastery. The management of the dietary regime within the monastery prison also reveals the degree to which the prison was (or was not) an integrated part of the monastery. Food filled a contested space in which prisoners, guards, and authorities interacted and negotiated the conditions of prison life.

As perhaps the most basic and fundamental of human needs, food is a wonderful access point to the material conditions of daily life in a monastery prison. Particularly in an Orthodox setting where it was tied to the rhythms of feasting and fasting, and in a largely agrarian society where it followed the yearly cycles of sowing and reaping, the consumption of food and the regulation of that consumption among people who had been deprived of their own personal freedom provide a lens through which we can analyze a variety of issues that existed in this monastery prison. These issues include the health and well-being of prisoners, protests, class distinctions and so on. So, what were the prisoners eating?

In May 1844, Archbishop Parfenii reported to the Ober-Procurator of the Synod on the condition of the inmates at Spaso-Evfimiev.<sup>763</sup> The reason for this report was the aforementioned complaint of the prisoner Evfimii. Contained within this report was a meal schedule providing details on what the prisoners were given for meals and when.<sup>764</sup> The schedule followed the Church calendar, dividing the year into three categories – the time for eating meat, all fasts except Lent, and finally,

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<sup>763</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 125 (1844), d. 682, l. 2.

<sup>764</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

Lent. For each of these periods, specific meals were designated for Sundays and holidays and other meals were designated for regular days.

During the time for eating meat, separate menus were indicated for monks and others who did not eat meat, and for those who did. For the first category, sturgeon and other fish provided the main source of protein on festival days. On regular days during this period the meal consisted of *shchi* (cabbage soup) and buckwheat *kasha*. On Sundays, a cold course of fish was added and on holidays, fresh fish soup replaced the *kasha* and a final course of hot potatoes was added. For meat-eaters during the time for eating meat, beef replaced the sturgeon as the main protein but in all other ways the menu was very similar. Potatoes remained an additional course on holidays. During the fasts one menu applied to everyone. On regular days the meal remained the same (*shchi* and *kasha*) except the *shchi* was made without meat or fish. On Sundays a cold course of sturgeon or other fish was added. During Lent the cold course of fish was replaced by potato soup. In terms of quantity, the meat course was specified at a pound per person except during the fasts when the Sunday fish course was designated at a half pound per person. Additionally, in a separate report from the governor of Vladimir to the Holy Synod, the governor noted that on holidays the prisoners were given tea and sugar when finances permitted.<sup>765</sup>

In order to evaluate the food provisions for prisoners, it is necessary to consider how their food consumption compared with others at that time. While the menu differentiated between those who ate meat and those who did not, it is unclear

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<sup>765</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 125 (1844), d. 682, l. 8.

to what extent the prisoners ate differently from the brothers in the monastery. In the same report from Parfenii to the Ober-Procurator, the archbishop states that the prisoners' meals were prepared by one of the guards and that they were "generally better than that which the brothers of the monastery received."<sup>766</sup>

Additionally, the prisoners' menu relates to the broader trends of food consumption in nineteenth-century Russia in two important ways. First, the staples of the menu were traditional Russian fare, regulated by the church calendar. Cabbage was the main soup ingredient, fish the main source of protein during fasts, and meat was relatively rare.<sup>767</sup> Smith and Christian have suggested that the church's regular cycle of fasts and festivals acted as a constraint on the dietary calendar but in all actuality it did so in a way that reinforced the natural constraints of the seasonal changes. They write, "This is clearest in the case of the long spring fasts of Lent, and Peter and Paul, which coincided with periods when supplies of food were running low for most households and abstinence was necessary anyway."<sup>768</sup> These patterns are consistent with the schedule of meals in the monastery prison.

The second way that the prisoner's consumption relates to broader nineteenth-century trends is in the addition of products that were new to Russia during this period. As in many parts of Europe, the potato arrived in Russia during the eighteenth century but did not become common fare until the late nineteenth century. Before the 1840s only small amounts of potatoes were grown in Russia and

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<sup>766</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 125 (1844), d. 682, l. 2.

<sup>767</sup> R.E.F. Smith and David Christian, *Bread and Salt: A Social and Economic History of Food and Drink in Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 262 and 266.

<sup>768</sup> *Ibid.*, 336.



most of them were concentrated in the western provinces.<sup>769</sup> The government issued decrees during the 1840s to force state peasants to plant a certain amount of potatoes, inspiring riots as a result. Smith and Christian note that “religious superstition probably played some role, particularly where there were Old Believers who saw the potato as the ‘devil’s apple’.”<sup>770</sup> By 1843 the government had moved from enforcement to persuasion and the cultivation of potatoes spread rapidly throughout the country.<sup>771</sup> The monastery menu from 1844, as well as an earlier version in 1830,<sup>772</sup> confirm the hesitancy with which it was accepted into the bill of fare, making its entrée initially as a part of the festive diet of holidays. In similar fashion, the tea and sugar that the inmates received, on special occasions and as finances permitted, was also a nineteenth-century addition to the Russian table.<sup>773</sup>

Before turning to the other food-related documents, the question must be asked to what extent this menu can be understood as an accurate representation of what the prisoners actually ate. It seems certain that the menu was prescriptive instead of descriptive, especially when we consider that it is almost an exact replica of an earlier 1830 menu.<sup>774</sup> To what extent this menu was followed is difficult to say; however, the dearth of complaints about quantity and quality of food (with the exception of Evfimii’s) along with the comprehensive investigation that followed the

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<sup>769</sup> Smith and Christian, 279.

<sup>770</sup> *Ibid.*, 282f.

<sup>771</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>772</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 287 (1830), no. 21, ll. 1-2.

<sup>773</sup> Smith and Christian, 356.

<sup>774</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 287 (1830), no. 21, ll. 1-2.

one complaint that was submitted, suggests that some level of care was taken to provide adequate nourishment for the prisoners, at least during the period under discussion here. Additional reports on the health of individual inmates and the regular efforts of the authorities to evaluate the overall upkeep of prisoners further support this conclusion. Also, during the investigation that resulted from Evfimii's complaint, each prisoner was visited in his room and Parfenii reports specifically that not one of them complained or demanded better conditions.<sup>775</sup> That said, the possibility of a pound of meat per person per day seems highly unrealistic. Indeed, in a later report on the condition of inmates, the governor noted that each one received a half a pound per day.<sup>776</sup> Whatever the case may be, it is clear that there was some degree of variation from the reported menu.

While further complaints about the general quality of the food provided are virtually non-existent during this period, reports on specific incidents suggest that the quality was at times an issue of significant concern. On the evening of 26 January 1832, archimandrite Parfenii received a regular report from the petty-officer on duty, Ivan Stepanov, stating that in general everything was fine. But the following morning Stepanov reported that during the night more than ten people (both prisoners and guards) became sick. They started by vomiting more than once and ended by feeling dizzy with a loss of appetite. Ivan Stepanov linked the illness to the *shchi* made with meat that had been eaten earlier that evening.<sup>777</sup> Parfenii passed this

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<sup>775</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 125 (1844), d. 682, l. 2.

<sup>776</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>777</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1832), d. 148, l. 1.

information on to the governor of Vladimir and then reported on February 2 that everything was back to normal in the prison and everyone was feeling well again.<sup>778</sup>

Great pains were taken to confirm this event – the reports were accompanied by signed statements from the guards attesting to the veracity of the incident. Also an investigation was made to discover whether the food poisoning had been accidental or intentional and to find the remaining spoiled food and to make certain there was no additional spoilage in the food stores.<sup>779</sup> Moreover, Parfenii requested that the established procedure be adjusted so that in the case of a similar incident, he would be informed without the delay of several hours that had accompanied this event.<sup>780</sup>

This story raises several issues that require further consideration. The first point to be made is in regard to the health and well-being of the prisoners. What was their quality of life and to what extent did it matter? It seems clear from the correspondence that the physical and mental, not to mention spiritual condition of the prisoners was a significant focus of the bishop's work with regard to the monastery prison. Indeed, both the bishop and the governor took pains to be informed of the quality of provisions and the health and lifestyle of the prisoners. This is evidenced in the examples presented here, where prompt and detailed instructions were given in response to specific incidents. But it is also clear in the regular reports they submitted to each other and at times to the Synod regarding the health and behaviour

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<sup>778</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1832), d. 148, l. 6.

<sup>779</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 289 (1832), no. 15, l. 1.

<sup>780</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1832), d. 148, ll. 6f.

of individual prisoners. Explicit directions were often given, not just in regard to food, but also about clothing, access to reading and writing materials, and so on. While it is difficult to say to what extent these conclusions apply in other times and places, it seems evident that in this time and place both the bishop and the governor were concerned about the well-being of the prisoners under their charge.

The second issue that arises in this correspondence is that of class distinctions. The fact that the prisoners and the guards were eating the same food and therefore suffering from food poisoning together might suggest the leveling of status within the monastery context; however, as we have already noted, this was often not the case. In an 1844 letter, the governor discussed the treatment of prisoners of a higher estate.<sup>781</sup> Arguing for better food and clothing for those from the civil [*grazhdanskogo*] and clerical estates, he reasoned that the denial of their usual comforts would be added punishment, whereas those from a lower estate would not even recognize these deprivations. Perhaps taking the opportunity to increase his own authority in this situation, he suggested that since the confinement of people from the higher estates was relatively rare, that requests for special treatment on their behalf should be fulfilled at the discretion of the local governor. While it is difficult to tell how frequently these special privileges were invoked, concrete examples do exist. As noted above, based on the list of belongings that Shakhovskoi brought with him from Siberia, it is safe to say that he was not without his creature comforts.<sup>782</sup>

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<sup>781</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 125 (1844), d. 682, l. 8.

<sup>782</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1829), d. 137, ll. 10-16.

The final issue that arises from these documents is the use of food as an instrument of protest. In the example of the food poisoning incident, Archimandrite Parfenii came to the conclusion that the episode had been accidental and not intentional. However, the fact that he was concerned to find out one way or the other, suggests that intentional food poisoning was not beyond the scope of the possible in Parfenii's own perception. Indeed, two years earlier, the same guard, petty-officer Stepanov, complained to Parfenii regarding an incident with the prisoner Aleksei Solov'ev. Apparently, after eating the buckwheat kasha that he had been given in a wooden cup, he then proceeded to defecate in the cup and return it to Stepanov with an oath.<sup>783</sup> Unfortunately, there is no further correspondence regarding repercussions. It is unlikely that Solov'ev was making a statement about the food so much as just making a statement of protest in general. Elsewhere, in a behavioural report to the Holy Synod he was described as being in his right mind but impudent, violent, and with corrupt morals and manners.<sup>784</sup> By contrast, the rest of the prisoners were described as being in their right minds and behaving themselves well, or meekly. However, while we do not know for certain if Solov'ev was commenting on the food per se or protesting against a specific grievance, or just making a general statement about his life as a prisoner, the fact remains that whatever the case may be, he was using his mealtime and its accoutrements to make his complaint known.

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<sup>783</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 287 (1830), no. 10, l. 1.

<sup>784</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 282 (1825), no. 34, l. 1.

In thinking about daily life within the monastery and especially within the monastery prison, and the role of food therein, I would like to suggest two main conclusions. First, while it is true that the Synod issued instructions regarding the care of prisoners, and while the menu was shaped by broader nineteenth-century food trends and by the feasting and fasting rhythms of the Orthodox calendar, when it came to working out the details of food provision and dealing with the specific issues that could arise in relation to food in the monastery prison, the realm of consumption was primarily a local concern under local authorities. Reports were still made to the Synod, but it was the governor and the bishop who investigated complaints. And it was they who developed systems of reporting to deal with various incidents. This means that when it came to questions of efficiency and fairness, the prisoners were at the mercy of the local authorities. At Spaso-Evfimiev, under archimandrite Parfenii, complaints and concerns were dealt with quickly and thoroughly. This may not have been the case in other monasteries.

Secondly, the realm of food was contested space in the monastery prison. For the authorities food could be used to administer both perks and punishments. For the prisoners it provided the opportunity for protest. Of course, some forms of protest were more productive than others. Evfimii's complaint resulted in a detailed investigation into the treatment of the prisoners. Not only were the food stores examined, but each cell too. Every prisoner was visited as a result of this one complaint and the authorities clearly invested energy in the consideration of the overall condition of prison life at Spaso-Evfimiev. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether Solov'iev accomplished anything with his form of protest, and if he did it

was probably not anything to be welcomed. But nevertheless he was making himself heard – even if only to the guard on duty. Clearly food provided opportunities for engagement between prisoners and guards and local authorities. It provided space for negotiation and gave voice to the complaints and concerns of individuals who were otherwise restrained.

### Deprivations

Thus far, this chapter has examined the material conditions of life in the prison at Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery. The rest of the chapter will consider other aspects of the treatment of prisoners including deprivations, treatment for illnesses, various ways of leaving the prison, and the religious expectations on the prisoners. It will be shown that the treatment of prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev involved deprivations, poor medical care, and a low possibility of ever returning to a normal life in one's home town, whatever and wherever that may have been. Yet in spite of these burdens and the general hopelessness of this situation, it was still a more desirable punishment than being sent to a state prison. Existence in the prison at Spaso-Evfimiev had much in common with monastic living.

The first point to be made about the physical treatment of prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev is in regard to the difficulties that were a regular part of life there. Deprivation was the primary disciplinary measure taken against the inmates at Spaso-Evfimiev and it came in a variety of forms. The loss of personal freedom must certainly be considered the first and perhaps greatest deprivation imposed on these prisoners. Though in material matters they lived much like monks, still it must be

emphasized that the monks chose such a lifestyle whereas the prisoners had it forced upon them. In some periods this loss of freedom appears to have been even more severe, although it is difficult to determine the extent to which the tools of incarceration such as fetters were used in the monastery at this time.

In 1854, the Governor of Eastern Siberia wrote to the Holy Synod to request permission to remove the prisoners' fetters during the time of confession and the Eucharist.<sup>785</sup> It is not difficult to imagine the apparent contradictions involved in offering a man forgiveness when he remained bound in shackles for the very sins he was confessing. The irony must have been bitter. But this request appears to concern only the convicts in the state prison system. No reference was made to monasteries or the practice of penance. Even at Spaso-Evfimiev, where the practice of penance was more like incarceration, it is unclear if fetters were a tool used in the transportation of prisoners only, or if they were a more permanent measure of discipline. The material evidence from the monastery proves that fetters were indeed used there,<sup>786</sup> but the documents that remain provide no indication of how they were used. Nevertheless, it is clear that loss of freedom was the primary disciplinary measure at work, and loss of movement was certainly an option to be applied by the guards as they saw fit.

A second deprivation came in the form of the denial of means of communication with the outside world. This deprivation also sheds light on the corresponding privilege of having the freedom to correspond with those outside the

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<sup>785</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 136 (1855), d. 1671, l. 1.

<sup>786</sup> The museum exhibit in the prison at Spaso-Evfimiev in 2010 included a display of fetters and shackles from the imperial period, but it is difficult to ascertain the frequency with which they were used or the changes to such practices over time.



monastery. Since the prisoners included a significant number of clergymen and also a number of Old Believers, it was not uncommon to find literate inmates among the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev.<sup>787</sup> Paper, quill and ink were among the material goods available to the prisoners. But having access to writing materials also meant that prisoners could petition the authorities. In general, it seems that they were permitted to do so; however, there were times when this privilege could be revoked as a measure of discipline. Hieromonk Apollon, for example, was sent to Spaso-Evfimiev in 1825 due to “the derangement of his mind.” The instructions accompanying his sentence included “removing [him] from any communication with outside individuals.”<sup>788</sup>

In similar fashion, the prisoner Malov was confined in 1853 for “insubordination to the authorities.” Originally sentenced to confinement in the prison at Spaso-Evfimiev for one year, his behaviour during that year resulted in the prolongation of his sentence. In addition to his “acts of violence and insubordination to the authorities,” he wrote weekly papers (presumably dissident in nature), absented himself from the monastery without authorization, and “led the monks, novices and state servants in insubordination to the monastery authorities.” Instructions were sent to keep him under strict guard so that he would not be writing petitions. But

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<sup>787</sup> Jeffrey Brookes has shown that literacy among Russian peasants increased after the great reforms and that the military also became a vehicle of increased literacy after the Nicolaevan era. Cf. Jeffrey Brookes, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2003), 19. But prior to the sweeping changes of the second half of the nineteenth century, it was primarily the nobility and the clergy who had higher rates of literacy. The presence of a greater number of clergymen in the prison at Spaso-Evfimiev thus accounts for the degree to which petitioning was possible. It should also be noted, however, that it was possible for illiterate prisoners to have letters written on their behalf.

<sup>788</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, v. 282 (1825), no. 34, l. 1.

according to the authorities, Malov was not the least bit repentant. Quite the opposite, he sought out any opportunity to “enter into relationship with other prisoners and in every way possible he tries to dispose them toward violence and not obedience.”<sup>789</sup>

These examples demonstrate that the privilege of communicating was at times denied the prisoners, usually as a result of behavioural issues. The case of Malov also suggests that the padlocks on the cells may have been viewed with some degree of flexibility by the authorities. It seems some prisoners had greater freedom of movement than others, and more opportunities to engage in conversation with the other inhabitants of the monastery.

The case of Nikolai Kireev raises several points of interest, not the least of which is the issue of prisoner petitions. His file will be considered further with regard to family petitions as well as the question of escape from the monastery prison and so it is worthwhile to tell his tale in some detail. This navy lieutenant was sentenced to monastic confinement because of his “debauched life.”<sup>790</sup> Wandering “from city to city,” he spent his time at the local pubs, was frequently blasphemous, and expressed hatred towards his brothers to the point that their families were afraid.<sup>791</sup> Originally confined in Kazanskaia Sedmiozernaia Bogoroditskaia Hermitage, his behaviour there “was so destructive, drunken, and personally offensive to the abbot” that he was transferred to a civil prison in Kazan.<sup>792</sup> In 1844, he appealed to the authorities to be returned to a monastery. His modest behaviour in prison was noted; however, the

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<sup>789</sup> RGIA f. 797, op. 22 (1852), d. 258, l. 1.

<sup>790</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1845), d. 174, l. 1.

<sup>791</sup> Ibid.

<sup>792</sup> Ibid., 2.

Vice Governor of Kazan suggested that this was only because of his sobriety and therefore he recommended that he be removed to a monastery “in a different province away from the city so that he could not get easy access to wine.”<sup>793</sup> He was sent to Valaam.

Kireev’s behaviour at Valaam was consistently troublesome. On Christmas Day he ran away from the monastery and when he was found in the forest he refused to return until two days later.<sup>794</sup> He was disruptive, violent, he tempted others, was abusive to the abbot in front of the monks and visitors to the monastery and in general he could not be controlled or calmed.<sup>795</sup> He stole, threatened to kill, insulted the monastic rank, “screamed in the church and the refectory, and during the evening service gave a beating to two monks.”<sup>796</sup> The abbot had him locked in a cell and called for a detachment of cossacks to guard him until orders could be received from the Synod. However, for unknown reasons, the abbot was unable to keep this guard and had to resort to using a couple of workers and a novice from the monastery to watch over the cell. The night of April 12, 1845, Kireev went missing. The window frame in his cell was found to have been removed and a rope tied to the bench he slept on had given him the means to slip down from his second-story cell into the court yard below. On May 7, he was caught in the city of Serdobol’ and returned to the monastery. The abbot requested his removal on the grounds that he did not have

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<sup>793</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1845), d. 174, l. 2.

<sup>794</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>795</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>796</sup> *Ibid.*

sufficient guard at Valaam, and finally Kireev was transferred to Spaso-Evfimiev since “it is clear that they have better means to supervise him.”<sup>797</sup>

In December 1845, Kireev himself wrote a petition to the abbot of Spaso-Evfimiev, Father Ioakim. His petition reveals the workings of a clever and scheming mind. Protesting his treatment after having been transferred to Spaso-Evfimiev under the strict supervision of two gendarmes, “as if I were the greatest state criminal,” he declared his innocence, claiming that he “was serving the tsar blamelessly.”<sup>798</sup> He then went on the offensive, accusing the treasurer and the abbot of Valaam Monastery of sacrilegious deeds. He claimed to have information about a heinous crime planned against “the precious life and health of the August Monarch,” and begged to have an audience with the St. Petersburg police.<sup>799</sup>

In the meantime, his brothers Aleksandr and Mikhail were also writing letters to the bishop, providing funds for Nikolai’s upkeep, but also requesting that every effort be made to persuade him to change his ways.<sup>800</sup> They also expressed misgivings about rendering him financial assistance.<sup>801</sup> Finally, in December 1846, though he was behaving more modestly himself, he was still stirring up trouble among the other prisoners. The abbot was commanded by the Vladimir Spiritual

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<sup>797</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1845), d. 174, l. 5.

<sup>798</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 ob.

<sup>799</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>800</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>801</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

Consistory to guard him more heavily and to see to his complete separation from the other prisoners.<sup>802</sup>

With regard to the loss of communication as a potential deprivation, Kireev's story suggests that, in general, prisoners had a high degree of freedom in their communications with each other and with the authorities, and they had the means to correspond with the outside world. But, when those privileges were used in a way that caused distress to the authorities, they were simply removed. Isolation was an easy disciplinary measure to apply in the monastery. The other cases noted here, as well as those of Court Councillor Konstantinov<sup>803</sup> and former hieromonk Filaret,<sup>804</sup> both of whom were denied access to means of communication upon their very entrance to the monastery prison, demonstrate that in some instances the very sentences could include this deprivation. If a person had a history of petitioning in a fashion that was deemed inappropriate, then a sentence to incarceration at Spaso-Evfimiev could include the denial of access to paper and quill.

Books were another means of accessing the outside world. But in contrast with letter-writing materials, there is no evidence to suggest that prisoners were at times deprived of the right to read. Quite the contrary, efforts were made to provide the prisoners with a library of books and encouragement was given in this direction.<sup>805</sup> In spite of these efforts, it appears that reading was not a very common pastime among the inmates. In 1846, for example, only two out of fifteen prisoners

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<sup>802</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1845), d. 174, l. 18.

<sup>803</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1828), d. 135, l. 8.

<sup>804</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 116 (1835), d. 598, l. 1ff.

<sup>805</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 125 (1844), d. 682, l. 8.

were reported as having books for reading in their cells.<sup>806</sup> Probably many of the prisoners were illiterate and there were also instances where the poor eyesight of a prisoner was noted as an explanation for why he did no reading.<sup>807</sup> Of course, the books accessible to the inmates through the monastery library would have been well-censored in order that they might serve in the “correction” of heresy, so this apparent freedom should also be understood in very limited terms. In fact, it reflected the measures of deprivation that were central to the disciplinary goals of the prison.

Limits on freedom and on communication were the main deprivations applied as disciplinary measures, but they were not the only ones. The evidence from other monasteries suggests that diets were at times restricted. The peasant Mikhail Nikitin was sentenced to penance at Borovskii Pafnut’evskii Monastery in Kaluga diocese where he was to be fed a “dry diet.”<sup>808</sup> At Solovki, access to the *bania* (the Russian bath, much like a sauna), was restricted and severely so during the pilgrimage season. Prisoners were moved surreptitiously to the bath in the middle of the night once a week so that their presence would not disturb the visitors to the monastery.<sup>809</sup> Clearly, deprivations were central to the experience of life in a monastery prison and to some extent to the practice of penance itself.

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<sup>806</sup> The peasant Kodrat Fedorov and Aleksandr Chernyshev. RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 303 (1846), no. 20, l. 1.

<sup>807</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 136 (1855), d. 708, l. 11.

<sup>808</sup> RGADA f. 1198, op. 2 (1825), d. 4498, l. 2.

<sup>809</sup> Pavel Nikolaevich Zyrianov, *Russkie monastyri i monashestvo v XIX i nachale XX veka* (Moscow: Verbum-M, 2002), 99.

## Health and Illness

Another aspect of the physical well-being of prisoners is found in the care and treatment of illnesses. There were very few instances of physical illness or medical treatment for physical illness that were recorded in the bishop's correspondence. In the above examination of food-related incidents in the monastery prison, a case of food poisoning was described in which many of the prisoners and their guards were violently ill. In that situation the illness was not reported with haste nor were medical experts in attendance. In essence, the approach to this illness was to wait it out and see what transpired.

The case of the Decembrist Shakhovskoi, who was sent to Spaso-Evfimiev from Siberia because of his failing health, provides an additional example of recorded illness in the prison facility. In his situation, his wife was granted permission to care for him and she had full access to provide for his needs in the monastery prison.<sup>810</sup> As was the case with regard to his material comforts, it appears that his social status also accorded him greater access to medical care.

Apart from these two instances, the only insights we can glean with regard to the physical health of the prisoners comes from the semi-annual reports on the health and behaviour of the inmates sent from the bishop to the Holy Synod. These reports occasionally referred to the failing health of an inmate or more specifically to a particular ailment such as the aforementioned case of Filaret and the illness “...revealing itself in his legs...”<sup>811</sup> Other than these brief glimpses of illness, the

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<sup>810</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1829), d. 137, l. 1.

<sup>811</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165, l. 15.

absence of records of treatment and especially of the presence of medical experts in the prison marks a profound silence in the bishop's correspondence. Given the attention that was paid to the care and upkeep of prisoners, the costs involved in their maintenance, and the other issues that arose in the day-to-day running of the prison, it seems unlikely that medical services would have gone unrecorded. It appears, then, that medical care for the prisoners was not a priority. Yet, as will be seen below, it was not that prisoners never got ill, for many died before the conclusion of their sentences.

In contrast to the problem of physical illness, the issue of madness was an ongoing point of concern and one that made use of outside expertise. Given the historical relationship between madness and Russian Orthodox monasteries, it is not surprising that the care of mental illnesses in the monastery prison at Suzdal Spaso-Evfimiev was a priority. The experience of those who were being treated for madness reveals the methods and priorities embraced by those in authority over them. In the cases of madness where no additional crime existed (be it some form of violence or political dissent), the goal of incarceration was not to punish the madmen indefinitely, but rather to contain them until their health was restored. This was clear in their sentences where it was stated that they should be kept among the prisoners in the monastery "until recovery."<sup>812</sup> This was unique to this category of prisoner because they were the only ones who were not being punished in addition to being "corrected." This is an important distinction to note because it sheds light on the

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<sup>812</sup> See for example the entries for Varsonofii, Apollon, Vasil'iev, Bedrinskii, Stoianov, and Stepanov in A. S. Prugavin, *V kazematakh. Ocherki i materialy po istorii russkikh tiurem. Shlissel'burg, Suzdal'skaia tiur'ma, Petropavlovskaia krepost'. S risunkami* (St. Petersburg, 1909), 213-230.



overarching goals of incarceration in this context. Madmen at least had the possibility of being released upon recovery. The infrequency of this result speaks to the common perceptions of madness in this period and perhaps even to the harsh conditions of life in a monastery prison, but the fact remains that the recovery and release of the madmen did exist in the conceptual framework held by the authorities. By contrast, when a heretic repented of his heresy, he still had to serve out his sentence.<sup>813</sup> This suggests that reform or correction was not the only purpose of incarceration for most prisoners. In addition to the goal of correction, prisoners were also being punished. Madmen were the exceptions to this scenario. The practice of incarcerating madmen varied in some significant respects. Because of their unique place, there was a higher degree of coming and going among the madmen in the monastery. They were frequently treated with greater sympathy and therefore they were more likely to receive medical attention. For example, hieromonk Rafail, former baccalaureate of the Kiev Academy, was confined in the prisoner's section of Spaso-Evfimiev in 1830 at the age of 29 because of "damage to his mind."<sup>814</sup> His behaviour was good and in 1835 he was moved from the prison to live among the monks in the monastery. In 1836 he was moved to the bishop's home because of illness. It is unclear whether this was a physical illness or a further indication of the "damage to his mind," but whatever the case may be, Rafail was obviously accorded a degree of compassion that was highly unusual for those who underwent

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<sup>813</sup> The vast majority of heretics did not repent. Those who did – Semen Dmitriev, Filipp Fedorov, Alimpii Korol'ko, Nikifor Maksimov, Petr Savkov, and Fedor Semonov – were generally released after a five-year sentence. See the corresponding entries in *ibid.*, 220-230.

<sup>814</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1835), d. 155, l. 24. Also see, A. S. Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 231.

incarceration. Others were not so fortunate and were treated more harshly and kept under severe restrictions.<sup>815</sup>

Some of the other madmen who were incarcerated at Spaso-Evfimiev were on occasion released from their incarceration either as a result of improved health and behaviour or because of a decline in their physical well-being and a need for other forms of treatment. The thirty-five-year-old archpriest, Gavriil Lektorskii, entered the prisoners' section of Spaso-Evfimiev for the first time in 1816 because of "a fit of melancholy for further examination of his downcast mind."<sup>816</sup> Evidently incarceration in the monastery did not lift his spirits, for he was not released until 1831 despite the fact that Parfenii reported that he was "seldom mad and conducts himself not badly."<sup>817</sup> After his release, it appears he was quick to get into trouble. By 1832 he was being returned to Spaso-Evfimiev from his confinement in the Peter and Paul fortress in St. Petersburg and this time under more serious accusations. He was confined "for performing reprehensible deeds, harmful for both himself and others, after suffering brain damage."<sup>818</sup> Roy Porter has suggested that sometimes madness is created by the conditions of treatment. He wrote, "...place a person in a madhouse, deprive him of normal contact, chain him up, and (above all) treat him as though he were beyond communication, and you create a madman, a monster after

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<sup>815</sup> Cf. Apollon was kept in isolation and denied "any communication with outside individuals." RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 282 (1825), no. 34, l. 1. Iosif and Filaret were denied access to church services, presumably because of the disruption they caused. RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 292 (1835), no. 1, l. 1; RGIA f. 796, op. 116 (1835), d. 598, l. 1.

<sup>816</sup> A. S. Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 215.

<sup>817</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 282 (1825), no. 34, l. 1.

<sup>818</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165, l. 15.

your own imagination.”<sup>819</sup> One wonders if this might be the case for Lektorskii. The reports on his behaviour after the second sentence were more varied, though by 1840, the abbot was able to report that in spite of some underlying anger issues, “Christian simplicity and candour form the essential traits of his character.”<sup>820</sup>

Others were permitted to leave the monastery in order to receive better health care. The case of Aleksandr Chernyshev provides some insight into the relationship between the medical care for the mad and the persistence of monasterial care. After displaying the behaviour of a holy fool, he was removed from the priesthood, allegedly of his own volition and with the permission of the Holy Synod. In 1835 he was sent to Spaso-Evfimiev to be kept among the prisoners “because of the breakdown of his mental capacity.”<sup>821</sup> Shortly after his arrival, he was sent to the hospital for madmen (the institution of the Vladimir Board of Public Welfare) in the provincial city of Vladimir by order of the provincial governor Stepan Fedorovich Paskevich. The inspector of the medical board reported to the governor of Vladimir that Chernyshev had been freed from his madness. His conduct had improved and the inspector wrote, “There remains in him only a delusion of the mind concerning the faith.”<sup>822</sup> Since his behaviour was no longer unruly, the inspector concluded that he would be better off back at the monastery. He was returned to the monastery prison

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<sup>819</sup> Roy Porter, *A Social History of Madness: Stories of the Insane* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), 232.

<sup>820</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165, l. 15.

<sup>821</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 ob.

<sup>822</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1835), d. 155, l. 57.

in 1836 and by 1840 the abbot was reporting that he had hopes of a full recovery for Chernyshev.

Like Chernyshev, Mikhail Ofer'ev and Egor Vishniakov were also “sent to the local madhouse, care of the Vladimir Department of Public Charity.” But unlike Chernyshev, they were sent there after lengthy stays in the monastery prison and with no thought of their recovery. They were considered “completely insane.” The bishop wrote to the Synod that Vishniakov did not know the day of the week or how long he had been confined.<sup>823</sup> Likewise, Ofer'ev could not distinguish between days or “between black and white.” And they both spent most of their time sleeping but in other respects were calm and attended the liturgy. It was decided by the local consistory in 1852 that they “would be more comfortable and [would] receive better medical care at the institution for the mad.”<sup>824</sup> They were thus transferred.

This last aspect of the care for the insane in the monastery prison at Spaso-Evfimiev raises another point regarding the physical treatment of prisoners in general – the question of leaving the prison. For many prisoners, leaving the prison was probably the focus of great consideration. Everybody left at some point, the only question was how. There were three possible ways to leave: release, transfer, and death. The possibility of escape will also be discussed here. Of the ninety-two prisoners incarcerated at Spaso-Evfimiev during the reign of Nicholas I, the departure of forty-three prisoners was explicitly reported. The clues left by the

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<sup>823</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165, l. 20.

<sup>824</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 310 (1852), no. 24, l. 1.

remaining forty-nine do allow for some speculation, but in many cases there is no way to know for certain in what manner they left the monastery.

Though the church teachings on public penance emphasized the correction of the sinner and the healing of the soul, when it came to the question of release, the practices in Vladimir Diocese suggest alternative priorities. Out of ninety-two prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev throughout the period, only twelve received an explicit statement of release. And to make matters worse, freedom did not necessarily include a return to one's past life. In many cases, former prisoners were placed under the supervision of either the local consistory, or the provincial governor. And for some, resettlement was part of the package.

In response to a petition sent by Markhil's wife, requesting that he be returned to his family, the Minister of Internal Affairs wrote that Markhil was to be released and that the emperor was pleased to send him to Vologda for settlement.<sup>825</sup> He was handed over to Nikiforov, the Governor of Suzdal, for transfer to Vladimir and on to Vologda where he was reunited with his family.<sup>826</sup> This example raises another aspect of the practice of monastic incarceration. It was not unheard of for the prisoners or their family members to successfully petition the authorities for leniency in some aspect of a case – be it access to certain privileges, permission to serve the sentence closer to home, or even release itself. This was true also in the broader practice of public penance. Gregory Freeze has noted the experience of one peasant woman, Elena Drozdova, who requested and was granted permission to fulfill her

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<sup>825</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1835), d. 155, l. 43.

<sup>826</sup> RGIA f. 1286, op. 5 (1834), d. 478, l. 13.

sentence of public penance in her home parish under the supervision of the local priest, since she was responsible for the care of an aging parent and younger siblings.<sup>827</sup> In similar fashion, Markhil's wife noted the family's dependence on him for financial support and the authorities responded by allowing him to be reunited with them.

Usually the reason for release was the completion of the sentence. But, as illustrated by Markhil, sometimes petitions from the prisoner or his family members could shorten the punishment. Most of the prisoners who were released from the monastery had committed some form of violent crime or debauchery. It was very rare for a heretic to be released and the two examples that did fall under this category had both repented of their heresy prior to their release.<sup>828</sup>

Then, too, there were instances where the release was impermanent. As already mentioned, Gavriil Lektorskii was released in 1831 after spending fifteen years in prison because of a fit of melancholy. But in 1832, he was returned to Spaso-Evfimiev "as a person harmful for society" because he had committed "disgraceful deeds, dangerous to himself and others."<sup>829</sup> It is impossible to draw conclusions about his state of mind given the paucity of the documents, but this situation does raise the question of institutionalization. It was thus not unheard of for prisoners to leave the monastery prison only to return a few months later for some new offence,

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<sup>827</sup> Gregory L. Freeze, "The Wages of Sin: The Decline of Public Penance in Imperial Russia," in *Seeking God: The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia*, ed. Stephen K. Batalden (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993), 71.

<sup>828</sup> Maksimov and Korol'ko, See Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 230 and 225, respectively.

<sup>829</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165, l. 14 ob. - 15.

and some prisoners requested to be housed among the monks after their release from the prison.<sup>830</sup>

A second way of leaving the prison was by a transfer to another institution. This came in a variety of forms. As already noted, some patients were transferred to the local home for the insane.<sup>831</sup> Others were transferred to different monasteries<sup>832</sup> or to service in a military regiment.<sup>833</sup> In many cases, a transfer indicated a lightening of the sentence. Spaso-Evfimiev, though more comfortable than a state prison, was a more rigorous punishment than most monasteries or hermitages and a transfer could mean a great enhancement in personal freedom. This was usually limited to members of the clergy.

Other transfers intensified the punishment, as in the case of escapees. While escape from other monasteries was a reason to be sent to Spaso-Evfimiev as seen in the case of Kireev discussed above, escapes from Spaso-Evfimiev appear to have been rare. Only one detailed instance was recorded during the Nicolaevan era. After fleeing through the monastery fence in the middle of the night on May 10, 1829, retired second lieutenant Sergei Mikhailov was returned over four months later on September 25.<sup>834</sup> The Vladimir Provincial Governor, Sergei Stepanovich Lanskii sent

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<sup>830</sup> Hieromonk Rafail in Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 231f.; see also the example of Kalnishevskii at Solovki in Roy Robson, *Solovki: The Story of Russia Told Through its Most Remarkable Islands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 144f.

<sup>831</sup> Aleksandr Chernyshev, GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1835), d. 155, l. 56; Mikhail Of'erev and Egor Vishniakov, RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 310 (1852), no. 24, l. 1.

<sup>832</sup> Cf. Vasilii Ivanov Gegorgadze in A. S. Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 221.

<sup>833</sup> Cf. Nikolai Frish in *ibid.*, 229.

<sup>834</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

orders for him to be transferred to the Shlisselburg fortress.<sup>835</sup> This was certainly a harsher sentence than monastic incarceration.

The similarities between Mikhailov's punishment and that of the peasant Efim Gushchin suggest that perhaps escape was attempted by the latter prisoner as well. The explanation was far more vague in this situation, but it is clear that Gushchin had been confined at Spaso-Evfimiev "so that he ... would be deprived of any possibility of absenting himself somewhere,"<sup>836</sup> and later he was transferred to Solovetskii monastery,<sup>837</sup> which also had a reputation for severity. Had Gushchin tried to escape without success? It seems possible. Both Mikhailov and Gushchin were also confined for religious heresy or sectarianism which seems to have drawn more severe punishment.

Former hieromonk Gennadii was also transferred to Solovki.<sup>838</sup> Gennadii's crime was against the state. He had written groundless petitions "troubling his imperial majesty" and was guilty of "disobedience and rebelliousness to higher authorities and other reprehensible deeds."<sup>839</sup> The reasons for his transfer were not specified, but the order came only a year after his arrival at Spaso-Evfimiev so perhaps he had been stirring up trouble in the monastery.

So it seems that transfer from Spaso-Evfimiev could indicate either a lightening or a harshening of the sentence of incarceration. There were those who

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<sup>835</sup> A. S. Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 234.

<sup>836</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>837</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>838</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>839</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 289 (1832), no. 25, l. 1.



were moved to other monasteries and hermitages where they lived among the monks, such as the aforementioned Rafail and Filaret as well as the priest Vasiliï Ivanov Gegorgadze who was sent to the Filipoiranskii Hermitage in Novgorod diocese after ten years at Spaso-Evfimiev. Others were transferred to a military detachment, such as the skopets Fedor Petrov who was sent to complete his sentence in service to the Arkhangel'skii garrison batallion.<sup>840</sup>

The only other way of leaving the monastery prison was in death. An astounding 18.5% of the prisoners during this period never left Spaso-Evfimiev alive. And over half of these individuals had been confined for reasons of heresy or sectarianism. Here we find a very telling figure. No matter how great the material comforts available to the prisoners, no matter the comparisons between prison life and the monastic vocation, no matter the correctional goals of the church teachings, nearly one out of every five prisoners did not survive their sentence of “penance.” This is where the distinction between a six-month sentence of penance to be served at a monastery and an indefinite term of incarceration in a monastery prison becomes evident. Monastic incarceration may have been conceived in terms of penance and as a light sentence, but the reality was not so kind.

The reasons for death were rarely reported. Between 1825 and 1855 thirteen prisoners died. Curiously, all of the deaths fell in the seven years between 1828 and 1835. Though it was never stated in the reports, one wonders if the cholera epidemic that raged through Russia from 1829 to 1831, claiming over 100,000 lives,<sup>841</sup> also

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<sup>840</sup> Prugavin, *V kazematakh*, 217 and 222.

<sup>841</sup> Yury V. Bosin, “Russia, cholera riots of 1830 - 1831,” in *International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest*, ed. Immanuel Ness (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 2878.

had an impact in the monastery prison. Given the lack of medical treatment in the prison, and the 1832 episode of food poisoning, it seems possible that this was in fact also a period of poor nourishment and care for the prisoners. Perhaps the quality of care and the concern the bishop demonstrated in response to the accusations of Evfimii in the 1840s actually resulted from the frequency of death during this earlier period.

In 1855, at the end of the period under examination here, fifteen people remained incarcerated in the prisoners' section at Spaso-Evfimiev. In addition to the prisoners who were released, transferred or died, this leaves thirty-four others who left the prison at some point during this period but left no record of how or why. For many of them, it seems likely that they were released after completing their sentence. Others may have died or been transferred elsewhere, but it is impossible from the data that remains to us to draw any firm conclusions about which ones left in which way. We know only that they were removed from the list of prisoners at various points throughout this period.

### Religious Life

Before drawing conclusions about the general material and physical well-being of the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev, I would like to comment briefly on the religious expectations of them. Public penance often involved performing certain religious rituals such as a certain number of bows to the ground in church or the saying of prayers publicly. In the context of monastic confinement, sentences also included these penances to varying degrees. Comparing the religious expectations on

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prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev with other sentences of penance is another way that we can get at the relationship between penance in a monastery and monastic incarceration. Were the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev monastery doing penance or were they imprisoned as punishment for their misdeeds?

There is no simple answer to this question. Penance was certainly a part of the process for some of these prisoners. The abbot reported to the bishop on their behaviour regularly and the Holy Synod periodically requested information about their attendance at the liturgy.<sup>842</sup> A report from the abbot Lavrentii in 1844 demonstrates the degree to which this Father Superior cared about the spiritual condition of the prisoners in the monastery. He provided the bishop with details on their opinions and behaviours based on his personal interactions with each one.<sup>843</sup> By contrast, when this same report was forwarded to the Synod from the Vladimir Spiritual Consistory, the behavioural information was vastly reduced, stating simply whether or not each convict was well-behaved. This suggests that the spiritual welfare of the prisoners was also delegated to the local ecclesiastical authorities and was therefore dependent on the degree of care and concern that they chose to demonstrate. The Synod apparently had little to do with the day-to-day management issues in a monastery prison, apart from the occasional need to address the overarching rules and regulations as they became outdated, as we have seen throughout this chapter.

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<sup>842</sup> RGADA f. 1203, op. 1, viaz. 303 (1846), no. 20, l. 1.

<sup>843</sup> GAVO f. 578, op. 1 (1840), d. 165, ll. 14-20.

As has been demonstrated throughout this dissertation, there were some ways in which incarceration at Spaso-Evfimiev was a product of traditional Orthodox teachings on penance. The prisoners were visited by a confessor and the goal of their incarceration, in most cases, was repentance and restoration to the Orthodox liturgy and to society in general. The cases of political subversion and some of the violent crimes are exceptions to this assertion, since repentance would not necessarily have led to freedom in those instances. Nevertheless, good behaviour *could* lead to release. The use of petitions by the prisoners and their family members and the willingness of the authorities to consider the particular circumstances of individual cases and to respond accordingly is another way that this more serious form of incarceration functioned in the same way as public penance.

The material existence of prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev suggests that monastic incarceration during the reign of Nicholas I was indeed a much kinder sentence than other forms of imprisonment or exile. In the state prisons, the condition of prisoners was unenviable at best. In 1898, in a lecture before a visit to a St. Petersburg prison, A. P. Salomon described the condition of the state prisons prior to the 1879 reform. He painted a very bleak picture of overcrowding, poor nourishment, and the absence of funds for building maintenance.<sup>844</sup> Under such conditions, it was impossible to organize the prisoners according to their sentences, so convicts serving short-term imprisonment, those who were awaiting exile and deportation, as well as the wives

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<sup>844</sup> A. P. Salomon, *Tiuremnoe delo v Rossii: Lektsiia pročitannaia 18 fevralia 1898 goda litseiskom XXXIII kursa A. P. Sal'monom vospitannikam Imperatorskago Aleksandrovsikogo Litseia pered poseshcheniem imi S. Peterburgskikh mest zakliucheniia*, (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia S. Peterburgskoi tiur'my, 1898), 7.

and children who were voluntarily following the exiles – all were crammed together in the same cells.<sup>845</sup>

Even the guards in the state prison system were kept in desperate straits. Salomon told the story of one inspector who visited a prison for inspection. Upon his arrival, not noticing the guard, he asked the prisoners where he was. Salomon wrote, “[From] one of the benches rose the figure of a man with unshaven face, dishevelled hair, wearing a prison cloak with an ace of diamonds on the back and armed with his sword.”<sup>846</sup> Noting that he received a mere 8 rubles a month for his food and clothing, Salomon concluded, “It is clear that such a guard, eating the remains of the prisoners’ rations and dressed in convict cast-offs, could only be the humble servant, and not the head of the people entrusted to his supervision.”<sup>847</sup>

By contrast with the state system, the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev were relatively comfortable. They were not crammed together, although two prisoners did at times share a cell. Their food was considered better than what the monks received – at least, according to the authorities.<sup>848</sup> And the prisoners, themselves, seemed to prefer a sentence in the monastery prison to one in a state facility.<sup>849</sup> The evidence with regard to the material existence of the inmates in the monastery prison as well as their physical treatment demonstrates that the authority over the management of the prison rested squarely in the hands of the local officials, including the diocesan

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<sup>845</sup> Salomon, 7f.

<sup>846</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>847</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>848</sup> RGIA f. 796, op. 125 (1844), d. 682, l. 2.

<sup>849</sup> GAVO f. 578 op. 1, (1845), d. 174, l. 1.

authorities, the abbot of the monastery and the provincial governor. While the Synod made inquiries and gave orders, it was left to those who were on-sight to negotiate their application.

Yet, as has been demonstrated here, even at Spaso-Evfimiev, the conditions were not always all that was claimed. The mortality rate was high, the food was not always up to standard, and medical care was unheard of except in the case of the insane, where asylums were gradually gaining in authority, or of the very rich who could provide for their own care. In addition, deprivation was a central aspect of life in the prison. Food, access to the bath, the freedom and means to communicate with the outside world could all become deprivations used as additional punishments for those who fought against the system.

For Orthodox believers who had committed violent or political crimes, a sentence at Spaso-Evfimiev was a lesser punishment and an opportunity to perform penance. For the insane and for aging clerics, it was a place of care. But for the prisoners of conscience, those who held beliefs that were at variance with the Orthodox Church, the expectations to attend the liturgy and the supervision of a confessor, not to mention the restrictions on their freedom, must have been weighty punishments indeed. For many of these prisoners, the relationship between the Russian state and the Russian Orthodox Church was not a theoretical subject to be contemplated, but a very present reality, influencing every aspect of their existence.

## Conclusion

The monk Avel was confined at Spaso-Evfimiev in 1826. Like many other cases, his sentence opened with the formula “by order of the emperor and by decree of the Vladimir Spiritual Consistory.” This stock bureaucratic phrase quite literally described Avel’s experience. His case vividly demonstrates the joint efforts and concerns of the church and the state in the practice of monastic confinement in imperial Russia.<sup>850</sup> It also reveals the unique place this form of punishment had as a way to cope with unusual individuals who violated social norms in a variety of ways.

Avel took monastic vows against his father’s wishes after a severe bout with typhus.<sup>851</sup> A restless wanderer, he spent short periods in a number of monasteries. While at Nikolaevskii Babaevskii Monastery in Kostroma, he wrote a book in which he predicted the day of Empress Catherine II’s death. The book was confiscated, he lost his monastic status, and he was sent to the Shlisselburg fortress. When Catherine died on the predicted date, Emperor Paul I released Avel and sent him to the Aleksandr Nevskii Lavra where he was tonsured for the second time in 1797.

Pestered by visitors wanting him to predict their futures, he requested permission to withdraw to Valaam. While there, he wrote a second book, this time predicting Paul’s demise, and was subsequently sent to the Petropavlovskii fortress. Ten months later, the new tsar, Alexander I freed him and sent him to live among the

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<sup>850</sup> A.S. Prugavin, *V kazematakh. Ocherki i materialy po istorii russkikh tiurem. Shlissel’burg, Suzdal’skaia tiur’ma, Petropavlovskaia krepost’. S risunkami* (St. Petersburg, 1909), 226.

<sup>851</sup> The following story is told in Tat’iana Kokoreva, “Monastyrskie tiur’mi kak mesto zatocheniia starobriadtsev i sektantov v XIX veke,” (Ph.D. diss., Moscow State University, 2001), 151-154. Cf. P. N. Zyrianov, *Russkie monastyri i monashestvo v XIX i nachale XX veka* (Moscow: Verbum-M, 2002), 104-106.

monks at Solovki. He proceeded to write a third book predicting the destruction of Moscow by the French. He was then moved to the monastery prison at Solovki. When this prophecy also came true, Alexander released him and invited him to St. Petersburg. By his own request, Avel was given permission to go on pilgrimage, which he did, visiting Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Mount Athos.

Upon his return, Avel settled at the Serpukhov Vysotskii Monastery, where he ran into further trouble with the abbot. Early in the reign of Nicholas I, he was sent to Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery with instructions to be kept under supervision. The archival record does not reveal further reason for his incarceration there, but his was a highly unusual case and this final confinement appears to have been a preventative measure. Certainly, his record as a prophet of imperial doom must have been unsettling to Nicholas, and yet he was not deprived of writing utensils. Although he wrote petitions over a financial matter in order to receive money that was owed him, he does not seem to have continued his work as a clairvoyant.<sup>852</sup> Avel died in the prison at Spaso-Evfimiev in 1831.

As evidenced throughout this dissertation, and as this example reveals, monastic incarceration in imperial Russia was in some respects a catchall for cases that did not quite fit other categories. Like many of the prisoners at Spaso-Evfimiev, Avel was an unusual individual with a unique perspective on the events of his time. He was not a criminal in any traditional sense, but he offended people in high places and he suffered the consequences.

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<sup>852</sup> Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Vladimirskoi Oblasti (GAVO) f. 578, op. 1 (1826), d. 120, ll. 1-63.



The Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state both used public penance as a solution for odd cases like this one. In some ways they had different priorities and each used this practice for its own purposes. And in other ways, the leaders of both church and state cooperated with each other to attain shared goals.

Drawing on the tools of practice theory, this dissertation has explored the relationship between penance and punishment from a variety of angles, including the place of penance in church and state law; the teachings on penance produced by the members of the church hierarchy during the reign of Nicholas I; and the many practical uses of public penance by church and state authorities during this period. By examining these different aspects of penance, it has become clear that the practice of monastic incarceration at Spaso-Evfimiev was both an extension of traditional practices of public penance, as well as an aberration from them.

For the church, monastic incarceration was understood within a penitential framework. Both the ancient canons on penance and the modern teachings of the church saw public penance as a way to return soul-sick sinners to good health. In practice, the church hierarchy applied this sentence to a variety of offences. At Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery in Vladimir Diocese, the church used this punishment most frequently as a way to discipline wayward clergy. The goals were repentance and reconciliation.

For the state, monastic incarceration was an additional punishment that could be added to any sentence as a way to address the (im)moral behaviour of subjects gone astray. In application, it often provided a way of coping with exceptional cases. Crimes against the state, for example, could receive such a sentence, particularly

when exile to Siberia was undesirable for some reason. This was the case with the Decembrist Fedor Shakhovskoi, who had fallen physically ill while in exile and was therefore remitted to Spaso-Evfimiev to serve out the remainder of his sentence. In addition to crimes against the state, monastery prison facilities provided space for incarceration in a period that saw the increasing institutionalization of criminals rather than corporal punishment and in a state that lacked sufficient infrastructure to accommodate such a shift.

In these ways, the institutional values and priorities of church and state differed from each other but without coming into conflict. In other respects, the two shared a great deal of common territory in how they approached these practices. This was the case in the application of public penance to certain crimes, but it was also evident in the attentions that were paid to the material well-being of the prisoners.

The long history of monastic involvement in caring for the insane was one aspect of this collaboration. Before the building of asylums for such purposes, the monasteries provided housing and supervision for aging priests and those considered mentally unwell. In this way, the monasteries provided social services to their communities. Keeping violent criminals, often from privileged backgrounds, off the street was another way the monastery and state colluded to keep the peace. The incarceration of sectarians and religious dissidents also served the purposes of both church and state. The state used the church to buttress its authority and the church strengthened its privileged position by offering its facilities to confine sectarian leaders, thereby inhibiting them from promoting alternatives to Orthodoxy.

There was also extensive cooperation between the church and the state over the care and treatment of prisoners. The material existence of these individuals further illuminates the social perceptions of penitential practices during this period. The status of the prisoners, particularly with regard to estate, had a direct impact on their quality of life within the monastery prison. So, too, did their behaviour. Those of a higher estate were given greater privilege with regard to material goods, and those who were well behaved had greater freedom of movement within the monastery and also more opportunities to communicate with others both inside and outside the monastery.

Like any case study, the focus on the prison at Spaso-Evfimiev Monastery in Vladimir Diocese presents both limitations and advantages. Of the former, the gendered nature of the practice across the empire as compared with its male orientation at Spaso-Evfimiev begs further research. With regard to the latter, the examination of the files on Spaso-Evfimiev at both the regional and imperial archives has brought to the fore the importance of local authority in the provinces. Both the church and the state authorities in the region worked to regulate affairs in the monastery prison in Suzdal. Instructions were sent from St. Petersburg, usually from the Holy Synod, but sometimes from the Senate or the Ministry of Internal Affairs as well. Ultimately, it was left to the local leaders to apply those directives, which they did selectively, as they saw fit.

In bringing together the history of religion, the history of the modern state and the history of crime and punishment, this dissertation has made the argument that the Russian Orthodox Church was deeply integrated into the fabric of life within the

Russian state. Often studied as two separate institutions battling over power, the picture presented here is quite different; when it comes to the relationship between the church and the state, actual practices subvert our categories of analysis. There was a great deal of cooperation between the church and the state over the sentencing, the care and the treatment of prisoners confined in monasteries. Father Zosima's argument for the intimate connection between sin and crime was played out historically in the practice of public penance.<sup>853</sup> For those who bought in to the narrative of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation were possible. For those who rejected this vision, the results were onerous and the losses great.

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<sup>853</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, ed. Ralph E. Matlaw, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1976), 55.

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