«RUSSIAN WOMEN AND ORTHODOX IDEALS ON THE EARLY MODERN FRONTIER»

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Following the conquest of the Kazan' in 1552, the Russian Orthodox Church constructed a role for feminine behavior on the frontier that defined women's participation in the imperial project. The Church's officials presented colonial women as moral, obedient women in need of male protection. This image assured Muscovite society that these frontier women were safe and protected, and that this new territory had become a place for the Orthodox community to live an ideal existence. These exemplary women were also useful for the state, as they symbolized a colonial society that revealed Muscovy as a Russian Orthodox space, removing any connection of the tsar's new land from its Muslim or animistic past. Furthermore, this exemplary version of Orthodox life recorded by the Church could be a suitable platform to encourage the conversion of the tsar's newest subjects. As a result of all of these pressures, the frontier did not offer any new freedoms to Russian Orthodox women; rather Muscovy's frontier only tolerated a narrowly constructed feminine role.

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In 1552, Muscovite Russia conquered the neighboring Muslim Khanate of Kazan', beginning the long expansion eastward that would ultimately lead to North America. Though the lands of the Khanate were settled with a variety of ethno-linguistic and religiously diverse groups, Russian settlers were at the forefront of the state's plans for controlling and integrating this frontier region within Muscovy's borders. Russian women and their families were among the first waves of Russian colonization, from the elite provincial gentry to the peasantry. Though women's experiences as settlers in this conquered region are largely unknowable due to a lack of records, an examination of Russian Orthodoxy provides one avenue for understanding their intended participation in Muscovy's colonial expansion.

Women's roles inside the Orthodox Church have been have only begun to be explored. Historian Isolde Thyrêt suggested that the lack of a substantial source base as well as the inherent differences between Catholic and Orthodox practices has hindered the development of the topic. She argued that acknowledging these differences could create new opportunities for understanding Orthodox women; in particular, miracle tales provide an opportunity for understanding women's spirituality in Muscovite Russia

(Thyrêt, 2003, pp. 160-162). This insight is particularly important for understanding the history of frontier women in early modern Russian history. As women could not become military servitors, merchants, or colonial administrators, their presence in the extant historical records is minor. Russian frontier women, however, were included in local miracle tales as exemplars of Orthodox behavior. In addition, many women lived as nuns in new convents on the frontier, living a life based on Orthodox regulations. Though not all Russian women conformed to this model of virtuous behavior, it became the one that Orthodox officials expected all women to fulfill.

The Russian Orthodox Church and its expectations for feminine behavior defined women's participation in the imperial project to serve itself, the state, and the conversion mission. The Church's officials presented colonial women as moral, obedient women in need of male protection. This image assured Muscovite society that these frontier women were safe and protected. This was of considerable importance for the empire's continuing expansion, as new territory could become a place for the Orthodox community to live an ideal existence (Kivelson, 2006, pp. 99-116). These exemplary women were also useful for the state, as they symbolized a colonial society that reflected the best values of Muscovy as Russian Orthodox territory, removing any connection of the tsar's new land from its Muslim and animistic past (Romaniello, 2007). Furthermore, this idealized version of Orthodox life recorded by the Church could be a suitable platform to encourage the conversion of the tsar's newest subjects. As a result of all of these pressures, the frontier did not offer any new freedoms to Russian Orthodox women; rather Muscovy's frontier only tolerated a narrowly constructed feminine role.

Women and Frontier Convents

Traditionally, the Russian Orthodox Church has portrayed women in an extreme dichotomy: either as obedient, chaste, and virtuous wives or as dangerous temptresses. Obviously, the expectation was for Orthodox women to aspire to the former rather than the latter (Bisha, 2002, pp. 21-23). These views of Russian women already placed a constraint upon their behavior; becoming colonists in the former Khanate of Kazan' added new limits to a rigid rhetorical construct of feminine behavior. As the territory itself was primarily inhabited by recently conquered non-Orthodox populations, the Church exhorted these frontier women to provide excellent examples of Orthodox virtue.

Life as a nun comprised the only formal role for women within the Russian Orthodox Church. Convents are devichii monastyr', placing chastity (maiden) at the forefront of these institutions' identity. With their total seclusion, these women could not become temptresses, leaving them only with one possible role as the ideal Orthodox woman: pious, obedient, and chaste

(Thomas, 1983). Furthermore, as the convents' themselves were placed inside city walls, the security of the nuns would be guaranteed by their location. No woman on the frontier could be safer than inside a convent's walls. As a result, becoming a nun became the ultimate expression of Orthodoxy's conception of a woman's role on the frontier, rather than only serving as a convenient place for dispossessed widows. This should not imply, however, that widows did not end up taking holy orders.

Establishing convents was more than a religious achievement, it was also a necessity for the Muscovite state to claim the physical space of its frontier. In a study of frontiers, historian Paolo Squatriti has argued that imperial states "resort to forming a façade of small easily managed zone of order, a miniature version of the ideal generalized order which remains unattainable" (Squatriti, 2002, p. 18). The physical buildings of the convent, therefore, became a visual reminder to the local city-dwelling populace of women's importance to the Church. Furthermore, Russians and non-Russians throughout the countryside could see Orthodoxy's imposition over this former enemy land. Of course, it was not even necessary to know who lived inside its walls to see that Orthodoxy had begun to dominate the landscape.

The symbolic world of Russian Orthodox domination created by a convent's physical establishment is much easier to discover than that inside its walls. This is due to the Orthodox conception of the goal for monasteries and convents: total separation from the outside world and its secular influence. In Greece, the Orthodox Church enacted the rule of abaton to create separate spheres for monks and nuns from secular influences. Convents frequently relied upon exceptions to this rule for practical reasons, such as requiring a priest to perform religious services, and many used priests, preferably eunuchs to manage their business interests (Talbot, 1998). That this principle reinforced the Russian Orthodox portrayal of women, as an obedient, virtuous woman, who needed to be protected, merely added to the applicability of abaton to the Russian frontier. Total seclusion, unfortunately, also leaves little record of any exchange with the outside world.

A second complication for the study of Muscovite convents is that Russian Orthodox institutions were idiorhythmic as opposed to the traditional communal (cenobitic) institutions of the Catholic West. While there was an abbess and other officials in the convent, individual nuns had the right of maintaining their independence within the building. This extended to building their own cells, and also allowed women of means to bring their own provisions, clothing, furniture, and even servants. Idiorhythmic convents reinforced preexisting social hierarchies from outside the convent walls by privileging elite women, allowing them to maintain their status (Thomas, 1983). As a result, even if there were better access to information about the internal life of

convents, there would not have been any single standard or set of common features regarding a nun's experience inside the walls.

Because of the absence of other sources of information, the physicality of convents is what remains as evidence of their contribution to frontier society. The process of establishing new convents was a slow, steady process, reflecting developing administrative confidence in the region's stability. Nineteen monasteries were founded in the first hundred years of Muscovite expansion into the region, but only twelve convents (Romaniello, 2012, pp. 40, 85). By 1578, the region's first defensive line of towns and forts linked by earthen barricades was completed approximately eighty miles south of the Volga River, between Nizhnii Novgorod and Kazan'. Convents were then established in Kazan', Sviiazhsk, Alatyr', Cheboksary, and Arzamas. When a second defensive line was begun further to the south in the 1630s, new convents followed once again in its wake, in Simbirsk and eventually Penza, though not until nearly the end of the century. It appears that while confidence was high that the northernmost region was secure, the southern sections still bordering the unsecured steppe were much less so.

In keeping with the fears of security, even the city of Kazan' did not immediately receive a convent. Tsar Ivan IV was instrumental in the establishment of the region's first convent, Kazan's Bogoroditskii Devichii Convent in 1579, after the construction began on the major new defenses. By comparison, Kazan's first monastery was built in 1552, upon the conquest, and its second in 1555. The only reason provided officially for the establishment of the region's first convent was to serve as the home of Kazan's Mother of God Icon, which had recently proven its miraculous powers (Malov, 1879, p. 3). Later tsars extended additional financial support to the convent, a sign of the state's continuing commitment to it. Tsar Mikhail Fedorovich assigned the revenue from the rent of four courtyards in Kazan' to the convent in 1623 to provide the funds for a new building to house the icon (RGADA, f. 281, op. 4, d. 6456). Furthermore, Kazan' became the first city in the region to receive a second convent in 1607, the Troitskii Fedorovskii, built on the instruction of Metropolitan Germogen and the voevoda of Kazan', Prince Ivan Ivanovich Golitsyn (Denisov, 1903, p. 253).

While Kazan' was a logical choice for major convents, most new towns and outposts also received them as conditions warranted. For example, the outpost of Cheboksary was founded shortly after the conquest of the city of Kazan'. In its early years, the town was a strong point against the still dangerous local Chuvash and Mari population. As the fortress became larger and more secure in the decades that followed, Cheboksary gained a cathedral and two churches in addition to its first monastery. However, the tsarist government decreed that no convent would be established in the outpost until the region was

pacified. In 1584, three decades after Cheboksary was founded, the Nikolaevskii Devichii Convent was created, built to include one of the town's original churches, quite close to the Volga River (Barsov, 1898, pp. 520-521).

Despite the details concerning the process of founding the convent, and the fame derived from the fact that Kseniia Ivanovna Shestova, the mother of the future tsar Mikhail Fedorovich Romanov, was exiled there to take the veil in 1601, little else is known of its early history (Barsov, 1898, pp. 519-520). Placing her into an institution on the frontier was likely a deliberate decision to guarantee Shestova's removal from the seat of government; her husband suffered a similar fate, signaling the collapse of their family's status. However, even the official history of the convent had little else to offer for the remainder of the seventeenth century.

Another notable convent in the region was the Kievo-Nikolaevskii Convent in Alatyr'. The tsar's government ordered its construction in 1639, to become a new home for the Abbess Elizaveta, her fellow nuns, and their priest, Mefodii, who were refugees from the city of Kiev. Though the convent burned in 1667, Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich ordered it rebuilt and provided all of the necessary funds for the reconstruction, noting that this was a reward for their loyal service on the frontier (Krasovskii, 1899, pp. 16-20). It is interesting that as early as 1639, the tsarist administrators considered Alatyr', in the tsar's new territory, significantly safer than returning the nuns to Kiev, which was still a part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This strongly suggests that the state envisioned convents as a necessary part of its colonial project. Therefore, providing nuns for the frontier became a state project similar to assigning troops to defend the border.

Furthermore, the state's interest in convents extended from building the physical structures to providing for the institution's future economic stability. While it may be surprising that the Russian Orthodox Church was not more directly involved, the tsar's control over land grants and economic opportunities prevented the Church from accessing the necessary financial resources to establish a convent or monastery. With the state's support, however, frontier convents received land and peasants to work it, and many institutions benefited from investments that typically included profitable businesses. Many convents, in fact, supervised the local grain mills in the region. Arzamas's Nikolaevskii Convent was assigned the revenue from both the land and the mill in a nearby village, Kichazanskii. The revenue from the mill was sufficient that the local governors of Arzamas made several attempts to seize the mill to provide for their own coffers in seventeenth century. This should not be taken as a sign that convents had extensive contact with their possessions. In this case, a priest administered Kichazanskii for the nuns, a typical arrangement (RGADA, f. 281, op. 1, d. 317). Preventing the nuns from direct contact with their peasants or

businesses was just one more mechanism for assuring their safety behind the convent walls, as well as fulfilling the monastic ideal of separation from the outside world. In this way, the interests of the state in establishing a convent and in the Church's in forcing women to embrace the Orthodox ideal were both achieved.

Separated from the world, however, did not mean that the seclusion was total. Abbesses, in particular, have left some records even if they did not leave the convents walls. On occasion, they petitioned either the tsar or local administrators in order to receive concessions. For example, Abbess Elisaveta of the Nikolaevskii Novodevichii Convent in Alatyr' petitioned the tsar on 1 February 1639, claiming that the roof of the convent was leaking. The water damage had rotted the cells, and no one in Alatyr' would help them. Furthermore, Elisaveta claimed that when pilgrims saw the convent they had "great wails and tears" but were unable to offer the convent any assistance. As the work of Isolde Thyrêt has shown, praying with tears (umilenie) was a special religious experience traditionally associated with Orthodox women (Thyrêt, 2001, p. 124). It seems likely that this petition was written to suggest this experience, potentially in hopes of fulfilling the expectation of the petition's readers. Whether the inference to women's spirituality was intentional, its success in motivating more sympathy in Moscow was limited. The central chancelleries granted the convent the right to construct a mill and charge for its services, which would eventually fund the repairs, but there was no immediate financial support for constructing the mill or beginning the repairs (Notariusa, 1997, pp. 9-11). However, the failure of the petition may have been due to suspicion about the seriousness of the damage. When the convent was later destroyed by a fire in 1667, the tsar did provide the funds for its total reconstruction (Krasovskii, 1899, p. 20).

Furthermore, certainly other exceptions existed that allowed nuns to bypass the strict principle of seclusion. As many of the nuns were widows, family connections may have allowed them to communicate through of the convent's walls. In the Bogoroditskii Convent in Kazan', which housed a miraculous Mother of God Icon, a nun Anastasiia fell ill. Her son, who was a monk, brought his mother myrrh from a local saint's shrine to heal her (MGU, General Slavic Fond, pt. 1, no. 50118, ll. 145-146). Of course, the son's status as a monk allowed him access to his mother, which would not have been allowed to a non-ecclesiastical relative, but it certainly is conceivable that this relationship was not exceptional.

While nuns could subvert the rule of abaton, and might even attempt to influence decisions in Moscow, these attempted transgressions hardly altered the state's or the Church's commitment to convents. The only limitation on new convent foundations arose from ongoing concerns about women's safety on the

frontier. In 1634, Tsar Mikhail Fedorovich ordered the construction of a Novodevichii Alekseevskii Convent in the town of Arzamas, but construction did not begin for more than forty years. His son, Aleksei Mikhailovich, once again commanded the construction of the convent on 15 June 1675, requiring the local governor to assure its establishment (Chetyrkin, 1887, pp. 1-15). In fact, the 1670s witnessed a new era of frontier convent-building, with new institutions in Tsivil'sk, Kerensk, Saratov, and Penza (Romaniello, 2012, p. 85).

Therefore, there was never a retreat from the process of creating new convents. However, if restricting a convent's economic role could enhance the region's security, which was considered a necessity for a convent's existence, then convents lost financial privileges. Arzamas's Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Convent faced this issue, ultimately losing their control over the village of Chernukha. The local governor of Arzamas seized the village in the early 1670s, though the village had been granted to the convent in 1626/7. The governor decided to support the military service of some of his local militia with the revenue raised from rents in the village. While both the convent and the villagers protested the land transfer, the central government was unmoved (RGADA, f. 281, op. 1, d. 299, ll. 2-4; RGADA, f. 281, op. 1, d. 303). Another facet of this debate was that all of the convent's negotiations with the central government occurred through a priest, who had been responsible for supervising their lands. It is possible, at least, the abbess's lack of direct involvement may also have led to failure of this petition (RGADA, f. 281, op. 1, d. 305). Whereas nuns could exploit the unique role as Orthodox exemplars, men acting on their behalf lacked that ability. Rather than a spiritual request for the good of the community, this could make the negotiation a strictly secular process of dividing estates among potential servitors.

While it is difficult to generalize about the situation of convents established in the lands of the former Khanate of Kazan', the ongoing commitment of the tsar and his government to the creation of these new institutions was not in question. The number of convents steadily rose from the late sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth. Furthermore, total seclusion for the nuns appears to have been the ideal, with priests placed in prominent positions inside most convents to keep nuns from secular contact. This commitment to achieving total seclusion separated the region from nearby territory, like the city of Nizhnii Novgorod, where nuns could be independent actors with the responsibilities for establishing and managing their convent on their own (MGU, General Slavic Fond, no. 686, ll. 82-85). While initially the frontier convents were supported financially, that support could be removed if needed elsewhere. This suggests that the physical establishment of the convent was important; maintaining its long-term presence was less so. Convents

became a feature of the early stages of Muscovite colonization. As the region Russian Orthodox land, the symbols of Orthodox presence lost value.

The fleeting importance of frontier convents was only reinforced with their lack of ability to influence the state in comparison to those in the central provinces. In fact, Moscow's most prestigious convent, Novodevichii, even succeeded in defeating local administrators' potential claims over the lands of the former Khanate. Novodevichii Convent was located just outside of Moscow, and had a long historical connection with the most elite members of Muscovite society. Late in the seventeenth century, Tsarevna Sophia Alekseevna granted the abbess and sisters of Novodevichii Convent a section of the Volga River near Simbirsk, which included both fishing rights to the River as well as the right to charge a tariff on transit across their territory. The local governor of Simbirsk unsuccessfully protested the grant when it was made, and then later even tried to seize a portion of its revenue for a local military servitor. In both cases, the governor failed to appropriate the convent's rights (RGADA, f. 281, op. 8, d. 11550; RGADA, f. 281, op. 8, d. 11568). This is the exception proving the rule, however, since no frontier convent so successfully defended its prerogatives. Furthermore, a close connection to the tsars, which Novodevichii enjoyed, further reinforced the isolation and powerlessness of the frontier convents. Even when one of these convents had a nun with a close connection to the tsar, and Mikhail Romanov's mother was one such, there is no evidence that great support ever flowed to the frontier convents.

The new convents of the former Khanate best served as a symbol of the Russian Orthodox Church's presence in the tsar's new lands. Few, if any, signs are left to suggest the interests or ideals of the nuns. On rare occasions, such as when the abbess of the Nikolaevskii Novodevichii Convent in Alatyr' included references to umilenie in her petition, the nuns appear as perfectly fulfilling the Orthodox ideal of women's spiritual role. While the specific motivations of women in frontier convents remains unknown, the commitment of both the state and the Church to establishing their presence on the frontier with convent foundations is clear. In the institutional Church, convents created symbols of feminine behavior for frontier women: secure, chaste, and silent.

Women and Frontier Miracle Tales

Convents might have been better symbols than institutions, but they did not serve as the primary reflection of women's religious experiences on the frontier. However, the ideal Orthodox woman, envisioned as a nun, defined the model of acceptable behavior for all frontier women. This role defined the common features of all women included in the official miracle tales from the frontier. Of course, for a woman's miraculous experience to be included in a miracle tale, a member of the clergy would have to validate the recollection.

Therefore, even "public" accountings of Orthodox behavior on the frontier were in fact strictly regulated by the Russian Orthodox Church. In this way, the Church and state had several tools at their disposal to construct their idealized frontier community.

There were two prominent miracle cults established in the wake of the conquest of Kazan'. An icon of the Mother of God brought to Kazan' in the 1550s by an Orthodox priest became the center for the first miracle cult, as it reputedly developed healing powers after it revealed itself in a young girl's vision during a fire in the city in 1579. Shortly thereafter, the relics of the first bishop of Kazan' and one of his contemporaries, the founder of a local monastery established on nearby Zilantov mountain, were revealed to have miraculous healing powers as well. Both of these events led to the formation of miracle cults in the local community. Of course, at that time the Orthodox community was primarily newly-arrived Russian settlers from the interior provinces, but there were some converts among the local non-Russian population. Metropolitan Germogen of Kazan' recorded these earlier miracles in order to promote both the holy icon and the local saints among the faithful, as well as to inspire further conversions of the local non-Orthodox population.

During a fire in Kazan' on 23 June 1579, a young girl had a vision of the Mother of God, who promised the girl that she would be saved from the fire if she took shelter in the Church of Nikolai Tulskii the Miracle-worker. Once in the safety of the church, the girl realized that the Mother of God Icon in the Church had provided this vision. According to the tale, the appearance of the icon during the fire was a reward from God for the Orthodox faithful in Kazan' for their ongoing battle against non-believers (inovernye) (SGU, no. 1756, ll. 21-23). Several different versions of the miraculous cures of the icon exist, to the extent that two versions were published during Germogen's canonization process in the early twentieth century (Tvoreniia, 1912, pp. 1-34). While several miracles are common to all of the versions of the "Tale," the later printed versions have additional details absent from earlier records, particularly noting the recipients' social status. Furthermore, the later versions contained sixteen miracles performed by the icon, while a seventeenth-century manuscript only contains fourteen, and three of these were not included in either of the printed versions examined (SGU 1756, ll. 26-33). Only three of original fourteen miracles affected women, though other miracles concerning women were added to the later printed versions.

Women's experiences with Kazan's Mother of God Icon all seem to follow in the typical patterns of recorded miracles. For example, one incident involves "a certain young mother" brought to the icon for a cure for her blindness. While standing in front of the icon, "she cried while praying and her sight was restored" (SGU 1756, l. 28). As this was a classic description of

umilenie, this young woman exemplified two important qualities of all Orthodox women: piety and humility in the presence of the sacred. Another miraculous cure concerned "a woman named Ragozina," who had a vision of the Mother of God Icon in which she was instructed to travel to Kazan' with her husband, where she would pray in the presence of the icon. However, "her husband would not move." This resulted in a second miraculous vision, which resulted in Ragozina travelling to Kazan' alone, where she did pray while crying in front of the icon. For her piety and obedience, she "received health (zdravie)" (SGU 1756, l. 29). As with the young mother, Ragozina's miraculous cure happened in the presence of the Archbishop of Kazan', who conveniently served as an irreproachable witness to both miracles.

Several aspects of these two miracles resemble many others recorded in the Muscovite era, particularly in women demonstrating umilenie, as well as the visions, which tended to affect women more than men. However, out of the fourteen miracles recorded in the "Tale," only these two women had the Archbishop of Kazan' mentioned as a witness. The third woman included in the miracle cycle, Elena Itagasheva, was the wife of a local parish priest. After a three-month illness, she was cured through the intercession of the icon, though without any reference to umilenie as in the other two tales (SGU 1756, l. 30). While the archbishop was not present as her cure, Itagasheva also had an inherently closer connection to the institutional Church than either of the first two women as she was the wife of a priest. As a result, the miracle cycle strongly suggested that women needed a close connection with the Church in order to receive their miraculous cures, which was not the case outside of the former Khanate.

Later printed versions of the "Tale" revised these miraculous cures in minor ways only. Ragozina's first name was Vasiliia, and the priest's wife Elena was from the village of Tagasheva, but the substance of the text was largely unchanged (Tvoreniia, 1912, pp. 9-10; 26-28). As new miracles were included in the cycle, other women were added over time to the cycle. One of these women was the wife of a minor noble (syn boiarskii) Ivan Kuzminskii, and the other was Domna, the wife of Ivan from the nearby town of Sviiazhsk (Tvoreniia, 1912, pp. 9; 12-13). Each of these women, however, was a witness to the miraculous cures of their husbands, rather than recipient of a miracle in her own right. Overall, while the later redaction of the "Tale" changed in small ways, it is not clear why these new experiences were included. With the original three miracles considered in addition to these last two, women's religious experiences according to the "Tale" are largely of proscription, where a man, preferably a member of the clergy, necessarily validated a women's connection to the sacred.

Several possibilities could explain this discrepancy on the frontier. In Kazan', it was possible that women's experiences were not perceived as being as trustworthy as men's, and therefore only women who could be validated by the hierarchy were included in the cycle. It seems plausible that the interests of the author of the miracle cycle, who would later become Metropolitan of Kazan, had an interest in promoting the importance of the Church hierarchy in the region. Another possibility is that if these women were intended to serve as exemplars for Orthodox women's behavior, the presence of the Archbishop merely reinforced the lesson of these tales – that pious and obedient women could have special religious experiences. Most likely, however, the prominent role of the Russian Orthodox hierarchy in the miracle tales was a reminder to the audience of the Church's prominent role in the conquest of these new lands. Women, in this view, became a feature of the Church's importance, rather than special recipients of miracles in their own right.

While the miracles of Kazan's Mother of God Icon may seem to be of minor importance from these few miraculous healings, the icon itself developed a national profile. Therefore, the recipients of its miracle-working powers would have also received national attention as the fame of the icon spread. The icon's ascent into national prominence was achieved when it appeared to aid the Muscovite military victory against the Poles in 1612. As the icon was carried into battle, it supported the Muscovite troops with its miraculous powers that had also healed the local population in Kazan'. In a short tale, recorded as "About the Advance of the Kazan' Icon of the Mother of God toward Moscow," the miraculous icon became an instrumental weapon against this foreign group of non-believers (PSRL, 1910, pp. 132-133). While the local Muslim and animist population around Kazan' were the first non-Orthodox audience for the icon's miraculous powers, now the Catholics were added to the icon's history of miracles in the presence of non-believers. With the experience of the icon in battle added to the "Tale" in Kazan', the women recorded in the miracle cycle gained prominence throughout Muscovy. Now, they were not only exemplars for the Orthodox community but also had to be inspirational enough to motivate the local animistic and Muslim communities to convert to Orthodoxy. Therefore, the women recorded represented the ideal Orthodox women: pious, obedient, and above any suspicion.

The ideal woman presented in the icon's miracle tales was reinforced by the other miracle cult established in Kazan' around the new Sts. Gurii and Varsonofii. Gurii was the first Archbishop of Kazan', selected in 1552 by a Church council to establish the new bishopric on the frontier. At that same council, the Russian Orthodox Church also decided to establish two new monasteries, one of which became the Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Monastery in Kazan'. Its first abbot, Varsonofii, joined Gurii as the official presence of the

Church in the city. The "Life of Gurii and Varsonofii" focused upon the selection of the men for their positions and their subsequent procession to the city, but also contained a brief summary of their subsequent careers. According to their vita, Gurii dedicated himself to establishing the Russian Orthodox Church in Kazan', and Varsonofii, having founded the Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Monastery, devoted himself to the conversion of the non-Orthodox population of the region. Varsonofii had been captured by the Crimean Tatars as a young man, and spent three years as a Crimean slave. During his enslavement, Varsonofii learned Tatar, providing him the skill to lead conversion efforts (SGU 1073, ll. 165-167).

Gurii died on 5 December 1563, and German succeeded him as the second archbishop. Varsonofii became Bishop of Tver from 1567 to 1570, but returned to the Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Monastery where he died on 11 April 1576. Metropolitan Germogen revealed their relics in 1595 by opening their tombs, and subsequently wrote the "Life of Gurii and Varsonofii" as the miracle cult was being established (Golubinskii, 1903, pp. 118-119). By the early-seventeenth century, sixty-six miraculous cures were recorded, of which twenty-six concerned women. Most of those cured by the relics were clergy, townspeople, and servants. Most of the sixty-six were from Kazan' and its hinterland, with the furthest arriving from Arzamas, Vologda, Viatka, and Rostov, all towns with trade connections to Kazan'. In its formation, it was a local cult built solely on the new frontier (SGU 1073, ll. 175-197).

The miracles contained in the cycle of Gurii and Varsonofii do differ from those of the Mother of God Icon. As the saints' relics were kept inside a monastery, women could not pray at the shrine, as their presence in the monastery was not allowed. Therefore, women relied on various intercessors, generally their husbands, to travel to the shrine on their behalf. For example, the wife of a clerk in Kazan', Aleksei Agramakov, received a letter that his wife had fallen ill in Moscow. He traveled to the shrine and asked the archimandrite of the monastery for myrrh from the saints' shrine, which he then sent to his wife, who was then healed (MGU, no. 50118, ll. 138-139). Similarly, Akilina, the wife of a priest, was healed from her illness after her husband traveled to the shrine, prayed, and then returned home to rub her body with myrrh he had received at the shrine, curing her (MGU, no. 50118, ll. 139-140). In each of these cases, the women are clearly distanced from any direct connection to the saints by their sex, but a loyal husband saved each.

However, with the great number of miracles recorded, there is no single pattern affecting all women. When Fedor Prokofiev syn Kashkarov lost his eyesight for thirty weeks, his grandmother, Paraskoviia Afonasieva, went to the shrine where she was given myrrh, which she then sent to her grandson for his healing (MGU, no. 50118, ll. 144-145). Mariia, a resident of Kazan', when to

the shrine herself and prayed to the saints for her arm to be healed. After she was given myrrh from the shrine and rubbed it on her arm, she was healed. Mariia, however, was a widow, and did not have a husband to act as her intercessor (MGU, no. 50118, ll. 158-158). Similarly, when Paraskoviia, the wife of a soldier, traveled to the shrine to receive myrrh to heal herself of an eye ailment, her husband might not have been available to act as her intercessor (MGU, no. 50118, l. 179). In these cases, each of these women either acted on behalf on her family, or because a male was not available for support, creating an opportunity for them to function outside of the expected social norms of female behavior. Certainly, in the overwhelming majority of the tales, husbands and fathers acted for their wives, who were not given direct access to the saints.

One of the longest tales in the cycle involved Varvara, the wife of a soldier of Kazan'. Varvara had fallen ill from a head injury; after praying to the saints, they appeared to her in a vision. Gurii instructed her to become a nun in order to heal her severe injury. Varsonofii interceded on her behalf with Gurii, arguing that it was not necessary for her to become a nun yet. When Varvara awoke, her illness was gone, and she traveled to the shrine to give thanks. The shrine in this case was the monastery, where she could not enter. Shortly thereafter, her husband was sent off to duty "in distant cities," and told his wife to go to the shrine and pray for him. However, Varvara became wrapped up in her family life "in the way of the simple people," and forgot her promised prayers. Then she became severely ill, and had a second vision of the saints. Gurii raised his hand to strike her, but Varsonofii once again interceded and asked Gurii for forgiveness on Varvara's behalf. When Varvara awoke, she was once again healed (MGU, no. 50118, ll. 166-169). The moral of this tale was clear to a Russian audience, that one's husband must be obeyed – even if her oversight was forgiven. In fact, Varsonofii's role as her intercessor, instead of her husband who would more typically act on her behalf, is a curiosity among the many recorded miracles. It does, however, conform to the image of Gurii and Varsonofii contained in their "Life": Gurii is the builder of the Church, while Varsonofii assumes pastoral duties among the people. In this way, this story not only supports an Orthodox conception of the family but also reinforces the image of the newly-emerging saints.

As was the case for Kazan's Mother of God Icon, the new saints, Gurii and Varsonofii, also gained national stature inside Muscovy. The two saints first appeared in a national calendar for commemoration in 1610; as such, they were associated with a feast day that was then celebrated throughout the country (Pelenski, 1974, pp. 269-275; Skrynnikov, 1991, pp. 248-250; Bushkovitch, 1992, pp. 87-88, 108-110, and 214-215). Part of the celebration would have included reading their lives and miracles. Therefore, the tales of the women in the cycle would probably have been known throughout the Orthodox

community. Once again, this fact could have constrained the types of miracles included, as they had to be suitable examples for the entire country.

Both of these two miracle cults demonstrate the centrality of personal religious experiences in relating the history of the Russian Orthodox Church along Muscovy's frontier, as well as the importance of presenting a positive, constructed image of Kazan' as a holy, Orthodox city. The miraculous cures of the local population extended the holy aura of the saints and the icon, which would hopefully inspire the conversion of the local non-Orthodox population. Both of these cults developed after the Muscovite conquest of the region, but they were not the only local saint cults. For example, Makarii Zheltovodskii was another local saint in the region, and the patron saint of a monastery near Arzamas (Denisov, 1903, pp. 560-561). Makarii lived on the edge of Muscovite territory, at a time when the Khanate of Kazan' was still a hostile enemy. However, though his original vita was written during the sixteenth century, it was redacted in the early seventeenth century, shortly after that of Gurii and Varsonofii was written. Chronologically, Makarii's miraculous cures provide a comparison to these other religious experiences, though dating from an earlier era, it reflects a different attitude toward the Tatars of Kazan'.

Of the ten miracles recorded during his life and after his death, four affected women (SGU 343, ll. 1-38). The first of these miracles occurred during Makarii's life, sometime in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. A certain Christian, Feodor, had a daughter, who was possessed by a demon that blinded her. Separately, Feodor and his wife had thought of Makarii and his spirituality, inspiring the entire family to travel to Makarii's hermitage where the future saint cured the daughter by praying over her with a cross (SGU 343, ll. 21-22). Both the blindness and the miraculous cure in the presence of an elder of the Church, connects these miracles to the others discussed. The miracles following Makarii's death were similar. One miracle involved healing a boiar's widow, Mariia, from her pain. She managed to carry herself to his tomb, but then was unable to control any part of her body. Following a liturgical service performed by an abbot, Mariia was sprinkled with holy water from Makarii's tomb and was healed (SGU 343, l. 36). Once again, the involvement of a member of the Church hierarchy provided an unimpeachable witness to the healing.

However, the other two miracles are considerably different than any of the others discussed. In one, the saint was responsible for freeing a woman from captivity and protecting her virtue. A raid by the Tatars of Kazan' had resulted in the capture of the "beautiful and virtuous" woman, who prayed to the saint for her release and the preservation of her "bodily purity." Later that night, she dreamed of Makarii, who told her to get up and return home. When the saint appeared a second time with the same command, she did rise and follow him. When dawn arrived, she found herself outside of her city gates. She knocked on

the city gates, and when questioned by the guard, could not answer him because of her sobs. Of course, she was soon returned to her family (SGU 343, ll. 29-32). In the final miracle of the cycle, a husband suffering from "the drunken illness" had become blind from his drinking. Because of the demonic influence of alcohol, he beat his wife Elena and "broke her bones." The very pious Elena considered leaving her husband, but then decided to drown herself in a nearby well. Before throwing herself into the well, she prayed to Makarii, who then appeared to her and changed her suffering to joy. Having experienced this miracle, she then told her husband and her neighbors (SGU 343, ff. 37-38). Unmentioned in the miracle tale is whether her husband was cured of his drunkenness, but the saint did successfully restore Elena's obedience to her husband, which does connect this miracle to the Orthodox feminine ideal.

Not only are the details of these two miracles significantly different from the others seen in "Tale" or in "Gurii and Varsonofii" but also they provide new insights into life along the frontier. There is the mention of tears in one, as well as repeated visions of the saint in both, but this is largely where the comparison to the other miracles ends. Instead, the inherent dangers of living on the steppe frontier are revealed, where taking captives to sell them into slavery was a profitable business. In another, the traditional problems of marriage in Muscovy, drunkenness and abuse, require the intervention of a saint to save the life of the victimized wife. These tales only highlight the difference with the national cults developed in Kazan'. Makarii Zheltovodskii's life was not a suitable tale for inspiring conversion among the local non-Russians, as they appear as a present danger against the Orthodox faithful. Several of the other miracles in Makarii's cycle refer to miraculous healings of veterans and soldiers fighting the Tatars of Kazan', which only reinforces this impression. In one, a Muscovite military commander was healed of an internal injury from an arrow wound that he had taken during a campaign against Kazan' (SGU 343, ll. 32-35). Furthermore, whereas all the women in the tales of the icon and Gurii and Varsonofii could be suitable exemplars of Orthodox behavior, the drunkenness, spousal abuse, and thoughts of suicide in one miracle tale from Makarii's life presented the Orthodox community in an entirely different light. By comparison, Kazan's miraculous tales presented women as the Russian Orthodox Church intended them to behave: pious and obedient to their husbands, as well as safe and secure.

Taking all three sets of miracles together it is possible to reach some tentative conclusions about the Russian Orthodox Church's expectation of women's roles on the frontier outside of the convent. Women's religious experiences played a part in the construction of the former Khanate as new, Orthodox territory, but it helped if the presence of the institutional Church was involved in their inclusion into these miracle cycles. Praying with tears and visions of saints were two traditional tropes of women's religiosity, but in

Kazan' this demonstrated that the new territory had successfully become Orthodox. These frontier Orthodox women were portrayed as pious, obedient, and humble, as well as protected by caring husbands and fathers. However, alternate discourses of frontier women also circulated inside the Church, as seen in the miracle cycle of Makarii Zheltovodskii. In this cycle, the danger of the frontier was explored, but the Church once again provided an avenue for protecting Orthodox women. Comparing two stories of Russians taken into Tatar captivity demonstrates the great success of the Church. St. Varsonofii was enslaved by the Crimeans, but managed to survive successfully among them, learn to speak Tatar, and then escape, preparing the way for him to eventually lead the conversion efforts among them. The captive wife of the Zheltovodskii cycle needed the direct intercession of the saint in order to reach the safety of her family, but of course, she did receive his protection. Therefore, as long as an Orthodox woman attempted to live up to the ideals of the Church, she would be as safe as the recipients of this miraculous visitation.

In the end, the miracle tales reveal a version of an idealized Orthodox community: pious, obedient, and safe. This community could inspire Orthodox believers throughout Muscovy with the examples of life on the frontier, and also hopefully inspire non-Orthodox believers to convert to the faith. While the miracles of Makarii Zheltovodskii presented a few stories that presented the Orthodox community as a less than perfect, the women included in those miracles still represented the Orthodox ideal. Therefore, it appears that women were expected to exemplify the values of the Russian Orthodox Church even when their husbands might have failed. To live on the frontier, Orthodox women were held to the highest standard, and the Church did not acknowledge any other possible roles for this portion of the Russian colonial population.

Conclusion

The Russian Orthodox Church had a vision of the ideal woman for frontier life, whether she lived in a convent or with her family. All women must be pious and obedient, and their position must be secure from the aggression of the non-Russian population that surrounded the Orthodox community. Furthermore, as this image became realized with the establishment of convents and recorded in miracle tales, the Church could present an image of Kazan' as a holy, Orthodox place to both Russians residing on the frontier and in the central provinces. If this image of exemplary women inspired the conversion of the formerly hostile non-Russians, then so much the better.

While the constructed portrayal of Russian Orthodox women on the frontier was a restrictive one, it was not reflective of the experience of women outside of the Church's authority. Violence among Russian settlers were hardly unknown, with regular reports of drunken brawls disrupting frontier towns

(RGADA, f. 1455, op. 1, d. 2294). Not all widows went into a convent upon their husbands' death (Romaniello, 2012, pp. 137-138). However, the conception of a pious, chaste, obedient wife, who was safe and secure on the frontier was never altered. In fact, the dichotomy of the Church's vision and the frontier reality demonstrates how little women's actual experiences influenced the exemplary role that had been designed for them. The frontier was not safe, the Orthodox community was not ideal, and the non-Orthodox populations did not convert to Orthodoxy in large numbers. Therefore, only allowing one ideal of an Orthodox empire crafted a new history of successful conquest, effectively obscuring the much more complicated reality.

The Russian Orthodox Church envisioned a pacified, holy Christian Empire, and women symbolized its establishment, even without actively playing a role in colonization. So successful was the Church's vision that even the secular authorities employed it as their vision of the expanding empire. Therefore, while reality might not have matched the vision, all authority inside Muscovy strove to achieve this proscription. It can only be considered unfortunate that in order to achieve the Church's goal, women were forced into a tightly defined image of Orthodox morality. While the real settlers of Muscovy's Empire had to adapt to frontier conditions to survive, the official vision of the frontier did its utmost to deny Orthodox women any options.

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РУССКИЕ ЖЕНЩИНЫ И ПРАВОСЛАВНЫЕ ИДЕАЛЫ НА РАННЕМ ФРОНТИРЕ В НОВОЕ ВРЕМЯ

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После покорения Казани в 1552 году Русская Православная Церковь выработала модель поведения женщин в зоне фронтира, которая должна была определять роль женщины в имперском проекте.

Церковные иерархи предлагали образ покорной, добродетельной христианки, нуждающейся в мужской защите.

Этот образ показывал московскому обществу, что женщины на фронтире были защищены, были в безопасности, и что на территории фронтира православное сообщество может идеальной жизнью.

Эти образцовые женщины оказались очень полезны государству, поскольку представляли построенное Москвой колониальное общество как пространство Русского Православия, изгоняя следы мусульманского или языческого прошлого с новоприобретенных территорий.

Более того, эта задаваемая Церковью идеальная модель православного общества была подходящей платформой для обращения в Православие новых подданных русского царя.

В результате этого всего, фронтир не оказался местом освобождения для православных женщин – Московский фронтир не более чем терпел эту женскую роль в ее узко заданных рамках.

Ключевые слова: православие; женщины; гендер; монастыри; чудеса; святые; Казань

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